



**BARCELONA
SYMPOSIUM 2018**

**TALKING
GALLERIES**

THE INTERNATIONAL
THINK TANK FOR GALLERIES

TALKING GALLERIES 06

Since its foundation in 2011, Talking Galleries has had a clear purpose: to facilitate the exchange of expertise about gallery management and the global art market among professionals of the sector. To that end, publications play a key role. After holding our annual symposium in Barcelona, it has become somewhat of a tradition to publish these notebooks, which compile the content of the sessions that integrate each programme.

The 6th Barcelona Symposium was held at the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA) from 22 to 23 January 2018. We believe the topics discussed during this two-day event will interest a broad readership. Surely, the knowledge and generosity of our keynote speaker and panellists are second to none. Curators, collectors, art advisors, auction houses, fair organisers and, most of all, gallerists will find along these pages rigorous, thought-provoking perspectives on the latest developments of the art market. For those who could not make it to the symposium, as well as for those attendees who would like to go over the talks again, this notebook is packed with ideas and data.

As proud as we are to be based in Barcelona, we are also growing internationally at an exciting pace. Berlin, Seoul and Paris were our first points of expansion. Now we are sowing seeds to expand to Dubai, Brussels, London and New York. As we know, the art market is a dynamic landscape where gallerists must adapt to ever-evolving challenges and difficulties. If there is one certainty that we can take away from this 6th Barcelona Symposium, it is that through collaboration and professionalism we will be much better equipped to overcome them.

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Lisa Schiff
Tim Schneider
Richard Scott
Alain Servais
Adam Sheffer
Rebecca Taylor
Daniel Templon
Carlos Urroz
Hélène Vandenberghe
Ossian Ward

Barcelona Symposium
6th Edition

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Introduction

By Georgina Adam*

Welcome to the 6th Talking Galleries notebook!

The Talking Galleries notebooks provide an invaluable resource both for attendees at the symposium and for those who were unable to be present. They summarise the panels, presentations and discussions, providing a permanent record of the opinions and debates expressed over an intense two days.

Talking Galleries exists to bring together art market professionals to discuss their mutual concerns and debate the latest trends in the market. One of its important characteristics is the friendly and collegial atmosphere between the speakers and guests, prolonged with dinner and late-night drinks.

The 2018 symposium was held in Barcelona on 22 and 23 January in the MACBA auditorium and attracted a record turn-out, with almost 220 attendees from 24 countries and with 30 speakers—another record figure.

This year kicked off with a look back by one of the world's most established dealers, Daniel Templon, who celebrated his fifty years in the trade in 2016. He started with what he called a non-judgemental observation: "At that time, we did not talk about a market. We talked about artists and galleries. We were cultural actors. Now we live in a world where commerce is dominant. The world has really changed in fifty years." It was a world without the Internet, without the obsession with the price of oil, "A world where time did not have the same urgency as today."

Templon recalled how going to Kassel in 1968 was a key experience, "Where I really discovered what contemporary art was." Of equal importance was his first trip to New York in 1972: "Such a trip still was an event in those days." Meeting Konrad Fischer in Germany and Leo Castelli in New York, whom he got to know through Donald Judd, were crucial moments.

Today, said Templon, art has become too expensive—he cited a Warhol *Dollar Sign* which in 1987, the year of the artist's death, sold for \$45,000—a sum that many of today's young artists expect to reach after a five-year career.

And the problem is also with collectors—which were doctors, dentists, lawyers—, who cannot buy at today's prices. So it is the “new rich” who can, and Templon said it was sad that those collectors, who were passionate about art, who went to museums, have been excluded. “There is less passion, less knowledge today.”

That will not stop Templon: he noted that many famed gallerists worked into their 90s (Sidney Janis, Leo Castelli, Ileana Sonnabend, Denise René, Pierre Matisse...) and in fifteen years he promised to be still working. “My satisfaction is seeing artists, working with them, going to their studios, going to their exhibitions, making them known through museum shows and, finally, selling their work. But today, selling is the most important thing,” he said.

The next panel was about a hot-button topic, that of the future of the mid-level art gallery. Participants were Nanne Dekking (Artory/TEFAF), Jean-Claude Freymond-Guth (advisor), Ursula Krinzinger (Galerie Krinzinger), Clare McAndrew (Arts Economics) and collector Alain Servais. McAndrew started by explaining that the situation was not as bleak as sometimes thought, that the number of gallery closures was diminishing, but more worryingly, the number of openings had plunged. A high-performing top end of the market masked more difficulties at the middle level, notably with the disappearance of the mid-level buyer, as noted by Templon.

Krinzinger saw the main problem today as there being too many hierarchies, and the fact that there were only men in the top galleries. She works with mid-level galleries but regretted that the top galleries do not develop young talent—they just take them from the smaller dealers. She has given helping hands to mid-level galleries, which everyone agreed was a good way to deal with the problem.

Also debated was whether the mid-level should worry about what the mega-galleries do. As Freymond-Guth noted, “Define your specific segment of the market and work within it, do not try to be a mega-gallery.” There are many examples of galleries who have done incredibly well within their segment, he said.

Closing the session was some crystal ball gazing: what would the market look like in five years? Servais said it would split, with part (the mega-galleries) just becoming a luxury goods market. McAndrew saw many different types of agents and participants coming into the market, with boundaries blurred. Dekking encouraged dealers to look beyond their established clients—“Try to reach new potential clients”—and use the Internet—“Involve younger people, who live on the Internet”—he said. And all emphasised collaboration between galleries and with collectors as the way forward.

The next presentation, “Everything at Once: 500 Shows and 50 Years of Lisson Gallery,” was by Lisson Gallery's Head of Content, Ossian Ward. He outlined the history of the gallery, starting from director Nicholas Logsdail being thrown out of art school because he was spending too much time running the gallery. Lisson, which Ward described as a “mid-level mega-gallery,” has remained faithful to its focus on conceptual artists and shows that are not always easy. For example, Santiago Sierra's show in 2002, when the gallery was walled up and no-one could get in.

A book of all the artists was produced for the 50th anniversary, with—as Ward specified—no editing: it contains the material relating to over 500 shows, with the texts that accompanied them at the time. And last year, a huge show was held in a disused office block, bringing together works by some of the significant artists Lisson has represented, from Ai Weiwei to Tony Cragg and Richard Long. One piece of advice Ward had for younger gallerists was: “Keep everything, every piece of paper. It is as much of an artist's legacy as a gallery's legacy. You need to be aware of that history and keep hold of it.”

Following on, David Juda (Annely Juda Fine Art), Alex Logsdail (Lisson Gallery) and Guillermo Romero Parra (Parra & Romero) debated “The Delicate Transition of Passing Your Gallery on to Family Members.” Experience working in outside galleries seemed to be invaluable for the second generation, with Romero Parra noting, “It is very healthy to see what the others do. I realised that there was a different world,” while Logsdail said it enabled him to establish his own identity. And the family situation means you share “an aesthetic sense, a set of values or morals, even if the charge of nepotism is hard to escape,” he also said. Were there difficulties? Yes, said the panellists, there were struggles, particularly about decisions to establish new spaces. But they noted that the older generation had experience, having seen good and bad times, which was helpful, particularly during the bad times.

The next session was “Artists’ Estates. Managing Legacy in the 21st Century,” and featured Natasha Hébert (Galeria Toni Tàpies), Christy MacLear (Art Agency, Partners), Adam Sheffer (Cheim & Read/ADAA) and Hélène Vandenberghe (The Institute for Artists’ Estates). This has become increasingly topical—as moderator Melanie Gerlis said, today she gets more press releases about galleries taking on estates than about hot new artists. Vandenberghe said, “Estates have never been so important and their relevance will grow in the future. They have even become players in their own right in the art markets.” The issues centre around the model chosen, how to involve the family, how to organise the database and deal with authentication. All agreed that the conversation with the artist was essential—“It is never too early to talk about this,” said Sheffer, who added that his gallery’s work with estates is as important as with living artists.

Interestingly, MacLear, previously with the Rauschenberg Foundation, noted that in her new role with Sotheby’s subsidiary AAP, she was looking at economies of scale and exploring the idea of a multi-artist foundation; for instance, for photographers, where values tend to be lower. The panellists agreed that the field is increasingly professionalised—a good thing, since “not all families are business people,” as MacLear said. And it is important to decide whether a foundation is the best solution, as not all can be justified, given that they are complicated and expensive. “You really have to be realistic, what is the artist’s place in the world? Is he an international artist or is he important on a local scene?” asked Vandenberghe.

The following day started with a presentation of the FEAGA European Gallery Awards by Ernst Hilger—a reminder of the importance of associations in this field, which reward galleries for their tireless efforts to promote art.

The next session examined how gallerists and art advisors should work together. It featured Lisa Schiff (Schiff Fine Art), David Juda (Annely Juda Fine Art) and Claes Nordenhake (Galerie Nordenhake). It would be no exaggeration to say this was contentious, with immediate attacks on the role of art advisors. Criticisms flew—that the role of advisor is completely unregulated, that advisors get between the gallerist and the collector, that their business model was opaque, with some taking commissions from both gallery and client, and that many advisors lacked even basic knowledge. Advisors were even accused of by-passing dealers and going directly to the studios. However, the panel soon agreed that—as in all aspects of the art market—there were good and bad professionals, with

Schiff being one of the best advisors around. Much discussed was the question of whether a code of conduct should be introduced, something that Schiff rejected, saying that the advisor’s reputation was crucial, and that staying in business required good behaviour; regulation, according to her, would not be the solution.

The next panel was “Ways of Collaboration among Galleries,” and brought together Vanessa Carlos (Carlos/Ishikawa and Condo), Elizabeth Dee (Elizabeth Dee/Independent) and John Martin (John Martin Gallery/Cromwell Place). Each explained how their projects worked: in the case of Condo (Carlos’ project), galleries in a city share spaces with visiting international galleries for a month, often during quiet times such as January in London. They can organise collaborative shows or divide the gallery, giving the guest part of the space. Condo has spread from London to the US, Mexico and soon China. The idea came partly, said Carlos, of frustration with the relentless and expensive need to do art fairs.

Dee, who founded the now ten-year-old Independent fair, also voiced frustration with the big fairs. Her small, invitation-only event was triggered by “the desire to take back the gallery marketplace from the larger fairs.” Her objective is “the fostering of communities, contexts and patronage around their work, and forming those communities with other galleries and institutions, having a balance between the art marketplace and institutional support, which we find equally meaningful for the development of the artists’ careers.”

Finally, Martin explained how Cromwell Place, a block of 19th-century buildings in London, was being reconfigured to provide offices and exhibition spaces for galleries. The problem, he said, was that, “People love fairs and art, but they were not coming into the galleries.” For him, Cromwell Place is a hybrid, allowing galleries to have a fixed office space in London but only hire the exhibition spaces for shorter periods, a huge saving on costs. It also provides all-important storage facilities. In the following discussion, Carlos explained that the model was not right for her business, where much of the work was made in the gallery by the artist, but that it could be interesting for more traditional art and for secondary market galleries.

Carlos and Dee emphasised partnerships as a solution, with a post brick-and-mortar model. As Dee said, “Partnership could be with several other galleries defining a new space elsewhere outside of [a gallery’s] home

network, you are seeing a lot of that now,” adding that, “It is important to develop a democracy between galleries of all economies and scales, to break through that really toxic class system in the art world, which I think is really not fostering innovation and talent.”

The next two panels focused on the online world. In “Changes in the Online Art Market,” Saskia Clifford-Mobley (Artsy) and Sophie Neuendorf (artnet) intervened, and the session started with moderator Tim Schneider giving a highly amusing presentation of the problems with the methodology of reports on the online art market. He also noted how little price information was actually available online—no transparency. Neuendorf then outlined some misconceptions about the online world, one being that posting information about a work of art and its price would “burn” the work, or that transparency via the Internet can “lock in” pricing.

Both panellists agreed that the Internet is no longer “just for the kids” and that the moment has come for any company, large or small, to have an online strategy and a key business objective. That plan can vary from firm to firm, “There is no one-size-fits-all strategy, but everyone needs one now.” And, continued Clifford-Mobley, if you cannot have a dedicated staff member, then train an existing one: “The more time you focus on online strategy and dedicate to it, the more results you will see and the stronger they will be,” she said. Also important is offering as much information as possible—Artsy determined that the more information was available, the more likely a sale.

Finally, “Engaging New Audiences” was the last session of the day, with Richard Scott (Scott & Co), Rebecca Taylor (FITZ & CO) and Ossian Ward (Lisson Gallery). Content was the subject all addressed: what it is, how to communicate it and what platforms to use as a way of communicating the gallery’s identity and engaging audiences. For Ward, the art should be the starting point: “The best social media work that we do usually comes from something that the artists have done,” he explained. Taylor gave three examples of communication strategies, notably a series of videos about dealers, made for Art Basel. And Scott emphasised the importance of storytelling, citing the Thomas Dane opening in Naples as a topic that had a major impact. Taylor also emphasised that the quality of the audience is more important than the quantity. “9,000 followers on social media, if they include museum directors, those engaged in art and professional journalists, are better than 900,000 random followers,” he said. And, she pointed out, galleries should not obsess about the platform—“If you master

the content, then you can adapt it for whatever platform you choose,” she said.

At the end of a content-packed two days, participants all agreed that the various panels and discussions had been rewarding, informative and of high-quality indeed. Most felt that 6th Barcelona Symposium was the best so far!

***Georgina Adam**, Art Market Editor-at-large for The Art Newspaper since 2008 and art market contributor for the *Financial Times*. Adam has been writing about the art market and the arts in general for over thirty years, and also lectures on the market and related subjects at Sotheby’s and Christie’s educational institutes. Now based in London, she has lived in France and Japan; in January 2018 she released the book *Dark Side of the Boom; The Excesses of the Art Market in the 21st Century*, a follow-up to her 2014 book *Big Bucks; The Explosion of the Art Market in the 21st Century*.

Nanne Dekking Artist's Advisor
Jean-Claude Freymond-Guth Artist's Advisor
Ursula Krinzinger Galerie Krinzinger
Clare McAndrew Arts Economics
Alain Servais Collector
Moderated by **Georgina Adam** The Art Newspaper

45min + 45min Q&A



SESSIONS

Daniel Templon

Daniel Templon, a 21-year-old self-taught when he founded his gallery in 1966, has become a reference in the contemporary art world, while tirelessly pursuing new adventures. A pioneering force for contemporary art in Paris, Daniel Templon played a pivotal part in opening the French art scene to international artists. His gallery's history, encompassing over 500 exhibitions and almost 300 artists, mirrors half a century of contemporary art and has always had a distinctive identity, characterised by its founder's independence and open-mindedness.

**WHAT I HAVE LEARNED
IN 50 YEARS IN THE ART
WORLD**

SPEAKER

Daniel Templon

IN CONVERSATION WITH
Georgina Adam



WHAT I HAVE LEARNED IN 50 YEARS IN THE ART WORLD

Georgina Adam (G.A.) Daniel, welcome, and welcome to all of you to another Talking Galleries. It is wonderful to have been associated with Talking Galleries from the very beginning. It is my honour and pleasure to talk this morning with Daniel Templon, who last year celebrated his fifty years as a gallerist, which started in a borrowed, infant space with friends. One of the results of his wonderful trajectory is this book, *Une histoire d'art contemporain*, published by Flammarion in 2016. He has been an indispensable figure in the contemporary art world for decades. Daniel, let us hear how you started.

Daniel Templon (D.T.) First of all, thank you very much for having me. Fifty years is a long time, it is half a century. It is half a century of passion for artists. Galleries, as obvious as it may seem, would not exist without artists. Everything that we do has to have this one precise goal: loving artists, letting them know and getting our public to love these artists' works. A gallery is a place of cultural combat, a place where we defend our aesthetic choices; a place which, for the best of us, seeks ideas to defend.

Before moving on to my own story, I would like to talk about the past and present situation. When I started in 1966 in Paris, we never talked about the art market; we talked about galleries, artists and their artworks above all. Selling works of art only came after, even if it is the first function of a gallery. If you do not sell works of art, your artists will go elsewhere, in galleries where they are better marketed: you ought to sell your artists as much as possible. Nevertheless, I have noticed in the past fifty years a formidable change. We used to be cultural players, whereas we now live in a world where the market is dominant. I am not judging this: it is just the way it is. We have to adapt and do our best to avoid our artists being drowned in this international movement which puts money ahead of any cultural function and ahead of the defence of

aesthetic choices. I have not abandoned this combat of aesthetics. My opinions are often set, sometimes a bit forceful, and they oppose many of the contemporary trends.

I really wanted to insist on this point. The world has really changed in fifty years. We face globalisation and an increase in the number of fortunes; money which people do not know how to spend when they have made a lot, so they invest it in art because some believe it to be “chic”; also because it is socially prestigious.

**“WHEN I STARTED IN 1966 IN PARIS,
WE NEVER TALKED ABOUT THE
ART MARKET; WE TALKED ABOUT
GALLERIES, ARTISTS AND THEIR
ARTWORKS ABOVE ALL.”**

My own story starts in 1966, I was twenty-one. A year earlier, I had not seen a single work of art. My father was a civil servant in Bois-Colombes, in Paris’ suburbs, and, mainly for social reasons, I had never set foot in a museum. At nineteen, just after high school, I worked as a substitute teacher in Nanterre, close to Paris, mainly to get by and pay for my Law degree at the faculty of the Rue d’Assas. While I was at this school, I came across an old schoolmate from Bois-Colombes. He was part of a small group of young poets. They were all about twenty and wrote in a poetry magazine called *Strophes*. Like all poetry magazines, *Strophes* published six or seven issues before disappearing. In this group, however, there was a boy whose name might ring a bell to some of you: Daniel Abadie (he was the director of the Jeu de Paume Museum for 11 years). He had already been in contact with artists and painters to illustrate *Strophes*, but someone else was needed to help him meet the artists. That is how the idea came to be of creating a space to showcase these young artists. They came from all over the world. When I held my first exhibition, there was a Yugoslavian artist, two from Japan, one from Vietnam, an Italian and, of course, a few French artists. We found an antiques shop on rue Bonaparte with an empty basement, between rue du Four and place Saint Germain-des-Prés. In this basement, I set up with a friend this first gallery. It was called Cimaise Bonaparte, because it was on rue Bonaparte. He left after six months and I continued.

How did I meet the artists? Apart from Daniel Abadie, nobody knew the young painters who lived in Paris back then. Nevertheless, we read *Les Lettres françaises*, the Communist Party cultural weekly, directed by Aragon and Pierre Daix. It was pretty much the only paper to talk about contemporary art, apart from a weekly magazine called *Art* and another one called *Cimaise*. Art magazines used to be quite scarce (nowadays, you will see over fifty art magazines at some fairs). People might not read them, but it is good that they exist. Anyway, we went to see the person in charge of the art section of *Les Lettres françaises*, called Georges Boudaille. We were both twenty, and he did not take us seriously. Instead, he sent us to go and talk to another young art critic, Marc Albert-Levin, who did listen to us. He gave us a list of about fifteen artists who would be appropriate for a first exhibition in this antiques shop’s basement. I am not going to go through the full list, but there was one amongst them who most of you will recognise: Daniel Buren! I went to his atelier in January 1966. He did not take part in the exhibition, though, because his paintings were two-by-two metres and they would not fit down the stairs. So Daniel told me: “I can’t give you paintings because they just would not fit”. So, there you go! I could have exhibited Daniel Buren as soon as 1966. I have exhibited him many times since, but a lot later.

**“A GALLERY IS A PLACE OF CULTURAL
COMBAT, A PLACE WHERE WE
DEFEND OUR AESTHETIC CHOICES.”**

Les Lettres françaises thus led us to the choice of young artists, to setting up the gallery. I stayed in that basement for two years and then, as I started selling works, I rented the space on the ground floor of the antiques shop until 1972. In March 1972 I moved to the gallery that many of you know, on rue Beaubourg, where I have stayed ever since. In a way, I am a true office worker of the art world; if I am not travelling, I am at my office every day at half past nine. That is what an art dealer’s job is: being at your working desk, except that now, we spend a third of our lives travelling. I will come back to travelling, it is important.

So, how does one start in Paris not knowing a thing about art and the artists? Well, I started immediately going to the museum at least once a week, and then to all museums around the world. I am self-taught.

For two years, to make both ends meet, I taught physical education in the mornings and opened the gallery in the afternoons. The start was really difficult, but when you look back, you think it was a marvellous time. We did not have to worry about the state of the art world nor the world in general. We did not have to worry about the price of oil, nor the stock market. We did not have Internet, we did not have mobile phones. Back then, it was like running errands; it was really pleasant. We visited artists, we took some paintings, and we put them in the gallery. Then, we waited for people to come and see them. We hardly even used the phone—especially not to call abroad—since it was so expensive. It was really a different time and all galleries worked more or less in the same way. We were a community, many were friends; in any case, apart from the well-established galleries, people respected each other, while still defending their artists and their sympathies.

“BACK THEN, IT WAS LIKE RUNNING ERRANDS; IT WAS REALLY PLEASANT. WE VISITED ARTISTS, WE TOOK SOME PAINTINGS, AND WE PUT THEM IN THE GALLERY. THEN, WE WAITED FOR PEOPLE TO COME AND SEE THEM.”

We did not have the feeling of fighting against time. Nowadays, time is the most valuable thing. You have to be very fast so that you can be faster than the rest, faster than your competitors, faster than anything. You have to travel constantly. You have to check what is going on on the Internet daily, accumulate information about the world. Back in the 1970s in France, the only way to find out what was going on in other countries was to read Willi Bongard's fortnightly newsletter. He was a German journalist who worked for *Capital*, a German economics magazine. It was about eight pages long and you had to subscribe. He was the one informing us about Europe and even about the rest of the world. Nowadays, that means nothing. You have so much information on your phone from dawn till dusk. But back then, every fortnight, we looked forward to reading Willi Bongard's newsletter to find out what was going on in the art world.

So, after a few years in the basement of the antiques shop and then on the ground floor, I opened up on rue Beaubourg where I still am forty-

six years later. Nevertheless, I am going to open a new place in a few months. I have found a very big space, 660 square metres located rue du Grenier Saint-Lazare, two minutes away from where I am now. This will allow me to hold two important exhibitions at the same time. So, even after fifty years in the job, I still feel like developing, and I am even keener to defend artists, to defend aesthetic choices.

“EVEN AFTER FIFTY YEARS IN THE JOB, I STILL FEEL LIKE DEVELOPING, AND I AM EVEN KEENER TO DEFEND ARTISTS, TO DEFEND AESTHETIC CHOICES.”

G.A. If you could give yourself advice today, if you could meet yourself at twenty-one, would you have done things the same? Would you have done things differently?

D.T. When I started to look at art, in 1966, the School of Paris was dominant. There were mostly French painters—Hartung, Soulages, Manessier, Bissière, Vasarely, etc.—but also some foreigners who lived in Paris and had a gallery. There were Italians (such as Adami), Spaniards (Tàpies, at Galerie Maeght, Saura, Arroyo), Dutch artists (Karel Appel) and Chinese ones (Zao Wou-Ki and Chu The Chun). There was a strong international atmosphere but the abstract painting of the School of Paris was dominant. *Les Lettres françaises*, which had the widest readership, only defended the School of Paris. They hated everything figurative and, obviously, everything that came from the United States. I liked the School of Paris, but I thought there must be something, even if I had never left France (except to go to Belgium, Germany or Italy).

I discovered this “something else” quite early on, which gave me my originality. I went to Kassel in 1968 with Catherine Millet, whom I lived with at the time and who has also become an important art critic and writer. It was the same time as the Paris events. I had to choose: to stay where I was, and follow the political and social situation, or to go to documenta in Kassel. We took a car and drove all through Germany (back then, there were not highways everywhere). There, we discovered true contemporary art, not the one exhibited in Paris, not what was seen in France. In Kassel 68, we saw the Pop artists:

Rauschenberg, Lichtenstein, Warhol, Rosenquist, Oldenburg, George Segal; the minimalists: Sol LeWitt, Frank Stella or Ellsworth Kelly, they were all there. So were the abstracts: Vasarely and Tàpies. And Beuys too! Arriving there at twenty-three, I thought, "Everything I have heard and seen in Paris is far from being true." There was a different world out there, the new world: American, which we did not really know about in France. The Germans and the Dutch did, however, thanks to the Ludwig Museum in Cologne and the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. I immediately decided to get to know more about them by going regularly to Germany and to Amsterdam, at least three times a year. I went to every big vernissage in order to see true contemporary art, the best contemporary art which could not be seen in France. Kassel was for me a revelation, Pop Art is really something different to the School of Paris—I thought to myself. I do not want to devalue the School of Paris, but it seemed that the truly unexpected was happening abroad.

**"KASSEL WAS FOR ME A REVELATION,
POP ART IS REALLY SOMETHING
DIFFERENT TO THE SCHOOL OF
PARIS."**

That is how I came to decide, in June 1968, that I would one day exhibit these Pop artists in Paris. But I did not know anyone and I did not have any money. So I had to wait to go where these artists were working and living: New York. In February 1972, I could finally afford to buy my plane ticket. Nowadays, we go to New York as if we were catching the tube. Back then, going to New York was a big thing. I assure you that if you went to New York, you told all your friends. The cheapest tickets were flying with Icelandic Airlines and you had to stop over in Iceland. But I finally got to New York! My first encounter with an American artist I wanted to work with was with Donald Judd. How did I come to love an artist which had not even been exhibited in Paris? Well, after Kassel 68, I started going to Cologne and Düsseldorf. I met Konrad Fischer and got along great with him. I owe him a lot. He was an advocate for minimal art. When I was in his apartment, I saw works by Carl Andre, Robert Ryman, Sol LeWitt and Dan Flavin—I did not even know they existed. And then I saw them in Kassel. My first exchanges abroad were thus in Germany with Konrad Fischer, who was a charming, generous man. I remember driving back in my old Renault 4 and bringing back

works by Judd in the boot and, on the roof rack, mural sculptures by Sol LeWitt, tied with strings. I did it many times but unfortunately, I have lost the photos.

**"IF MEETING KONRAD FISCHER
WAS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT
ENCOUNTERS IN MY LIFE, THE OTHER
HAS TO BE MEETING LEO CASTELLI IN
1972."**

If meeting Konrad Fischer was one of the most important encounters in my life, the other has to be meeting Leo Castelli in 1972. How did I meet him? Through Donald Judd, which I visited in New York to suggest exhibiting him in Paris. He said: "Okay, we will do it. But I already have a gallery in New York, Leo Castelli. Go talk to him." So I went to see Leo, who was then on 77th 4 East, and we hit it off straight away. Our relationship continued till his death. He had found someone in Paris who could be both his correspondent, a defender of his artists and aesthetic choices, and later becoming a friend too. Leo Castelli did not have any problems with this exhibition, so we organised it in October 1972. Hence, my first contact with Leo Castelli was through Donald Judd, and then it continued: Dan Flavin, Robert Morris and especially Rauschenberg, Lichtenstein, Warhol, Rosenquist, also Stella and Kelly. It was a time when defending aesthetic choices was more important than financial interest. When I told Leo that I wanted to exhibit Warhol, he told me: "Okay, choose." When I wanted Rauschenberg, the same and so on. What drove us was not the money or the artist's pricing. We wanted to defend this artistic trend. This is what I did, I did the best I could. But I was not really understood in France. Too few people bought, too few collectors believed in this aesthetic direction. The French were still quite reluctant to what was the most innovative art of the time.

G.A. I think in a lot of early shows you did not sell particularly well.

D.T. That is correct. It was very difficult to sell Pop Art because institutions disliked it. The School of Paris was just too strong and did not want to accept the Americans, synonym of imperialist colonisation and capitalistic investment. One must not forget; the Communist Party

had gained 25% of the vote after the war and most French intellectuals were communists or close to their political ideas. Most of the French establishment was in any case left-winged. That meant that everything that came from the United States was dangerous and mistrusted. We could not accept a country which was putting commerce before art as a “virtuous expression of human thought”, of beauty detached from everything material.

I really lived through all of this. To make a living, I had to work as a physical education teacher, but also as a proof-reader for *Les Lettres françaises* (journal of the Communist Party, headed by Louis Aragon). I saw this climate, which was the French intellectual climate at the time, where the US was not acceptable. I can tell you that even nowadays, many of those in charge of our cultural institutions, have kept this mistrust of everything American, of the country’s culture.

“I WAS NOT REALLY UNDERSTOOD IN FRANCE. TOO FEW PEOPLE BOUGHT, TOO FEW COLLECTORS BELIEVED IN THIS AESTHETIC DIRECTION. THE FRENCH WERE STILL QUITE RELUCTANT TO WHAT WAS THE MOST INNOVATIVE ART OF THE TIME.”

The Centre Pompidou, our key institution, has often been reluctant to exhibit American Pop artists. The successive directors of our national museum have really had to force themselves, even with the likes of Warhol. As of Lichtenstein, he was first exhibited in 2014! And mainly because the President of the Pompidou imposed it to the Director. This is also why Pop artists are not present among the French collections. France is the abstraction, everything post-Duchampian and the rejection of figurative art. Even the New Realists had difficulties making it in France. Arman had his retrospective at the Pompidou in 2015 and César only this year! And for Arman, it was a small retrospective because he was not given the big space; he was not considered to be worth it. A mistake. It was thus not easy to introduce these American artists, which the majority of the French community rejected. This did not stop me from exhibiting almost all of them and having, despite

the limited financial success, wide recognition, which is maybe more important. At the same time as the Pop artists, I was also exhibiting the minimalists and a few great abstract painters: Frank Stella, Ellsworth Kelly, Jules Olitski, Kenneth Noland. What I am most proud of are the two Willem de Kooning exhibitions I did, one of the best artists of American history, and which really did not attract the French buyers’ attention. Just as an anecdote: I had only managed to sell one of his sculptures and it was to the Centre Pompidou because the director at the time was Pontus Hultén, and he was a lot more open-minded than his successors.

G.A. You mentioned at the beginning the changes that you have seen and particularly the commodification of art and the entry of this financial consideration. Could you talk a bit more about that?

“IN THE YEARS AFTER THE CRISIS, AND STARTING IN THE AUTUMN OF 1974, THERE WERE MANY SATURDAYS IN WHICH NOTHING WAS SOLD. THAT MADE THINGS TERRIBLY DIFFICULT FOR A LONG TIME.”

D.T. The art market became financial at the end of the 1980s. There was a crisis in 1974 which lasted a few years, but back then the market was not so financial. What was the crisis like? I will give you an example. Before it broke out, people tended to come to the gallery on Saturdays and you could sell five artworks in the day. In the years after the crisis, and starting in the autumn of 1974, there were many Saturdays in which nothing was sold. That made things terribly difficult for a long time.

Afterwards, everything boomed until 1989, when things peaked; everyone went crazy. And then it all went downhill, starting in 1990. Because of the petrol crisis going on, the Kuwait war, the stock exchange collapse and all the economic consequences we know. The Japanese crisis had, in a way, warned us, and it was pretty similar to the first crisis. For five years, what had been worth a million dollars was worth \$200,000. I can give you a few examples. A good friend of mine, Jean-Eric Löwenadler, had a beautiful Andy Warhol, a big three-by-

three flower canvas he had bought for a million dollars. After the crisis, in 1993 or 1994, he was willing to sell it for \$200,000. He was a brilliant, wealthy art dealer, and yet, because he needed cash at that moment, he was selling this amazing artwork for close to nothing. That painting, today, can easily reach \$10 million. That is what the crisis was like. Just to keep going, many had to sell the artworks they had for half, a third, a quarter or even a fifth of their value.

“I GO TO ABOUT ELEVEN OR TWELVE FAIRS PER YEAR. WHY? BECAUSE THE MARKET HAS BECOME SO GLOBALISED THAT YOU HAVE TO BE AHEAD OF YOUR CLIENTS AND TAKE WHAT YOU HAVE IN YOUR GALLERY TO THEM.”

I remember going to Art Chicago, which was an extraordinary art fair. Back then, it was the second most important one after Basel. Jean-Eric was in the stand next to me, so we talked all the time. He told me that in 1989 he had sold forty paintings. That is a lot. In 1990, however, he sold only fourteen. The crisis had then only just started, straight after Christie's and Sotheby's May sales which had been a disaster. So, you see: from forty to fourteen artworks, the worry had spread like wildfire. In Europe, we tend to react slightly slower, but in the United States it is immediate. When it stops, it stops immediately; then restarts quick; at home, it is all bit slower. But that was the crisis.

Can there be a crisis now? Of course. But, taking into account how globalised the market is and the amount of money invested in art, one would believe it would be a small crisis, if at all. In any case, the art market has never been as buoyant as it is now, and these past years have been prosperous for everybody.

I go to about eleven or twelve fairs per year. Why? Because the market has become so globalised that you have to be ahead of your clients and take what you have in your gallery to them; show your artists and make them famous, so you can sell them all over the world. I will give you an example of this globalisation: I exhibited an Indian artist at the

Hong Kong art fair. An American collector was interested, but his wife was not. I then met this same collector in October at Expo Chicago, and he bought the same artwork he had seen in Hong Kong, now that his wife was also convinced. That is globalisation: you can exhibit an artwork in Asia and sell it in Europe or the United States. That is why we have to travel all the time and go to fairs.

G.A. So you now have a gallery in Brussels, which is run by your son. You did have a gallery in Milan quite early in your career, which is now closed. Have you never thought about extending to New York?

D.T. I had a gallery in Milan for four years, between 1972 and 1976. I was ahead of my time in that aspect. In Paris, nothing was happening, so I really felt like going to Italy, where things were much more active. It was a very good friend at the time, Giancarlo Politi, who suggested opening a gallery in Milan, he said it was prosperous for contemporary art. And he was right. I exhibited Joseph Kosuth, Donal Judd, Lawrence Weiner, Art and Language, Viallat, etc. But then, in 1974, the crisis came and by 1976 I had to close the gallery. Otherwise, I would have stayed in Italy for a long time.

So I had the idea of going abroad quite early on. I would not say to go and conquer the world—it was not about that at the time. To do that, you had to go to New York. I could have gone there in the 1980s. Since 1972, I had become very good friends with Leo Castelli and there was this building on 420 West Broadway. Leo was on the first floor, Ileana Sonnabend on the second, John Weber on the third and André Emmerich, who was leaving for 57th street, on the fourth. There was thus a vacant space and I thought of renting it. Leo even offered his help. But I did not do it. I just did not feel comfortable—I do not know if this is the correct phrasing—in this American culture, which gives a sense of freedom, but a faint one, at least not the same as in Europe. Puritanism governs. Look where America has gotten today, with the politically correct. On the other side, I have been to New York hundreds of times and know the city by heart. And yet, at the time, I thought that I had better to do staying in France and becoming Paris's most dynamic gallery, which is what I did in the end. We will never know whether I was right or wrong, maybe I would have been successful in New York as a foreigner.

Nevertheless, there is a French who made it in New York as a foreigner, Xavier Fourcade. I really liked him, it was thanks to him that I exhibited De Kooning. In Paris, he became a director at Knoedler and then opened his own gallery. He had the most formidable artists: De Kooning, Malcom Morley, Joan Mitchell, Michael Heizer. He made it, but no one else did. Yvon Lambert also tried in the early 2000 but he had to close up after only a few years. Maybe he thought a New York gallery could be run from somewhere else, but this is a mistake. You cannot have your main gallery in Paris or another European capital and your secondary one in New York. New York always has to be the main gallery, and you can have a subsidiary in Paris or elsewhere in Europe. But Yvon did not like travelling. I travel all the time. That is why it did not work: you have to live in New York.

**“I HAD THE IDEA OF GOING ABROAD
QUITE EARLY ON. I WOULD NOT SAY
TO GO AND CONQUER THE WORLD—IT
WAS NOT ABOUT THAT AT THE TIME.
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There is also Gian Enzo Sperone, but he was associated with Angela Westwater and spent half of his time in Soho, so it does not really count. Probably the most successful European career in New York is that of David Zwirner. He now has one of the four most financially powerful galleries in the world. That proves a European can set up, succeed and become a major player in New York. He deserves credit. But for a Frenchman, it becomes harder since there is no French community in the United States, whereas there is a German community. And it has always supported Zwirner; there is no French community capable of supporting a French art dealer. Furthermore, the French market is not powerful enough to take in what comes from New York, as the prices are quite high, whilst Zwirner sold all his artists to German collectors who were already buying them back in his father Rudolf's days. Rudolf Zwirner was a great art dealer in Cologne and it was him who set up the Ludwig collection. He succeeded in introducing American art into Germany, which is something we were incapable of doing in France, for political and economic reasons.

G.A. In a little while, I am going to open up to questions, because I am sure that there are a lot of people who would like to dialogue with you, but first I would like to ask you two more questions. Firstly, I would like you to talk about the change in profile of collectors that you have seen and, finally, my last question would be, what have you learnt in fifty years? What are the essential points of this long and successful career?

**“BACK THEN, A LOT OF COLLECTORS
WERE DOCTORS, DENTISTS OR
LAWYERS. THEY WERE THE RICH
PEOPLE. NOWADAYS, IT WOULD BE
IMPOSSIBLE FOR THESE LIBERAL
PROFESSIONALS TO BUY WORKS OF
ART, UNLESS THE ARTIST IS AT THE
BEGINNING OF HIS OR HER CAREER.”**

D.T. Art has become very expensive, too expensive. The year Andy Warhol died, 1987, I exhibited his *Dollar Signs*, big seven or eight-foot paintings. They were worth \$45,000. People at the time thought it was a bit expensive. Nowadays, young artists, after a five-year career, sell paintings for \$45,000. The young abstracts sold even at \$100,000, but they are now already disappearing because they were too light on the creative front. Anyway, Andy Warhol's *Dollar Signs* were selling at \$45,000. Nowadays, the same paintings would reach \$5 million at auction. Of course, Warhol is now considered history, but back then, a lot of collectors were doctors, dentists or lawyers. They were the rich people. Nowadays, it would be impossible for these liberal professionals to buy works of art, unless the artist is at the beginning of his or her career. But even so; after five or ten years, they have to turn to younger generations, as the prices have become too high. So, it is usually new fortunes, new social categories who can buy art nowadays.

I cannot say that I regret it, the world changes and you have to adapt. But it is a pity. It is a pity that all these people who are passionate, who would make an effort to stay informed, to be cultivated, to read the papers, to go to museums, are to be excluded from the pleasure of collecting. Nowadays, people travel, but read the papers superficially. They look things up on the Internet, but do not deepen their

knowledge. The old saying, “People buy with their ears, not their eyes,” paradoxically, becomes more true. The more information there is, the less informed people are, and the less they know. There are people who come into my gallery to buy what I am selling today, but do not know the names of artists active forty or fifty years ago. That is the most shocking. There are buyers who can spend large amounts of money but do not know what has been done before. This makes them very naïve because they buy new artists—like the young American abstracts I spoke about earlier—but they do not know about Hartung, Mathieu, Appel, Leroy, Wols, Fautrier, Martin Barré, etc.

**“THERE ARE BUYERS WHO CAN
SPEND LARGE AMOUNTS OF MONEY
BUT DO NOT KNOW WHAT HAS BEEN
DONE BEFORE.”**

If you have aesthetic convictions, it is important to defend them. What I am worried about nowadays is that many galleries put their economic interest first. So they may exhibit artists which they do not believe in, just because they know it will be profitable. And conversely, they will not exhibit an artist they really like if they do not think that they will sell immediately. I see that every day. We have entered an era of financialization of the art market. And I regret it in a certain way. But us, galleries, we need nevertheless to have a certain style. This does not mean that we have to go only in one direction and be like Denise René-Hans Mayer, where you would only find abstract art, geometric or lyrical, just as in the time of the Galerie de France or Emmerich in New York. Nowadays, that would be infeasible for any gallery. We have to exhibit artists who apparently have nothing in common. But this is good, because the ideal gallery should be like a museum: an institution where you can see the full range of contemporary art, its possibilities and the reflection of our times, in short. A given time is composed of many different artists. Imagine you wanted to be the best gallery in the world in 1915. You would not only need Picasso and Matisse, but also Monet, Bonnard, Mondrian, Kandinsky, Malevitch, Duchamp and Klee. You would have to combine so many different styles and artists, some of whom maybe hated each other. I am sure Picasso thought Mondrian was stupid, and quite possibly the other way around too.

Today it is normal to exhibit things which are apparently very different. When I designed the cover for my book, published on the occasion of the gallery's fiftieth anniversary, I had Warhol, De Kooning, Sol LeWitt, Lichtenstein; but I also included a French artist, that I consider as one of the best of his generation, Gérard Garouste; Kehinde Wiley, the Afro-American painter who painted Obama's official portrait for the Smithsonian. A gallery must showcase the range of everything it considers the best of the times.

**“I CONTINUE TO SEARCH FOR YOUNG
ARTISTS BECAUSE I THINK THAT
IS THE TRUE PASSION OF AN ART
DEALER.”**

I think there is a lot of horizontal communication. Our role is to look for the best ones and make it a game. We all want to be right before the others. The pleasure of this job lies in discovering new artists and taking them towards the top. After fifty years, I could think that I have had enough and just exhibit the old and the dead, the renowned. Yet I continue to search for young artists because I think that that is the true passion of an art dealer. In these past few years, I have taken on: Iván Navarro, who works with light, of course; Kehinde Wiley, a great portraitist; the Japanese artist Chiharu Shiota or this young Senegalese whom I will exhibit soon, Omar Ba; Prune Nourry, sculptor of the soul and the body. Maybe tomorrow I will find someone else. You cannot take on too many new artists, because, at the end of the day, you can only do five exhibitions a year. I will soon have two galleries in Paris and, with the one in Brussels, I will make fifteen exhibitions. It is a lot, but still, the key for me is the discovery.

Contemporary art is acknowledged by its time. Of course, there will always be historical revisions. Will Jeff Koons and Damien Hirst be considered the best artists of these last thirty years? We will never know. They might be the current equivalent to the *pompier*s. So I really do not like people who have absolute certainties. I know that there is this debate about Damien Hirst. I really liked his Venice exhibition, but many people absolutely hated it. I believe the earlier Damien Hirst is secondary. The true Damien Hirst is the one we can see now, with the works he exhibited in Venice. Before, he was producing what the

market wanted. Then he painted fifty paintings mimicking those of Francis Bacon, but they were a total failure because he can't paint. Nevertheless, he had the courage to paint them and then, exhibit them at the Wallace Collection in London. He said he wanted to be as good a painter as Bacon, who, for me, is maybe the greatest post-war painter. Yet he continued with this new series. He went to the bottom of the sea and looked for hidden treasures. The story is extraordinary and, of course, totally false, but it is truly beautiful, almost like a fairy-tale. There are treasures deep down the sea, they have been hidden for twenty centuries, and he is going to get them and bring them to the water surface. My interpretation is a bit psychological: I think this is his unconscious speaking. Deep down inside him, he has all these treasures of history. He has art all the way till today, even, since there is a Mickey Mouse. So he brings all of this back to the surface and produces something kitsch, baroque, decadent and vulgar. However, it is true history and also the story he has in his imaginary. The artist always tells his story, even if he is not aware of doing it. He becomes a great creator when he reaches the universal. Hirst goes towards that.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND QUESTIONS (C/Q) FROM THE AUDIENCE

Q1. Thank you, Monsieur Templon, for having talked to us today. Thank you very much Georgina as well for your questions. I have a question about your first clients. I would very much like to know who were the people who supported you, encouraged you and bought artworks from you when you were in that basement in 1972; were they French or foreign? I would also like to know when you stopped teaching physical education and started to make a living out of your gallery.

D.T. I was a physical education teacher for two years, to make a living and be able to have my gallery opened in the afternoons. First, I was in the basement and then I made it up to the ground floor. When I got there, I had to start opening in the mornings too, so I could no longer teach. As to the first buyers, in the day, it was a miracle to sell an artwork. They cost about 500 francs, which is the equivalent of €500 nowadays. But let me come back to your question. At the beginning of the 1980s, in 1981 or 1982, when Sotheby's was at Parke-Bernet on

Madison Avenue, where Gagosian is now, I was sitting in the front row of an auction next to Leo Castelli, when a Jasper Johns *Flag (Three Flags)* came up. The bids started at \$100,000 and reached a million dollars. Leo told me, "They have all gone crazy! A million dollars!" Nowadays, this painting would get to at least fifty, thirty-five years later. It was reproduced in *The New York Times*. I reckon the consignor was Richard Armstrong, President of the Whitney Museum Trustees. I believe he had bought it for \$900. Leo even kept a photocopy of the bill. There has been such massive inflation. And Leo had more or less the same reaction as I have nowadays: they have all gone crazy. What is \$50 million, \$100 million nowadays? Warhol and even Jeff Koons or Basquiat make more than \$50 million. It means nothing. It is absurd, but real.

**“WARHOL AND EVEN JEFF KOONS
OR BASQUIAT MAKE MORE THAN \$50
MILLION. IT MEANS NOTHING. IT IS
ABSURD, BUT REAL.”**

G.A. But Daniel, I would like you to answer the question. Who were your first buyers?

D.T. It is difficult to tell you about my first buyers. They were unknown to me, I knew nobody. They must have been doctors or dentists, I guess. How did I make myself known? I worked as a proof-reader in *Les Lettres françaises* and I lived back then with Catherine Millet, who became an art journalist and writer. I met her when she was seventeen, and I was twenty, and we got together a year later. She had just come out of high school and did not really know what to do. I suggested that she should write about contemporary art, and she said, "Why not?" So I contacted Georges Boudaille, who was in charge of *Les Lettres françaises* and told him about her. He simply asked for her to send in an article and that was it. It worked.

The first two articles that she wrote were about galleries in Paris. It was in May 1968, although it had nothing to do with what was going on politically. One of the articles was about Jean-Pierre Raynaud at Mathias Fels and the other about Simon Hantaï at Fournier. Her intuitions were good and it is how she got started. Boudaille got her

to write for *Les Lettres françaises* for years, until it disappeared. She also wrote for *Art vivant*, which was Jean Clair's magazine, published by the Fondation Maeght, and in 1972, I created *Art Press*, which still exists after forty-six years. Catherine and I separated in 1976, but she has kept *Art Press* going. Nowadays she is chief-editor and it is a high-level magazine, more intellectual than the others, since I had this idea of creating it. So, she wrote reviews of my exhibitions. That is how I made myself known, thanks to *Les Lettres françaises* and its reviews.

G.A. And through the press, which is very nice for me to hear. The press is still important, I think. Are there more questions?

Q2. Hi. Was it not so that in 1980 the Mitterrand government changed the rules? With the new socialist government, did the rules of the market not change?

D.T. No, they did not change. Noticing the bad situation of the French art market, that is to say that the young artists were selling little in France and nothing abroad, he created in 1981, through the Ministry of Culture headed by Jack Lang, what we can call regionalisation. He allowed regions to buy works of art through an organism called Regional Funds of Contemporary Art—FRAC, after its initials in French [Fonds régionaux d'art contemporain]. The FRACs were a system through which the central government would match any investment the regions made in buying artworks. If the region spent 100,000 francs, the government would chip in another 100,000. That was a very good idea. There are twenty-two regions in France, so that makes twenty-two FRACs.

That meant a lot of galleries were able to carry on or, in any case, do better. So FRACs were very useful. They also bought some things which they kept. I remember the Bordeaux FRAC bought Jeff Koon's *Vacuum Cleaner* and the Lyon-Rhône FRAC bought a Gerhard Richter *Candle*, which would probably now be worth about \$10 or \$20 millions. It is thanks to these FRACs that the market was able to develop. In any case, they brought back confidence in the market and made French artists more visible, although FRACs also bought a lot of work by foreign artists, who could indirectly get into French public collections.

Q3. (Carlos Urroz) I am participating this afternoon in a panel about the transition of galleries from one family generation to the next. You have just celebrated your fifty-year anniversary and opened a new space, whilst your son is in charge of your Brussels gallery. I was wondering how you see your gallery developing with the next generation. Will your son take over?

**“ALL OF THE GREAT ART DEALERS,
AND I HOPE TO BE ONE OF THEM,
HAVE LIVED PAST NINETY YEARS
WHILE STILL BEING IN BUSINESS:
SIDNEY JANICE, LEO CASTELLI,
ILEANA SONNABEND, DENISE RENÉ,
PIERRE MATISSE, MARIAN GOODMAN.
THIS IS BECAUSE IT IS AN EXCITING
JOB WHICH MAKES YOU WANT TO
CONTINUE.”**

D.T. I will still be here in fifteen years, nobody doubts that... All of the great art dealers, and I hope to be one of them, have lived past ninety years while still being in business: Sidney Janice, Leo Castelli, Ileana Sonnabend, Denise René, Pierre Matisse, Marian Goodman. This is because it is an exciting job which makes you want to continue. It keeps you in constant movement and enriches you, intellectually. There is no reason to stop, other than divine will or biology. That is why I will be opening a new big gallery in addition to the actual one in three months.

But, since you are asking: my son is thirty-one and directing the gallery in Brussels, so he should logically take over. It was him who expressed early on an interest in art. Before going to Brussels, he worked for three years at Sean Kelly in New York. Of course, it is always a pleasure when a child wants to take on the business of one of his parents. You will notice that this is common nowadays in the arts.

The change in the profile of gallerists is also interesting. Back in the day, you did not expect a collaborator in an art gallery to have studied a lot. Today, in Paris, a growing number of employees have studied in a

prestigious business school or in our elite education institution called Sciences Po. Back then, they would have been considered idiots or bohemians. Now, galleries have become extremely respectable both socially and economically.

Q4. As a gallerist with such a long career, what is your advice for the times when we sell a painting to a client and, much later, the price of this painting does not increase? What should we do? What should we tell the client if the price goes down and the client no longer trusts us?

D.T. Should we say we made a mistake? We can always blame ourselves and say we made a bad choice. We can also blame the artist, saying he was fantastic at the time but has become worse after the sale. I think we should just tell collectors that you cannot always win. It is life. The future of an artist is not predictable. Every gallery has made bad choices, believed in an artist and then noticed two, five or ten years later that it was a mistake. So the collector should also accept that it is neither his fault nor ours: you cannot discover a new Picasso, a new Andy Warhol every morning; great artists are extremely rare.

**“IF, NOWADAYS, EVERYTHING SELLS,
THAT IS A PROBLEM OF OUR TIMES.
EVEN MEDIOCRE ARTISTS SELL WELL
AND MAYBE THAT IS THE PROBLEM.”**

If, nowadays, everything sells, that is a problem of our times. Even mediocre artists sell well and maybe that is the problem. And it is not up to us to fix this problem. It is a different debate that we do not really have time to go into. We just have to say the truth, admit that an artist may have let us down, but also bring the collector's attention to other works they bought whose price has gone up. It is like playing the stock market: some will do well, some will do badly, and some will disappear altogether. Time, and only time, will tell what the right choices were. Let us be patient.

Q5. I was wondering... you mentioned a couple of times that the business aspect is now dominant in the art market in terms of art dealership, but you also mentioned that at the beginning of your career, if there were

no sales then artists would go somewhere else, to someone else. If we forget the money for the moment, what has changed?

D.T. Today, money is driving the market. Let us say that, at the time, trust was more important. Artists wanted a relation of trust—that is, of friendship, recognition, exchange. There was something more, the race for money was not as bad as it is nowadays. It is not that people want to become so rich, make lots of money quickly. It is just the competition is so strong that you always have to think of money. It is a race. You have a gallery, then two, five, ten... Some want to have that many. It is all about the ego, it is absurd.

**“AT THE TIME, TRUST WAS MORE
IMPORTANT. THE RACE FOR MONEY
WAS NOT AS BAD AS IT IS NOWADAYS.”**

We should think a bit differently. There are no limits to the desire for power, there are no limits to the desire to become rich. For me it is different. My satisfaction comes from seeing artists, working with artists, going to their workshops, looking at their work, putting on exhibitions, making them known through museums and, then, selling them. Nowadays, it is like the selling jumped to the top of the list. The natural process of taking time to discover an artist, of taking time to show it to others, is no longer respected. We go straight to the immediacy of commerce. It is an organised system and we are all responsible: artists, galleries, museums, the press and collectors. Is it rogue capitalism, the exuberance of the consumer society? That must change.

G.A. I have another question. How do you deal with an artist who is not doing well in the market? Do you keep him on? Do you have artists who you believe in but who will not sell, who do not have commercial success?

D.T. It is very difficult to break with an artist, to tell him that you no longer want him or her in your gallery. You can't ignore the personal relationship you have with an artist. And you are thinking that he or she is going to start painting well again, that things are going to get better. So what do we do? Instead of exhibiting the work every

two years, I push the dates of the exhibition back. If after five or six years, the work is not getting any better, I think both the artist and the gallerist understand that it cannot go on and the artist has to exhibit somewhere else. It has happened to me. Then there are also artists who leave the gallery because they think things will be better for them somewhere else. One told me, "An artist is like a football player: he has to change team every now and then." So he went to another gallery, he changed teams. And then his career collapsed.

"SOME GALLERIES JUST TAKE ON ARTISTS TO FILL THE PROGRAMME: YOU HAVE TO HOLD TEN EXHIBITIONS A YEAR, SO YOU ARE FORCED TO TAKE PEOPLE ON. I PREFER HAVING FEWER ARTISTS BUT BEING SURE. I HAVE NEVER TAKEN ON AN ARTIST LIGHTLY."

G.A. But that has happened to you. You have had artists who have left, you have had gained artists. Can you talk a bit about that? Why do they go and how?

D.T. Lots of artists had very childish reactions. But there are also a few cynical artists who have left me.

G.A. What makes an artist succeed? Is it possible to predict?

D.T. No, it is unpredictable. When we take on a new artist for a gallery, we obviously think that he or she is going to become a great artist and is going to sell, be popular, be good. If you are not convinced from the start, you will not be able to convey it to collectors, and you will become a bad salesperson. The artist has to be right for you. Some galleries just take on artists to fill the programme: you have to hold ten exhibitions a year, so you are forced to take people on. I prefer having fewer artists but being sure. I have never taken on an artist lightly. You have to wait for a year or two, risking another gallery taking on the artist first, before deciding whether you are convinced and ready to defend and work hard for the artist. But it remains a question of personal sensitivity.

I do not know whether I have a gift, more than others, but I think I have an eye. I find people have an eye less and less. They do not take time to look, to compare. Does this artist bring anything new in comparison with what already exists? Does he or she have a strong personal conviction, something inside them that means they are not just an artist for the sake of it? I will come back to this, it is important. I often remember a quote from Ben, the artist you all know. He wrote some extraordinary sentences, I think he is a great artist: "Unemployed people, become contemporary artists." Think of this sentence and look at what is happening in the world, what we can see in museums, galleries, biennales and big exhibitions. How many artists are "intellectually" unemployed and are just there for the sake of it? They need to make a living, you cannot hold that against them, but how many just ask themselves what they can do to be talked about and make a quick buck? Nowadays, you place a bunch of leek on top of a stool, you make a bronze cast from it and that will be exhibited. You will easily find a gallery for that. The art scene is full of artists who do just that. I am trying to avoid it.

When I come across an artist, I try to find out if, deep down, he or she has a need. If they are doing this because they cannot do anything else. Many artists nowadays could easily be doing something else. They could be working in advertising, decorating, fashion or cinema. But what really interests me in an artist is the need. Chiharu Shiota, who is now forty, is one of the latest additions to the gallery. When you meet her, you notice she is inhabited by creativity, beyond the poesy of her art, by a sort of original anguish. She was Marina Abramović's student, so it is all a bit complex. She has become a great artist. And she does not cheat. She does not create objects because they are going to sell. She creates objects because, if she did not, she would not be able to live. And that is what I consider a great artist.

My favourite amongst French artists is Gérard Garouste. You might not know his story, but I will tell you quickly. He was born into a Catholic family but at the age of fifty he decided to learn Hebrew, so he could read the Bible in the original language. It seemed a bit strange. If he were doing it at twenty, we would all think it was great, he was learning about the culture, etc. But at fifty, it does seem a bit odd. Yet he took his Hebrew courses and now reads the Bible in the original

language. He can prove that all the misfortune in the world, especially what has happened to Jews, is because of bad translations of the Bible. And if you listened to him, you would be convinced. Five years ago, aged 65, he converted. He then called me one day to tell me he was getting married. I was shocked that he had divorced his wife of over forty years, but he explained he was marrying her again according to the Jewish ritual. Crazy. For twenty years now, all his paintings have been on Biblical and Talmudic themes. Madness, but in a good sense: creative madness. He feels invested with some sort of divine mission, where he should illustrate Biblical themes, take these topics from over two thousand years ago and transpose them into painting. That is true madness and a true great, possessed artist. And it is these artists that I seek, and not the ones that simply create to get by, for the sake of social recognition.

G.A. Thank you so much, Daniel Templon, it has been most interesting. And thank you all for being here as well.

Georgina Adam

Art Market Editor-at-large for *The Art Newspaper* since 2008 and art market contributor for the *Financial Times*, Georgina Adam has been writing about the art market and the arts in general for over thirty years. A frequent lecturer at Sotheby's and Christie's institutes, she is the author of *Dark Side of the Boom: The Excesses of the Art Market in the 21st Century* (2018) and *Big Bucks: The Explosion of the Art Market in the 21st Century* (2014).

Nanne Dekking

Founder and CEO of Artory, New York/Berlin and Chairman of the Board of TEFAF. Founded in 2016, Artory is creating the first standardised data collection solution by the art world, for the art world. Formerly, Dekking was Vice Chairman and the Worldwide Head of Private Sales at Sotheby's New York and Vice President of Wildenstein & Co. Of Dutch origin, early in his career he held numerous distinguished positions in The Netherlands, including Deputy Administrative Director of the Dutch National Ballet.

Jean-Claude Freymond-Guth

Former gallerist and now independent curator and advisor to artists and artists' estates. As owner and Director of Freymond-Guth Fine Arts (2008–2017), based in Basel, he worked with artists like Dani Gal, Virginia Overton, Magali Reus or Hannah Weinberger and contributed largely to the rediscovery of the Estates of Heidi Bucher or Sylvia Sleigh. Since 2017, he is developing A Performance Affair, a new, non-profit, yearly event in Brussels.

Ursula Krinzinger

Owner and Director of Galerie Krinzinger, founded in 1971 in Vienna. Since then, the gallery has organised at least 400 exhibitions of national and international artists. The main interest and source of the gallery programme stems on international performance and body-related art. Housed in a separate building, since 2002 Krinzinger Projekte joins Galerie Krinzinger, inviting artists to take part in the gallery's artist-in-residence programme.

Clare McAndrew

Dr. Clare McAndrew is a cultural economist, investment analyst and author. In 2005 she founded Arts Economics, an economic research firm focused exclusively on the fine and decorative art market. Clare has published widely on the economics of the art market, including her book *Fine Art and High Finance* (2010). She has published an annual macro-economic report on the global art market for the last ten years. Her global research is currently commissioned by Art Basel and UBS.

Alain Servais

Art collector, investment banker and entrepreneur, Alain Servais started collecting art in the late 1990s. In 2000, he moved into a 900-square-meter old factory, which he later transformed into a three-storey loft, located in a working-class neighbourhood of Northern Brussels, where he showcases his contemporary art collection. Servais is an active member of key committees such as the Art Basel's Global Patrons Council, and has been jury on several occasions.

WHAT FUTURE FOR THE ART MARKET AT THE MID-LEVEL?

SPEAKERS

**Nanne Dekking, Jean-Claude
Freymond-Guth, Ursula Krinzinger,
Clare McAndrew, Alain Servais**

**MODERATOR
Georgina Adam**



Ursula Krinzinger Galerie Krinzinger
Clare McAndrew Arts Economics
Alain Servais Collector
moderated by **Georgina Adam** The Art Newspaper

45min + 45min Q&A

WHAT FUTURE FOR THE ART MARKET AT THE MID-LEVEL?

Georgina Adam (G.A.) I am going to start by asking each of our panellists for a short answer to a question and then, after that, we will go into the discussion. Our topic is a very burning one; namely, the problem of the mid-sized gallery. I am going to start with Clare, because she is the one who crunches the statistics for us. She produces a market report, the latest version of which is going to come out in a couple of months. Clare, you have been looking into the subject, what can you tell us?

Clare McAndrew (C.M.) It is not all bleak. I think a lot of people at this time last year were probably less optimistic, but it has not been a bad year for everybody. When you parse up the survey data and the auction data, the same thing has been happening, particularly for the last six or seven years: there are businesses that turn over more than \$10 million and some that turn over more than \$50 million, those who have done the best. It is the same feature we saw last year. In the upcoming report, there is a new section where I looked specifically at gallery longevity—openings and closings. If you compare galleries to other retail businesses, they actually have greater longevity than other industries. However, the problem comes when you classify the data and start looking at where businesses last the longest: at the high end. It stands to reason, if you have been in the business. Longevity and performance are best at the high end. In this coming report, we looked specifically at closures. I cannot give too much of the work away because it is being published in a few weeks, but on the positive side, it is interesting that the number of closures has diminished, especially since 2009. You can imagine that the middle of 2009 was not a great time for a lot of businesses, so the closures have taken an up-and-down curve.

Another very interesting finding is that the number of openings has taken a massive dive, so the net openings figure is not just the result of many galleries opening, but also of galleries closing. I suppose what it shows is that, by sheer numbers, if you look at the numbers alone, the art market is doing better than other industries. That being said, it is the type of galleries that are closing down that is problematic, as we are all well aware of. We are seeing a high-performing top end and a very interesting, vibrant, dynamic lower end, but the middle of the market seems to be rather hollowed out. I think this is one of the problems with the future market.

**“IF YOU LOOK AT THE NUMBERS
ALONE, THE ART MARKET IS DOING
BETTER THAN OTHER INDUSTRIES.
IT IS THE TYPE OF GALLERIES
THAT ARE CLOSING DOWN THAT IS
PROBLEMATIC.”**

G.A. Thank you for sharing some facts with us, Clare. Ursula, could you talk a little bit about how you see things from your respected, long-established gallery? What is your perception of the gallery landscape today?

Ursula Krinzinger (U.K.) I think we have already heard quite a lot about the situation. Daniel Templon talked about it. I would add that there are too many hierarchies. I see them everywhere: in the different types of galleries, among fairs, among collectors, etc. We have all these different types of hierarchies. For me, the emerging galleries are the most surprising. Even in Austria, there are five new very interesting, very young galleries. Obviously there is a need for younger collectors. Then you have the mid-galleries where, for me and for our generation, it is a catastrophe. We always try to communicate, to collaborate and to do things together. Then you have the established galleries, the top galleries, within which there are other hierarchies. It is all about hierarchies. There are non-professionals and also extreme professionalism. What is interesting for me—because I have worked a lot with female artists ever since I opened my gallery, fifty years ago—is that in the mega-galleries, at the very top, there are only men. That is very typical, at least in my view. Perhaps others agree.

On a different note, we all have entered the capitalistic art market, so we cannot complain. Instead, we must find solutions. We must figure out how to be more professional, how to make the business work. I think everyone has to try and make things work. I opened my main gallery in 1971 and a project space in 2002. By then I had made some money with the gallery, so I thought I had a responsibility with the young artists, who really interested me. That is the reason we launched the space, a whole building where there are artists-in-residence programmes and theme exhibitions. In that space, we try to collaborate with a lot of mid-sized galleries. Of course, I also do my own discoveries, which so far has been very interesting, because a high percentage of the artists I chose developed very well. But you asked me about the mega-galleries, so let me say something about it. Alain, in our correspondence you made a connection between football clubs and mega-galleries. Can you formulate it again?

**“IT IS ALL ABOUT HIERARCHIES.
I SEE THEM EVERYWHERE:
IN THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF
GALLERIES, AMONG FAIRS, AMONG
COLLECTORS, ETC.”**

Alain Servais (A.S.) Well, right now there is a big fight for artists among mega-galleries. They are trying to take in the artists that have already developed. The same happens in sports. Football clubs have very good schools, so they develop players inside their organisations. You do the same, Ursula. You develop artists, instead of getting them from other galleries.

U.K. But are you saying mega-galleries act like football clubs? I think, in football, the top clubs hire their big players from other clubs and they develop the really young talents. It is part of the system. However, I do not see that happening with the mega-galleries. In fact, I do not see it at all. They take artists from all types of galleries. As soon as they are interested in an artist, they can convince him or her, because they have all the possibilities: they have money, they have the best collectors... They have everything, so they can convince the artists. I experienced that with Paul McCarthy. It made things extremely difficult for me. I had other artists, so I continued. I fought for my gallery, because I am full of passion. But that was just the beginning.

G.A. Jean-Claude, tell us a little bit about your experience. In your correspondence with Alain, you said that two issues were particularly challenging: “The higher price ranges of offered works within my programme (clients prefer to spend such amounts with established galleries) and the mid-range sector almost entirely disappearing.” Can you expand a little bit on that?

**“AS A FORMER MID-SIZED GALLERY,
I CAN SAY WE SHOULD NOT BE SO
PREOCCUPIED WITH WHATEVER THE
MEGA-GALLERIES DO. THEY HAVE
THEIR OWN SYSTEM AND THEIR OWN
COLLECTORS.”**

Jean-Claude Freymond-Guth (J.F.) We always speak about the art market as a whole, but looking back at my own structure, my history and my mistakes, I think it is very important to break the market down into very different segments. Especially as a former mid-sized gallery, I can say we should not be so preoccupied with whatever the mega-galleries do. They have their own system and their own collectors. If we try to look up to them, if we think theirs is the best or the only way to do things, then inevitably we get into trouble. Because you start thinking that you have to do so many fairs, you need to have multiple locations, etc. The reality is that you do not have the backup or the structure, even in terms of staff, to provide the services of a mega-gallery. Maybe you do not have the programme or the interest either. So I think it is very important to define your specific segment of the market and to work within it. There are many examples of galleries that have done incredibly well within their segment, but they have not become mega-galleries. Now, let me see if I can answer your question better. When I talk about my experience, I have to say I put myself in a precarious situation. I was dependent on these very big sales, because I wanted to generate the context for my artists like a mega-gallery, or a bigger mid-sized gallery. At the same time, my daily business kind of dried out. I wonder if it could have been done differently had I not focused so much on what the big galleries do.

G.A. Maybe we will come back to that afterwards. Alain, would you like to add something?

A.S. Picking up on what Jean-Claude said, I think what is interesting is to look at the whole situation not only from the art market point of view. We always think that it is very special, when really it is just one more economic system. A few days ago, I was very surprised by something a billionaire, the head of the Bridgewater hedge fund, posted on Twitter. He said, “I am not trusting the general numbers.” Maybe I could refer to Clare’s report. Looking at the art market as a unique entity is a mistake, because people are not looking at the general numbers anymore. If you do, you end up mixing the top 5%, who are making a fortune, with the 50% or 60% who are in a crisis. That being said, I would like to try and give mid-sized galleries some tips. It is very important to stop looking up to the mega-galleries. The media has been totally absorbing us. They are always talking about the \$400 million here and the \$100 million there, or saying such and such are selling so well, etc. So everyone thinks, “Oh, I am going to have a slice of the cake.” That is a big mistake, even suicidal sometimes. You should build another system. Think about it differently. Mr Templon spoke earlier about the notary and the doctor as collectors, but there is a real problem: the mid-size buyer is not there anymore.

**“IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO STOP
LOOKING UP TO THE MEGA-
GALLERIES. THE MEDIA HAS BEEN
TOTALLY ABSORBING US. YOU
SHOULD BUILD ANOTHER SYSTEM.”**

We were talking about the prices as well. The prices for emerging artists today, as Mr Templon said earlier, are too high. They have become too expensive to take a risk. So, for a mid-sized gallery, reviewing the strategy means changing the way you see art fairs. You still attend them, but not just to sell. Instead, you use them as a marketing instrument to attract visitors to your gallery, in one way or another. One of our afternoon sessions today is about collaboration. It is very interesting to foster collaboration between galleries, but the galleries alone cannot do it. I think we need to encourage other sorts of collaboration. I have had galleries tell me, “We would like to attend Zona MACO, but I cannot take the financial risk. Can you commit to buying €15,000 from my gallery over the next two years? If you can, if you give me the money and you buy whatever, then I can offer you this and that.” So there are different kinds of collaboration. Collaboration

with sponsors, as well. I like the idea of Lafayette Sector at FIAC, the art fair, where they are supporting very young galleries so that they can participate. That is another very good way of collaborating. It is also important to take the artist into account. I really liked Vanessa Carlos' talk at Art Basel, with Tim Schneider and Stefania Bortolami. Vanessa insisted on the fact that the artists must take their share. However, sometimes the artist can be part of the problem as well. They expect incredibly high prices, because their colleagues are getting them, so they want higher production, more museum presence, more catalogues, etc. That is slowly killing the galleries that try to help them. Sometimes the artists are too demanding.

So collaboration must be 360° and must work for everyone. Another fact that was mentioned is that there are more galleries opening and closing nowadays. Personally, I can tell you that I see many of my favourite galleries closing. My favourite gallery in the world was Andrea Rosen and it closed. I received two SOS calls early in December. One gallery from New York was telling me, "Can you buy something from me? If I do not find \$25,000 by the end of the month, I will have to close." And they have been in the business for thirty years. The same happened with a gallery in Brussels. "Buy €15,000 from me before December 4 or I am gone." So even established galleries are struggling. It is very important to try and change the way of thinking, not only among galleries.

**"RIGHT NOW, THE ART WORLD
IS WORSE THAN THE FINANCIAL
MARKETS IN TERMS OF LACK OF
ETHICS AND COMPETITION. IT IS THE
LAW OF THE JUNGLE. "**

We also mentioned something that I find very interesting: professionalism. Someone on Twitter was complaining about art saying, "The problem with art is that you cannot find it." Very often I am furious at the lack of professionalism I see in galleries. Some of them just have a plate in a place where you would never find it. There is another important element that should be discussed: there is a lot of ideology underneath the art market, because it is the money that rules. However, there are many galleries and artists who do not want to play with money, who are more sympathetic to Podemos than capitalist,

in many ways. They do not want to play by the rules. That element of professionalism is very important.

The last point that I think is truly crucial is that, right now, the art world—and I come from a finance background—is worse than the financial markets in terms of lack of ethics and competition. It is the law of the jungle. The strongest get what they want. If I do not pay a work at Gagosian, they are going to sue me. If I do not pay a work at Vanessa Carlos, she will not sue me, and vice versa. It is changing all the time, so we need a better set of rules, a code of best practices. It is very interesting that Art Basel were the first to come up with this idea. You would think that they are the ones most interested in blocking it, but it happened just like in football: football as a sport understood that they needed to set rules to protect the small clubs, because if they disappear, there is no market anymore. The same applies to the art market right now. If we do not protect the mid-sized galleries and let them do their work, there is no art market anymore.

**"IF WE DO NOT PROTECT THE MID-
SIZED GALLERIES AND LET THEM
DO THEIR WORK, THERE IS NO ART
MARKET ANYMORE."**

G.A. I would now like to pass it on to Nanne. First of all, can you tell us what Artory is and how it is relevant to the mid-market gallery?

Nanne Dekking (N.D.) I think a lot of people are touching on the subject: the art market is the most opaque business in the world. It is the last uncontrolled market space. I had the huge pleasure of building a collection, or rather to advise someone. He is a tech person, the founder of SAP. He built a very big art collection, which is currently open to the public. He has a private museum called Museum Barberini in Potsdam. If you are ever in the city, it is worth visiting. He built a huge collection of impressionist and modern art. Whenever I sold him a painting, he would say, "Can't you do better? It's unbelievable that I have to trust you." Like Daniel Templon said in his talk, "My clients trusted me," so it is fine. That method works for a long time, but things can change. Maybe you have seen the commercial of Schwab, the investment bank. A father and his son sit in a restaurant. The son is around twenty and the father says, "Son, it is about time that we

discuss our family's financial situation. I will introduce you to our adviser," and the son says, "What kind of commission does he charge in a good financial year? Do you pay him when he loses money?" The father, bewildered, looks at his son and says, "That is not how we do business." The son replies, "Well, that is how we do business."

**"THE ART MARKET IS THE MOST OPAQUE
BUSINESS IN THE WORLD. IT IS THE LAST
UNCONTROLLED MARKET SPACE."**

That is what you have to realize: in the current landscape, the art market only looks at the potential of existing clients. It is the only market where you do not look at prospective clients. Whether it is Sotheby's or Christie's or art dealers, we only reach out to people interested in art. We forget that there are a lot of other people who would actually become buyers if only they had more trust in the information about the artwork and the art market. That is what Artory is trying to achieve. This long introduction goes to say that, with the tech person supporting my company, we are creating a database system that immutably links an artwork with all the important events in its life cycle. We make that information immutable—you cannot change it—and we time-stamp it. So for any given artwork that appears in the database, you can see the day it was sold—let us say it was at Sotheby's, 17 March 2017—and an attestation—this work will be included in the catalogue raisonné of the Wildenstein Plattner Institute. I am sorry if it sounds a little bit pretentious, but someone is really trying to help the art world to become more transparent. In doing so, they create more confidence in the market for those people who do not buy art because they are used to getting a lot more reassurance with whatever else they buy. They can walk out of a store with a \$500 pen with a certificate and all guarantees. In short, that is what we are trying to do. We are backed by SAP and by a big art collector. Hopefully I have a little bit of experience in the art world to explain what it is that potential buyers want to know about artworks and how important that is to expand the market.

G.A. Could you also say a word or two about your position in TEFAF? I think this is something we are going to discuss, the question of art fairs and the pressure they put on the mid-level gallery, because they must think so carefully about how many to attend, the costs and benefits, etc.

N.D. Having worked at Sotheby's for quite a while, and having seen the art market from different perspectives, I have realized that an art fair is the only good way to compete with auction houses. For dealers, it is the only way to create a pressured environment where people have to make up their mind, which of course always happens at an auction—you had better raise that paddle if you want to own the work. To that respect, art fairs are really important. Also, with the landscape changing so rapidly, and with a lot of people not buying art, I believe TEFAF and every fair you just mentioned—Art Basel—is coming out with a code of ethics for dealers. I am absolutely sure that TEFAF wanted me to become their chairman because they know that I am a change agent in the industry. I think it is really important for art fairs to help galleries in that process and to lead the way in defining what that change could look like. TEFAF has already set an amazing example in being more transparent with the information about the artworks that they sell by establishing a huge vetting committee. It is unbelievable: there are 180 people vetting each individual piece before the fair opens. That is already an enormous change, but as you can already guess, I think we should push a little further. Do not forget auction houses are tech-savvy now. Look at someone like Tad Smith, who is not from the art world. He is now in charge of Sotheby's.

**"THE ART MARKET ONLY LOOKS AT
THE POTENTIAL OF EXISTING CLIENTS.
IT IS THE ONLY MARKET WHERE YOU
DO NOT LOOK AT PROSPECTIVE
CLIENTS."**

A.S. I totally agree with you, art fairs are competition for the mega-galleries and auction houses, but should we go back to mid-sized galleries? We were trying to give some tips on how to make their business easier.

N.D. That is what I wanted to say. If, as a mid-sized gallery, you do not notice how much and how fast the landscape is changing, then frankly speaking you might as well close the shop. And that is what I feel that you can do with TEFAF and with Art Basel. As an umbrella organisation, you are much better equipped to give these mid-sized galleries the resources that big auction houses have and to give them access to this kind of digital information, etc.

A.S. We know the threat. The threat is very visible. But what are the solutions?

G.A. I would like to welcome all our panellists to suggest possible solutions.

A.S. When I was talking about collaboration, I forgot to mention collectors. We also have a responsibility with mid-sized galleries. I threw a lot of responsibility on the galleries, the sponsors and the fairs, but sometimes collectors are frustrating as well. During Art Basel, I have asked many of them to come with me to visit a gallery and, quite often, it has been impossible to drag them out of the fair, which I find the worst place to see art. I try to drag them to exhibitions in Vienna or elsewhere and it is very hard, because the top-tier environment is like a dopamine addiction: many dinners, many parties and whatnot, so they will say, “Oh no, sorry, I need to get to my hotel at 7:00, I have a dinner at 8:00 with Thaddaeus Ropac.” So we have a responsibility as collectors as well.

“COLLECTORS ALSO HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY WITH MID-SIZED GALLERIES. I THREW A LOT OF RESPONSIBILITY ON THE GALLERIES, THE SPONSORS AND THE FAIRS, BUT SOMETIMES COLLECTORS ARE FRUSTRATING AS WELL.”

G.A. Sure, but we are looking for solutions now.

J.F. It was interesting to hear what Mr Templon said at the beginning, how the foundation of the FRACs changed the landscape in France. In Europe, we still have museums that have built up the means and the tradition to collect. They are not entirely financed by boards of private collectors, like in the United States, so there is a responsibility to work very closely with those institutions, both as collectors and as galleries. I think this is a market. We are talking about mid-sized galleries, which is more or less my expertise. I do not know too much about auction houses—maybe I should—, but from the reality of a mid-sized gallery, where you are just trying to pay the bills as you go along, I think it is crucial to look for those markets that are more suitable for the kind

of work we sell. Maybe Mr Abramovich wants to buy one of my artists at some point, but that cannot be my aim or my ambition. There is an incredible amount of collections, even private ones, that cannot buy for \$200,000, but they are willing to buy the work of younger artists, maybe for \$10,000 or \$15,000. I am talking about the academic collectors. Quite often I hear, “Oh, they are not good collectors, they are doctors.” Sorry, but two of my most interesting clients right now are psychiatrists. People like them do not have the same capital as Mr Abramovich, but they can guarantee their commitment to our artists, which allows us to survive as a gallery. This is what we need to focus on at the mid-level.

“IT IS CRUCIAL TO LOOK FOR THOSE MARKETS THAT ARE MORE SUITABLE FOR THE KIND OF WORK WE SELL. MAYBE MR ABRAMOVICH WANTS TO BUY ONE OF MY ARTISTS AT SOME POINT, BUT THAT CANNOT BE MY AIM OR MY AMBITION.”

G.A. Clare, I remember you sent me some notes about the top 5% dominating the market.

N.D. Out of the thirty-seven million transactions a year, 80% of the works are sold for under \$50,000.

C.M. What Jean-Claude is saying about expanding the audience is that everyone is more or less focused on pandering exactly to the top 5%. A friend of mine just opened a new online company and he said, “Those are the only people I am not interested in”, that top 5%. I think the key is to focus more on the other 95%. Why are they collecting a little bit or not collecting at all? With the publicity that is in the media, as Alain was saying, a lot of people think that they cannot even get into the art market, that it is out of their reach and that you cannot buy something good unless you spend a certain amount. But that is just not true; there are so many options. There are lots of other issues. Many people I talk to year on year tell me that a big problem—and I know these are very practical, mundane issues—is financing. It was interesting to listen to Daniel’s talk. He said that, towards the end of the 1980s, the banks were coming to him and saying, “Do you want some money?” Nowadays,

financing is an insurmountable barrier for a lot of new galleries and for mid-sized galleries that are looking to expand their businesses. They have got volatile cash flows, a very slow inventory cycle and a very slow payment cycle.

**“EVERYONE IS MORE OR LESS
FOCUSED ON PANDERING EXACTLY
TO THE TOP 5%. THE KEY IS TO FOCUS
MORE ON THE OTHER 95%.”**

All those features put together mean that, quite often, mid-sized galleries are devoid of cash flows, and therefore the banks will not talk to them. The moment they hear you are an art dealer they say, “No way.” They will not even talk about lending, inventory financing or things like that. So, as much as a lot of the reports on the market are by no means perfect, what the banks want is to be comfortable. They care about the authenticity of artworks, the size of the market, etc. You can contribute to all those things so that banks feel more comfortable and they understand that art is a substantial marketplace where people are working hard and have got good businesses. I think some of those more mundane features are important, together with collaborative strategies, obviously a lot of vertical collaboration, which in my opinion is crucial. There is a lot of horizontal collaboration between people of the same level—and there are already some positive things going on there—but it is important to find ways to tie the bigger and the lower ends, even contractually, through collaborative efforts.

G.A. Ursula, what can you say about financing?

U.K. Well, let me first say something else. We sit here and might give the impression that the problem of the mid-sized gallery is a recent one. Many of us have been gallerists for a while and I must say I have had terrible times in the past too. The oldies that are here this morning, we all spoke about our bad times, what we did and what we tried to do. I think cycles always repeat. When we were really new galleries, we had more problems than ever, around the 1990s, so we started to collaborate. We did exhibitions together. We even shared sales. We did a lot of these things and we worked hard, but things were just slow. They were not as quick as they are now. Everything is so quick today, even the relationship with collectors. They have no time to give you. Back

then, you could discuss things with collectors, you could involve them, you could enrol firms. For two or three years there was an incredible crisis. Galleries closed. I think, at the moment, galleries have to slide or glide from one to the other. There are different models. I think we should all be aware of how fragile the lower part is. Everybody knows it: curators, collectors, galleries... Everybody wants to contribute.

**“THERE IS A LOT OF HORIZONTAL
COLLABORATION BETWEEN PEOPLE
OF THE SAME LEVEL BUT IT IS
IMPORTANT TO FIND WAYS TO TIE
THE BIGGER AND THE LOWER ENDS,
EVEN CONTRACTUALLY, THROUGH
COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS.”**

Let me mention my project space again. I decided to invite artists, to look for them and to establish collaborations with galleries. What you call mid-sized galleries—and by the way, I hate that name—are just interesting young galleries to me. So, as a second part of my gallery, I developed that space to connect with young art. It has now existed for forty-six years. I think a lot of galleries could do similar things. Daniel Templon, who is obviously a multi-millionaire, was sitting here today. Why does he not do something similar and give to the young ones? I think we all have that responsibility if we have a well-established gallery or if we have made so much profit. We got so much from the art scene—not only the art market. We said it before and I agree, I think the older galleries came out of this enormous idealism. During my first ten years I could hardly sell anything. I had side jobs and financed my gallery. Willi Bongard, whom Daniel Templon mentioned, always said, “You need to wait ten years until you get your first profit.” Today, a gallery opens and they want to be millionaires in three years. That is just not how it works.

A.S. But it is also because of the money. Everything is about the money now.

U.K. If you want, we can speak later about David Zwirner. He has an incredible business talent. He is fantastic. You have to admire what he did all these years. He had his target and he built it up: information, working with collectors, working with artists, developing it. And he had

passion! Passion is key. I will die in my gallery. And I made money, too—not millions, but...

**“PASSION IS KEY.
I WILL DIE IN MY GALLERY.”**

N.D. But there are things that add to that passion. It is what you do, Ursula. What makes the difference in your kind of gallery is that you are knowledgeable and focused, you have client relationships, you work with younger artists, you give them the chance, etc. You are doing all the things that the big galleries cannot do. They only scrape the surface. But I want to ask you a question, because I think it could help the mid-sized galleries here—and by the way, I also hate the word, because you are basically the biggest sellers in the world; after all, most art is sold by people like you. Now, there is a whole new generation that is not so interested in personal relationships anymore. They do not necessarily want to go to your gallery anymore, but you still have to explain to these collectors how important your knowledge is and what it is that you are doing. Unfortunately, people do not book a room by calling the hotel anymore, do they? They go on the website, they want to see the room, they can see it online, turn the camera around, go into the bathroom, open the closet, and so on. So I fear that what galleries like you have to do is to give much more exposure to what you are doing. That is a disadvantage for dealers.

U.K. That is PR for your firm!

N.D. No, it is not, this has nothing to do with Artory. In fact, we are very boring, you should see our website.

A.S. You are forgetting something very important. It is a short-cut to this, because of course a lot of people are talking about online strategies and the online market. Do not forget that the reason a painting that costs €500 to produce can be sold for €5,000 or €50,000 has very little to do with its quality. It has to do with the myth-making. If a Birkin bag is worth so much money it is because everything is organised to make it special. So we have to be very careful not to fall for this “everyone can get it” idea.

N.D. That is not what I am saying, Alain. The online market is hopeless. Nobody spends large amounts of money on the online market. All I am trying to say is, “Look at her. Her speciality.” There are all kinds of ways—and not through Artory—to get the message across. That is all I am saying. I am not talking about selling online. I think many galleries really need to understand that people want to see the artworks before they go in person.

**“MANY GALLERIES REALLY NEED TO
UNDERSTAND THAT PEOPLE WANT TO
SEE THE ARTWORKS BEFORE THEY
GO IN PERSON.”**

U.K. We have websites. We have plenty of online connections. You sound as if you were teaching us new things, when really it is not the case.

A.S. Mr Templon said, what is the difference between the 1960s and now? The question arose earlier. You said it as well, Ursula. The big difference is that money has become the key factor behind the decisions, whereas fifty years ago you could sit on it. At every level. Listen to the story of Michael Werner. What made him so rich today is that he was drunk in the 1970s and 1980s, because he could not sell any of those Polke, Baselitz and so on. You cannot afford to do that anymore today. If you are not part of the next art fair—which is going to cost you €20,000 or €30,000—or if you do not have an ad in this or that place, you are in trouble. That is the key thing. We come back to the original message: if you want to defend the arts, you need to take it slower, not to be looking up. That is what Templon said earlier as well. And I really like what Stefania Bortolami said, “I became a gallerist because I wanted to be a participant in art history.” You need to really try to build your business around you. As I said, with collaboration: between galleries, with the collectors that are open to it, etc.

Sometimes I hear galleries saying, “Oh, I am attending this fair. I do not really believe in it, but I am going to do it just in case.” That is like jumping off a plane. You are hoping that someone will catch you, that there will be a collector to save your back. You need another way of thinking. The piece of advice I would give is not to fantasise about a big thing, the big Las Vegas neon lights. You need to build your gallery

from your place, slowly and with connoisseurship. Forget about the rest and try to grow little by little.

**“IF YOU WANT TO DEFEND THE ARTS,
YOU NEED TO TAKE IT SLOWER,
NOT TO BE LOOKING UP. YOU NEED
TO BUILD YOUR GALLERY FROM
YOUR PLACE, SLOWLY AND WITH
CONNOISSEURSHIP.”**

G.A. Can I ask Clare to intervene? You have worked so much on fairs. To what extent is participating in them necessary for an art gallery?

C.M. In terms of figures, fairs are stronger than ever. I have talked to a few gallerists that said they talked to their colleagues, maybe five or six years ago, and they were all giving out the number of fairs they did. Those who stopped doing fairs at the time have now closed. Fairs are a very important part of a lot of people's businesses, but we have seen a little bit of consolidation. Alain was asking me about how concentrated they are. Do we see the same people going around? We do sometimes. Take the last Talking Galleries event, when we were in Korea. You are inside an art fair, so you could be anywhere in the world and still see the same people. We looked a little bit into it for the report and what we saw was that, across all fairs, there is very high rate of first-timers. However, if you concentrate on the top five or six fairs, the number of first-timers drops quite dramatically. It remains about a third of the galleries exhibiting there, which is higher than I thought, but we looked at a ten-year period and there were a significant number of galleries that had attended the fair every single year. So you do get a lot of galleries doing the same thing regularly. There is a bit of concentration at the top end, at the top fairs.

A.S. Just a question. You know that the same thing always happens at the top fairs: you have the gallery section, which is kind of the core, the ones really making the money, and then you have the focus section, which very often I describe as a validation, because the art fair does not look so much like a shopping mall if you have a focus section with fancy things. So sometimes those guys are paying to make the fair look more experimental and daring than it actually is.

J.F. That is such an important point. As younger or mid-sized galleries, we provide content at huge risks, in proportion to our business operations. For us to do something that is \$20,000 is not easy. It is not just to spend \$20,000 on a booth. It is not just an investment. It is about fighting and not even knowing how you are going to pay for the fair when you apply to it. Still, you are hoping you get in. As a younger gallery, in order to be accepted at these fairs, you have to propose outrageously interesting curatorial projects—which is great because you get to show them and there is an importance in that—, but we kind of bury the risks for other galleries to show, depending on the hierarchy, as Ursula mentioned. Depending on the hierarchy of the fair's secondary or tertiary quality of works in the main section, we provide content and we cannot afford that. I think art fairs are very important. They were definitely important for my gallery, because I was in Switzerland and did not know anybody, but the way they work needs to change. I would like to mention Liste, for example, where you pay depending on the year of participation and depending on your project. If you are a first-timer, you pay very little and you can still make a lot of money. Liste did not expand—I do not work for them, by the way—, they built a tent that cost them a lot of money, but they kept quite close to their core businesses and clients: the galleries and their collectors.

**“IN ORDER TO BE ACCEPTED AT
THESE FAIRS, YOUNGER OR MID-
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KIND OF BURY THE RISKS FOR OTHER
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A.S. They are non-profit.

J.F. They are trying to be. But anyway, you pay about 6,000 francs the first year and then the second year maybe 8,000 or 10,000. By the last time I did Liste, it was almost as expensive as doing Statements, but it was fine. If you do a one-person show, it is cheaper than if you do a group presentation. I think there are other professional structures that have power and can support younger, curatorial programmes,

but there just need to be more of them. Liste has been around for twenty-five years, so I think there are many ways of doing it. Alain was talking about responsibility. When I closed, so many people came to me—collectors, curators, etc.—saying, “You know, I always loved your programme, it is such a pity...” Actually, after the panel we had in Berlin, somebody came up to me and said, “I love your programme, when can I come and see the show?” I had just talked about the fact that I closed, but never mind. For me, everyone is responsible to not just bitch and moan and be sad. There are many galleries out there that still need your support, as collectors, as art fairs or as colleagues. I think it is very important, so be aware of the responsibilities.

N.D. How many young, new clients did you pick up at those fairs?

J.F. I would say between one and three new clients.

G.A. That is great.

N.D. Yes, it is good.

G.A. I am going to open it up to questions in just a minute, but I have got one more question that I want to ask Jean-Claude. You said, “The mid-range sector within my programme almost entirely disappeared.” Where did they go?

J.F. I think they do not go anywhere. They are the shrinks and maybe the private heirs, who have culture and come from educated backgrounds, so they want to buy, but they are not being approached anymore. Suddenly, they do not get invited to the big dinners. I am chasing the big guys, the Abramovich on their yachts, and forget to take care of my core business. Of course, they can follow you nevertheless, but they feel very intimidated or turned off by their situation.

A.S. And, as I described, their economic situation is not getting better. If someone suffered from globalisation it is them, the middle class.

N.D. It was on the newspaper today: much more money is being made, but it all goes to the 1%.

A.S. There is a great lack of connoisseurship as well. The market needs a reform. And as I said before, collectors have a responsibility. So does the press. I am sick and tired of seeing the press writing about the

evening auctions. I keep telling them, “Look at the day auction, this is where the art market actually happens.”

**“THE MARKET NEEDS A REFORM.
COLLECTORS HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY.
SO DOES THE PRESS. I AM SICK AND
TIRED OF SEEING THE PRESS WRITING
ABOUT THE EVENING AUCTIONS.”**

J.F. Sure. Evening auctions are just one part of the market.

N.D. But that is everything that is being written about art. If I were a shrink or a doctor, I would be very disoriented. All you read about is scandals. Someone overpaid an artwork. Someone bought a forgery. If you typed “TEFAF” on Google, it should be a party, right? You should see this huge range of art dealers displaying the nicest things. But no, the first thing you see is, “Forgery sold at TEFAF.” I can imagine that, unless you have a billion sitting in an account, you are never going to buy.

G.A. Alain, you touched on the question of the code of ethics, which Art Basel started. I think it is very important, because more clients would come into the market if they felt it was cleaner. I would love to keep on discussing this, but I also want to allow our audience to participate.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND QUESTIONS (C/Q) FROM THE AUDIENCE

C1. Hi, I am here as a collector. I just wanted to say that, in my view, it is possible to collect without being part of the high end. I have been collecting Latin American art for quite a number of years. When I started, there was absolutely no interest in it. All of a sudden, it has become interesting, because the Getty has given it a boost. But what amazes me, as a collector, is the lack of research I often see in museums. They take in some artists, but they are the same that are shown in exhibitions; museums just forget about everything else. Why? Because those artists will eventually be picked up by a gallery and create value. Again, we go back to the money side of things. As a collector, a lot of people ask me the same thing all the time, “What is the value? Is

there value on this artwork?" and I say, "No, these artists are not on artnet yet, because they have not had an auction." So it is not only galleries that struggle in the beginning. As a collector, you also feel intimidated at the start. You are thinking, "Well, I will never be able to have a valuable collection." The truth is you can create a collection with a lot of value if you do your homework and you take a chance. You say, "It might be worth nothing, but contextually and historically what I am buying is solid." We always go back to the same balance between money and quality. And one thinks, "Am I going to speculate or am I not?" It is very difficult for both ends not to play that game.

G.A. Thanks for your comment. Are there questions?

Q1. Yes. Hi, I would like to underline that the focus of this panel is mid-sized galleries and mid-sized buyers, but the word "buyers" has not been mentioned; you only talked about collectors. Why is that?

A.S. My definition of a collector is very simple: the person that keeps acquiring art when all the walls are full is a collector. We could go into a deeper psychological distinction. For me, the collector tries to get something out of the art, whereas the buyer might only be looking for an investment. That is a little bit the way—the insulting way—that we refuse buyers to be compared to collectors. But it is very artificial. In the end, a collector is anyone who buys art.

N.D. Maybe what you want to point out is that art is becoming an alternative asset. It is an asset class, although it is not really trusted by people financing the arts. So a buyer could be someone who buys art to flip it. However, when you collect, you do not necessarily want to flip. You build a collection and only sell something to make it better. Is that the distinction you are suggesting?

Q1. Yes, it is. But if we are trying to widen our horizon, we should not always use the word "collector," because someone who loves art, who reads and studies about it and maybe has ten works, because he or she is still young, might be afraid of the word collector.

G.A. That is a good point, thank you. It can be an imposing word, yes. Are there any other questions?

Q2. This morning we heard a lot about the past and a bit about the

present, but what will the future look like at the mid-level? We did not hear so much about that and I think we are all hoping that you could delve into it. Thank you.

G.A. Thank you, you stole my question, but I am extremely happy you asked it. I think all of you need to tell us, what will the market look like five years from now?

A.S. It is relatively simple. Part of the art market is becoming a luxury goods market and working just like a flagship store. Galleries are opening venues like a Gucci boutique in Paris. That is happening, you cannot fight it. It is probably linked to the way the wealth gap and inequalities progress. Politically speaking, I still do not understand why there is a "one man, one vote" system and people keep voting for parties that defend the rich over the poor. But that is fine, maybe one day that will change. My concern is, "How do you protect the real art, the one that makes a difference?" Again, I think it will be by slowing down, not looking up to the mega-galleries and encouraging collaboration.

G.A. But what will the market look like in the future?

A.S. The same. Hopefully, though, the big luxury goods market will crash. I like to think of it in terms of cycles. What happened in this cycle? Ronald Reagan got to power and cut the capital gain tax, which was 65% in the United States. Can you believe it? Not even Podemos would suggest something as high as 65%. Reagan suddenly brought it down to 30% and the ball started rolling again. Perhaps in twenty years time, things will die off and we will start another long cycle. In general, I think the future will look the same. There will be mega-galleries, mid-sized galleries and a lower end of the market. There will be more online activity. But I am more interested in who will protect the art that we will want to see in museums in the future. Who will give those artists the chance to keep working, when nobody looks at their work today? The problem is the same throughout history. It has been the same, except today, what we still call an art market has mainly become a luxury goods market.

C.M. I think things do take quite a long time to change, so Alain is right: in many ways, it will look a little bit the same. Still, from my perspective—and I worry about this a lot—it will not be just the traditional dealer-

auction interactions that I will have to measure. I think there will be many new factors. Just because some galleries have closed, it does not mean that is the end of economic activity for those people, as we can see in the case of Jean-Claude. So there are going to be many more different types of agents and participants in the market. The boundaries are not going to be as clear, and it is already difficult for somebody like me to measure things as they are. I think in the future, more artists will connect directly with their audiences and collectors, maybe with a nest gallery or something similar, but there will be many more different kinds of collaborations.

G.A. So, many more participants in the future. Ursula?

“PART OF THE ART MARKET IS BECOMING A LUXURY GOODS MARKET AND WORKING JUST LIKE A FLAGSHIP STORE. GALLERIES ARE OPENING VENUES LIKE A GUCCI BOUTIQUE IN PARIS.”

U.K. I underlined it already: collaboration will be important. I agree with Alain, to a large extent it will continue like it is now, but perhaps it has to become more humane, like the political situation. Art always had a more humane side. More ethics are demanded. And cycles, even if they are long, are all over in the end. Perhaps that is what Alain meant with the luxury art items. Also, I do not know why you want to know exactly what things will look like in five years time. That does not interest me at all. I want to live in the *carpe diem*, it is the moment that interests me the most; five years from now, not so much.

J.F. Well, I am a romantic. I think our generation, or rather my generation of gallerists, has the big advantage to have the knowledge and the observation of the various cycles that preceded us. We have today's realism. So, yes, we know about the importance of humanity, contact, etc. I think the market is shifting. It is becoming more extreme, but within the shadow of the extremities we can also organise ourselves. This is going to be more important, at least I hope so. Those galleries that manage to survive and find ways will become stronger in the niche. Maybe nobody knows them, but they are doing fantastic work. I think that will be important.

N.D. I actually believe that it is incredibly important to think about where you will be five years from now. I am no longer involved in the art market on a daily basis as a dealer, but that experience made me learn a lot. Again, I am not talking about Artory, I am just talking about the many existing possibilities. First of all, you should not just look at your competitive landscape. Instead, look at the people you want to turn into your clients. Why on Earth do we art people only look at ourselves? It is incestuous. Who are potential clients and how do you reach out to them? If you go to an art fair or all the way to Vienna to see some art, or to another gallery, there is hardly any information online—which I can understand, because as a dealer you have your inventory, but you do not want to give it a lot of exposure. Well, I can tell you that with Instagram the world is changing rapidly. In two years, everybody will know the prices, the information that you give potential buyers about the artworks you are showing in your gallery or at the fair. Just consider that information the public part of your inventory, as if it were an auction. It is public. Treat it as such and use that advantage to give these artworks exposure. To have someone like Ursula is something that you can translate in a digital way. You can present her and her knowledge. That is what Airbnb does, that is what all these companies do. I am so proud of the art market, because there are so many specialists. When I worked at Sotheby's, I realized that as an art dealer, you actually have lots of knowledge. But let us not keep it the best secret in the world!

“IN TWO YEARS, EVERYBODY WILL KNOW THE PRICES, THE INFORMATION THAT YOU GIVE POTENTIAL BUYERS ABOUT THE ARTWORKS YOU ARE SHOWING IN YOUR GALLERY OR AT THE FAIR. JUST CONSIDER THAT INFORMATION THE PUBLIC PART OF YOUR INVENTORY.”

A.S. I would love it if you started a YouTube channel. [Laughter] Now, what interests me about art is sociology. Georgina was asking us about the future. When I talked to my friend Nerea Fernández, who works at a gallery in Madrid, she told me the younger generation is not interested in art anymore. That worries me. That can be a problem in the long run. I have children myself and I find them extremely conservative.

Sometimes they get into my room and, if I am naked because I am dressing up, they are bewildered! I mean, when we used to go to Ibiza, fifteen years ago, we were all naked at the beach and nobody cared. That is just a symbol of the conservatism that is permeating society in many ways. I am a little bit worried about interest in art in the long term. When I think about the young people I see around me, I am not very hopeful. When my nephew, who is twenty-three, moved into his first apartment, I told him, “You can look through the collection, there are a few hundred works, choose whatever you want.” And he said, “Can I choose not to?”

**“THE KEY IS TO DO BUSINESS
DIFFERENTLY, NOT JUST THINKING THAT
SPENDING A LOT OF MONEY TO ATTEND
A BIG ART FAIR WILL SAVE THE DAY.”**

Q3. Hello. I wanted to go back to something Jean-Claude said about creating different markets. That is, not focusing on the whole art market, but just segments. Have you come up with alternative ways to sell art that would go beyond fairs and waiting for a collector to drop by the gallery? Maybe Ursula had an idea with the residency, that it could be another way of bringing art closer to the people, who could visit the studios. If we agree that art is a very elitist market, what are ways to break away from that?

G.A. So your question is about other ways of selling. What are some ways of breaking out of the fair, the gallery, etc.?

A.S. Collaboration, quite simply. But collaboration is not just one thing. You have Condo, for example. On the other hand, why are galleries closing at 6pm in most of continental Europe? Why do they not open at 10pm once a week? Why do they not organise more talks with artists or art historians at the gallery? There are multiple possibilities, I have no single answer. The key is to do business differently, not just thinking that spending a lot of money to attend a big art fair will save the day.

N.D. There is a collection in Holland called the Kremer Collection, owned by George and Ilona Kremer. They collect old master paintings, especially Dutch, and they have created a virtual museum of it. I had the chance to see it at Sotheby's in New York and it is travelling. But

what is key is not that people in the art world see it. They brought it to the Bronx, to kids who do not usually see art, and these kids were blown away. I find that spectacular. Because of that, they actually now start going to the Met, etc. So there are many ways to show art. And, in relation to Alain's point, I totally agree: I have two kids and the children are indeed more conservative. In comparison to how we grew up, there is one big difference: they are always sitting with their iPad and looking at the screen. That is something that we have to realize, that is how you reach people.

**“SOMETIMES WE ARE ASSUMED
TO BE UNREACHABLE. HOWEVER,
I CAN TELL YOU THAT A LOT OF
COLLECTORS, FROM THE RUBELL TO
THE DE LA CRUZ, ARE VERY OPEN. SO
GO TO THEM AND TRY TO DISCUSS.”**

A.S. Facebook decides what they see, so watch out! [Laughter]

Q4. Hello, I am Sofie van de Velde. I have a gallery in Antwerp. We opened the space—which is 500 square metres—and we divided it in three. I asked another gallery to join us, so there is a reception, my gallery and then another gallery. That is how we collaborate. We also collaborate with more than thirty galleries all over the world, including some of the largest. Collaboration is interesting for them as well, because they can show some artists in a different kind of environment. Now, I have a question for Alain Servais. It is very interesting that you want to be involved in some galleries. We are a young gallery and I wondered, how you can be approached as a collector? Not financially, because I think that is the easiest part, but in terms of collaborative initiatives. Do you have some suggestions?

A.S. The key is that people know about you. I did not know your gallery. I am not on your mailing list, I think, which is very strange. That is one of the problems in Belgium: there is so much going on, but I am the least informed, because there is no central newspaper where you can see all the events and read about what people are doing. In Belgium, for example, we are missing a critical press like *La Vanguardia* in Spain. We need a press that talks less about the surface of the big news.

Q4. You are very welcome to come to our gallery!

A.S. I will come, out of curiosity! And one tip about collectors: sometimes we are assumed to be unreachable. However, I can tell you that a lot of collectors, from the Rubell to the De la Cruz, are very open. So go to them and try to discuss.

Q4. But how can a collector be involved in a small gallery? And to Ursula, do you see possibilities to work with younger galleries? To be honest, my father had a gallery for forty-five years, so I have a long background, it is not just you for me, I am curious to see how we can do things differently.

U.K. I said it before: we work with younger galleries. Above all, the project space is about young artists. It is a whole house where we invite galleries and artists—but checking the quality, of course.

A.S. Just one word: networking. Throughout the entire art world, it is about networking. You must find networking possibilities.

Q5. I am an art history student. I am very glad that I was invited to Talking Galleries and that I can listen to all of you. At the universities, you do not have that “corrupt” idea of what is going to happen to art in terms of money—maybe I sound a bit idealistic. How could you get the younger generations more involved? I think it is extremely important. When was the last time you visited a university campus? How are you inviting students to go to your galleries?

N.D. That is a great question, I would love to answer it. I studied art history in Amsterdam and we had absolutely no idea about trades, what collectors were, etc. It was unbelievable. We were just not prepared for anything. Compare that to other studies, like the tech world, where students know everything and where they are actually asked to produce products for big tech companies. They work with case studies. I do not know about Spain, but in Holland this has changed a lot. Still, I think art students come here and they go, “Oh my gosh, I am not trying to sell art.” Every art history student should learn everything about open data right now. Almost every museum will have its archives online for free, so I hope your research approach is changing. Sorry, it sounds horrible, but do not read too many books. There is so much more information that you can get online. I always say art students spend too much time

at university. Do internships, work at a gallery or at a museum. Look at all the information out there.

“MUCH OF THE ART MARKET IS ABOUT CONFIRMING SOCIAL STATUS. IF IT BECOMES MORE AND MORE ABOUT BRANDING THE COLLECTION’S NAME IN COLLABORATION WITH FANCY MUSEUMS, THEN IT WILL BE PROBLEMATIC.”

Q6. Hello. This question is probably for Jean-Claude, Ursula or Alain. We see collectors, collections and foundations that, at a certain point, decide not to buy artworks in the traditional way—that is, going to galleries, seeing exhibitions, following the artists and purchasing whatever is produced. Instead, they devote a big part of their money to projects for their foundations, for museums or for institutions. I would like to know your opinion on how this affects the mid-sized gallery. Is there an effect? If so, is it good or bad?

J.F. I think you bring up a very interesting topic. It highlights the fact that so much of the art market is about confirming social status. If it becomes more and more about branding the collection’s name in collaboration with fancy museums, then it will be problematic. But I think there is a growing interest, especially among young collectors, in being very actively involved in the production of works. There is also an awareness that some of the pieces shown at galleries need people financing them from the beginning. So I think there is a good development there. It could also be more important in the future, but again: it is so much about PR. You have to be very selective of which kind of project you collaborate with. In the end they spend €5,000 on the production and €20,000 on a big, beautiful opening. It actually happened to me. The cocktail party is very expensive and the production is left aside.

A.S. You are totally right, there are different ways of involving the younger collector. One way is to understand that now, they are always moving together in groups, so it is good to do things that bring them to the gallery as a group. There are quite a few collectors associations, some young. I see that many people are not discarding them. I am amazed by how committed they can be. So we have a responsibility to

try and help them make those first steps. That is what Ursula is doing very well in her project space, it is helping them to get on the ladder. Jean-Claude said it as well: sometimes, as a gallerist, you forget that the guys at the bottom may be the guys of tomorrow. Today, with this kind of frantic activity, maybe you should think differently. It is a good idea to find collaborative ways. Kickstarter launched Drip, for instance. There are different formulas to build up a collection.

“WORKING LOCALLY CAN BE A SOLUTION, BUT IT CAN CREATE ANOTHER PROBLEM. THE ARTIST THAT YOU ARE DEVELOPING LOCALLY WANTS YOU TO TRAVEL.”

J.F. I think what people will need more than ever in the future is identification with things. I am not sure that these big stars, the big names, can provide it very well. But mid-sized galleries can. We can still be quite close to our audiences; we can involve them and be more flexible, because we do not have twenty European sales directors.

Q7. I would like to know, do you think focusing on the local scene can be a solution for the future?

J.F. Yes, I think it is part of the niche that you need to find. If you have a very strong client base in Arosa, then you should have your gallery there. You do not need to be in New York. Still, I think it varies from scene to scene. Or do you mean developing local artists?

Q7. As we said, galleries spend so much money attending fairs. And often there is a cool little local market that you can invest in and try to develop. I would like to know if this could be a solution for mid-level galleries in the future.

A.S. It can be a solution, but it can create another problem. The artist that you are developing locally wants you to travel. You would be surprised by how often galleries tell me that they are attending fairs because their artists request it. So, again, I will emphasize my point about collaborative ways of working, which is why I like initiatives like Condo. You can have a local gallery in Berlin and still be in London for a few weeks. It does not cost you too much money. What are ways

for you to work in collaboration? Finding those answers can help you keep your artists. Otherwise, the moment they grow and you are not able to give them international exposure, they will find someone else. So focusing only on the local scene will not work, but you can find alternatives. There is no need to have twelve venues across the world.

G.A. Tomorrow we have a panel on Condo and other initiatives, with Vanessa Carlos. We have to finish now, because it is lunchtime. You have been a wonderful audience and you have had the privilege of listening to a fantastic panel, so I want to thank them all. Nanne, Jean-Claude, Ursula, Clare and Alain, thank you so much for your insights.

Ossian Ward

Ossian Ward is Head of Content at Lisson Gallery (London/ New York) and a writer on contemporary art. Until 2013, he was the chief art critic and Visual Arts Editor at *Time Out London* for over six years and has contributed to magazines such as *Art in America*, *Art + Auction*, *World of Interiors*, *Esquire*, *The News Statesman* and *Wallpaper*, as well as newspapers including the *Evening Standard*, *The Guardian*, the *Observer*, *The Times* and *The Independent* on Sunday. Formerly editor of *ArtReview* and the *V&A Magazine*, he has also worked at *The Art Newspaper* and edited a biennial publication, *The Artists' Yearbook*, for Thames & Hudson from 2005-2010. His book titled *Ways of Looking: How to Experience Contemporary Art* was published by Laurence King in 2014 and a sequel will be published by Thames & Hudson in 2018.

EVERYTHING AT ONCE: 500 SHOWS AND 50 YEARS OF LISSON GALLERY

SPEAKER
Ossian Ward



EVERYTHING AT ONCE: 500 SHOWS AND 50 YEARS OF LISSON GALLERY

Thank you, Talking Galleries, for inviting me here today. I must start by apologising, because I come indeed from a mega-gallery, or maybe a mid-level mega-gallery. I am not going to talk about all the 500 shows we did—you will be glad to know—but it was interesting to listen to Daniel Templon this morning as Lisson Gallery has been around for a similar amount of time and has a somewhat similar trajectory. I am going to try and explain some of that narrative and what we did with it last year. Maybe tomorrow I can explain in another session a bit about my strange job title, which is Director of Content.

In 1967, Lisson Gallery began on Bell Street, in London. It does not sound so mega, but we have not moved since. We are on the same street fifty years later. What does that tell you about the art world in terms of trends and neighbourhoods? In my lifetime, everywhere has been hyped as the new centre of London, whether it is Hoxton, Vyner Street, Bethnal Green, Hackney, Olympic Park, Mayfair, Fitzrovia... All these different areas were at some point considered by some to be the new centre. So why have we not moved? I do not know the exact answer, but I would like to say that it has something to do with consistency or confidence, that it is about sticking to your guns. If anyone here knows Nicholas Logsdail, the founder of Lisson, maybe it was his bloody-mindedness. In the 1960s, Nicholas was an art student and he happened across a derelict building on Bell Street. Together with his girlfriend Fiona McLean and other friends, he ended up living there and doing up the building.

In 1969, they decided to have a show. Essentially, Nicholas was the only one opening the gallery every day. He spent so much time on the project that he was expelled from Slade, the art school where he was studying, because back then he was desperate to be an artist. He was shown in *New Contemporaries* with the same grouping of artists in 1967, and suddenly he found that he was not welcome at art school anymore, because he had spent so much time doing this. And so Derek Jarman said, “Well, you have opened a gallery, so you had better focus on it now.” It was sort of a happy accident.



Bell Street, London, 1967

In the same year, I think it was the third show, there was an amazing show of Yoko Ono. There is a funny anecdote that I could tell about that. She happened across the gallery and left a nice note for Nicholas in which she gave the instructions of how she walked to the gallery from her apartment. She took twenty paces this way, she turned left, then took another twenty paces that way, etc. She left this little note and Nicholas had to follow it back like a map to her apartment. Then they agreed on this show. That work is in the Guggenheim now, *Half-a-Wind Show*, in which every piece of work was cut in half in the installation. I suppose that was the flavour of things to come, a kind of rigorous, conceptual work.

However, Nicholas did not follow the Pop Art route, even though The Beatles turned up at Yoko's opening and he thought, “Wow, this

could be really something.” But instead of going down that path, he continued into a slightly more conceptual line into the 1960s and 1970s. I am going to take you through a little bit more of that history.

Another seminal early show was John Latham's. It was called *The Gallery Does Not Exist for 100 Years*—so we still have another fifty years to go before we can say that we are open. Latham claimed that the gallery was shut and then opened it at the London Stock Exchange, at the London Zoo and at Hyde Park's boating lake. So, as you can see, these were tough shows. This was not an easy-going programme of pretty things.

“LISSON STARTED WITH TOUGH SHOWS. IT WAS NOT AN EASY-GOING PROGRAMME OF PRETTY THINGS.”

In 1970, there was quite a famous group show called *The Wall Show*, in which Nicholas gave an open submission to artists. He contacted lots of people and said, “You can have a wall each,” and they just had to come back with a suggestion. This is Lawrence Weiner's piece, a removal of wall, which he also recently presented at Harald Szeemann's 1969 show, *When Attitudes Become Form*.



Lawrence Weiner, *A Removal From The Lathing Or Support Wall or Wallboard From A Wall*, 1968, exhibited at the *Wall Show*, 1970

This was the kind of milieu that we are talking about, late 1960s conceptual art. In a funny kind of way, just like Daniel Templon talked about his first trip to New York, Nicholas has a very similar tale. He turned up in New York and was looking for all these artists. When he came back, his friend said, “Oh, did you meet them all? Did you meet Donald Judd?” and he said, “No, but I’m interested in their work.” And his friend replied, “Well, just look them up in the phone book and turn up in their studios.” That was his first introduction to a lot of these artists: visiting them in 1968 and 1970.

And remember we are talking about the model of a small gallery. There was no way in which Nicholas could ship all these works back to London. So he asked the artists to come and stay and to work with the surroundings of Lisson Gallery. That is why a lot of the work made during that time was scavenged, or built or manufactured on site. The artists all came and stayed with him. There was a focus, if you like, on the American minimalists and conceptualists in the 1970s. You can see these relationships building up through the correspondence with Sol LeWitt and many others.

“THE SENSE OF COMMUNITY HAS ALWAYS BEEN IMPORTANT FOR NICHOLAS AND FOR LISSON GALLERY.”

But it was not all about the Americans. In the 1970s, lots of interesting British artists were shown at Lisson as well. Richard Long had his first early shows there, and so did Tony Cragg. There is a nice story that Nicholas tells about Cragg. His number was at the bottom of the press release of his graduation show, so Nicholas just phoned him up. And Tony said, “Oh, I was wondering when you were going to call me.” Nicholas was taken aback. He then realised that a lot of these artists were already coalescing around the gallery. They knew about Lisson and to what extent Nicholas had heard about them. People started to engage with the gallery.

Nicholas was taking on significant artists like Art and Language, who at this time were essentially an anonymous grouping of artists based between London, New York and Coventry. These were not normal gallery relationships, especially not for the 1970s. Nicholas was becoming engaged and interested in the local British scene.

That was also relevant for the 1980s, when we go into artists like Anish Kapoor, Richard Deacon, Shirazeh Houshiary, Bill Woodrow, Franz West, Julian Opie, Juan Muñoz and many others. It was not just British artists, but in a way there was almost a community at roughly his own age. They were artists that he was growing up with. They were all of a similar mind-set. They were dubbed the New British Sculpture. Obviously, that was kind of a media-invented movement, but the fact is that for a while they were all linked and together, even if they do not all get along now, or maybe did not even get along at the time. There was this sense of community, which I think has always been important for Nicholas and for Lisson Gallery. Often people say, “Oh, if you are an artist, how do you get into Lisson Gallery?” It is not about sending a portfolio or hustling Nicholas. It was always about building your own community and then inviting him on to see it. I think that is what he has always appreciated.

“GETTING INTO LISSON WAS NOT ABOUT SENDING A PORTFOLIO OR HUSTLING NICHOLAS. IT WAS ALWAYS ABOUT BUILDING YOUR OWN COMMUNITY AND THEN INVITING HIM ON TO SEE IT.”

Moving on, the 1990s would be the moment of expansion and new spaces. Still on Bell Street, Nicholas opened one of the first purpose-built contemporary art galleries in London, designed by Tony Fretton. There was a Dan Graham show to open it.

Then, about ten years later, in 2002, another space opened on Bell Street, with this amazing intervention by Santiago Sierra, in which he actually closed the space with corrugated iron. Everyone turned up for the private view expecting a brand new gallery and all they got was a shutter and no drinks. Everyone was furious. So the time of expansion was also a time of risk. The risk was in the art as well as in the gallery management.

As far as the 2000s, there was a different kind of internationalism. A new chapter began. Not just with the US and the UK, or with the occasional international artist, but very much global, as we now know the art world to be. Marina Abramović had her first exhibition in 2010—

although she had already had an origin story at Lisson; she turned up at the gallery, being a bit embarrassed to talk to Nicholas, and only later did she actually follow through with her interest. There was also Ai Weiwei, whose first show was marred by the fact that he had been detained in China. He had done this amazing work at Tate Modern's Turbine Hall, but he could not be at the show. After the expansion of the 1990s, this was a period of consolidation and internationalisation.

**“AFTER THE EXPANSION OF
THE 1990s, THE 2000s WERE A
PERIOD OF CONSOLIDATION AND
INTERNATIONALISATION.”**

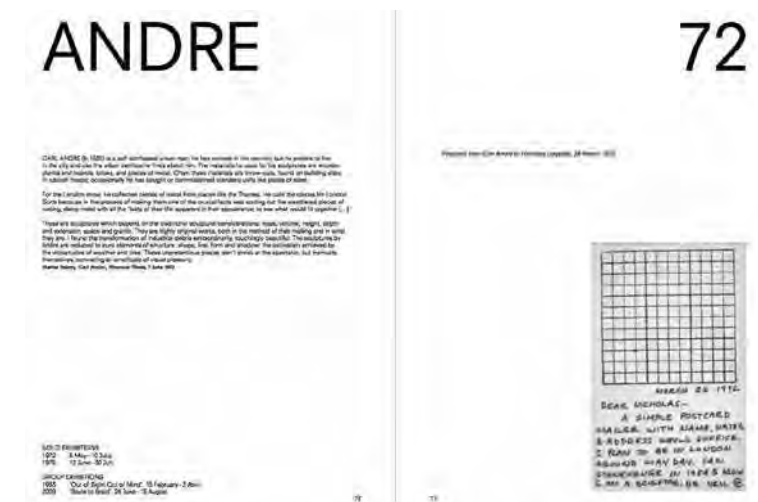
Skipping forward a little bit now, last year we opened this amazing space in Chelsea, in New York, under the High Line. Listening to what everyone has been talking about this morning—the opportunity of being in New York—it is interesting to wonder why that did not happen earlier. I suppose it could have happened in the 1970s, because Lisson did a transatlantic show, showing British artists in New York and bringing artists back to London. I think slightly later, in the early 1980s, Nicholas bought a building in Soho, because Jenny Holzer bought one next door and said, “Why don't you buy this building? It's cheap.” So it is interesting to think about the current concern about not having a global presence, because people did not worry too much about it in the 1980s. There was not the feeling that you needed to have a gallery here and another one there. And there was not the infrastructure either.

That new space was built partly thanks to the experience of having a long-standing relationship with New York, and then the bonus of having Alex Logsdail, Nicholas' son, from whom you will hear later. Alex started working in New York and built a team, at which point we could actually open a gallery. A few months later we ended up opening a second space. It happened quite quickly, but if you look at the trajectory, it was also gradual. It was a long-term game. We had spent a long time planning and waiting.

My challenge last year was figuring out what to do with these fifty years of history. Nicholas had never been keen on anniversaries. He had never celebrated the 25th or the 40th anniversary. There was partly the idea that it was sort of a weird line in the sand for him, or

that his colleagues (Konrad Fischer and other people) had died in the process. His colleagues were moving on and doing different things. He was never desperate to celebrate anniversaries, but if you are ever going to do it, the 50th is the opportunity. The way I decided to look at the history was through the archive. In a way, I wanted to be brutally honest about what the gallery had done since the 1960s. There is a look to this book that is influenced by those 1960s conceptual artists. There is a nostalgic element to it, if you like, but it also makes sense conceptually. I know that sounds sort of pretentious—to say that the book is like a conceptual work of art—but it is made through the archive in a consistent way. We did not edit out shows. We did not edit out artists we did not like or with whom we had fallen out. It is all in there.

The book has all the 500 plus shows from the fifty years. This is the documentary aspect of the anniversary: an archive made real through the book. It is done alphabetically, so we begin with Marina Abramović. You will see that 2010 was her first show. The top corner of the page tells you the year of the exhibition. The texts are also contemporaneous to the show. We did not use a text that I or someone else had written. They all come from the time of the exhibition. Alphabetically, we move on to Carl Andre. There is another nice postcard here: “I plan to be in London. Oh, by the way, I saw Stonehenge in 1954 and now I'm a sculptor. Love, Carl Andre.”



Carl Andre's spread from 50th anniversary book

There is also another very famous show, Michael Asher's, little known in London but a very important moment in 1973. There is a lot of material. I should add that the book was designed by the Dutch designer Irma Boom, who not only is famous in her own right as an amazing designer and artist, but also understood this material. She has worked with Seth Siegelaub's archives—in fact, she has worked with archives ever since she became a designer—so she contributed to presenting the material in an honest, plain way, without the editing.

Within the book there are also narrative passages, ordered alphabetically. In "B", for instance, Nicholas tells the story of the beginning: how he stumbled across the space. In "D" Alex talks about discovery: how you discover an artist, what a new artist brings to a gallery, etc. If you are looking for the list of exhibitions, they come under "E." We were quite rigid about the way we controlled the book. We thought it made sense at the time and we still think so. Following that logic, group shows come under "G." The design, funnily enough, followed a design by Daniel Buren, who Daniel Templon mentioned earlier today. This material gave rise to an idea I had in which we could ask all the artists to participate, so we had different covers made by about half of the artists—Ryan Gander, Richard Long, Carmen Herrera, Stanley Whitney, Ai Weiwei, Spencer Finch, Julien Opie, Richard Wentworth, etc. Apart from Carmen's and a few others, the covers were all hand-drawn or handmade, in editions of ten. It was a way to involve some of the artists in the 50th anniversary, and also to make some money on the book, because as you know book publishing is not the most lucrative part of the art business. Still, we try to publish as much as we can.

I am now going to talk about what came next and what complemented the book. It was an exhibition that we produced with the Vinyl Factory in London, from 5 October to 10 December. It is never easy to try and distil an entire history into one exhibition, or even into one book. In the end, I decided to use that difficulty as part of the title, so I ironically chose *Everything at Once*. It is a lie, of course. You cannot fit fifty years of every artist's work into one exhibition. The title is actually a John Cage quote from 1966 or 1967, when he talked about how, "Everything happens at once, and our souls are conveniently electronic and omniscient." Already in the late 1960s, Cage thought that the art that would assault all the senses (whether it was sound, music or video)

would all happen at once, and we would be able to take it in. That idea became the mantra for the exhibition.

"THERE WAS A CHALLENGE: HOW COULD WE REPRESENT THE GALLERY THROUGH ONE SINGLE SHOW?"

We mentioned collaboration earlier, and it was very important for this show. We had to work with other partners to make it happen. The venue we were lucky enough to secure with a partner is The Store Studios, in central London, on the Strand, near Somerset House. It is where Vinyl Factory and other companies have their offices. Frieze Magazine, for example, is moving there soon.

It is becoming a sort of cultural hub. The year before they had a very successful show called *Infinite Mix*, which was curated by Ralph Rugoff, of the Hayward Gallery. So there were many reasons to do the show there, but also a challenge: how could we represent the gallery through one single show? I will talk a bit about that problem.



Interior of *Everything at Once*

Here is a bit of what the show looked like. In hindsight, people say, "Why didn't you just blast the building with Lisson Gallery logos? Why didn't you make it all about yourselves?" We are not the kind of gallery that enjoys that sort of branding. Although the book has our name on

it, we are not trying to shout it out. It is all well and good to tell the world that you are doing something, but if you keep telling them for a whole year, they will eventually just want to kill you. So you try to do it at certain moments and focus your energy at certain points. That is why the exhibition happened during Frieze, which meant that there was a moment for it. However, like I said, it is not a very Lisson thing to be that heavily branded. We were also working with the Vinyl Factory, Serpentine Gallery and König Gallery, so we had different partnerships to play with. In that sense, it was not just about us. It is an amazing building—an old office building—and, as you can see, it has sort of a brutalist design. It gave us the opportunity to have some really big work and to explore this kind of cavernous space. There were twenty-five artists in three floors. It was a big show. But again, the size of the show goes back to the history of the gallery. We had done so many offsite shows, in Venice, for instance. Also, in the year 2000, Lisson Gallery did an exhibition of film and video work. It was around the same time as Tate Modern opened, just over the road, in Covent Garden, with some of the same works from this exhibition. We used Irma Boom for the branding to have consistency with the 50th anniversary.

**“EVERYTHING AT ONCE WAS SORT
OF PLAYING WITH THE NOTION THAT
WE COULD NOT POSSIBLY CRAM OUR
ARTISTS INTO ONE IDEA.”**

Rather than trying to squeeze all the artists under one umbrella term, or trying to fit all of them into the Lisson trajectory, the idea of having a gallery is not that all the artists somehow fit your programme or your vision. They are all different. They all come from different places. At some level, yes, there is maybe some shared vision, some elements that can link a group of artists, but to try and squeeze them all under one roof and say that they all fit together (which is the idea of many group shows and biennials) is kind of nonsensical. *Everything at Once* was sort of playing with the notion that we could not possibly cram our artists into one idea. In the end, it came out as a series of museum-scale presentations, like Art Unlimited, where you have one big work and another room dedicated to another artist. Each one has their own space, rather than constraining them to smaller spaces or trying to bounce ideas off each other.



Installation views of Ai Weiwei and Richard Long in *Everything at Once*

There was a large wall paperwork by Ai Weiwei. Another piece, by Richard Long, was directly painted by hand with mud on to the wall in a couple of hours. It is amazing to work with artists like Richard Long, who fifty years ago made this incredible piece called *Walking a Line on the Grass*, where he just walked back and forth on the grass to make an invisible path. It was interesting to try and use this theme, *Everything at Once*, to collapse time between 1969 and 2017. I was especially pleased to have that work in the exhibition, which sadly was painted over at the end. But there were some other historical moments, some elements of historical narrative, I suppose you would say.

Installation view of Tony Cragg in *Everything at Once*

This work by Tony Cragg which had coincidentally been shown over the river, at the Hayward Gallery when it was first made. Similarly, with a piece by Dan Graham, the idea was to show Dan in this very post-industrial office space, with the glass and the steel, which he would appreciate. That kind of architecture fit the narrative and the space. We also showed a set of Stanley Whitney works and some Lawrence Wiener pieces. As well as this line here, Ceal Floyer's work, which helped link the whole show together, because it was over three floors.

Not including all the artists was a complicated decision. It was partly logistical: some works would not survive in that space, because it got very cold. Some artists do not make work of that scale, and some were already doing shows across town—we had amazing shows by John Akomfrah and Haroon Mirza at other institutions, for example. So there were many reasons why we chose what we chose. There was also a focus on large, immersive works, partly because the Vinyl Factory had professed interest in them through their previous show, *Infinite Mix*. Also, the spaces just lent themselves to big, digital, multimedia works. To complicate matters further, the Vinyl Factory brought their own commission. Originally, the idea was that we would co-present the entire exhibition together, under one title. But it became clear that, as different models, we worked differently. Our gallery has a group of

Installation view of Dan Graham in *Everything at Once*

artists, and a commissioning body like Vinyl works at a different speed. So we ended up apportioning different spaces to these works, but they all fell under the same roof, they all became one. In fact, a lot of people did not understand the difference between what was shown with the Lisson Gallery and what was commissioned by the Vinyl Factory, who had wonderful works by Arthur Jafa on the roof, in a tent, and a piece by Ryoji Ikeda, among three or four other works, in collaboration with Serpentine Gallery.

In a funny kind of way, you could say, "Are all these different partners not diluting your message?" Actually, they strengthened it. We had over a hundred thousand visitors over the course of the exhibition, which is quite an astonishing number, not just for us—because our footfall on Bell Street has never been huge, unlike in Chelsea, where we get lots of visitors. Within this set of visitors, there was a younger audience. They were not all collectors, art world people or Lisson Gallery people.

I'm going to end by talking a bit about that. The collaboration aspect that we have been discussing today is key, as was the press that we received. All of that helps in the run-up to a show and during a show. It was also good to try and tie together what we did as an anniversary project with the exhibition. Of course, social media was also very

important, but I'll be talking about that tomorrow, in another session. Before I run out of time, I wanted to see if there were any questions. Otherwise, thank you for listening.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND QUESTIONS (C/Q) FROM THE AUDIENCE

Q1. Thank you very much for your presentation. I have not read your bio, so I would like to ask, how long have you been working at Lisson? And also, in your opinion, what are the main challenges of being part of these mid-level or mega-galleries?

“YOU SHOULD TRY TO DO YOUR COMMUNICATION IN A WAY THAT IS ELEGANT AND WILL ACTUALLY BE READ, RATHER THAN BEING NOISE.”

O.W. I have been at Lisson for about four and a half years. I was previously an art critic, a journalist and a writer. That is my background. As far as the challenges, the art world is a busy environment so, like I said, when you are doing an anniversary, you want to shout out to the world, but you also want to be mindful of how much information you put out. We all receive different streams of emails, and when you have a busy programme with more than four exhibitions at once, you have to be careful not to push out too much information. You should try to do it in a way that is elegant and will actually be read, rather than being noise. That is one thing. There is also the idea that the gallery should not be a monolithic thing. What we struggled with for this big exhibition was trying to show that, yes, we are a gallery with great artists and great ambition, but how do we translate that into what people know about us? Maybe people did not come out of the show knowing exactly what Lisson Gallery was, or what our history was, but they may have enjoyed the works or become fans of our artists, so they will eventually come to the gallery. These are all different ways of engaging people. Those are the things that I struggled with on my end. On the whole, just keeping up with the other galleries is the difficulty of being a mid-sized or mega-gallery.

Q2. It is usually the founder of the gallery who speaks, but we are in an era of increasing professionalisation, so I was wondering about the idea of having a public speaker for the gallery. Could you talk about that? How do you feel about it?

O.W. I think Nicholas would actually love to be here, but he is traveling. We are lucky Alex is here to talk in a bit. I think it is nice to have more than one spokesperson for the gallery. So yes, it is about the founder, but we also have directors at the gallery who are able not only to speak on his behalf, but to talk about different areas. We have people in the gallery who have expertise in the Middle East or Latin America, so we can call upon them when needed to talk about those areas of the business that I do not necessarily know about. I know about this exhibition, because it was my responsibility last year, but I do not know all the stories. I have heard most of them, but there are still many different areas. I am the content distributor, that is why I am here giving this specific presentation. Equally, there could be many other people from the gallery. That is a strength. It is good to make sure that there are many voices. That is the difficulty of having a large, transatlantic business: you have different competing interests, different people with different specialties, etc. I feel that it is my role to do it and I enjoy it, because having been a journalist, I see it in the same way. I approach an artist with questions like I would if I were interviewing them for a magazine. In order to draw out the material I need, I follow the same process. I treat each show just like a journalistic mission. Each is different, but I use these techniques.

Q2. But do you think the professional field is going to change in that sense? Because Lisson used to be a small team (probably at the beginning there were four people working) and now it is a big structure. Do you think things are changing and it is now important to have a public speaker?

O.W. I have a strange title, Director of Content, which I like because it sounds like I could be producing cat videos—and, of course, I do. There is content in all the work I do, but it is kind of a buzzword. It is a horrible word, but it was difficult to be an editor for a gallery. In terms of the professionalisation, galleries have lots of different positions and areas of expertise, we have our technical team, and so on. These things grow as you grow and it is good to do it in a sustainable way. It seems natural for me to be talking about it in this environment, because it has taken

the gallery a long time to get to this stage. It has not happened in five or ten years, it has taken fifty years. And, to be honest, I do not see the shortcut to getting to this stage. I have seen difficult times when you cannot sell anything, or you have to shed stuff, or you cannot keep the lights on. These periods exist in the life of every gallery.

Q3. I am a gallerist from Tel Aviv. For me to look at Lisson Gallery is very natural and, in a way, listening to you is like listening to the director of a museum, because Lisson Gallery played a big role in creating the contemporary scene as we see it today. So as someone who has access to the history of the gallery, I would like to ask you, what would you recommend for those of us who are creating content now?

O.W. Keep everything. Keep every piece of paper. It is harder now, in the digital age, to know what is interesting and what is not, but if you have a little sketch that an artist has drawn for you, or a plan of the show, keep it. We have an archive and a person who looks after it. It is harder to know when it is a good email as opposed to a bad one. In those days, you had handwritten notes, postcards and beautiful objects to keep. I think Nicholas has kept everything since day one. That helped me, but it also helped us to teach some of our artists, who are like, "Why do you keep all this stuff?" You have to tell them, "Well, you need to keep it, it is your legacy as well!" You have to go into their attics and pull it all out and sort it out for them. This is as much of an artist's legacy as a gallery's legacy. You need to be aware of that history and keep hold of it. That would be my suggestion in terms of archiving.



David Juda

David Juda started working with his mother, Annely Juda, in 1967, who opened her first gallery in 1960. In 1967, Annely Juda Fine Art was established, representing contemporary international artists including Christo, David Hockney, Leon Kossoff and Anthony Caro. The gallery also exhibits 20th-century avant-garde, specialising in Russian constructivism, Bauhaus and De Stijl. Juda has been an active member of the Society of London Art Dealers for over forty years and served as their Chairman from 2014 to 2017.

Alex Logsdail

Alex Logsdail is International Director of the New York-based Lisson Gallery, which opened in 2016. He works closely with artists such as Carmen Herrera and Dan Graham, and with a younger generation that includes Allora & Calzadilla, Pedro Reyes and Haroon Mirza, among others. Prior to Lisson, Logsdail worked at Deitch Projects and Team Gallery, NY, among other organisations. He is currently a member of the Whitney Museum's Performance Committee and previously a member of Triple Canopy's Publisher's Circle before joining the Board.

Guillermo Romero Parra

Guillermo Romero Parra studied Art History, specialising in Modern and Contemporary Art in Christie's London. He started his professional career in the White Cube and Victoria Miro galleries. Since 2005, he is in charge of Galería Parra & Romero in Madrid, founded in 1993 by his parents Pilar Parra and Francisco Romero. The gallery programme lies in the boundaries of conceptual and minimal art from its origins to the current day. In 2013, the gallery opened a space in an old hangar in rural Ibiza, with the idea of developing projects outside the "white cube" context and of supporting the intellectual scene that resides in the island since the 1930s.

Carlos Urroz

Carlos Urroz is Director of the International Contemporary Art Fair ARCOMadrid since May 2011. His contributions to ARCOMadrid include: forging the link with Latin America through the section Solo Projects, dedicated to solo artist stands; the section Opening for young galleries; and the ARCO Professional Meetings, a new activity format linked to the fair and aimed at experts. From 2005 to 2011, he founded and directed UP (Urroz Proyectos), a company focused on designing and implementing projects within the cultural organisation and communication context. From 1998 to 2006, he was Director of Galería Helga de Alvear.

THE DELICATE TRANSITION OF PASSING YOUR GALLERY ON TO FAMILY MEMBERS

SPEAKERS

**David Juda, Alex Logsdail, Guillermo
Romero Parra**

MODERATOR

Carlos Urroz

ROUNDTABLE

15.45 - 17.00

DELICATE TRANSITION OF PASSING GALLERY ON TO FAMILY MEMBERS

David Juda Annely Juda Fine Art
Alex Logsdail Lisson Gallery
Thermo Romero Parra Parra & Romero
Moderated by **Carlos Urroz** ARCOmadrid

45min + 30min Q&A



THE DELICATE TRANSITION OF PASSING YOUR GALLERY ON TO FAMILY MEMBERS

Carlos Urroz (C.U.) “Children are the hope of the future.” “Even your family can betray you”. “Inheritance must be abolished.” “It’s just an accident that your parents are your parents.” “Much was decided before you were born.” “Planning for the future is escapism.” “The family is living on borrowed time.” “You can live on from your descendants.” Probably this last sentence, from Jenny Holzer’s 1977 *Truisms*, is the one that speaks better to today’s subject: the delicate transition of passing your gallery on to family members.

I had to do some research in order to prepare this roundtable and, basically, all the information came from art dealers and *Kunsthändler* in the 20th century, like the Rosenbergs. Paul and Léonce Rosenberg became the dealers of the Cubists. They were already a second generation of dealers and the exclusive dealers of Picasso, Braque, Léger and Matisse. Alexander Rosenberg, Paul’s son, was the founder of the Art Dealers Association of America (ADAA), and now their archives are part of MoMA. Another of these mythic sagas are the Wildensteins. Daniel Wildenstein was already part of a third generation of dealers. He was the director of the Jacquemart-André Museum in Paris and published the catalogue raisonnés of Manet, Monet and Courbet. The Wildenstein family are still part of PaceWildenstein. And another of these sagas are the Nahmad, reputed by Christopher Burge, honorary chairman of Christie’s, to have sold more works of art than anybody alive, excluding auctioneers. Probably the second biggest holding of Picasso works after the Picasso family, the Nahmad still have two galleries. But I think these sagas are probably easier for art dealers than for gallerists that represent living artists, like many of us here at Talking Galleries, for whom trust is so important—the trust of the artists and collectors—and where the personal name adds value to the list of artists we represent.

We are going to analyse how this passing a gallery on from generation to generation works with the insights of three panellists. David, you joined your mother's gallery, Annely Juda Fine Art, in 1967. Alex, you are the international director of Lisson Gallery, which opened a new space in New York in 2016. And Guillermo, you worked at different galleries in London, such as White Cube and Victoria Miro, before taking over your family's gallery in Madrid.

Besides the three of you, I see several other second-generation gallerists in the audience: Nerea Fernández, Patricia de Muga, Ursula and Thomas Krinzinger, etc. Please feel free to join the conversation. I will start by asking you the same question and then we will delve into each specific case. How was the transition in your gallery? How did it happen? How was it announced? Let us start with you, David.

David Juda (D.J.) I started working with my mother in 1967, as you mentioned. I became a partner in 1982 and then, in 1988, my mother and her lawyer decided that I would take over the gallery totally from a business point of view, a financial point of view, although this was not made public in any way, because my mother was the main person in the gallery. But it helped in the transition, for tax reasons and so on. When my mother passed away, there were no complications. It all went very smoothly. So, to answer your question, I think the transition went very naturally and very smoothly, in a way to do with age, to do with energy, etc. I was very fortunate to have a mother who basically let me do what I wanted, to a certain extent.

“I WAS VERY FORTUNATE TO HAVE A MOTHER WHO BASICALLY LET ME DO WHAT I WANTED.”

Guillermo Romero Parra (G.R.P.) My case was a little special, because when my parents ran the gallery, it was quite different. I was in London. I was actually learning about starting my own gallery and I remember we had a conversation because they believed in what I wanted to do, so they asked me to take over their gallery. My parents' gallery was completely different. I would say it was almost like a different religion. Changing everything was a very slow process, because I also had to convince them about what I wanted to do. It is very interesting because a few years ago we were looking at photographs—from maybe like,

ten or fifteen years ago—I realized that my parents are now younger than before, when I started at the gallery. For me, that was probably the best reward, because it meant that I had injected very well the potion that I wanted to. So the transition was very nice, but also very hard. They became my employees, which is very interesting. It is a very specific and different case, in the sense that I did not really continue their project. It was the base for my gallery, but I really launched a new project. My father, for example, is a former architect and he now takes care of all the production, logistics and things like that. He is great at it. And my mother is very good with accounting. Obviously, now we have more people helping us to develop those fields.

“THE TRANSITION WAS VERY NICE, BUT ALSO VERY HARD. I DID NOT REALLY CONTINUE THEIR PROJECT. IT WAS THE BASE FOR MY GALLERY, BUT I REALLY LAUNCHED A NEW PROJECT.”

Alex Logsdail (A.L.) I think I am in a slightly different position in that Nicholas and I still do a lot of things together. We really collaborate very closely together on the artists that we choose to work with, the programme, the general running of the gallery, etc. So I guess we are still in a transition phase, rather than having completed it. I moved to New York when I was nineteen. I did not know anyone, I knew one person. I interned at *Artforum* and worked at a couple of galleries. Previously, though, I had really no interest in being in the art world at all. I kind of had an allergic reaction, having grown up around it. I was going to be a musician and that did not really work out, so yeah, after being in New York for about four years, I had a medical issue and I had to go back to the UK. I stayed there for a while, for three and a half years. Then I moved back to New York in order to open up the gallery there. We had a little office and then, a few years ago, we started building the actual space. That is really where the transition fully began, in earnest.

C.U. Great. I do not know about you, David, but Guillermo and Alex, you have worked at other galleries before joining your family business. How was that experience? What did you take from those galleries? Did it help? How useful was it?

A.L. I found it very useful. I learned that every single gallery is very, very different. I worked at two galleries and a project space in New York. Every single one of them was radically different and the way that Lisson runs is also radically different. I think it has so much to do with the personality of the owner or founder, who has kind of set the pace for how things operate, and also with the ethos of the artists that you choose to show. It creates radically different environments. I do not think there is a blueprint to say how one works or another does.

“NICHOLAS AND I, WE REALLY COLLABORATE VERY CLOSELY TOGETHER. I GUESS WE ARE STILL IN A TRANSITION PHASE, RATHER THAN HAVING COMPLETED IT.”

G.R.P. In my case, it was essential, because I learned many of the things that I would later introduce in my gallery in Madrid. I think it is very healthy to see what the others do. I realized that there was a different world, so it was extremely positive and it still is to this day.

C.U. David, in your case, you started working with your mother, right?

D.J. Well, I did not work in any other gallery. I think my first bit of education in the gallery world was probably from 1960 to 1964, when my mother had her first gallery and I was allowed to serve the drinks. I was taught that you fill the glass half full for the artist, three-quarters full for the collector and you take out the whiskey bottle from under the table for a museum director. That was the first thing I learned. Then I decided that I would perhaps have a better career in the Merchant Navy and I became a waiter on a luxury liner. That is why I used to come to Barcelona quite often. But when my mother's second gallery closed, because the backers did not want to support it, I joined the family business. I really did not know anything about art, apart from going to exhibitions with her and things like that. So I learnt it all from the beginning.

C.U. How is the relationship with the artists different between your mother and you? How was it when you joined the gallery? Did they want to talk to you or not really?

D.J. It was great. I think they enjoyed me going around with my mother, because I was learning all the time. However, I would get very upset when collectors came in, I offered my help and they said, “No, we want to speak to Annely.” I said “Well, I am David.” They insisted, “Well, you are not Annely.”

C.U. Did the same thing happen to you, Alex?

A.L. Yeah, of course. But one of the things that I feel was crucial about having worked at other places is that you earn your own identity, which I found very, very important. I would come into this very well-established business, with a long history and a large number of staff, with a degree of my own credibility from the outside world. That was very important in establishing good relationships with collectors and earning respect from the artists that I have developed good relationships with over the years as well. So yeah, I think it is always a challenge, because you are trying to latch on to existing relationships, but you have to make them your own.

“IT IS ALWAYS A CHALLENGE, BECAUSE YOU ARE TRYING TO LATCH ON TO EXISTING RELATIONSHIPS, BUT YOU HAVE TO MAKE THEM YOUR OWN.”

C.U. What perceivable changes were made in the galleries when you entered? In your case, Guillermo, was it a completely different gallery?

G.R.P. It was a 100% new, yes, completely different. In my case, it was a nice process, but it was very slow. I realized after a few years that it would have been easier for me to open a completely new gallery on my own, because in the end we were three people making decisions, so we had to really sit down to discuss everything. I was the one making the decisions about the programme and a few other things, so I used what I had learned from these two big galleries, for example in terms of how to structure a business, which is very important. Take Lisson Gallery. It is useful just to understand how many people work there, how many divisions there are, things like that. When I started the gallery, when I was studying, I basically did not know anything about that, so thanks to my experience in other galleries I was able to manage the information that we were handling in a better way. Financially, we were trying not to

make a lot of mistakes with the programme, especially in the context of being in Madrid, where visibility is very reduced. Building up a gallery with a bit of global resonance is really, really difficult. That is also why I recently decided to open a new space in Ibiza, because I wanted to use what we already have in our country. And it is quite an international place—there are other reasons behind it, but that is a big one. It was extremely hard for me in the beginning, to be honest.

C.U. And for you David, did you introduce some changes? Did you suggest new artists or encourage to go to other art fairs?

D.J. I think the gallery has evolved over the years, but I was fortunate that my mother worked in the gallery until she was 90, until 2004, and I had started much earlier, so we sort of had moved in the same direction. I brought in a few new artists, but a lot of the ones that we were showing when my mother was alive had also come from me. I think probably 1989-90 was the major point of transition. Perhaps a little bit like you, Alex, we did not build another gallery, but we moved from a warehouse space to Dering Street. Incidentally, in 1967 we wanted to open a space next door to your gallery, but unfortunately we were not able to do it, so we moved from a warehouse space in Tottenham Mews to Dering Street, where we are now. I sort of organised all that, so then I really felt that I was running the gallery. It all went very naturally, I think that is the best way to describe it. There were no real problems. As far as the artists, there were certain artists that my mother was more fond of than I was or vice versa, but it was never a problem.

C.U. Some sons of gallerists open their own gallery, like KOW in Berlin, run by the sons of Rosemarie Schwarzwälder, of Galerie Nächst St. Stephan, in Vienna. There is also Francesca Minini, of course, the daughter of Massimo Minini. Claes Nordenhake's son has his own gallery too. Alex, you never thought of opening your own gallery once the music career did not work out?

A.L. I did but... I planned to do something in New York, which was made impossible. I had a medical issue and I had no health insurance at the time, so I was forced to move back to the UK. But, actually, I also felt that it was a very, very difficult time to open a gallery in London, and I was not able to do it in New York at the time. So it just happened organically. I did not feel that I could open a gallery in London in the same kind of territory as Nicholas. I thought it would have been difficult.

C.U. What is the difference between taking over a gallery from a father or from relatives and having partners continue with it? Suddenly, after years in the gallery, a second name appears and the other person retires. What happens when there is a blood link? Are there family issues? Are the differences easier to handle?

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G.R.P. Well, as I said before, my parents and I had a lot of discussions, so in the end it was not really difficult to handle. The name of my parent's gallery was Pilar Parra, which probably nobody knows. I decided to add my second surname. In fact, I am not Guillermo Parra Romero, I am Romero Parra. I twisted the gallery, so I twisted the name as well. It is a little pleasure that I wanted to have. Obviously, because we are a family business, I kept the two surnames, but I inverted them. My parents have always been very generous and they said to me, “You should have your own name for it,” but I wanted to carry on with it.

C.U. About the continuity of the gallery when it is taken over by someone of the same family as opposed to just a business partner, are there differences? Is it easier because you are relatives and you have lunch together on Sundays?

A.L. I think there are pros and cons to both situations. In the family situation, in theory, you share a sensibility, an aesthetic sense and a set of values or morals. So there is an ease at which things can be fluid. That said, there is always the charge of nepotism, which is very hard to escape—impossible, in fact. So it is not necessarily an easy thing to do, but it can be done, I think.

G.R.P. It is also very nice, in my experience. For example, I live in front of the gallery and my parents live behind it. When I moved to Ibiza, I said, “I am going to have my own thing, my house and everything.” Then my parents bought a house there two years ago. On Sundays, I have my kids and I see my brother, who is an architect. He is not related to the gallery, but he is already doing things in Ibiza and Madrid next

to me, so we are close anyway. On Sundays, we always have lunch together and talk about the gallery. We cannot really escape it and that is also very nice. I do not remember discussing with my parents about anything else other than the gallery, in fact, but I think in the end it is also very nice. So, in my case, I really like it. I even hope my kids will take over—though I do not want to put any pressure on them, because they are too young. I would really like it if they also worked at the gallery.

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BE EITHER A BLESSING OR A BURDEN.
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REALLY DO NOT ENJOY THOSE WORKS.”**

C.U. I have only worked in one gallery, with Helga de Alvear, who took over Juana Mordó. And regarding the inventory, there were pieces that belonged to the former gallerists, they were Helga’s artists. In a two-generation gallery, does it help to have artworks from a previous generation in your inventory? Do you consider it positive or is it sometimes difficult?

D.J. I do not think it is a big problem, because all galleries—although they do not discuss it that often—have inventory that they do not want to know about. I think everybody has that sort of section. It is the same between two generations, really. Going back to the point about working together, the whole thing is actually much easier if it is family, because the son cannot take the mother or father to the employment tribunal and the mother or father cannot sack you very easily. So it is much easier.

A.L. I think having the old inventory can be either a blessing or a burden. It depends on whether it is pleasurable or you simply feel obligated to do it even though you really do not enjoy those works. There is always a mix.

D.J. But there is always a mix anyway.

C.U. In my case, there was also a mix. But I was thinking that probably, if it is family, it is an easier relationship.

G.R.P. I would like to say something about this, because my family’s inventory helped us in some cases to carry on other things. I remember Yvon Lambert used to say that what matters the most is what you keep, not what you sell in your exhibitions. Today it is probably even more difficult than twenty or thirty years ago, but I think it is very important to create your own archive. Because sometimes, when things are not going so well, you can use it.

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C.U. Does a new generation in the gallery imply technological innovation, promotional sales and such things? As the youngest ones, Alex and Guillermo, how do you feel about it?

G.R.P. I think it is very interesting. I was talking about visibility before. Having a gallery in Spain is very difficult, because you do not get the visibility of other cities where people go very often. So in my own domestic economy, instead of investing a lot of money in magazine advertisement or media presence, I decided to run the risk of opening the gallery in a place that is outside of Madrid, which is getting a lot of attention, so... In my case, of course, I dedicated a lot of time to thinking about how to communicate for my generation and the next one, which in my opinion is something to really think about today. But I am also really dedicating my time to having visibility in a different way. In my case, being peripheral is also interesting, so I am trying to make the most of the situation.

A.L. I agree. I feel that the use of technology, with your website or your social media feed or whatever it might be, is at the moment most useful for visibility. I think it is going to take a very long time for the art world to fully embrace online sales or anything that really generates a large level of income. I think it is really a promotional tool. It is a way of getting people educated about the gallery, about your artists, about

things that you want people to read about. I am not sure that it is at the point where it is useful for much more than that.

C.U. Yeah, me too. I think so far that is the issue, but on the other hand, we need it, so I wanted to know your approach. Did renovation in this generation of galleries bring a new audience to the gallery? In your case, David, did your presence bring a new public, a younger crowd?

D.J. Well, I think probably in my case, because I have been around for relatively long, that is already the role of my colleagues in the gallery. It is my colleagues that are really going forward for the younger collectors and really, in a way, bringing a transition to the gallery past what I have done with my mother. And they are doing it now, because I think my knowledge of all the technologies is so limited. I still talk about a calculator being a computer, so I have to really rely on my colleagues, who are pushing very hard on this, and very successfully. I do think it is more of a future than we wish.

A.L. I think that since I started working in the gallery there has been a change in audience. I do not know how much of it I can attribute to me, though. I think it is attributable to an evolving programme. We have taken on a large number of artists in the last ten years. We do more art fairs. We have a space in New York now, whereas before we did not. I think it is a result of that. We now reach a different group of people. It is very hard to know exactly what to attribute it to, but I think that whenever you take in new artists to the gallery, they always bring a new demographic with them and that brings a new audience.

C.U. In an analogy with gastronomy, I was thinking that everybody would choose a two-generation restaurant over a brand that has ten restaurants all around the world, right? What are the advantages of a two-generation gallery in comparison to a multi-branded global gallery?

D.J. I really do not know. I learnt a lot and I did not have to go into the deep end straight-away. I think that was a great advantage for me. The disadvantage is that it is difficult to be recognized for yourself. That comes not only from other people, but also from you recognizing to yourself that you actually have achieved something. Once that happened to me, I was much more confident.

G.R.P. Well, in Asia, a third generation is a dynasty, right? In the end, I think it is more basic: it all boils down to what you have in your programme. That is the value. In the case of Alex or David, there was huge value, because they already had amazing galleries with extraordinary programmes. In the end, that is what remains, right? Basically, that is what really builds an identity. So probably, in a restaurant, they value the tradition of that identity. In our case, I think it is almost the same.

“SINCE I STARTED WORKING IN THE GALLERY THERE HAS BEEN A CHANGE IN AUDIENCE. I DO NOT KNOW HOW MUCH OF IT I CAN ATTRIBUTE TO ME, THOUGH. I THINK IT IS ATTRIBUTABLE TO AN EVOLVING PROGRAMME.”

A.L. The only major benefit that I can think of is that you have history behind you. And you have the opportunity to continue that history for longer than one lifetime. That is something that I think is very valuable and it is impossible to replicate. Again, it comes with its complications, but it does allow you to kind of continue a lineage that would otherwise just end.

D.J. I think there is one thing to add. In my case, and probably in yours too, we have been around and seen situations. Ursula Krinzinger mentioned it earlier this morning: we have seen bad times and we have seen good times, so we are perhaps not overstretched with what is going on at the moment. I know in the case of Nicholas, and also in the case of my mother and myself, we had struggles. And it is good to remember them, because we may go back to them.

C.U. I quite agree. Having memory is very important for business. On a different note, before the panel David and I were talking about Soledad Lorenzo, about her quitting the gallery and donating her whole collection to the Reina Sofía. There is an exhibition right now of all the works she donated. Helga de Alvear is also expanding her museum in Cáceres in order to donate her collection. And even Juana de Aizpuru's collection can be seen now in Valladolid. Do you have a collection—a gallery collection or a family collection—that you would like to preserve, to be part of a museum or maybe even a museum itself?

D.J. Meaning, how is the gallery going to go on in the future?

C.U. We will talk about that later, but I was asking if you have an inventory, your own personal collection of works, that belongs to you and that you would like to pass on to an institution or to be part of a museum. So that the works can be exhibited as the David Juda Collection, let us say.

D.J. There is a gallery collection. I have a personal collection that is very atypical. It has formed over many years and I actually do not want it to go anywhere. I want it to be sold and given to a charity. And to actually do some good.

**“THE ONLY MAJOR BENEFIT OF TAKING
OVER A GALLERY IS THAT YOU HAVE
HISTORY BEHIND YOU. AND YOU HAVE
THE OPPORTUNITY TO CONTINUE THAT
HISTORY FOR LONGER THAN ONE
LIFETIME.”**

C.U. That is very noble.

A.L. I think that, generally speaking, a gallerist's collection, rather than a strict art dealer's collections, grows organically, in weird ways. It grows unpredictably. You may end up with things that you maybe had to buy back or whatever. That is how things come together, and it is not necessarily built in the same way that a collector would build a collection. So it is hard to identify what it really is, even. I do not know.

G.R.P. In my case, my parents have their own collection. I am trying to build my own. Probably the best business we can do is to keep things for ourselves. It is a passion as well, it is more than a job. It is a way of life. That is probably how most of you think about it and, for me, it is sometimes very hard to sell pieces that I really like. So I always try to buy from the gallery and to keep as much as possible. I do not know if, in the future, my collection will be exhibited in the museum. I doubt it. But I really enjoy building it. In my case, also, hopefully my kids will continue it, so I now have a second motivation, which is to do it for them as well.

C.U. You already mentioned that you would like your kids to take over the gallery. We were talking with David before, what happens if you do not have family? What happens to a dynasty of galleries when there is no future generation? That was something that he pointed out and I think it is interesting to discuss it. When there are no partners, heirs or directors to take over, how do you manage all that?

D.J. As we are talking about legacy, I think legacy is also what will happen after we are gone. If you have family, yes, maybe the gallery will go on, but maybe not. There are not that many third- and fourth-generation galleries. It could well be that your children would love to do it, but perhaps not. I do not have any children, so it is a subject that has worried me for quite a long time, because it is not that I want Annely Juda Fine Art to exist forever, but there is a lot in the gallery that I would like to have continue. I do not mind if it goes in a different direction to a certain extent. But I do not know the answer. That is really the problem. In an ideal world, you would like for somebody to come in and slowly have a transitional situation exactly the same as if they were family, but it does not seem to work like that. And I suppose galleries get either sold, if there is no family, or they close, which I think is a great pity because there is a lot of experience that goes down the drain when that happens. But finding somebody who wants to come in and slowly buy out the gallery is hard. And it is not a question of money. It is a question of finding somebody who has got the energy and the will to do it. You ask your colleagues or your staff, who are really dedicated and have worked with you for many, many years, and they do not want to take on the risk and the responsibility, which are pretty big these days.

C.U. Well, I mentioned Paul Rosenberg before. The Rosenbergs' archive is now part of MoMA. Do you think these important gallery archives should be kept all together in an institution? I know the German gallery association made an archive for galleries, run by Rudolf Zwirner for a while. How do you think these gallery archives should be handled? Because it is a very important part of art history.

D.J. I think the answer is, yes, it is very nice to have an archive, but we must not forget there are an awful lot of them. The Tate is continually being given artists' archives and they do not want them, because they cannot find people to look after them and to translate them into a proper archival situation. And although I do not want to

discount archives—far from it—, I think we have got to be careful not to overvalidate them. The artist is what is important. Perhaps I made a wrong comment just now, when I said, “I want to give my collection to charity.” What I was actually trying to say was that there is so much art around that my art collection is not important enough to be archived. It could be sold and help in a hospital or something. I mean, we have got too many archives. We have got too much art.

C.U. That is interesting. Now, maybe we should pass it on to the second-generation gallerists that are in the room, if they would like to add something.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND QUESTIONS (C/Q) FROM THE AUDIENCE

Q1. (Tim Schneider) Hi. I would like to know if any of you would be willing to tell a story, or to recount an instant, where you and your parents had a substantial disagreement about the direction of the business and how you resolved it.

A.L. When I moved back to New York, we decided to open a small office there. That seemed to kind of satisfy Nicholas for a while, because we had a small staff and a physical presence. I started looking for spaces, but it is very hard to find a good space in New York. I found this very difficult space, which was not a space at all. It was a piece of dirt in Chelsea. Nothing had ever been built on it. It was underneath the high line and came with all kinds of complications. It took a lot of convincing for Nicholas to do that. It was a very major undertaking. As all building projects do, it took double the amount of time and double the amount of money. It was a pain in the ass. But, eventually, he got used to it. Those kinds of decisions make you go through a sort of seismic shift. You are really kind of changing gear, which is uncomfortable if you have been riding in the same gear for a long time. That, for me, is where there was the biggest source of tension, which is now past.

D.J. I think the moving of a gallery, or opening another gallery space, is an enormous undertaking. It was a major thing when we moved from Tottenham Mews to Dering Street. For instance, in terms of financing. We have never been a very wealthy gallery, we did not start with money. My mother started as a secretary in a gallery and so on, so until

perhaps 2002 or 2005, we always owed money to the bank. It was quite a big jump, in 1990, just at the time of the 1991 recession coming up, to move and spend what we thought was an awful lot of money at the time for making a new building work, etc. But I think you have to do these things. You sense it is right and in fact it was the absolute right thing to do. And it will happen again, I imagine, but it was pretty scary at the time, when the banks—I am sure many gallerists here know—start calling and there are checks in the post, etc.

G.R.P. Well, in my case, I had to introduce many new things, so I had many discussions and fights, which luckily always ended well. Both sides of my family had a very modest background, so every single new thing in the gallery for us was a fortune. I also needed double the energy to convince my parents. Even to buy new computers. Now everything is moving in the right direction and we are able to do many things, but we had so many fights in the beginning.

“I HAD TO INTRODUCE MANY NEW THINGS, SO I HAD MANY DISCUSSIONS AND FIGHTS, WHICH LUCKILY ALWAYS ENDED WELL.”

C.U. It is probably typical with family. You are used to that from the beginning, unlike with a business partner.

Q2. (Melanie Gerlis) Thank you, that was very interesting. Carlos, can I ask you a question? I was thinking about art fairs and how the change of directors is actually quite rapid. Do you think art fairs would benefit from having that sort of longevity that we are talking about for galleries for their directors?

C.U. Well, I think it is an absolutely different business model. Fairs have a character of their own. The director can bring some novelties or suggest ways of doing things, but the fairs stand besides the people that run them. I always say that ARCO is a public fair and that has helped it survive even the worst moments of the Spanish economy or the crisis in the art market. In that sense, a fair is not a personal project, while galleries are. The relationship with the artist is very personal, and so is the relationship with collectors. But for the art fairs, we have a system. We have rules and we establish how to apply, etc. So it is not

about personal sympathy with one thing or another. Of course, I think the fact that one person runs an art fair brings some changes, but the structure goes beyond an individual and I think that is very, very important. It is completely different from galleries. No art fair claims to be “by such and such.” Maybe it will be like that in the future, but right now art fairs go beyond their directors.

Q2. (Melanie Gerlis) Still, the relationship with the galleries is hopefully personal.

C.U. Yeah, but it is a different model. Most fair directors stay for a while. I think it is an honour to be the director of a prestigious art fair, but it is also good that it changes every some years. It is very natural.

Q3. (Georgina Adam) Guillermo, you said that when you opened your gallery in Ibiza, things were very difficult. What do you define as difficult? Is it a question of sales or is it a question of creating an audience?

G.R.P. Ibiza is a very peculiar place. Everyone thinks it is just a party destination, but there is a tradition—which started around the 1930s—for a lot of intellectuals from Central Europe to be in the island. So the party area is a very tiny part of the island; geographically, it is a minority. There are always very interesting people in Ibiza, so I decided to open the gallery there because I wanted to preserve, or try to preserve, the intellectual identity of the island. I used to go there when I was a kid and I always found it very interesting in that sense. I thought this cliché about the island, which everyone talks about, was very dangerous. So the difficulties have to do with the place. My programme is not easy, really. It is a conceptual programme and I decided to open the gallery in a place that is very difficult to reach—an old warehouse in the middle of nowhere that belonged to farmers. There were no signs, it was difficult to get there. It is a very big space, because I wanted to really be able to build exhibitions that were not possible in the regular context of the gallery, so more like institutional shows.

The difficulty is that there is not really an audience in the area, so what I wanted to do is to create a place that people do not reject invitations to visit. Also, a very spiritual place. So people feel that they are really treated equally, there are no hierarchies, it is a very interesting place and it is still very difficult to run. I read an article today in the newspaper

saying that Ibiza is the most expensive place in the Mediterranean. And it is true, it is extremely expensive, but people are there relaxing, so you have to make double the effort to bring them into the gallery. My ambition was to try and help change the identity of the island. Before I opened mine, there were no galleries there. Not even the museum was doing a really important programme. Now, not because of me, though maybe I helped a little bit, there is a foundation. Lisson participated in an exhibition with this foundation last year, which I think is fantastic, the idea of collaborating with international galleries. They bring in a really interesting audience. And the most beautiful thing is that you are able to participate in a change. Our profession is very difficult and demanding, but in the end, the real pleasure of having a gallery, for me, is just to be happy, to work with your artists and to have a direct relationship with them. Also to build up your own collectors, which is very interesting. We did not really talk about it, but it is probably the most important thing, to create your own community and to have it follow you.

Just to finish—I do not want to go on for too long—I, I decided to open a gallery there because it is a wonderful place to work from. I am based in Ibiza for about five months and I do not wear a jacket. I wear my bathing suit and flip-flops, which is a really good way to do business. Artists love to come. In fact, I have difficulties now because everyone wants to come, so my house has become a hotel. Still, I think it was one of the brightest things I ever did, especially for the gallery.

C.U. I would like to hear some of the second-generation gallerists that are here with us, like Nerea Fernández or Patricia de Muga. It would be great if they wanted to share something about their experience or maybe add something that we have not said.

Nerea Fernández: My case was very similar to Guillermo's. I had a lot of fights. It was not so organic. I decided to run the gallery, but it was not easy. However, I think it is also normal when a gallerist, in this case our parents, built so much and then started to see someone else making the decisions. I think it is quite hard for them. They also left a very big inventory, which helped us. There is a lot of weight on your shoulders, but it also helps on the other side. In short, it was not easy.

C.U. Thank you, Nerea. I think Ursula, right behind you, is another case.

Ursula Krinzinger: I am still in the process, in “the delicate transition.” My case was quite difficult as well. Thomas does mainly all the fairs. It somehow works perfectly, but as soon as it goes further, we really need to have long discussions, because I intend to really talk to him and to have his approval. Otherwise, I think in the future you will have fights all the time. I know that other colleagues—I will not name names—all have difficulties until the transition is done. So I am still in progress.

C.U. Is there someone else who can share their experience?

Sofie van de Velde: My father has had a gallery for forty-five years, Ronny van de Velde. I also have a brother and a sister, which complicates matters even further. Eight years ago, my father asked me to work at the gallery because he was very ill, which I did, but we had a lot of difficulties. Some of them were, of course, because my sister and brother also had their say, it is a family thing. But also, it was because of the way he was working. He did a lot of secondary market sales. His slogan was, “I like to work with artists who do not live anymore, because they don’t argue.” On the contrary, I like to work with people, so we had a problem. That is why I decided to take a step backwards and open my own gallery. I think it is not easy to do that. It was really tough and we were all very sad about it. Now things are fine. When I hear all the stories here, they sound great but, to be honest, it was really tough in our family. Two years ago, I invited my father as a curator and we linked our contact lists, because when I opened my gallery, I said, “I do not want your collectors at the beginning. I do not want to send them an invitation. If they want to come later, they should come because they like my programme, but not because of you.” We crossed our contact lists and only one-sixth of all our collectors were the same, which means we have a totally different audience. I think it is a richness for both of us. I am still working for my father. This weekend I sold two pieces for him—good for him, good for me. I think that is also a possibility, but it is never a love story, to be honest.

C.U. Well, we all have families and we know how they work. Thank you so much for being here today.



Melanie Gerlis

Melanie Gerlis became the weekly art market columnist for the *Financial Times* in September 2016. She was previously Art Market Editor at *The Art Newspaper*, reporting on auctions, art fairs and market news globally since 2007. Before entering the art world, Gerlis worked for ten years at Finsbury, a strategic communications and investor relations firm, advising investment banks, hedge funds and other financial services clients in the City of London. Her book *Art as an Investment? A Survey of Comparative Assets* was published by Lund Humphries in 2014.

Natasha Hébert

Natasha Hébert is Director of Galeria Toni Tàpies Barcelona, through which she manages the Estate of Antoni Tàpies. She moved from Canada to Europe at the end of the 1990s to pursue her career as a correspondent art critic and independent curator. She arrived in Barcelona in 2004, when she started to work for the gallery. With the opportunity to represent Antoni Tàpies internationally, she developed a strong and endless fascination for his work and collection. At the artist's death in 2012, she took the lead in managing the Estate on behalf of the family. Currently, Hébert is finishing an Executive MBA at HEC Paris.

Christy MacLear

Christy MacLear is Vice Chairman at Art Agency Partners (AAP), a subsidiary of Sotheby's focused on creating an advisory practice for artists, estates and foundations. She was the first CEO of the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation and the founding Executive Director of the Philip Johnson Glass House, giving her deep expertise in legacy planning for artwork use, foundation start-ups and museum sites. MacLear serves on the Board of Trustees for Stanford University and is Chairman of the Board of the Municipal Art Society of New York.

Adam Sheffer

Since 2003, Adam Sheffer has been Partner and Sales Director at Cheim & Read in New York, where he has expanded the gallery's scope of representation, adding artists such as Ghada Amer, Chantal Joffe, Tal R and Sean Scully. Prior to Cheim & Read, Sheffer was Director at the Robert Miller and Mary Boone galleries, where he began his career as assistant to the owner in 1994. In 2014, he was named a benefactor of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, where he first encountered art during his childhood. From 2015 to 2018, he was president of the Art Dealers Association of America (ADAA).

Hélène Vandenberghe

Hélène Vandenberghe has been co-director of the estate of her father, Philippe Vandenberg, since 2009. An art historian by training, Hélène began her career in 2000 as a curator at the Huis van Alijn, Ghent. In 2002, she co-founded the heritage weekend in Flanders and Brussels and, in 2008, took up a position as an art advisor to the Centre for Fine Arts (Bozar), Brussels. In 2012, she co-founded SOS Artistieke Nalatenschap, providing practical advice on managing artistic legacies within Belgium. Since 2015, she has worked as a special advisor to The Institute for Artists' Estates in Berlin.

ARTISTS' ESTATES. MANAGING LEGACY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

SPEAKERS

**Natasha Hébert, Christy MacLear,
Adam Sheffer, Hélène Vandenberghe**

**MODERATOR
Melanie Gerlis**

Adam Sheffer Cheim & Read and ADAA
Hélène Vandenberghe The Institute for
Artists' Estates
moderated by **Melanie Gerlis** Financial Times
45min + 30min Q&A



ARTISTS' ESTATES. MANAGING LEGACY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Melanie Gerlis (M.G.) Thank you all for staying for today's last session to talk about dead artists. Hopefully, though, what we will discuss applies to living artists and very much to living gallerists.

I certainly am aware that artists' estates have been very much in the news these past couple of years. I get a lot more press releases telling me about a gallery winning an artist's estate now than I get about a young, hot artist. Estates are clearly a fairly lucrative business, but they are also fairly complicated and can be very challenging. I am based in London, where I just met Frank Lloyd, who manages the estate of Craig Kauffman. He has a show on in London at the moment and I asked him, "What was it like when you first got the estate?" Lloyd very happily said, "It was a total mess." My amazing panellists this evening are here to help, I hope, avoid the total mess. We are going to start with Hélène Vandenberghe.

Hélène Vandenberghe (H.V.) Andy Warhol once said, "Death can make you look like a star." To a certain extent, he was right. Estates have never been so important and their relevance will even grow in the future. They have become players in their own right in the art market. As the field has professionalised, so has the management of estates. But this growth and this professionalisation has sparked a lot of questions. How do we start an estate? What is best, the sunset model or the eternity model? Is the family in charge? How do we organise a studio after the death of the artist and with what kind of database? How do we deal with authentication? How do we work with the gallery? How do we work with the artist's children? To give you an answer to all these questions, we started The Institute of Artists' Estates in 2015. We are located in Berlin, although we work worldwide. We work with a lot of people, but there are four of us at the core of the institute. There are two lawyers in the team: Dr. Loretta Würtenberger, who is the director of the Institute, and Karl von Trott. There is also an economist, Daniel Tümpel, and then lastly I am an art historian and I work as an advisor for the Institute. It is important to know that the four of us all have personal engagements with estates.

For example, in my case, it has now been eight years since I started working for my father's estate, together with my two brothers. He was a Belgian painter, Philippe Vandenberg. Through that responsibility, I came in contact with a lot of other estates, with heirs, with children of artists, with artists and with people who are, in one or another capacity, connected to estates. In that situation, I really felt the need—and the same is true for my three colleagues—to share my experiences and to professionalise the sector. At that time, there was nowhere you could go with all your questions. Working for an estate was a really lonely job. So I am really proud to say that we are the first and only institute in Europe that focuses on all matters related to estates.

**“BEFORE WE FOUNDED THE INSTITUTE
OF ARTISTS' ESTATES, THERE WAS
NOWHERE YOU COULD GO WITH ALL
YOUR QUESTIONS. WORKING FOR AN
ESTATE WAS A REALLY LONELY JOB.”**

So, who do we work for? We work for artists, for heirs, for galleries and for other professionals, like lawyers, notaries, museum directors or governments. What do we do? We focus on three pillars. First, education and connection. Then, research and publications. Last but not least, consulting and management. In fact, this last pillar allows us to pay for the first two. Let us now focus on education and connection. Every two years, we organise an international conference, which serves as a platform to learn and to connect from peer to peer. Our first conference was in Berlin in 2016, maybe some of you were there. The title was *Keeping the Legacy Alive* and some of the speakers were Claudia Andrieu, John Welchman and Flavin Judd. I am sure you all know them or the estates that they represent. The conference was a huge success, with more than 250 estates from all over the world attending. Our second conference will be in Los Angeles in the fall of 2018. It will focus on new perspectives.

The second thing we organise are workshops. Every year we do very in-depth trainings for twenty-five people or more. They last four or five days. Our first training programme was in London. We always try to work with partners that are linked with the foundation of an estate, so we collaborated with the Henry Moore Foundation, the Lynn Chadwick Estates, the Courtauld Institute and Christie's. We invited Andrea Theil,

from the Lichtenstein Foundation, who is an expert on catalogues raisonnés. If you ever want to know something about that matter, just ask Andrea. We hosted the workshops at the Lynn Chadwick Estate, a beautiful castle outside of London. If you are ever in the area, you really have to visit. There is a wonderful garden and the art is beautiful—a lot of Chadwick, of course. Our next workshop will be in Berlin in June. Some of the speakers will be Shervone Neckles, from the Joan Mitchell Estate, Andrea Theil, the expert on catalogues raisonnés, and Chris Dercon. You all know him as a former director of the Tate and, as such, he was in contact with a lot of estates, of course. The locations we have chosen are the Hans Arp Foundation, the Gerhard Richter Archive and some artists' studios. We thought it was important to do the workshops in these meaningful locations.

As part of the second pillar, research and publications, we publish an ongoing series of interviews, the last of which was with Natasha Hébert. We also organise a lot of university lectures throughout Europe—we have been in Milan, Zurich, London and Berlin, among other cities. And then there is our book, *The Artist Estate*, a handbook for artists and for everybody who works with estates. If you cannot make it to our conferences or workshops and you have questions, I recommend buying it. It is great. It is based on interviews with people who work for an estate and tries to offer a guideline using that expertise.

The third pillar is consulting and management. I chose three completely different examples of artists that we consult. One of them has already passed away, Gerhard Marcks, and then we have Wim Wenders—a filmmaker—and Random International, whom I chose because they are quite young, so they work more with digital art. I think you all know their piece *The Rain Room*. Working for an estate with this type of work is completely different than working for a sculptor or a painter. The same thing is true of Wim Wenders. Each case will lead you to organise the estate differently. I also chose three examples of estates that we have managed. They are all completely different: Hans Arp, whom you all know, Sophie Taeuber-Arp, an incredible artist who is now getting famous—and I am very happy, because she is wonderful—and then Keith Arnatt, a conceptual artist from the 1960s. Again, how do you manage the estate of a conceptual artist? A lot of new questions arise.

To conclude this very short presentation, I would like to say that I am really convinced that if we want to protect and to guarantee our

heritage for the future, we really need professional support for the heirs, the artists and the people who work with estates. And that is what we try to offer through the Institute. So if you have some questions about our workshops, the conferences or anything else, please do not hesitate to contact me or my colleagues in Berlin. Thank you.

“WITH THE SUNSET MODEL, YOU DECIDE TO WORK FOR A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF YEARS. THE ETERNITY MODEL, ON THE OTHER HAND, GOES ON FOREVER.”

M.G. Thank you, Hélène. I think I understand the difference between the two models you mentioned at the beginning—the sunset model versus the eternity model—, but do you mind clarifying it for us? Is the difference that one keeps on going forever and the other has the legacy run just for a certain number of years? And if so, how many?

H.V. With the sunset model, you decide to work for a certain amount of years. You can choose whatever you want: twenty, fifty or eighty years. Then you stop. The eternity model, on the other hand, is like the Picasso Estate, it goes on forever. I suppose the Rauschenberg Estate works like that too. In a lot of cases, the models transform or the works go to a foundation that does certain topics.

M.G. That makes complete sense, thank you, Hélène. Natasha, could you talk to us a little bit about Antoni Tàpies’ estate? I think you are quite professional, but would you have benefited from this sort of advice in 2012?

Natasha Hébert (N.H.) I would say yes and no. We have been working on the estate for six years now. It was very well organised. And even though it was well organised, these six years we have been working non-stop. We are talking about an artist who was extremely fertile, so it is really a lot of work. Our model is kind of different from others, where there is a foundation or a family that owns everything. In our model, we have different little companies. Tàpies was really well organised from very early in his career. In the 1970s, he was already thinking about the catalogue raisonné. At the end of the decade, he really started working on the book. He had all these pictures and he was really aware of what he was doing. By the end of the 1980s, he built another company,

which was Antoni Tàpies i Família, which at the beginning was a lower-tax company. The idea was that all of his artwork would go directly to this company and would be sold through it.

“TÀPIES WAS REALLY WELL ORGANISED FROM VERY EARLY IN HIS CAREER. IN THE 1970S, HE WAS ALREADY THINKING ABOUT THE CATALOGUE RAISONNÉ.”

The idea was to involve members of the family in this company—in Spain, it is actually quite usual to have big family businesses. This was at the end of the 1980s. Then, at the beginning of the 1990s, a foundation was created as a separate entity. So the family business is a for-profit business and the foundation is non-profit. The foundation was built by Antoni Tàpies. He gave a big part of his work and made a very well-organised collection. It was given to the foundation with the participation of the city of Barcelona, the Generalitat—which is the regional government—and the Spanish Government. The idea was to build a foundation that was half-private, half-public. At that time, the foundation would give the certificate for the artwork, until at a certain point, they thought that maybe certificates should be handled from outside of the foundation. And so another business was created, the Comissió Tàpies, which is a very professional team, with lawyers and other professionals who look at the work, give the certificate and have the rights.

M.G. And are you involved in that process at all? Presumably, you still have a say over the authenticity, right?

N.H. Yes, I do.

M.G. I was just wondering because one of the questions in Hélène’s presentation was, is the family in charge? I wondered if maybe being an in-law—being the daughter in-law of Tàpies—makes you sort of family but not too much.

N.H. Kind of. Actually, it is very helpful. It is helpful that I like to talk, I like people, public relations, management and all these things. I am really passionate about Antoni Tàpies’ work. I have known him personally. He was my father-in-law, so it was very engaging at a certain point.

My position is very helpful, because I do not have a cold look; I have a “half-cold” look, let us say. I can be a little bit colder regarding some decisions that we have to make once in a while. Like moving to the new warehouse that we are building, which means taking the work out of the studio—it is an incredible place, but it is not safe, it is not in good conditions. We had to decide to get professional and to take the work out of there, which can be very difficult emotionally.

**“MY POSITION IS VERY HELPFUL,
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M.G. Because that is where he worked?

N.H. Exactly. It is heartbreaking, but at the same time, we understand that if we want to move forward, we really have to take these steps, because this is our future, the estate is there, so we have to take care of it. Also, in some situations, the family can be very emotional, but you have to put that aside to make decisions. You have to manage, you have to work, you have to put together exhibitions. And it is good for the family not to be in the front line. They have the right to feel pain, they have the right to be angry or happy, because that is their space, it is still their family, their father or husband or whatever. I think it is very important to protect that, so that the family is involved but still has the necessary private space.

M.G. Adam, I am going to welcome you into the conversation now. We have heard about all these different associations, foundations, authentication processes and family members. Where does a gallery fit into all of this?

Adam Sheffer (A.S.) Well, I frankly think that being involved with estates and foundations is as important to my work as a dealer on a day-to-day basis as other things that I do in terms of sales, organising museum shows, cultivating collector relationships, etc. There is no handbook to it and most dealers, like myself, or people that are inherently creative individuals, do not come to it naturally with a business sense. However,

we do have a passion for the artists and their work and we want what is in their best interest. I am reminded of Ossian's talk earlier today. He mentioned archives. It is never too early to have that conversation about estate planning with artists.

M.G. Is it difficult, though? Because you are basically saying to someone, “Think about when you die.”

A.S. Absolutely. Mortality is a very scary issue for all of us. However, I will tell you that it is much harder to have that conversation with an artist in their 70s or 80s than it is with an artist in their 30s. It allows them enough perspective down the road to really think that every decision that they make now with regard to their work, their ephemera or the materials that they have, may have some sort of consequence in the future. I am very fortunate, because we work with a large group of artists who are in their 70s and their 80s, some of whom have been absolutely meticulous, airtight archives and have worked on them since the 1960s. It just goes to show how they feel about their art and how the legacy of their work was as important to them as their practice. They are really thinking about the arc of their career. And being able to understand that big picture is crucial, because then you can sit down and have very consequential conversations with artists who have not thought about things like, is this going to be a sunset foundation or an eternal foundation? What are we doing here? What is your wish? Do you want to have a body of work that is sustained throughout time, by which we can constantly have inventory to loan to museums? Or do you want to sell things off and start a grant-giving organisation like Joan Mitchell did, giving grants to young artists and starting a residency centre in New Orleans? It is important to discuss these kinds of issues with artists while you are dealing with their material. It is also key to understand when the artists get older, “Okay, how much inventory do you have? How much longer are you producing? What does it take?” You have to start figuring out the deep details about decisions like, how are we going to start disseminating what you have into the market? What are we going to hold back?

M.G. And how do you decide? Is it always part of a conversation?

A.S. It is a bigger conversation and it has to do with the volume of work, the work that is more recent and experimental, the things that

they made in 1965 that never sold. When a gallery does its job, with an estate or foundation, it really goes around with a magnifying glass and says, “Wow, nobody has ever shown this body of work that Philippe did way back. It is so fascinating and there are so many artists working out of this kind of tradition. It would be great to show their historical significance and really build a market for this area, this repository that we have”, which may or may not have market value at that time. There are also issues that you have to ask yourself with regard to tax consequences. Are we going to be a charitable foundation or are we going to be in a charitable foundation for ourselves? Are we going to make it our mission to buy back work in the market, at market value, so that we have these works for great museums that want to acquire things?

**“IT IS NEVER TOO EARLY TO HAVE
THAT CONVERSATION ABOUT ESTATE
PLANNING WITH ARTISTS.”**

M.G. Do many foundations do that? Do they buy back?

A.S. That would probably be a question for Christy. I just know what we deal with and I can say that the case of every artist is completely different. There were some things that Louise Bourgeois sold very early on because she needed the money and the foundation was very anxious to buy that back, because those works filled certain gaps in the collections that could be loaned to museums. You cannot tell a complete story without these objects. That is part of their arrangement and part of what they want to do. It is a priority for them. Are you selling work to build an endowment or are you selling work simply to cover operating costs? Do you authenticate? Does the gallery authenticate? What is your role in that process? We are so linked to the artist-foundation conversation that I feel like they cannot do it without us and vice versa. That kind of scaffolding only makes an artist and an artist’s profile stronger and I am so glad that we have organisations like Christy’s—and I mean Christy MacLear’s, not Christie’s, the auction house—and art galleries that have experience with so many different kinds of artists and building foundations. We realise there is no one industry standard, but we have come across so many different variables that we know what to ask and that is crucial.

M.G. I am later going to pick up on a couple of things, but first I would like to hear about Christy’s business. What led you to make what we thought was quite a major decision, to go to AAP, and how is it going? And where do you see an auction house fitting into all of this?

**“BEING INVOLVED WITH ESTATES AND
FOUNDATIONS IS AS IMPORTANT TO MY
WORK AS A DEALER ON A DAY-TO-DAY
BASIS AS OTHER THINGS THAT I DO IN
TERMS OF SALES, ORGANISING MUSEUM
SHOWS, CULTIVATING COLLECTOR
RELATIONSHIPS, ETC.”**

Christy MacLear (C.M.) I was the first director at the Rauschenberg Foundation. Before that, I was the first director at the Philip Johnson Glass House, so I have actually done this twice. For fifteen years, I have been enmeshed in post-death management. I always say I was in the Glass House and going through David Whitney’s sweaters and writing the mission statement. And I am going through Philip Johnson’s postcards and I am doing the budget and financials. The common thread here are strategic questions and advisors. This new field that is emerging cannot exist without the galleries. That is one of the most important things. Joining AAP was not an attempt to eclipse that, but it is an attempt to bring to light an area that I felt like at the Rauschenberg Foundation lacked professionalisation. And sometimes that was taken advantage of. Let me give you an example. The gallery does an excellent job at managing the market, the artwork, the exhibitions long-term and short-term, scholarship and so on. Your lawyer or your tax advisor can manage the legal structure and the estate formation. But so many of these questions need to be figured out in order to advise both parties and these were the things that I was noticing could have been taken advantage of and that we are certainly advising them.

So I decided to join AAP because I had been there for seven years, I had been speaking on behalf of the Aspen Institute and it was very clear to me that there was a big opportunity to go out and help people. I was talking to Tad Smith and to Allan Schwartzman, whom I have great respect for, and they said, “Look, if we have this advisory arm as part of AAP, it is separate in location and in practice from Sotheby’s.” We

structured it so that I am remunerated not on sales, but on a monthly fee, like a staff person, and when I work with a gallery we do not take a cut. So the motivations are aligned properly. I lack a fear gene and I am a business person, so I was like, "You know what? I am going to do this and, for one year, I am going to verify that it works and that there is a market, and the second year I am going to innovate and implement principles from the business world."

**“THIS NEW FIELD THAT IS EMERGING
CANNOT EXIST WITHOUT THE
GALLERIES. THAT IS ONE OF THE MOST
IMPORTANT THINGS.”**

M.G. That is now?

C.M. That is now, yes. Now we are in our second year. During the first year, I found that there was more demand than I expected. I invite all of you to please take some of these services and integrate them into your galleries.

M.G. But you are not out there trying to win artists' estates, are you?

C.M. Honestly, they are coming to our door. I have not even began marketing. There is a small firm we just started in New York and we are giving them business. I have thirteen artists and five more in contract, so in fact I am turning some of them away, because you have to be very dedicated and focused. We are hiring people. I hope that the people who work for Allan and I become the next foundation directors. I hope that they learn from the questions that we are asking and the strategies that we are populating the field with. What I am hoping to do this second year is look at things like economies of scale. It is a young field, but one that all businesses can benefit from. Could there be a multi-artist foundation? For photographers, for example. Photographers have the same cost basis as maybe the Rauschenberg Foundation, but their revenues are lower. And what I have learned over the course of last year is that, many times, the families take over the estate and they may not be business people. Their costs get too high: they have three storage places, an office and, let us say, two staff people. So eventually they have to sell work to meet these financial expectations.

Part of what we can offer is management consulting. Let us go in and renegotiate this storage and fix the budget. Then, you do not have to sell. Sell in an appropriate way that meets your vision and your mission. So a multi-artist foundation is something I am hoping to establish. Another one is bringing outside tools in from other industries. Could we use a donor-advised fund in order to facilitate philanthropy?

“MANY TIMES, THE FAMILIES TAKE OVER THE ESTATE AND THEY MAY NOT BE BUSINESS PEOPLE.”

M.G. Can you explain what that is?

C.M. Yeah. Hélène, you could probably help me. It is a tool that most banks have. You can move your stocks or your money into a donor-advised fund and then it will give the grants. I know some artists who want to give away grants. They do not like to do the paperwork, but that is actually illegal and it can be a problem. Because grant-making is actually quite a serious phenomenon, it would be better for them to use a donor-advised fund and let somebody else do the paperwork. That is just a matter of adapting an investment tool into the art industry. So I am learning a lot and I think there are many ways in which the galleries can ask some of these long-term questions and take responsibilities for even more than the market, maybe even advising the estate about ways to be financially responsible, because that affects how you sell.

M.G. A question to Hélène and Natasha: as managers of estates, do you sometimes wonder, what is the business? Galleries and auction houses are in it, so there must be money being made. How do you strike that balance between maybe being a charitable foundation and meeting the needs of the market? Why are estates such big business, from your point of view?

N.H. In my case, the foundation is a non-profit, so it actually needs money. The family part is for-profit. We are not going on a sell-out, but we do have to think about the market. We do not have an exhibition space, that is not what we do, but we are keeping part of the estate to make it available for curators, researchers, etc. If they want to work on it, it will be open for them to come and do some research. Maybe we used to work more with galleries and now we have slowed down. We

want to retain a little bit. There is one big myth about the death of the artist, which is that when an artist dies, prices rise, which is not true at all. The demand does not rise either. There is some sort of a step back. Everybody is watching, nobody wants to act and they are all checking what happens.

**“THERE IS ONE BIG MYTH ABOUT
THE DEATH OF THE ARTIST, WHICH IS
THAT WHEN AN ARTIST DIES, PRICES
RISE, WHICH IS NOT TRUE AT ALL. THE
DEMAND DOES NOT RISE EITHER.”**

So I thought that this time-out was very good for us, actually. We really needed to take this step back and look at what we had. Actually, as the family entity was for-profit, the family was where galleries would come and pick the work for their exhibitions. So the work that we have is kind of random. It is not like in the foundation, which has a very good chronological collection where you can really see the history. What we have is full of gaps, it is not perfect. Sometimes we do not really understand what we have in our hands. So we are not throwing that on to the market. We want to step back a little bit and see what happens.

M.G. If an artist's foundation or estate is in order, will the market be better? Because then people do not have to worry about maybe a stepchild appearing and having a different opinion, or someone saying that a particular work is not authentic, etc. Is it fair to say that when an estate is in order, the market benefits?

H.V. I would like to answer the first question. In our case, for example, it was really important for us to keep the work of my father alive. That was our goal. So it was not a commercial initiative. What we did, and it is important for estates, was an A,B,C cataloguing of the works. We said, this is A—only for museums—, this is B—only for the market—and this is C—for the estate. It is very important that you work horizontally, not vertically. That means that you keep works from every period. I think you all know the example of the Hartung Foundation. When Hans Hartung died, they decided to focus on the works of the 1960s, which were extremely popular. They only kept that, but things changed over the years. They focused on a vertical way. It is very important to avoid that.

I also want to say, regarding the market: just because you work with the market it does not mean that an estate is a commercial project. I really think that, within the estate, we always seek to have a triangle. If you want to keep an estate alive—and if you want to keep an artist alive, actually, because to some extent it is the same—you have to build a triangle with the market, the museums and the academic world. The three have to work together, that is the only way. If you can make those three work together, the artist will stay alive. This applies to both living and dead artists. It is essential to keep the market alive, not only to make a profit. That is something that we have to understand in an estate, because sometimes the artist's children will say, “Oh, I do not want to be commercial!” It is a reality: you need to be in the market to be seen, so that a museum director sees it, brings it into a show and eventually the academic world works on it. So the three aspects must work together all the time.

**“IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU WORK
HORIZONTALLY, NOT VERTICALLY. THAT
MEANS THAT YOU KEEP WORKS FROM
EVERY PERIOD.”**

C.M. That is absolutely true. And I will go even further and say that it is helpful to the market if the estate or the foundation is really organised. It assists with a catalogue raisonné, with the ability to look at different movements of the artist's career and different focuses...

N.H. I would like to add something about our company and the foundation. What is also interesting in our case is that, because we are more flexible, we do not have a space, we do not have this kind of mission—we have a very long-term mission, but we are very flexible—, so we were able to go out there and meet people, to put together exhibitions and to work very quickly. While the foundation has this mission about representing the work of living artists at the same time, so they are really focused on the present—what is happening now, instead of focusing on the future. We are trying to work together as much as possible and to make sure that we have this museum part, because the foundation has probably a better way to talk with other foundations and museums, whereas we are able to do some very spontaneous things. I think that is also interesting: to be able to put that together, what we are doing can be done by galleries. The gallery

can maybe have a good relationship with other galleries and with museums, but a foundation is sometimes in an awkward position to work with galleries, with the market and art fairs, these kinds of things.

**“IF YOU WANT TO KEEP AN ESTATE
ALIVE, YOU HAVE TO BUILD A TRIANGLE
WITH THE MARKET, THE MUSEUMS AND
THE ACADEMIC WORLD.”**

M.G. So the galleries can be the bad boys. [Laughter]

A.S. I had a really interesting conversation with the heir of an estate.

M.G. Feel free to name him.

A.S. Alina Szapocznikow and Peter Stanislawski, her son. He is very interesting. He is not somebody that I work with, but I have deep respect for him and for Alina's work, on a lot of levels. In our conversation, we agreed that, essentially, there is this real Chinese wall between galleries and estates, “You do this and I do that.” But we are in constant communication. The relationship with the gallery is a very close one. The gallery and the estate are not adversarial, they must work together in order to enhance things. As long as people understand that is the goal that you are after, everything is okay.

M.G. Your goal is to be managing an artist's estate.

A.S. Yes. This is about people. The whole business is built on relationships. I often reference a really wonderful commencement address that Eric Fischl gave in 2012 at the school of the Art Institute of Chicago. He talked about what it is like to be an artist and the role of an artist as he has seen it evolve, from being a young painter in Nova Scotia to the present day, when he is an international superstar par excellence. Long before there was even an art market, there was an art world. It consisted of a bunch of people who were interested in being surrounded by artists and art and doing as much as they could within that environment. You really have to keep that as a core value when you decide how you are going to proceed in this sector, because the sense of integration, the sense that we are all part of the art world, will always prevent you from stepping on another's toes.

M.G. Maybe that is when there are challenges and when it does go wrong.

**“THE GALLERY AND THE ESTATE ARE
NOT ADVERSARIAL, THEY MUST WORK
TOGETHER IN ORDER TO ENHANCE
THINGS.”**

A.S. Of course. People will come to me and see if they can access a show and, if I say no, they will go to the foundation. So it is important that we can call one another and say, “Did you talk to so and so? What did you tell them?” Or the Joan Mitchell Foundation, for instance, which is extremely well organised at this point, many, many years after Joan's death in 1992. We cannot even submit catalogue raisonné material on behalf of clients. It needs to go directly. That is Suzi Villiger's area. She is an expert on this. She did Hans Hofmann's catalogue raisonné. That is something that I would never get involved with. I would never authenticate. They do not authenticate. We have this agreement. As long as you are on the same page, it can be a very harmonious relationship.

M.G. I just wanted to pick up on something David Juda said earlier: that it is not so much about the archives as it is about the artists. And I was thinking, maybe we did not need everyone's stuff? I mean, is there an argument that there are going to be too many estates formed now because of this craze?

C.M. Well, not everybody needs a foundation. And they are quite expensive. There is tax reporting, there is legal reporting, there are so many unexpected costs associated with a foundation. That is another reason why asking certain questions when you are alive can drive different decisions and different models. I actually think that it is quite important.

H.V. Yes. And also every artist has his or her context. Some artists are very important locally, for example. So that is something that I always say when I advise the children or the wives, I say, “You really have to be realistic, what is his place in the world? Is he an international artist or is he important on a local scene?”

M.G. Because maybe everybody wants their relative to be an international artist.

H.V. Of course. As a child, for example, your father is the best artist in the world. So it is normal. That is why I say, “Just invite other people also to comment and to give their advice, because your view is very subjective.” It is really important to know where you stand, because otherwise you will always have the door against your nose. You will always be very disappointed, so it is important to be realistic. Not every artist needs an estate functioning at an international level. At all levels, there are artists who were very important for their intellectual discourse and maybe less for their works, but their discourse can be very important, so the approach can be very varied.

“ONE OF THE GREAT CHALLENGES THAT WE FACE IS THAT AN ESTATE IS ALSO ALL THE PEOPLE THAT WORKED NEXT TO THE ARTIST. WE NEVER TALK ABOUT THEM, BUT THEY ARE PARAMOUNT.”

C.M. I can actually imagine that, because there is this rather enormous boom of artists’ estates, college and university museums will be more important in the future. Everybody wants to be in the best museum—in the Pompidou, in the MoMA and so on—, but the fact of the matter is, sometimes what matters is encouraging scholarship and connecting to a younger generation.

H.V. Absolutely.

C.M. So, as a dealer, one thing that you can ask is to map the ages of the scholars for your artists. See how old they are. A college and university museum not only will hang the work and hold it—it will not end up in a basement—, they will even build classes around it and get it into the hearts and minds of younger people. That is where you are reconnecting with another generation. So I am a big believer in the importance of college and university museums going forward.

M.G. Sure. Anywhere where you can tap into a new generation is very beneficial.

N.H. You were also talking about having too much stuff. Do we need that much stuff? We were talking about the fact that an artist’s estate comprises so much: a lot of paintings, sculptures, videos, whatever it is. A lot of objects, and sometimes you do not know if it is art or not, if it is part of the archives or not. All the archives, all of this stuff, even the homes! One of the great challenges that we face is that an estate is also all the people that worked next to the artist. We never talk about them, but they are paramount. They are crucial.

In our case, a bit before Tàpies’ death and also shortly afterwards, some people that were very close to him died, so in a way we were left with a wood with no trees. We lost some very important people: some of his friends, his son and people like Leslie Waddington, whom he used to work with, or Daniel Lelong, who is now retiring but had been working with Tàpies for more than thirty years. It is like a marriage, thirty years working together! These people are going away at the same time, with all their knowledge and memories. So you also have to consider the people related to the studio, who have the skills. They know how to restore things—“Tàpies would use that tool, this product, these things...”—, people working in transportation, everyone. They are part of your estate. You will not be able to keep all their memories and all their things, but still, that is something really important to manage and to pass on to the next generation. Because you can see a clash of generations taking place. You have people who knew the artist and new people coming in. And someone will say, “I knew how it was supposed to be,” and someone else will reply, “That is not how we do things anymore!”

M.G. “He would have hated Instagram!”

N.H. Exactly! “He would never have accepted this, he would never have accepted an exhibition like this. I knew him!” This kind of problems.

M.G. We were touching on how to reach younger people. Just before we take some questions from the audience, I would like to ask you for one piece of advice, either for living, young artists or for gallerists. What could they do now to make an estate work better in the future?

H.V. Documentation. Make sure that you have pictures of everything and that you are well documented. One day, the catalogue raisonné, certification and everything else will be easier. Because you want to have as much information as possible.

**“IT IS IMPORTANT TO BE REALISTIC.
NOT EVERY ARTIST NEEDS AN
ESTATE FUNCTIONING AT AN
INTERNATIONAL LEVEL.”**

C.M. I have sort of an abstract piece of advice. I am a big believer in thinking about things a hundred years from now. How do we pass the baton beyond the people who knew him or loved him? If you are an artist, have the people who know you and have worked with you for thirty years help you define what your legacy is, through values, for example. I was saying earlier that Rauschenberg's values, which we braided into the foundation's mission statement, helped us make decisions, so that the management did not have to be owned by five people. And those questions were: is this collaborative? Is this risk-taking? Is this creative problem-solving? Is it global? If it did not meet those criteria, you would go back to the drawing board. Those values would be different for Donald Judd or for any other artist, but they help you a lot in the decision-making.

A.S. The one thing that comes to mind is that there is no question or line of thinking that is not worth considering when it comes to deciding the gallery's role with estates and foundations. There are always things that can be explored during a lifetime and afterwards. And the second question is: that relationship is very valuable to our gallery, because the estate might have knowledge and insights into all sorts of questions that can empower us to have a conversation with museum curators, collectors and with the foundation to enhance the message that we are trying to tell about the artist. So it is far more than just dollars and cents—or Euros, pesos or whatever.

M.G. You have almost convinced me of that. [Laughter]

H.V. I think what Christy said about the values is very interesting. As an artist, it is important not to fix what you want too much. I say that because, for example, in the case of my father, he actually became

more famous after his death. Had he fixed things, we could not have done what we did. Another very important issue is that the reading of a work changes all the time and it needs to keep it alive, it needs to be relevant. So if you fix too much a reading of a work, it dies, because works live in relation with the audience and that is also important. If you can work with values, the range of possibilities is much broader and you can go in different directions.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND QUESTIONS (C/Q) FROM THE AUDIENCE

Q1. (Georgina Adam) A large number of estates have closed their authentication boards. I would just like a few comments on that, because it has been such a problematic area.

N.H. In our case, we feel very confident about it so far, because the catalogue raisonné is very well done. Actually, where we have more problems in terms of forgeries or fakes is mostly on the Internet. It tends to be very, very small things, such as posters or fake drawings, but they are sold cheap. For now, we have a monthly meeting with the commission and it is very serious. We think that it is secure. I know there are some other certification processes that have been very complex. We do wonder, however, can you handle it forever? I think that there is a moment when it starts to become a bit difficult, as you lose people who knew the work. We still have the widow, Teresa. She is not with us every month, but when we have a pressing doubt, we just bring the work to her and she remembers. It is really amazing. We still have that possibility.

M.G. And Christy, did you authenticate at the Rauschenberg Foundation?

C.M. We did not. We took it all the way to the finish line. We had all the papers and had the whole panel. We realised that we did not have an authentication problem. We did not have the problem Warhol had. Also, I think authentication is different in America. It is a legal morass and it can be a huge financial hindrance. I am interested in technology and how it will impact this, whether it is blockchain or something else. We do not know yet, but I do think it will change things.

H.V. It is completely different in America, where you have another law system. In Europe we have the so-called “moral rights.” It changes completely, of course. In America, even if you win, you have to pay. In Europe, it is different. So I think in Europe, there are a lot of estates who do authenticate. In America, they do not. I actually think it is important to authenticate, especially for the artist. If you do not, what credibility does the artist have in the market? But let us see, maybe in the future it will not be such a big issue anymore.

N.H. I think you just have to be very clear about who is in charge of it.

A.S. That is the issue.

N.H. We have made false certificates as well. People really have to know. It has to be very official, estates need to be sure that they really know.

H.V. Yes, but it is also about the credibility that you build. You cannot say, “I am now the one who authenticates.” It is something that grows.

N.H. Yes, but when you go into the secondary market, you have a certificate made by galleries or some other people.

A.S. We will always defer to the estate or foundation and, if they prefer that we do not it, then we do not. But that is part of our conversation. And frankly, we work for them, so we give them our advice and reach an agreement that works, that is amicable and that is always in the best interest of their mission statement and their core values. Is this important to them? For some it is, for some it is not.

Q2. Hi. This is absolutely fascinating to me. I work closely with an artist in his mid-60s and I have encouraged him for ages to do just what you are saying, but there has been considerable resistance on his part. I think it probably has something to do with the fact that he would have to face his mortality. How would you recommend I handle the situation? Where do I start in trying to convince? I am interested in your advice, maybe your anecdotes.

N.H. Does he have a family? I think that is very important, whether he has heirs or not.

Q2. Yes, he has a family. He has heirs.

N.H. So he has to take care of them.

A.S. It needs to be a very personal conversation. However, it is very easy for people to turn to their attorney, who will put together something, and they will merely sign it because they want it off their table. The problem is: it may not be something that they thoroughly understand or that is in the best interest of their legatees.

**“AN ESTATE CAN SOMEHOW BE THE DOOR
TO IMMORTALITY. NOT TAKING CARE OF IT
PROPERLY MIGHT BE THE WORST GIFT HE
LEAVES TO HIS CHILDREN.”**

C.M. It probably will be uninspired.

A.S. Completely. And, frankly, it may be against their views as an artist and their work, etc. They may just not have entered a broader conversation about what the options are.

M.G. Is there a way of asking the question that is not, “What do you want to do when you die”? Is there a way to say it in a more accessible way?

C.M. I think it is true: how you ask the questions is everything. In fact, an estate can be your last symphony, so to speak. I am working with a living artist on expanding his philanthropy and starting a residency in a village. It was really about asking inspiring questions and talking about things that he loved, things that mattered and choosing words that inspired him, thinking and taking tours of places that he loved. So it was not about death. It was about living. He is young, he is 67, so it was about, “You still have forty years ahead. Let us make something really big happen, it could be your biggest creative gesture.” I do not mean to be trite, but I think he is really into it. It is great to get that inspiration.

H.V. I would add two things. First, an estate can somehow be the door to immortality. So it can be very interesting and important. The other thing is, not taking care of it properly might be the worst gift he leaves to his children. So planning ahead is very important, because you can leave a big estate, but if you did not think about the money, or if it is split between too many people... You have to think about that.

A.S. I will give you an example. When I first got out of college, I worked for an artist who was extremely temperamental. He worked in editions of five and was so controlling of the work that he only ever wanted to make two out of all the five. He had a very contentious relationship with his son. They never got along. They barely spoke. He would not acknowledge him and he was not interested in creating a foundation or anything to help the kid out. The artist dies, the son inherits the work and he convinces his dealer to finish all the editions because he wants to cash in on all the hell that his father put him through. That is clearly against what the father wanted.

N.H. I think you have raised a really important point. People are irrational and when they are emotional and their parents are involved, it can get very delicate.

Q3. I just have a comment. I would like to add that, for a gallerist, an artist one has worked with is never dead. Artists never die. When the gallery dies, then it is done. Also, most problems for the artists happen after death. From what I see, it always has to do with the family, not the galleries. When they have trouble during the artist's lifetime, then there are discussions afterwards. So an artist can die twice. First the person, then the work. I have seen many cases where, after twenty years, there are still problems with lawyers and all the rest. It can be a very sad story and it is not often discussed in the academies. I am very happy to hear you say that the future for an artist is when young people are interested. I agree. Thank you for this presentation. Academies and art institutes should do more to warn people and talk about problems like these.

H.V. I would like to react to your comment about the family being the worst part. Can you imagine what it is like? Estates are a business. Actually, they are the only business in the world where the owner dies and the heirs are not prepared to take over. If your father has a big business, if he is a banker, rest assured you will be prepared. There will be a whole group of people trained to advise you. With an artist, that does not happen. An artist wants to be immortal. To an extent, creation is to be immortal, so he will not talk about his death, especially not with his children. Also, children sometimes have a bad relationship with the father, because it is very difficult to have an artist parent, it is quite conflictive. So it is somewhat normal that heirs are not prepared. Even if they want to do it, nobody has trained them to, which is why we try to help them.

Q4. In some situations, an artist has been working with a gallery for over forty or fifty years. Then he or she dies and the gallery keeps on going, but a bigger gallery comes and takes over the work. What do you think about that?

**“ESTATES ARE A BUSINESS.
ACTUALLY, THEY ARE THE ONLY
BUSINESS IN THE WORLD WHERE
THE OWNER DIES AND THE
HEIRS ARE NOT PREPARED TO
TAKE OVER.”**

A.S. I think there are two sides to that equation. For example, I was not familiar with Philippe Vandenberg's work during his lifetime, but I have to tell you it is some of the most interesting and joyful work that I have seen in the last decade. I really have to congratulate the gallery, because they have exposed the work to a huge audience and to so many artists. They brought it to North America and it was covered internationally by the press. I do not know the story behind it, I do not know if there was a gallery that handled his work regularly and lost an opportunity there. All I know is I have been in both sides, so I understand. And there is a lot of resistance to these situations, but I know that it has changed the perception of Philippe Vandenberg's work on an international level and I doubt that would have happened otherwise. I think it has a lot to do with what galleries, independently, can offer. Some are suited to do things and some maybe lack the resources, so each situation is different.

M.G. Thank you. What I take from this panel is how specific each particular case can be. Maybe the questions to ask are the same, but the answers are always very different. My lasting memory of this session will be Natasha's "human beings are irrational." With that in mind, I just want to say thank you very much, Natasha, Christy, Adam and Hélène. You have been superb.

Ernst Hilger

Ernst Hilger is a philanthropist, art curator and gallery owner. He founded the Galerie Ernst Hilger in 1971, located at Dorotheergasse 5 in Vienna's 1st district. It represents the works of artists such as Erró and Mel Ramos, along with exponents of Austrian modernism from the 1960s onward and the main exponents of the most important international art movements of the 20th century. Hilger NEXT provides artists from cutting-edge countries with a platform. In order to extend the cooperation with international museums, the Hilger BROTKunsthalle was inaugurated in 2009. Hilger was the head of FEAGA for several years and member of numerous art fair committees, including Art Basel. Hilger acted as the longest-serving president of the Austrian Gallery Association and was instrumental in establishing the present conception of the role of galleries as partners of museums, collectors and representatives of the State.

VISIBLE – INVISIBLE. THE FEAGA EUROPEAN GALLERY AWARDS

SPEAKER
Ernst Hilger



VISIBLE - INVISIBLE. THE FEAGA EUROPEAN GALLERY AWARDS

The second day of the 6th Barcelona Symposium began with an institutional presentation. Ernst Hilger, board member of the Federation of European Art Galleries Association (FEAGA), introduced the audience to this dynamic “association of associations” and, more specifically, to the European Gallery Awards it organises.

Hilger emphasised the importance of collective efforts and umbrella organisations as the most effective way to defend the interests of the gallery sector. “You can only have a vote if you have a voice, and you can only have a voice if you have a vote,” he explained. FEAGA was created in 1999 with a threefold goal: to promote a code of best practices for art market professionals, to lobby for an economic, legal and political framework that meets the needs of European galleries, and to increase public recognition of the sector’s contribution to the production and conservation of art.

FEAGA members represent over 2000 modern and contemporary art galleries in the European Union and Switzerland. In 2005, with the support of Art Basel, they decided to create two prizes to highlight the importance of galleries. Whereas the Lifetime Achievement Award recognises the trajectory of an established gallery, the Innovation and Creative Award seeks to give visibility to young, promising initiatives. The symbolic prize consists of the object created by Leo Zogmayer, an aluminium figure with the engraved words “VISIBLE INVISIBLE,” a reference to the galleries’ behind-the-scene efforts to give art maximum exposure. Hilger commented on the galleries that have received the award so far.

The list is as follows:

	Lifetime Achievement Award	Innovation and Creative Award
2005	Ernst Beyeler (Switzerland)	Galerie Esther Schipper (Germany)
2006	Galerie Denise René (France)	Ellen de Bruijne Projects (The Netherlands)
2007	Annely Juda Fine Art (Great Britain)	Zeno X Gallery (Belgium)
2008	Galerie Hans Mayer (Germany)	Layr/Wüstenhagen (Austria)
2009	Galeria Soledad Lorenzo (Spain)	Galerie BQ (Germany)
2010	Galerie Kaj Forsblom (Finland)	V1 Gallery (Denmark)
2011	-	Studio La Città (Italy)
2012	Galerie Krinzinger (Austria)	Freymond-Guth Fine Arts (Switzerland)
2013	Leslie Waddington (Great Britain)	Ani Molnár Gallery (Hungary)
2014	Galerie Gisela Capitain (Germany)	Galerie Jocelyn Wolff (France)
2015	Galerie Fons Welters (The Netherlands)	KOW (Germany)
2016	Galerie Klüser (Germany)	Temnikova & Kasela Gallery (Estonia)
2017	Galerie Nächst St. Stephan (Austria)	Galleria Massimo Minini (Italy)

On a more personal note, Hilger, who founded his own gallery in 1971 and was elected president of the Austrian Gallery Association in 1988, celebrated the art market's ability to recover from previous critical periods. However, he lamented the disappearance of middle-class buyers, whom he described as "the intellectual backbone of the gallery, who forced you to talk and to discuss your work." To conclude his intervention, Hilger advised young art professionals to strive for transparency and generosity.

David Juda

David Juda started working with his mother, Annely Juda, in 1967, who opened her first gallery in 1960. In 1967, Annely Juda Fine Art was established, representing contemporary international artists including Christo, David Hockney, Leon Kossoff and Anthony Caro. The gallery also exhibits 20th-century avant-garde, specialising in Russian constructivism, Bauhaus and De Stijl. Juda has been an active member of the Society of London Art Dealers for over forty years, and served as their Chairman from 2014 to 2017.

Claes Nordenhake

Claes Nordenhake opened his first gallery in Malmö in 1976. In 1986, the gallery moved its activities to the Royal Academy of Fine Arts building in Stockholm. The new space offered ideal conditions for the presentation of large-scale sculpture by artists such as Ulrich Rückriem, Richard Serra and Meuser. In 2000, Nordenhake opened a second gallery in Berlin and, after seven years, moved the gallery to a historic building in the Kreuzberg district. From 2003 to 2012, Nordenhake was member of the Art Basel Committee. He was one of the six founders of Gallery Weekend Berlin in 2005. The group initiated abc—art berlin contemporary in 2008.

Lisa Schiff

One of the leading and internationally recognised art advisors, Lisa Schiff has over a decade of experience building private collections and foundations. As the founder and Principal of SFA Art Advisory, she has offices in New York, Los Angeles, Portland and London. Schiff is ABD on her Ph.D. in Art History from the Graduate Center, CUNY. She holds an MA in Art History from the University of Miami, Florida. She is the co-founder of VIA Art, a non-profit organisation dedicated to supporting artistic production, thought leadership and public engagement.

Jeffrey Boloten

Jeffrey Boloten is the Course Leader for the Art & Business Programme at Sotheby's Institute of Art, in London. Since 2004, he is also co-founder & Managing Director of Art inSight Ltd., the education partner of art market research firm ArtTactic. He is a frequent speaker on the global art and art investment markets, and is a founding member of PAIAM (Professional Advisors to the International Art Market). Jeffrey is also the author of the "The Market for Photography" chapter in the *Grove Dictionary of Art* (Oxford University Press).

GALLERISTS AND ART ADVISORS: HOW SHOULD THEY WORK TOGETHER

SPEAKERS

**David Juda, Claes Nordenhake,
Lisa Schiff**

MODERATOR

Jeffrey Boloten



GALLERISTS AND ART ADVISORS: HOW SHOULD THEY WORK TOGETHER

Jeffrey Boloten (J.B.) Before we start a discussion, I would like to contextualise what we are going to talk about. I think the world of art advisory is becoming of crucial importance, today more than ever. As we all know, the art world is a scary and mysterious place and it is becoming increasingly difficult to navigate as it gets more complicated and more global. People are scrambling to find out what they really should be doing, how they should be buying and what exactly to navigate through. There are also younger, new collectors coming in these days who have money and need more advice than ever. And there are also lots of people vying to provide that advice, probably competing with the advisory role, whether they are the auction houses, the galleries themselves or even financial institutions. Lots of people are trying to be the go-to guide for these new collectors. And because the art market is unregulated, as we know—which is always a very interesting issue—an art advisor plays a role that is also unregulated, which is very different from something like the real estate industry or the financial services industry, where people advising are overseen by a regulatory body. They have set contracts that they have to follow, they have regulatory rules, whereas art advisory and the art world are a kind of Wild West—not that you are the cowboys, but it does not have that degree of regulation.

It will be interesting to unpack today what that role is exactly, where it is headed and how it relates to galleries, to artists and how, as we say, we could all work together as well. To begin with, I think it would be interesting to talk, from each of your perspectives, about what an art advisor is. What is the role of an art advisor and what kind of background is necessary? Lisa, I know you have a Ph.D. in Art History. Is that essential? Is that a prerequisite for what you think an art advisor should be? What is that role, basically?

Lisa Schiff (L.S.) I have been doing this now for almost sixteen years. I think, over time, I have really understood what it is, because when I started I really had no idea. There was no real roadmap and there were not that many art advisors as there are now. What I have learned is that it is really about making the art world transparent and, as you said, helping people navigate all the different personalities and characters, to educate them. In terms of what kind of background is necessary, for a while I wished I had an MBA, because I have a lot of financial clients. But the truth is the best thing that I could have done was to study Art History. As much as I would love to say that I am Dr Schiff, I am ABD on my Ph.D., which means I have done all but my dissertation. I spent a lot of time doing doctoral work and I taught at the university. Probably the biggest crisis we are in right now has to do with the lack of any historical knowledge or relevancy. I really fight to preserve that, so I do think it is really important to have some art history background.

“LOTS OF PEOPLE ARE TRYING TO BE THE GO-TO GUIDE FOR THESE NEW COLLECTORS. AND BECAUSE THE ART MARKET IS UNREGULATED, AS WE KNOW, AN ART ADVISOR PLAYS A ROLE THAT IS ALSO UNREGULATED.”

J.B. Claes and David, you have been gallerists for many years. Is this a new role? And has it actually changed in Europe in your lifetimes?

Claes Nordenhake (C.N.) I am very much opposed to this phenomenon, which to me feels very new. It could be very efficient and there are a few art advisors, in my experience, who do their job, but very few are of the quality that we would want to have. To my experience, an art advisor is somebody who went through the course at either Christie's or Sotheby's, was probably hired by a gallery and then kicked out, so they started working on their own. The lack of conduct that there seems to be in the sector is deplorable.

L.S. I think it is the same in the gallery sector.

J.B. We are immediately getting into controversy.

C.N. The gallery creates artists.

L.S. Artists create artists.

C.N. That is true.

L.S. There are deplorable artists, there are deplorable galleries, there are deplorable people everywhere, but there are also upstanding people, so I do not think it is fair to just make a derogatory statement, saying that we were all kicked out of galleries so we went into business for ourselves. I was not kicked out of a gallery.

“I AM VERY MUCH OPPOSED TO THIS PHENOMENON, WHICH TO ME FEELS VERY NEW. THE LACK OF CONDUCT THAT THERE SEEMS TO BE IN THE SECTOR IS DEPLORABLE.”

J.B. Claes, what particularly is deplorable in your view? Can you define what sort of behaviour you find objectionable?

C.N. Let me explain. In Miami, last month, the art advisors were only interested in the work that was most commercial and was the biggest attraction for the audience. So an art advisor came and put a hold on a piece, because he wanted to speak to their client. This procedure stretched over a long time, so the piece was on hold for such a long time that I lost the other clients. That was because of this advisor, with whom we have worked before. And it happens all the time.

J.B. Is that a particular thing about an advisor or is that something a collector would do as well?

L.S. I was just going to make that point.

C.N. No, with clients you say, “Do you want it or not?” and they decide.

J.B. David, let me bring you into this. In your experience, have you seen the role of art advisors growing or changing?

David Juda (D.J.) I think even when I first started, in 1967, there were already advisors. They were called “runners” and had a slightly different role. Things have evolved now, through modern technology and everything else. Advisors have a role and, as a gallerist, it is important

to accept that. But if they have a role, they also have a responsibility. Just as a gallery should have a responsibility to the artist and to the client, so should art advisors. I think there are a number of extremely good advisors who do their research, do their work properly and have a correct procedure with the gallerist and so on. They are extremely helpful and very, very good. Unfortunately, as Claes has said, there are a number who are just, in a way, becoming like go-betweens. “I know this client, I know the gallery knows this client as well, but I can get a wedge in here,” that is their thinking. But this also happens with other galleries so, in fairness to art advisors, it is not just them. What we are really talking about here, I think, is a code of conduct. We as galleries are increasingly in need of a code of conduct, because the sums involved are enormous. But I think, likewise, there should be an advisors association. Actually, I do not know, is there one already?

“ADVISORS HAVE A ROLE AND, AS A GALLERIST, IT IS IMPORTANT TO ACCEPT THAT. BUT IF THEY HAVE A ROLE, THEY ALSO HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY.”

L.S. There is.

D.J. And do you discuss things like that?

L.S. I am not part of it.

D.J. Why are you not part of it?

L.S. I have never found it relevant.

J.B. I think that is what is interesting. I was going to talk about the unregulated nature of the role of the art advisor, which is like the rest of the art world, the whole industry.

L.S. Is the gallery regulated?

J.B. Exactly, that is what I am saying. But is the sector self-regulating?

L.S. When you talk about regulation, you are talking about finances. But we have to understand there is an art history component, so how am I regulating that? Sorry.

J.B. Absolutely, but what I am saying is, like most things in the art market, art advisory is unregulated, but is there a sort of self-regulation that takes place? As you are saying, if there is bad behaviour, is there not some sort of internal punishment that goes on? Maybe you will not deal with that advisor again, so it is not like there are no repercussions for acting in a negative way. You have to maintain a good reputation.

“IN MY EXPERIENCE, MANY OF THE ADVISORS ASK FOR COMMISSIONS, NOT ONLY FROM THE CLIENT FOR WHOM THEY ARE SUPPOSEDLY WORKING, BUT ALSO FROM THE GALLERY. AND THAT IS ABSOLUTELY WHERE THE ROAD DIVIDES.”

L.S. Yeah, or you would not be able to buy anything! I do not want to convince people that they should like art advisors or have art advisors, but if you have questions about how it works, I can answer them.

J.B. From a gallerist's perspective, is the art advisor not doing a service by bringing new clients, new types of clients that maybe would not step through the door had it not been for them? Claes and David, do you see that happening?

C.N. That is the service that we would hope for. I think that there are two ways in which I have experienced this service. One of the most difficult things is that, in my experience, many of the advisors ask for commissions, not only from the client for whom they are supposedly working, but also from the gallery. And that is absolutely where the road divides. If you ask for a commission from the gallery, then you are not really defending the client's best interest. It is the client who is supposed to pay for this service. Do you agree, Lisa?

L.S. I think what you are talking about is criminal and it is disgusting behaviour, but that is not the advisors that I work with or what I do. I am sure there are many of them.

J.B. What is your business model?

L.S. I have been working with the same collectors for fifteen years. You talk about competition because there are all these new advisors

coming out, but the truth is: A, there are not that many really good ones or really educated ones; and B, you can only have so many clients. I cannot just pile on clients. It has to be a really good person who really wants an advisor. I get phone calls all day long from people who think that I have special access and that I could be hired to get access. And I do not have access at all! The client has access, I am just there representing on their behalf. So I work with my collectors, we work on building their collections. Everybody is very different in what they want. Some people have their own contacts with galleries and then I just get called in to discuss, help make decisions and then negotiate at the final hour. Some of my clients do not know anything about art, so I start little by little trying to help them.

“I THINK ONE OF THE HARD THINGS ABOUT ADVISING THAT YOU COULD FALL INTO IS BUILDING YOUR COLLECTION. I WORK HARD NOT TO DO THAT OR NOT TO IMPOSE MY OWN TASTE.”

I think one of the hard things about advising that you could fall into is building your collection: finding some galleries that you are really close with, and artists that you really love, and just kind of building the same collection over and over again. I work hard not to do that or not to impose my own taste. I try to figure out what a client is like, what their aesthetic interests are and then to expose them to things, “If you like this, then maybe also look at this.” I just go across the board and let them find it. It is not about me selling to them in that way. I also found, over time, that my client is the collector, not the gallery. Because I have been very manipulated by galleries, many times, to try to push their agenda on to my clients. I really have to play Geneva, because I love galleries, I find them more and more important as we are losing some kind of filter into good taste—and I hate using that word, but I do not know how else to say it. I do really believe in historical relevancy. If you do not have any kind of content, if I am just doing an art fair off of Instagram, then we are in trouble. So I do find the role of the gallery crucial. It is important to me, but I am very careful with how close I get to galleries. I am very aware of their needing to make sales. Yesterday, we were talking about having a sales quota. At some of the mega-galleries, when you have twenty sales people, it is really dangerous, so I think I am actually protecting a lot of collectors from galleries.

C.N. But you do not do any exhibitions, do you?

L.S. It is not my job.

J.B. Is there an issue with bringing clients to a gallery and potentially losing them? Has that happened, that the gallery takes over?

L.S. I have no interest in owning their relationships. I usually ask people off the bat, “Do you want to have me be the primary contact? Do you want to negotiate? Do you want to get to know everybody or do you want to be buffered and private?” And it is completely up to them. One of my best clients, who did not know anything about the art world, is very close with a lot of different galleries now and I am very happy for that.

“MY CLIENT IS THE COLLECTOR, NOT THE GALLERY. BECAUSE I HAVE BEEN VERY MANIPULATED BY GALLERIES, MANY TIMES, TO TRY TO PUSH THEIR AGENDA ON TO MY CLIENTS.”

J.B. And your financial relations, is it a retainer or how does that work?

L.S. It depends on the collector. Either way, it kind of averages out to a percentage. Some people are more comfortable with the retainer. I think it is the best model just for regulation, if you will. Also, the job is really hard. For me to be on top of the global art world, I have to be on an airplane 24/7, I have to pay staff, you know? Having a retainer is great, because then you are getting a constant feed, but the issue is that not everybody is building a museum. People are like, “Well, I am not going to spend that much,” so they would prefer to keep it on a commission basis. However, if we are on a commission basis, we are on 100% exclusivity and a contract, so even if you are on vacation in Saint-Bard and you want to buy something, I might waive my fee, but I have to transact, I have to be part of the conversation.

J.B. Let me mention the case of Simon Dickinson. He and his wife just won a big judgement, an eight-figure judgement—I am not going to say the number, but it is a lot. The high court in the UK upheld what was called “the gentlemen’s agreement” that he had with the person

he was sort of dealing with, facilitating a very big sale. So the idea that this word-of-mouth thing was upheld, the idea of not necessarily having to have a contract, I think legitimises the fluid nature of the art world and how it works, in some way.

L.S. I think in that instance he was acting as a dealer. I think there is confusion between advising and dealing, or maybe it is just a slippery slope.

“IT IS VERY SIMPLE: I WOULD NOT HAVE ANY CLIENTS ANYMORE. IF I AM NOT TRANSPARENT, IF I AM NOT HONEST AND IF I AM NOT DOING A REALLY GOOD JOB, I WOULD BE OUT OF BUSINESS.”

D.J. Obviously, you are a very well-known art advisor and you are very well organised. You have staff, so you are putting in a lot for the client. Likewise, what Claes is talking about is that the gallery is putting in an enormous amount for the artists and it involves years and years of building up things. Where things go wrong is with people who call themselves art advisors but really they just happen to know a couple of friends who have some money or are collectors, so they are basically just in for a wedge, for a bit of the money, so to speak. That, I think, is the problem. It is quite extreme, and I think that is why a lot of galleries get upset. You can be at an art fair talking to a collector and somebody will barge in, an art advisor, and will screw the deal to go somewhere else or vice versa. Galleries do the same. We see a lot of galleries that do not behave correctly either, but what we really need is not mass regulation, but some kind of a code of conduct. If art advisors do not behave correctly, there are ways of not working with them. The same goes for galleries. We know that there are galleries that do not pay their artists, we need to work on that. I think the market is going that way.

L.S. I think you cannot regulate that way. The organisation that exists for art advisors is probably full of many of these misbehaving advisors. In the end, it is very simple: I would not have any clients anymore. If I am not transparent, if I am not honest and if I am not doing a really good job, I would be out of business. It seems so obvious to me when

there is somebody who is just completely useless and knows nothing. If somebody is happy with that kind of work, then...

D.J. I think there is no question about us here. Hopefully we are talking about other people. I think we should be talking about them: the galleries who misbehave, the artists and art advisors who misbehave. There must be something that can be done.

J.B. I agree with Lisa, I think the whole industry is reputational. You survive on reputation.

L.S. This conversation is kind of silly, almost. There are horrible collectors. Horrible. I do not even want to call them collectors. There are people speculating everywhere. So there are all kinds of bad behaviour, all over the art world. It is kind of what makes it funny, sometimes. I think what is interesting is not to talk about how to police these people—because I think you have to police yourself—, but how can we function, how do we work with galleries? How can we help artists better? How do we work for collectors? And it is a really hard time for galleries. This is what I come across a lot. I have been doing this for fifteen years. Back then, there would be one gallery in Los Angeles that had this artist, this artist and this artist and that is where I went for them. All of a sudden, there are twenty galleries. I remember I was very close to a gallerist in Los Angeles who had X artist and then that artist had a show in New York, where I live. I told him, “This is an amazing show, I want to get this piece for my client,” and it was as if I had betrayed this person so badly for going to another gallery.

Now it is almost impossible to even see straight. There is so much stuff coming all the time. When I go into a gallery, sometimes we get this, “Well, your client is not supporting the rest of the programme.” Just because I am an advisor, it does not mean that I am coming in and saying, “I only want your best stuff.” But I will go through everything and decide what I like. I do not look for market artists. I have some collectors that tend to buy your blue-chip artist and others who could not care less and are looking for specific things that fit their collection. So I tend to buy across the board and in a lot of galleries, which has been very helpful. Another thing I see all the time and I think is a huge disservice is that artist X, who is so famous, is only sold if some other five artists are also purchased—which is a horrible thing for them, because then the collector is just going to want to sell all of it, because

they did not want it in the first place. So there are all these different pressures going on. There is bad behaviour on both sides. Working with a large gallery as an advisor is like a landmine, because it takes a long time to figure out how to get around the fact that, when you walk in the door, somebody basically calls you as theirs. That is it. You are that salesperson's thing. So the truth is that you really need to work with ten different people at some of these large galleries, or the owner only, because you will not be able to get a straight answer about anything or get access to what you are looking for. I hate to use the word access, but there is so much infighting and politics happening on the inside of some of these large galleries that that has been really helpful to understand. And it is good to explain it to a collector so they understand you and they know what is going on.

“I HAVE SOME COLLECTORS THAT TEND TO BUY YOUR BLUE-CHIP ARTIST AND OTHERS WHO COULD NOT CARE LESS AND ARE LOOKING FOR SPECIFIC THINGS THAT FIT THEIR COLLECTION. I TEND TO BUY ACROSS THE BOARD AND IN A LOT OF GALLERIES.”

J.B. Just to carry on with what we were talking about, is one of the benefits of having an art advisor that they act as a filter? Because you are sort of saying, “I am not going to take on people who are speculators. My clients are going to have the right motivations.” That helps the galleries.

L.S. I have done everything wrong at some point. I took on a collector years ago who was a young MTV guy and I thought, “This is so exciting, I have a young client.” I started with a really small group of collectors from Boston—who are so lovely and amazing, but you have to continue to grow and not put all your eggs in one basket—, so I got this young guy from Los Angeles, who completely bamboozled me and was planning on using me to buy things. I fired him after six months. You start to learn to see this kind of client, you can sort of read between the lines. It is really obvious, that was just my first time, so I did not realise that was happening. Also, speculation is relatively new. Even without speculation, when I am interviewing clients, there are certain cities in particular where you just know: they all buy the same things, they just want what their neighbours have, so I try not to get into that

trendy thing. It is boring. I cannot be selling art. If I am just trying to sell to make a commission, or to make money, I will not have any clients. I really have to build great collections and that means taking a long time for people to find something.

“I TRY TO TELL MY CLIENTS NOT TO BUY AT FAIRS, TO JUST TAKE THEM AS RESEARCH. THE AMOUNT OF ART THAT PEOPLE ARE PRESENTED EVERY DAY, ALL DAY LONG, IS SO INSANE!”

I try to tell my clients not to buy at fairs, to just take them as research. The amount of art that people are presented every day, all day long, is so insane! You are just supposed to keep buying and buying and buying. If you are a good collector, and I work for a lot of them, you are offered things all day long. And if you do not keep buying, well, “You are not supporting the gallery.” There has to be a limit.

J.B. What are the direct connections between art advisors and the artists? Do they exist? If so, how does the gallery feel about them?

C.N. Well, there are a few artists who do work with agents. I would also like to question that. Of course, it depends on the quality of the work that the agent does, and there are some very efficient agents, comparable to these very few efficient and reputable art advisors. But in this audience, where there are mainly art dealers or gallerists, I am sure that everybody has the same experience as I do. We have had major problems with art advisors. A code of conduct is not regulation. It is a suggestion on how to handle problems when they arise, but just like for galleries, it is very important.

J.B. Let us move on a bit. The role of art advisory is going beyond the classic art advisor like you, Lisa. Auction houses seem to be moving into art advisory. Does that work? How is that happening? Are they taking your role as an art advisor in-house into an auction?

L.S. I think even banks are doing it. I do not find it threatening at all. First of all, I have to say, I am so excited about AAP. That is amazing.

J.B. She means Art Agency Partners, which has been acquired by Sotheby's.

“A CODE OF CONDUCT IS NOT REGULATION. IT IS A SUGGESTION ON HOW TO HANDLE PROBLEMS WHEN THEY ARISE, BUT JUST LIKE FOR GALLERIES, IT IS VERY IMPORTANT.”

L.S. Yes. That is really important for the industry of art advisory, because we need a model. Thea Westreich was the only model, but it was not really clear. I feel like AAP is quite clear. I was on their website last night feeling really jealous about how much better than mine it is, but I was thinking, “This is so fascinating, all the different tasks that art advisors can get involved in: strategising, museum acquisitions, helping out with artists’ estates, having different departments...” I advise for a foundation. I feel like I am the Lorax for artists. I agonise about how to engage artists in different ways, rather than just having art auctions and making tons of money. So we have been working really closely with artists to produce things together and that has been really interesting. As an advisor, there is a lot of potential. It is getting more and more complicated. Just managing collections when they get big enough becomes not problematic, but complex. And figuring out how to activate a collection is also part of my job, like, “Alright, let us see if we can get a curator to come in here and look through everything. Can we get a show pulled out of this? What boards do you want to sit on? Can I introduce you to this non-profit?” I co-founded a non-profit called VIA Art, which basically gives money away to art production. I got some of my clients involved in that. I think a lot can be done by a really good advisor. There are horrible collectors and horrible art advisors out there—I just do not want to say they are art advisors, I would like to say they are just runners or...

J.B. We are back at that again. Let us move on. Have either of you, as gallerists, had an interaction with this new sort of art advisors from financial institutions, which are now getting more into that role? What about the auction houses who are sort of acting as art advisors, have you been approached by them or not really?

D.J. Not yet, as far as I know. Coming back to art advisors, we work quite often with a lot of them and they all have acted very professionally. I

think the discussion we are having here is, what can they contribute? And they can contribute an awful lot. But the gallerists can also contribute an awful lot to the collectors and it is finally in the middle way of correctness. I come back to it again, I do not think it is a silly subject, I find it is a very serious subject. You have people who have no knowledge at all. If you listen to the conversations between art advisors and collectors—and I am sure this happens with gallerists as well—, it is pretty mind-boggling. We need to increase professionalism. We should not be having a discussion about ourselves. This is about the industry. I think it is crucial to talk about it and to find ways to make it better.

“WE NEED A MODEL. THEA WESTREICH WAS THE ONLY MODEL, BUT IT WAS NOT REALLY CLEAR. I FEEL LIKE AAP IS QUITE CLEAR.”

L.S. I still hold that it will regulate itself. The client is really the one deciding to hire these deplorable professionals, I suppose. I would think what is more interesting is, how can galleries and professional art advisors work together in a more beneficial way? There are a number of galleries that I work with where I will call and talk about the collection and brainstorm, like, “What do you think about this? What do you think about that?” So when I bring a collector over, there is not this animosity of, “Oh, you are an art advisor.” It is more like, “This is Lisa, okay.” And that is almost always my experience, thank God, because I think it would be really embarrassing if it were not.

Then we sit down together and I do not pretend to own the conversation about the artist. I am always learning as well, because it keeps on going, right? I just know how to ask the right questions, sometimes. However, I certainly do not want to be this buffer between a gallery and a collector at all. Again, I think the most important thing is that I do not have a sales quota, so when someone is pushing on my client—which they do—, I can say, “Pause for a second.”

J.B. David, just following on from what you are saying, how can art advisors and galleries work together with the goal of promoting an artist’s career? How do you think an art advisor can contribute to what you are doing, in terms of building the artist?

D.J. I think in two ways. One is that the art gallery business has evolved so much and has become so speedy. When I first started, in 1973, it was the first oil crisis and my mother said, “There is nobody coming in. The collectors are not coming in.” I said, “But there must be some collectors,” and my mother said, “There are only really three collectors in Britain.” Now there are hundreds of them and the art business has become a wonderful situation where there is a fantastic amount of collectors, but galleries are not always putting in enough research and work for them, because we have so many. In that way, I think art advisors can be helpful, because if they are doing what you are saying you do—and I know you do it, Lisa—that is great. It is like having an insurance broker who does it all.

“THERE IS A FANTASTIC AMOUNT OF COLLECTORS, BUT GALLERIES ARE NOT ALWAYS PUTTING IN ENOUGH RESEARCH AND WORK FOR THEM. IN THAT WAY, I THINK ART ADVISORS CAN BE HELPFUL.”

So art advisors can do a lot, but it is a different thing. They are there for one side, whereas the gallerists are there for both sides, in a way. In other words, they are there representing the artists and trying to sell their artists’ work and, if they are a good gallery, they should also be there to make sure that the collector builds a good collection and is acquiring good work. So we are helping both sides. The auction houses were meant to be impartial agents, but now they do all of our work. They are art advisors and art galleries; they represent the collector, the seller and the buyer, which I obviously do not think is quite right, but I do honestly think art advisors have a role to play, if they play it efficiently.

L.S. I think part of the problem has to do with the expansion. There are a couple of young galleries in New York that I go to when I feel like buying something for myself. I keep my eye on them. And I think a lot of galleries advise. They still do. There are collectors out there that just go to a few galleries. That was really the way it used to be. But now there is so much information reaching collectors all day long! Even for me it is overwhelming. I used to be on top of the art fairs, now I am like, “I do not care, it is too much.” So I think actually it is really hard for a gallery to build a collection with one person, the bottom line is the

first thing coming into a lot of gallerists’ minds every day—because you have to do twenty art fairs and pay all this staff and keep your artists happy. I feel like increasingly galleries are really there for the artists. And they need to be. That is your client. And I feel like increasingly art advisors are needed to help the collector.

J.B. You talked about expansion, the globalisation aspect of the art market. I do not know how advisors or galleries cope with keeping their fingers on the pulse in a global art market. How do you know what is happening in China, in the Middle East or everywhere else?

“I FEEL LIKE INCREASINGLY GALLERIES ARE REALLY THERE FOR THE ARTISTS. AND THEY NEED TO BE. AND I FEEL LIKE INCREASINGLY ART ADVISORS ARE NEEDED TO HELP THE COLLECTOR.”

D.J. I would just like to comment on Lisa’s point about galleries being there for the artists. They are not just there for the artists, they are there for the collectors too. Years ago, a collector would have a gallery and, even if they saw something in another gallery, they would buy it through that gallery. In the Far East that system does still work and it is very good, because it builds a relationship of trust with the gallery. And if it is a good gallery, it is not going to say, “Do not buy that from that gallery, etc., etc.” But I think it is important to know that, as a gallerist, you are representing artists, but you are also there for the collector. I have a number of really good collectors and I would not sell them something that I did not think would fit their collection just because I show that artist.

L.S. I think actually that is the conflict and maybe the big change. In America, almost every gallery I would talk to would say, hands down, 100%, their client is the artist. Period. That is their priority, bar none. I think that is shifting and maybe that is where art advisors could be more needed. And it is shifting just by nature of doing twenty fairs a year. It is not every gallery, but I would say the bulk of them.

D.J. I would hate to think you are right.

L.S. I like the old days too—you know, one gallery, no Internet. It was

great, but things are really shifting. In a weird way, and this is where I hope galleries and art advisors can come together, the ability for shit art to sift into the system now is huge. It is so easy, because things are moving so fast and everybody is obsessed with the bottom line. All of a sudden you see a gallerist that you think is amazing take on a bad artist. And you can hardly believe it. I think protecting content is the hardest thing right now. Galleries are the creators of content—artists are. The galleries are bringing them together and providing some sort of platform so we can have a conversation, but if I am just going to Swizz Beatz' Instagram art fair... What is my filter? "I like it?" I am really fighting for that meaning. Maybe I am naive, but I feel like that is where we can come together.

J.B. But also, are you not in a prime position in the globalised art world? You can connect galleries internationally, because you are the agent in some way as well. You can fulfil that role. Is that something you see? If so, how do you manage that?

**"I DO NOT WANT TO DISCOVER ARTISTS AND
I DO NOT WANT TO MAKE ARTISTS. IT IS NOT
WHAT I DO."**

L.S. What do you mean by connecting?

J.B. Seeing what is happening at Hong Kong art fairs and connecting galleries internationally with collectors in the United States.

L.S. A lot of times, I look to curators to see what they are working on, to kind of get the international picture, because I do not want to discover artists and I do not want to make artists. It is not what I do. I want to see that they have been pulled through the system in a way that demands my attention. It is not to say I would not buy somebody who did not, but it is not really my job. Sometimes artists seek me out to do stuff like that and I have no interest, it is not my job and I would not do a good job at it. And by the way, I think galleries have the hardest position of all. It is so expensive and difficult to run a gallery. It is unbelievable, everything that you have to do to have these relationships. And, from what I understand, dealing with the artist is not easy at all either. So I do want to make clear that I think galleries are incredibly important. If we could work together to defend them, I would be really happy.

J.B. Great. On that note about coming together, I think we can open it up to questions from the audience.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND QUESTIONS (C/Q) FROM THE AUDIENCE

Q1. (Ernst Hilger) As a traditional gallerist I have some objections, but the main one is that we compare the enormous investment the gallery makes with what advisors do. The advisor can go around anywhere. Lisa, on the Internet I found that you work with galleries and with artists. This already poses a great contradiction for me, because to go directly to the artist is what the work of galleries should prevent.

**"ONE OF THE REASONS I DO NOT LIKE BUYING
FROM AN ARTIST'S STUDIO IS THAT THERE IS
NO CONTEXT. THERE IS NO SHOW, THERE IS
NO EXHIBITION HISTORY."**

L.S. But wait, here is how I work with artists. Take Andrea Bowers. I just produced a neon work with her. I contacted Andrew Kreps and we did an amazing project together, we put her on the outside of the Pérez Art Museum and gave her a show. That is it.

Q1. (Ernst Hilger) I did not mean cooperation with galleries. On your website it says that you work directly with artists.

L.S. It does not say it. In any case, by "directly with artists," I do not mean that I buy from artists' studios or have interest in that.

Q1. (Ernst Hilger) Great, because I think that is what many of your colleagues do and one of the reasons that many galleries have a problem with art advisors.

L.S. Buying from the studio? Well, first of all, you should be worried about the artist, if they are selling from the studio. Second of all, I do not do that. I will let you finish, but I just wanted to say that one of the reasons I do not like that is that there is no context. There is no show, there is no exhibition history. Also, the gallery should stop taking things made for art fairs. You should make sure it goes into a show first, sorry.

Q1. (Ernst Hilger) I completely agree and that is what I wanted to find out with my question. I also saw that you work with Leonardo DiCaprio. He just gave a gift of one of my former artists to the museum in Los Angeles. John Gerrard is somebody that we really built up for over ten years and, five weeks before the biennale, he said he wanted other representatives, which happens all the time.

“ANOTHER PROBLEM IS WHAT TO DO WHEN ARTISTS SELL FROM THE STUDIO. IT IS NOT LIKE ART ADVISORS ARE FORCING THEM TO DO IT. IT IS THEIR CHOICE TOO.”

L.S. How do you think DiCaprio knows who John Gerrard is?

Q1. (Ernst Hilger) Probably through you, but...

L.S. A good art advisor.

Q1. (Ernst Hilger) That is true, but where did you see his work?

L.S. I helped produce the piece at Lincoln Center through the non-profit I co-founded.

Q1. (Ernst Hilger) So already with his new gallery, Thomas Dane, right? Anyway, thank you very much. I just wanted to point out that really many art advisors go to the studios, which is a great problem for galleries, because we spend a lot of money building up artists and then suddenly they go.

L.S. I worked really hard to get that donation at LACMA and now I am fundraising—if anybody wants to give me \$200,000, you are welcome—to produce the John Gerrard outside of LACMA. We are working on that now. So we are not all bad, but I understand.

J.B. It is a hard crowd, Lisa!

L.S. No, it is okay. These are all good issues. Another problem that you are bringing up is what to do when artists sell from the studio. It is not like art advisors are forcing them to do it. It is their choice too.

Q2. Hello. I am working for an art fair in Brussels and I was wondering

if a fair can play a role in that, in the sense that many collectors and art advisors are invited to come and visit a fair, but you were saying that it is difficult to have some sort of regulation. Is there a way that a fair can help in that? For example, just like there are press badges, is there something that we can do working together with fairs to say, “This is really a knowledgeable art advisor”?

L.S. I find that offensive, somehow, because we are not talking about finances. That is a role I play. If you want me to take a Series 7 Exam I will, but I am very snotty about education, so I just think it will sort itself out. If you want to give me a badge... I have issues with the one organisation that does exist—that is a longer story we do not have to go into. In short, I think it self-regulates.

J.B. It is a good question, because art fairs like Basel are starting to become sort of regulatory. They have this code of conduct for the galleries now. Maybe that will extend to the entire industry.

L.S. The volume of business I do at art fairs should speak for itself.

Q3. (Alain Servais) Galleries sign agreements with most art fairs. They have conditions that they have to meet, which may be that the work is an original, that it is not fake, that it is not stolen, that they are paying the artists, etc. And you are asking whether art advisors, who after all are a business coming into the fairs, should be regulated in a similar way. I am very much in favour of not regulating everything, but it is not an uninteresting subject, because if a photographer goes into an art fair, he signs forms stating what he is allowed to do, what he is not allowed to do. Should advisors have to sign a similar form?

L.S. But what am I not allowed to do? I feel like an advisor is as good as their clients. If I do not have a good client, I suck.

D.J. But that is the same for me as a gallery!

L.S. And to have a good client, I have to have a break.

D.J. But I sign a form, you do not.

L.S. Well, do not sell anything to me then. Is it not that simple?

D.J. No, that is not the question. The question he is asking is, should there be some kind of regulation?

L.S. How, though?

D.J. I am not sure.

**“WE AS COLLECTORS NOW NEED TO
MARKET OURSELVES TO GET ACCESS TO
THE RIGHT WORKS. THAT IS ONE OF THE
PROBLEMS AND THAT IS WHY WE WOULD
NEED AN ADVISOR.”**

Q3. (Alain Servais) Can I ask my question, which goes in the same direction? I am a little bit embarrassed, first of all, to defend art advisors. I am surprised to be doing this. But I am even more surprised to see galleries going at a good professional—because Lisa is one of the good ones—and stigmatizing the whole profession through her. First of all, there is a problem. I remember, at the beginning of his career, a very major Belgian collector told me, “I do not understand why galleries are not considering me, because I am really ready to buy things.” In a way, we as collectors now need to market ourselves to get access to the right works. That is one of the problems and that is why we would need an advisor. You may want to get in the business and you may have the \$100,000 to buy, but you may not have access to that work, for example. Secondly, Claes, why did you put the work on hold for this art advisor in Art Miami? It was your choice.

C.N. Because we had been working with him for a long time.

Q3. (Alain Servais) It does not matter. If you do it, it is your choice. You do not have to. You see the same problem all across the gallery sector too.

C.N. Yeah, it was a mistake.

Q3. (Alain Servais) I have another example. A few years ago, a small gallery in MACO tells me, “Alain, a woman came with a group of Mexican collectors, they started discussing, eventually one of them bought something from the gallery and the woman came back ten

minutes later asking for a commission, what should I do?” Then I told her, “It is very simple. Did she come to visit the booth beforehand, to check out what you had and to say, ‘I want to present this work’, for example? Or was she just walking around randomly? Secondly, did she have a business card showing that she was an advisor?” We are not even sure that the people she was walking with knew that she would make a commission for showing them around. So I said, “I do not think you should pay her, because she had no business card and she did not come in advance.” The gallerist then replied, “Yeah, I am not sure, maybe it is better to pay, maybe she will bring me more business.” So, long story short, it is your choice.

And when you are talking about regulation, I am a little bit embarrassed as well, because I am often pushing galleries to take best practices seriously: I am fighting for you to have best practices in terms of contract with the artists, paying the artists, even asking us collectors to sign something when we buy, instead of just shaking hands and then having 10% of collectors not pay. I am in your favour, but if you want to impose this regulation on art advisors, I think it is a little bit harsh. It is nasty, because the art world is just a jungle for everyone right now, so why go for them? You could go for a critic, for advisors...

J.B. Can I just step in for a moment? I do not think this is about going for anybody...

D.J. Exactly. I have to say I quite object to what you are saying about going for art advisors. I said here that I am very much in favour of professional art advisors. What we were discussing is unprofessional—probably not real—art advisors. We are talking about people who take a wedge, which is something very different. There are unprofessional galleries as well, but I certainly take objection to saying that we as galleries are having a go at art advisors, because that is creating an atmosphere here on the stage. What we are trying to discuss here is professionalism and where art advisors can contribute, which they can.

J.B. Just to clarify, Lisa, you complained about it yourself: there are many advisors who do very poor work.

L.S. Oh, it is embarrassing.

J.B. Exactly, but would it not help you as a proper professional to have regulations?

L.S. For me, this conversation is a bit silly—I mean, it probably is not, but to me it feels like it. Because there are stupid people and there are really smart people. It is more interesting to talk about what we can do, instead of asking ourselves, how do you get rid of the dumb? They are crooks; they will burn out on their own. Galleries know exactly who they are. You might get burned one time, but... A lot of it is coming from the collectors, too. How many collectors have you met that made money on a work of art quickly and suddenly became dealers? So there are all kinds of bad behaviour, but that is not so interesting. I think it is really interesting to talk about defending art, which is what we all love and why we are all here. The way I see it, there is a lot at stake right now, the power is shifting all over and the future scenario is unclear.

**“FOCUSING ON REGULATION IS
LIKE BUILDING A WALL AROUND
MEXICO.”**

Just to give one more example, I was working with an artist for an art auction, I did a Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation auction in Saint-Tropez last year. I worked really, really hard to get Lynda Benglis, Yinka Shonibare, Sean Scully... People from every style, I did not want to do just Jeff Koons, Mark Roshan, etc. I put Andrea Bowers in there. I did the best I could to put together this exhibition. And one of the things I really wanted was a Lawrence Weiner. I knew which galleries would not allow me to talk to Lawrence and which ones would be fine. Thaddaeus Ropac, who was very generous—and whom I sort of fell in love with last year after he gave his keynote speech—, brought me to his studio and we had this most incredible interaction. The work was purchased at the auction by Len Blavatnik. Now we are working on putting it in the pool at the Sunset Tower Hotel and launching a series of conversations about art in the environment.

The reason I bring this up is because I think we all just have to let go. Art advisors cannot cling to their clients. It is silly to think, “You cannot talk to my clients, I control them.” In some cases, artists are doing whatever they want and selling out of the studio—which, I completely agree, is really problematic—or playing gallerists by sneaking around

to other galleries. I watch that and it makes me really nervous. What does that mean for my collectors and for that artist's work? I really do think that we all need each other. The ecosystem is changing so fast—it is kind of terrifying—that you wonder, “Am I going to have a job next year?” But I think there are ways to carve out a space for everybody. I think focusing on regulation is like building a wall around Mexico. If the criteria is a master's from Christie's—and no offence to anybody who has one—then fine, but I feel like it is a bit silly.

**“YOU ARE NOT GOING TO TELL ME WHO YOUR
CLIENT IS? DO NOT EMAIL ME, THEN, BECAUSE
I AM NOT GOING TO SELL TO YOU.”**

J.B. Any more questions?

Q4. At the beginning, Lisa said that art history knowledge is a prerequisite, but the longer I listen to you, the more confused I get. What is more important, art history and art knowledge or things like integrity, common sense, professionalism and good taste?

L.S. Why is that an “or”? Why are those mutually exclusive?

Q4. Something like art history can be learned, but attitudes cannot.

L.S. Exactly, so how are you going to regulate integrity? I think integrity is what we need more than anything everywhere in the world.

Q4. If you were to hire somebody, for example. Imagine they had a limited art knowledge, but they were good people—with integrity, with professional attitude, someone who can be taught.

L.S. I think you have to have both.

Q5. Hi. I just wanted to get back to a remark Alain made. He was suggesting that this art advisor that turned up at the gallery after the sale to ask for a commission would deserve it more if she had a business card or had shown up beforehand. I think the mess starts as soon as art advisors are paid by the galleries. Galleries simply should not pay art advisors. Art advisors should be paid by their clients, the collectors. This would be a clearer picture, because as you said in the beginning, taking commissions from both sides is criminal.

L.S. I agree. I am paid by my client. That example is just silly. If the lady came back, it is clear that the collectors did not know she was taking a commission. That is just ridiculous. I would not pay her if I were the gallery.

Q6. (Vanessa Carlos) Hi. I agree with Lisa that this conversation is silly in a way, because it is pretty obvious to me as a gallerist that you have a very small number of extremely professional, extremely reputable art advisors—of which Lisa is one—and those are the ones I deal with. I do not even answer the emails of the other ones, just like I do not answer the emails of crap clients. It is that simple. You are not going to tell me who your client is? Do not email me, then, because I am not going to sell to you. And if you are the kind of gallery that will sell anyway because you are desperate, then that is the way you run your business, it is your responsibility.

The other thing that I wanted to bring up was this idea of collaboration between art advisors and galleries. Lisa said something that I think is very prevalent in art advisory, which is the importance of working with artists that have been pulled through a system. I appreciate that a lot of clients have that concern for a certain type of validation or a certain market level before they purchase something, and the employee often advised us to act as that buffer, but I find that problematic for younger galleries. Because the system is rigged. I can be showing an artist who your advisor will have no interest in and then, as soon as it is picked up by a blue-chip, the advisor is on the back of that artist. I think one thing that advisors could maybe think about more in regards to supporting this whole ecosystem is to have a different attitude towards younger galleries. I know people are very time-constrained, especially the clients, but I think that there could be more of a look at not only an art historical conversation, but a very contemporaneous, current dialogue and research. Maybe art advisors could show their clients younger artists and bring them to younger galleries, because what I find with advisors is that, even the excellent ones that I work with, are only interested in my artists when they sell for about \$50,000. I find that extremely frustrating.

L.S. I live for young art. If I had all the time in the world and a lot of money from my family or something, I would just focus on young art. I spend a lot of time and resources keeping my finger on the pulse. In fact, sometimes I am sad that I have been known for the younger,

emerging artists. I am always going to young galleries. By the way, at that point you should not have an artist who sells for \$50,000. I just sat down with somebody in New York and said, “\$25,000 is too much to put on this artist. It is too expensive, because he is a very emerging artist.” And he replied, “I have no choice, the artist has to pay her graduates school bills and I have to pay for the art fair.” So again, the problem is not so much that art advisors ignore younger galleries; it has to do with collectors, with people who are not really collecting, but just buying and looking for the right investment. Quite frankly, I would never waste my time doing that. I get excited about art. I mean, why are we all doing this? We love art. I just bought a painting from an artist who has no money right now and he needed some support. I do not know what is going to happen with his career, I do not care. He was so grateful and wrote me the sweetest note, like, “You really gave me hope,” so I am there for the ecosystem. I really am.

J.B. David?

D.J. I would like to answer that. I think that gallerists—and I know that I can speak for Claes and certainly for others here—, although we need to sell expensive pictures because we have vast overheads and so on, we have a lot of young artists. In my next exhibition, there is one artist who is pretty established and the works are all under £4,000, every single one. I think it is very important to be doing things for what you believe. It is exactly why we are in this business, because we love it—at least I hope that is a reason that people are in the business. And I think, first and foremost, comes the art and the beauty of it. In that way, we should all be the same, but there are a lot of people in our business today that are only in it for money, prestige and so on, and that is causing a lot of problems.

L.S. It is so boring, actually. This has happened to me so many times: I have loved a young artist, I have visited the gallery with my clients and then, all of a sudden, the artist explodes and it is not interesting anymore. Or if there is hype around an artist, I always say, “Let us wait, the noise is too much.” It becomes about something else, suddenly you just see a dollar sign and you cannot really see the art. That is never a good sign. It is not good for the artist, it sucks for the gallery and it is not interesting. It is really boring.

Q7. (Melanie Gerlis) Hi. Thanks, everyone. Partly to address Vanessa's point—which is that, if you are an advisor and you work on a commission, which is a percentage of the work that your client buys, of course you have no interest in showing work under \$50,000—, equally if you are just in it to make a quick buck and you see people can make millions out of one transaction, you might do something unprofessional just for that, so who cares, I made five million, I will never work again, but that is okay. I agree that it is difficult to regulate, but could we have something internally that says, “Okay, a good art advisor only charges a retainer”?

L.S. I promise you it regulates itself. If I want to make \$200,000 on a commission sale—I am not going to disclose my fees, but they are quite low, so that would be a big number for me—, I can make that sale all the time. If I am forcing a sale, it is so obvious that I am just trying to make a commission. What happens is, if that is the way you are operating, if you are operating to make a buck, you are a dealer, you are not going to have regular clients, you cannot sell! I work with a lot of collectors who start from ground zero, so it takes them a while, whether they have the money or not, to even get comfortable to spend that kind of money. It could take five to ten years. And I love those people, that is fine, you get to grow with them. So I honestly believe that you can set up rules and say you have to take retainer and so on—I beg people to put me on retainer—, but they do not want to.

Q7. (Melanie Gerlis) Just to have some clarity, your clients all know how you are remunerated?

L.S. They see every single thing, yeah.

Q7. (Melanie Gerlis) That should be common knowledge, that anyone who takes on an art advisor should see the remuneration.

L.S. You are a moron if you do not look at every part of the transaction. Typically, with commission, you can have the gallery bill you directly or I attach the bill with it. Also, the work we do to earn that commission does not stop with, “Here, let us buy.” It includes shipping, installation, conservation, insurance, etc. It goes on and on and on. So you are not really advising if you do not have a small stable of regular collectors. And you will not have that stable if you are behaving the way that you are saying. Those people might say they are advisor, but they are just dealing. Sorry.

Q8. Hi. This is a question for Lisa. I was here last year and I remember you talking about how to appreciate and value a work of art. You gave a few criteria. I only remember one and it would be great if you could tell us all of them.

L.S. I work with three criteria. Number one: is it visually and conceptually compelling? Number two: does it have historical relevancy? And three, is it strategically placed? It is not my job to be a curator—although sometimes I do that—or to be a gallery. I am not the one creating the context, so sometimes I might pick someone who is at ground zero, but it is hard to know whether an artist is historically relevant until there are enough shows happening to really understand what is going on. The most fun is to look at what is happening in the world. The best art will reveal to us what was right in front of us but we could not see clearly. It is the truth. So it is important to look at what is happening around the world and trying to look at artists that are addressing things and how they are doing it. Are they just producing art that looks like art? Am I just making some more process-based abstraction? Not that that is bad, but that was a trend. Anyway, I try to think about those three points. It is about history. I am sure there are some Ph.D. students here who would say, “There is no history.” Well, I do not want to get theoretical. I do think it is important that an artwork is participating in a conversation, not just about what is happening formally with art, but also in the world around us.

Q9. I have to say that I am also a little bit confused, Lisa. Because we all know that we want to educate collectors, we all know that there will be more young galleries and there will be more young art advisors. Of course, nobody wants to work with people who lack a professional ethos, but if we do not all work to educate them, and if you say you do not want to be involved in educating them, then who will do it?

L.S. Listen, when people call me to meet for coffee and talk about art or about being an advisor—which they do all the time—, my door is always open. I also have a five year-old son and I am really busy, but I do not avoid being involved. I just find the conversation, or maybe just in the context of this talk, a little bit off. I hate to give airtime to the kind of crap behaviour that goes on in the art world. I am sorry that it does come a lot from art advisors or people pretending to be art advisors, but it also comes from collectors and all kinds of people.

Q10. (Adam Sheffer) My question is for David and for Claes. We represent about thirty artists—some exclusively, some non-exclusively. Over the course of the last twenty-five years, I have also developed some very, very close relationships with collectors. And they constantly come to me to help them build their collection, both with works that are in the gallery and works that are outside of it. I am more than happy to do this, because I really believe in them, we have a long relationship and the whole business is based on relationships. Even in certain instances, I will be asked to do their due diligence and bid for them and advise them on things that come up at auction. I will charge them a fee of 10% of what the hammer price is and they know exactly what it is—they get the bill from the auction house, I put my bill on top, etc. Do you find that a conflict of interest, in terms of the role of the gallery and the dealer when it comes to working with collectors?

C.N. Absolutely not. It is certainly part of the work that we do. It is one of our many services, which start by taking care of the artists' work right as it leaves the studio. But running a gallery certainly includes what you just described.

Q10. (Adam Sheffer) I think some of the best collections in the world historically have been built by the gallery-dealer relationship, as well as through advisors. The Havemeyers were so lucky, in the turn of the century, to have Mary Cassatt advising them. And she was an artist. Things have changed enormously, we are all good at doing a lot of things and I think we should all do what we do best.

L.S. I just want to make one comment to Adam Sheffer, who is one of my best friends and whom I met in the art world. One thing that is really valuable for me as an advisor is finding people that are smarter than me. Finding people that are really smart, have integrity and I can rely on. If it is day one with a collector, there is nothing more impressive than saying, "I am going to Sheffer." Because I know he is going to take us through the whole programme. I think that kind of generosity in certain galleries has been really helpful as an advisor.

Q10. (Adam Sheffer) Thank you, likewise.

Q11. I am a small, emerging gallery and I am also confused about the role of advisors and how to collaborate with them. In terms of added value, what do they bring? Their input seems to be a reality only at

the very high level. Unfortunately, my own experience has been more with the cowboys that are just looking for sales and selling to their rich associates, rather than actually doing any homework. So, for a younger gallery, does it make sense to work with an art advisor? And if so, how?

"I AM A PARTNER; I AM NOT SOMEONE TRYING TO SELL THINGS TO YOU. I AM REALLY JUST A SOUNDING BOARD TO HELP MAKE GOOD DECISIONS."

L.S. I think that is actually a really good question. I now have staff underneath me that probably does more of the young art than I do now, but I really try my hardest to stay in the game. One thing I do is asking artists all the time what galleries they like and what artists they are looking at. I also look at curators. As a young gallery, the hard thing is that you are at ground zero, so the only way I can recommend something from your gallery is after having spent time with you and gone through the whole programme. I try to do that whenever I can and I should do it more, because it is important to keep it all going together. I do not know that any gallery needs to seek out an advisor. There are lots of people who do not need one. It is really a time issue, I think. All my clients are perfectly educated and, if they put the time in, could do this themselves. It is just that they have busy lives. So what I can do with the young galleries—not so much with young artists, because they are still so new—is just to tell my clients, "Let us go, get out there!" I send them to you. I want my clients to go look at art all day long, I do not want them to wait for me. That is trust. If I cannot do that with my client, if I am worried they are going to buy around me, then that is not an advisory. If people are holding on tight, it is problematic. If someone does not want to work with me, they should not, you know? I am a partner; I am not someone trying to sell things to you. I am really just a sounding board to help make good decisions.

Q12. (Martin Aguilera) One of the things we have not really talked about is holding collectors accountable and the ways in which, in my experience, advisors help me with that. As someone working in a medium-sized gallery, I can give examples not only of bad advisors, but also of bad collectors. In some way, advisors facilitate holding them accountable, especially with a new class of collector coming in, whether it is a collector from the tech industry that traditionally has

not purchased art before or people from, say, non-collecting regions, like South-East Asia. Lisa, maybe you can shed some light on this.

L.S. What do you mean by holding accountable?

Q12. (Martin Aguilera) Particularly when it comes to payment or when it comes to renegotiating the terms of a sale, I have experienced many times people coming back and saying, “Actually, I really do not want 10%, I want 15%.”

L.S. I am sure there are people like that, but I do not work with them. Sometimes I wish I were a tougher negotiator, you know? There is someone in our industry who is quite tough. I would not work for someone who is like that and it would become problematic for all my clients if someone was behaving that way. That being said, I certainly have had clients that have behaved badly. And I take the blame.

C.N. That problem is the same for everybody, obviously not only for an advisor, but also for the galleries or auction houses.

Q13. My question goes to David and Claes. Imagine an art advisor came to your gallery with a secured sale. I suppose they mostly take 10% or 15%. As you typically split it 50/50 with the artist, you could just get your cut down to 40%—or even split the commission with the artist and do 45% and 45%. In that case, why would you have such a resistance to an art advisor, who is coming to your gallery to give you a sale, basically?

D.J. First, I do not think I am resistant. I just think it is very important that the collector is aware of the situation, which is up to the advisor. What I do not approve of is basically giving a backhander, but there is no reason why you should not give a commission to somebody who is doing a job. What I was talking about were the people who were not doing their jobs. Obviously, this is an organisation that really works well and is doing all the work, which involves a lot of other things, such as arranging the shipping, an insurance, advising the clients, etc. These are really quite complex at times, but I have no problem in paying a commission, as long as it is upfront and it is understood.

L.S. I also think there is a horrible advisor situation. I have heard of advisors buying for one client when the work is not actually going to

that client. So I think knowing who the buyer is becomes an issue with some bad advising.

Q13. And Claes, what would be your response?

C.N. I agree. Transparency is the basis for all of this. If it is not transparent, step away.

J.B. All right, I am going to take the last question. I will give you a little bit of a rest, Lisa, because you have been working very hard. This goes for our two gallerists. In a perfect world, what would you want from an art advisor? What would make your lives better, happier and easier in regards to these transactions?

D.J. I think it is relatively simple: in an ideal world, you want an art advisor who comes with a collector that is not already your own and is somebody new and fresh, who trusts the advisor and has been given proper information. Actually, basically what Lisa has been saying: someone who contributes to my gallery by making a sale to a good collector. It is pretty straightforward and simple. Unfortunately, it does not work like that.

C.N. Yesterday, we also talked about this and we used the word collector in general for people who buy art. I think we should really start distinguishing between the collector, the occasional buyer and the regular buyer. These are certainly three different kinds of entities or agents in the art world.

D.J. You forgot investors.

C.N. Yes, that is true. The role of the gallery used to be the role of the art advisor, but in a bigger art world, I see the point of having professionals specialised in advising people who do not feel that they have time to spend, like the old collector used to do. But I think it is crucial to distinguish between these groups. I do not think a collector, in my terms, would talk to an art advisor as much as they would talk to a gallery or possibly an auction house. Over time, I am sure that this will also be okay.

L.S. I know I am not supposed to talk anymore, but you make a really good point. Let us criticise the media and the art fairs a little bit: I think

part of the problem arises because so many people only experience art through fairs now, which really upsets me. I would beg them, "Do not go to the fair, give me a day in New York and we will go to galleries." But they go to fairs, so they are seeing David's gallery and Clae's gallery in this trade show, where it is hard to see the content. I know you work hard to present it properly, and I appreciate it when it is done really well, but the space is simply not ideal. How can you even know what you are looking at? I get that great art should jump out at you, but when it is a whole building full of it, it is a little tricky. So let us blame the art fairs and the media. I feel like all the stories are about how great the art market is. Nobody ever asks about the artists. They focus on the market, the market and the market. That is part of the problem, we are creating monsters.

J.B. Yes, and fake news! [Laughter] On that note, I just want to say thank you. It has been a very honest and interesting discussion. Lisa, I think you have been very good at explaining your profession.

L.S. I am going to win these guys over! I am going to become their best client! [Laughter]

J.B. It is starting to happen. You have been very honest about your role, which is very interesting. And you have had to defend a profession that does have its good folks in it, as well as its not-so-good. But I think, like everywhere in the art world, the cream rises to the top. Thank you very much to everyone for a great discussion.



Vanessa Carlos

Vanessa Carlos is Director of Carlos/Ishikawa gallery in London, whose programme focuses on international artists with wide-ranging, multidisciplinary and experimental practices. In 2016, Carlos founded Condo, a project that takes its name from “condominium” and is a large-scale collaborative exhibition of international galleries. Host galleries share their spaces with visiting galleries either by co-curating an exhibition together or dividing their galleries and allocating spaces. The project was brought to New York in 2017 and will launch in Shanghai, Mexico City and São Paulo in 2018.

Elizabeth Dee

Elizabeth Dee is a cultural entrepreneur, curator, dealer and producer. She is the CEO of Elizabeth Dee Gallery in New York and of Independent Art Fairs in New York and Brussels. The gallery, established in 2002, is located on Fifth Avenue in Harlem. Dee has produced numerous ground-breaking, first and internationally recognised exhibitions by artists such as John Giorno, Adrian Piper, Julia Wachtel, Derek Jarman and Ryan Trecartin, among others. Previously, Dee created X Initiative, a non-profit consortium of the global art community, presenting exhibitions and programming in response to the major philosophical and economic shifts in contemporary art.

John Martin

John Martin has been Director of John Martin Gallery for twenty-five years. He was co-founder and Fair Director of Art Dubai (2007-2009), launching the Global Art Forum and Abraaj Art Prize. He has been a Trustee of the Shubbak Festival and the Artists' Collecting Society and was a founder board member of Mayfair Art Weekend. Martin is also the Creative Director of Cromwell Place, a new location for international and UK-based galleries, curators and art institutions, scheduled to open in the autumn of 2019.

Lorena Muñoz-Alonso

Lorena Muñoz-Alonso is an arts writer, journalist and editor based in London. She was UK Editor at *artnet News* from 2014 to 2017. Her writing has appeared in publications such as *Frieze*, *Frieze Masters*, *artnet News*, *art-agenda*, *Input*, *Photoworks* and *Architectural Digest*, as well as in artist projects and gallery and museum publications. From 2005 to 2008, Muñoz-Alonso was staff writer at *AD*, Condé Nast Spain, helping launch the magazine as part of the original editorial team. She has curated exhibitions in London, Madrid and Barcelona and holds an MA in Critical Writing & Curatorial Practice from Chelsea College of Art & Design.

WAYS OF COLLABORATION AMONG GALLERIES

SPEAKERS

**Vanessa Carlos, Elizabeth Dee,
John Martin**

MODERATOR

Lorena Muñoz-Alonso

WAYS OF COLLABORATION AMONG GALLERIES

Lorena Muñoz-Alonso (L.M.) Thank you, Talking Galleries, for inviting me to moderate this panel. There has been a lot of talk about collaboration between galleries as a way to overcome the situation that a lot of mid-tier, mid-sized or mid-level galleries are facing. Hopefully, we will be able to get into the details of what we mean by collaboration between galleries and what shape and form that can take and is taking already. I am delighted to have a very interesting panel of speakers who do different things, but who share an interest in collaboration. I will start with Vanessa Carlos. Condo is a very well-known, new collaborative model. It has got a lot of coverage and critical acclaim, so Vanessa, can you tell us how it came into being? What were your thoughts at the time?

Vanessa Carlos (V.C.) Condo is a project I started where host galleries of a city share their spaces with visiting international galleries. That can mean curating a show together or dividing your space and offering another gallery to have an exhibition there. And it is an actual exhibition, it is on for a month. The idea was born out of a certain frustration and also a wish to help create the world we want to live in. I always say this, but I feel frustrated about the way the art world mimics the structure of the world at large. It has become a microcosm of this neoliberal pyramid structure where everything points towards corporations and anything that is not functioning like a corporation is squeezed. And I thought, how do independent initiatives survive? They act collectively and they collaborate. It was very much this idea that got me started with Condo. Galleries follow inherited models that functioned in the 1990s, but they do not feel like they function anymore, so how can we try and propose something, a different way of showing internationally that is not what has been kind of handed over to us? That is how it started.



**“HOW DO INDEPENDENT INITIATIVES
SURVIVE? THEY ACT COLLECTIVELY
AND THEY COLLABORATE. IT WAS VERY
MUCH THIS IDEA THAT GOT ME STARTED
WITH CONDO.”**

Sometimes, there is an oversimplification about Condo in the press. They will write that it is about young to mid-sized galleries fighting back at art fairs, although it really is not. Of course there is some kind of conversation that relates to art fairs in a project like that, but I think art fairs are essential, especially the really good ones, the ones that deliver, like Art Basel. The problem, in my view, is that there is an overproliferation of fairs. What that has caused in cities like London—I think not so much in New York—is, is that the gallery-going culture has disappeared. You have people who flock to whatever art fair, pay a fortune to get in and then blast down corridors just turning their heads as they glance at some art. I think Condo aims to create this festival of galleries where a number of proposals have been filtered down and where it is really about a slower way of looking, a slower way of talking about a project with your artist, a slower way of engaging with people when they come, and just really encouraging a gallery-going culture again. This remains to be seen, but I hope that with these projects galleries can be more experimental in how they show internationally, because the costs are much less prohibitive than those of attending an art fair. So you would hope that Condo could become a place for taking risks. It has happened in London three times—it is currently on right now—and then New York did it last summer and will do it again this year. We are also starting in Shanghai and Mexico City.

The last thing I wanted to say about Condo is that it is primarily geared towards younger galleries—because I think they are the ones that have to deal with these issues the most—but it is by no means reduced to them. We have some really big galleries attending, like Sadie Coles, Gavin Brown and ShanghART, in Shanghai. For me, it is much more about galleries that, no matter how successful they are and how big they get, have a certain ethos. Someone like Sadie Coles has never become a corporation, even though she is one of the biggest galleries in London.

L.M. Thank you, Vanessa. Elizabeth, could you introduce us to Independent?

Elizabeth Dee (E.L.) I am going to show a little bit of its time-line and evolution from 2010 to now. We are entering our ninth year. Independent began out of a really deep desire to take back the gallery marketplace from the large fairs that we were all participating in as emerging galleries at the time, ten years ago. That became a really great opportunity to collaborate with colleagues. I always feel like my role, as one of the founders, was really just to be a facilitator to something that was already being discussed. It was already being driven, but there was no way to demonstrate and incubate these ideas. We had an opportunity to take the Dia Center for the Arts in 2010. That gave us a rare chance to independently occupy a museum, primarily with galleries that are single owner-operator. We wanted to discuss several issues. What does an exhibition model look like? How do we bring gallery culture into a fair context? How do we take what works for fairs and for biennials and bring it in to combine it with a larger platform? So it was really about using the economies of scale to the benefit of each individual, small gallery that has developing artists. Because they need to have more sustained conversations about the curatorial nature of these artists and about how important they are for the programmes that represent them.

**“INDEPENDENT BEGAN OUT OF A
REALLY DEEP DESIRE TO TAKE BACK
THE GALLERY MARKETPLACE FROM THE
LARGE FAIRS.”**

This is inherently what we have been trying to do from day one. It goes back to the core values of the gallery tradition, which is a European and American tradition, as you know. In our mind, this means taking in artists and bringing them from one place to another through the fostering of communities, contexts and patronage around their work. It also means forming those communities with other galleries and institutions, as well as having a balance between the art marketplace—the sales that occur to keep these artists and the gallery going—and the institutional support, which we find equally meaningful for the development of the artists' careers.

We began in 2009 in the Dia building. New York, as you know, is an extraordinarily expensive place to do business. We have been very transparent about our organisation model for the fair. Essentially, it is

meant to cost as little as possible, so our biggest cost is always the rent. We were very lucky when we first started in that a building was donated to us and then, incrementally, it became a rental building for us. It was eventually a development property which sold, so upon the sale we ended up moving to a new location, pretty much the only museum-quality space with natural light in Manhattan. It is called Spring Studios. It is a building in Tribeca and it has allowed us to be in proximity to the galleries in the area: the New Museum, the Whitney, as well as galleries in Chelsea and the Lower East Side.

**“IT WAS REALLY ABOUT USING
THE ECONOMIES OF SCALE TO THE
BENEFIT OF EACH INDIVIDUAL,
SMALL GALLERY THAT HAS
DEVELOPING ARTISTS.”**

When we moved to Spring Studios, we also decided to think through the possibility of returning our gratitude to the European galleries that had been coming to New York all the way back in 2009 and 2010 to discuss the project with us. We felt that European galleries had really made Independent New York a success. They were not showing their artists, their artists were not represented by galleries in New York. They were galleries like Maureen Paley, who has been a really key supporter of Independent. She had not been to the Armory Show in years as an exhibitor, she had artists that did not have representation in New York, so what we were able to do was to provide a fresh look at an entire European generation that was coming up and had no voice in New York at the time. That was really important for us. To thank the European galleries for being a part of New York and investing in us, we wanted to return a model and to do a partnership with the city of Brussels. We felt that it was really in the spirit of the European community. We have a wonderful relationship with the city of Brussels that emerged in 2015. We have a very economical situation with our real estate there, which allows us to make the prices extremely affordable, even for the most emerging galleries. We can be their first fair and still we have the support of major galleries that are very established and have been coming in and out of our rotation throughout our nine years.



This is the original Dia Center. You can see Jorge Pardo's floor was still there. We had the Dan Flavin's in the stairwell. We also had our mission statement and our manifesto there. We made it together and put it on the front wall, as you first walked in. I like to go back to this every year to say, "Are we on track?" Our circumstances have evolved, some are in our control as a community of galleries, others are not—like real estate and the cost of living—, but at the end of the day, are we really staying true to our core values? And is that supporting the galleries? Because we need to be advocating for their rights and the rights of their artists.

**“WE FELT THAT EUROPEAN GALLERIES
HAD REALLY MADE INDEPENDENT NEW
YORK A SUCCESS. THEY WERE NOT
SHOWING THEIR ARTISTS, THEIR ARTISTS
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IN NEW YORK.”**



This is a picture (*left*) of the Dia Center from the outside, so you can see where we started. And this picture (*right*) shows our first fair. As you can see, we had very little to work with. It all came with great work. We did not build a lot of walls, which was sometimes confusing and sometimes really exciting.

We did the first solo projects of many artists that went on to become quite recognized in the global landscapes, so it was a very important year for us to break ground and to see what the feedback was. When we did the first fair, in 2010, we actually did not know if we would do it again. The idea was just to put something out there as an offering for discussion and feedback. If it worked, perhaps we would continue. But becoming an art fair corporation, or anything that resembled the kind of institutions that we were already affiliating with, was not our goal. They already did that very well. We were trying to work within the territories of opportunity. Once people come for the first time and then come back the second year, or once they see the exhibitions and presentations, the galleries start to get ideas and say, “You know what? Actually, next year I know exactly how I am going to address that space. I might build a wall, bring more specific material or have a more contextualized view.” So this becomes an opportunity to develop the project more in collaboration with the galleries.

In 2014, we decided to try and take ourselves out of the picture and just do solo shows, have an opening weekend the way you would at a fair, but then evacuate the space and let people see the work on its own terms, as curated by the galleries. So we had two weekends during which people could roam free in the entire building as if they

were in a museum. It was a really special project and something that we would love to do again, although we have not found the right space and the right circumstances yet.

L.M. Before we pass it on to John, I think we should talk about what you are doing with Régence in Brussels. Can you tell us a little bit about it?

**“WE DID NOT WANT TO BE JUST A
NEW YORK FAIR COMING IN. WE
REALLY WANTED TO FOSTER A
ROOT SYSTEM.”**

E.D. When we decided to come to Belgium, one of the things we really wanted to decide was how to integrate ourselves with the local community. We did not want to be just a New York fair coming in. We really wanted to foster a root system, not only with the local galleries, but also to invite galleries that maybe were feeling a lot of stress and strain in doing these fairs. We were starting to see a shift in the landscape of fairs and galleries and we wanted to support changes in the system. So what we decided was to take on and subsidize ourselves a Régence space, which was a space in a gallery building that had Jan Mot, Catherine Bastide, Dvir, Micheline Szwajcer, Sorry We Are Closed and several other galleries. It was really a nice gallery building in Brussels. We took the kind of clubhouse at the top and built an apartment, a catering kitchen and three galleries there.

We thought it would be helpful for galleries that maybe did not have a huge Belgian market support for their programme, but still liked to build ties in that territory, to come for a month and do an exhibition. The price would be a fraction of doing a fair, so the shipping becomes more manageable when you know you have thirty days to kind of cultivate walk-throughs of the exhibition with the artist and with the audience that you are targeting. Also, we wanted to ensure that there were only artists that had no representation in Belgium, so we did a lot of Belgian débuts. The first gallery to participate in the project was The Approach, with a beautiful show of sculpture, never before shown in Belgium, of John Stezaker. We have worked with so many great galleries from all over the world over the course of three years.

Now we are rethinking the project for the future. The location has stopped being a gallery building in those three years. A lot of changes

took place in it, so we have concluded our time there and are currently working with the city to use different buildings at different times of the year, so that people can walk through Brussels and have these experiences. Also, it allows us to work with maybe four or five galleries at a time, rather than having the idea, an approach, and having to fit it into a specific gallery structure. We are trying to be as fluid as we can in addressing the interests of galleries spending time in Brussels and exposing artists that have never been shown in Belgium before.

**“WE WERE STARTING TO SEE A SHIFT
IN THE LANDSCAPE OF FAIRS AND
GALLERIES AND WE WANTED TO
SUPPORT CHANGES IN THE SYSTEM.”**

L.M. Great, thank you, Elizabeth. Now, John, tell us about Cromwell Place, please.

John Martin (J.M.) I will just give you a bit of background about the project. It is very similar to some of what Vanessa was talking about in London. As you said, I have had a gallery for twenty-five years and I also ran an art fair. When I left the fair and came back to my gallery, things were not looking all that great. I love working with my artists, but I was in exactly the environment that Vanessa described, where no longer were we seeing people coming in. There was not the same buzz or excitement over private views and receptions. Getting people in was really difficult—even though I was on a ground floor in Mayfair. It was frustrating. Meanwhile, I saw that the public loved art fairs. That was inescapable. They were fun, accessible, convenient, social, lively... So people loved them, and they were a great and a very necessary part of the business for any gallery. However, we all have a kind of love-hate relationship with fairs because, as a gallerist, I just do not think they really reflect me or my artists. I find them a little bit superficial. As a small to mid-sized gallery, you are parked in some far corner and you are kind of exposing yourself to a hierarchy, so already, just by taking part in the fair, you are being positioned in a bad place. You are sort of saying, “I am not actually mid-tier, I am somewhere lower, somewhere down here.” And it does not really help. Fifteen years ago, we were just galleries. There were no tiers. We were just galleries and people came to us.

I loved what Vanessa said about slowing the whole pace down, that frenetic chasing of fairs. Trying to sell spaces as a fair director, I realized that galleries were getting more and more fed up with fairs, and so too were collectors, weirdly. And yet, they would not come into the galleries. It was a conundrum and clearly it was never going to change. There was not very much one could do to get people back into the galleries, but we were all thinking about ways we could present in a more accessible way. I suppose a lot of galleries started thinking about a hybrid model.

**“WE ALL HAVE A KIND OF LOVE-
HATE RELATIONSHIP WITH FAIRS
BECAUSE, AS A GALLERIST, I JUST
DO NOT THINK THEY REALLY
REFLECT ME OR MY ARTISTS.”**

For me, in London, a source of inspiration was looking at something like the Fuller building in New York, where you can have galleries together sharing the exhibition space, therefore keeping that momentum going, so you can be open in the evenings, at weekends, and you are going to get more people coming through. So you create a really good destination, rather than a splinter one, which is what Mayfair is, with its two hundred galleries. But in order for that to work, you needed to have a collective willpower to move all the galleries into this place—which you, Vanessa, have achieved with Condo, but in my case it would require a lot of galleries suddenly moving. The trigger for us, what got us started with the idea, were rents in Mayfair. All galleries, around the world, are facing the same problem: rents. Galleries are becoming unsustainable, because they are no longer attracting as many visitors as they used to. This was particularly acute in Mayfair, because being in London means that rents will only go up, and in fact they do every five years, based on something called market value.

In my particular case, Victoria Beckham moved into Dover Street. I do not resent her, but I think she paid a record rent for that shop. If it had not been her, it would have been someone else, but it was five times what I was paying and that became the benchmark. So it was inevitable that my rent of £70,000 or £80,000 was going to be somewhere in the region of £300,000 or £400,000 a year. And then, two years later, rates would go up, on top on everything. So I was just going very fast

into a brick wall. Then I thought, “It is not just going to happen to me, there are two hundred galleries, probably half of which are on ground, and at some point between 2011 and 2016, they will have a rent review.” That is the five-year cycle. At some point, their landlords are going to send them a rent demand that will be three or four times what they are paying. And I said, “Look, this is a great moment to do a Fuller building type model in London.” I was very lucky to meet Scott Murdoch, who is one of our directors, and Sir Stuart Lipton, who gave me a lot of advice and help looking for a building—because they do not just come in from estate agents. I was sent to South Kensington. We spent six months looking and then Scott said, “Well, I know someone who handles South Kensington estates, they have got some lovely old buildings there, would you ever consider it?”



I kind of went along thinking that this was just a series of old houses, but it was the entire street. It was a stunning standalone terrace of six houses, built in 1870. At one end, in the number five, Cromwell Place was built for Sir Coutts Lindsay, who founded the Grosvenor Gallery, which later was taken over by Sir John Lavery. His house was built next to it, in number four. It has got the most spectacular interior. The location is great, it is quite close to the South Kensington tube station. There is also Heathrow Airport, the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Natural History Museum. It is an incredibly accessible place and it is not just the front, it is the entire island site, including the original gardens and the mews behind. So we are working with a really stunning, beautiful historical building. Number five was Lavery’s studio.

It is actually eight meters high; it is a vast, beautiful space, with one of the largest sash windows in London, I think. Next door, Lavery put in a very grand salon with floor-to-ceiling mirrors and this rather wonderful stucco. It is Grade-2 listed, so we could not do anything with it, but it is a wonderful place for talks, it can be used as a meeting room, etc. Right after walking in there we said, “Why don’t we just use this as a kind of club space?” This would be great for galleries. They can meet there, take clients and socialize with each other.

L.M. How many galleries do you host? How many spaces are there?

J.M. What I was looking for is something where galleries could have offices permanently. So they are on five-year leases. The top two floors were perfect for that. They were the old bedrooms. Small galleries do not really need a huge amount of office space, but they need a permanent address. So there are about twenty-five offices, but they can be configured in different ways. We are talking to galleries at the moment about how they want to use them. In one of these rooms, we are putting in a sort of hot desk, so galleries can just use it for a day at a time. And then the ground, first and second floor have these beautiful high ceilings—13-foot ceilings on the first floor, slightly lower on the third floor. There are lovely spaces. There are 60-square-meter balconies and lovely, incredible light.

We were asked to do a feasibility study. We had the bare bones of this rather beautiful building, with a similar feel to David Zwirner Gallery in Dover Street, in terms of proportions and of these great, elegant rooms. But what it was lacking was storage space and connections between the different rooms. Otherwise, everyone would be coming in and out of every single building. The gardens came to the rescue here. Linear against the building is a walkway that goes the whole length of it, so once you are through one of the front doors, you can walk through the gallery on the ground floor and navigate your way quite easily along the back. In the 1980s, some spaces were filled with offices. We are removing that at the moment, we are digging that all out. It took a lot of planning and persuading the Council over this, but in the end they were very supportive. If you look through it, we are putting in a plant room there, which will make the property climate-controlled. There will be a 2,500-square-foot storage unit, maintained by a team of technicians and storage people. The idea is that the facilities of Cromwell Place are the thing that every single gallery needs. There is nothing like it in the

centre of London, so we are also talking to secondary-market dealers, who can use it as a place to show clients. In the basement behind that, towards the street, there will be six viewing rooms.

L.M. It is beautiful, but it sounds expensive.

“WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO DO IS PROVIDE THE MOST AMAZING FACILITIES. THIS IS A £20-MILLION PROJECT. WE ARE GIVING GALLERIES ACCESS TO THIS INCREDIBLE SPACE AND THESE SERVICES BY CONSOLIDATING EVERYTHING.”

J.M. It is, yeah! Above that, you have got this pavilion gallery, with north-facing louvered lights. We talk to insurers and museums to make sure that, if an institution wanted to do something amazing in there, they would all be happy, so it can take four tons. Next to it, there are also natural lots. Their levels can be adjusted and completely modified. So that is the modern bit of it.

L.M. So who is your target? Who is going to rent this space?

J.M. Predominantly, the people applying are galleries. What we are trying to do is provide the most amazing facilities. This is a £20-million project. We are giving galleries access to this incredible space and these services by consolidating everything, by having marketing teams onsite, tech teams onsite and offering many different services. We are developing an app that visitors can use to navigate their way around the space. So not only are we providing the services and the facilities that only the best galleries—or the biggest galleries—could ever afford, but we are also adding additional things using technology. There is even catering onsite, so if you want to do events, it is all quite easy.

L.M. Do you provide a collectors database? Because if someone from abroad was to come and rent a space, they might not have exposure in London. They might lack local collectors, contacts, etc. Would you then provide that or do they have to do their own work?

J.M. I think most of the galleries we are talking to have got their own set of collectors. They are fairly self-sufficient, but inevitably, over the course of the year, we will get visitors. I would have thought most people interested in contemporary art—or some of the other specialities we are looking at bringing there—will visit at some point. And then hopefully we will create an environment where they will keep coming back. The app is really useful, because that is your key to get in.

L.M. So, just going into the small print, what would be the prices? How long can these galleries stay?

“WHAT WE HAVE ENDED UP WITH, SO FAR, IS A LOT OF INTERNATIONAL GALLERIES THAT WANT TO COME TO CROMWELL PLACE LOOKING FOR LONDON PRESENCE.”

J.M. Well, first you join as a member. There is a joining fee and then an annual fee, which essentially covers the marketing costs for us. So the joining fee is £3,000 and then, if you are going to be a resident, doing a lot of exhibitions, you pay £5,000 a year, I think. If you are an international member, you pay about £2,000 a year. For non-exhibiting members—people who just want to use the storage facilities and the viewing rooms—I think it is a bit less than that, approximately £1,500 a year.

L.M. And what about the space?

J.M. It varies. It is a bit like a hotel: it varies at different times of the year. So during peak times, probably in October, you would be paying £80 to £120 a square meter. That is sort of equivalent to an art fair, maybe £200, £300 or £400 a square meter. A 50-square-meter room would oscillate between £4,000 and £7,000 a week. And then there are project spaces on the third floor, which would probably be in the region of £2,000 a week. So it depends on how every gallery wants to use the space. It can be slightly different for everyone. Those prices include everything: you have got AV, you have got lighting equipment, etc. The galleries we were originally talking to were often Mayfair galleries looking for another option. What we have ended up with, so far, is a lot of international galleries that want to come to Cromwell Place looking

for London presence. Having your own standalone gallery in Mayfair costs a fortune. So suddenly, for £3,000, you have no upfront costs, no lease, no obligation, no fit-out costs or anything like that, you can probably reduce your marketing spending and your staff...

L.M. I am curious to know what Elizabeth and Vanessa think about Cromwell Place. I mean, you are dealers and you are facing pressures for rent as well.

“YOU DO NOT NECESSARILY BENEFIT FROM BEING IN A GRADE-2 LISTED BUILDING. YOU HAVE TO BE ABLE TO DRILL INTO THE FLOOR AND PAINT THE WALL GREEN. I THINK IT WILL WORK BRILLIANTLY, BUT NOT FOR A GALLERY LIKE MINE.”

V.C. For me, it is a great idea, but I do not imagine it functioning so much for the contemporary art world. I imagine it will work really well for antiques dealers or secondary dealers. For example, if we are saying that some of the cheapest rooms are £4,000 a week, that is around £16,000 a month, right? My rent used to be £17,000 a year, you know? Also, this whole property-development initiative in London is one of the reasons gallerists cannot pay their rents and artists cannot pay their studios in the first place. So I am a bit suspicious about the developers' long-term vision for that, although you cannot say South Ken has problems with gentrification. And then the last thing that I think is problematic is this idea of being itinerant. That is why I think it works better for secondary dealing and antiques—and I think it will work brilliantly for that—, because when you work with contemporary artists, maybe only 60% of the work gets made in the studio. Often, you cannot just transport a work from a studio, put it in a place and leave. The exhibition space becomes the final stage of experimentation for the artists, so you need to have as little restriction as possible, you do not necessarily benefit from being in a Grade-2 listed building. You have to be able to drill into the floor and paint the wall green. You have to be able to do those things, and so I think it will work brilliantly, but not for a gallery like mine.

E.D. In my view, there is a lot of opportunity in this post brick-and-mortar territory. I think we are going to see a gradual loosening of the boundaries of what it means to be a gallerist. There are already people who have retired from gallery work but are contributing to the gallery field. They are doing it in a different way. Take Nicole Klagsbrun, in New York, who is still doing great projects. I think that taking back the terms and conditions of what it means to be a gallerist does not have to mean going back to the original model that we were all brought up in and taught. There is great value there, but it is not necessarily applicable or possible for everybody to just continue in a very linear methodology according to which you should have a space that is open twelve months a year, in one city or more, and then change it every ten to fifteen years. That works in a lot of ways and there are a lot of benefits to the model—I think it really does support artists in a durational sense—, but there is also a lot of artists who are really well-known in the territory where they have their mother gallery and less known in other areas. It is an opportunity to, as a gallerist, look at artists that you have relationships with and say, “You know, I would love to have you do your third show here at our space, but I also realize you have three museum shows happening in London in the coming year and, even though I have begun conversations with other galleries about working with you, maybe the way to accelerate that conversation is for us to take a space in London.”

“THERE IS A LOT OF OPPORTUNITY IN THIS POST BRICK-AND-MORTAR TERRITORY. I THINK WE ARE GOING TO SEE A GRADUAL LOOSENING OF THE BOUNDARIES OF WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A GALLERIST.”

I see great benefit to that. It is a way to look at the artists you are working with in a very expansive possibility, beyond my own brick and mortar. What is out there? There are collaborations, there are colleagues, there are models that are much more fluid. They might be expensive at the moment, but it is just like everything else: you are making an investment in that, whether it is in the gallery or at a fair. So it is just a matter of being open to many more options to produce shows and to reframe the conversation around a practice. I am very

open-minded about the possibility of these models working in the future for a lot of people.

“THERE ARE INFINITE WAYS IN WHICH PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS COULD WORK. EVEN JUST CO-REPRESENTING ARTISTS IS A REALLY IMPORTANT, STRATEGIC FORM OF COLLABORATION.”

L.M. There is a lot of conversation about collaboration that has to do with ways of display, exhibition-making, attending fairs that are very expensive and so on, but I am wondering whether there is something else that we can think about in terms of collaboration, a different kind of conversation in terms of galleries coming together, maybe having a dialogue with the different segments—the mega, the mid-sized and the younger ones—and in terms of a contract, of facilitating practices that will enable these galleries to survive. They are not there. Do you have any thoughts about best practices or codes of conduct? You know, preventing the mega-galleries from poaching artists that you have nurtured in your galleries...

E.D. As it relates to collaboration? What do you mean? How does it link into the topic of this talk?

L.M. I was thinking about galleries coming together in ways that are not shows, kind of paving the way for an ecosystem that is more sustainable for all the segments, not just the top-tier.

E.D. I think there are a lot of possibilities. We are using the word collaboration, but I also think of it as partnership. I think there is benefit to both things. Partnership can be with a new model, it could be several other galleries defining a new space elsewhere outside of their home network. We are seeing a lot of that now, and I think it is also a great model. There are lots of ways to broaden the conversation, as long as they look outward and think about the context of the projects that galleries are doing together. What kind of context, relevance and value does that add to the gallery's visibility and profile? How does it reframe the conversation around the artists or the artists in conversation with other artists? And then, how are we really engaging and growing a

public? Because I think what we are seeing is that the community or the audience for the art world feels global, but also very fixed. We really need to make the pie bigger so that there is more space for everybody to engage and develop education and intellectual interest in what the artists are doing. Any way in which that could happen is great: working together on a talk, working together on a performance, coming together to a new space that does not currently exist in your home territory... There are infinite ways in which partnerships and collaborations could work. Even just co-representing artists is a really important, strategic form of collaboration.

“MEGA-GALLERIES, BY BEING SO EXTREMELY AGGRESSIVE, BY POACHING AND THINGS LIKE THAT, LOSE SIGHT OF THE FACT THAT THE ECOSYSTEM NEEDS THE YOUNGER AND MID-LEVEL GALLERIES TO THRIVE. OTHERWISE YOU ARE LEFT WITH NOTHING.”

J.M. Also, trying to divide the art world between big galleries and small galleries is not always helpful. Elizabeth, you have successfully brought some big international galleries into Independent, because they identified themselves with what you are talking about, with this ethos.

E.D. Because it is important for their artists, and for them, not to be overdetermined or overbranded, as well. And it is important for us to be able to develop a democracy between galleries of all economies and scales, to break through that really toxic class system in the art world, which I think is really not fostering innovation and talent. And we are full of great talent and innovation, among the galleries and among the artists.

V.C. I was going to say that Clare McAndrew, who was here yesterday, wrote a really interesting article about the problem of the superstar economy. One of the ways in which I would be interested to see collaboration among galleries develop is through things like 47 Canal in New York, which is a very young gallery, and Metro Pictures, a more established one. I do not understand the ins and outs, but as far as I can tell it is basically Metro Pictures supporting 47 Canal.

From what I read in Clare's article, I think that mega-galleries, by being so extremely aggressive, by poaching and things like that, lose sight of the fact that the ecosystem needs the younger and mid-level galleries to thrive. Otherwise you are left with nothing, including artists to poach. You are left with nothing. If we do not want to look back in ten years time and find an extremely homogeneous, boring art world and art production, then we have to recognize the importance of supporting galleries in the lower tier, which are supporting emerging artists.

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Maybe one of the ways of doing that is for those galleries who act so aggressively to think about ways to act differently—and some do, a lot of big galleries can be extremely generous with the younger generation, which I think is key. We could also comment on subsidies, even when we talk about art fairs, as Jean-Claude Freymond-Guth pointed out yesterday when he brought up the way the pricing system works at Liste, for example. A lot of fairs would argue that the younger sectors are already subsidized, but they are not, really. And if you look at the economy of what the square meters at a fair cost and what the artworks costs, there is a lot that art fairs could do to help younger galleries.

L.M. Are there any other collaborative initiatives that you are interested in? I am thinking about Ruberta, proyectosLA...

V.C. I participated at Independent Régence and I thought that was really exciting and interesting, because they have a team in-house that has experience working in other galleries, so you come in with your exhibition, you are there for the opening, but once you have left, the team is still working on your exhibition. And I did end up meeting a couple of new clients and making a couple of sales. I thought that was because it was not just renting a space and then leaving, it was

a support structure in a city. That really puts you in touch with local collectors, so I find it really interesting. There are not many similar initiatives. In fact, I think it is the only one I know.

L.M. Is that something Condo could evolve into?

V.C. Condo does that naturally, because we cross-pollinate our mailing lists. We all spam our mailing lists about Condo starting. Maybe my client has never been to your gallery, but they might go for the first time and what is nice is that we will introduce each other. This week, for example, I sold two or three works for the New York gallery that I am hosting. I do not take a commission, because I cannot quantify the ways that I am benefiting from having them in my space either. So with Condo we do that, but we cut out all the middlemen, basically. We cut out everyone and just rely on each other for that cross-pollination of our mailing lists and those introductions.

L.M. And can you tell me a little bit about the iteration in São Paulo? It is going to be slightly different from the New York version, right?

V.C. Because it is my hometown, I really wanted the South American Condo to be in São Paulo, but for many different reasons we decided that it would be better to do it in Mexico City. But there was still interest, specifically from Jacqueline Martins, who has participated in quite a few of the different Condos, so we thought that we could do something different there, in a city where it does not make sense to have this sprawling festival of exhibitions that is Condo. Jacqueline's building is big enough, it has three floors and each is maybe about 300 square meters, so we will have five galleries there at the same time. We are calling it Condo Unit. Maybe every year we will do these mini versions in a couple of cities, perhaps one in Los Angeles. In São Paulo, it would not make sense to have a project as big as the ones that will hopefully happen regularly in New York, Shanghai, Mexico, etc.

L.M. What are the costs of participating in Condo?

V.C. It is always the same: the host galleries do not pay anything, because they are giving in kind by paying for their rents and their electricity. The visiting galleries only pay enough to share the costs of the opening party and the website, so the costs tend to be between £650 or, in America, in New York, \$850. So the visitors just share the

promotional costs. The organisers do not take a fee. It is entirely not-for-profit from an organisational point of view. Of course, the galleries make their own sales, so if you are being hosted by me, you come for the opening weekend and, after you have left, a client comes in, I will just connect you via email and you will make your own sale.

L.M. And in São Paulo, would you rent the space?

“IN THE FUTURE WE WILL SEE REALLY BIG, VERY WELL-PUT-TOGETHER FAIRS THAT DELIVER AND THEN A COUPLE OF SMALLER THINGS COMPLETELY GEARED TO VIEWING EXPERIENCE. SMALLER FAIRS, SMALLER PROJECTS AND NOTHING IN BETWEEN.”

V.C. No, in São Paulo it is in Jacqueline Martins’ space. So it will work exactly like Condo, but all under one roof. Again, the visitors will just share the cost of whatever dinner or party we do and they will pay the designer. That will be it.

L.M. You organise a fair, so you obviously find a lot of value in that model, but there is a lot of criticism about fairs and their overabundance. At the same time, I guess there is this other universe of low cost fairs: I am thinking of Poppositions, Granpalazzo, Sunday, Paris Internationale...

V.C. Yeah, but they are a waste of money, because they do not deliver either. I was invited at a fair last year. I got a free hotel and a free booth, so I was like, “Beautiful!” Guess what? I still managed to lose money. Personally, I think in the future we will see really big, very well-put-together fairs that deliver and then a couple of smaller things completely geared to viewing experience. Smaller fairs, smaller projects and nothing in between, I suspect.

E.D. I think, at a fair, you have to have a point of view or else you lose all context of why you are there. And people lose context of what they should be focusing on. You have to slow people down by making it more human. And you have to make it social. That is the thing that we are missing from gallery culture, that we need to bring back into fair culture: the exchange, the conversation that inspires and changes the

way you think about the world, because you have just encountered this amazing artist’s work and you now understand it at a level you had not before. Maybe it is MoMA coming in and making several acquisitions—which is something we are lucky to be able to deliver on for galleries. Or maybe just meeting your clients in a different environment, where it is less rushed, less hurried, less of a soup or a trading floor and much more of a place of discussion and debate about the merits of what people are looking at. Because we need to get back to that consensus. Without the consensus, none of this is possible.

“WE NEED THE ESTABLISHED GALLERIES FOSTERING THE GROWTH OF THE NEXT GENERATION. WE ALSO NEED TO PAY ATTENTION TO THE FACT THAT WE HAVE FEWER GALLERIES OPENING NOW THAN EVER.”

One of the things that we are seeing here—particularly since all three of us, apart from doing these collaborative projects, are passionate gallerists—is that we are really committed to the model, but we are also really committed to sharing with other people how special this opportunity is. I think that getting back to the core value of everything that we are doing is necessary. Whether you see me at a fair, you see me in the gallery or I have just helped a museum produce a major exhibition of an artist, you want to have a sort of level quality of discussion. We want to reclaim that. Collaborations are already happening, that is the thing, what is happening is very exciting. There is a lot more openness between generations. Just as Vanessa was saying, we need the established galleries fostering the growth of the next generation. We also need to pay attention to the fact that we have fewer galleries opening now than ever, according to what Clare McAndrew reported yesterday. That is a concern to me.

Our world is shifting so rapidly around us. We are working together at a level we never have before. I think that is exciting. I just want to make sure that people see the practice as a viable future to make an impact and be a part of the art historical movement that they are living in. Being able to mentor the younger generation is really going to become an essential discussion point for us because, as challenging

as our world is, we still have a lot to share. We have been through a lot and we have a lot to share. I would love to save upcoming galleries some headaches, if nothing else, and also to provide them with some opportunities that maybe I did not have when I was starting out as a gallerist, twenty years ago.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND QUESTIONS (C/Q) FROM THE AUDIENCE

Q1. (Lisa Schiff) Vanessa, I just wanted to applaud you because I think Condo is a really amazing model. It is really hard to come up with something innovative that lets you hit all the marks. Condo is great to encourage people to go back to galleries. And then I also have a question, I guess for Vanessa and Elizabeth. When I talk to young gallerists these days, I often hear them say—and again, I am not a gallerist, so I do not really know the ins and outs—, “I have to do the fair.” And I am always like, “Don’t do it, it is too expensive and it is too soon.” So, is there a time when you think a young gallery should be spending time on the programme instead of trying to do art fairs?

V.C. I think that, for example, Bridget Donahue in New York is a good example of someone who, for the first year or two, said, “I am not going to do many fairs and I am going to focus on my programme,” and I think that has really worked out for her. On the other hand, when you are starting out, fairs become a way of contextualizing yourself. So to be allowed into a certain fair already positions you in a certain way. And the artists want to be positioned in that way. So with fairs, I feel like a gambling addict, because by the third day I am always like, “I hate this, I am going to quit it, I am going to start making jam, screw this,” but then I will go back home and see that another application starts and I will start getting this FOMO and be like, “Just one more time!” So it is like this horrible gambling cycle. Some galleries, like Cabinet, in London, which is an amazing gallery, have just decided to do Art Basel now, I think. They do not even care about the rest. But they can do it because they have reached a certain position. So to hold off and have the confidence to opt out of fairs is amazing, but I also think that it is a little bit of a privilege and a luxury. I think that, as a young gallery, you have to enter that grind. Maybe not, maybe there are a couple of exceptions, but I feel that to contextualise and position yourself in a certain way, you have to do it. Once you are more established, you can sit back and say, “I do not need this.”

E.D. I also think Independent is different in that there is no application process. Our co-founder, Matthew Higgs, does the invitational for the New York fair and Vincent Honoré, our new curator for the Belgian Edition, does it for Brussels. So the curatorial meetings that take place are really about the artistic content and projects or about reaching out to a gallery to start a discussion. And the goal of a discussion is not always, “Do this fair this year,” but rather, “We would like to invite you, do you have a project that you think is ready to put forward?” Often there is that. There is always the question of, would this work well in the New York context? Would this work well within the context of the other galleries that are coming this year? So, in a way, I think you save the risk that you are talking about, Lisa, when you say, “Let us make sure that there is an appetite for this presentation and that we feel there is already an ability to bridge support for it.” But it is coming through a very knowledgeable curatorial vision.

“WE ROTATE 30% OF OUR GALLERIES EVERY SINGLE YEAR. WE DO NOT WANT TO PUT THE PRESSURE TO FEEL THAT THEY LOSE THEIR SEAT AT THE DINNER TABLE IF THEY TAKE A YEAR OFF AND THAT SOMEBODY ELSE IS GOING TO REPLACE THEM.”

I think it is very important that I stay out of that conversation as a gallerist and as an organiser. I think it is important that that conversation happen purely between the curator and the gallerist. We rotate 30% of our galleries every single year for that very reason. We do not want to put the pressure on galleries to feel that they lose their seat at the dinner table if they take a year off and that somebody else is going to replace them. That is not our intention. This is supposed to be very fostering of the needs of galleries year to year and of the projects that will work for the locations where we are active.

J.M. It is all about context. If you are in a city like London or New York, where essentially it is incredibly difficult for a young gallery to attract people, because you might have to start off with a space out of the centre or away from other galleries, I just do not know how long you are going to have to wait. You are building up a great programme, but

it is so difficult to get people to come to the gallery. So, at the moment, you have got to have art fairs. You have got to get into that art fair cycle in order to get known. I do not know how else you could do it, because the footfall is just not enough, certainly not in London.

Q2. Hello, Vanessa. I have a question for you. I am really a fan of collaborations. I am based in Belgium, which is a small city, and we collaborate with all the museums and with lots of colleagues. We opened a gallery in a new place in Antwerp, only 200 metres away from all the museums and from other galleries. As I explained yesterday, we rented a 500-square-meter space and divided it into three, so we have a central reception and two exhibitions. During the Antwerp Art Weekends, we invite several galleries from all over the world to come and use the space. I always say happiness is better when shared and I always use this metaphor: if we eat pizza, we all have an experience together. The thing is, if I am hungry, you should give me your slice—like you just mentioned about the sales you did—, but finding galleries that have the same mindset is very difficult. Everyone wants to eat pizza, but if you are hungry, I am not sure everybody wants to share. So, first of all, I am wondering, how do you make a selection? And secondly, we all seem to want collaborations, but for example, if one of my clients comes into our gallery and wants to buy something from my colleague, they ask me, “Is it fine if I buy something? What do you think, is it good quality?” And I say, “Sure,” because it is good for him and it is good for me as well. I think we talk about collaborations, but it is easier said than done, for the clients and for galleries. So I am wondering, how do you all deal with that? Do you have suggestions for me?

V.C. To answer the first question, about how I make the selection: I only do it in London. I choose the host. And that is based on organic conversations and relationships with galleries that might be really big but have a similar ethos, I would say. And then, in terms of how we select the visitors, it is a mixture of some of the host galleries being like, “Oh, I really want to work with my friend, this gallery from this city,” and I will say, “Fine,” and other galleries saying to me, “Surprise me, give me a list of young galleries that I have never heard of before.” So it is an organic process. And in other cities, the way that I split the labour with Condo is by not pretending to know the art scene in Mexico and in Shanghai. So each city has its own counterpart to me, a gallerist who knows the scene well and whom I trust to choose the

hosts. For example, this year in Mexico City it is quite exciting, because the galleries that we were going to host were really good, kind of international-circuit galleries, but then because of the earthquake, they had a big meeting and decided that they did not want to exclude anyone, that it was more important for the city to bring energy back to all the galleries. So I think every gallery in Mexico City is doing it this year. That is more important to me than it being a selection. Now, as to how we find each other, I think it is a very natural, organic thing as well. I will not name names, but there are many galleries that I would never invite to Condo, because they do not generally operate in a collaborative way. They do not generally demonstrate that. And we all know who they are, because we share artists with them. It is almost a self-selective thing, you organically come together because you share a similar mindset. I think it is the same with the collectors you end up working with, the same with the artists you end up working with, etc. If an artist does not understand that, I do not want to work with them. If it is about, “What can you give me?” and you do not think you have to give anything back, then I am not interested. I do not know how else to describe it, but the same organic way that you form all the relationships in the art world—with your artists, your collectors and your colleagues.

J.M. I think showing collectors that galleries like to work with one another is great. There is an amazing number of exhibitions that galleries get together and do, even crossing different specialities—historical with contemporary, etc. Every single time something like that happens, the public really likes it. We are not really in a particularly competitive business, because we are all doing our own thing, working with our own artists. I think that gives them a big sense of confidence in the integrity of each of these different elements that make up the art world. So it is an incredibly positive message. One of the things that we are looking at with Cromwell Place is choosing different galleries across different specialities and kind of offering them the space to come up with their own programmes during the year or bringing another group of galleries that they feel comfortable showing alongside into the space at the same time. I think that makes it more interesting as an event and it opens up an awful lot of new possibilities.

Q2. Just one more question, do you contract? Because last year, I think we had three or four thousand visitors in our gallery, only during the

weekends. For example, the patrons of several London museums came, which was great. It was a great venue, so we did very well. Now, in terms of sales, for me it is obvious that, if you sell, it is great for everybody. But suddenly there were galleries who wanted to collaborate and there were some arguments. So I am wondering, how far are you going with all the rules? You contract a lot of things, but not really everything, do you know what I mean?

V.C. I can only answer for Condo. There have never been any disputes, because each gallery makes 100% of their own sale and people understand how these client relationships work when they come to the space. So we have not had that problem. In terms of the competition, as John was saying, I think that unless you are on a very, very high level, the idea of competition is not very present. If someone buys something for \$10,000 from me, that is not keeping them from buying something else for \$10,000 from someone else. I think competition only really happens at the highest level. Are you going to buy the Jeff Koons from Larry Gagosian or from David Zwirner?

Q3. My question is a little bit related to that. Vanessa mentioned fees that are very moderate. Is that financially sustainable? If not, then how do you finance it?

V.C. It is financially sustainable inasmuch as all the galleries are paying the rent anyway. All the galleries are going to have an exhibition anyway. Well, sustainable for whom? For me as an organiser?

Q3. No, for all the people attending.

V.C. Over the three years, I have done it all myself with my two employees. The way that we have divided the workload is pretty simple. To be honest, the only thing that is annoying and takes the longest is the party guest list, because each gallery can invite twenty people and they want to change all their guests up to the last minute. That is the only thing that costs me time. The rest of the time it is pretty quick to match them. I send two emails only. The first one starts with, "I am only going to send you two emails," because I know what it is like to do fairs and get fifty emails, so it is actually very streamlined. I do not need anything else, I just enjoy doing the project. Part of the restriction, which is both the good thing and the bad thing about Condo, is that it can never be scaled up very much, otherwise you lose everything

that is good about it. So it will always only have around twenty venues and up to fifty galleries taking part. But that is okay, because there are plenty of fairs you can go to and see 500 galleries. Condo does not need to be the same. In terms of it being sustainable, it certainly is as an organisation, because the idea is that we are all sharing our resources. Everyone who is participating is sharing their space, their mailing list or whatever. It is self-sustainable. And in terms of it being commercially viable, again, it varies from gallery to gallery. Some sell during Condo, others do not. I do not think that has much to do with Condo itself. Today, if you call up ten galleries in London, some made a sale this month, some did not.

E.D. I also do not think it has to be commercially viable as an entity. I think it has to be viable for the gallerists individually, that is the goal. I do not think any of us are trying to start a second career running an entity. It came out of a very organic sense of consensus at the time and place in which these projects were formed. If there is a demand for them, which there is, they will continue. You really have to go with that as your key model and not lose sight of it, because everything else is about it being a business. I do not think that it is useful to look at it in that metric of success. I think it is more about the individuals themselves.

Q4. Hi. One thing I find remarkable about Condo is this idea of self-organizing and self-applying the knowledge and the network that we have and share. I was wondering if you could talk a bit about expanding Condo as a concept to other cities, because usually, art fair circuits sell or buy the entities. And from what I understand, it is basically people from the Condo environment who said, "Hey, we would like to do it in our city," and then you just said, "Okay, go for it." There is not really a commercial entity behind it that has ownership over anything. How do you work around that?

V.C. Again, it is an organic thing. In my head, I had thought about the ideal cities where I would like to have Condo. I strategically kept inviting galleries from those cities, hoping that someone would enjoy participating in it in London and would be like, "Hey, maybe I should organise this in my city!" And that happened, which is great. That is exactly what I wanted with New York and Shanghai. And I think it is no coincidence that the organisers of Condo in all the other cities are women, sorry. I was approached by those galleries because they just

get it. They think similarly. Then the labour is split, so they will often consult with me, “What do you think about this? What do you think about that?” They ask me about the organisation in their own cities, but I leave them to it. It is this idea of collectivism, so the labour is shared. They look after their projects in their city. We discuss it together, but yeah, the self-organizing aspect of it is really important. It is about like-minded colleagues who just find each other.

“I THINK IT IS NO COINCIDENCE THAT THE ORGANISERS OF CONDO IN ALL THE OTHER CITIES ARE WOMEN, SORRY. I WAS APPROACHED BY THOSE GALLERIES BECAUSE THEY JUST GET IT. THEY THINK SIMILARLY.”

L.M. And are there cities that you have said, “I do not think Condo would be a good fit”?

V.C. Yeah, many. But it is really sweet, like for example in Warsaw. They wanted to do Condo there. But Condo has to be generous from every perspective. For me, it is a lot about generosity, so I am not going to ask someone to fly across the world, even if they are not paying anything, barely, to participate, if they are not going to meet any curators or collectors. It has to be cities that have a really healthy audience already. So a city like Warsaw I found difficult. I shared all my organisational documents with them, I explained the structure and I said, “Do your own thing.” They have got a different name for it and it is exciting. They have asked me to visit it. They are working in partnership with the city council there. There are a couple other cities. Two of the people who did Condo in 2017 then did a version in Cologne. There are a few other cities where it does not make sense for me. I encouraged them to do something. If they want to replicate the model, they should go for it, but it is just not something that I have an interest in developing because of the way that I envision Condo.

Q5. (Lisa Schiff) I just wanted to ask a question about the avant-garde. Is there any place for that in the art fair model? Just by listening to you speak and hearing all the organising you have to do, Elizabeth and Vanessa, I am already getting tired. It starts reminding me of all the previews that are in my inbox right now and how exhausted I am. And

then I am thinking about Bridget Donahue, who basically has a gallery for very non-commercial artwork, but who is very well respected. She is kind of just sitting tight there. I am craving not getting on an airplane and not going to twenty different art fairs, or even just one art fair in my backyard, because it is just too overwhelming. Is there something like a slow food movement in the art world? Is there a place where we might go back to galleries again and just stay in our local communities and see that? And if not, is there a place to be revolutionary inside an art fair?

“THE FACT THAT MOST OF THE ARTWORK THAT IS NOT HISTORICAL AT INDEPENDENT IS COMMISSIONED BY GALLERIES, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE ARTISTS, IS SOMETHING WE ARE VERY PROUD OF.”

E.D. I love the idea of the revolution inside the art fair, that is good. It is an open platform and I can only speak from Independent’s perspective. The creative genesis of these amazing commissioned presentations that the galleries do is a germination of today’s version of the avant-garde, which is the studio conversation, the conceptual conversation, which leads to a massive investment on the gallery and artists to bring something into being that did not exist prior. The fact that most of the artwork that is not historical at Independent is commissioned by galleries, in partnership with the artists, specifically for the presentation at Independent, is something we are very proud of. Because it means that this is not about taking pre-existing inventory and flying it around the world and forcing other people to fly around the world to look at it when they really could just walk across the street and visit each other in the gallery. This is about the work driving the methodology for the presentation and then that also being something that comes into being through a shared space.

I also feel that, going back to the new models that we were talking about earlier, a gallerist does not have to have a brick-and-mortar space, because just as it is tiring to do art fairs, it is also tiring to have to have a ten-year lease that you are personally guaranteeing with your life savings. And I really do feel that the gallery is more than just

individualized spaces. It is the community that galleries create with each other and their audience, it is the relationships they have with the artists and with their collector base and the way that they uniquely individualize bringing all that together for that exchange.

**“WE HAVE TO GET OUT OF THIS
OVERCLASSIFICATION SYSTEM OF
GALLERY VERSUS FAIR. IT IS ALL MEANT
TO WORK TOGETHER. THIS IS THE
PRIVATE GALLERY MARKETPLACE THAT
WE ARE TRYING TO RECLAIM.”**

To me, some galleries have more of an active gallery culture during the fair than on a day-to-day basis in the middle of January in their space, when there are maybe five people coming to the exhibition in the afternoon and there is not a dialogue. They are left alone to have their own private time with the work. So I think there is a lot of opportunity. I think we have to get out of this overclassification system of gallery versus fair. It is all meant to work together. This is the private gallery marketplace that we are trying to reclaim. It is not the marketplace you see at Christie's and Sotheby's. It is not the attention-grabbing headline in *The New York Times* about the art market, this is the exchange value of what we do. I think that it is in some ways radical, but also very inventive. And the talent is in the room.

V.C. I would agree that there is an appetite—I certainly am starving—for this idea of a slower movement. For me personally and for my gallery, the dream would be to do maybe two big Basel fairs a year and two or three smaller, independent, self-organised projects, whether they be fairs or Condo. And that is it. I would love to do no other fairs throughout the year, because those are the two experiences that I want: one that is kind of a global thing with a huge outreach and the other that offers more of a personal exchange. I agree with you: it is exhausting, we are all exhausted by it. But when it comes to space for avant-garde, in my case I still treat fairs, especially the big ones, as the one time that a hundred thousand people are going to see my presentation. I really try and deal with each booth as a show. I do not think about it—for better for worse, maybe it is stupid of me—in terms of how much stock I am going to be able to shift this fair, because I am a young gallery. It is about how many people I can introduce this

work to in its most powerful form. Sometimes I have done extremely commercial art fair presentations and I think there is still room to be avant-garde there, because you do this experimental presentation that is not commercial, but you hope that is how you introduce the work of the artist and then the sales happen throughout the year. So I think there is room still in the fairs, but there are definitely, in my opinion, way too many of them. And they are not delivering. You can look at the list of participants. From one year to another, a fair's list of participants will be super great or a dogs dinner, because people are getting fed up. Amongst our colleagues, we talk about how there are some fairs that are basically giving away free booths right now, so...

J.M. Yeah, breaking that cycle is key. I think a lot of galleries, with the combination of fairs and gallery shows, with a permanent space, become a bit of a slave to the calendar. You have got this perpetual cycle of a fair this month and a gallery show, etc. And talking to galleries, it is lovely to have that option, just as Vanessa was saying, where you have the freedom to do the shows, to really spend a lot longer thinking about exhibitions and to be freed of having to do something every month or every six weeks. It is really hard work. And I would think that the quality and the attention that you are going to get in those exhibitions is going to be so much better once you break away from that perpetual cycle.

E.D. When I moved to Harlem, that was definitely the situation. I felt let out of my Chelsea cage. I was so lucky to find an abandoned, former museum space that I worked on for about a year—together with the city, which helped us clear the space so that we could occupy it. The first thing I said I wanted to do was to slow down. I wanted to just go through every idea for an exhibition I ever had with an artist or a historical topic that I had been reading about for years and figure out which of those shows were really relevant to the audience that I was engaging with there. That was just such a wonderful luxury that I had never had in the tiny Chelsea space that I had been in for fifteen years. Being a destination is challenging. We end up organizing things well in advance and keeping shows up for what, two months? Our last series of shows were two and a half months, but what was nice is that you sit down with people and you have the conversation one-on-one. You have the opportunity to bridge thinking and to really get into the topic of the exhibitions in a way that that five-week cycle is still a little

bit too short for. But that said, Independent for me was a way to set up a dream context for how I would like to participate in an art fair, something that felt more manageable. I wanted collectors to come in and remember what they had seen, not be completely bombarded with the magnitude of the tremendous, thousands of artworks that no retina can have a visual memory for. And to really get back to the choreography, what it means to have a journey by looking at things, and to be able to do it with peers of my generation, as well. I think that there is a lot of space to create things that work. It is individual. As a gallery, you go through chapters and stages. What you need in the first seven years is not what you need in the second seven years. There is also these micro time periods that kind of shift the focus, the kind of artist you are working with can also really dictate a lot of things.

**“I WANTED COLLECTORS TO COME
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J.M. Vanessa said another interesting thing: with a fair, you have got a huge number of people coming through. You can save time by being kind of more efficient. If people come to your gallery in dribs and drabs and you are getting like ten or fifteen visitors a day, your show is therefore going to be much longer, whereas if you can have a shorter exhibition, in a week or two, maybe you are going to see 5,000 people coming through. That is going to be a much more efficient use of your time. Your artists are going to be seen by more people. You have suddenly got a lot more time to do fairs, to do research, to plan projects...

E.D. What you are saying, John, is you have the ability to keep your shows up longer at home. If you are taking a space at Cromwell for a week and doing a show there, it is sort of allowing different kinds of economies and exposures to take place simultaneously, so having a home base that can go as long as you need it to go for the show that you have on is great.

V.C. I think that the bricks-and-mortar aspect is still important. I see it with my artists. The first artists will be like, “Can I paint the floor red?” You are like, “Sure.” Then the others see the show and the next artist says, “Can I build fifteen walls?” “Yeah, sure.” The next artist is like, “Can I build all the walls and paint the wall green and the floor?” And the space takes on a sort of collective memory. Each artist sees the possibility of the last exhibition and it somehow compounds. That is really important. I still think the space is important and for people out of town to come and visit you and know where to find you and to have that physical experience. It is exciting to be able to have the freedom to try different spaces and different projects, but for me, the base is the base, it is the home. For the artists and for me. What is not important is to pay a fortune and be in the most expensive neighbourhood, for sure, you do not need that to put on amazing shows.

**“I THINK THAT THE BRICKS-AND-MORTAR
ASPECT IS STILL IMPORTANT. IT’S
EXCITING TO TRY DIFFERENT SPACES
AND DIFFERENT PROJECTS, BUT FOR ME,
THE BASE IS THE BASE, IT’S THE HOME.”**

Q6. My question is for Elizabeth. The list of exhibitors at Independent New York this year is going to be mostly Europeans and Americans. I think only Travesía Cuatro is from Latin America. I was wondering, why are you focusing on Europe and the United States?

E.D. We are a very small fair, so to develop context between galleries that are already collaborating with artists, with points of view, with shipping, with all those things is pretty hard. Once you bring in the European region—which is not small in terms of countries—and you bring the UK into it, which has always had a very big presence at Independent, and then you have the New York galleries doing special projects—often historically relevant projects at the fair—, we are always dealing with the demand for that fair particularly, and for the amount of space that we have. We also do not want to get bigger. So that is why rotation has been important from the beginning. But we have a balance of that. We have had galleries from other regions, the Middle East and Latin America. It just depends on the year. By the way, that is not my decision, that is the decision of Matthew Higgs, the curator of Independent.

Q7. Hi. Thanks for your talk. I have a gallery in a small city in Canada. We are off the beaten track in a country that is invisible—at least it feels that way—, so we struggle with a lot of things. One of the triggers for me to think, “Okay, I can actually open a gallery here and try and make a go of the programme I want to put together” was Independent. Also Seven, in Miami. I guess, first, commendations for finding other ways to do things. We have focused on doing nothing but solo presentations at fairs for the past four years, as a way of trying to launch our artists, not necessarily for collectors but for the curators and the institutions that have no idea that we exist. And I have tried pop-up projects in other cities in Canada. We have done one in Los Angeles, we are working on other projects, that sort of thing. But it is difficult to get, say, on Matthew Higgs’ list, or anywhere on the radar, Condo or anything else, from a place like ours. Do you have suggestions for galleries who are way outside of the centres?

“I THINK THAT ACTUALLY IT CAN BE A HUGE ADVANTAGE TO BE THE BIG FISH IN THE SMALL POND. IT IS MUCH HARDER TO GET EXPOSURE IF YOU ARE IN LONDON OR NEW YORK OR BERLIN.”

V.C. I actually think that is a huge advantage. I have colleagues, like Rodeo Gallery, which used to be an Istanbul. And Sylvia, who runs it, said that every curator that passed by Istanbul came to her gallery, whereas later she moved to London and nobody came anymore. I think that actually it can be a huge advantage to be the big fish in the small pond. So I would see it the other way around. It is much harder to get exposure if you are in London or New York or Berlin. You are scraping by, because there are 200 galleries that people can go and visit, so I would have thought that if a gallery has a strong programme, it is a huge advantage to be outside the centres. And you see galleries strategically doing that all the time: opening up in cities where there is no other competition.

E.D. I would definitely agree with that. You can develop such a specific point of view, because there is no noise around you. You can really sharpen your identity and it will not be in contrast to six other galleries in town. You have that really unique opportunity to communicate. I think telling the story of the programme is really important. Obviously

you are doing that through the exhibitions, but it is also through the communication with international curators who are working on these projects with us. I think that, over time, these things do align. You said you have been open for four years, five years? It is the beginning. You have to do shows over that period in order to just state what you think your true foundation is. Allowing yourself that time to incubate the programme will really pay off. When you have more invitations than you have the ability to say yes to, which will happen in the next stage, you will feel like you have a fully formed identity. And you are able to translate that, regardless of what you decide to do.

V.C. I think there is so much potential. Also, if you are within one of those cities. you can work with any artist, basically, because they are not taken. You see galleries doing that. A gallery in a random place will literally go to Reena Spaulings and take her whole programme to some new place. And then they are on everyone’s maps. I think that the programme speaks louder than anything. If you have a strong programme and you have all these advantages going for you, where you are an art fair’s only applicant from a given country or a given city, and you have a strong programme, and you can work with this super desired, sought-after artist that does not have representation in your country, I would see all of those things as a huge advantage, personally.

L.M. Okay, I am afraid we have to leave it here. Thank you so much to all of our panellists. And thank you for your questions.

Saskia Clifford-Mobley

Saskia Clifford-Mobley manages the Gallery Partnerships business for Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) at Artsy, the leading global platform for discovering and collecting art. Based in London, Saskia and her team enable galleries from all over the region to build Artsy partnerships and forge connections with the millions of visitors to Artsy every month. It was Saskia's experience in both the tech world and the art industry that led her to Artsy. Previously, she worked as a Brand Solutions Manager at Google, focusing on YouTube B2B sales and product management. Prior to that, she pursued a career as an archivist in national museums, including Tate and Ashmolean.

Sophie Neuendorf

Sophie Neuendorf is Director of artnet's prestigious Gallery Network, a platform for the world's leading galleries. With eight years of expertise at artnet, Sophie also pioneered their partnership programme with art fairs and financial and cultural institutions. In a globalised art world, the artnet's Gallery Network provides galleries with the valuation, inventory management and marketing tools they need to grow their business and move the art world forward. Sophie is German, London-educated, and spent time at Christie's before entering artnet.

Tim Schneider

Tim Schneider is an art-business reporter for artnet News and the writer behind *The Gray Market*, the conversation-starting weekly industry-news recap. His work combines nearly a decade of firsthand experience in the gallery sector with insights gleaned from research into economics, tech, data-analysis and related subjects. He often focuses on the need for best practices and greater professionalisation in the art market, particularly on the private side; the negative consequences of their absence for all parties involved; and the potential for innovation to create lasting change in the trade. These themes also form the core of his 2017 book *The Great Reframing: How Technology Will—and Won't—Change Contemporary Art Sales Forever*.

CHANGES IN THE ONLINE ART MARKET

SPEAKERS

**Saskia Clifford-Mobley,
Sophie Neuendorf**

MODERATOR

Tim Schneider



CHANGES IN THE ONLINE ART MARKET

Tim Schneider (T.S.) Before we start the discussion with Saskia and Sophie, I am going to do a short presentation to set the stage a little bit. When we talk about the online art market, it is important to think about how we are framing the conversation and what it is specifically that we are talking about. I have not been a journalist for that many years. I got my start in the gallery business. I was working at a mid-level gallery—our favourite term—for about eight years, give or take, so I have seen the sector from both sides of the looking glass, so to speak, and hopefully that will give me an interesting perspective. One of the things that I think about a lot is that, when we in the art industry start talking about issues like tech, we have a tendency to get a little near-sighted and to lose the broader picture of what is happening. So what I would like to do initially is to talk a little bit about, not the online art market, but the online market in retail more broadly.

If we go back to 2011 and look at the world population, 11% of people had made at least one ecommerce purchase that year. 9.6% of people owned smartphones and, overall, you had about \$650 billion in online retail sales. Fast-forward five years and now those percentages have changed like this: now you have 22% of people who have made at least one ecommerce purchase, which means that number doubled. 28% of people owned a smartphone, so that number tripled. And we have about \$1.9 trillion in online retail sales, so that number also about tripled. If you wanted to tell this story with pictures instead of with boring statistics, you could look at our friend Jeff Bezos, founder of Amazon. This is him in his original office in Seattle in 1999. If I did not know any better I would tell you that this guy was probably a sad middle-manager at an office supply store. Fast-forward eighteen years and last year, this is what Jeff Bezos looked like. He pretty much embodies the power of ecommerce in action. He is literally flexing on all of us. So, naturally, that begs the question, what about the online art market?

It turns out it depends on who you ask. A couple of weeks ago, *The Wall Street Journal* ran a big profile on David Zwirner. In the context of that article, he mentioned that now 30% of his clients buy work solely on the basis of emailed images. That is a huge number. As a matter of fact, it is so big that it basically makes David Zwirner the Jeff Bezos of the online art market. But I think it is safe to say that that is atypical. If you ask about the broader spectrum of online art sales, you will get a few sets of numbers.

“THE WALL STREET JOURNAL RAN A BIG PROFILE ON DAVID ZWIRNER. IN THE CONTEXT OF THAT ARTICLE, HE MENTIONED THAT NOW 30% OF HIS CLIENTS BUY WORK SOLELY ON THE BASIS OF EMAILED IMAGES.”

In general, the two most popular sets come from the Art Basel and UBS report and the Hiscox Online Art Trade Report, which is done in conjunction with Art Tactic. Between those two, they will tell you that there were somewhere between \$3.8 and \$4.9 billion in online art sales in 2016. The market share was between 8.4% and 9% so, from that number, you would basically be on par with what was happening in the general retail sector. I would really like to believe these numbers, but if you are a hopeless nerd like I am, what happens any time you get one of these art market reports is that you cycle all the way to the back and you look at the methodology, which basically explains how they put together those numbers. I am going to focus on the Hiscox report, because it is just about the online art market and I think that is interesting for us.

Again, a recap of their findings: \$3.75 billion in online art sales, 8.4% market share, 15% year-on-year growth from the year before. Where are they getting these numbers from? This takes us into the question of sample sizes. Sample size is a really basic statistical concept. It basically means that if you are trying to project about a big population, you have to interview a small population. So, how many people are you going to interview? That is your sample size. To get to this \$3.75 billion number, they interviewed representatives from 42 of the 75 online art platforms that they tracked. That is fine, I do not have any issue with that. They talked to 132 galleries—out of the 296,000 small art sellers

across the world active last year, according to Clare McAndrew. And they talked to 758 buyers. The question of how many art buyers are in the world at any given time is a really hard one to answer. The best that you can really do is look at who is most likely to be an art buyer and the answer to that is: people who make over \$100,000. There were 398 million people in the world who hit that category last year. With that in mind, this is my reaction to the numbers in the report: I cannot say that they are wrong, they may in fact be right, but if you are working with really small numbers, it increases the probability that you could be really off with your projections.

“THE QUESTION OF HOW MANY ART BUYERS ARE IN THE WORLD AT ANY GIVEN TIME IS A REALLY HARD ONE TO ANSWER. THE BEST THAT YOU CAN REALLY DO IS LOOK AT WHO IS MOST LIKELY TO BE AN ART BUYER.”

This takes us to the second point: sample structure or sample composition. Again, if you are trying to look at a big population of people through a small population of people, you want the people in that small segment to look as much like the people in the large segment as possible. This means factors like age, gender, ethnicity or socio-economic status. Imagine you are an edgy streetwear brand and you want to put out a line of clothes. You are trying to figure out ahead of time whether or not what you are doing is going to hit with your audience. If you wanted to run a statistical model on this, I would highly recommend to you that your sample structure was not mainly conservative white men over fifty. Because, regardless of how many of them you interview, you are probably not going to find out anything about the people who would wear your clothes. So that raises the question of sample structure in the Hiscox report.

Of those 132 galleries, here are some things that we do not know. We do not know how big they are. We do not know where they are. We do not know whether they focus on the primary market or the secondary market. We do not know what era or what media they specialise in. We are not even sure if they are selling art, because this report mixes the collectibles trade with the art trade—that means things like furniture, decorative arts, design, etc. And while those are all totally honourable

professions, I think that we in this room are not as concerned with them as we are about actual contemporary art or art of any kind. So again, when we look at sample structure and you ask me, “Tim, how helpful is this?” My reaction is, “Not very helpful.”

**“GALLERIES THAT INCLUDED PRICE AND
AVAILABILITY INFORMATION UPFRONT
ON THEIR WEBSITE GOT BETTER
ENQUIRIES, HAD A HIGHER LIKELIHOOD
OF SALE AND GOT BETTER SALES
PRICES.”**

Now, to be fair, I am not doing this because I want to go on a diatribe about statistics in the art market. The reason I think it is important to look at where these numbers are coming from is that, when you hear numbers like \$3.75 billion in online art sales—and this, again, is coming for somebody who has worked in the gallery sector—it raises the probability that you end up having one of two reactions. One is, “Oh my god, this thing is already getting so big, I do not have any idea how I am going to catch up, maybe I should just not even try. I will just wait for the next thing or I will do the absolute minimum needed to participate.” The other reaction I think is possible is that you say, “Oh my god, \$3.75 billion in online sales, I have no idea what I am doing, most everybody else that I talk to admits that they have no idea what they are doing, so I guess it just happens on its own. All I have to do is open up a storefront on Artsy or artnet and start a web page and it takes care of itself.” Those of you who have tried this know this is not really how it works. So how did we end up in this scenario?

To me, a big part of the problem goes back to transparency. In fairness to the people who are putting together these art market reports—whom I have a great deal of respect for and I honestly think that they are really trying to do the best they can—the problem with anything that comes to statistics is that you can only do your best with the numbers that you are given. If you cannot get good information about what you are trying to quantify, the best that you can do is basically guesswork. So transparency is a big issue here.

If gallerists, online art platforms or even buyers are not being upfront with you about what it is that they are doing, you basically have no

hope of having any kind of understanding of what is going on. And obviously, the transparency issue plays an even bigger role than that, because even though I am going to take a look at some things that are really simple—like who makes pricing available and who actually tells you whether or not the works that you are seeing could be bought—, transparency is a much bigger question. It relates to things like how galleries are going to work with their artists. Are each of them aware of what their expectations are for what each other is going to do? Are you working with your colleagues elsewhere in the gallery sector openly and having a free and fair exchange? All those things are big questions and the less of that that we have, the harder it is to understand what is going on and the harder it is to come up with solutions for what is, increasingly, a really hard set of problems.

So, just on the basics: Artsy did a survey last year that revealed some interesting information. What they found was that galleries that included price and availability information upfront on their website got better enquiries, had a higher likelihood of sale and got better sales prices. It all seems encouraging and important. The question, though, as we know, is that the art sale space in a lot of cases ends up being a follow-the-leader business. And it is natural to do that, on some level. If you see what the really successful people are doing, you think that you might be able to model yourself after that. So that begs the question, what are the people that we have been referring to as the mega-galleries doing online?

ARTNET WORKS – June 1, 2017

Gallery	Works for Sale	Price Listed	Click to Buy
Gagosian	0	N/A	N/A
Hauser & Wirth	64	0	N/A
Pace	65	0	N/A
White Cube	240	0	N/A
Zwimer	222	0	N/A
TOTAL	591	0	N/A

I will now share with you the results of a high-level data mining operation that consisted of me hand-counting artworks on my laptop inside of a Starbucks. It is a really, really simple analysis, but I think it

is powerful. What you have here is just the five mega-galleries and their presence on artnet circa 1 June of last year, which is when I was finishing my book. The results are pretty obvious. You have almost 600 works that were allegedly on offer. Nobody bothered to list any prices for them and there was no “click to buy” option either.

ARTSY WORKS – JUNE 1, 2017

Gallery	Works for Sale	Price Listed	Click to Buy
Gagosian	0	N/A	N/A
Gagosian Shop	41	40	0
Hauser & Wirth	256	17	0
Pace	191	0	0
Pace Prints	234	0	0
White Cube	241	0	0
Zwerner	223	2	0
TOTAL	1,186	59	0
BY %	-	5.0%	0%

If we go to Artsy, we see very similar results. The chart has expanded for reasons that I will not bore you with, but the point is: now you have almost 1200 works, 59 of which had prices listed—that is 5%. Again, “click to buy” was not an option. What does this tell you?

I think it tells you that it is time to rethink what you are doing online, to a certain extent. If we go back to the data and think about what is happening, we can infer a couple of things. First, being online is not inherently more transparent than being offline. If you want to use your online presence to try to cultivate an air of exclusivity and to build up this mythology around you and your business, you can. Some galleries are doing it and they are really successful. That does not necessarily

mean that—again, if we go back and we look at these transparency issues—that is what you should be doing. This takes us back to the final point that I would like to make.

Expanding the concept of the “online art market”

- Social media
- Digital marketing/advertising
- Online/offline synergies
- New tech

What do we talk about when we talk about the online art market? If we are just talking about, “Okay, things I am going to put up on a website and hopefully sell,” I think that is too narrow a way of looking at it. What I would encourage everyone to do—and this is just my opinion, so take it for what it is worth—is to think about the online art market as a kind of collision of all these different things: your social media presence, digital marketing and digital advertising, and the synergies that you can create between your online and your offline presence—for instance, maybe you are putting on events in your gallery space and you want to livestream a talk or something like that, or maybe you are going to present an art fair booth, so you change your website or your Artsy and artnet pages to promote what you are doing at the fair. Those things make sense and I think may make a difference.

The last thing is new technology. To kind of zoom out a little bit, it is significant that we in this room, and in 2018, are talking about online sales as a potentially revolutionary thing. If you told that to people in any other retail sector, they would laugh at you. “What are you talking about? We are so far beyond that right now!” But adapting is not easy either. There are new technologies coming down the pipe and nobody really fully knows what is due. I am not saying that everybody needs to do everything, but I think that it is smart, especially for people who are smaller and cannot compete on a staff level or a money level with the really big players, to really think about what else is happening out there and how you might be able to change what you do using these new tools that are becoming available.

“THINK ABOUT THE ONLINE ART MARKET AS A KIND OF COLLISION OF ALL DIFFERENT THINGS: SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE, DIGITAL MARKETING AND DIGITAL ADVERTISING, AND THE SYNERGIES THAT YOU CAN CREATE BETWEEN YOUR ONLINE AND YOUR OFFLINE PRESENCE.”

I am now going to talk to our panellists about this. Before we get into the actual discussion, I want to put a few disclaimers upfront. Number one: we talked amongst ourselves and decided that we did not want this to be a war between Artsy’s features and artnet’s features. We are going to try to keep this really high-level. Also, not everything we say is going to apply for everyone. There are no one-size-fits-all solutions. So, let us start. Sophie, from your experience, what are some of the biggest misconceptions that gallerists have about the way the online space works?

Sophie Neuendorf (S.N.) I think one of the most common things I have heard since I started at artnet would be the idea that posting an artwork online, on artnet, would essentially burn the work. That was something weirdly popular and something that gallerists seemed to be afraid of. Some of them have now come around to the idea that it is not going to happen. Others are still sticking to that concern. Another misconception, also very popular, was that the transparency that we

offer at artnet—or at Artsy—would in fact hinder their business and not allow them to move freely in their pricing. That is something we are still struggling with a little bit within the gallery network, the idea that putting prices online and being very transparent about them will not be great for your business.

“ANOTHER MISCONCEPTION WAS THAT THE TRANSPARENCY THAT WE OFFER WOULD IN FACT HINDER THEIR BUSINESS AND NOT ALLOW THEM TO MOVE FREELY IN THEIR PRICING.”

T.S. Just for context, how long have you been at artnet now?

S.N. About eight years.

T.S. Okay, yeah, so that is a long time and we are still dealing with the same issues. Saskia, would you like to add anything to that?

Saskia Clifford-Mobley (S.C.) In terms of misconceptions—and this has been a real learning curve for me, as I have transitioned from working for a big tech company into this industry—, there is the idea that the audience on these online platforms are just the kids. “My collectors are not really using these platforms.” That is something we hear quite often in regards to Artsy, artnet, Instagram and so forth. But it is just not true, your audiences really are online and their digital footprint is as varied as your very own. So it is important to make sure that you are where your audience is.

The kids are online, yes, but that is not a bad thing. The kids are alright. They are the future collectors and it is good to cultivate that segment as well as your existing audience, to see the potential in the audience online. The other misconception that I thought of is the idea that you can kind of dip your toe in the water and try digital. “I will do a three-month trial or maybe just buy some digital media advertising as a one-off and see how that goes.” These short-term bursts are not a useful business strategy. It is about thinking long-term, because if you just scattergun and try lots of different things for short periods, you will not see the return on that investment and you will not actually get the learnings or the data you need to make sensible business

decisions going forward. So it is not about doing a test or a trial. Digital presence, awareness and sales take time to build up and they are a very cumulative approach to business-building.

“IT IS NOT ABOUT DOING A TEST OR A TRIAL. DIGITAL PRESENCE, AWARENESS AND SALES TAKE TIME TO BUILD UP AND THEY ARE A VERY CUMULATIVE APPROACH TO BUSINESS-BUILDING.”

T.S. I was actually talking to Ossian Ward about the idea of online presence as a kind of “soft power.” It does not mean that everything is going to immediately translate into results. Just because suddenly you start an Instagram account, you are not going to be able to say, “Oh, I have twenty more people coming into my gallery every week.” It is just not like that. It is a diffuse asset, which I think makes gallerists more likely to kind of abandon ship early. But I am editorialising a little bit, I should stop. Obviously, both of your jobs are to help galleries get as much as they can out of your platforms. Again, everybody is different, so can you talk a little bit about some of the differences in approach, or even in experience level with technology, that you have found over time? Maybe you can start, Saskia.

S.C. In terms of the galleries and businesses that we work with?

T.S. Yeah. What are some of the different things that you find people looking for?

S.C. It is a broad spectrum. Again, it has been fascinating for me to work with an industry, a set of clients and businesses where there is such varying degree of expertise, confidence and experience. You have the David Zwirners, who have incredible, large-scale, integrated campaigns and full operational resources to make that effort. And then you also have the one-man, one-woman operations where the gallerists are kind of a Swiss Army knife, trying to handle absolutely every aspect of the business, which means digital might not be their strength. So it is a very broad spectrum in terms of the galleries that we are working with. And there is no one-size-fits-all approach. I think it is really about working out what your key business objective is.

Are you trying to build brand awareness? Are you trying to increase footfall into your physical space and therefore raise awareness at a local or regional level? Are you trying to perhaps grow internationally and generate an export business? Are you trying to amplify seasonal live events, such as fairs? There are so many different objectives. I think what is key is being quite strategic and strict with yourself and working out what it is that you want to do, putting your focus and energy on that aspect of your digital presence and then relying on expertise from the industry and third parties, such as artnet and Artsy, who essentially can guide and advise on that.

“THERE IS NO ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL APPROACH. I THINK IT IS REALLY ABOUT WORKING OUT WHAT YOUR KEY BUSINESS OBJECTIVE IS.”

T.S. How many clients have those decisions worked out before they come and talk to you? That is a question for either one of you.

S.C. It varies. If I think about the gallery partnerships team in Europe at Artsy, they will have one conversation with someone who is very savvy and very confident, who has experience looking at their digital footprint and data and making the correct decisions off the back of it, and also somebody who genuinely does not feel comfortable investing in a new set of computers for the business, let alone then getting the digital skills that they need to make the right decisions. So I really would not be able to say, you know, X percent are confident. We see the full spectrum.

S.N. I think it also develops into a conversation. They may come to us and say, “We want such and such,” but they may go into a completely different direction after having a conversation and seeing what the product offering is. I agree with you, Saskia, that one tries to be really quite sensitive and understand where the gallery is and what their offering is. Are they an emerging gallery? Do they want to advertise their new shows or their first art fair participation? Maybe they are so well-known that they just want to use the price database. So yeah, I think it is just about tailoring it to that specific gallery and then taking it from there after a conversation.

T.S. Has that changed much over the course of eight years? Do you still see as wide a spread as you used to? Or do you feel like people are coming into it now with more of a baseline understanding of what they want and how to use a technology?

**“SOME PEOPLE ARE STILL STRUGGLING
TO COME TO TERMS WITH THEIR ONLINE
PRESENCE.”**

S.N. I cannot say it has changed that much. We were talking about it this morning and, as Saskia just said, some galleries are very, very savvy, especially the younger and emerging ones, while others are antique dealers. Some of them actually decide to go completely offline and not have a proprietary site, not be on artnet or Artsy. So we see a broad spectrum and I suppose one has to be sensitive to all of the cases. It has not changed in that sense. Some people are still struggling to come to terms with their online presence.

S.C. I would say that maybe there has been a shift from, “Should I really start thinking about a digital presence?” to, “How should I think about it?” Speaking with the team—and I am sure Sophie’s experience can illuminate this—there has been a pivot as to, “Okay, I understand this is critical. Now I need to think about what the best strategy is for my business and my inventory.”

T.S. In terms of implementation, we are all saying that we now think online presence is basically as important a part of your business as accounting or shipping. It is something that you need to do. But especially if you are a really small gallery, say you are a mom-and-pop store, how do you implement that? Because I can speak from my experience in the gallery world, where we will be aware of like, “Oh, we should really update our Artsy page or our Internet page or whatever,” but when you get to it, it is 5:45, you have had a hell of a day, etc. It is the easiest thing in the world to put off. You know that you can just do it tomorrow, whereas everything else feels pressing. “I have to follow up on shipping about this, I have to follow up this person about payment, I have to do this, I have to do that...” Those things just seem so much more present on a day-to-day basis. You are like, “Oh, it is fine, I will just do it tomorrow.” And then you look up and two months have passed. So do you have any recommendations as to how people

could start to wrap their minds around the idea that digital needs to be something that they should really be thinking about?

**“YOU SHOULD HAVE A CONSTANT,
CONTINUOUS RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR
DIGITAL PRESENCE. THE MORE TIME YOU
FOCUS ON IT AND DEDICATE TO IT, THE
MORE RESULTS YOU WILL SEE AND THE
STRONGER THEY WILL BE.”**

S.C. I feel so strongly about this. You would not ask your intern to do your legal work. You would not ask the gallery manager to do your full accounts. These are specialist skill sets and digital is exactly the same. You should really think about hiring a specialist. If you cannot increase your headcount, then really invest in upscaling and training for existing staff, so that you are future-proofing your business and you are in the right position to succeed. In terms of recommendations, “take it seriously” is the big one. And think about in terms of “input equals output.” Sophie mentioned a gallery might upload one artwork and just assume that they are done, that the profile is there. No. You should have a constant, continuous relationship with your digital presence. The more time you focus on it and dedicate to it, the more results you will see and the stronger they will be.

At Artsy, we know that when a gallery’s response time goes down—meaning they take less time to respond to an enquiry—, conversion rates go up. The more hands-on you are, the more success you will see. So that would definitely be a recommendation: just take it seriously. And then another recommendation is just to understand the positive power of data. It is not scary, it is empowering. There are so many ways you can look at data. You do not need a Ph.D. in statistics to make sense of it. It is actually very straightforward. You look at data, for example, on your collector profiles and then you can make more informed decisions about how to tailor your offering to them. Every enquiry essentially is the opportunity to foster a relationship with a collector, so you should be looking at their profile to get to understand what they want. Also, see data as empowering in terms of, again, input equals output. The more data you attach—and pricing is obviously a huge part of it—, the more high-resolution images you can attach—

not just some installation shots, but specifically of the artwork—, the better. We have some galleries who are incredible at servicing their collectors through Artsy. They will photoshop mock-ups of the artwork in that person's house so they can understand the scale, for example. All of that is good stuff, but also artist-level data, particularly if you are representing emerging artists. All of that metadata that you provide on an artwork makes it more surfaceable, more discoverable, and not just on platforms but in Google Search, in SEO, it is all logged in the Internet. So I would say: really understand the power of data and take it seriously.

“UNDERSTAND THE POSITIVE POWER OF DATA. IT IS NOT SCARY, IT IS EMPOWERING. THERE ARE SO MANY WAYS YOU CAN LOOK AT DATA. YOU DO NOT NEED A PH.D. IN STATISTICS TO MAKE SENSE OF IT.”

T.S. Just for the uninitiated, SEO stands for “search engine optimisation.” Basically, it is about putting your presence out there, online, in a way that makes you the most findable for whatever it is that you are trying to put out there. For instance, if you represent an artist together with other galleries, search engine optimisation is one of the ways you can try to make sure that you are the first gallery that somebody sees when they search for that artist.

S.C. Digital presence is about making it as easy as possible for the collector. Whether that means you are the first answer to their Google search and your artist's works appear there or by displaying a price. The goal is to have fewer steps, fewer hurdles or hoops for the collector to jump through so that they are more likely to convert. The easier you make it, the greater the success you will have.

S.N. As we said this morning, the more information you provide readily, and the lower the steps are for the collector to access it, the better. And relationships are key too, online as well as offline. If you have a friendship and you do not invest in it, it is not going to grow in any way. You have to treat your online presence on artnet or Artsy the same way and really invest in it. We see the same thing at artnet: the more artworks you put online, the more often you rotate your inventory and

the more information you give us, the more searchable it is on artnet. That allows us to do our job and help you and your business.

T.S. Do you think that people who you work with in the gallery network are coming around to that idea? Or is it still something that you have to kind of handhold them through? Do you still have to try to get them to believe that giving more information is a good thing?

“IF YOU PROVIDE PRICES READILY, IT WILL INCREASE TRANSPARENCY AND MAKE COLLECTORS MORE COMFORTABLE. HOWEVER, WE ONLY HAVE A FEW GALLERIES THAT DO THAT READILY, PERHAPS 180.”

S.N. I think there is still quite a lot of hand-holding and convincing to do. Just like Artsy does, we advertise the fact that, if you provide prices readily, it will increase transparency and make collectors more comfortable. However, we only have a few galleries that do that readily, perhaps 180. It is really not something they do. And yes, we do have to push our galleries and remind them—and we do it happily—to add to their inventory and add their exhibition at a museum or their art fair participation. Sometimes it is just genuinely forgetting and other times, yes, it is because they think, “Oh my goodness, it is 5:30 and I have some other things to do,” but then of course, that is where client services come in. You can allow us to do our job and to do it for you. Digital is something that you have to be happy to do. Whether you do it yourself or let artnet do it. It is a conversation, I guess.

S.C. The consultancy that we are able to offer galleries in terms of, “Okay, what is your objective? What is the strategy we are going to put in place for you?” is key. We build out a plan, whether it is an upload schedule or, if you choose to, for example, we do exhibition previews online only. It is about really plotting that out in advance and working closely with the platform to make sure that you are making the right decisions. And just keeping a close work relationship. For example, one of our galleries made two sales through Artsy in their first year and they completely changed their strategy. They started displaying prices and massively reduced their enquiry response rates. Every enquiry they receive they now answer within 24 hours. That is their kind of

company line, “This is what we do as a business now,” and then they sold over fifty works the following year, just by making these changes and putting that focus. So the support that we can offer our gallery partners and the optimisations and recommendations are significant.

T.S. Sophie, we were saying that attitudes have not necessarily changed that much in eight years. Can you maybe talk about something where you have seen a pretty substantial shift in people’s behaviour?

“I THINK THE WHOLE SOCIAL MEDIA DEVELOPMENT, THE SHOPPING THAT GOES ALONG WITH IT, IS THE BIGGEST CHANGE.”

S.N. In eight years? Gosh. To me it seems like a long time and in fact I think in technology there has been so much advancement. Eight years ago, when I started, maybe five galleries had a presence on Facebook, a professional one. Now you cannot go without it, so most galleries do. It has just shifted. Back then there was Instagram and WeChat. That developed and now you can actually shop on Instagram and artists are selling via their studios and WeChat, so I think the whole social media development, the shopping that goes along with it and being able to purchase artworks online, even if many collectors would be uncomfortable doing so, just having the option to do that is a big leap. I think this is the biggest change: that social media has really developed into a viable business option for galleries.

T.S. Saskia, you obviously went through a big change, because you used to work for a dedicated tech giant, where this stuff works very differently. Was there almost a culture shock when you got to Artsy?

S.C. I went from working with large advertisers and media agencies who were trying to do really experimental—sometimes ill-advised—things with technology and really being extremely forward-looking to an industry that is still hesitant and still learning what the right model for the business is. So it is difficult. In my previous role, there were more broad-stroke recommendations I could make. You know your type of business, so if you are a packaged consumer-goods retail business, great, we would advise this. If you are a telco company, great, this is the best approach you should take. But with galleries, as I mentioned

earlier, the spectrum is so large. There is no one-size-fits-all strategy. That has been a fun journey for me in terms of getting to grips with that. Listening as much as possible to our gallery partners is important. And being here is also fantastic, meeting so many people and just hearing about their experiences, because that is triggering new ideas of, “Okay, well, this is maybe a strategy we can implement with this type of gallery, for example.”

S.N. The other night, I was speaking to one of the gallerists that is attending the symposium. It was very interesting to hear that they have different approaches on social media, so I learned what they use WeChat for, what they use Instagram for, the types of images that they would put online, etc. That is probably something you have been hearing as well.

“THE ART INDUSTRY IS TRYING NEW THINGS, FOR SURE, BUT I DO FEEL LIKE, AS A GROUP, WE ARE SEVERAL YEARS BEHIND MANY OTHER BUSINESSES.”

S.C. In the Artsy gallery round-up survey that Tim mentioned in his very good presentation, another statistic that came out was that just over half of the galleries we interviewed—who were a combination of Artsy partners and non-partners—had experimented with online video in the last year. I think that is a really interesting shift and we would expect that to increase. The art industry is trying new things, for sure, but I do feel like, as a group, we are several years behind many other businesses. For example, again, at breakfast we were discussing the retail section. Amazon has just launched this new shop where they are essentially eliminating checkout tools and it is all done with sensors and lasers. They are completely changing that retail experience. If you think that some business models are changing in such a radical way—they are changing the way humans behave—we have a long way to go till we get to that level.

T.S. Right. And I am sceptical that we ever will. Or that we should. I am a big believer in the idea that so much of what makes the art industry unique and kind of makes it work is the social aspect that is built around it. I talked about this a lot in my book, but I am sceptical about the idea that somebody would just say, “Here, I will create an experience where

collectors, instead of having to go to art fairs or to shows and talk to people, can just go online and click to buy.” Collectors are going to be like, “I do not want to do that, that sounds horrible.” I mean, maybe to some collectors not so much, but broadly speaking, I feel like people actually want to be involved. They want to see the art. They want to see other people. So I do not envision the gallery where we have the Jeff Bezos scanner-only system happening. But who knows. I could be totally off-base about that.

S.C. No. And I think it is really important for galleries to view the online relationships and current client cultivation that can happen there in the same way they would regard a walking into the physical space. And really give it the same amount of attention. It is about the expertise that you have and the way you can bring it to the potential buyer. I do not see why online should remove that human or personal element. It should be the common thread that goes through all operations.

“I DO NOT SEE WHY ONLINE SHOULD REMOVE THAT HUMAN OR PERSONAL ELEMENT. IT SHOULD BE THE COMMON THREAD THAT GOES THROUGH ALL OPERATIONS.”

T.S. I am just thinking about this now but, when you are talking to one of your gallery partners and they explain to you what they want to do, do you ever just tell them that they are wrong? Like, “No, that is not the way that you should do this.” Or do you try to respect their wishes?

S.C. It varies. I would say I have definitely seen a couple of instances where a gallery has not wanted to include any information on the artwork and their digital presence is very low-key. For me, that is just frustrating, because it defeats the point of the engine that runs the platform, which surfaces the right artwork to the right collector based on their behaviours. So you are effectively doing yourself a disservice if you do not take advantage of the technology that is available. Certainly, we would say, “No, you need to include at least some more information. Otherwise, the work is not discoverable and your artists will not be surfaced to the right people.” We have seen that. I will go back to a point I made at the beginning: what is your objective? Are you trying to raise awareness? Do you want to use a platform like artnet or Artsy as a

marketing tool or are you looking to drive sales? And if you are looking to drive sales, what is that strategy? Is it local? Is it international? Is it seasonal? I think we have to approach a partnership sensibly so we know exactly what you want to get out of it and we can decide what the inputs should be.

“YOU ARE EFFECTIVELY DOING YOURSELF A DISSERVICE IF YOU DO NOT TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE TECHNOLOGY THAT IS AVAILABLE.”

S.N. It is also important to convince those partners that we are working in their best interest and that the more transparent they are with us, the better it is for their business.

S.C. Yeah. And the beauty of working for a tech company, the absolute joy of working for a company like Artsy, is that we have data. We are sat on data that we can then share with people and say, “The numbers do not lie, $X = Y$, if you do this you should see the increase in quality of enquiries or sales.” So to be able to actually share hard numbers and trends with galleries in their best interest is wonderful. It is not just plucking an idea out of thin air. It is really rooted in actual data on people’s behaviour.

T.S. Sophie, you talked a little bit about social media being a big change in the art market from the time that you started at artnet to today. Can you expand on it? What do you think it has affected the most? Either specifically with the way that you run the artnet gallery network or just kind of more broadly in the art industry overall.

S.N. Do you mean in terms of sales?

T.S. No, not necessarily...

S.N. Engagement?

T.S. Yeah, in general, just the way that people are thinking about it or asking questions that they did not ask before.

S.N. The one big shift that I have seen is that, from starting as something that they found superfluous, superficial and maybe not serious enough

for the art world, now it has become really an indispensable tool for advertisement and sales. That is the biggest shift I have seen, but then also having to go all the way to being sensitive about what types of platforms there are and also becoming part of our product offering towards galleries. When they are on Artsy or artnet, we do offer this type of exposure by being a partner and being on our social media or advertising their programmes on their social media. This exchange in conversation and engagement I think is something that has really become important for our business overall and our product offering. I think that is the shift.

**“MY RECOMMENDATION IS TO HAVE AN
INTEGRATED STRATEGY THAT LINKS
YOUR ONLINE AND YOUR SOCIAL
PRESENCE WITH YOUR REAL WORLD
EVENTS.”**

S.C. I think when it comes to social media, no one channel exists in isolation. You cannot just say, “I will have an Instagram account. Great, that is the social box ticked.” Your audience and your collectors are across many different channels and it is your responsibility to greet them at each of those points. I think it is about being very sensible about the different channels you operate on. What is the approach to them? How are they integrated? Because there needs to be consistency. You cannot have a different voice across these different platforms. You nurture it over time and the rewards are cumulative. My recommendation from the social perspective—and I am sure the next panel will tackle this with much more detail—is for you to have an integrated strategy that links your online and your social presence with your real world events. Make sure they are not in silos. Your online and your offline presence should be working completely together at all times for maximum impact. That would be my recommendation.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND QUESTIONS (C/Q) FROM THE AUDIENCE

Q1. The Hiscox report said that there is a market threshold of about \$5,000. I was just wondering, what are Artsy or artnet users—people who log in, buyers, viewers and visitors—looking for in terms of price?

S.C. That is a difficult question to answer. How long is a piece of string, right? Everybody is looking for something different. It is about understanding that the technology is essentially going to help people navigate what they are looking for. Quite often, people will browse not knowing exactly what they want, but based on previous browsing behaviour, we can start to create a picture for them and what they are looking for. In terms of price brackets, typically it is the sub-\$100,000 market.

Q1. That is quite big!

**“THERE IS DEFINITELY A SEGMENT OF
OUR AUDIENCE LOOKING AROUND
THE \$3,000 MARK AND THEN THERE
IS ANOTHER LARGE SEGMENT THAT
TYPICALLY WILL BE LOOKING AT
\$50,000 AND ABOVE.”**

S.C. Well, there are brackets within that. I would say the audiences are operating at different levels. There is definitely a segment of our audience looking around the \$3,000 mark and then there is another large segment that typically will be looking at \$50,000 and above. Audiences behave and interact with those price brackets in different ways. It is difficult to say, “People who are interested in this era and this size will be willing to spend this amount.” Certainly we are building that data up. Collector profiles, for example, are a tool that gallery partners can use to get a better sense of what people are looking for and then, once you have established that relationship with the collector, you can start to surface in a more targeted way. But from the pure behavioural standpoint, we have a wonderfully diverse audience.

S.N. I think for us it depends on which product they are surfing. If they are going on artnet auctions, then they might be looking for something at a different price bracket than, say, they would be looking for in the price database when they are simply researching. So I think it really varies from product to product and our product offering is quite holistic, so that does make a big difference.

Q2. Hi. Thanks for your presentation. At the very beginning, you quoted David Zwirner saying that 30% of his sales go via email, right? Why do

you calculate that into online purchases? Is email considered to be the online market? To me, it is a very different thing.

**“THE MORE YOU CAN UNITE OFFLINE
AND ONLINE, THE BETTER. IT IS THE
SAME, YOU ARE RUNNING THE SAME
BUSINESS, IT IS JUST A DIFFERENT
COMMUNICATION TOOL.”**

T.S. Right. That is a great question and it speaks to something that I maybe could have developed more towards the end of the presentation; namely, what qualifies as an online sale and what is the value of being online? From my perspective, having worked at a gallery, it is not necessarily as simple as to say, “Oh, we got an enquiry from a collector that we had not met before. It came in through one of these platforms, we had a conversation with them completely online and a sale resulted and that is it.” Instead, it is a mixture of things. Somebody would contact us through one of these platforms—our website, Artsy, artnet or whatever—and then we would get into a conversation with him or her about an art fair that we were going to attend two weeks later. Then the collector shows up there and you start an offline relationship. Maybe they do not even buy anything at that point, but six months down the road you make a sale to them.

Q2. And you would still consider that an online sale?

T.S. For me, at least, it is less a question of, does that count as offline or online? It is all the same, I think. It is all an integrated ecosystem now. So trying to silo what counts as online is maybe not the most helpful way of thinking about it. I am always trying to encourage people to get rid of the idea that the online space is something separate from what you do every day as a gallery. Seeing these kinds of interactions happen convinces me that the more you can unite offline and online and think of them as just one thing, the better. It is the same, you are running the same business, it is just a different communication tool. That is what I have seen that works, but it is my personal experience more than anything else.

Q3. (Adam Sheffer) I guess this is for Saskia. Is there something that you can do to help us when we engage with a collector through your

platform—we spend a lot of time with them, because we want to have a good reputation and engage them—and then they disappear? We try to be polite, we try to answer all our enquiries and to take everybody seriously, because you do not know who they are. They spend a lot of time either checking prices or comparing with some auction result and that is time I would rather be spending on somebody serious or an artist. I would like a little defence for what I am doing, if possible. Thanks.

S.C. Other than me personally running after that person, there are a few things that the platform can do to support you. You raise such a great point in terms of you offering an input and essentially expecting an output, which I am harping on about. As far as the relationship between the collector and the gallery, I would have two recommendations. The first is: we have different levels of partner subscriptions and, on our premium one, you are able to access your collector’s details after there has been back and forth with them, so you are able to then approach them off the platform and email them or call them to manage that relationship. What would you do with a walk-in who behaved like that? You have the initial conversation, you are still investing time, thought and expertise, you are preparing a proposal for them to try and reach that point of sale, and then they disappear. How would you approach it in real life? I guess this is almost a question for you, how would you say that could best translate into the online world?

Q3. (Adam Sheffer) If someone takes the time to come into the gallery and to actually see things, it is a lot more of an investment on their end, and it shows that they are willing to cultivate that relationship, as opposed to just sending a quick link or something like that. So your point is well-taken, but I think the issue is the amount of time that we invest. We at least want to feel like somebody has our back.

S.C. There are things that we know improve enquiry quality, so that the person is more likely to then continue that conversation with you down the line and hopefully purchase something. For example, posting as much information on the artwork and as much artist context as possible. If you upload the artist’s CV, for example, they will be able to get a sense of whether this is a good investment for them. We are currently actually doing an A/B test with a new product launch where we are including artist-level context data, which will appear when you click on an artwork. So the collector will be able to see information like,

has this artist ever had a show in a museum? What type of galleries are representing them? All of that is there to empower the user, the collector, to think, “Okay, this is something I am more serious about moving forward with.” All of that context that empowers the collector will mean that the ones that then filter down and enquire are probably more likely to convert.

**“POSTING AS MUCH INFORMATION ON
THE ARTWORK AND AS MUCH ARTIST
CONTEXT AS POSSIBLE IMPROVES
INQUIRY QUALITY.”**

Also, I would recommend adding details like pricing. We know that really improves enquiry quality. Any sort of metadata you can attach and further information will improve that quality for you. I realise that if you are investing all that time and thought, it is frustrating when a collector then chooses to stop engaging, but you are more likely to have those valuable conversations if you add information. And once you have built a relationship with the collector, that is something you can manage off the platform, if need be, and cultivate over time.

Q4. (Melanie Gerlis) Thanks. How do you answer the question, why will my work not get burnt if I put it up on a public forum? Everyone knows it is for sale and maybe everyone knows it has been for sale for a year or two.

S.N. I am still trying to figure out why there is so much sensitivity there. It is an excellent question. I think maybe it is the idea that you have it up there for a certain amount of time and maybe nothing happens. It is like when some galleries, for example, bring an artwork to an art fair and, if they do not sell it, then maybe they should not bring it to the next one. That is perhaps similar, the fear that if you have it up there for sale for a certain amount of time and nothing happens, if nothing moves, then it kind of limits the excitement about the artwork and everything else.

Q4. (Melanie Gerlis) But what do you say in reply to that? How do you convince someone not to think that way?

S.N. I would say I do not believe it would be negative. I think that it is always good to be very open and transparent about the inventory you have. Fair enough if you do not want to list the prices, if that is something you would like to be more discreet about, but I do not think that having an artwork online is necessarily going to make it any less valuable. It is the same as if it was hiding in your back-office.

**“IT IS ALWAYS GOOD TO BE VERY
OPEN AND TRANSPARENT ABOUT THE
INVENTORY YOU HAVE.”**

S.C. It is an excellent question and certainly an objection that galleries do pose to platforms like ours regularly. My personal argument would be: if you do not put it up, then you will never reach the potential audience. And also, you have utter control over how long it is published for. It is not like you put it online and then it is just there indelible, in the ether, and you can never take it down. You have utter control over it, so you could publish it for a couple of months, take it down and later republish it and link different tags and categories to it so it would be surfaced to a new audience. You could even be very targeted and clever about surfacing it to different audiences at different times. I would recommend taking advantage of that toolkit. There is also the argument of, you either have zero share of voice representing that artist or you have a share of voice. If you do not publish anything, then you will not have that share.

T.S. I would just add something really quickly—although I do not know the answer to this. I wonder if people who are primarily getting introduced to artworks or to galleries online are necessarily even thinking about it in terms of an artwork in particular, as the exact one that they are going to be able to buy. Speaking from experience, I can tell you that I have worked for places where the work was not available, but we left it up because we thought it was a great example of that artist’s work, that it read really well online. It would draw enquiries and then, when people asked, we would go, “Well, unfortunately that one is not available, but here we have this other work from the same artist that you might be interested in.” We can debate whether or not that is the right way to do things, but I do know that it happens. It raises the question: should we automatically assume that people are interacting with art online in exactly the same way as they do offline? And I would

not say that they always do. I do not know where the percentage breakdown is between the aspects where it is a mirror image and the things where it is not.

Q5. (Lisa Schiff) I just wanted to say, first of all, I am a huge fan of art online. I feel like there are some really interesting new platforms. I love Artsy, I use it all the time. I am least interested, though, in the gallery interface part of it. I think one of the things I am concerned about, as someone who cares very much about content and filtering, is that there is no editing as to what goes into Artsy. Anybody can put their stuff up. So I might be looking at Robert Ryman and then a collector I am working with says, “Okay, well, I might also like this.” And it is just a white painting. So I worry about that side of it. It is like with Instagram, which is an interesting tool to use as well and I am trying to figure out how to navigate. I just wonder what you think about that.

**“SHOULD WE AUTOMATICALLY ASSUME
THAT PEOPLE ARE INTERACTING WITH
ART ONLINE IN EXACTLY THE SAME WAY
AS THEY DO OFFLINE?”**

S.C. When we have that concern of, “Oh, but maybe there is a saturation of works for that example that you gave,” I would go back to understanding the technology that powers the platform. We have developed this really gorgeous algorithm and the Art Genome project, which essentially means that we are only surfacing artworks that are relevant to that user. Sometimes people online—we have all done it—fall down the rabbit hole and spend hours going down different categories and threads, seeing how they will connect together. But typically, users will be looking at what they are interested in. That search will develop, like on Instagram, based on your previous behaviour. It becomes a more tailored experience. So just have confidence in that.

Q5. (Lisa Schiff) I think there are pros and cons to every part of the art world, but what you are describing to me is more like trending. If I am looking at this one day, then tomorrow I can look at something over here. That is something I am concerned about in terms of real history, because I do not feel like it functions that way. What does that mean for future generations if this is the main platform that people are using to get their information?

S.C. No, hopefully not. In terms of the recommendation, it is more bespoke to that individual and their behaviour. It is less about real-time trends, although I would say that is definitely something we are looking at, what data do we have that we can share with collectors and galleries?

Q5. (Lisa Schiff) Are there curators? This is where AI gets really terrifying to me, because this is defining the future of the art world and the art market.

S.C. Definitely. The Art Genome project is powered by curators who are building out the context of every kind of thread that we have in that project.

Q5. (Lisa Schiff) Robot curators or real ones? [Laughter]

S.C. Real, human people. And I can vouch for them as being wonderful.

Q5. (Lisa Schiff) I do not believe you!

S.C. My gosh, we are going to have to do an exposé of the people contributing to the Art Genome project, although I am sure it is on the website.

Q5. (Lisa Schiff) What if, as a gallery, I have no credentials but I want to pay and put my inventory on Artsy. No curator is going to filter me out. That is the problem. It is not curated. What gets posted is decided on by who is going to pay. Once I paid, you would be obligated to put me in the mix. There would be a lot of really bad stuff mixed in with the good stuff, because there is no quality control.

S.C. Oh, I see. We actually have quite strict eligibility criteria at Artsy in terms of the galleries that we work with. It is based on a whole range of things, such as artists represented, how engaging and active the programme is, etc. So we definitely choose those galleries that will contribute to Artsy and make the partnership beneficial for both sides. Their inventory does well on the platform and they are bringing quality works that satisfy our user base. I would say that there is an element of, I guess, quality control, in that sense.

Q6. I have a question for both sides of the stage. Both cryptocurrency mining and digital artists are strictly open source, so they are absolutely

transparent by nature. The cryptocurrency market grew ten times last year, from \$50 to \$500 billion. Next year, it will probably grow to \$5 trillion, then to \$50 trillion and then it will probably collapse. We do not know. I have not seen the dot-com boom and how it affected art sales, but cryptocurrency is definitely a proxy. So my question is, how are you getting prepared for this, the so-called Web 3.0? You were definitely speaking about Web 2.0. How ready are you to be transparent for this potential \$50 trillion proxy market of the art market?

T.S. Let me just clarify to make sure I know what you are actually asking. Essentially, what you are saying is that there is this new phase of technology that is based on cryptocurrencies, blockchain and all that stuff, which is fundamentally different in terms of its level of transparency, at a DNA level.

Q6. Yes. Transparency and anonymity, at the same time.

T.S. And you are asking, how is that going to affect the art market going forward?

Q6. Exactly. How are you technically prepared for it? The other side, a potential \$50 trillion market, is ready to trade transparently. The general public will miss out, it is Wall Street sharks and geeks who will benefit the most from this new tech.

T.S. Well, my personal answer would be that we can have a really long conversation about where the cutting edge of technology and art is going versus the more traditional aspects of the market, which are only now integrating themselves with things like ecommerce. If you ask me where I think it is going, there is a real possibility that the tech avant-garde stuff that you are talking about—cryptocurrencies and blockchain—ends up not really crossing over to the rest of the world. If everybody starts buying things with cryptocurrencies and the people who would normally buy art, like the Rubells or whoever, use them to buy things, then I think there would be a different outcome, potentially.

Q6. Let us compare this phenomenon to the dot-com boom, can we? I was too young to see it for myself, but maybe you have some insights.

T.S. Those two strike me as different things. What I can tell you from looking at the charts of how the art market—at least the auction

market—tracked with the stock market is that there was definitely a crash after that. There was a link between those two things, but then it rebounded. It is more about how wealth is interacting with art than necessarily how tech is interacting with art. So if some people end up getting very wealthy off of cryptocurrencies, then historically speaking you would think that they would start buying art. I think that raises the question of whether or not getting rich in that way ends up changing your entire perspective on things, so that you think about the world differently than you would if you had happened to invest in Amazon at the right time. But that is an incredibly complex conversation. It is not a very satisfying answer, but I think that we still understand so little about the real traction that blockchain and cryptocurrencies can have in the economy that it is really difficult to know, “How is it going to affect the art market?”

S.C. I do not think we know how cryptocurrencies will impact the different industries.

Q6. To make it simple, the collide of transparency—the very wealthy people, who as you said, would have transparency in their DNA—and the art market.

S.C. I would not want to be the one predicting that.

Q6. What you are talking about is transparency. Imagine you had a huge amount of buyers who believed in it.

T.S. I think that there are levels of transparency. Just getting people to think, “We are going to be free and open about pricing” is different from saying, “Everything that ever happened with this piece is going to be digital and you are going to be able to track it.” I do not know if people are ready. Getting people ready for one of those does not necessarily mean they are going to be ready for the next. We are sort of taking baby steps. I do not know how it is going to turn out.

S.N. I think we were talking about it this morning at breakfast as well: whether or not we are thinking about blockchain at our respective firms. I think we both are, but is the audience that we are dealing with ready for this type of technology? That is the issue, not whether or not we want to use it. Of course, it is fantastic. It is very interesting and I think the market might go in that direction, but I do not know.

Look at online auctions. In the early 2000s, they were a great idea, but at the time, the audience was not ready for them. There has to be a momentum. It is all about timing as well.

Q7. (Alain Servais) Can I bring you a live scoop about blockchain and everything you were talking about? I just read that Paddle8 announced they will merge with The Native, owned by Sergey Skaterschikov, who tried to buy artnet, Artsy and other companies. And they will offer a blockchain service. So this is in fact the future.

S.C. That is an amazing live news update.

Q7. (Alain Servais) But I agree with Tim: it is much too early. The dot-com boom originated because people extrapolated and thought everything in the world was changing forever. It took twenty years to get there, so it is much too early to get excited. A few gallerists still do not know how to use email, so let us not go too fast.

S.C. On the transparency point, I feel like galleries are just beginning to feel comfortable with sharing their data. The survey that Tim referenced, the Artsy gallery round-up, found that 29% of galleries said that they will publish their prices. Not quite a third yet, so I feel like we have a long way to go until we consider this indelible online ledger that tracks everything.

T.S. I think we are going to have to leave it there. Thank you very much, Saskia and Sophie. And thanks everyone for your questions.



Lorena Muñoz-Alonso

Lorena Muñoz-Alonso is an arts writer, journalist and editor based in London. She was UK Editor at *artnet News* from 2014 to 2017. Her writing has appeared in publications such as *Frieze*, *Frieze Masters*, *artnet News*, *art-agenda*, *Input*, *Photoworks* and *Architectural Digest*, as well as in artist projects and gallery and museum publications. From 2005 to 2008, Muñoz-Alonso was staff writer at *AD*, Condé Nast Spain, helping launch the magazine as part of the original editorial team. She has curated exhibitions in London, Madrid and Barcelona and holds an MA in Critical Writing & Curatorial Practice from Chelsea College of Art & Design.

Richard Scott

Richard Scott is founder and Director of Scott & Co, the leading PR agency for clients who shape culture. A communications specialist with over 16 years of experience, Richard and his team develop global strategies for *Frieze*, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, The Royal Academy of Arts, Thomas Dane Gallery, Stephen Friedman Gallery, The Joyner/Giuffrida Collection of Abstract Art and many others. Richard has led international PR briefs for organisations and individuals across the arts, design and lifestyle sectors, affording him a unique insight into the intersection of commerce and culture.

Rebecca Taylor

Rebecca Taylor is Executive Vice President of FITZ & CO—the leading strategic communications and marketing firm specialising in arts and culture. She lectures extensively on the art world ecosystem at international conferences in Berlin, Bristol, Buenos Aires, Glasgow, Istanbul, Mexico City, New York, Santiago and beyond. Prior to joining FITZ & CO, Taylor worked at MoMA PS1, the Getty and MOCA Los Angeles, taught contemporary art history at UCLA Extension and contributed to Khan Academy's Smart History and the *Huffington Post's* Arts + Culture vertical.

Ossian Ward

Ossian Ward is Head of Content at Lisson Gallery (London/New York) and a writer on contemporary art. Until 2013, he was the chief art critic and Visual Arts Editor at *Time Out London* for over six years and has contributed to magazines such as *Art in America*, *Art + Auction*, *World of Interiors*, *Esquire*, *The News Statesman* and *Wallpaper*, as well as newspapers including the *Evening Standard*, *The Guardian*, the *Observer*, *The Times* and *The Independent* on Sunday. His book titled *Ways of Looking: How to Experience Contemporary Art* was published by Laurence King in 2014 and a sequel will be published by Thames & Hudson in 2018.

ENGAGING NEW AUDIENCES

SPEAKERS

**Richard Scott, Rebecca Taylor,
Ossian Ward**

MODERATOR

Lorena Muñoz-Alonso



ENGAGING NEW AUDIENCES

Lorena Muñoz-Alonso (L.M.) Welcome back. With these three wonderful panellists, we are going to talk about something that Tim Schneider touched on in his great introduction: what communication strategies can mean for galleries, not in terms of immediate sales, but rather of building a certain momentum. Let us start with Ossian and his presentation.

Ossian Ward (O.W.) So, how do you engage new audiences? Everyone is always thinking about who their audience is and we are doing the same in the art world. Who is running the show at the moment? That is always what we need to ask ourselves. Pablo Helguera, whom many of you know from his *artoons*, drew about this. "And poor artists still think it's about them."



Realistically, who are we aiming all of this stuff that we are pushing out at? Part of the problem is that we live in different art worlds. I do photography, you do contemporary art, you do old masters... We do not talk to each other and we spread across many different places, so the first thing we need to know is, who exactly are these new audiences? Are they in Asia? Are they young people? What are we talking about when we say new audiences? I will not answer that question, because I think it is up to you guys to say what your new audience is or where your "want to be" is. Do you want to be in the Sea of Beuys or in the Sea of Warhol?



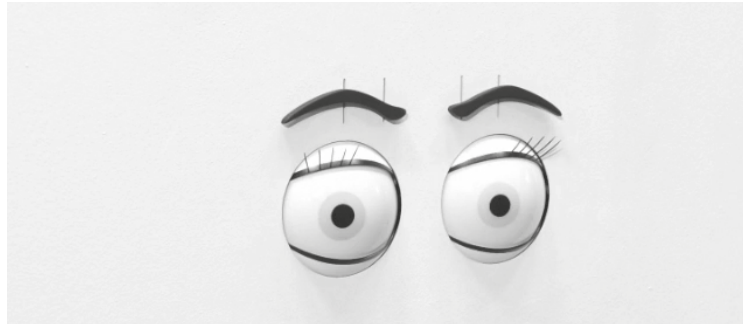
I will just say a little bit about what I do. At our booth in Frieze, I did a performance for Cory Arcangel. I was supposed to watch *Anchorman 2* and ignore anyone who came to the booth to ask about the work. I may have looked like a stropky teenager, but I was being Head of Content at a large London gallery. Sitting next to me was a nice collector called Peter Ross, whom I was ignoring. So that is what the Head of Content does. The term itself is problematic, as I think Tim Schneider also pointed out. What am I creating? What is “content” in the gallery? It is a strange term. I look at it as being kind of everything and nothing. It is everything in a gallery. What is our content? Is it the artists we work with? Is it what the artists are making? What the gallery is producing? Content is king, I am afraid to use that, but I am also keen not to get too deep into a theoretical wormhole here, because I am aware that the language we use can be off-putting, so I do not want to create a further layer in front of the audience. I just want to tell them about the art. Obviously, we use Instagram. There are examples of galleries and museums that do it very well. At Tate, my old job, I invented art twitticism, which was about being an art critic in 140 characters or less. So there are lots of ways. I think a social media post is a way of getting someone interested before they go deeper into things. At Lisson Gallery, we do follow a model. We have a news post and we try to keep people up-to-date on what we are doing. It looks a bit like the old *Time Out* site that I used to work for, that is funny. Also, thinking about what everyone was talking about previously, who is producing this content? There is a great work of net art, a work of art in which someone has

tried to scour the Tate’s website and use an algorithm that will describe all the works in it. So this Novice Art Blogger is actually telling you how to describe the collection. A Turner is, “A close view of a hole or I suppose a close-up of a hole. I’m reminded of a picture taken from the back of...” Anyway, it is nonsense, so robots are not going to be making this content—you will be glad to know.

**“TO ENGAGE AN AUDIENCE, YOU CAN
USE THE ARTIST’S INTERESTS AND
PRACTICE AS MUCH AS YOU HAVE TO
USE SOME KIND OF GALLERY STRATEGY.”**

Technology is amazing. More content was created in 48 hours in 2015 than from the beginning of time until 2003. So content is everywhere. What we do at the gallery is to promote our artists. This is a work of art by Cory Arcangel. He assembled cats to make a piece of classical music. He also uses the Internet himself, so another thing he did was a “Sorry I Haven’t Posted” website that aggregates all these people who have not posted for a long time. For his exhibition, we actually used what you all know as clickbait, those annoying sections at the bottom of a website that suggest stuff. We used it. We found out you can post anything on there. You can make up anything. The only thing that was not allowed were swear words or anything like that. So if you clicked on “27 Signs Your Cat Hates You,” it took you to the Cory Arcangel page on Lisson Gallery. Why? It does not matter. It is clickbait. What I am trying to say is that, if you use social media to engage people, to engage an audience, you can use the artist’s interests and practice as much as you have to use some kind of gallery strategy.

We also do more conventional things. Cory did a talk, for instance. For another exhibition, we used clips of films that we were showing as part of a campaign. Essentially, what we did with social media to engage these new audiences was to use the medium. We use the strengths of the medium and of the work that we are trying to show to populate those campaigns. This is an example of that: a short clip from a piece for an art fair. It is a good way of publicizing what we are doing at the fair.



L.M. So you work across social media campaigns, press... Do you handle all these different strands of the gallery?

O.W. Yeah, unfortunately. Because, even though we are a mega or mid-sized gallery, I do not have a department for everything. So I oversee press, communications, marketing... and that includes all of this, as well as publications, writing, etc. There is a lot going on, but there are not many of us doing it.

L.M. How seriously does a gallery like Lisson take social media? Saskia Clifford-Mobley was saying, “Do not leave it to the interns, really engage with it because it will bring much more return”. Who does social media at Lisson?

O.W. We share it. I think we do have one person, but it is difficult to maintain a tone, it is difficult to maintain an interest and it is difficult to keep it up. You have got other things to do. So yeah, of course, sometimes it goes through periods where we are just announcing stuff that we or our artists are doing, but we will occasionally try a social media campaign or try and do something where people will stop and they will be like, “Okay, well, what is this?” We had this image on our booth at the art fair, “You’ve been here before.” It was brilliant. Every time people walked passed it they went, “Oh my god, I have gone out the other side.” What I am trying to say is that, basically, the work should be the starting point for all of this. The best social media work that we do usually comes from something that the artists have done. Cory is a special case, because he works with the Internet, but I think that is the best way to do it, to use the content to drive the strategy, rather than just sort of emitting stuff.

L.M. We will come back to that, but first, Rebecca, do you want to talk about what you do for your clients?

Rebecca Taylor (R.T.) I work for an agency called FITZ & CO. I am just going to tell you very, very briefly about it. Everything my agency does is about audiences for arts and culture, so what we do is we work within all the different kinds of platform structures and ways of doing that in the art world. Of course, through the traditional medium of PR, which I am not going to talk about in my presentation, because I think Richard is going to focus a little bit more on it. We also do a lot of social media strategy, in some cases for our clients’ execution, but since that was well covered by my colleague, I will skip over that. We also do a lot of VIP relations and one-on-one events—direct marketing and those sorts of things. What I am going to focus on today is the marketing campaign that Lorena pointed out to me when we were preparing for this. She thought it was interesting and successful and it might be the most relevant case study for you.

“THE WORK SHOULD BE THE STARTING POINT FOR ALL OF THIS. THE BEST SOCIAL MEDIA WORK THAT WE DO USUALLY COMES FROM SOMETHING THAT THE ARTISTS HAVE DONE.”

Among our many clients, we work with art fairs, museums, not-for-profits, biennials and brands in the art world, such as BMW and Rolls-Royce. One of our clients, whom we have worked with since 1996, is Art Basel. We work with them in a variety of capacities, but what I am going to tell you about today is the *Meet the Gallerists* campaign. In the early fall, we were having strategic brainstorming sessions. We were thinking, what can we offer galleries that is helpful for them? There has been a lot of talk in the past few days about the crisis of the gallery system. How do we support galleries? There is not enough foot traffic and there is a tendency to blame the art fair, which obviously Art Basel does not believe is the case. They actually want to reinforce and support galleries and they see themselves as a platform, as a meeting place and an exchange place where people can come together. Ultimately, the goal is that you go to galleries, to their actual bricks-and-mortar spaces, after you have been to their booth. You would get to know a gallerist and you would form a relationship, which is what

often drives people to your gallery again and again. It is the content, it is the programme and oftentimes it is your personal relationship that they come back for. So what we came up with, together with Art Basel and my team, was this concept of *Meet the Gallerists*.

**“THE MEET THE GALLERISTS CAMPAIGN
IS ABOUT STORYTELLING, IT IS ABOUT
HUMANIZING AND IT IS ABOUT
PERSONALIZATION.”**

We profiled six gallerists who were participating in Art Basel in Miami Beach for the first time and we made two- to three-minute video profiles of each of them. The goal was to introduce you to them, to help you know their programme so that when you walked by their booth, you had already heard of the space, it was not so foreign to you and you were maybe more likely to go in. You might recognize Simon Wang and think, “Oh, I watched you in a video.” So this campaign is about a couple of things. It is about storytelling, it is about humanizing and it is about personalization. We wanted to reinforce the idea that these galleries are not just mega-galleries or something that exists in an ether, but that they are run by actual people, who have an actual passion for contemporary art. I thought the most moving part of yesterday’s talks was Ursula Krinzinger talking about her passion. “I will die in my gallery,” she said. I thought that was so beautiful. Often, galleries are only written about in the context of the market, in this context of being mega-dealers or pursuing the latest deal, but many gallerists are heroes to their artists. They are building careers, they are doing a lot of incredible work. What we wanted to showcase were some of these stories. I am so proud of all of them, I could show you any number of them. There is an amazing one of Andree Sfeir-Semler in her gallery, in Beirut, that I encourage you to watch afterwards. She is just incredible. I will now turn it over to my colleague Richard, unless you want to ask questions.

Richard Scott (R.S.) I am going to take a little bit of a step back and try a macro approach to this panel. I wanted to start by telling a brief story. I am going to set the scene. It is a real story, it happened last Saturday night. I was at an art party—I am sure you are all very familiar with art parties—standing on a beautiful terrace with a crowd of about three hundred people, a mix of artists, curators, museum directors...

There was Nicholas Serota in one corner, the former director of Tate, and Maria Balshaw in another corner, the current director of Tate. The artist Glenn Ligon was in another corner talking to the curator Douglas Fogle, from Los Angeles. Next to them were Anita Zabłudowicz and other collectors, surveying the scene. What was this occasion on Saturday night? Well, it was the opening of the first new space outside of London for one of my clients, Thomas Dane Gallery. I am really trying to resist categorizing the gallery, but you could probably call them a top-tier mid-sized gallery. So where was I? New York? Hong Kong? Shanghai? No, I was in Naples. Naples is a beautiful, romantic city, but not exactly a prime contender, you might think, for the second location for a leading gallery with a successful roster of international artists. This is exactly the point and this is why I wanted to talk about this today.

By opening in Naples, Thomas Dane Gallery has shocked and surprised or, at the very least, it has captured the imagination. At the root of this is a great story and this is really what I wanted to talk about today: storytelling. My company, Scott & Co, is a PR and strategic communications company based in London. Our elevator pitch is, “We are storytellers for clients who shape culture.” And this has come from a very simple realization: that at the heart of every successful campaign that we have done—and also every successful campaign that we have seen other people do—is a great story. And this is even more relevant as we move inexorably towards a digital world. We all talk about content a lot, Ossian is the head of it. Content is king. There have never been more platforms and online opportunities to share, consume and post content. In this new landscape, having compelling stories is paramount. Stories basically are your content. This is how you will attract new audiences. So this is very much our approach as an agency. We put the story at the heart of everything, whether it is an online campaign, whether it is print, whether it is a gallery dinner, an event, a panel discussion like this, a lobbying campaign... Storytelling is always our point of departure. To bring this to life, I am just going to show you three very quick examples from our client list.

I am going to go back to Naples, just briefly, because this story feels really pertinent to so many of the conversations that we have had these past couple of days, and also to the topic of this panel. How do galleries reach new audiences through communications? Well, a very compelling way to

do this is really to challenge the existing narrative. This is exactly what happened with Naples. Against the backdrop of mega-galleries opening in Hong Kong, New York and London—there is nothing wrong with that narrative, but it is a very well trodden one—, what we were able to do with this story is cut through that narrative and completely reinvigorate it. Our story focuses on how Thomas Dane Gallery can, instead of chasing the market, put the artists back at the centre of the gallery operation by creating a space that artists can visit, can stay in—there is an apartment next to the gallery—and can show work in. At worst, this is just a hopelessly romantic story that is perhaps a bit mad, and it is a bit mad. But at best, it is a very clever move that puts the artists at the centre and allows the gallery to stand apart from its competition.

Next weekend, *The Wall Street Journal* magazine is publishing a double-page spread on the opening of the gallery. I think the previous discussion quoted David Zwirner in *The Wall Street Journal* a couple of weeks ago. *The Wall Street Journal* is usually the preserver of the mega-dealers like David Zwirner or Larry Gagosian—they did a big profile on him about a year ago. With the story, by challenging the narrative, we were able to secure this kind of press coverage for our client.



Yesterday we talked a lot about how galleries can engage the 95% and not stay focused on the 5%. This is a great example: this is British

Vogue's Instagram account, not an art specialist's destination, but the story basically leads to engagement and that leads to new audiences. Of course, there is a scale issue here: not every gallery can open a space in Naples just to attract new audiences, but I think the point is that this is a scalable idea. There are plenty of ways that you can challenge your narrative: through your programme, through your events, through your presentation at art fairs.



This example is not a gallery, but it is actually a collector client of ours. Her name is Pamela Joyner, she is based between San Francisco and New York. Between her and her husband, Alfred Giuffrida, they have amassed one of the most important, if not the most important, collection of abstract art by artists of colour. When I first sat down with Pamela at our first meeting, I asked her what I always ask new clients, which is, "What is your objective? What do you want to achieve?" And Pamela shot back very quickly, very deadpan but very seriously, "I want to rewrite art history." Pamela and Alfred's collection is really based on reorienting the place of black artists in the art history canon, especially within institutions. There is a particular focus on abstract work, because artists of colour working in the 1970s and 1980s were not only excluded from the predominant canon, but also often rejected from the black community, because they were not making overtly

political work. Pamela and Fred collect because they love the work. But in addition to that, they want to leverage their position, their authority and their relationships with artists, who effect change.

What I wanted to illustrate here was that, through storytelling, you can really create a movement. That is what this campaign became. The tools were a book. We published a book at the end of 2016, featuring the collection and critical texts by curators, writers like Mark Godfrey, from Tate, Thelma Golden, Nick Cullinan, etc. An exhibition, which is based on the collection, will tour eight institutions in the United States. It has already started. It opened at the Ogden Museum of Southern Art in New Orleans at the end of last year and it will end next year at the Baltimore Museum of Art, curated by Chris Bedford and Katy Siegel, who were the curators of the US Pavilion that Mark Bradford did in Venice last year. So we told this story through a number of platforms. Chiefly, strategic media relations, but also a high-profile series of events, panel discussions—a bit like this—and symposia with artists.



This is the invitation to the symposium that we did in Venice last year with Mark Bradford. Through this work, and really through the story, we were able to get Pamela—but more importantly, it is not really about Pamela, it is more about her mission—on to the front page of the

art section of *The New York Times*. I guess the takeaway here is that through smart storytelling you can create a movement.

“THROUGH SMART STORYTELLING YOU CAN CREATE A MOVEMENT.”

And lastly, just to finish off, I would like to talk about Frieze Art Fair. They have been a client of mine for a long time. I think this is the ninth year that we work together. The story I want to talk about here is one of reinvention. Frieze is one of the most recognizable and successful brands in the art world. That brings a lot of challenges as much as it celebrates success. It is a challenge every year to keep it fresh, because it is a story and a brand that everyone is very familiar with and has opinions about. So it is hard to keep it moving in order to make sure that you are talking to your audiences in a relevant way. So the way we have done this with Frieze is really through innovation. Frieze is one of the most innovative brands in the art world, partly because it was born of an editorial source. It started as a magazine, as I am sure you all know, but it has really been led by a forward-thinking leadership that puts innovation at the forefront of everything they do, whether that is expanding to different experiences and events, like Frieze Masters and Frieze New York, which started in 2012, or the constant development of different sections within the fair itself. Two years ago, in 2016, a new curated gallery section within Frieze London was presented. It was called *The Nineties*, curated by Nicolas Trembley. Then last year, at Frieze London, there was a curated section called *Sex Work*, featuring work by radical female artists, curated by Alison Gingeras. Institutional relationships, supports, developing different platforms and using different communication strategies have all led innovation to make sure that Frieze is engaging with existing audiences and meeting new audiences.

L.M. From my perspective, being an art lover and a journalist, I receive information from different channels and in different ways. The three of you are in the business of creating content or making it happen. How much can people take? Are you worried about the limitations of people's attention spans or how they might cope with this sort of deluge of information that we are all creating? How can you stand out in this kind of scenario?

R.T. I think the quantity question comes later. The first question is quality. If you are producing quality content that your audience wants to receive and on channels they have selected to receive it from, there is not really a quantity problem. It is going to be more of a resources problem on your side, of how to produce enough content to feed that interest. Certainly, during show times, biennials and fairs, even if we increase the level of activity on a social media channel times five or times ten, we still see increased engagement during those weeks. Because we are providing content that people want. So I would focus much more on the quality issue over the quantity issue. The quantity issue can be tweaked. You can monitor your numbers. You will find the point of diminishing returns through trial and error and monitoring your statistics. Particularly in terms of social media, that is very, very easy to suss out, actually, what your audience wants from you and when they want to receive it. What is more difficult is to mine what you have, your archives, like Ossian was talking about yesterday, going through what you have and finding a way to present it that is interesting, that is engaging, that meets people, that uses the tools and the features of whatever platform you decide to do it on. If you are going to do a Facebook Live, use what makes Facebook Live great. Tell a story that is well-suited for that platform. In the same way, if you are going to produce a video series, the type of content you select is very different. So I think it is more about the content for the platform.

**“IF YOU ARE PRODUCING QUALITY
CONTENT THAT YOUR AUDIENCE WANTS
TO RECEIVE AND ON CHANNELS THEY
HAVE SELECTED TO RECEIVE IT FROM,
THERE IS NOT REALLY A QUANTITY
PROBLEM.”**

O.W. I think you are absolutely right. You use Facebook for one certain thing that you know works. Instagram for images. Twitter for witty things. But I have got a more radical solution, which is just to go the other way. We actually think that people do get spammed and bombarded too much, not just by us but by everyone. If you are a collector or you are an interested party, you just get tons of these things, you get invites non-stop. So we are looking the other way. We think, what can we print that is nice? Should we be making a magazine?

Should we make a book? Should we send them a nice card? We do not, because we do not like wasting paper and we do not send really thick, huge invites anymore, like we probably used to. But where does that lead? It just leads to more online noise. So we also think about that, we also think about changing completely and going back to old-school print, which I like.

**“EVERY ARTWORK SHOULD COME OUT
OF THE GALLERY HAVING BEEN LOOKED
AT, DISCUSSED AND THOUGHT ABOUT.
THEN IT SHOULD GO OUT TO THE WORLD
ATTACHED TO SOME BIT OF TEXT.”**

R.S. I think it is an evolving landscape. On the one hand, in print media there is an ever-diminishing kind of opportunity. Magazines are closing, pages are shrinking... Everyone wants to be in the *Financial Times* or *The New York Times*, but there are only so many stories that those outlets can accommodate. Then, of course, there are so many new digital outlets. Just to go back to what I was talking about before, I think you need to see how that story can be rolled out in many different ways. So rather than saying, “Okay, it is an editorial campaign and we are just going to focus on that,” it is about thinking, how can that story have an activation through an event, through a talk or online?

L.M. Ossian, specifically to you, how did you find the transition from being an art critic to working on the other side?

O.W. The dark side! No, it is kind of grey, but it is not as dark as I thought it would be. It is interesting because I use journalistic skills as much as I can in what I do. I had an idea that, when I got to the gallery, I would write about everything, every work of art that came through, every fair, etc. That is impossible, but the theory is there, that whatever we look after and promote, every artwork, should have some text, some content—I hate the word, but it is my job title. Every artwork should come out of the gallery having been looked at, discussed and thought about. We think about these things. Why is this work of art great? Or, why is it a development? Why are we even handling this thing? Then it should go out to the world attached to some bit of text. I am not talking about a difficult, complicated text, I am just talking about something that sits with it and means that we have actually

given it some thought. I cannot profess to have written about every single work of art, but that is the aim.

L.M. A question for all of you. What do galleries want with this exposure, be it social, online or offline? What are they ultimately seeking?

**“WHAT YOU ARE DOING ONLINE IS NOT
NECESSARILY GOING TO LEAD TO AN
IMMEDIATE SALE OR A CHANGE IN FOOT
TRAFFIC. WHAT YOU ARE DOING IS
CREATING AWARENESS.”**

R.T. I think ultimately most galleries are looking for sales. I think it was Tim who talked about “soft power.” What you are doing online is not necessarily going to lead to an immediate sale or a change in foot traffic. What you are doing is creating awareness. You are building your brand, you are leveraging your audience in favour of your artists, you are getting the opportunity to tell the stories that maybe the press is not telling. Richard is absolutely right: clients want the *Financial Times*, they want *The New York Times*, but sometimes the content you publish and serve to your own audience directly is just as effective, if not more.

I think it is really important that we recognize each channel for what it can bring us, but not choose one over another and not look for the same results from each platform. We do a Facebook live for a different reason than we tweet, for a different reason than we post on Instagram. It is about knowing which audience is where and what they want from you and then offering the appropriate content for them. It is about getting away from ROI that is purely quantitative, although we certainly have data in support of social media as well, and actually even in support of sales. Even though I would not encourage you to do social media for the purpose of sales, many galleries actually see sales via social media. But I think it is really important to look at it for what it can bring you: the opportunity to tell your story in a language that you are comfortable with, in the way you want to be positioned and presented. Right now, there is so much noise out there. If you can position yourself the way you want to be perceived, and the way your artists deserve to be perceived, how much more successful is the content you are generating going to be?

R.S. I think different galleries do things differently. It completely depends. From my experience, there are some galleries that know exactly what they want and they are very good at communicating that to us. And that is great, because then we can do what they want and hopefully keep them happy. Some galleries know what they want, but it is not what we think they should want. That is often an interesting situation, when it actually becomes more about counsel, strategic planning and using our experience, our network and our knowledge to maybe make recommendations and build a strategy together. And then there are some galleries that have no idea about what they want. Many galleries tell us they just want reviews, because they want to be able to produce a review for their artists, so they are coming from a very artist-oriented approach, rather than sales or branding. I think, ultimately, Rebecca is right, everyone wants sales, but it is a soup of different levels of expertise and savviness within each gallery.

O.W. Yeah, and it does work. I remember there was a piece about one of our artists at the front page of the *Financial Times* collecting supplement and we got calls. People were saying, “Oh, why wasn’t that piece available, Ossian?” “Sorry, I didn’t realize I would sell it off the page.” So it does work. I think artists want reviews. They want coverage. They want to know that there is some critical appreciation. The difficulty is, nowadays, you are not talking about essays or critical responses of that kind, you are talking about people on Instagram, and that is harder to explain and possibly less interesting, in a way. It is less engaging. The problem with promotion and PR is that you have to do all of it all of the time. I was going to be a bit controversial and ask whether you guys can work with smaller galleries, because you charge a monthly fee. We have just gone in-house after spending a lot of years and a lot of money on external PR, but what I see is exactly what you were saying, Lorena, that you have to do so much: the marketing, the PR, client engagement, events... these guys can do that, but otherwise it is you doing it yourself, basically. I was just wondering whether you guys can scale down what you do for a smaller gallery.

R.T. Yes and no. Certainly we can, and certainly what happens often, if we are trying to work with a small gallery or a small museum with a tight budget, is that we will do a much more focused scope, which means you look specifically at achieving a particular kind of result. We advise on where to direct your resources, because you cannot do

everything all the time on no budget, certainly not, and hire an agency. So it is much more complicated when we have to do that, but I think that is when it is really important to define goals ahead of time and to know, is your goal a review? If so, we need to work together on PR. If it is to tell a story that the press has been uninterested in telling up till now, then perhaps we are going to look at social media. Perhaps it is sales, maybe we are going to say, “Let us actually look at your database.” The topic of this panel is engaging new audiences, but the first thing I say when a client asks me about engaging new audiences is, “Are you engaging the ones you already have?” Let us focus there. Let us start by looking at everything you are already doing. Let us start with an audit: see what your emails look like, look at your click-through rates and your open rates, how people are responding to the content you are already producing. Rather than focusing on new audiences, take a step back and see if what you are doing is actually working. Then, assess.

**“RATHER THAN FOCUSING ON
NEW AUDIENCES, TAKE A STEP
BACK AND SEE IF WHAT YOU ARE
DOING IS ACTUALLY WORKING.
THEN, ASSESS.”**

We just recently did an audit of a very important organisation, which will remain nameless, who was basically spamming its clients with something they did not want to see. We made some very important changes, both to the content in the email newsletter and to the back-end of the database, how they were segmenting their database and how they were targeting people. We immediately saw a change in click-through and open rates, within a single month. And then over time, over the next few months, we saw dramatic changes that actually resulted in sales. So it is a really important thing not to think only about expanding and doing more and doing new things and trying the newest platform. Clients are always saying to me, “What is the next social media platform? What do we need to be on?” Master your own content first and then you can adapt it for whatever platform you choose. Whatever platform comes in two months, it does not matter if Facebook does not exist a year from now, you have not wasted your time. You then just transition, you change and reallocate your resources. If you know who you are, if you have a strong identity, a strong sense of positioning, and

if you know how to tell your story on various platforms, you can adapt to whatever new platform comes tomorrow.

O.W. Wow, Facebook is not going to be around in a year? We had better call them up! [Laughter]

R.T. I do not think it will have disappeared in a year, but it might change...

O.W. And how useful are they all? They are all useful for different things.

**“IF YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE, IF YOU
HAVE A STRONG IDENTITY, A STRONG
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TOMORROW.”**

R.T. Exactly. And last year, when they first changed the algorithm and Facebook became pay-to-play, everyone said, “It is the death of Facebook.” No, it was not the death of Facebook, it just led to a reorientation of our strategy around Facebook. What we post there, how often we post there, etc. We now advise our clients to post less, but to post certain content that performs really well there. Facebook privileges video. The algorithm privileges certain other things—that I will not share publicly—that we know and we learn through testing. Once you learn those things, you adapt. Facebook is going to change the algorithm again next week? We are going to learn, we are going to change and we are going to adapt. If in a year Facebook is inconsequential, we will all adapt and learn the new platform. I think it is much more important to focus on the quality of the content and learning who your audience is so that you can provide the quantity and quality of content they want. Ossian, you said you found, maybe, that they want less. For some of our clients, three posts a week is perfect. For others, there is no limit. Literally, the audience will take as much as we can produce. For other clients, one a week is enough. You have to learn who you are, what you can produce and make sure that the quality is up to that standard, rather than focus on quantities. And learn what your audience wants from you. I think that is hugely important.

L.M. Picking up on something you said—which is something I have observed in my own use of online platforms—, is video king? Is video where everything is headed?

“VIDEO IS AN AMAZING MEDIUM TO TELL A STORY. IT REALLY ALLOWS YOU TO UNFOLD A LONGER-FORM STORY IN A WAY THAT ENGAGES PEOPLE, BUT YOU STILL HAVE TO CAPTURE THEIR ATTENTION. YOU CANNOT GO ON FOR TEN MINUTES.”

R.T. At the moment, yes. Most algorithms are privileging video. That said, on Instagram it does not have to be a video, other things perform really well too. Right now, Instagram stories are so hot. We are seeing such engagement from Instagram stories. So yes and no. Video is king of Facebook, for sure. Video is an amazing medium to tell a story. It really allows you to unfold a longer-form story in a way that engages people, but you still have to capture their attention. You cannot go on for ten minutes. It is sort of like what Twitter was for all of us in the beginning, “How do I say what I need to say in only 140 characters,” right? What a challenge. We all became more concise and more articulate—some of us, maybe—because of Twitter, because we had to learn how to get right to our message. You could not then say, “Continued on tweet number 12.” You had to get right to what you wanted to say, because you might be retweeted and things might be taken out of context. Video is the visual form of that. Videos that often perform the best are quite short. Nobody wants to watch a ten-minute video. So you really still have to get to your message. Video is definitely performing very well. And the great thing about Facebook Live for young galleries is that it does not require the same level of investment as, say, producing a video series, where you need to have a videographer and spend money. A Facebook Live can be done in an artist’s studio and be totally compelling and fabulous for three minutes, five minutes, hit the seven minute sweet spot. And it costs you literally your time and going to your artist’s studio and filming it.

L.M. On the flipside of online video is something that maybe Ossian can talk about: the mega-galleries, or the top-tier middle-sized galleries,

are increasingly becoming like small publishing houses. They are really investing in books, even in magazines. What are your thoughts on that?

O.W. There is no right formula. We are all doing it differently and I do not think any of us are doing it quite right. One person has a bookshop, one has a publishing house, another person publishes books for every show, some rarely publish anything... We are all doing different things, none of which are exactly right. I think it is difficult, because your artist can only stand so much Lisson publishing. They also want to have a proper book or a book by someone else. So if I just keep pumping out catalogues, it does not necessarily help. You have got to think about what that publication is for, who it is for. Make sure it is for the right audience, do not just make something because you think you have to or because you promised the artist that you would. It has got to be the right time, it has got to be the right format, it has got to be the right length. It needs to hit all those sweet spots, otherwise it is a waste of paper.

“YOU HAVE TO KNOW THE AUDIENCE, BUT ALSO THEN TARGET THEM WITH A DIFFERENT VERSION OF THE SAME STORY.”

L.M. But I think there is an appetite for printed matter.

O.W. Sure. Again, it depends on the audience. What I wanted to say about that, which was really interesting, is similar to what Rebecca was saying, “Know who they are.” I actually change what I do for those different audiences. We built this amazing gallery in New York, we launched there and we were so excited, but New Yorkers were like, “Yeah, so what? You are Lisson Gallery, whatever. What are you showing?” And when we said Carmen Herrera, they went, “Okay, now we are interested.” They did not care so much about the narrative story and all the stuff that I developed. They just wanted to know what we were showing, whereas in Asia they are much more interested in the heritage, the established nature of the gallery and the fact that we are fifty years old. It is kind of a nice story, because maybe they do not know it and maybe it is a different way of looking at what you are getting from the gallery. So you have to know the audience, but also then target them with a different version of the same story.

L.M. Surely we have a lot of gallerists in the room. Some of them will not have a respected art critic turned head of content and they will not be able to hire an agency, which is expensive. What would be your tips for galleries at that level?

“IT IS A MISTAKE TO THINK THAT YOU CAN JUST PAY YOUR MONTHLY FEE, NOT CONTRIBUTE ANYTHING AND THEN GET A WAD OF PRESS CUTTINGS OR SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS. THERE NEEDS TO BE A CONVERSATION AND A GOOD RELATIONSHIP.”

R.S. So much of PR communications, especially in the art world, is about relationship-building. I think this is actually something that has come up a few times in last couple of days. If you do not have huge budgets to be able to pay someone for counsel, strategy or other services, you have got to really put yourself out there. You have got to start making the connections yourself, start doing your own PR, whether that is at art fairs, biennials or wherever. Build a sense of your brand and get it out there so that it can snowball. We do often work with younger galleries or smaller organisations that maybe do not have huge budgets, but usually when that brings something interesting to the client. My client is a little bit like a gallery’s programme: you want to have a programme that makes sense, that you are almost building a community with and that essentially defines what the gallery is. It is kind of the same with an agency. Your client, for me at least, and I think for most good agencies, needs to have integrity. And there needs to be a kind of discourse amongst the different clients that sit there. We would work with a client with a smaller budget if they have already put a bit of work in themselves. That is another thing. When clients do work with agencies, the relationship is very important. It is a real misconception to think that you can just pay. It is a little bit similar to what Saskia and Sophie were saying about Artsy and artnet. It is a mistake to think that you can just pay your monthly fee, not contribute anything and then get a wad of press cuttings or social media posts. There needs to be a conversation and a good relationship.

O.W. I think the great thing about all of these things is that they are free. You can get your own press, you can make your own videos. They tend to not be very good, but you can do your own social media. Still, it is a lot of time and a lot of effort. You need to find someone who has an aptitude for some of those things. Do not go down the social media rabbit hole without having never navigated social media, because you will spend weeks trying to work it out. Find someone, even if it is your son or daughter or your nephew, who can tell you how it all works and train you up. And then focus on the things you are good at. Because they are all ultimately free. We have just tried to go in-house with our PR. It may be crazy because there is a lot of volume. It is a lot of work and it is probably going to be more work now that we are doing that, but you do need time and effort. I think Rebecca is right: you can make your own videos and you do not have to hire an expensive videographer, but often you only get what you pay for. We noticed that the quality of video—you guys made a nice video for *Meet the Gallerists*—does not come cheap. Also, if you are trying to film or photograph works of art, you really do not want to skimp on that, because the minute you start presenting the work badly, it will become counterproductive. You might as well not bother.

“START WITH THE BOTTOM LAYER, BEING OWNED MEDIA. WORK ON YOUR WEBSITE, YOUR EMAIL NEWSLETTER AND YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA. JUST FOCUS ON THOSE THREE PRIMARY TOOLS OF COMMUNICATION.”

R.T. Yeah, I agree. When I said you did not need a videographer I was talking about Facebook Live, but absolutely: if you are going to do a full-scale video, you have to be careful not to drop the quality. And to go back to your question, Lorena, I think actually there are ways to work even with the large agencies. The best way we work with smaller clients is through creating a strategy that they can then execute themselves. So, for instance, for our bigger clients we create the strategy, we deliver and execute on it, but what we do for other clients, who maybe cannot afford that, is to create a social media strategy. We might create a marketing or an advertising strategy, and then we can do a workshop with whoever on your team is going to be

executing that strategy. That is also something we are often hired to do, particularly on social media. Someone will come to us and say, “We certainly cannot afford to have you run our channels, but we would love for you to do a one- or two-day workshop with our team and teach them best practices, what works and what does not.”

That is sort of an ideal scenario, but I would say: if you have to do it internally, go back to the basics. The marketing trifecta is still the same: paid, earned and owned. So earned marketing is the media, right? Traditional PR, that is pitching. That can be tough to come by until you have sort of built your own brand. Paid obviously requires a budget, it is advertising, so you may not have that opportunity right away. So start with the bottom layer, being owned media. Really get right. Work on your website, your email newsletter and your social media. If you have to bite off one at a time, do it one at a time. Just focus on those three primary tools of communication. Make sure you are doing each of those right, then move on to the next. And after that, you might have a story that is worth telling and then you will be able to get earned media. And after that, hopefully you start making more sales and you have more of the opportunity for paid. So think about the marketing trifecta, but maybe think of it as a layer cake that you are making. Start by building the base, start at home. Focus on what you are doing on the content that bears your name and your logo. Perfect that and then build up from there.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND QUESTIONS (C/Q) FROM THE AUDIENCE

Q1. (Lisa Schiff) I have worked with a PR company very closely for a long time, but I am nervous about the emphasis on branding, marketing and content. Somebody said “quality content,” which just means good branding. I am nervous about it, because we are talking about engaging new audiences, but we are not talking about the artists so much. It is interesting that there is an emphasis on the identity of the gallery, which has actually started to supersede any interest whatsoever in who the artists are. And also, I worry about fake news or marketing parading as news content—and Ossian, I do not mean it as a dig at all. But it is interesting to see that Hauser & Wirth has hired Randy Kennedy, AAP has hired Charlotte Burns, I am going to be hiring Georgina Adam and Melanie Gerlis—I mean, I would love that,

let us talk. Anyway, I worry about those paid strategies. The David Zwirner article in *The Wall Street Journal* was really interesting and a bold move, but it felt very bought and paid for. I am just curious to see what you think.

O.W. I mean, I did start with the Cory Arcangel stuff. Even though it is kind of fun and there were cats, it is a serious way of engaging the artist in what we do. You do not want to do some kind of campaign—whether it is marketing, PR or anything—and have the artist turn around to you and go, “What was that? I did not ask for that. You talked about my work in a horrible way, you presented me all wrong.” That would not go well for you, trust me. It has to start with the artists and, actually, that is why I think those campaigns that sort of come out of the work worked well. I know it is difficult to imagine—Cory is an obvious example—, but there are so many ways you can involve the artist, even remotely. You do not have to have them do your Instagram account or anything like that, but having them at the heart of it is definitely the key. I would not start without them and we do not really talk about branding at the gallery. I know we have a brand, but it is meant to be rather quiet. We talk more about what other people were talking about, this ethos, how to further the ethos of the gallery... We do not try and put a stamp on every artist and say, “Yeah, they are Lisson” so that they go off with the stamp on their back. We try and let them lead.

Q1. (Lisa Schiff) That is just your brand, though. It is not bad.

R.S. Much of our work is focused on the artists and on exhibitions. In a weird way, it is often very difficult to get press coverage on the gallery unless it is a very market-driven story; and some galleries love that, others do not. A lot of my clients are very discreet and actually find that whole narrative a bit uncomfortable. So we really grab the opportunities where you can talk about the gallery. Thomas Dane opening in Naples... that does not happen every day, so that is the one opportunity where we could get something about the gallery in *The Wall Street Journal*. But if you go back to the example that I showed with Pamela Joyner, it was completely about the artists. I mean, this is not just because of her or the work that we have done, but the past couple of years, if you think about sea-change institutionally in the representation of artists of colour, from Mark Bradford in Venice and the Mark Godfrey show at Tate... It is enormous. And that is very much about repositioning artists in a kind of forgotten canon and driving

awareness amongst audiences. Pamela is very smart, she understood that you need to start at the institutional level to then filter down to the general public. What was really cute at the opening in New Orleans was that we were upstairs in her exhibition and there was a group of school kids—you know, ages fifteen to sixteen—being led around by a guide. And Pam and Fred were there at the back, no one knew who they were, they were just kind of watching this happen. That is what it is all about. That really was rewriting art history. So I think that is very artist-focused.

R.T. I think our presentations today all tended to focus on the gallery branding for the gallerists here, but your point is well-taken, Lisa, and certainly I showed the *Meet the Gallerists* campaign because that is what Lorena asked me to show. But for every case study like that I could show you one—though actually I cannot, because we are not allowed to talk about it—where a gallery has hired us to promote an artist’s museum show and it was not about the gallery at all. That tends to happen more with the medium- and larger-scale galleries, which can afford that kind of PR that is not focused on them. But it does happen, and quite a bit, that a gallery will come to us and say, “This museum does not have the resources to do PR and we would love for you to do PR for this artist’s show.” That happens too.

I think most galleries still very much care about their artists and keeping them at the core of the messages. We find that, even with the corporate channels that we work on, even with Art Basel’s channels, all of these big brands, at the end of the day the artwork is the content that performs the best. That is what people really want to see. Those are the stories people want to tell, so I actually really agree with Richard that the bigger brand stories are the hardest ones to tell and so the *Meet the Gallerists* campaign was a chance for Art Basel to tell those stories for gallerists who maybe did not have the opportunity to tell them themselves. Oftentimes, galleries are in a PR cycle that is completely about their artists, because that is what makes the news: you have an exhibition changing and that is what you can usually get easier PR on.

O.W. We do publish news about our artists and what they are doing. And we find—there is some miraculous algorithm that I do not understand about, SEO and how you get your website to perform well—that if you search for one of our artists, we do come high up. And that is not because I am writing, “Anish Kapoor is the best artist in the world.” I am

just publishing stories that I think are relevant to artists. But, as a good beginning, if you fill your websites with relevant content, well-written and linked, it will help that algorithm, whatever it is. Google.

Q1. (Lisa Schiff) I did not mean it so much as a negative issue. It is just that we are in this new state of discussion where, even for an art advisor, branding seems to be kind of the way we are framing it, which is interesting.

R.T. I think branding gets a bad wrap, as being a dirty word. Another way to think of it is positioning, which is a softer way to say almost the same thing. It is about, who are you? What is your identity? The brand tends to be the physical embodiment in the form of a logo or something that becomes recognizable for people, but really, at its core, branding should be about positioning. It is about having an identity. It is about knowing who you are and making sure that all of your messages, on all of your platforms, consistently deliver and reinforce that, so that people are not seeing this version of you over here and it is incongruent with this version over there. And I am not disagreeing with what Ossian said about tailoring your message to a specific audience on each platform. I think that is important too, and telling different parts of a story, but they should all match up. They should all be part of a bigger puzzle that all adds up to your identity. I should not encounter you here and encounter you here and find that the two do not match.

Q2. (Melanie Gerlis) Thanks, Lorena. I am slightly breaking the rules, because I want to answer Lisa’s question. I think, first of all, hopefully any journalist worth their salt does not want to write an advertorial. I also think fake news is quite a dangerous term to bandy about and I think that, in a national or international newspaper, certain nuances or subtleties are not going to appear. It is not in the interest of the reader and it is not in the interest of the editor. If you want that, there are plenty of other media outlets, so it is not fake news. Maybe a national paper is broadening the news, branding or oversimplifying, but I think that is a reality and it goes back to what the panel has been saying about tailoring what you do via different channels.

Q3. Hi. Thank you very much for your presentation. I just have a quick question based on an example from outside of the art world. Anthropologie is a brand that sells very beautiful and expensive clothes. They have a following on Instagram of three point something millions.

However, they are on the verge of bankruptcy, because everybody is following but nobody is buying. I was just wondering if you have an insight about that. I know you can quantify all the data that you provide to your customers, or the data you are using in your gallery, but how do you know what really transforms into sales? Because obviously, for some businesses, it is not happening.

O.W. You cannot quantify it. Unless, like I said, you happen to have this freak occurrence of someone calling you up and saying, “I saw this work.” You just have to know that you are doing all this work for a reason and that, if you do not do it, if you stop all the noise, you run the risk of exactly that happening: no one coming to visit you. Yes, if you had ten social media managers and no sales people, then you would also be focusing on the wrong area. I think social media, as well as just being representative of the art you are showing, needs to be tailored. If you are a big, loud and brash gallery, then do it big and loud and brash. If not, you sort of tailor it accordingly, so it should also fit your own tone of voice. It should not be like, “Oh my god, sales are down this month. Let us start a massive sale online. Here, tweet this!” I think you cannot be so reactive. Social media makes you think you should be, that you should be chatty or funny or whatever, but I do not think that is the right way.

R.S. In traditional PR, this has been an ongoing conversation for years. How do you evaluate an earned piece of coverage (to borrow Rebecca’s term)? There are these beautifully imprecise metrics that used to be used where earned media is three times more valuable than paid for media, because of the advocacy involved in the story. I have no idea where that magical number three comes from. I think, as Ossian says, anecdotally you can often see a kickback when a story publishes. Web traffic, if it is a gallery, usually increases dramatically, and so do phone calls and other indicators. Without oversimplifying it, I think that is the basic premise of communications: if you have got an incredible product, whatever it is, but no one knows about it, then it is almost like the tree falling in the forest. Does it exist? Did it happen?

R.T. I agree with everything everyone else has said, so I will say something totally different just to give you another point of view, because I think they are both completely right. Metrics are important. We look at them. We pay attention to them. They are a guide. But that is it. You cannot learn everything you need to know from them. We have

clients who come in and are obsessed with follower count in the same way other clients are obsessed with a review in *The New York Times* or something in the *Financial Times*. What we often have to get to with a client is, what is the end goal? Because follower count, in and of itself, is not actually a useful metric, in my view. You can buy followers. There are plenty of people out there with hundreds of thousands of followers and still, if you actually crunch the numbers on their engagement ratios, they are pathetic. So I will take my 9,000 hard-earned followers on Instagram, which include the directors of major museums, every art fair, my colleagues, professional journalists, people who are really interested in art and who have come to my channel because it is all about art all the time and that is what they want to see. I will take that group of followers any day over 900,000, because I know they have come to me the natural, organic way and they are engaged in what I do, so the responses and the engagement I see are quality.

Metrics are important, but do not get caught up in that, “We have a million followers, that means sales are going to be great” or “That means that we are doing well.” Take a deeper dive at what they are doing and then take a step back, move away from it and do qualitative analysis. Do not just look at the numbers. Look at how people are responding. What are they saying back to you? What kind of engagement responses are you getting? Sure, maybe we are not looking to take it directly towards sales, but I look to see, when we post a video, not just how many impressions it has caused, because that is an algorithmic number dictated by a lot of things—how much money I put behind the post, what time of day I posted it, how many shares, etc. All sorts of things can affect that number. I actually do not care about how many people viewed it. I care about how many people liked it, shared it, commented on it, emailed me directly about it and said, “This video was amazing.” When I get an email from a gallerist after we post a video and they say, “My phone is ringing off the hook,” we won. I do not care about what the metrics show or about anything else. If that is the response, that is what we want for the gallerist: to raise awareness for them. That is what we are trying to do with this campaign and so, when I get that phone call afterwards, I am not so worried about the numbers anymore. So look at them, but keep everything in check.

L.M. Thank you. I guess we have come to conclusions on the topic. Thank you so much to our panellists and thanks to the audience as well.

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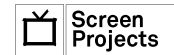
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Since its foundation in 2011, **Talking Galleries** has had a clear purpose: to facilitate the exchange of expertise about gallery management and the global art market among professionals of the sector. To that end, publications play a key role. After holding our annual symposium in Barcelona, it has become somewhat of a tradition to publish these notebooks, which compile the content of the sessions that integrate each programme.

The 6th Barcelona Symposium was held at the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA) from 22 to 23 January 2018. We believe the topics discussed during this two-day event will interest a broad readership. Surely, the knowledge and generosity of our keynote speaker and panellists are second to none. Curators, collectors, art advisors, auction houses, fair organisers and, most of all, gallerists will find along these pages rigorous, thought-provoking perspectives on the latests developments of the art market.

“The Talking Galleries notebooks provide an invaluable resource both for attendees at the symposium and for those who were unable to be present. They summarise the panels, presentations and discussions, providing a permanent record of the opinions and debates expressed over an intense two days.”

Georgina Adam

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