



**BARCELONA
SYMPOSIUM 2019**

**TALKING
GALLERIES**

THE THINK TANK FOR GALLERIES

TALKING GALLERIES 07

Talking Galleries was launched in 2011 to provide art gallery professionals with a much-needed space where they could exchange ideas, share their expertise and assess the changes impacting their industry. Thanks to the generous support of many people and institutions, what began as an annual symposium in Barcelona has been steadily evolving into a multi-faceted international think tank.

In recent years, we have organised conferences in Paris, Seoul and Berlin, and we keep sowing seeds for a greater international presence, planning collaborations in Dubai, Santiago de Chile and New York. We have also been working on the development of an educational area for gallerists, consisting of short-format courses to be held across the globe—the first of which took place in April at the Delfina Foundation, in London.

From 21 to 22 January 2019, the 7th edition of our Barcelona Symposium brought together a diverse audience of art market professionals, including some of the world's leading gallerists, auctioneers, curators and analysts. If the event was a unique opportunity to provide a sense of community and to share specialized knowledge, this publication serves another key purpose: to help spread that experience beyond a specific time and place. To that end, this book collects the keynote session, panels and presentations that shaped the symposium's programme. Among the topics discussed are the presence of women in the industry, the growing African market, the struggles and opportunities of mid-sized galleries, and the impact of booming technologies, such as blockchain and VR. I hope readers will find these pages as valuable and thought-provoking as I did.

Llucià Homs
Director



Georgina Adam
Lerato Bereng
Anna Brady
Vanessa Carlos
JJ Charlesworth
Elizabeth Dee
Simon de Pury
Touria El Glaoui
JiaJia Fei
Peter Gerdman
Melanie Gerlis
Joe Kennedy
Maribel López
Clare McAndrew
Alison McDonald
Ani Molnár
Jane Morris
Bomi Odunade
Emmanuel Perrotin
Eugenio Re Rebaudengo
Kenny Schachter
Lisa Schiff
Tim Schneider
Anny Shaw
Süreyya Wille

Barcelona Symposium 2019
7th Edition

INTRODUCTION Georgina Adam	9
SESSIONS	
The Globe-Trotting Gallerist Emmanuel Perrotin in conversation with Georgina Adam	19
Women Artists on the Market Vanessa Carlos, Clare McAndrew and Lisa Schiff, with Anny Shaw	51
State of the Art Market Today Simon de Pury and Kenny Schachter, with Tim Schneider	89
Social Media: The Next 4 Billion JiaJia Fei	121
Beyond Blockchain: Other Technologies Worth Every Gallery's Attention Tim Schneider	139
Art Market Hybrids. Embracing New Business Models Eugenio Re Rebaudengo	161
In the Consumer-centered World, How Do Galleries Remain Relevant? Joe Kennedy	177
Is the Art Fairs System Unfair? Elizabeth Dee and Maribel López, with Melanie Gerlis	195
New Players on the Traditional Publishing Market JJ Charlesworth, Alison McDonald and Jane Morris, with Anna Brady	219
Strategies for Going Online Süreyya Wille	253
Africa's Growing Market Lerato Bereng, Touria El Glaoui and Peter Gerdman, with Bomi Odunade	267



Introduction

By Georgina Adam*

Welcome to the 7th Talking Galleries Notebook!

These notebooks contain transcripts of the debates, conversations and presentations held over the course of two days, every year in Barcelona. For those who were present, they are an invaluable reminder, and for those who missed the conference or some of the sessions, they provide an important resource.

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 2019 symposium was held in Barcelona on 21 and 22 January in the MACBA auditorium, and as always attracted an engaged, international audience with almost 200 attendees coming from 22 countries. All agreed that the quality of the speakers and the debates was exceptional, with a broad range of topics discussed.

The conference kicked off with a presentation by the renowned French gallerist Emmanuel Perrotin. He retraced his career, starting from a non-art-collecting background, dropping out of school at seventeen but getting a job with Charles Cartwright. He was lucky: Cartwright exhibited works by Marina Abramovi , George Condo and others. By age twenty-one Perrotin had opened his own space, although he was sleeping on a futon which he rolled away at night. His first collaborations were with Philippe Parreno, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Bernard Joisten and Pierre Joseph.

The challenges he faced at the beginning, he said, were simply, “To stay open! It is a constant struggle. How do we find the resources to develop the gallery, to stay open, to have a reasonable private life? It is a huge challenge and it would remain a huge challenge for a long time.”

He spoke of the “adventure” of opening a gallery in Hong Kong and what he thinks is the most important aspect of his work—not the space, but the relationship with the artists. Today, he has 132 people—including shipping specialists, PR specialists, Internet specialists, and software engineers—and he said that after relationships with artists, those with the assistants are the most important. But even, successful as he is, he said, “Every dealer is haunted by the fear of another gallery taking your artists.”

The following session featured Vanessa Carlos, Clare McAndrew and Lisa Schiff, moderated by Anny Shaw. Its topic was “Women Artists on the Market.”

McAndrew kicked off with statistics she called the “baffling disparities” that are gender-related. Women artists at auction are priced at 50% less than their male peers. Information gathered from primary market galleries found that about 36% of their artists were female, generating about 33% of sales. Among emerging artists the picture was slightly more positive—43% of artists in galleries were female. But overall women are still massively discriminated against and McAndrew said, “It’s not just making women do better in the male-dominated structure. It’s making the structure itself less male-dominated, that’s the harder and more difficult challenge.”

The discussion was wide-ranging and passionate, examining everything from quotas to demand- and supply-side of art. Finally all agreed that the problem is of a male-dominated hierarchy, which is universal, even if the art world is less affected than other industries.

“State of the Art Market Today” was the following, eagerly-awaited discussion, featuring Simon de Pury and Kenny Schachter and moderated by Tim Schneider.

The discussion revolved around the changes in the art market, notably the blurring of roles and the way business is conducted—auction houses doing private sales, for instance. They also talked about whether the monetary value of art is important; about guarantees, and about how the whole concept of ownership is changing. They disagreed about fractional ownership, examined the issues facing the mid-market galleries; talked about the fair landscape and issues around private museums. A fascinating and wide-ranging conversation.

The next presentation was by JiaJia Fei, speaking about “Social Media: The Next 4 Billion.” As Director of Digital at the Jewish Museum in New York, Fei’s role is, as she said, to help institutions make art more accessible and reach more people, notably because the language of the art world can be very inaccessible.

But she identified a conundrum in the art world, which has failed to do what other industries have, to create a single project, such as Netflix, iTunes or Spotify. At the same time attendance in museums is at an all-time high, partly thanks to the “experience” economy. She then identified ten technology trends and what they mean for the art world. Among these are the importance of managing data; the impact of “super apps” such as the Chinese WeChat, in contrast to, for instance, museum apps, which have very little traction. She spoke of the importance of “influencers” and of social media, which has given a voice to those who previously did not have one: witness the #MeToo movement.

Staying in the technology sphere, the final talk on the first day was by Tim Schneider, entitled: “Beyond Blockchain: Other Technologies Worth Every Gallery’s Attention.”

Schneider started with a brief explanation of blockchain, and pointed out that the most commonly talked-about uses of it, for registry of ownership and smart contracts, have inherent problems. The anonymity of the art world is not solved by blockchain, as owners can still retain confidentiality. And enforcement of smart contracts is not resolved either. So, he concluded, blockchain is not essential for the art world, for reasons that are not technological, but rather behavioural.

He went on to discuss other technologies: virtual reality (VR), which can enable the visit of an exhibition remotely, and even lead to “stay-at-home patronage.” However the equipment is quite expensive, and there is also the isolation effect—whereas many people in the art world like the “sharing” aspect of experiencing artworks. Schneider also noted the advantages of augmented reality (AR) which notably for gallerists can be of interest, for instance allowing clients to virtually “place” works of art in their own homes before deciding to buy. He also discussed artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning, which has seen increased interest in the last year.

The following day, Eugenio Re Rebaudengo gave a presentation about “Art Market Hybrids. Embracing New Business Models” based on his own experience creating and running Artuner. Having noted that two trends of the art world were the rise in the number of art fairs and the impact of the Internet, Rebaudengo created a hybrid model, working both offline and online. For the real world presence, the firm identifies settings in different cities, countries and venues, enabling both artists and viewers to have a different and memorable experience. The online presence means that works can be shared and bought digitally. Artuner also has developed Studioscape, in which studio visits are arranged to artists he has identified as interesting.

Rebaudengo went on to suggest a way forward for mid-market galleries, drawing on examples from the music and healthcare industries, where bigger entities work with the creative smaller ones, preserving their identity, rather than just pushing them out of business. And he called for better regulation of the art trade, notably, suggesting adoption of the sort of rules that operate in the football world.

The following presentation was by Joe Kennedy, of Unit London, and was titled “In the Consumer-Centered World, How Do Galleries Remain Relevant?” Kennedy explained how he took the small gallery from a tiny operation to the 6,500-square-foot gallery in Mayfair it is today, representing 25 artists. His business targets the new collector and operates in an unconventional way, facilitating a direct contact between collectors and artists and responding to the input from consumers. Kennedy said: “We take people’s preferences and allow that to inform, to a certain degree, the programme content that we produce, as well as our exhibition programme, at times.”

Reaction to this model, in the audience, was quite negative. As one person said: “If artists are going to adapt to the market of the public’s tastes, they’re going to create things according to the tastes of other people and eventually lose their personality. I think it is extremely dangerous.” And while Kennedy acknowledged such popularisation was “terrifying and dangerous,” he also noted “it is happening... we need to figure out how we can make sure that the proper cultural values of the artists there are allowed to have a voice and are allowed to produce new lines of thinking.”

Art fairs were the topic of the next discussion, entitled “Is the Art Fairs System Unfair?” and moderated by Melanie Gerlis and bringing

together Elizabeth Dee and Maribel López. Gerlis started by calling fairs “frenemies”—both essential to and a problem for galleries.

The ensuing discussion unpacked the reasons that led Dee to create Independent, giving a “museum experience” to the exhibitors chosen on an invitation-only basis. López noted that ARCO tries to have a pricing policy that helps young galleries. Looking forward, Dee said that, “The future of fair innovation in the next ten years is going to be really interesting because smaller galleries are able to be more reactive to the change in collector behaviour than traditional galleries,” while López said that ARCO is making efforts to ensure that artists can operate, within the fair, as closely as possible to the way they work in the galleries. Other topics discussed were the VIP programmes and selection processes, and even the issues around galleries not always making payments on time.

The following discussion was moderated by Anna Brady, and brought together JJ Charlesworth, Alison McDonald and Jane Morris, to discuss “New Players on Traditional Publishing Market.”

Morris started by outlining the structural changes in publishing, from the impact of social media to the decline in advertising, while Charlesworth noted that many of the early titles he had worked for have disappeared. He pointed out however that art magazines are not necessarily money-making affairs, and this was borne out by McDonald, responsible for the high-quality *Gagosian* magazine—she said it was not profit-making. The advantages of print, digital, social media and audio were debated, along with whether a gallery magazine such as *Gagosian Quaterly* or *Ursula*, as well as museum journals, can ever be truly independent. And that being so, how can independent art news publishing be sustained? Discussions also centred on reader engagement, the usefulness of podcasts in the art world and, inevitably, the difficulty of monetising the shift from print into digital.

Next was Süreyya Wille, talking about “Strategies for Going Online.” She gave the audience key goals when thinking about how to strategize online. Among these were how to establish the brand’s presence, how to be discovered online and how to build lasting relationships with collectors. Using Facebook and Instagram helped increase awareness, and social media campaigns should be run year-round, she said. She also recommended watching followers’ feeds, so that you can align interests. Be transparent with pricing, respond quickly to enquiries—and take great photos!

The final panel was moderated by Bomi Odufunade, its topic was “Africa’s Growing Market” and featured Lerato Bereng, Touria El Glaoui and Peter Gerdman.

Gerdman started with some data about the sector, noting that the definition was African artists, modern and contemporary, who were born in Africa, but not necessarily living and working there now. In 2018 auction data showed sales of \$34 million for African artists, with growth slightly down compared with 2017 (\$37 million) but well up compared to 2016 (\$21 million). Three women artists are in the top five highest selling: Marlene Dumas, Njideka Akunyili Crosby, Ben Enwonwu, Julie Mehretu, and Mahmoud Saïd. Compared to other markets, Gerdman said, the African market was young, and gender balance was much better than in other fields.

El Glaoui spoke about the growth of her fair 1-54—which now exists in three cities—and Bereng outlined how Stevenson gallery had grown and the challenges it has faced—notably geographical distance and the currency issues. She was glad, however, that in the past few years the region and the gallery have gained far greater visibility. Topics discussed included the arrival of museum projects and the fact that almost all art initiatives are private, with very little government support. And it was noted that essentially just a few countries, Nigeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Kenya, Ghana and South Africa lead the way in the art market today.

The symposium concluded with the now-traditional summation and a sociable get-together; attendees were unanimous in their praise for the quality of the talks, with most concluding that it was “the best Talking Galleries ever!”

***Georgina Adam** is 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 30 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*. She is currently working on a third book.





CONVERSATION
15.00 - 16.15

STATE OF THE ART MARKET TODAY
A CONVERSATION

Simon de Pury de Pury de Pury
Kenny Schachter art journalist/collector/curator

moderated by Tim Schneider artnet News/The Gray Market

45min + 30min Q&A

SESSIONS

Emmanuel Perrotin

founded his first gallery in 1990 at the age of 21 in an apartment in Paris, and is one of the most influential gallerists in the world. He has since opened over 18 different spaces, with the aim to continue offering increasingly vibrant and creative environments to experience artists' works. To date, Perrotin runs six gallery spaces in Paris, Hong Kong, New York, Seoul, Tokyo and launched in late 2018, Shanghai—spanning 7,000 square meters (75,000 square feet) across three continents. He has worked closely with his roster of artists, some for more than 25 years, to help fulfill their ambitious projects. Among them, Takashi Murakami, Maurizio Cattelan, Jean-Michel Othoniel, Xavier Veilhan, Pierre Soulages or Sophie Calle. The gallery organises about 40 exhibitions and participates in 20 art fairs worldwide each year. Over the past three decades, Perrotin has exhibited and supported contemporary and modern artists through numerous collaborative projects.

THE GLOBE-TROTTING GALLERIST

SPEAKER

Emmanuel Perrotin

IN CONVERSATION WITH
Georgina Adam



THE GLOBE-TROTTING GALLERIST

Georgina Adam (G.A.) We are particularly honoured to welcome Emmanuel Perrotin, who is going to talk to us about his career. Emmanuel told me that he does not come from an art-collecting family. He really is completely self-made. He started in his own apartment and now he does twenty-one fairs a year. You have just come back from San Francisco, is that correct?

Emmanuel Perrotin (E.P.) Yes.

G.A. So “globe-trotting” is truly the right adjective for you. You also have a new space in Shanghai.

E.P. Yes, and in Tokyo.

G.A. I am going to start by asking you to retrace your career a little bit. How did it start? What was your vision, and is it still the same today?

E.P. I started working at the age of sixteen doing a variety of small jobs, for instance, a summer position at the bank where my father was employed. At seventeen years old, I was coming to the end of a very specific kind of secondary school. I know we don't usually speak about this level of education during a talk, but I don't have a normal secondary school diploma. I never graduated. It was in a very special kind of school called Lycée Autogéré de Paris where we, students, were able to decide everything. We decided which teachers to have, there was no attendance requirement and we could vote on everything, one vote for each student. That was a brief experience in a degree of self-government.

At sixteen years old, I was able to start working while I was still in school. At seventeen, I completely dropped out of school and started to work for the Charles Cartwright art gallery. He was a half-Swedish,

half-British man living in Paris, an extraordinary man with vision and a very good eye. He was rather good-looking, quite smart and very rich. Actually, he was not that rich, but at the time I thought he was. I'm giving you context because at that time, all of this really impressed me.

I started to work at this gallery, which was just like doing four years of school, because he was doing Science Po, a prestigious academic track. He was granted the right to do his last years of school in only two years, and he was only twenty-three years old. He asked me to do some research for him—I was terrible at school, so that was interesting—and I came back to the gallery with my research and met the gallery directors. One of them said to me, “I’ve heard about you, Emmanuel. It’s great that you’re here. It is 4 p.m. Here, take the key and the alarm code. You close the gallery and come back tomorrow morning.” I was seventeen years old, alone in the gallery. That’s how I started. I didn’t know anything.

**“I WAS SEVENTEEN YEARS OLD,
ALONE IN THIS GALLERY. THAT’S
HOW I STARTED. I DIDN’T KNOW
ANYTHING.”**

I was lucky, because we were working with very interesting artists. I did a show with Marina Abramovi and Alighiero Boetti. We did group shows with George Condo and many great artists. Considering the time period, this dealer was very smart for his age. He protected me from many very dangerous aspects of the art world. I understand there are a lot of young dealers here, so we need to talk about some serious stuff. First of all, be careful about the alcoholism in this business. That is what destroyed the life of many people in this business. It was very sad to see how many problems of that kind we deal with at the start of our careers. You go out every night, you are invited to every cocktail party and it progresses, step by step, without you even realising it. That’s why I don’t drink alcohol. It surprises everybody, but when you witness things at a very young age like I did, experience makes you want to move away from that.

Anyway, working at this gallery was an extraordinary experience for me because I saw the many dangers of spending money in a way that is abusive of artists due to short-term thinking. I was just a small assistant,

but I was quickly given many things to do by the ladies running the gallery. Slowly but surely, at eighteen years old, I became director of the gallery. It was a small gallery. We were nobody. I was lucky because we hired a woman with a lot of experience and she taught me, but I was there first, so we were co-directors.

I dressed well at the time and looked like a serious gallerist. A window opened for me in that Mr. Cartwright was very shy. He did not talk to people that much. Even though he had a very good eye for art, he had poor vision and he was a little bit of a dandy, so he didn’t wear his glasses. Because he didn’t wear his glasses, he kept the door to his office a little bit open and he didn’t get up to greet people, so everybody talked to me. Little by little, I was giving the impression that I was a gallery associate.

At twenty-one years old, I offered to do a show for Mr. Cartwright. He declined, but he did ask me to help with renovations. I still held many other jobs while I was working as an assistant there, because I was being paid the lowest possible salary. I worked a large variety of jobs and tasks, including finding a gallery space for the gallery. I was paid one month’s rent to find a space and I was in charge of renovations. That is very good experience because you learn a lot for when you do your own renovations. You get experience with talking to companies and can prevent them from abusing you too much. Later, I did something like eighteen spaces. I did a lot of renovations, including renovating his gallery.

After renovating my second space—with all these people teaching me how to do it, and they were fantastic advisors—, we made a new space, an addition to our main space. I don’t know why I was so ambitious and crazy enough to imagine I would manage this space. In my mind, I thought, “I will do the programming.” I already had four years of experience, so why not do it myself? At this time, I was paying my own way to art fairs like the Cologne Art Fair, then the biggest art fair in the world, before Basel became the largest. I took the train and paid for my own hotel room to go to other fairs just to know more. Then, Mr. Cartwright sold the space’s lease. I was shocked. I had spent so much energy on making this space and he just sold the lease.

That was the other gift he gave me, this insecurity. Every Christmas, just before going on Christmas holidays, he would tell me, “You know, Emmanuel, I think the gallery is going to close. Don’t say that to anybody because there is a small chance that we will stay open, but I think we are going to close.” Every Christmas, I would say, “OK, I cannot tell anyone and I cannot find a new job, but I’m not sure if I have job.”

I started thinking, “I don’t have that much experience, but, OK, I have to do my own gallery. I’ll do it. I’ll save every cent I can.” I was an expert at saving money. Sometimes I would eat so little that I fell down during conferences. I was participating as a visitor at a Wim Wenders conference and making a video of it when I fell over. When you watch the video you hear everybody talking about me. It happened because I was saving money by not eating. I was skinny at the time, but now I look rich.

“I WAS AN EXPERT AT SAVING MONEY. I SCRIMPED AND SAVED, SO I WAS FINALLY ABLE TO GET AN APARTMENT. THAT WAS HOW I STARTED MY GALLERY.”

I scrimped and saved, so I was finally able to get an apartment that was more expensive than what I was being paid by Mr. Cartwright in order to make my own gallery. That was how I started my gallery. I had to sell each show, one by one. If I didn’t, I would have had to close. I got that apartment, so I put away my futon in the closet every morning and took it out to sleep every night in the room. I managed to convince an artist he needed a studio in addition to his apartment, so he shared the rent with me and I finally had my own room. It was on the third floor of an apartment building, which meant I had to use my name for the gallery, since I was not allowed to have a gallery name at a residence, so the space started as Chez Emmanuel Perrotin, *voilà*.

I didn’t open my own gallery right away, however. Before I opened my space, my boss agreed that I could do a mini-catalogue raisonné of artists as a separate job because I was the one who made the software for the gallery. I had been in an association and learned programming when I was fifteen years old, so when I started at the gallery, I said, “Why don’t we create a piece of software to make a catalogue raisonné?” We

did it on black and white computers. One of my jobs had been doing some interactive slideshows for the Orsay Museum and La Villette. Imagine twenty-four slides and a computer. You said, “Monet”, and boom, you went to a Monet slide. Sure, it looks a little bit low-tech now, but at that time, it was super exciting and very impressive. I was seventeen years old with an IBM computer and a green screen at my parents’ house and I was doing that for these institutions. I was not the engineer, I don’t want to show off. It was just data entry.

Later, I did create the software for my own gallery and started to offer services to other artists who I didn’t represent or for whom we only did group shows, and I made catalogues raisonnés. Some dealers were not really frightened by me, so I asked if I could sell their works in parallel and most people agreed. I made a few sales, which were very useful.

“LATER, I CREATED THE SOFTWARE FOR MY OWN GALLERY AND STARTED TO OFFER SERVICES TO OTHER ARTISTS.”

My first collaboration with artists was with Philippe Parreno, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Bernard Joisten and Pierre Joseph. I made up a catalogue model that I called *catalogue évolutif*—“evolving catalogue”—and I bought a laser printer for 40,000 French francs. That was a lot of money at the time. My own computer was in black and white and I was creating the text on paper to send with an envelope. I took some pictures and printed them on an A4 sheet of paper, which I would cut with a guillotine paper cutter. I did the pictures one by one with the text.

The text was able to evolve because, at this time, not that many projects were happening. Only Dominique Gonzalez did some projects by herself and the others only did projects together. We believed that if we promoted ourselves, the projects would come. They were just students in Grenoble when I met them and this catalogue was very useful because we were able to show people who were visiting us a catalogue when it was really the starting point of their careers. Philippe Parreno never did a single piece by himself at that time. He only did collaborative works. So, that was my first real gig. Later, my first show was in collaboration with Edouard Merino, who later opened the gallery Air de Paris.

G.A. Which artists did you represent at the beginning?

E.P. Philippe Perrin. Maybe you have never heard of him, but he was doing something interesting. He was doing a kind of Arthur Cravan revival. Arthur Cravan was this Dadaist poet-boxer, a nephew of Oscar Wilde. He was an art critic at the time of Marcel Duchamp and was very famous for doing a performance in New York in 1917. He came because he was invited by Francis Picabia and Marcel Duchamp to give a talk about independent artists from Paris and the US. He arrived on-stage wearing a white toga. He was a very tall man, a boxing champion. He stood up and he did a striptease. A striptease in 1917 in front of Dadaist Marcel Duchamp and everyone! He had clearly planned the performance. If Arthur Cravan didn't like an artist, he would beat him up, and not just with words, but also physically. He was a very interesting character. Anyway, we could talk about Arthur Cravan for hours.

Philippe Perrin was doing something on Arthur Cravan. Pretending to be somebody famous was an interesting thing to do at the time. The problem was how to manage the fact Perrin was starting to be famous in Paris. He didn't have the answer either. I stopped working with him because his works got strange after that. He left my gallery to go to the most powerful gallery in France back then, Galerie Beaubourg, with Pierre and Marianne Nahon. That was not really a failure. It was a choice because, honestly, I didn't know where his works were going. Commercially speaking, it was very successful for a while, but I think I was right not to continue.

G.A. What was your vision for your gallery when you got started?

E.P. My vision was a clear understanding that what a young gallerist has to do is exactly the same thing that a doctor does. You have to analyse the problem and the symptoms, and later you can assess what to do about it. The situation can change, too. At that point in time, all of the galleries were clearly focused on famous artists or weren't working with any young artists. You had to wait until you were thirty-five years old to be able to show.

The biggest problem was that only very bankable artists were producing works. Nothing was being produced to help artists to develop their

work. This was at a time when many artists didn't want to paint. They had to develop interactive artworks or do installations. It was quite expensive and I was trying to find the resources to help them produce. At the very beginning, the costs were not very big, but it was a very big amount for me. I was trying to develop collaborations with industries or brands, and I was struggling technically to find solutions. Sometimes I was doing the work for them by transforming some electronic and plug-and-play works, so they wouldn't be too complicated for clients.

“AT THAT TIME ARTISTS DIDN'T WANT TO PAINT; THEY DEVELOPED INTERACTIVE ARTWORKS OR INSTALLATIONS. IT WAS QUITE EXPENSIVE AND I WAS TRYING TO FIND THE RESOURCES TO HELP THEM PRODUCE.”

In fact, some clients created real drama, because they would send back works every year. One of them sent them back a work by Noritoshi Hirakawa from Canada. It was an electronic artwork that was a sort of metaphor about human relationships. It was simply a sensor that told you the distance between you and the machine, just the number, the measurement between you and the machine. I lost a lot of money on this piece just to make this Canadian collector happy. Unfortunately, he never bought from me again. If you listen to this talk, it is very unfair to do that to a young dealer. It was such a small amount and you made me lose money on that.

G.A. How did you move on from your apartment gallery?

E.P. My vision was to produce and to go international quickly because it was impossible at that time to be a French dealer. Everyone thought we were a joke. They were right, too, because after the Second World War, my country was too self-centred and too arrogant. We didn't speak English well and everybody thought, “We are the centre of the world.” Step by step, we became the worst market in the world.

It was very important for me to bring international artists to my gallery immediately. In 1993, I was invited to do an art fair in Japan. I was a

very young dealer, since I had only opened my gallery in 1990. I started in 1989, and in 1990 I had opened the gallery. In 1993, I was already doing my first art fair in Japan. We French share something with the Japanese, which is that we don't speak English very well, so I was on my equal footing with them. I brought my works like I did to all the fairs I did for many years, in my luggage.

G.A. Which artists did you take with you to Japan?

E.P. Damien Hirst, Maurizio Cattelan...

G.A. You gave Damien Hirst his first show in France, didn't you?

E.P. No, his first commercial show in the world. Normally, you say, "the first solo show." Damien gave me the idea to say it was the first commercial show. We had scheduled the show in the programme first. It was his first conceptual show about humans. After that, he used animals. It was an autopsy room with a photo of people who had committed suicide, a scalpel and formaldehyde. That was a solo show. The group show I did first was the first spot paintings and one of the first *Medical Cabinets* from 1989. I sold a spot painting for \$1,000 and *Medical Cabinet* for \$2,000. This is before discounts, so you were able to get a good deal, \$1,000. I was offering the self-portrait with the head of a decapitated man during the solo show. You see Damien smiling and the head next to him. I was offering that for \$500. I bought it for \$350. I am technically the only dealer in the world who didn't make money with this work and I am very proud of that. Everybody thinks I am a good businessman, but you see, I am not good enough.

**"IT WAS A HUGE HELP FOR ME TO BE
ABLE TO SAY I DID DAMIEN HIRST'S
FIRST SOLO SHOW."**

Damien was super supportive and nice, though. The dealers in London organised a non-profit show and, at a certain point, they made me change my date so that the first show would be in London. They realised it was strange for Damien Hirst's first solo show to happen in France, so they changed it by one month. That was the second show, but it was the first commercial show. I was so proud of that for so many years. I have not used that experience for many years, but before, I can

tell you that it was a huge help for me to be able to say I did Damien Hirst's first solo show in the first two minutes of conversation. He was super nice to me and I am very grateful to him. We have remained on very good terms. In fact, we decided to do a show again twenty years later and maybe my idea of a great show with him got too carried away and I refused two or three shows. Now, maybe I regret that. I regret the first one he offered me. I felt like I should have said yes and do it, but I didn't do it.

G.A. Emmanuel, before we finish up the chapter on the beginnings, tell me, what were the main challenges you faced when you were starting out?

E.P. The same challenge every dealer faces now: to stay open. It is a constant struggle. How do we find the resources to develop the gallery, to stay open, to have a reasonable private life? It is a huge challenge and it will remain a huge challenge for a long time.

**"THE SAME CHALLENGE EVERY
DEALER FACES NOW: TO STAY OPEN.
HOW DO WE FIND THE RESOURCES
TO DEVELOP THE GALLERY, TO STAY
OPEN, TO HAVE A REASONABLE
PRIVATE LIFE?"**

You have to imagine that, at that time, when we were promoting artists, we had to send a stamped envelope with slides and hope that you would be lucky enough that people would send you the pictures back. You had to send a stamped return envelope in the hopes that they would take the time to go to the post office to drop off the envelope so you would get the photo back. It costs a fortune. I was joking about my *catalogue évolutif*, but at that time, it was really something to promote an artist. I'm sure I sound like an old man to you and we always talk about how difficult it is, but it has always been difficult for every dealer throughout art history.

The fact is that throughout time, this has largely been a rich people's business. They don't admit it. They always pretend it has been an epic story, but most of the time when you look into the details, they weren't

taking a personal risk. They took on the financial risk of the gallery, but they would have an apartment and something else to feed their families. It's new to have dealers coming from backgrounds without personal resources. That is unusual and it is very hard, but the Internet helps a lot. You have access to the entire world at a very limited expense and that makes a big difference. If you are talented and your artists are talented, there is no reason for you to remain unknown. Access was a much larger problem in those days compared to now. You wondered, "How will they ever hear about me?"

Japanese dealers like Masami Shiraishi have been very important in my career. He had this gallery in Tokyo, SCAI The Bathhouse, and he was coming to my gallery because I was working with other artists who were quite famous: Ange Leccia, IFP (Information Fiction Publicité), Jean-Luc Vilmouth... Maybe you have never heard of them, but they were important then and they were very well-connected with Japan. Shiraishi came to my gallery and offered me a booth to do the fair for free. Well, I had to pay for the plane ticket and an apartment, which I found in a very exotic area, and then I had to bring the works in my luggage and do customs by myself. I was an expert at customs back then.

**"IT'S NEW TO HAVE DEALERS
COMING FROM BACKGROUNDS
WITHOUT PERSONAL
RESOURCES. THAT IS UNUSUAL
AND IT IS VERY HARD, BUT THE
INTERNET HELPS A LOT."**

So, you try to sell. I was very exotic for the Japanese because I was bringing work to them so cheaply. They were like, "Just a second, are you sure?" Because everybody at the time came over with the idea, "We're going to screw over the Japanese. We screw them with impressionists." We destroyed their market for a very long time. They thought it was strange to have this young guy bringing works by himself and selling them at the same price as he was selling them for in Paris. A Japanese collector bought a Damien Hirst photo and it was very inexpensive. He didn't speak English, so I don't know if he knows what it has, but there is one Damien Hirst in Japan.

G.A. Can you continue on about the Nippon International Contemporary Art Fair?

E.P. The Japanese fair was an important moment because I met Takashi Murakami there. I did his first show outside Japan. The story goes, a guy who didn't speak English showed up at my booth with lots of friends. He had great energy and he took me by the hand and brought me to his booth. I said, "Oh my God, this is what I saw when I was visiting the fair." It was absolutely not the Murakami work you know. At this time, he was doing installations with clothes and with balls from different sports, and it had nothing to do with what he does now. But this was a crucial moment in my career because, if you ask me what made my gallery what it is now, Murakami is a huge step. It was an adventure, like a fairy tale.

**"IF YOU ASK ME WHAT MADE
MY GALLERY WHAT IT IS
NOW, TAKASHI MURAKAMI IS
A HUGE STEP."**

G.A. Did you immediately establish a relationship with him?

E.P. Yes. I sent him three questions by fax—don't forget that the first revolution before the Internet was the fax machine. You can laugh, but it was the first time I was able to send black and white pictures with a description and to know they had been received. I was able to fax and the machine would tell you, "I confirm." That was huge. As I was saying, I sent three questions in English and he answered me with eleven pages of cartoons to explain it to me. I kept those fax pages for a very long time. My assistant threw them away because they were blank. Some young people might not understand that, but at that time, if you didn't set fax images with something, the page would be blank, because the method works on thermic principles. But I was happy to keep the blank page. It was a good souvenir.

Anyway, it was incredible: Murakami got a tiny studio in New York City with an organisation and I had lunch with him in New York just before the opening of the Gramercy Park Art Fair organised by Paul Morris, Pat Hearn, Colin de Land and Matthew Marks. Colin de Land and Pat Hearn from American Fine Art Gallery were like the godparents

of my gallery. They were extraordinary people. Colin de Land was an electrician before becoming a gallerist and Pat Hearn was a top model. Unfortunately, some great people die very young, as was their case. I'm sure you have heard of them because they were legends. They invited only three dealers from the rest of the world: Tomio Koyama, Iwan Wirth, and me.

G.A. What year was this?

E.P. In 1994 I was showing a very intellectual, very intense Belgian artist who was doing video, drawings and small sculptures: Eric Duyckaerts. Just to give you an example, Iwan Wirth was already showing Francis Picabia at that time, so you can see the difference in level there. But the second year of the fair, Takashi didn't have this small studio. He came and showed me slides. I saw some paintings inspired by manga culture and I had never done any painters until then, from 1990 to 1994, never. I told him, "What the hell, why not show them? Come with them tomorrow and let's show them at the fair." He brought a painting, but he also brought a t-shirt.

"WHEN I STARTED SHOWING ARTISTS FROM JAPAN, PEOPLE LOOKED AT ME LIKE, 'COME ON, ARE YOU CRAZY?' MY VISION WAS TO IMMEDIATELY BE VERY INTERNATIONAL."

Now, some people have written that I only showed a t-shirt. No, I was showing a t-shirt and a painting, but the t-shirt led to one of the most successful sculptures he ever did. This lady's breasts are pressed together and it creates the Milky Way around her. It was a t-shirt before it was a sculpture. We did not have the money to do it in the right order. We showed that and it was very strange for Americans because they didn't know about manga culture. To protect the cartoon industry, the United States was not importing Japanese cartoons.

In France, we know all the references. When I was a child, I saw Japanese cartoons. We understand the difference between American cartoons and Japanese cartoons, but for Americans, it was an extraordinary and very different aesthetic. We immediately found him a group show with a gallery, Max Protetch, and a solo show with a very good gallery,

Feature Gallery, with Hudson. He also died young, and he was an extraordinary dealer. He was showing Charles Ray, Tom Friedman and artists like that. So, Takashi got a solo show directly from this small presentation in a gallery booth.

I kept a fantastic relationship with him and was only able to do a first solo show in 1995 because you sell these kinds of paintings or drawings and you only pay for the shipping. International shipping was very expensive then. That is another advantage to being a young gallerist now. Plane tickets and shipping are much less expensive. You aren't assuming the same type of risk as we did in the past. When I started showing artists from Japan, people looked at me like, "Come on, are you crazy?" But my vision was to immediately be very international.

G.A. When did you open your first space outside France? Which one was that?

"MIAMI WAS A SUCCESS AS A FIRST INTERNATIONAL OPENING. PEOPLE IMAGINED IT WAS A FAILURE BECAUSE I CLOSED IT."

E.P. In 2004 in Miami. The year before, I was attending Art Basel Miami. They couldn't sell the first years of the fair because of the 11 September tragedy, but I was there with Maurizio Cattelan. Because I paid for the least expensive plane ticket and hotel room possible, it was not refundable, so I was there with Maurizio and we did the programme, visited the museums and things like that. I was joking with him about how cool it would be to open a gallery here. It was a joke, but I did it. One of my collectors, Cathy Vedovi, helped me and it was a great experience. My feeling was that if I opened in New York, I would get killed. They would steal all my artists in five minutes and I would not be ready to face all the legal aspects.

Miami was fantastic because it is very slow. You have time to think there and one of the problems we have in this business now is time to think. Do not forget that Leo Castelli opened his gallery at fifty years old and when he was coming to Venice, Vienna or places like that, he took a boat. He had time to think. We do not have that much time. It's one of our problems. We are in a hurry. We know we are doing this

talk right now and we will have maybe fifty emails by the end of it, and I am not talking about spam. I mean real emails. We worry about never being in the right place at the right time, and nobody thinks it's abnormal to cross the globe to go to one opening. That part was much better back then.

So, Miami was a success as a first international opening. People imagined it was a failure because I closed it, but I decided to close because I didn't want to make my artists do shows when they didn't have very many visitors every day. There were lots of great people the night of the opening. We organised a fantastic barbecue and a party with music. The gallery was absolutely gorgeous. It was also successful in the sense that it contributed more inventory to take to art fairs. Some of the best galleries during art fairs are the ones that don't sell well in their own gallery space, because they have the best choice of works. When you do well with your works in your gallery, it is hard to have your best piece at the fair. To have a gallery that doesn't sell that much can be a huge advantage in that way. People spread this rumour that I was bankrupt when I decided to close the gallery, because if I close a space it must be because I was bankrupt. No, it was a decision. I was very happy to have had this adventure and I learned a lot from it. I was better off. Later, I opened in Hong Kong.

G.A. Yes. I wanted to come to that. Then you had this Chinese or Hong Kong adventure.

E.P. Yes. I have to thank Etsuko Nakajima. She is a half-French, half-Japanese director working at my gallery in Paris. We have been working together for a long time. She went to live in Asia, first in Korea. We brainstormed on a plane about the fact it would be important to open a gallery in Asia. Neither one of us had ever visited Hong Kong in our lives, but we decided, strategically, that it had to be the city. Nobody had opened there yet except Ben Brown, not even Gagosian. We saw that Hong Kong is a hub for Asia. It was a logical choice for many reasons. You don't have to visit to understand the geostrategic aspect. We said, "OK, let's go to Hong Kong and see." We hired a fantastic, very ambitious lady, Alice Lung. She has Taiwanese, Chinese and Korean heritage, so she speaks many languages. We visited spaces, small ones at the beginning, then big spaces and then very big ones. We finally settled on a wonderful space on the 17th floor.



Perrotin Paris, Turenne Space, located at 76 Rue de Turenne

In Paris, we have a beautiful 18th-century building with a more contemporary building at the back, there is also a bookstore, offices and a courtyard. We also have a ballroom at 60 rue de Turenne: a 700-square-metre show room with a garden where we are able to show all of our artists at the same time and organize talks, events...



Facades of Perrotin galleries in New York and Shanghai

The Hong Kong space is on the 17th floor across from the Four Seasons hotel. You know, Hong Kong has the most expensive real estate in the world. Rent for our space is \$100,000 per month. It is not a simple thing to open a gallery there. You have to put all your money on the line. I have been gambling my whole life, so we opened this gallery and tried to make it work. You can see the whole bay of Hong Kong from the window. It is not a claustrophobic space like all the other spaces in Hong Kong, which is not an exaggeration because, unfortunately, they don't have windows, in general, so it is rare for spaces not to be claustrophobic.

“OUR VISION WAS TO NOT ADAPT TO THE CONTEXT, BUT TO TRY TO MAKE PEOPLE INTERESTED IN WHAT WE ARE DOING.”

We made this crazy move to open a gallery there on this scale and we used the same strategy: we were selling the same kinds of artists at the same price as in Paris. Our vision was to not adapt to the context, but to try to make people interested in what we are doing. My Chinese team was telling me the whole time, “Yes, but in China, they don't do that. They don't understand that.” Yes, but what is the point of us

opening a gallery there if we act like everyone else? Let's do it our way and we will see if it works or not. Artists were talking to me about the programming like, “But they have never heard of that.” My response was, “Yes, but let's try doing an art fair and you will see.”

Slowly but surely, we showed some of the artists they were totally against. They asked, “Can we do a show of him?” And the artist was like, “Yeah, sure, let's do it,” because during the fair, they got some interest. For sure, it's an adventure. You are growing your artists. This is not like when you take only bankable artists and you pay for everything that way. Many of the shows I organise don't pay for all of the gallery's expenses. We expect to just develop the artists and then, one day, maybe they will be the source of revenue that helps the gallery to pay for the others.

“MANY OF THE SHOWS I ORGANISE DON'T PAY FOR ALL OF THE GALLERY'S EXPENSES. WE EXPECT TO JUST DEVELOP THE ARTISTS.”

That has always been the way, except at the very beginning when I only had unbankable artists. I started with Maurizio in 1992 and I worked very hard together with both Maurizio and Takashi for ten years before they were able to be profitable. It was not easy, but that was my big chance. Whereas Damien Hirst was a big star six months later thanks to Charles Saatchi, who paid the production costs of one of his sharks and made him a big artist, Takashi and Maurizio were unsuccessful for a pretty long time. However, I got the time to show them my dedication and all the sacrifices I was making for them. It was a great adventure and I was lucky that they gave me the chance to help them because sometimes artists want to move quickly from one gallery to another. We built a very strong relationship.

The most important thing is not space. I can show you pictures of spaces, but to be honest, your relationships with artists are the most important part of your gallery. Of course, we can speak about organisation and about my software, but the choice of artists is more important, regardless. The relationships you have with them and the ability to show an artist that you have chosen to work for—and not just for yourself—for ten years are the crucial aspects to me.

Many galleries make choices based on the short-term, because as we all know, staying in business is very difficult. You risk closing every month. On many, many occasions, you will get a proposal from someone to buy twenty pieces or to do this or that for you “to help you,” but it will only help get you into trouble with your artists six months or five years later. You will kill your relationships with your artists; you have to say no and you have to refuse to push the price too quickly.

The projected cost for many of my artists was so expensive. Just to show you, that famous sculpture on the t-shirt, Murakami’s Milky Way creation, I priced it at \$12,000 and I was not able to sell it. I sold it for \$10,000 in 1996. That year, we only spent \$8,000 on production costs. Production costs for that kind of piece now would be \$300,000 or \$400,000, minimum. At that time, we were able to do it for \$8,000. Since we sold it for \$10,000, that means I gave \$1,000 to Murakami and I kept \$1,000, with which I still had to pay for the shipping. And would I be able to do the shipping for \$1,000 today? I was doing it in FedEx crates with the whole show inside, including the sculptures. The male version of the work reached \$15 million at auction. Imagine the FedEx didn’t arrive.

**“YOUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH ARTISTS
ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF
YOUR GALLERY.”**

G.A. Emmanuel, you have been talking about relationships with artists. You now do twenty-one art fairs a year, you trot around the globe and you have to be going here and there. How do you maintain those relationships?

E.P. Thanks to the Internet, first. We can Skype. I travel a lot and I have a lot of meetings. For sure, a romantic vision of art dealers of the 19th century still exists. You can hold on to that vision and build your gallery like that where you have twenty artists, speak with them every week and have two or three assistants, or only one. That is a fantastic way to have a gallery and I never judge that. That’s great, don’t get me wrong.

You need to be ready to see your artists find a new gallery and leave you each time they start to be successful, definitely. It was fantastic for dealers to be like that, when they were pushing their artists out of the

gallery, telling them, “Oh my God, you are too big for me now. Maybe it’s better. I’ll find you a better gallery.” That was great.

But you need to accept that, and I was afraid to lose my artists. We are still afraid of the prospect of another gallery taking your artist—every dealer in the world is haunted by that fear. I had to expand. If I didn’t expand and offer more and more services to my artists, I would not get anywhere. It is not just a question of space. It’s much more about the quality of the services you offer, like providing the staff to be able to work for them enough and finding new ways to help them because it is very difficult for artists. The life of a modern artist is very complicated.

**“IF I DIDN’T EXPAND AND OFFER
MORE AND MORE SERVICES TO
MY ARTISTS, I WOULD NOT GET
ANYWHERE.”**

G.A. When you say services, what sorts of things are you doing for your artists?

E.P. You build and archive, of course, you promote the show, and you help them to produce the works in certain cases. You help make them more famous all around the world. Who would have brought some of the artists I brought to Hong Kong or New York when I did? No one was interested. We got an offer to have some of my artists, like Paola Pivi, exhibit in New York, but they were ready to take the artist’s proofs of the works that we were assuming the risk of producing. They were not assuming the risk of having an artist tell you, “I need 3,000 cappuccino cups and a live leopard to do works for my Kunsthalle Basel museum show.” I say, “I see, what are you going to do with that?” and they reply, “We’ll see.” You are paying to see what the artist will do, and it makes you feel like you are taking on so much risk. Some artists will come to me and say, “I need 10,000 litres of lip cream and eight live alligators for the Miami show.”

If before I made a joke about Parisian gallerists after World War II, New York galleries are in a similar position now. Maybe this statement will create some controversy, but they have felt like they are the centre of the world for a long time. They have everybody coming to them and they do not have very much showroom space. They receive people, sell

the show, and that's it, that's enough. That is why many of the bigger dealers in New York now are European, because we come from a more challenging context. It was more difficult for us to thrive before we came to New York, and now it is easier for us to work in this territory because it is very competitive. Maybe I sound crazy saying this, but you can have a look at the numbers. Maybe all these Swiss-American and British gallerists in New York feel American now, but originally, they were European.

**“MANY OF THE BIGGER DEALERS IN
NEW YORK NOW ARE EUROPEAN,
BECAUSE WE COME FROM A MORE
CHALLENGING CONTEXT.”**

G.A. I would like to move on to something that we discussed when we were preparing this talk. You said that you felt that few galleries are truly internationalising.

E.P. Yes, although it changed quickly. Many galleries now want to open venues everywhere.

G.A. You feel that the art trade has not internationalised the way other industries have. Why do you think that is?

E.P. If you looked at luxury brands of clothes thirty years ago, they were in what, four or five cities? And we were impressed. That's nothing nowadays. It's crazy. Luxury brands have thousands of shops around the world now. They have already many in mainland China. The art gallery business keeps thinking, “We have to stay like we were in the 19th century.” Again, I respect this way of working, but do we always have to work like this, working and building artists and seeing them go to these big galleries? I hoped to find a way to resist. Opening a gallery in Hong Kong was one of the ways I found to bring my artists to another territory. Opening another gallery later in Seoul also seemed crazy. Nobody was opening a gallery in Seoul if they were not Korean.

We did it like that in many cities, but we have also tried to do many art fairs. Early on, I did it by myself, for example, in New York and then in Chicago's art fair, with just two days in-between them. I took all the art with me in my luggage for the two fairs. I don't know how I did that. I

spent the one night in between them in the hospital too, because I had a problem with my ears on the plane. And still I had to go hang the works for the art fair in Chicago! You are alone and you have to do it, two fairs alone in two weeks.

G.A. How many spaces have you got now?

E.P. I am in six cities.

G.A. Six cities and you do twenty-one art fairs. Is your vision still the same you had at the beginning, when you started out? What has changed in terms of the way that you work?

E.P. One big difference between a gallery like mine and a smaller gallery is that I give my assistants, directors and partners a lot of opportunities to expand with me. In connection with relationships with artists, while I may not have the same relationship with artists as young dealers do, I have maybe ten assistants in my gallery who are able to open a gallery by themselves. They are very good, smart people. They have great energy and great expertise. Some of them have been with me for sixteen, eighteen and even twenty-two years. They have been there for a very long time and we know exactly how to work together. The maximum number of artists they have and share responsibility for is six. They also might have two or three assistants working directly for them, so they have a lot of time to speak with the artists.

They also have the whole organisation around them, supporting them. We are 132 people, so we have shipping specialists, PR specialists, Internet specialists, and software engineers, so the associates are really dedicated to the artists. Plus, they only do fairs on their continent. If they go elsewhere, it is because they want to. If they are based in Paris, they can go to Miami, but they are not required to. The American team takes care of that. The team already has better personal lives because of that. They do not have to run around everywhere like in a smaller gallery. We did two art fairs this weekend in Taiwan and San Francisco. I only went to the San Francisco opening and I'm absolutely unnecessary. In fact, the most successful fair was the one in Taiwan, which I didn't visit.

The point is, we have to trust our assistants. We have to trust our directors. We have to take the risk of putting them on-stage and risk them leaving to open their own galleries. It has happened to me. I tell some of them, “My door will always be open to you,” and some of them come back, because finally, they did not have a good experience. This is the challenge. One of the most important challenges, after your choice of artists, is your relationships with assistants. When I say assistant, I mean directors, partners, everyone. This is so crucial.

“ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT CHALLENGES, AFTER YOUR CHOICE OF ARTISTS, IS YOUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH ASSISTANTS, DIRECTORS, PARTNERS, EVERYONE. THIS IS SO CRUCIAL.”

I was lucky enough to have a very bad motorcycle accident in 2001. They put me in the hospital for a long time and I had to tell my assistants to run things. I changed hospitals to be closer to the gallery and, sure, they came to the hospital every day to ask me questions. My home was my gallery, you know. The gallery was 90 square metres large. My room was my office and the bathroom, kitchen and toilet was about 4 square metres, maybe 3. I was living in these conditions. When I came back from the hospital, the answering machine was running all night, it was difficult to rest.

This motorcycle accident was an opportunity. One of my two assistants at the time was so scared that after I came back to the gallery, she resigned. The other one is the person who now leads the gallery in New York, Peggy Leboeuf. When she started at my gallery, she had only one day’s experience in another gallery. One day. She did not speak English and she turned red if you talked to her. She was that shy. But, little by little, she learned English, like me, and now, she runs a gallery in New York, she has been working with me for twenty-two years.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND QUESTIONS (C/Q) FROM THE AUDIENCE

Q1. Thank you very much, Georgina, and *merci beaucoup*, Emmanuel. My question is, when did you realise you needed a team and that you couldn’t do it by yourself? When did you accept that you couldn’t do it by yourself?

E.P. I dreamt of having a team the very first day. There was no doubt about that. The difficult part is how to do it. I was lucky, I got an assistant, but yes, you need a team. I did make some mistakes like not getting a big enough team together quickly enough. We haven’t talked about my software, but incorporating my software was a key moment for my gallery. I only hired a programmer eleven years ago. At that time, I was not able to pay more than one and it was better, but I took too long to understand that I need five or ten of them. Now, I have twelve full-time programmers, but it is a slow process to get what you want.

“INCORPORATING MY SOFTWARE WAS A KEY MOMENT FOR MY GALLERY. IT IS CALLED THE MANAGER.”

G.A. What are your programmers doing?

E.P. My software is called The Manager. What do you prefer: to be screamed at by an assistant and directors, or for a piece of software to scream at you? Red dots next to numbers tell my assistants what they have to do and what they haven’t done quickly enough. For some of them, a red dot appears on their information and tasks after twenty-one days. Why twenty-one days? It gets complicated. The software is who tells them, “You have to do it.” If they don’t do it, I see it.

G.A. Whoa, that’s a big brother situation.

E.P. Well, you can also see it the other way around. I will not name names, but some dealers call their assistants and every salesperson ten times a day to ask them, “What did you do for me today?” I don’t have to do that, because I have this software. Every day, I see all the pieces on reserve, all the pieces in, and the photos of the salespeople. You see the buyers’ photos, you see the margin, you see the discounts

they give and you see the works and number of reservations. I can make comments easily. We reduce the amount of email because everything happens on the software. I can see the second step, which is “on request”—when you sell but you don’t have the invoice address yet—and the third step, which is the invoice.

I can follow this and know if everything is done for everyone’s benefit (the artist and the gallery), because sometimes when you have a lot of staff, some of them may prefer to sell in bad conditions than not to sell at all, since they have percentages on the sale, of course. This system helps me follow everything. How do you keep up with six galleries from around the world? We have a system to decide all the dates we do around the world, following Fashion Week in Paris, or the auction in New York, etc. All the assistants know what my daughters’ holidays are. It is very important. We can fix things and we know exactly where we are in the programme.



The Manager, the gallery’s software

G.A. Did you develop this software?

E.P. I started on it at eighteen years old and worked on it every day. That is something I am very proud of, finding a way to make the team feel like part of the programming too. A long time ago, my assistant was always between the doors telling me, “Look at this artist on my telephone. He is fantastic, everybody is talking about him. We have to hurry.” You cannot work like that, it’s just not possible. You don’t decide on an artist like that. You have to take some time to make a smart decision.

So, we decided to merge the potential artist’s entire website with our website. My art assistants offer to create the artist’s website by merging it with all the others so we know everything about this artist. Sometimes we have a better website for artists we don’t represent—I promise you, every time I do a demonstration, people are surprised. I’m serious. It sounds crazy, but it’s true.

“YOU DON’T RUN A GALLERY IN SIX CITIES AROUND THE WORLD WITHOUT AT LEAST LETTING YOUR STAFF EXPRESS THEIR OPINIONS. I HAVE A GREAT TEAM.”

Then, forty-five people in my gallery receive an alert telling them, “You have to vote for an artist.” They don’t know who proposed the artist. They see images and a price range. They can look at many different aspects and give a rating from 1 to 5 on how much they like them. They can make comments and say if they think it is a better show for New York or for Hong Kong. They can give their opinion and the software digests all of this information.

Therefore, when we have a directors’ meeting, you don’t see one person give their opinion and imposing it on everyone else, since the first one to speak generally influences the others. That is why I said they don’t know who proposes an artist, because that can also influence your assistants. You just see a rating. It is partially democratic in my gallery, although not completely. Sometimes I impose an artist I really like and they say, “Oh yes, that was good.”

G.A. You have the Midas touch.

E.P. But sometimes they impose an artist upon me, clearly. But you don't run a gallery in six cities around the world without at least letting your staff express their opinions. I have a great team, I cannot say that enough. I can see from the software if the key people in the gallery are pushing a certain artist and making good comments about them, so who am I to decide? Maybe they are very inspired. My gallery needs to be able to develop without me. I am just a conductor, a *chef d'orquestre*, but if one of the musicians gives very interesting input, I would be stupid not to follow that.

Q2. Thank you. Hello, Georgina and hello, Emmanuel. Well, I'm not an art dealer, but I have a question regarding Perrotin. You represent a lot of really hot artists with a lot of demand, like Madsaki, Murakami and artists like that.

**“OUR ARTISTS ARE NOT FACTORIES
AND WE DON'T PUSH THEM INTO
OVERPRODUCING.”**

E.P. You certainly surprised everyone by saying Madsaki first, but I can see where you are coming from.

Q2. Obviously, with new technology like Artsy, a lot of these artists have a lot of demand and you sell them in the primary market, but many of them end up in the secondary market very quickly at much higher prices. Is one of your jobs to position these pieces so that this does not happen? I ask because, as a client or collector, I see this as one of the biggest problems right now in the art market.

E.P. It's a nightmare when you are a young dealer and it's a nightmare when you are a big dealer. Our artists are not factories and we don't push them into overproducing. Madsaki produces works easily, OK, but for many of them, it is not that easy and the market pressure is very difficult to handle. For all of them, to go from normal one day to having everything sold the next and having a lot of people demand works can be quite stressful. Madsaki made \$120,000 at auction and I could do nothing but laugh. It's crazy!

So yes, it's a nightmare for everyone—well, certainly it's a good problem to have, a rich person's problem. Somebody in the audience sent me a letter just before coming to this symposium telling me how disappointed she was, because she asked us three weeks ago about the Mr. show we had last Saturday, we did not reply and now all the paintings are sold and I was only able to offer her drawings, which she said was so unfair. She's right. I didn't answer, so now I am taking the opportunity to answer your email.

You are right, it is unfair. But life is completely unfair about everything. It is the same for concert tickets. What can I do? Yes, we have to place art. If you have a gallery show in Paris, you have to try to give the French audience a chance to buy the works. Someone told me, “When the Josh Sperling show happened in America, you told us it was for American clients, and now that it's in Paris I still have no access.” Yes, a Parisian colleague at a dinner told me, “I didn't get access to Mr in the Paris show.” I know it is very complicated. It is a good problem to have and a complicated one to manage.

G.A. It's good for the artist.

E.P. At Madsaki's level, it's OK, but of course, it's happening to Cattelan, to Murakami, to every hugely successful artist I get, Mariko Mori at one time, and others. When this happens to you, there is a moment when you are in your studio and you walk around artworks. It must feel like, “Oh my God, this is the price of this work at auction. Now I have to consider that.” It's not easy for them either, but they expect that we make a minimum number of mistakes so that the works placed in collections will not come back to auction quickly. And yes, it is difficult, because trust me, the worst people who want to speculate on the artworks have the most elaborate speeches to convince you to sell to them.

G.A. Do you blacklist people?

E.P. Of course. I'm like Thaddaeus Ropac, yes. We blacklist people and occasionally some of them can come back. Sometimes we have to give them a second chance, because some people want proof that we are not Bernie Madoff, in a way. Sometimes good collectors resell a piece in auction just to reassure themselves.

Melanie Gerlis (M.G.) Thank you, Emmanuel, that was very interesting. I just wanted to pick up on something you said about your Miami space. You said that you closed it because there weren't enough people coming, apart from to the openings. The logical conclusion of that is, "If you don't have enough people coming to your gallery, you should close it." Is that something you agree with, generally speaking?

E.P. Yes. What is the difference between Instagram and our gallery? We offer a life experience. Live music is totally different from recordings. Art fairs are very important and will remain important, but visitors are coming for just one day. They run from one booth to the next. You cannot expect to teach them about new artists. You would only do your bankable artists if you were focused on doing art fairs.

If you are still doing young artists—and I just got a 28-year-old artist from a township in Cape Town—, we need to help people to learn about their works, to understand and see the works for real. I don't want to spend my team's energy on a gallery that doesn't have visitors. It is unfair to my artists and also to my team. In 2018, we got 275,000 visitors worldwide. I am not pulling these numbers out of the air. We have machines to automatically count visitors, which are placed where the staff doesn't walk.

**“I DON'T WANT TO SPEND
MY TEAM'S ENERGY ON A
GALLERY THAT DOESN'T
HAVE VISITORS. IT IS UNFAIR
TO MY ARTISTS AND ALSO
TO MY TEAM.”**

We have the smallest audience in Seoul, unfortunately, where the strategy at the beginning was to make the gallery very VIP. Maybe we will change that, we'll see, but I am very proud to have a lot of visitors. Our average in Paris is 450 people per day. For a show by an unknown artist in New York, it can be huge sometimes. We have a great audience and that is very important to me.

The gallery space is important for me as well. I don't think luxury brands have stopped opening shops around the world. They are selling a lot

on the Internet, of course, but the experience of seeing the clothes is very important. I don't think shops in the high-level market are going to disappear any time soon. I don't want to be called out in ten years for saying this, but let's say that, right now, it's OK.

G.A. We are going to have to end on that note. Thank you very much, indeed, Emmanuel, for a fascinating talk.

E.P. Thank you!

Vanessa Carlos

is the Director of Carlos/Ishikawa gallery in London, whose programme focuses on international artists with wide-ranging, multidisciplinary and experimental practices. Carlos founded Condo in 2016, 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 has since expanded to New York, Shanghai, Mexico City, São Paulo, and Athens.

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. Dr. McAndrew has published widely on the economics of the art market, including her book entitled *Fine Art and High Finance*, published by Wiley, and papers in academic journals. She has published an annual macro-economic report on the global art market for the last ten years, and her global research is currently commissioned by Art Basel and UBS.

Lisa Schiff

is one of the leading and internationally recognized art advisors, with over a decade of experience in building private collections and foundations. Schiff is the Founder and Principal of SFA, an art advisory with offices in New York, Los Angeles, and London. Schiff has curated exhibitions and mounted several benefit auctions for the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation. Additionally, she has taught as an adjunct professor of art history, lectures continually, and regularly comments on art related topics for the press.

Anny Shaw

is a correspondent for *The Art Newspaper*, reporting on auctions, art fairs and market news since 2010. She trained as a journalist in her native south London and has contributed to *The Telegraph*, *The Guardian*, *Apollo*, *LUX* and *Frieze* magazines, among others. She has a BA in Art History from the Courtauld Institute of Art (1st) and an MA in Contemporary Art Theory from Goldsmiths, University of London (distinction).

WOMEN ARTISTS ON THE MARKET

SPEAKERS

**Vanessa Carlos, Clare McAndrew
& Lisa Schiff**

MODERATOR

Anny Shaw



WOMEN ARTISTS ON THE MARKET

Anny Shaw (A.S.) We are going to kick off with a short presentation from Clare, who has been analysing the gender imbalance between men and women, not only in terms of prices, but also in regards to gallery representation.

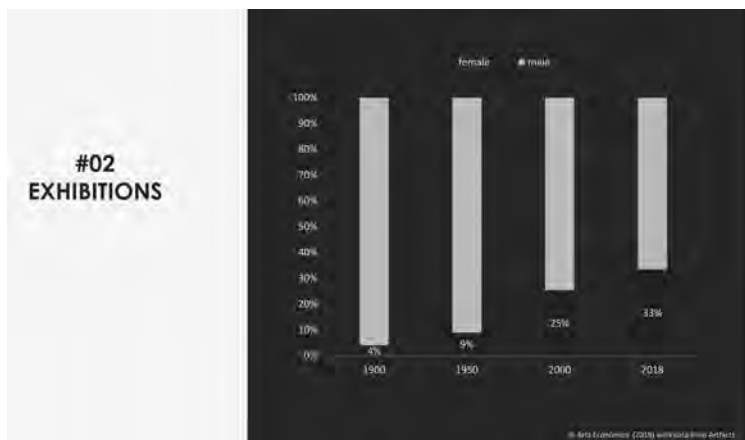
Clare McAndrew (C.M.) Thanks very much Anny, and thanks very much to Talking Galleries for inviting me to talk and be involved in this very important discussion. When things don't necessarily affect you directly, it is easy to underplay them or to underestimate their importance, but when I started digging into the statistics, it is staggering. I can understand this disparity between genders from a historical perspective. I can get on board with why it was that way in the past, but when I see that it is still so pervasive, I find that difficult to understand. I hope we will get to the why and what we can do about it.

“WOMEN ARTISTS GET PRICED ABOUT 50% LESS THAN MALE ARTISTS IN THE AUCTION SECTOR.”

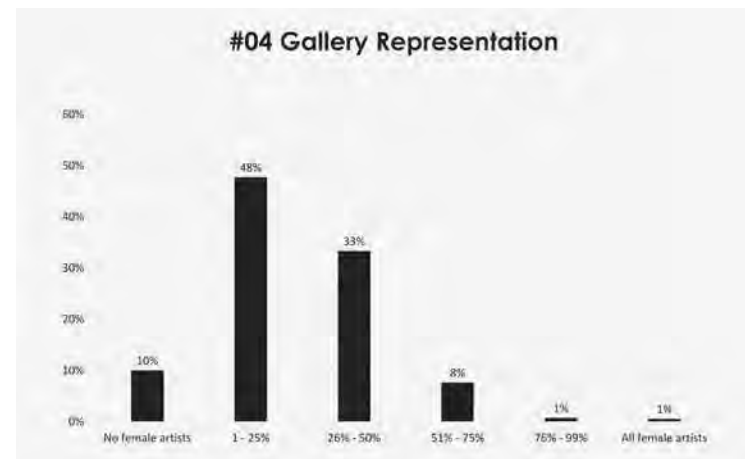
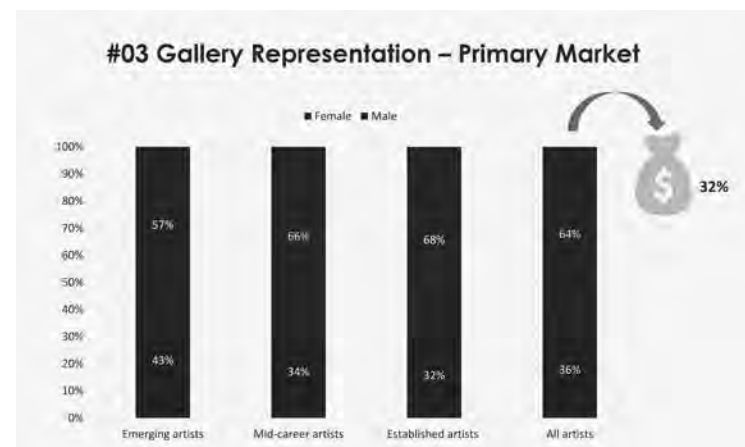
A very good colleague of mine, Roman Kräussl, did a paper on gender disparity a few years ago where he indicated that the average gender discount for female artists at auction is 50%. Women artists get priced about 50% less than male artists in the auction sector. This is very well-established. The disparities also tend to be greater in countries that have bigger gender disparities generally, so we are seeing that demand clearly plays a role in the auction sector. The common fact that female artists get paid much less has been in a few academic papers and is very well-published in the media.



That being said, I also wanted to include something positive. Some of the trajectories of the five top-selling artists at auction in 2018 are obviously going the right way, so there are some female artists there. But even if you look at the top-selling woman in the auction sector, she is at about one-fifth of the rate of the top-selling man. If you look at the record prices for the top-selling living artists at auction, you’ve got Jenny Saville’s big record last year of \$12 million versus \$60 or \$90 million for the top living male artist, so there are still huge disparities. While some people are moving in the right direction, there is a very well-established disparity in the auction sector.



Some of the great statistics that ArtFacts supplied us on exhibitions and their database—which, by the way, I’m very grateful for—allow you to go right back to 1900. There are two ways of looking at this. You can look at exhibitions across the board in all institutions—museums, art fairs, galleries, etc.—from an optimistic point of view and see how much it has improved since 1900. Female artist sales have gone from 4% to one-third of the exhibition sector auctuate. The other way, which is the way I look at it, is, “Why does this still exist?” Some of the data I’m referring to comes from historical exhibitions, where this disparity is understandable, but some of it also comes from contemporary exhibitions, where it is much less understandable.



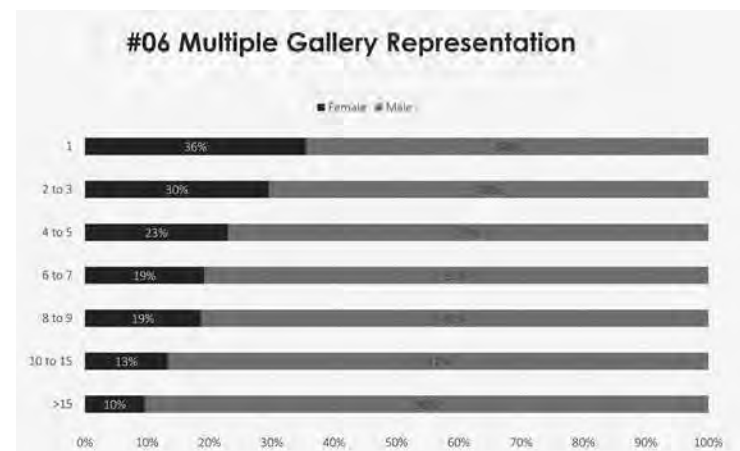
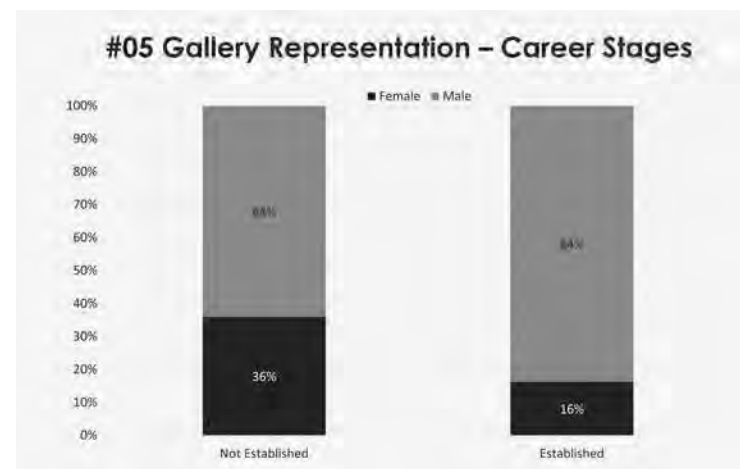
Some of my own research this year addressed the topic quite up-front through gallery surveys. We asked them what their representation of female versus male artists was. The 30-70/40-60 divide is a very common statistic. 30-70 is the key number I kept returning to when I went through all of these figures. It's the same number I found in a lot of the different surveys and tests. At the moment, about 36% of primary market galleries' artists were female and they generated about one-third of the sales. This is on average across all primary galleries worldwide, so it is a very general statistic.

If you look at emerging artists, there is a bigger share of women (43%) than among established artists. Again, there are two ways of looking at this. The optimistic way is to think that maybe this situation is being ground out in subsequent generations, but given that these are all primary market galleries that deal with living artists, the more realistic way of looking at it is, "Why are there so few? Why do the numbers go down when you look at established artists?" It means there must be less gender disparity when artists are starting out. The conclusion is that fewer female artists are successful.

**"THE CONCLUSION IS THAT
FEWER FEMALE ARTISTS ARE
SUCCESSFUL."**

As I was working with Artsy quite a bit this year, I also took the opportunity to use their massive database and looked at the gender breakdown of the artists on their site among about 3,500 galleries. Again, it was about 27% female when you looked at all artists posted on the site. That is a little bit lower than the surveys' figures, but it includes secondary market galleries as well, so the fact that secondary market sales or galleries' artists could be less female is a little bit understandable because of historical context. If you recall that women weren't allowed into a lot of art academies and institutions prior to 1900, it is easy to understand that there are fewer female historical artists. That prohibition no longer exists, which is the problem I'm still baffled by. You can understand disparity historically, but not currently. Only 10% of 3,000 or so galleries had greater than 50% female artists. Most galleries have some female artists, but only the minority have a greater share.

In my surveys, I asked the galleries to ascribe whether an artist was established or not, so I tried to do something slightly more objective with the big Artsy data set. I said artists were established if they had an auction record. After we broke it down, we had similar findings. Looking at less-established or not-established artists without an auction record, the breakdown was 36% female, but when you moved to established artists with an auction record, it goes right down again.



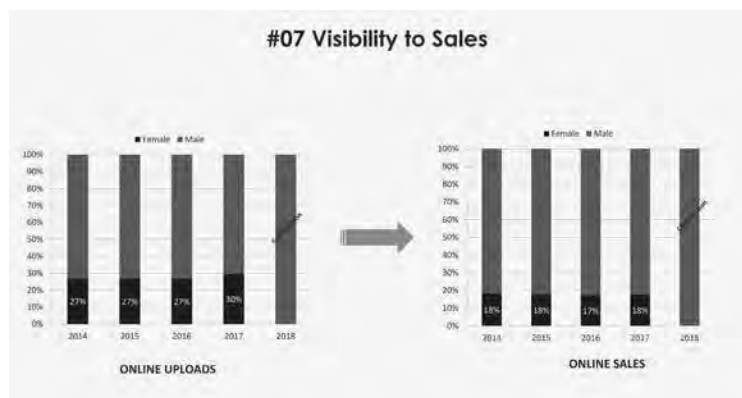
If you look at statistics from the art colleges—and these have been published widely in articles in the press—there is even a slight gender bias towards female graduates from a lot of art colleges. So,

it is certainly not that there are not enough women going into the profession. It's that they are not making it to this established stage, so again, these findings were pretty stark.

Another interesting thing we did to tackle this success factor and measure it in an objective way was to look at gallery representation. I looked at the number of galleries each artist in the massive Artsy database was represented by and, again, got the normal gender discrimination rate of 36%, like when you look at one gallery. But, as soon as you moved up to galleries with multiple representation, the number of women started to drop.

All of these indicators lead us to the same conclusion: that there is a bit of a gender bias at the start, which we need to explain. Then, as you move up and artists get more famous or more established, women drop out. When you get to the stage of representation by ten or more galleries—which you can probably equate with more success, certainly with wider distribution—it goes down to 13%. Among artists with gallery representation of greater than 15 galleries, just 10% is constituted by women.

One of the last things I looked at was online uploads on Artsy. This topic has made quite an impression. It has certainly gained a lot of publicity in the last couple of years. Women are getting their day in the spotlight and they are being highlighted more. We have obviously seen a lot of exhibitions highlighting female artists. What I wanted to look at was, “Are galleries actually posting more artists on a platform like Artsy? Are they making artists more visible that way?” There was a slight increase in 2017 and a consistent trend in 2018.



Unfortunately, when you look at how that transfers to sales, it is not actually having an effect. Needless to say, there has been absolutely no revolution in sales from that little bit of increase in visibility. So, this issue has been gaining a lot of traction in the media and getting a lot of focus, but that is not really translating into actual sales at the moment. These things take a long time.

“THERE HAS BEEN ABSOLUTELY NO REVOLUTION IN SALES FROM THAT LITTLE BIT OF INCREASE IN VISIBILITY FOR WOMEN.”

The statistics are what they are. The big question is why they are like this. As I said, it's easy to see historically. You can understand with women not being allowed into institutions and not being given the opportunities why this sort of unbalance might be the case with historical art. It is not as easy to understand why the same things are happening now.



There are usually two culprits or two sides of the story. The first is the demand side arguments, which are the normal arguments about gender discrimination and cultural bias. If women and men made exactly the same thing, women would get paid less or get priced lower, in this case. That is the normal argument and studies have repeatedly

shown in other industries that women are discriminated against in things like job interviews and that they are judged by their colleagues—even female colleagues—on skills like innovativeness and leadership. They are judged differently than men. The demand-side arguments are fairly well-established.

In the art world, you would be looking at the bias of the art market gatekeepers: the museums, galleries and collectors. You would be addressing differences in how women are represented, cultural biases and artistic interpretation and critiques, everything from the myth of the bad boy genius of art to women never being allowed to have the same kind of leeway, the sexism of ageing, unequal balance of parenthood, etc. All of these are part of the demand side of the argument. They are all the obvious culprits.

The perhaps more difficult, less palatable explanation for some people is on the supply side. This looks at the issue from the perspective, “Are the values and prices different because men and women produce different things?” This usually meets with a very strong negative reaction, arguing that there is absolutely no “female art” and that it is wrong to make these assumptions. I think we have to be very wary of ecological fallacies that would say, “Everybody in this group has to behave like this and everybody in that group behaves like that,” or making silly biological arguments that women make different things because of their biology. But a very interesting argument whose lid has just been taken off is, “Is there some kind of socially-constructed difference in what men and women produce?” and then, “Do we value those traits differently?”

**“IS THERE SOME KIND OF SOCIALLY-
CONSTRUCTED DIFFERENCE IN
WHAT MEN AND WOMEN PRODUCE?
DO WE VALUE THOSE TRAITS
DIFFERENTLY?”**

I have been working quite closely with a very talented young sociologist called Taylor Whitten Brown. She is doing big experimental research using the giant Artsy database to look at whether a computer can recognise different traits in men’s and women’s work. Her research is

fascinating, both for the Art Basel report and for what she is publishing academically. It is those kinds of hard questions that people don’t necessarily like to ask: “Do men and women make different things? And if they do, why do we value the male traits more than the female traits? Why are they valued differently?”

It is important to at least test and find out more about the supply side. If those reasons are important as well, it means that there are different tactics to tackle the problem because it is not just a matter of making sure that women are equally represented in the current structure. It’s about changing the structure itself. It’s not just making women do better in the male-dominated structure. It is making the structure itself less male-dominated. If you accept that there could be some supply side issues at play, that’s the harder and more difficult challenge that we face.

**“IT’S NOT JUST MAKING WOMEN DO
BETTER IN THE MALE-DOMINATED
STRUCTURE. IT IS MAKING THE
STRUCTURE ITSELF LESS MALE-
DOMINATED.”**

A.S. Thanks Clare, thanks for sharing that research with us. There are some really interesting stats which we will be returning to in this discussion, but I thought we could address most questions anecdotally with our panellists. I also thought it was worth noting at the outset that, while there are huge historical discrepancies in price, gallery representation and exhibitions, we are seeing an unprecedented number of exhibitions with or about women, not only in museums, but also at art fairs and galleries. All of us receive emails daily about women-only shows and this obviously comes at a time when the #MeToo movement is really taking off as well as the centenary of voting rights for most women. I wanted to ask our panellists about this disconnect between galleries and museums increasingly marketing women and the market reality, where these trends have not had much of an impact.

Vanessa Carlos (V.C.) I would be interested to see what this research looks like for my generation and the one after it, artists born between 1980 and 1995, because my feeling is that the artists from then who

are getting a lot of prominence and a lot of attention are quite well-balanced in terms of gender. The point is that we are talking about women artists, but really, we are talking about non-straight, non-white, non-male artists. It is all part of the same issue if we talk about non-binary or people of colour. My sense is that the generational factor would be really key because when I look around my peers, both galleries and artists, I feel like there is a balance.

By no means am I promoting this website, but I had a look at Art Rank before I came. For those of you who don't know, it supposedly tells you what you should and shouldn't buy, though I don't know where they get their data. I thought it was very revealing that the "Sell now!" column was full of white boys from the last five years, while every "Buy under \$10,000" column was lists made up of half or more female artists. That really reflects what I am sensing.

The last point I wanted to make was that when I was in art school, it's true that there were more female students than male students. I have a friend who came up with a very interesting theory that I think really holds, which was that when all the young male artists I worked with graduate, they become art technicians. That means they work two or three days a week, sometimes in very big galleries, and they get paid a lot. That means that they can afford a studio practice immediately out of college. What tends to happen with women—also anecdotally, but I have been in this business for a while—is they go into full-time art administration jobs, which are very low-paid. This is obviously a hang-up of a bigger cultural construct, but it means that it is harder to maintain a studio practice.

Then, we look at the next stage of a woman's life because we still have issues with things like paternity leave. Obviously, at every stage of a female artist's life, she has outside structural issues that we can try and correct, even if we positively discriminate as people who give platforms to artists, but it is an impossible battle to fight on your own.

Lisa Schiff (L.S.) One thing I have noticed is that when we talk about the art market, we are basically talking about the auction market. Not always, but it seems that way in this instance. I feel like there is a really big problem with trying to understand why things like exhibitions and emerging artists don't translate into auction, which is the most

exacerbated capitalistic part of the art market, and I think it is gendered relatively male. The auction market doesn't have much empathy—not that men don't have empathy—and it doesn't really discern in terms of gender or ethnicity. It just follows greatest profit. Hopefully, one hundred years from now, as more and more women are entering the mainstream and matriarchy takes over, the auction sector will catch up.

**“ONE HUNDRED YEARS FROM NOW,
AS MORE AND MORE WOMEN ARE
ENTERING THE MAINSTREAM AND
MATRIARCHY TAKES OVER, THE
AUCTION SECTOR WILL CATCH UP.”**

A.S. We will come back to auctions quite later on because I know you have written about how we ascribe value, Lisa, and whether that is inextricably linked to price, and that sort of conundrum. You touched on it there, Vanessa. The interesting point in your research, Clare, was that the gender gap in terms of gallery representation widens as a woman becomes more established. You had the figure that when artists are represented by one gallery, 35% of them are female, whereas of the artists who are represented by nine or ten galleries, less than 10% of them are women. You also mentioned the motherhood conundrum. That's a bit of a tricky subject.

V.C. Sure, though I am not by any means saying this bullshit that people spout about when women become mothers. I am talking about when women are in a heteronormative relationship with a male partner who still does not get enough paternity leave to support her having her career.

A.S. So it's a paternity leave issue?

V.C. Absolutely.

L.S. These women who are more established in their careers are older, so there is also a generation gap. There were fewer women who had opportunities in the talent pool, so maybe that will also become less disparate.

C.M. The point Vanessa made is very important. Having a family and children doesn't stop your career as an artist in any way. To be fair, it is probably easier to be an artist than working in corporate finance or something like that. What does stop your career is being really poor. If graduates are going into different jobs before they are established because of the wider gender structure we're in, that is a huge issue.

V.C. Yes, there are very few female art technicians. I usually see more in Berlin, but in the whole of London, I know maybe one. Yet all my male artists work as art technicians at some point and they get paid three times what a woman gets paid in an administration job. It's this idea of tools and male and lifting. Of course, women can do those things. It is just another cultural construct.

A.S. In terms of being gatekeepers to the market, do you think dealers, collectors, or auction houses, to a lesser extent, have a responsibility to redress the balance? Is equal representation something you consciously think about when looking for new artists in your gallery?

“FROM THE VERY BEGINNING, I HAVE WORKED WITH PEOPLE FROM EVERY BACKGROUND AND ETHNICITY. I DIDN'T HAVE TO MAKE A CONSCIOUS EFFORT TO DO THAT.”

V.C. I have always been interested in different perspectives within my programme, so from the very beginning, I have worked with people from every background and ethnicity. I didn't have to make a conscious effort to do that. What I notice in my generation is that no one wants to hear what a straight white man has to say right now or ever again. I just came out of another gallery conference this weekend where a straight white male dealer was telling us how hard it is right now for straight white male artists. This is why I am very excited to see how Clare's research develops in terms of generations. I feel a real shift and we can see it outside of the art world. We have a responsibility, but within this particular age group, I think it has already happened. I don't think we even need to make a conscious effort.

A.S. Are we at the beginning of a long road to equality or is it here already?

V.C. It's definitely not here, but I think we all agree there is a shift. If you look at Hollywood right now, all the film releases recently, like *The Favourite*, all have very strong female leads. Women are playing roles that aren't like the traditional roles you would expect. The question is whether that has been a real shift or Hollywood trying to create some marketing to cover the shame of what they have just been through. This is a real moment. 120 of us wrote a letter bearing 10,000 signatures that was published in *The New York Times* and *The Guardian* calling for an end to some of these things. The shift is real. Of course, there is still a way to go.

In terms of positive discrimination, I agree with Lisa: I don't think the auction market cares. That's just not the conversation The market is led by money alone. Even in their own personal and social lives, I think established galleries still have to address how they see gender.

“IT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY—AS CURATORS, GALLERISTS, ART DEALERS—TO EXPOSE MORE FEMALE ARTISTS. WE HAVE TO BE CONSCIOUS ABOUT IT.”

L.S. Can I make a comment on that? I always thought, “I'm totally open and I look at artists of any ethnicity and any gender. I'm good.” I had two interesting experiences with curators. One of them went to look at a collection I had put together in Boston and I was really proud of. After seeing it, she just walks up to me and goes, “Nice collection of white men.” I was so horrified. I thought, “But they're not about gender politics!” I was mad for a while. But I came back like, “It is my responsibility to at least expose them more, right?”

The other experience was in Los Angeles. Instead of kissing their ass, that curator confronted a lot of the board members of the Museum of Contemporary Art for having the same exact auction evening sale collection. She was really political about it and I thought, “This is where we start to see change.” I loved the position that these curators were taking and I do feel like it is my responsibility to be more conscious about it. I haven't been, but I'm trying.

A.S. Would you go to an art fair and just look for women artists, or is that going a step too far?

L.S. They were doing this California minimalism thing and I just didn't even think to take a step back for a second. We bought Donald Judd, Robert Irwin and Larry Bell, and I should have said, "Let's look at Mary Corse and other stuff." It took me a little punch to do that. I was being lazy.

V.C. I would agree that any form of privilege is really a responsibility and that we have to be more conscious. I was making the point earlier that I think we are already more engaged by default within a younger generation.

**"THERE ARE STILL A LOT OF
GLOBAL ISSUES REGARDING THE
CONTROL OF WEALTH AND POWER
WHICH FILTER DOWN TO THE ART
WORLD."**

C.M. I agree. I asked by age in the surveys as well, but there is still a gender divide in terms of representation. I used an age group of 15 to 39, so it's probably even older than that. I could refine it a little bit.

V.C. I'm really thinking 25 to 35.

C.M. There was less of a gender disparity, but it was still more in the realm of 40-60 rather than 30-70. Quite a lot of statistics have been published on this for a long time; just because it came up a couple of years ago it doesn't mean this is anything new. There tends to be some bandwagon-jumping as well, which is not all helpful, but it is very important to put these benchmarks in and see if it is actually improving.

There are huge databases of statistics and if you look at the wealth data on women in politics, it is still very male-dominated. CEOs, on the business side of things, are still very unequally distributed. I personally tend to be in a bubble where it doesn't affect me whatsoever, and I would have diminished things slightly until recently, which is easy to do. There are still a lot of global issues regarding the control of wealth

and power which filter down to the art world. It is definitely improving and it won't be an issue for my children at all, but it is important to make sure that we don't just say, "Everything's fine," and we do put measures in place.

L.S. What a badass we have running the economics for the art world in Clare McAndrew!

V.C. Again, totally anecdotal, so don't hold me to it, but I wanted to posit an idea about some of the attributes that we have—or are socially constructed to have. For example, when I want to work with a female artist who already works with another gallery, because women are constructed to be more collaborative and men are constructed to be more aggressive, I find that it's always a longer conversation and a conversation with the other galleries. In terms of multiple galleries representing an artist, my experience of men is that they are more like, "Yes, let's do it. I'm my sort-of-aggressive own boss. I make my own decisions."

L.S. I am not an expert on the Chinese art market by any means, but having delved into it a little bit over the past few years, I was really shocked at the lack of any female artists whatsoever until very recently in contemporary art.

V.C. Yes, but within contemporary, some of the biggest ones are women with huge markets.

L.S. Exactly, but otherwise, it is a complete drought.

A.S. The sociological reasons that you brought up are really interesting, Clare, such as the fact that this can be looked at both from the demand and the supply side, such that when men and women produce the same thing, women are rated or priced lower. That seemed to stem from a cultural bias that exists outside of the art market and across industries. However, on the supply side, when works are deemed more feminine, they're also rated or valued lower. You can't really win as a woman. Could you talk a bit about that generally? Are we looking more at one side or the other, or is it more of a spectrum?

C.M. It's definitely a spectrum. This is what Taylor has tried to test with her giant experiments with algorithms. There's nothing where you can say, "This is female painting. That was done by a man," obviously, but I don't think it's a big jump to say that women have a very different historical and lived experience than men in a lot of cases. It seems a little bit natural to me that they would reflect on their realities as artists and might produce different things with slightly different themes or content. As we saw from the ArtFacts data, women tend to produce more in certain mediums. This comes from all the different characteristics that Taylor is putting into these giant experiments to see, first of all, if that is a fact. Then, if so, the next question is, "Why do we value some things more than others?" Do the discount and the prices go with it as well?

"AS WE SAW FROM THE ARTFACTS DATA, WOMEN TEND TO PRODUCE MORE IN CERTAIN MEDIUMS."

L.S. And yet, the highest price for female artists goes to Georgia O'Keefe.

C.M. Yes, still.

L.S. And she paints small-scale flowers. Then there's someone like Cecily Brown. When I first encountered her paintings, I thought, "Oh, she paints like a man!" I wonder if that is part of the success, these large-scale, very aggressive paintings.

C.M. That is the whole thing. Even men are told in wider industries to behave a certain way if they want to succeed. "Be more manly, be more aggressive, be more decisive." This is the big, thorny issue that I still am very uncomfortable with. The framework that we judge success in is one that we've inherited over the years. We need to take a look at it because, frankly, it's not working that well in some other industries, like in politics. Some of those traits we valued—and trends, such as how men are told to be more masculine—are not necessarily working well. The art market is probably better on that front. It's a little bit more open, but still needs work.

V.C. It's also a continuation of, "Don't take up too much space." For example, one of my painters who does very well and makes some huge, very confident paintings had a tutor at her art school say to her, "I didn't think a woman could make a painting this size." It's all interlinked.

A.S. Again, there was some interesting research done with ArtFacts data on that. In a survey of 820,000 exhibitions, 25% of women practiced photography compared with 17% of men. That is not a huge discrepancy, but there is obviously a tendency, according to this research, that women practice photography more. There are historical reasons for that, or at least examples in history.

"THERE ARE HISTORICAL REASONS FOR WOMEN CHOOSING PHOTOGRAPHY."

Think of Cindy Sherman or Barbara Kruger, for instance, taking up photography in the 1980s as a way of challenging society's notions of women and the female body. That was particularly a time when male painters dominated the market. There are historic reasons for women choosing photography, but I wonder whether those tendencies still exist or whether they were very much a product of that time as a reaction to the politics of that time.

V.C. I absolutely do not think that's the case now, but I agree with what Clare said that a lot of artists are making work about their experience. A lot of women are making work about the struggles they have with the femininity construct, so those themes may be present where they may not be in male art.

A.S. So, it affects media less than subject.

V.C. Yes, from what I can observe, with no research whatsoever.

L.S. If anything, I feel like there are more men doing ceramics now than ever before.

A.S. Getting woke. Is it your experience that women don't gravitate?

L.S. No. There was a whole set of artists who were not recognised due to their medium, like Sheila Hicks, for example, who wasn't recognised for working with textiles. Those things are now coming out into the mainstream.

V.C. What I think is interesting is women making work about their experiences with the difficulties of the femininity construct. I was seated with a group of artists and galleries the other day and we were saying, "What kind of straight white male art is make-work now?" We were joking, "Abstract painting?" What is exciting—though this is very much in its early days, from what I can observe—is that there are a couple of artists, straight white males, making work about toxic white male masculinity.

**"IT IS EXCITING TO SEE THAT
THERE ARE A COUPLE OF ARTISTS,
STRAIGHT WHITE MALES, MAKING
WORK ABOUT TOXIC WHITE MALE
MASCULINITY."**

L.S. Yes!

V.C. For that to even be conversation...

L.S. Paul McCarthy has been doing that for a long time.

V.C. Yes, that's true, there have been artists, but I feel like there are more male artists engaging on that side of the conversation now.

A.S. Let's move to auction data. The 50% pay gap between men and women is quite widely reported and well-known but remains stark and, worse, is lingering on. The auction price issue raises an interesting point you have worked with, Lisa, and that we have mentioned in this discussion, which is how we ascribe value and whether that is linked directly to prices, particularly auction prices. There is a tendency to get carried away with auction prices. I wanted to ask you what your thoughts are on this younger group of women artists that we are seeing in evening sales, Njideka Crosby or Avery Singer, for instance.

L.S. In a weird way, my article wasn't really saying anything specific. I was just commenting on what I was watching happen, which was that great artists of either female gender or of different ethnic backgrounds who had been making great work for a very long time were suddenly blowing up at auction. It was very speculative and trend-based and I thought, "I'm not mad." I get angry when there's too much speculation, when there's some really crappy artist and suddenly it's just so obvious. I think, "Why is this happening?" But these were really good artists. I thought it was really interesting and I wasn't mad. It's good that they are getting some visibility and some price hike in the auction market. Is this the way we want it to come to be, though? I don't think it was the right way, because it can be very harmful to them or to the whole system.

A.S. It does denote a certain degree of success, if we're measuring it in the terms we're used to, but is this a matter of reassessing how we define success? Is it about changing the parameters of the system rather than trying to succeed within the existing one?

L.S. Auction is so specific and, unfortunately, it's the most concrete data that we have to judge by. It's also where people look to get their information. Outside of auction, though, success for women artists right now is pretty great. Some could be way better, but at auction, it's very specific. The speculation is not happening by women or people of colour. It's happening by white male individuals who are speculating on these artists and they don't give a shit that it's a woman artist. They only care about where they think the greater fool is going to land.

A.S. The potential danger is that other people are persuaded to let go of their women artists because the market is so buoyant. It could potentially cause issues with flooding the market.

L.S. The two artists that I made examples of were Avery Singer and Njideka Crosby and I think they'll both be fine. But, we have seen it over and over again and it happens to white men artists too. Where there's a huge spike, then there's complete decimation. It's definitely ruined some people's careers, most of whom didn't come back I don't think really merited the hike in the first place. Those two will be OK, but it's both a bummer and not a bummer.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND QUESTIONS (C/Q) FROM THE AUDIENCE

Q1. Can you talk about bias and collectors? Does all this disparity stem from the bias of overwhelmingly male collectors?

C.M. I have done panels in the United Kingdom, Singapore, Hong Kong, Germany and Japan, as well as the United States panel that I did with UBS where we asked them about the gender balance in their collections. It's interesting that, in terms of, not the content of the collections, but where a lot of buying power is coming from, Asian females are spending more and buying more.

There wasn't a tendency in my data for women to necessarily buy more female artists in these panels of high net-worth individuals, but they had a lot of the buying power in terms of the volume of activity, the amount they're spending and the highest price they were paying. If you look at places like Singapore and Hong Kong, the female presence is really strong, so that was positive in the findings. They are a coming force to be reckoned with. This is a wider finding in luxury markets as well, the power of Asian female spenders.

L.S. Interesting. I work with some female collectors who focus on feminist art. I have worked with a lot of female collectors and they just don't tend to be that active at auction.

A.S. Are they politically minded? What motivates them?

L.S. One of them is getting her PhD in feminist art history at Harvard right now, so she's teaching me. I would say the other one is political, yes.

Q2. Hello, I have a very specific question. I'm an artist myself. I founded and run the Creative Professionals Club. Mostly women attend, and a lot of them really struggle. We discuss the issues and challenges of being not just an artist, but also a creator. Personally, I face very big discrimination as a sexual artist. I would like to ask you why a male sexual artist like Tim Patch is more recognisable and more interesting for buyers than female sexual artists.

L.S. Define sexual artist, please.

Q2. I masturbate, paint and make a video. It's about loving yourself, about femininity and about the sexual energy of women. For me, this act is about showing that it's cool to be a woman, but when I go to the galleries, they normally say, "It's too provocative. What you do is like porn." And it's really not. I consider Tim Patch to be porn, yet there is greater demand for him. There are a lot of us; I know other female artists who do the same, or more or less the same thing, and they are undervalued.

L.S. That's very conceptual. You've got Carolee Schneemann doing this kind of thing in the 1960s, and the collector who is going to buy that is a very specific one. I did just sell a painting by a young artist named Ella Kruglyanskaya. It's a female artist sitting in a chair with a posture that expresses exasperation and self-protection. There's an erect penis ejaculating on her and she's showing disgust. That is the most scandalous thing I have been able to sell in a long time, but it was a painting. It's the nature of the performance and man-woman concept. In that sense, it is always difficult to find a collector base.

Q2. So, it's all about the collector, that they like male artists more than female artists?

V.C. I have been uncomfortable in the past with conceptual art made by women where they use their bodies. Some male collectors find that "titillating." I would even have thought that works with female bodies that can be objectified—whether or not that was the intention—would do better at market. I can think of lots of female artists who are making work in that way but I can't think of that many male artists.

A.S. So for you, using the female body can be the basis of interesting conceptual art, but not just women masturbating.

V.C. There is some quite sexually aggressive work made by women. I never had the impression that we are more interested in male bodies expressing sexuality than female bodies because, traditionally, that's not where we're coming from, and women are possibly trying to subvert that, but that's just my impression.

Q3. Hello, I'm going to ask a question that tags onto something you said earlier, Vanessa, and ask Clare about the diversity breakdown of

women in your report. Do you also split your data into racial groups or is it just on women in general?

C.M. No. I haven't done that yet, but it would be interesting. Actually, with the Artsy database, we have coded it by nationality, but not racial group as such.

Q3. Another quick question, Vanessa. Looking at your gallery profile and the artists you represent, are you consciously thinking about how you diversify? Do you look at female-male balances? Do you just say "whatever goes" or are you very conscious when picking artists about how they fit in?

V.C. My interest in art is rooted in sociocultural perspectives, so from the beginning, the artists I work with tend to represent and be from different social classes, ethnicities and genders, because that's the conversation I'm interested in. I'm not guided by trying to diversify. It has always been quite diverse, but in a natural way.

Q4. (Tim Schneider) Hey, everyone. I have heard from some older baby boomer-generation women artists that when they get offers to be placed in exhibitions that are specifically branded in gender terms—like, "We're going to have an exhibition of all women artists"—, they take offense. In some cases they will say they don't want to participate because they see that as a negative. Do you think that attitude is changing in women of a younger generation?

V.C. My experience is that if some of my artists wanted to do a really well-put-together show that is smart, they would do it, but I agree, they don't like the idea of being reduced to that. Equally, I find that a lot of trans or queer artists get annoyed by this new trend of "queer-themed shows." It has to be done very intelligently and there are not so many curators who can address those things in a way that is complex enough.

L.S. It's an interesting question because as a woman working in a male-dominated profession—like most professions—sometimes, subconsciously, I didn't help my female counterparts because I was fighting so hard to get my space in the man's world. Artists possibly are doing the same thing: they just want to be recognised for who they are without being

separated out. I think the newer generation is helping each other more and is much more conscious of it. It might be a little bit less insulting to them to be included in a "female artists" show.

**“AS A WOMAN WORKING IN A
MALE-DOMINATED PROFESSION,
SUBCONSCIOUSLY I DIDN'T HELP
MY FEMALE COUNTERPARTS
BECAUSE I WAS FIGHTING SO
HARD TO GET MY SPACE IN THE
MAN'S WORLD.”**

Q5. Hello. I'm going to try to make my question clear because it's about counting. Clare, we know that there are more and more exhibitions dedicated to female artists. Do we know how many artists there are in total? Are they always the same ones? Is there a greater number of shows about a small number of artists? Do we now have more shows and more women artists represented in a given show?

C.M. Unfortunately, I haven't researched that. It would be interesting to see how the names circulate. Even going off of the number of artists for example, in the Artsy database, there is obviously a lower number of women's names to circulate. I would imagine it is the same, but that would be another interesting way to look at the repetition of names, if that were possible. It's fantastic that there is more and more data and it is very important, given that we have fantastic data sources like ArtFacts and Artsy, that we start marking these things as we go along to test questions like that. If the same women are getting circulated and they are just in more exhibitions, that is not necessarily a measure of success.

V.C. In some ways I find this conversation... pointless. Because if the power structure that we are all inhabiting is an imperialist, white supremacist, capitalist patriarchy, of course, the means and everything around them is going to go through that power structure.

L.S. Well said.

V.C. We are actually relatively progressive in the art world compared to

other industries. Of course the stats are going to look like this and of course we can take certain attitudes and shifts, but this is a symptom of such a larger, bigger problem.

L.S. That is so well said. A great anecdote is that just this past year, Helen Molesworth, an activist lesbian curator at MOCA, either got fired or had to step down while Mark Grotjahn, a white, male, straight artist, was offered a retrospective by the white male-dominated board, all of whom have exclusive access to his work. The situation is changing, yet these kinds of things still happen.

A.S. *Plus ça change...*

Q6. Hi and thank you for the talk. We are quoting data and so on, but as you say, I think it's somehow pointless too. We are now opening up for artists around the world and there are so many artists from countries like Palestine, Indian territories and Bangladesh, and we have never heard of these names. How they can access these structures is an even bigger question and this not only applies to female artists. This has to do with all artists.

“IN MY GALLERY REPRESENTATION DATA, THE FIGURES FOR EUROPE WERE THE WORST. WHEREAS THE MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA HAD ONE OF THE HIGHEST RATES OF FEMALE REPRESENTATION.”

V.C. It's all the same structure.

Q6. They are somehow outside of these structures and there is no way in. The female discussion is not pointless because maybe it is a good way to start.

A.S. It's the beginning.

Q6. Yes, I think it's a way to interest a wide audience to engage in discussions on this subject.

C.M. Certainly. Just in my gallery representation data, the figures for Europe were the worst.

V.C. Not surprising.

C.M. Whereas the Middle East and Africa had one of the highest rates of female representation. So the data is not necessarily like we would expect.

Q7. (Emmanuel Perrotin) Hello, here's my question: did you study the number of women gallerists in the art world, the number of women curators in museums or the number of women museum directors? Thirty years ago, there were a lot of women in all of these positions. Have you studied that to understand everyone's responsibility?

A.S. I did, in art school in 2013. I looked at the number of female dealers at Art Basel in 2003 compared with 2013 and that figure actually remained largely unchanged at around 25%. That was one snapshot I did five years ago.

L.S. Only 25%?

A.S. 25%. These were women whose names were above the door, meaning, that doesn't include the countless sales directors and women who were behind the scenes, making stuff happen behind the successful men. There was not very much movement.

Emmanuel Perrotin. If you study the number of women artists in these powerful women's galleries, you will be surprised.

A.S. In some of them, yes.

Emmanuel Perrotin. Oh yes, it's very sad, in fact, because it is very important to have women artists in powerful galleries.

V.C. Those women are also operating within the same structure, so again, I wouldn't expect anything different.

Emmanuel Perrotin. We will all change that together. Don't give us the full responsibility. We are all together, sharing that.

A.S. We're in it together.

Q8. I am not sure I understood the last question correctly. Is he saying that women support this discrimination? Something like, “You’ve been tortured as a child, so you torture when you are an adult”? Is this what he meant and is this the case?

V.C. We are all operating in the same structure and we are all fighting the same issues, but look at the women’s march, for instance—although feminism has issues with excluding ethnicities, for example. That is the job that a lot of women have been doing for a long time for other oppressed communities, and it can be improved. Feminism is a bit too white, but that is the job. That is what women do. They do all the work.

L.S. Something else that we haven’t touched upon yet is the kind of family that dominates the auction circuit and the power that they have over value at auction. They are pretty much all men, save for Eleanor Acquavella. That is a quite powerful position to sit in and a complicated and vast situation. It would be interesting to shift it to more women.

**“THE AUCTION CIRCUIT
IS PREDOMINANTLY
DOMINATED BY MEN.”**

A.S. Is this also an issue for the auction houses in terms of the number of women auctioneers? Do you think there is a sense that we need to introduce more women at that level to encourage trust or confidence in women, perhaps?

L.S. This is one of those touchy sociological questions on real, intrinsic gender issues, but I don’t know that many women would really care to spend and dedicate their lives to the pure profit end of art-making. Even meeting all of these new tech kids coming in who are working on blockchain and cryptocurrencies—where there will be fractional ownership of artworks—and have zero understanding of the art market. It’s just, “Why can’t we make money off of art?” I don’t know that many women are interested in that. That is a really hard thing to say, sorry.

Q9. Hello. This question is for the three of you. We have talked about the responsibility of collectors, auction houses and dealers. What about museums? We didn’t touch on that point, except for you, Lisa.

Are you implying that today art is defined by the art market? Or that museums just follow the art market because most collectors are on museum boards? Museums just follow what galleries decide because they all depend on private funds more and more, and are kind of held hostage by that.

L.S. That’s a can of worms for another discussion. It is super complicated and, yes, there is a lot of drive to keep the doors open, keep the profits coming in and sell experiences at museums. There are conflicts of interest all over the place with different boards, some more than others. There are some boards that have incredible integrity and would never succumb to those issues, but you have the same overarching patriarchal situation.

**“MOST CURATORS ARE VERY
INTERESTED IN DIVERSE
PERSPECTIVES, BUT IT BECOMES A
MONEY ISSUE AT THE END OF THE
DAY, AND MONEY COMES FROM
POWER.”**

A.S. Are we in danger of the market replacing fiscal apparatuses?

V.C. Yes. Museums don’t always have enough government funds, so they need to go to the galleries. Those galleries are the blue-chip. They are all of these statistics we’re talking about and they tend to have a majority of male artists. It’s a cycle. I would venture to say that most curators are very interested in diverse perspectives, but it becomes a money issue at the end of the day, and money comes from power, and power is the system we talked about, so it’s a losing game.

L.S. There are a few very brave curators I mentioned before who are really going for it, even at the risk of losing their jobs. There are people out there who are fighting the fight.

Q10. (Süreyya Wille) Hello. I would like to turn the lens away from the West a bit. If in African, Middle Eastern and Asian contemporary art there are a lot of big women artists—in fact, in African contemporary art, the top sellers are women—perhaps these emerging markets are

the trailblazers for the West to follow. In your experience, do you think this is also a problem with the Western construct? Could these younger markets hopefully show us more of a matriarchal system?

V.C. Brazil is historically one of the few places where a lot of the top names in market and exposure have been female artists for the whole 20th century. Yes, because the Western system is imperialism, which is linked to patriarchy, which in turn is linked to white supremacy.

Q11. Hi, maybe my opinion on this question will be a bit controversial, but we talk about gender and how we expect a man to give us power or expect someone else to empower us. There are so many powerful women out there, both on the stage and in this room, who are already able to go and make changes. Maybe it's time for us to think of different structures and different systems to facilitate this change and not just say, "The system is like this and we cannot go against the system. That is just the way it is."

**“IN AFRICAN CONTEMPORARY ART,
THE TOP SELLERS ARE WOMEN.
COULD YOUNGER MARKETS
HOPEFULLY SHOW US MORE OF A
MATRIARCHAL SYSTEM?”**

V.C. We go against the system every day in a thousand actions and a thousand times! I don't know how people who don't identify as male in this room feel, but I think this is a daily micro-struggle, day after day.

If you look at the last twelve months from a bigger cultural perspective, you see how powerful women's marches have been happening, and there has been lots of women's activism, the #MeToo movement, and the #NotSurprised movement. Actually, I don't think it's fair to say, "We women should stop waiting for men to do whatever." We have been doing things. And we should pat ourselves on the back and do more of it.

A.S. What is the solution?

L.S. Uprising.

A.S. How would you envisage a different approach? What's the alternative?

V.C. I went to two very interesting talks this year. One was by Chelsea Manning and the other was given by an academic feminist theorist who teaches at the University of Warwick. She's interested in this new line of black feminism. I thought what both of them said was really inspiring right now, when we all feel so defeated. Chelsea told this anecdote of a university that had a statue of a Confederate soldier. Since the 1960s, students have been campaigning to take it down and the university was like, "Our hands are tied. We can't do it." Finally, in 2018, the students were annoyed and just ripped it down. Then, it becomes a different decision to re-erect that statue. This other activist said that when Trump came to London, everyone went to hold an anti-Trump placard, but that achieves nothing. We need different avenues.

**“THE WESTERN SYSTEM IS
IMPERIALISM, WHICH IS LINKED TO
PATRIARCHY, WHICH IN TURN IS
LINKED TO WHITE SUPREMACY.”**

What both of them said, which I thought was very inspiring, was that we are in a time of micro-activism and that if you do something in your immediate surroundings, it is a much more powerful way to do activism, because those structures of protesting on the street clearly don't work. Perhaps there is a way of interacting with or utilising social media. Immediate actions in your surroundings can be the most powerful thing within your reach because you now can expose those things through social media.

L.S. These youth are much savvier about all of this.

V.C. Unless we watch that video of the boy wearing the MAGA cap and the Native American in Washington, D.C.

A.S. It was horrendous.

V.C. Horrendous.

C.M. Thinking from the kids' perspective, my feminist principles came from my parents, who were equal professionals with equal household duties, and from the music I listened to. Eve Libertine and Polly Styrene were the kind of women who inspired me, whereas now, even in the music industry, not just in the art world, kids are being subjected to things that are dangerous. I do think it's about bringing up your children to think along these very equal lines.

A.S. Do you think we are going to see equality within our working lifetimes?

V.C. I don't know if people who vote for Trump or Jair Bolsonaro are going to educate their children to tackle those issues.

C.M. I think that's what it takes. It's slow.

L.S. It is slow.

C.M. You can create equal access and equality from the demand side, which should be and is by law in most domains. Maybe there should be more of it in the art market and museums as well. But changing this bigger structure is what you keep coming back to. That is a slow-burning process that we need to do in the education system and in homes.

**“CHANGING THIS BIGGER
STRUCTURE IS WHAT YOU KEEP
COMING BACK TO. THAT IS A SLOW-
BURNING PROCESS THAT WE NEED
TO DO IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM
AND IN HOMES.”**

V.C. And in our daily lives, that's the point that I wanted to make.

L.S. I grew up in a household with a lovely chauvinist father—whom I adore regardless—and a Miss Oklahoma mom, so I've been a little slow on the uptake, but I am working on it. At almost fifty, it's shocking, like, “Oh, OK, that's not right.” I do think we're just wired to answer a certain way, or maybe some of us more than others. In time, yes, we have got

to get away from the Trump voters and use social media and work really hard to educate.

Q12. Lisa, can you explain the main idea of your article on artnet News about the prices of the women artists in twenty years' time if they are in fashion now? You said something like it is going to be worse for their careers if they are in fashion now.

L.S. It wasn't a deep argument so much as saying, “Check this out. This is happening right now.” It was about what happens when speculation lands on artists who are under-recognized, either because of their gender or their ethnicity. Recognition is actually pretty good stuff, but why isn't it happening outside of trending and when is it truly going to happen? I hope it will enter the mainstream little by little through exhibition-making, curatorial and non-profit work, and galleries.

Q13. Hello and thank you for taking my question. Frances Morris did a 50-50 gender policy in the Tate Modern. I would like to know what you think about quotas.

A.S. Positive discrimination?

L.S. Affirmative action?

A.S. Say you are going to acquire 50% women, 50% men. Is that what you mean?

Q13. She did that. She implemented that at the Tate Modern and I was just wondering what you think about these policies of starting quotas for the museums.

A.S. It's affirmative action.

L.S. It's funny, there is an underbelly to everything and there are parts of affirmative action or quotas that I don't like because I feel like it should only be about pure quality. On the other hand, it is actually a pretty good idea right now, because it is going to push the talent in that direction.

V.C. I would agree, but they would need to define quotas for everything. If we say men and women, we are already excluding an entire population that doesn't identify with either of those categories. I would be interested to know if they had a quota for ethnicity.

C.M. I think it is important to have quotas on the boards of museums and similar positions to make sure that the people making decisions are balanced in some way. Female artists shouldn't do better or be put on a pedestal just because they are female. It should be about quality. You can have a paternalistic argument about promoting women that's not quite right either, saying if they are not good enough to get there, they are not good enough as an artist. The power and the decision-making in a lot of industries have been so male-dominated that perhaps the solution is not to pick on the creative side, but on the decision-making side instead.

**“IT IS IMPORTANT TO HAVE QUOTAS
ON THE BOARDS OF MUSEUMS AND
SIMILAR POSITIONS TO MAKE SURE
THAT THE PEOPLE MAKING DECISIONS
ARE BALANCED IN SOME WAY.”**

V.C. Just statistically, considering the gender distribution of the world population, doesn't it make sense for these positions to be half-and-half in terms of gender?

C.M. Yes.

Q14. Hi, this is just a brief question. Thank you, this discussion has been really life-affirming, because since coming to Spain, I have been surprised by the lag in contrast with what is going on in London or the United Kingdom. I have a very specific question about time out of the market. Do you think that this is a factor for women? Because women have to take unpaid time out of the market for family reasons or to look after parents. Do you think that is a factor as women go up in the hierarchy of the art world?

L.S. I think so, yes. Whether as an artist or just somebody working, we don't ever want to talk about it. Having a family and raising children is really hard and it's time-consuming. It's hard for men too. They also

have to work as fathers. I know a whole handful of artists in New York who, in the past, paused when they had kids and then had to get going again, but I don't think you necessarily have to. It's a life choice. Just like in any job, you can say, "You know what, I need to focus on this. I'm going to stop," or you can keep going. I think in some more egalitarian, more liberal countries like Denmark, men take off as much time as women do.

Q14. But are there structures in place to bring women back into the market? In the financial industries, they have major issues trying to retain female executives when they take time off. I'm just wondering if there were structures in place that allow for that.

L.S. I'm not a gallerist. You would know better in that sense, Vanessa, but just observing, someone like Jacqueline Humphries is a great example. She was the Whitney programme star and was on the cover of every magazine in the 1990s. Then, she had a child. I don't know if she had more than one, but she kind of dropped out. She resurfaced stronger and better, but almost a decade later. I don't know that you need any infrastructure for that other than the fact that you need to be really motivated as an artist. Anybody can drop out of art-making. I have seen lots of male artists drop out for a variety of reasons—just creativity block and rebooting at any time is hard—but I don't know about a structure. Maybe.

V.C. I would agree with you.

L.S. You've just got to pull up your pants and get your mojo back.

Q15. This question goes back to the museum quotas. I live in Tenerife, which is very peripheral to Spain, and there was a retrospective show on Canary Island artists. There was a huge controversy because the museum is publicly funded, so it is a very different model from the United States where you get private funds and some public funds, depending on the institution. The show had to close down because there is a government quota for female representation. It was an interesting situation because the curator said, "But we couldn't find anybody in the history of Canarian local art of women who would be warranted to be included in the show."

So, on the one hand, you had this curatorial, “But there was nobody.” On the other hand, there was an institutional decision dictated by quota politics that basically said, “We can’t. You have to have some sort of representation if you are doing this.” I had conflicted feelings about them closing down the show because it’s almost a teachable moment. Could there be a conversation about why it was just assumed that there would be no female artists in the whole history of that region who could be considered important, in terms of larger structures?

V.C. Wait, the curator was a dude, right?

Q15. Of course. But it was interesting that the call was to shut it down. Again, I had conflicting feelings because I thought maybe it would have been better to keep it open and have some sort of engagement with what it is rather than just saying, “It can’t exist.” Confront it a little bit more.

L.S. One, I’m very jealous that you live in Tenerife. That’s just not fair. Two, in Hollywood—not to go off-topic, but it just sort of jolted my memory—there is a financial incentive in the movie industry to include more ethnic and different genders in film. I think you get some sort of tax break if you reach a certain quota net. I suddenly felt like we should have that tax.

V.C. The fact that it shut down probably caused more of a scandal and a conversation than if they had kept it open and had a soft conversation around it. If that is the remit of that particular institution, then they shut it down.

Q15. It was interesting because it was also expensive. It was not a small thing to make that financial decision and say, “It’s not staying open.” I’m actually an immigrant there, so there are all these nuances of seeing that. It is very peripheral and then we see that kind of action of it getting shut down and not being able to exist after years of development.

L.S. I have one more comment again. Not on topic here, but you reminded me of things and maybe they go back to the article I wrote. It is interesting and good that there is a rush by a lot of the bigger galleries and the secondary market galleries to find any undervalued female or minority artists where there are huge margins to make a

market. The incentive is not because of their great concern over the plight of this group, but that you can buy up a whole ton of it cheaply and then resell it at a much higher price. While that might sound disgusting, it has a good result in the end.

A.S. There is a good result short-term, but do you think it’s risky in the long term?

V.C. With younger artists, it becomes a pillaging.

L.S. Yes, I’m thinking more of Pat Steir and older artists who are more established.

V.C. I agree that there is a positive outcome, but the negative part is that younger galleries think, “Oh, it’s a moment.” I was talking to a colleague here about an artist who fits that description and is getting pillaged.

L.S. Yeah, it is a pillaging.

V.C. It has a good outcome, but it also creates this culture that can be really exploitative for living or younger artists.

A.S. So how can we do it in a sustainable way? What’s the solution?

L.S. Socialist anarchy.

A.S. Right behind you.

V.C. The matriarchy.

A.S. Well, on that note, the matriarchy sounds like a good place to stop. Thank you to our panellists for a really interesting conversation.

A special thanks to Katharina Cibulka #Solange2018

Simon de Pury,

a leading figure in the art market, is renowned for his deep and longstanding knowledge of the global marketplace and for his legendary performance on the auction podium. He was Chairman Europe and Chief Auctioneer Worldwide at Sotheby's, curator of the Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection, Chairman and Chief Auctioneer of Phillips de Pury & Company. In 2013, de Pury and his wife, Dr. Michaela de Pury, co-founded de Pury de Pury, a company specializing in building collections for individuals and institutions. In 2016, de Pury published *The Auctioneer: Adventures in the Art Trade*, his memoir of a life in the auction world.

Kenny Schachter

has been curating contemporary art exhibits in museums and galleries and teaching art history and economics for nearly thirty years. He has lectured internationally, been the recipient of a Rockefeller supported grant in Mexico, and contributed to books on Paul Thek, Zaha Hadid, Vito Acconci, Sigmar Polke, and Gerhard Richter. Schachter has a regular column on artnet News and writes for various international publications. In 2018, he had a retrospective of his art at Rental Gallery in New York and exhibited at Simon Lee Gallery in London. Schachter deals in international art from Impressionist and Modernism to the art and design of today.

Tim Schneider

is an art business reporter for artnet News and the writer behind The Gray Market. His work combines nearly a decade of first-hand 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, and the potential for innovation to create lasting change in the trade. These themes formed the core of his 2017 book *The Great Reframing: How Technology Will—and Won't—Change the Gallery System Forever*.

STATE OF THE ART MARKET TODAY

SPEAKERS

Simon de Pury & Kenny Schachter

MODERATOR
Tim Schneider



STATE OF THE ART MARKET TODAY

Tim Schneider (T.S.) Hi everybody, welcome back. I think everyone knows who Simon de Pury and Kenny Schachter are. Their reputations precede them, and if I started reading off their resumé's, we would only have twenty minutes left, so we can just dive right in.

Talking Galleries' focus is on galleries, and I want to keep the spotlight on gallery issues. However, the blurring of boundaries has been a dominant trend in the art market over the course of the past ten or fifteen years. For instance, most primary galleries now sell secondary market work, auction houses are doing private dealing and some people even regard biennales as selling exhibitions. These are big changes from previous decades. Since both of you have been in this game for such a long time, how do you feel about all these blurred boundaries? Is it a good thing? Is it a bad thing? Is it just the way things are?

Simon de Pury (S.d.P.) I personally think it is a good thing. All these barriers exist and it's always good when barriers are broken down, or at least blurred. In my long professional life, I have had the privilege of doing literally every permutation of what you can do in the art world, from being an artist to a curator, to a museum director, to an art gallerist, to an auctioneer. I think it's OK for the boundaries to be blurred.

I would say they have been blurred for even longer than the last ten or fifteen years, because auction houses started doing private treaty transactions earlier, for the last twenty-five years, I think. The main auction houses have developed private sales teams to complement their main auction activity because even they need private sales to be more profitable, even in what used to be a duopoly. Auction houses are in a particularly good position to do private sales because auction events give you all the information you want. You know who the potential buyers are and who is out there looking for what. At each auction, you not only know who bought the main lot, but you also know who the other people trying to get the lot are, so when an

artwork is entrusted to you for a private sale, you can proceed to sell it effectively in a very targeted way.

“AUCTION HOUSES ARE IN A PARTICULARLY GOOD POSITION TO DO PRIVATE SALES BECAUSE AUCTION EVENTS GIVE YOU ALL THE INFORMATION YOU WANT.”

Kenny Schachter (K.S.) I agree, one hundred percent. Dilettantes and people doing different things are—or used to be—celebrated in the world. I have always been of the mind that you should do any damn thing you want in any which way you like as long as you are not hurting anyone or breaking any laws. In contrast, I remember times I have been rejected from art fairs, having had a project space myself, when, a lot of the time, I would hear comments like—literally, this is quote-unquote from people like Frieze and Basel even—“Who does Kenny think he is? He makes art one day and writes about it the next, or curates shows and then deals,” as if I were committing some kind of crime.

Some of this blurring can go too far. I see some collaborations breaking down these barriers of who is an artist and who is not. There are good points and bad points to everything, as well as a bell’s curve of quality, but people should do what they want how they want it. The art world should be about freedom and the lack of rules rather than the reverse. Jerry Saltz wrote an article recently which I thought was fabulous, “How to Be an Artist: 33 rules”¹. I would reduce that to one rule and say there are no rules and that one should do and approach this field in any way they can and do so creatively and with good faith.

S.d.P. You know what’s interesting? So many people in the art market and the museum world are failed artists. I’m well-placed to know, because I am one of them. When I was a teenager, my dream was to become an artist, not an art dealer. Not having been able to turn my first dream into a reality, I am very happy to have lived out my second dream. It’s so interesting to see how many art dealers have been artists before and are quite ashamed of speaking about it. It’s something you

¹ Jerry Saltz, “How to Be an Artist: 33 rules to take you from clueless amateur to generational talent (or at least help you live life a little more creatively),” *New York Magazine*, November 26, 2018.

won’t see in their CVs, and they suddenly become very silent when the topic comes up. For instance, The Geneva Musée d’Art et d’Histoire de Genève owns some works by museum director Thomas Krens. Nobody knows that he was also an artist at one point, or that Roger Mandle, the former deputy director of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., was an artist. Jeffrey Deitch was an artist, Ernst Beyeler was an artist, Jan Krugier was an artist. You could organise one horrendous exhibition with artworks done by gallerists and art dealers.

“IT’S SO INTERESTING TO SEE HOW MANY ART DEALERS HAVE BEEN ARTISTS BEFORE.”

But there is a reason for that. When you are an artist, you learn how to use materials. I went to the Tokyo Academy of Arts (now called Tokyo University of the Arts) and learned to use Japanese brushes, the Japanese ink thing when you rub your stone and create your ink yourself and all that. It teaches your eye how to look at things. It is actually a very good thing to have been an artist yourself or at least attempted to be an artist because it helps you to sharpen your eye.

T.S. Most people who are involved in the art world got into it in some capacity because it was regarded as a very open space. This is a place where anything goes. You can write your own rules. Now we’re in this phase where the art market itself is becoming valuable enough that it’s industrialising to a certain degree. We are trapped in-between these two dimensions where there is the do-anything, anything-goes art side and, on the other hand, there is also a lot of money to be made, so we should have rules and distinct ways of doing things. The clash of those ideas is extremely interesting, and I don’t know how it resolves. Maybe it doesn’t. Is this just how it’s going to be? Are we just going to keep going down this path?

K.S. This path in terms of people assuming different roles?

T.S. Yes. And Kenny, you are obviously an interesting case because you are going to have a show in Frieze Los Angeles.

K.S. Speaking of gallerists making failed art shows, I’m about to have another one in February.

T.S. On some level, what I hear both of you saying is that things aren't really that different. Maybe people have always been dancing between roles. Is this a slightly more extreme version of that same situation?

S.d.P. One thing that has changed is that when I first wanted to be an artist, I had this very romantic notion of being an artist. It was *la vie bohème*. Whereas now, when you go visit a young artist—which is still my favourite thing to do in my professional life—you feel that, with some of them, you have to be there very much on time. *They see you*. It's like going to see a banker. They ask you questions like, "How many works should I produce per year? How much can I do without flooding the market? How can I make as much money as possible in the shortest amount of time?" and some very blunt questions that you would have expected a young guy becoming a stock broker to ask you.

**“THERE IS A LARGE CHANGE IN
THE ATTITUDE OF SOME OF THE
YOUNG ARTISTS. THAT IS PROBABLY
THE RESULT OF THE ART MARKET
HAVING BECOME WHAT IT IS
TODAY, WITH PRICES HAVING RISEN
EXPONENTIALLY.”**

The experience of visiting an artist who is completely *dans la lune*, as we say in French, who is distracted and not as organised, is far less frequent. Some artists have studied the mechanisms of the market and the marketing of art itself very carefully, and it's fascinating. That is where I feel there is a large change in the attitude of some of the young artists. One should never generalise, but that is probably the result of the art market having become what it is today, with prices having risen exponentially. It is understandable, then, that there are those types of vocations amongst young artists. When I started, people were speaking to my parents and commiserating, "How terrible to have a son who goes into art," as opposed to becoming a lawyer or going into the banking world.

T.S. That brings up an interesting subject just in terms of the scale of transactions and prices that are attaching themselves to art. I want to bring up a moment in the HBO documentary *The Price of Everything*,

which I'm sure some people in the audience have seen. Early on, Simon appears and he makes a statement that—and I'm going to quote here—"It's important for good art to be expensive, because you only care for and protect things with a high value." Kenny, you reviewed this film and you called out that particular comment by Simon.

K.S. Uh-oh. Sorry!

S.d.P. You are in very good company. I just read yesterday that the *New York Review of Books* has been even more damning than you were, Kenny, which is amazing, as well as several other people who have seen the movie.

K.S. I'm not done yet!

T.S. Kenny's response was—and again, I quote—"If that woefully misguided notion were ever to have taken hold—which it hasn't—we'd be left with nothing more than the market art of the moment. No, thanks."

K.S. What I am trying to say—with all due respect and love to my friend over here—is that it's the art that has no market that needs to be preserved. I have been closely associated with a few artists in my career who I'm thinking of. One is Vito Acconci, the conceptual artist who died a few years ago. It wasn't that there was a small market for him; there was basically no market. Another American artist who died in 1988, Paul Thek, died destitute. There was only one museum in the whole of America that had a simple drawing by him.

**“IT'S THE ART THAT HAS NO MARKET
THAT NEEDS TO BE PRESERVED.”**

I say that art and money have been in bed for a million years, but they don't spend the night in the same bed. They separate and you really have to look beyond the financial return to see and protect art. Art and artists, on some level, need to be protected. If there is no value ascribed to a body of work, it could be discarded or fall by the wayside and that fact is tragic.

S.d.P. I will attempt to defend my statement, which has been characterised as phenomenally silly. Two anecdotes illustrate why I have come to that conclusion. My very first job at Sotheby's, a hundred years ago, was at the front counter in New Bond Street, where, all day long, people come with little plastic bags filled with objects, ceramics, pieces of silver or whatever it may be for an estimate. One day, a lovely elderly couple came with a huge parcel. They took forty-five minutes to unwrap it with an incredible amount of caution, explaining to me that this was an heirloom that had been in the family forever and that they all cherished it, etc., but now the moment had come when they had decided, reluctantly, to cash in.

When it was finally unwrapped, the Sotheby's expert came and looked at it. He tried to convey as diplomatically as possible that it might be a very nice heirloom, but that there was zero commercial value in it. The minute he said there is zero commercial value, they threw the stuff back into the box with no care at all. I thought, "How is it possible that a family has cherished this for years and the minute they know that there is no financial value added to it, they no longer view it as worth protecting?" That's one example which I thought was very telling.

The other example took place in 1983. I organised an exchange exhibition between the Hermitage Museum and the Pushkin Museum and Baron Thyssen-Bornemisza's private collection. This was before it moved to Spain, when the collection was still in the Villa Favorita in Lugano, Italy. All the paintings that were shown at the Fondation Louis Vuitton last year from the Shchukin and Morozov collection, the masterworks by Picasso, Gauguin, Matisse, Van Gogh and Manet, were shown in 1983 in the private home of one of the greatest capitalists. This was at the height of the Cold War, in the days of Brezhnev, so you have to realise what this meant. To this day, it is the most successful exhibition that ever took place in Switzerland. 460,000 people saw it. On the last day of the exhibition, we threw a party to close the event. Half of the guests were ministry officials from the Soviet Ministry of Culture, and the other half were major private collectors from around the world.

A gypsy band was invited and a fantastic gypsy musician got carried away. We were having dinner in the home where all the Tahitian Gauguins were hung and I thought, "My God, as a curator, I've survived

this exhibition for five months and all these paintings remained intact despite the hundreds of thousands of visitors, and now I have to witness how the musician is going to pierce these incredible Gauguins with the bow of his violin." I was going up to him in the middle of his performance the whole time and begging, "Please, please don't go so close to the paintings!" Nothing worked. His temperament was far stronger than my comments. Finally, I thought, "Each one of these Gauguins is worth at least six million dollars." You may think this a ridiculous little price, but in those days, that was a whacking price. I went to him and said, "Please, this is worth six million dollars!" When he heard "six million dollars," even in his temperament and all of that, I saw him listening and he tempered his playing a little bit and the Tahitian Gauguins from the Hermitage and the Pushkin survived the evening.

**“FINANCIAL VALUE IS WHAT GIVES
PEOPLE THE INCENTIVE TO WANT TO
MAKE SURE THAT ANTIQUITIES DO
NOT GET DESTROYED.”**

This anecdote goes to demonstrate that economic value is very important, just like it is very important that there is an antiquities market. If there weren't, no antiquities would be preserved because every time a construction site uncovered great artefacts, why should they hold back and delay construction? Nobody would take care of them. That is why I do my profession, out of passion, out of love, out of idealism. However, I am also observant and I see that financial value is what gives people the incentive to want to make sure that antiquities do not get destroyed. Of course I love Vito Acconci. I bought my desk from Kenny Schachter, which he had commissioned from him, and at the time when he was not this towering figure yet. I love every day that I have spent at that desk.

K.S. On the other hand, there was a collector that had a Van Gogh painting that was his most cherished possession in life. An expert came in and told him it was a fake, so he chucked it into his attic and never saw it again, and it turned out to be real. These differing perceptions can vary and change retroactively.

S.d.P. That is so true, because subliminally, when you hear that the painting is worth a lot of money, suddenly the comments about the

paintings will start changing. You see that at auction sometimes when a work that was expected to bring one type of price suddenly brings ten times that price. People will suddenly hold back in terms of their criticism.

K.S. Fake art is like a fake orgasm. If you have this Van Gogh hanging in your house and you think it's real, you are the happiest camper in the world as long as you don't know that it's a fake. Once you know, you take a different philosophical position in relationship to the object. It's kind of funny.

T.S. Let's stay on the Vito Acconci thing, because I think this is interesting. Kenny, I am assuming you bring up Vito because his practices were obviously not particularly market-friendly, generally speaking, and yet his estate is now represented by Pace, if I am not mistaken.

K.S. It went to Sotheby's, believe it or not. Back to the blurring of distinctions.

**“AS OPPOSED TO AUCTION HOUSES, GALLERIES
ARE NOW BEING MORE PROGRESSIVE AND
PROACTIVE IN TERMS OF THEIR FINANCIAL
PARTICIPATION IN THE MARKET.”**

T.S. Exactly. What are we supposed to make of that, if we have an artist who you were saying, was valuable entirely separately from the market? He was doing very progressive things and really breaking down boundaries. I'm not going to say he has become a market artist now, but certainly the market has taken an interest in him all of a sudden in a way it hadn't before.

K.S. No. First of all, it was shocking when he passed away. Four days before he died, I had a phone call from Sotheby's asking for a recounting of all the pieces that I had collected over decades. He was in his sickbed and they were already making preparations for his imminent death. That was in bad taste if you ask me. Then, Sotheby's couldn't deal with the estate, since it's all but unmanageable because of various other situations. They were going to work in conjunction with Pace and then Sotheby's walked away from it.

Back to the blurring of distinctions: the auction houses are getting into representation of primary artists, estate management, career management and gallery management. Art agency partners, Sotheby's in particular, are really trying to broaden the scope of what auction houses do, as opposed to galleries, which are now taking guarantees and being more progressive and proactive in terms of their financial participation in the market.

Pace picked up representation. I have curated a Paul Thek show at Pace in the past, and I would love to get involved with Vito's body of work, but at this point, there is still little or no market. Someone who was a paradigm-shifting force of nature in the world of conceptual art, and to this day, his body of work is still being assimilated and digested. The art world likes to affirm success, so you see series upon series of artists that create three hundred of this kind of painting, four hundred of that painting, whereas Vito just flitted from one body of work to the next. He was dismissed because of that. He went from making art about his body to performative work to sculpture and installation. In the end, he was doing furniture and full-blown architecture. At that point, he was basically all but dead, marketwise.

S.d.P. But it will still happen.

K.S. I agree. The closest I got to getting divorced was the fact that I was continuing to embrace this work. My family was scratching their heads thinking that I was a bit mad and wasting time and resources because I have been such a proponent of this work for so long.

T.S. In the midst of all of this, you brought up guarantees, Kenny, and that is another very hot topic in the art market. Simon, I am sure that you know the history better than I do, but straight up guarantees have been around for many years. This is not a new idea. That said, we're getting into the zone where we not only have straight auction-house-to-consignor guarantees, but we also have third-party guarantees, irrevocable bids, and other kinds of complex arrangements. A higher and higher proportion of lots at any given auction have a guarantee attached to them. And the dollar figures are getting crazier and crazier. Is this all getting out of control? Has the financialisation of the auction market gone too far? Regardless of the answer, what kind of effect do you think this is having when it comes to the day-to-day business of galleries?

S.d.P. The market will always evolve and that is why I think a forum like Talking Galleries is particularly interesting. We need to listen to how professionals feel the market is going to change structurally because, out of all the markets, art is the most conservative one and the one that has tried hardest to protect the status quo. It has resisted change, but you can only do that up to a point and then change catches up with you.

“OUT OF ALL THE MARKETS, ART IS THE MOST CONSERVATIVE ONE AND THE ONE THAT HAS TRIED HARDEST TO PROTECT THE STATUS QUO.”

For owners of very important artworks, guarantees have been a way of minimising or eliminating the risk of putting something up for auction. It basically allows you to have your cake and eat it too. You know what you will receive in the worst case, but you still don't eliminate the best-case scenario, whereas in a private transaction, you know what you are getting, but you won't have suddenly a very pleasant surprise. You cut out the bad surprise, which means that if you go to a big evening sale, there is no longer a lot of suspense. You are just going to see whether you go beyond the third-party guarantee or not.

I conducted many auctions and evening sales at Sotheby's in New York during the 1990s, and believe me, it was very different in those days. You came to the star lots of the sale and you did know, of course, what the preliminary interest had been before the auction, but you did not know if it was going to sell. I remember going up on the podium and the then-CEO telling me, “You realise that a quarter of the year is now in your hands.” It makes you even more tense and nervous, whereas now, when you know that your star lots are all covered, it must still be an exciting thing to do, but a slightly more relaxed experience.

What I am most intrigued by is that the whole concept of ownership is potentially going to change. Now the art market is limited to a small group of the super-wealthy. We see that, economically, we are moving towards the world where 0.1% of the top 0.1% is going to become more and more wealthy. I think that blue-chip art, the ultimate trophies, are going to become more and more expensive as a result of that, and that we are going to see price levels we never thought possible. The big

problem is going to be all of the rest of it. The question is, how will that market evolve?

I'll give you this example: there is this young gentleman in Switzerland who had a website where he was selling second-hand Rolexes. They were being snapped up by his clientele. One day he was offered a very moderate quality Picasso for \$3 million. He thought, “Why not try this out with my database of Rolex buyers?” He puts it on his website and 12 hours later, he had raised \$12 million. If you had asked me to sell this work privately, it would have taken me much longer than 12 hours to sell it for \$3 million. 36,000 people all put up the money to buy this \$3 million picture. He then went to the Geneva Musée d'art et d'histoire and said, “Can you hang this Picasso?” They were delighted because they never have many visitors and suddenly, they had 36,000 people who all wanted to show off that they owned a piece of that work. He also asked, “Could you have a 24/7 camera that shows this painting?” All of these 36,000 owners can now show off on their cell phone that they own a tiny, tiny little piece of that work.

“THE WHOLE CONCEPT OF OWNERSHIP IS POTENTIALLY GOING TO CHANGE.”

The concept of ownership is completely shifting. We used to own cars; I don't own a car anymore. I had the largest vinyl collection in the world. OK, not quite, but it was substantial, and then we had CDs, and then I became the best downloader of Apple music in the world, and now I am on Spotify. I think it opens up the idea, if not completely change the market. Pace has created a new company for artists that are doing special experiences like this Japanese collective teamLab or Studio Drift. If you look, for instance, at Yayoi Kusama's *Infinity Mirror Rooms*, you have thousands and thousands of people who go and pay money and queue for hours to see it. You can really cash in on an artwork just by sending it on a worldwide tour and nobody is ever going to own it. It is a completely different model, but different ways now exist which will transform the market as we know it. That's what I find exciting.

K.S. That was a long slope from guarantees, but let's go back to auctions. The job of an auctioneer is basically to get people to sell things they don't want to sell and to buy things they don't want to buy. Guarantees, in a sense, are a way for the auction houses to free up work to continue to have fodder to sell on the market. The way capitalism started—the way people were trading, buying and selling goods amongst each other and so forth, which defined the underpinnings of capitalism—changed over the course of financial history such that financial capitalism came into being. There was money, then moving money around, then money investing in money, and you have derivatives of all of these investment vehicles. That is what has happened to art.

“WHENEVER LARGE SUMS OF MONEY ARE INVOLVED, COMMENSURATE CRIME COMES TO THE FORE. ART HAS MIRRORED THESE TYPES OF INVESTMENTS.”

Really, art is in no way any different from any other aspect of culture and humanity and economics. The art world is just mirroring that as people pay more and more attention to art and as increasingly escalating values are attached to these artefacts. Whenever large sums of money are involved, commensurate crime comes to the fore. Art has mirrored these types of investments, so the guarantees have become a kind of derivative investment. Third-party guarantees are just a new modality to participate in the art market as a financial vehicle. Whether it's good or bad and trickles down to help younger artists, it is what it is, and in my mind, it just draws more people into the fore and increases the breadth of the overall market.

I am very disbelieving that fractional ownership situations will ever catch on and be more than a novelty. I think the whole point of art is living and existing with it. I remember when I first started curating exhibitions, I found it to be very difficult to work with young and emerging artists. It is very competitive to become successful and I found it very demanding to work with young artists who are always looking past you to see what the next opportunity is and where they can step over to get to a better gallery, better clientele, better collectors and so forth. It's not like these artists are curing diseases. They are cottage industry entrepreneurs making art and they are not curing illness.

But I have done some volunteer work at the Chelsea and Westminster local hospital where I live, in London, and they have done these clinical studies that suggest that living with art actually results in shorter hospital stays and lesser issuance of medications, so artists are, in fact, helping to ameliorate some of the ills of society. Part of the joy of art is waking up and rubbing your nose against the drawing or painting or sculpture or turning on a video. I don't think anything will ever supplant that. I don't believe in art hedge funds or that type of stuff. It's bullshit, and I don't think it will ever succeed on any other level than as a talking point, but ever since art came off the wall of the cave, it has been coveted. People really gain something from that experience on a day-to-day basis in their life.

“I AM VERY DISBELIEVING THAT FRACTIONAL OWNERSHIP SITUATIONS WILL EVER CATCH ON AND BE MORE THAN A NOVELTY.”

S.d.P. Do you think you enjoy an artwork more because you own it or just by looking at it?

K.S. I don't think you can own art. Art owns you, basically. You are a custodian for the art for your lifetime. I have four kids and I am basically doing more damage from carelessness to my collection than my kids are. You're charged with the responsibility to care for it and it's as simple as that. For me, it's not so much the ownership of art, because I don't get overly attached to one thing or another. As long as I'm surrounded by these things, that's enough for me.

S.d.P. That would be an argument for sharing it as opposed to owning it.

K.S. Sharing is great, I just don't think that people are going to buy a \$150 million Modigliani and 27 billion people are going to own a thread of the canvas. I don't see it happening.

S.d.P. I see it happening.

K.S. We'll call that an impasse.

T.S. Let's save that for next year. I want to go back to this notion that you brought up, Simon, about the different experience models and Future Pace, which is the Pace entity that deals with exhibitions like teamLab. Those are experiences and people are going to them. Do you think that the people who go to those experiences value them more, like we were talking about at the beginning, where things that have a high price are what is valued? It seems to me that if you are going to a new media installation that teamLab puts up and you know that it is all digital images being broadcast around the room, that's different than an object that you can point to and say, "Oh, that Leonardo is worth \$450 million now." Do you think it's the same thing?

S.d.P. It is different. It's an evolution, but this is going to be a different way for art market professionals to operate and it is going to offer artists a wider range of possibilities for expressing themselves. They will be able to do much more ambitious projects than they could by only catering to private individuals who only want to hang their objects in their homes. This widens the possibilities of artistic expression, so it's a very good thing. We must also realise that we are moving towards a society wherein the majority of people will not have a job because of artificial intelligence. Society's whole way of living will evolve. Offering this type of experience of art will make a big difference. I loved your example about the Chelsea hospital. I hadn't heard that, in fact, art was medically improving certain patients' recovery.

K.S. Like having a dog.

S.d.P. Music has that same power. Anything that allows artistic expression to blossom will be a good thing.

T.S. That is very well-said. I do want to go back to the fractional ownership issue, though. I dealt with that a fair amount last year while I was doing all these blockchain conferences. I kept seeing the people who would start these fractional ownership ventures talk about how this was all about the experience of art, like buying 1/1600th of a Picasso was a valuable experience of art. I don't think that's really an experience of art. It's an experience of money. It's just a transaction.

K.S. They are just trying to come up with another derivative to trade, like a guarantee. It's just another blockchain. It's all hype, more of the same hashing out another way to do the same thing. I'm not convinced.

S.d.P. But anything that brings you to look at art, whatever angle it is, is legitimate, even if it is that you just want to spend \$100 on something and you want your \$100 to be well-placed, so therefore you are going to look at certain works of art. It is one of many different ways of having access to art. Whatever makes you look at art, whatever makes you take an editing decision, becomes an artistic choice. I see it so often at the top end, when some collectors who buy mostly to have a good bottom line from an investing point of view get emotionally attached to art, even the most hard-nosed, pure investors, in the end. You tell them, "Now you should sell that," and they say, "No, I don't want to sell it. I like it too much." I say, "You seem to forget that you told me that your sole motivation for this was the bottom line." I find that is a beauty about art: at some stage, the emotional involvement kicks in.

**"I FIND THAT IS A BEAUTY
ABOUT ART: AT SOME STAGE,
THE EMOTIONAL INVOLVEMENT
KICKS IN."**

K.S. I don't buy into all of this fractional ownership. It is a novelty of how to break something down and turn it into another form of financial asset. I'm disbelieving of it.

T.S. When we are talking about the financialisation of art, whether it's fractional ownership or the highest amount of interest being in the most expensive stuff, all that ends up filtering back to our hot topic: the middle-market gallery crisis. We hear about this all the time. I am curious as to whether you two gentlemen, who have been around for a long time and have seen various decades of the art market, think that this idea of middle-market crisis is justified. Do you think that people believe it to be worse than it really is or that it's newer than it is?

K.S. I have been in the art business for thirty years, and I will say, there was a recession in the 1990s where the market didn't constrict; it evaporated. It has never been easy to have a mid-level gallery. It's never been a situation where business was flowing and opportunities were rampant. It has always been an incredibly difficult, persevering type of business and it is never going to change. Think about iPhones, which have only been around since 2007, or Instagram, which has been one of the most fundamental shifts in the way people experience and

buy art. These things have been around for such a short time and the impact has cleaved into the whole system and history of art.

When you look at the MoMA architectural model for modern art, they opened in 1929 with this kind of white-wall, clinical, stark environment in which to see art. Contemporary galleries as we know them today probably only started in the 1940s with Betty Parsons having this minimal aesthetic in which to elevate the value of art in people's minds. When you are looking at a Jackson Pollock painting for a few thousand dollars and you see it in this kind of environment mimicking a museum, it ascribes a whole new level of value to it.

“IPHONES OR INSTAGRAM, WHICH HAVE BEEN AROUND FOR SUCH A SHORT TIME, ARE ONE OF THE MOST FUNDAMENTAL SHIFTS IN THE WAY PEOPLE EXPERIENCE AND BUY ART.”

In terms of all of this discussion about the plight of galleries today, it has been the same since galleries opened and it is never going to change. It's always going to be a kind of bell's curve with wildly commercial successful galleries on one end, young emerging galleries on the other and what is in-between. It has never been easy and it never will be easy.

At the same time, we have to think of new methodologies that will reflect changing times and changing technologies. A mid-level gallery representing twenty artists doing fair after fair and trying to slog away and make a living is never going to be easy. Things are going to change and there will be new models in the near future that we haven't even thought of yet that reflect new technology and other ways of doing things.

It's difficult to be an art dealer without being Gagosian or Hauser & Wirth or one of these big players, but it is always going to be difficult. Art is this strange field where, on one level, it is a raging cut-throat business where people will all but kill each other—don't leave!—and on the other level, art is like this pursuit of knowledge with an educational component. There is this weird disparity as a profession. It has this amazing side of just bringing joy touching people's lives and, at the same time, it's a business.

What drew me to art in the first place was the fact that there is this altruistic side to it. We are all sitting up here for very little resources. In the car on the way from the airport in Barcelona, I was with Georgina Adam, Melanie Gerlis, Eugenio Re Rebaudengo and Simon, and we're like war reporters in the trenches. We travel around to do these seminars for next to no money whatsoever. I write for next to nothing, but we do it for something which is beyond business and money. It's really for what you said, love, passion and these kinds of things that makes the hair stand up on my arms and makes me weep if I think about working with my children in art. It's the fabric that holds my whole family together. I think that's what makes it so enticing, that it is this kind of gambling casino filled with money and high stakes and, at the same time, you are helping a kid find a better life.

“THE PHENOMENON OF THE ART FAIRS IS MAKING IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR SOME GALLERIES.”

S.d.P. I do think the phenomenon of the art fairs is making it more difficult for some galleries. It is just so expensive to participate in all of these art fairs and if you're a gallery nowadays, you can't count on foot traffic. Your business will essentially be going from fair to fair and therefore, with the consolidation at the top end of the galleries, you will have five to eight mega-galleries. For everybody else, it is going to be more and more difficult.

K.S. I wouldn't say there's a consolidation because I think there are more galleries today in the world than ever before and things like Instagram have democratized art. When I started, in the 1980s, you had to send a sheet of twenty slides and look up towards the sun to try to see the art that someone was trying to communicate. You had to use a stamp and write an address on an envelope and that was the only way that you could communicate what you were doing from one venue to the next. Now, you just turn on your phone, and see what is happening in every disparate corner of the entire world. These things are contributing towards breaking down barriers.

You could get into a three-day seminar on art fairs. What was it, there were 50 in the year 2000 and now there are 260, more or less? They didn't just mushroom on their own. They mushroomed because there's

a demand. Our attention spans are getting progressively shorter due to the phone and all of our commitments and the speed of information and life. Art fairs are there because they serve a purpose. You can see 150 galleries in a short period of time. At the same time, they are difficult for galleries. I understand the disruption in your family, the expenses and the travelling. Galleries could do between five and fifteen art fairs a year, which is completely mad. At the same time, it helps them to make money. There is an up-side to it, otherwise they wouldn't proliferate.

“I THINK THERE ARE MORE GALLERIES TODAY IN THE WORLD THAN EVER BEFORE AND THINGS LIKE INSTAGRAM HAVE DEMOCRATISED ART.”

T.S. Kenny, do you think that art fairs have become a whipping boy in the current structure, that they are basically just getting a bad rap? One thing I always wonder about when we talk about this middle market crisis is how much of it has to do with the art market in particular and how much of it has to do with the way that culture is moving in general. You see the same thing happening in Hollywood, in popular music and in publishing; it's happening everywhere. When we see Art Basel, Frieze and these other major exhibitors saying, “We are going to solve this problem. We are going to give you a 10% break on your booth costs next year,” I'm like...

K.S. Those are *de minimus* efforts. When David Zwirner and company agree to lower a gallery's fee for a fair from \$20,000 to \$19,567, that's PR. That is not going to make one hell of a difference to anybody. They are just gestures, nothing more. What I have found is that in the past, when the market was raging, some of the fair proprietors' mentalities—like the Frieze people's—can be tremendously snobby and entitled about their approach to letting people in and out of the fair. When they are on top of their game and everyone wants to be in this particular art fair, their capricious behaviour is downright stifling.

At the same time, now that there are so many fairs, I think we are going to see the breakdown of the fair stranglehold, which is a positive thing. You've seen Frieze, for the first time, let Nicole Klagsbrun in. She was a very talented mid-size dealer in New York City who closed her

gallery for the reasons we're talking about, how hard it is for dealers to survive. Frieze isn't letting her in because they are benevolent; they're the opposite. They are breaking down the barriers just so they can continue to have clients to rent the booths as it gets more competitive because there are more fairs. I think we are going to see a humungous change in this, “You have to have been a gallery for six years or you can't even submit an application.” Those things will break down.

“AT THE SAME TIME, NOW THAT THERE ARE SO MANY FAIRS, I THINK WE ARE GOING TO SEE THE BREAKDOWN OF THE FAIR STRANGLEHOLD, WHICH IS A POSITIVE THING.”

I was just asked to participate in an alternative fair to Frieze in Los Angeles called Felix, which will be at the Roosevelt Hotel. They asked me, as someone who is an artist, a curator and a writer, to take a booth and participate. Fairs will become more adventurous because of economic necessity and not any benevolent side. They are going to be forced to reach out to a broader base of people and become more reflective of the art world in general. I sound like I'm running for office.

T.S. Your campaign speech is apparently going to be the end of our prepared remarks section. We're going to move it on to the Q&A at this point, not that anyone would have any questions about anything that we have brought up during the course of the past forty-five minutes.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND QUESTIONS (C/Q) FROM THE AUDIENCE

Q1. Hi, I have a question about the virtual reality galleries. I saw that some showrooms online have appeared as well as some galleries, in Cadiz, for example. What do you think about the future of virtual reality galleries or about virtual reality galleries even participating in fairs, for example? Maybe they wouldn't bring all of their art there, but just one set of glasses to show to the public. The future is here, so I would love to know your opinion about that. Thank you.

S.d.P. I think it could be very interesting. There was an art fair that was meant to be online only. That was five years or six years ago.

T.S. It was called VIP.

S.d.P. Sadly, it was a total failure because it collapsed when everybody was trying to get online. People lost trust in it and preferred to go to physical exhibitions. Of course, yes, if there is a way that I can see lots of exhibitions from places I cannot travel to, I would be delighted to do so. For the moment, I use Instagram like that. I used to read art magazines. Now, I just look at Instagram to see what's on at different exhibitions or art fairs around the world. I have bought several things having first seen them on Instagram. These tools will definitely help.

“I JUST LOOK AT INSTAGRAM TO SEE WHAT'S ON AT DIFFERENT EXHIBITIONS OR ART FAIRS AROUND THE WORLD. I HAVE BOUGHT SEVERAL THINGS HAVING FIRST SEEN THEM ON INSTAGRAM.”

K.S. I agree. I have seen humungous changes over the past thirty years, and one of them is the fairs. Another one is how art is morphing into this luxury design hybrid. The Fertitta brothers, these Americans who made billions in cage fighting, have opened up a billion-dollar hotel in Las Vegas and they have commissioned artists like Damien Hirst to create a pastiche of things they've done before, which then occupies this weird space between fine art, design and luxury lifestyle. Besides the expansion of the market into Asia, again, I think the phone and Instagram have been here for such a short period of time but have radically changed the way that we think about and experience art. It has transformed our lives.

T.S. Simon brought up the VIP art fair, which was a totally online art fair that happened either in 2010 and 2011 or 2011 and 2012. The technology just wasn't there at that point. It literally didn't work. I wrote a piece last year about some things that Gagosian and David Zwirner are doing in their online stores, and they are now doing all of the things that VIP tried to do six or seven years ago. Even in that span of time, things have changed enough that what used to be a fantastical idea is suddenly something that people have to at least think about. I would say that bodes well for the future, or at least means that things will be interesting.

Q2. I'm wondering, since you mentioned Instagram was so useful, what is the point in even attending these art fairs or participating in them? Do you think there might be a reversion back to the exclusivity of a gallery in a stand-alone location and having people come?

S.d.P. The fabulous thing about art is that, of course, you can see it in a beautifully-produced catalogue or on a beautiful iPad, but nothing ever replaces the physical experience of seeing art first-hand. Even if you are a professional and you have spent your whole life in the art market, when you read about a work and its dimensions, you can still be greatly surprised when you see the actual work itself. I see this season after season when I get all the auction catalogues. I make my notes, then I go and see the exhibition. So often, I experience things completely differently from what I had expected, despite the glossy catalogue illustration or the amazing close-up I had on the iPhone or iPad.

“ART IS A SLOW-BURNING PROCESS. IT'S A LIFE-LONG PROCESS OF ACCRUING INFORMATION AND EXPERIENCES. TO BUY SOMETHING IMPULSIVELY IS RIDICULOUS. I DON'T CARE IF IT'S \$100 OR \$1 MILLION.”

K.S. I agree. I bought a garbage can from Amazon and, when it came, it was about the size of a thimble, because I didn't pay much attention to the size. Nothing will ever replace the real thing, forget it. Nothing could ever substitute standing in front of a work of art, ever.

T.S. That is one thing we are starting to see. We were talking about the attention economy and how that is affecting our experience of art, whether it's on Instagram or the way that we look at or don't look at art in physical locations. Ben Davis at artnet has written about this idea of a slow art movement. The slow food movement has cropped up over the past several years. People have felt like they are in too much of a rush and that we need to take time to enjoy things and process them in a way that we haven't been doing. That strikes me as having potential.

K.S. That is a great point because, like you say, art is a slow-burning

process. It's a life-long process of accruing information and experiences. There were times when the market was white-hot in 2007 and people were dressing up in prosthetics to break into art fairs early so they could jump and buy something before anybody else. That's absurd, because when you stand in front of a piece of art, the process is just beginning. To buy something impulsively is ridiculous. I don't care if it's \$100 or \$1 million. You need to learn to live with something or spend time and study it and think about it and see more.

**“SO MUCH HAS CHANGED. CRITICS
HAVE LOST THEIR TEETH. MUSEUMS
AND PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS BASICALLY
HAVE NO MONEY.”**

Q3. Hi. Thanks very much for sharing all your thoughts. It feels like museums used to be the space where you would see most exhibitions and who decided what counts as art history, for example. A lot of galleries now seem to do museum-type shows and museum boards push for certain works to be shown. Do you feel that the role of the museum has been diminished? Has it succumbed to the market and art history along with it?

K.S. That's a wonderful question, because so much has changed. Critics have lost their teeth. Museums and public institutions basically have no money. I was speaking to the Metropolitan Museum about an exhibition and they had no money to paint the walls from one show to the next.

There are some instances where private museums fulfil an extraordinary role in society and culture, but then there are other situations. For example, does Los Angeles need a private museum? Or New York, where they have these phenomenal museums that have been around for decades building up a constituency over time? Then you have someone who's been collecting for five years and splashes out on a big building. It's curatorship without scholarship. I think the proliferation of private museums has come at the direct expense of proper museums. Like critics, galleries today have the power of permitting people access to the artists they want. That's their power. Collectors and investors have usurped the traditional role of museums and critics are losing their power.

S.d.P. The true way to immortality is through art and culture. Only achievements in the cultural arena give you some kind of immortality or longevity. In the old days, a collector's dream would be for his artworks, his collection, to end up in an important, prestigious museum. Now, the big collectors' dream is to have their own museum.

**“NOW, THE BIG COLLECTORS' DREAM
IS TO HAVE THEIR OWN MUSEUM. THE
QUESTION IS, FAST-FORWARD, HOW
MANY OF THESE EGO PROJECTS CAN
THE WORLD TAKE?”**

K.S. Collectors dream of bigger tax breaks.

S.d.P. Collectors consider themselves artists. A good collector is like an artist because a good collection carries the handwriting of the person who put it together. The only way to present one in an undiluted way is to present it in your own museum, so this is also an attempt at immortality by collectors. The question is, fast-forward, how many of these ego projects can the world take? In the long term, how is this going to play out?

T.S. I would like to expand on what Kenny mentioned, the fact that museums have no money. Your question comes up a lot and I feel like it gets siloed and treated like, “Why aren't curators making these decisions?” or, “Are galleries too influential in terms of what they can convince museum to put on?” I'd like to take a step back from that.

Over the past thirty or forty years, public funding has declined and private funding has increased. So much of what's happening in museums is a consequence of the fact that we as societies are not funding public institutions in ways that we used to. As a result, places like museums have to survive in any way they can. It's not just a matter of, “Are galleries getting so expensive that now they can convince museums to have shows?” Our tax policy means that we are no longer giving money to museums, or in some cases, health care, at least in the United States, where I am from. There is a much bigger structural conversation that affects this issue, but I don't think we're going to solve that one at Talking Galleries.

Q4. Thank you for the opportunity to ask this question. Recently, I've been speaking to private museum owners and one thing that has struck me after those conversations was that public museums tend to conserve artefacts and existing artworks, whereas these private collectors invested in a living artist. They commissioned an artist for a new artwork. Do you think that what we want from museums is shifting? Maybe private collectors function more like an investment in a start-up, whereas public collections conserve things that already exist. Do you agree?

S.d.P. If you collect art and can afford to collect it at a high level, one of the most exciting things you can do is commission works from artists and give them the means to create at a scale or of an ambition they would otherwise not be able to do for the domestic art market. This is what the great art patrons have always done and I think commissioning things directly from artists is the ultimate thing you can do in that situation.

K.S. They can also commission things and give them to museums rather than their own collections, if you ask me. It makes a lot of sense in places like China or jurisdictions where there are not a lot of public institutions showcasing international work. I don't make a wholesale indictment of private museums. I think they fulfil an extraordinary role, besides the fact that museums can work on a five-year-plus scheduling programme. Private museums have an agility and flexibility that other institutions don't have. They have more money, but I just think it makes more sense for some of these collectors in big-city jurisdictions like Los Angeles, New York and Rome to better serve the aim of people by supporting existing institutions.

T.S. It's tricky. I lived in Los Angeles for thirteen years. The Broad, a major private museum, was started during that time period and it quickly became, at least by their press releases, the best-attended museum in the city.

K.S. For sure, it's a zero-sum game where they are sucking the audience out of the main museums.

T.S. Part of the reason, though, is that they offered free admission and no other museum in the city was doing that until the Hammer a few

years ago. Of course, if people are going to go to an art museum and they are not really art people but they want to have that experience yet they feel excluded from it, they're going to go where they don't have to pay.

K.S. They'll go to the place where there's a Kusama *Infinity Mirror Room*.

S.d.P. That's fascinating. The incredible thing about the Broad—which I personally love because it is a fabulous collection—is that you just need to cross the street to walk into the Museum of Contemporary Art. While you have endless queues around the Broad, you go into the MOCA and you are by yourself. It is completely empty. It is incredible that only a tiny percentage of the people who queue for hours to get into the Broad will bother to cross the road where they can see outstanding art.

T.S. The difference is that they're paying \$17 to get inside of MOCA and they don't have to pay anything to get inside of the Broad.

K.S. You find some of these collections in Los Angeles, like the Marciano collection, where a lot of it seems to be like box-ticking, like, "I want this artist." They're all night sales. Some of these collections look like an auction catalogue. I find that some of them lack depth. They are vanity types of things in some cases.

Q5. Hi. My question is for Simon first. I was just wondering, and this is purely conjecture, of course: Christie's is privately owned and doesn't need to divulge as much; Sotheby's is a publicly-traded, acquired Art Agency, very controversial. How do you see it panning out? Which model works or fails for an auction house?

S.d.P. You mean to be private or public? It is probably easier to be private, because as soon as you're public, you are under a degree of scrutiny that you would not have if you were privately owned.

Q5. What gives you the most flexibility to branch out as a business?

S.d.P. It is perfectly legitimate that auction houses try and do many different activities. Saying no is like telling a big bank, "You are only allowed to do this kind of banking and not any of all of these other

types of banking.” I think it’s perfectly OK for a big art company—like the big auction houses are—to provide a different range of services.

In a way, I am always very surprised that while the main auction houses do all of these services, the main galleries aren’t doing auctions. Why don’t galleries do all of the other things? Nobody prevents them from doing them and that is what I find surprising, because the top five or top six galleries could do all of the above and just as well.

C1. All galleries connected to an auction house were rejected from art fairs. That is part of the role of an art fair.

S.d.P. That’s the old mindset.

“I AM ALWAYS VERY SURPRISED THAT WHILE THE MAIN AUCTION HOUSES DO ALL OF THESE SERVICES, THE MAIN GALLERIES AREN’T DOING AUCTIONS. WHY DON’T GALLERIES DO ALL OF THE OTHER THINGS?”

C1. Yes, maybe it’s old, but that was the reason until now. You are right, maybe it will change. It was not a choice.

K.S. I think Christie’s is also on their way to going public anyway. That’s why they have been buying market share and suffering losses in some of their biggest sales, so they can build their books in the public perception, to go public like Sotheby’s.

S.d.P. I think there is lots of hypocrisy surrounding auctions and art galleries. When I was still at Sotheby’s, Kunsthalle Basel asked me to conduct an auction during Art Basel. When this auction was announced, all the galleries reacted strongly in a huge protest. It was a very strong reaction, so much so that the Kunsthalle backed down and said, “OK, we will not sell the artworks that we have obtained for this auction during Art Basel. We will sell them in October. Nevertheless, please do come, and we will do an evening with a lot of artists where we will only sell hot air. Each artist will create a certificate for every bit of hot air sold.”

It was an amazing evening. It was very hot that June night and I sold a lot of hot air. Then all of these artists made the certificates for each purchaser. And then, in October, they asked me back to sell the artworks that had been donated to the Kunsthalle in Basel. Let me tell you that the hot air auction made six times the price of the auction when only the local Basel population was there in October. Obviously, when you have a big event like a big art fair, it’s good for everybody. Same thing if you have a big auction week: it is good for everybody because everybody flies in for the auction and they do the round of local galleries, and vice-versa with big art fairs, they go and look at what is at the auction houses.

We are all dancing around the same honey pot, all of us. These barriers of saying, “Oh, we are part of the institutional world, or we are part of the commercial world, or no, we are part of the auction world or part of the gallery world,”—this is all hypocrisy. Everybody is behind the scenes working in exactly these areas.

Q6. Hello, this is about Tim’s comment, when you said that we as a society are not funding museums anymore, or not like we used to. Well, directly, yes, but, indirectly, no, because of all the tax breaks we give to collectors and whoever is funding art. This money doesn’t come from tax revenue, so it’s not that we are not funding it as a society.

This is my question: are we now giving more power to private interests in the museums compared to before? There was a big state budget, maybe more so in Europe than in the United States. Professionals had more say on exhibitions than they have today because now there is a more direct link between who provides funds and who is in power in museums. Maybe the roles of curators, art historians and all those professionals are becoming secondary. This is both a provocation and a question.

T.S. Granted, all of my answers are an American viewpoint on things. I know much better how things run there as opposed to in Europe, but I don’t think that there is any question that private interests are increasing much more than public interests in any vector of society at this point, and that is naturally going to have an effect on the arts because so much of what the arts have been throughout time is an investment in indirect, intangible benefits.

Unless you're talking about the art market, you can't say you invest in a Leonardo and sell it for \$450 million. Culture is supposed to enrich our lives in ways that can't necessarily be measured. In the economy and culture that we have built in the 21st century, there is an extreme focus on direct outcomes. If you can't prove that something directly benefits a person or a culture, it gets harder and harder to say we should spend money on that. People want to be able to point to numbers. They want to be able to point to direct returns and that's not what art is about. It's never been what art has been about, and it's never going to be what art is about. Naturally, we are at a disadvantage in this economy with this kind of thinking, and that means we in the art world have to be even more creative. We have to think about things in ways that other people aren't thinking about, and I guess that is why we have events like this, to try to figure out how the hell we do that.

That's it, thank you everyone.



JiaJia Fei

is a digital strategist with over a decade of experience working at the intersection of digital marketing, branding, web, mobile, and social media content strategy for art and culture—making museums and cultural organisations more accessible through technology. Fei was an Associate Director, Digital Marketing at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, bringing modern and contemporary art to a global online audience through award-winning digital initiatives. She currently serves as the Director of Digital at the Jewish Museum in New York City. Fei has lectured on the impact of art and technology worldwide.

**SOCIAL MEDIA:
THE NEXT 4 BILLION**

SPEAKER
JiaJia Fei



SOCIAL MEDIA: THE NEXT 4 BILLION

JiaJia Fei (J.F.) Hi, everyone. First of all, I want to thank Lluçia Homs and the whole Talking Galleries team for bringing me to Barcelona and for inviting me to be here today. My name is JiaJia Fei. I'm a digital strategist and the Director of Digital at the Jewish Museum in New York, and today I'm going to talk to you about social media.

“I SEE MY ROLE AS A TRANSLATOR. (...) AND WHY DO WE NEED TRANSLATION IN THE ART WORLD? BECAUSE THE LANGUAGE WE TEND TO USE CAN BE VERY INACCESSIBLE.”

I've been working for museums for the last decade, specifically in the realm of digital. My job addresses the question of how technology can be used to solve problems as a design solution, so that the institutions can help make art more accessible and reach more people. To most people, some initial thoughts that come to mind when I say my title is Director of Digital, are things like: augmented and virtual reality, cryptocurrency or artificial intelligence. To clarify, my job is not in the business of creating shiny products or implementing technology for the sake of technology. Rather, I see my role as a translator; an interpreter, storyteller and problem-solver. In short, I use the tools of our time—technology—to further a museum's mission.

And why do we need translation in the art world? Because the language we tend to use can be very inaccessible—I'm sorry, but all of our press releases and wall texts make no sense. When speaking about technology, we use language that can be just as alienating. As museum technologists, we must be fluent in both art and technology.

The concept of technology in museums is a paradox: technology is new, but museums are not. Museums are not technology companies either. We are not start-ups. Whereas innovation and technology are constantly moving forward and looking towards the future, the mission of museums is to preserve objects and better understand the past. Yet, for the first time in the history of art, a work of art is seen online first before it is experienced in person.

As a millennial, I grew up on the Internet. My first experience on the web was circa 1996 in an AOL chat room powered by a dial-up modem. That experience was known as Web 1.0 or the World Wide Web, which refers to an Internet that was completely not connected in terms of interactivity. There was lots of information, but it was painfully slow.

“BETWEEN THE YEARS 2000 AND 2015, THE NUMBER OF INTERNET USERS WENT FROM 700 MILLION TO 3 BILLION.”

Then there was Web 2.0, the social web. Facebook launched in my first year of college and, as you may or may not recall, it began as a social network just for college students, which later expanded into high school students and then into the rest of the world. On Web 2.0, everyone could self-publish a blog and therefore self-identify as a blogger. That’s how everyone became a curator. It’s estimated that between the years 2000 and 2015, the number of Internet users went from 700 million to 3 billion, producing an unprecedented amount of data. In fact, nearly 90% of the world’s data was created in the last few years.

The Internet also opened up unprecedented possibilities for connection and democratisation. It sparked moments of optimism where social media could have massed the power to bring down governments, such as in the Arab Spring in 2010. But this new phenomenon soon turned dark. In 2013, Edward Snowden informed the world that our governments had been spying on us using all the data collected on these platforms, and yet, all of its users—all of us—continue to sacrifice security for convenience and give away all of our data to platforms like Twitter and Facebook, which later acquired Instagram, WhatsApp and Oculus Rift. This data was used to target and control public opinion in

a perfectly choreographed strategy to influence the US presidential election of 2016, and it’s something we’re still dealing with. So, what began as a gesture of optimism to connect the world, ended where we are today—inside the heart of darkness.

The Rise and Fall of Social Media

1996	World Wide Web
2004	Facebook launches
2006	Twitter launches
2010	Instagram launches
2010	Arab Spring
2012	Facebook buys Instagram
2013	Edward Snowden NSA Leak
2014	Facebook buys WhatsApp
2014	Facebook buys Oculus
2018	Facebook combats fake news

We are now entering a new paradigm shift called Web 3. This leads us to the cusp of what’s happening recently: a decentralised web. Web 3 is a direct response to Web 2.0: a more human-centred, privacy-enabled Internet that seeks to counter the power structures like Facebook that have stolen our data. The antithesis of these massive corporations produces virtual private networks and decentralised platforms like the blockchain.

World Population

1	Facebook	2.2 billion
2	YouTube	1.8 billion
3	WhatsApp	1.5 billion
4	China	1.4 billion
5	India	1.3 billion
6	WeChat	1 billion
7	Instagram	1 billion
8	LinkedIn	500 million
9	Twitter	336 million
10	United States	325 million

Today, there are more individual Facebook users than citizens of China and India. But what about the next four billion people? Where is the next great digital battleground?

Some defining moments from 2018 have already defined our trajectory: the staggering breach of private user data that Facebook shared with its advertisers, on top of serving as a platform for foreign entities to influence public opinion during elections; the fall of brick-and-mortar businesses to the convenience of e-commerce; and straight from an episode of *Black Mirror*, the Chinese government leveraging facial recognition software and artificial intelligence within its rule of law so that jaywalkers can be instantly ticketed for crossing the street.

**“TODAY, THERE ARE MORE INDIVIDUAL
FACEBOOK USERS THAN CITIZENS OF
CHINA AND INDIA.”**

When I think about how technology has impacted human behaviour, I return to this quote from Ev Williams, the co-founder of Twitter. He said, “We often think the Internet enables you to do new things. But people just want to do the same things they’ve already done. Take a human desire, preferably one that’s been around for a really long time. Identify that desire and use modern technology to take out the steps.” When you apply this logic to most major corporations on the web, it checks out. If you want to go shopping, you go on Amazon. If you want to order a car, you fire up your Uber app (except in Barcelona during the Uber strikes).

“We often think the internet enables you to do new things. But people just want to do the same things they’ve always done. Take a human desire, preferably one that has been around for a really long time... identify that desire and use modern technology to take out steps.”

- Ev Williams, CEO of Twitter

Within the creative realm, industries such as publishing, cinema and music have found ways to cut out the steps and create a singular product—whether it’s Netflix, iTunes or Spotify—to meet a singular human desire, except for art. What is it about the art world that prevents this?

Go shopping...	Amazon
Order a car...	Uber
Order food...	Seamless
Call a friend...	Skype
Go on a date...	Tinder
Read a book...	Kindle
Watch a movie...	Netflix
Listen to music...	Spotify
Looking at art...	

Perhaps one of the answers is that art is just too nuanced and complex, and simply can’t be exactly replicated and translated. To this day, no single technology solution can reproduce the experience of standing inside a four-channel video installation or the gesture of closely looking at a painting to see a the touch of an artist’s hand. Maybe by complete accident, unintentionally, it’s been to our advantage that this hasn’t happened yet.

What’s happened to all of these industries that have automated into a singular solution? Netflix took down Blockbuster and movie theatres. Amazon and e-readers have closed bookstores.

Yet art museums, art fairs and art galleries have seen their attendance reach a record high thanks to their own resistance to technology.

In 2018, the Louvre broke attendance records thanks to the popularity of Beyoncé and Jay-Z’s music video *APESH*T*, which motivated fans to visit the museum and see these works of art for themselves. In the year 2000 there were 55 art fairs around the world; now there are more than 260 an average of five per week. People continue to visit and see art in person, if they have already seen that work of art on

Instagram. The phenomenon goes further: it's even extended to fake "museums" created just for social media: the Museum of Ice Cream, The Museum of Pizza, The Color Factory, and they've become the "greatest monument to brand hellscapes of 2018." When people see a work of art on Instagram, they want to go there and have that experience. The Internet will never, ever replace the in-person experience. I am often asked, "Will putting images of artwork online keep visitors from coming to the museum?" The answer is, "No." That will never be the case. And it's because we live in an experience economy. The greater the online impression of an object, the greater the value of that object in real life.

**"WHEN PEOPLE SEE A WORK OF ART
ON INSTAGRAM, THEY WANT TO GO
THERE AND HAVE THAT EXPERIENCE.
THE INTERNET WILL NEVER,
EVER REPLACE THE IN-PERSON
EXPERIENCE."**

Here are ten technology trends for 2019 and what they mean for the art world:

1. Data is now the oil of the 21st century. It needs to be mined and it's in the control of a very limited amount of entities in the world. At the same time, its value is vastly underestimated and easily hacked. Last year, Marriott experienced one of the biggest data breaches in history: 300 million guest accounts—basically everyone who's ever stayed at a Marriott hotel—were released. It's only a matter of time until something like this massive data breach takes place in the art world. How do we prevent future hacks from happening? Hire nerds to take out other nerds. Who are the next CTOs and CDOs of the art world? You may have heard the term CTO, the Chief Technology Officer—but how many have Chief Data Officers? In response to this sea change of technology, staffing structures must be as responsive.

2. Video killed the social media post. For anyone who manages Facebook business pages, you might as well stop publishing unless you pay to play. Organic posts on Facebook currently reach less than 2% of your total following, which means you have to buy ads and give Facebook your data. For your content to be seen, everything needs to

be sponsored. If you don't have a budget, just redistribute that full page in *Artforum* seen by ten people. The most successful ads on Facebook are videos. Online users now watch more video on Facebook than on YouTube. With 5G, the new data network, downloading a movie which used to take up to 6 minutes on your phone with 4G, will now take 17 seconds.

3. Swipe is the new scroll. As more and more online engagement becomes mobile, our interfaces will change accordingly. With mobile, swiping is the more natural gesture when it comes to user experience, whereas scrolling was designed for your computer, for desktop. This doesn't only apply to Tinder. Just recently, Instagram released a new horizontal scrolling interface, which later got removed.



4. The rise of the super-app. Out of the 1.4 billion people who live in China, 1 billion are on WeChat. It's not just a social networking app; it's a super-app that does practically everything. It's the app that every other app wants to be—and that your western phone does not do. You can talk to your friends, order food, order a car, book a doctor's appointment... all on one single platform. All other apps have WeChat envy. It's the app that reflects the situation China is in right now. In capitalist regions, we allow multiple businesses to compete with each other, so that when I want to order a car, there are multiple apps that I can select from. In China, there's only one. And, with a data sample as significant as 1 billion people, the ability to iterate and constantly bring up new software is unprecedented. So, of course, there's no substitute for WeChat.



5. Decline of Native Art Apps. Now let's talk about useless apps. In 2010, Apple coined the term "there's an app for that," because there was an app for literally every single thing, including every art museum and major gallery. If you launched an app for your gallery, I'm sorry to tell you, but nobody's using it. What happened to all of those apps?

The average person downloads 119 apps on their device, but less than 25% of them are used during any given month. Most apps lose 77% of their userbase within three days of download and our top five apps take up 80% of our time.

6. A Cashless Society. We're also becoming an increasingly cashless society. In America, and here in Europe as well, we have multiple ways of digitising our payments through companies like PayPal, Apple Pay or Venmo, but if you examine a technologically advanced society, like China, cash is becoming completely obsolete. The trend is so drastic that, when I visit China these days, it's becoming increasingly impossible to do anything without an app like WeChat or mobile payments. In fact, homeless people are begging for money on the street with QR codes. For artists, decentralised currencies based on blockchain offer incredible opportunities to do things like creating a sense of transparency, authentication and provenance. But it's just the beginning. In 2015, the MAK (Museum of Applied Arts) in Vienna became the first art institution to purchase a work of digital using bitcoin. The work in question was Dutch artist Harm van den Dorpel's *Event Listeners* (2015), a limited-edition screensaver that was

authenticated through blockchain, which is the same technology that bitcoin uses to determine artwork attribution.

7. AI will displace 40% of the world's jobs in 15 years. Jeff Koons recently laid off a large number of his staff, largely because of automation and jobs being delegated to machines. As far as artists, the Obvious collective, from France, were the first to sell a work of art created with artificial intelligence at Christie's. The painting, titled *Portrait of Edmond Belamy* and produced by an algorithm, sold for over \$400,000.

"MOST APPS LOSE 77% OF THEIR USERBASE WITHIN THREE DAYS OF DOWNLOAD AND OUR TOP FIVE APPS TAKE UP 80% OF OUR TIME."

8. Platforms for Accountability. The transparent nature of social media has also given a voice to people who were once afraid to speak. The #MeToo movement has also impacted the art world, amplified through sub-movements such as the hashtag known as #NotSurprised, which used an image of Jenny Holzer's installation *Abuse of Power Comes As No Surprise*. The Instagram feed *Scene and heard*, is what I consider to be one of the bravest and most successful use cases of social media calling attention to the abuse of power and sexual harassment—in the Indian art world, especially—which is long overdue. Users send in anonymous comments, and the feed continues to be updated to this day.

9. Watch out Influencers, for "Microinfluencers." I can't talk about viral media without talking about influencers. They are social media users with a large following, especially on Instagram, and they are paid to endorse a product. To reach a younger millennial audience, most advertisers and brands have decided it's actually more cost-effective to pay someone with hundreds of thousands of followers to endorse their product than to buy an ad through traditional advertising. But the latest trend is what's called "microinfluencers" or "nanoinfluencers." They are born out of the realisation that perhaps some of these people with a significant number of followers are too difficult to work with and too expensive, so users with just a couple thousand followers are now being contacted to push product on their platforms. My favourite

influencer story of the past years is about the computer-generated influencer named Lil Miquela, who's accumulated over 1 million followers despite having been created by CGI and not being a real person.

10. The Running Joke of Social Media as Performance. The final trend I'd like to mention is also very personal. It's the running joke of social media as performance of identity. To me, it represents the peak of our complicity with misinformation in the digital age. We're all in on the joke. We all know that social media represents this very curated, selective representation of reality, yet we're perpetually fooled and we keep fuelling the fire. The artist Amalia Ulman did it first in 2014. For several months, she put on a performance on Instagram called *Excellences and Perfections*, where she performed the identity of an influencer posting pictures of herself and a curated life, a foreshadowing of the moment we're living in now. Although everything you see on Instagram looks fake, you continue to engage as if it were reality. And by creating this consistent theme, this model is easily replicated and consumable, and these identities can be built very easily.

“THE ART WORLD IS ALSO ONE OF THE ONLY INDUSTRIES IN WHICH FOR-PROFIT LAGS BEHIND NON-PROFIT WHEN IT COMES TO TECHNOLOGY.”

Case in point: Anna Delvey, the socialite who infamously scammed many well-known people in the art world hundreds of thousands of dollars pretending to be a German heiress. She was ultimately arrested and sent to jail, but lived out her performance of luxury through being an insider on Instagram and in real life. I decided to try this out myself. For the first time in eight years, I decided not to go to Art Basel Miami Beach in 2018, but continued to post content from previous years. You wouldn't believe how many people emailed me, “Oh, I saw that you're in Miami.”

So where do we go from here? We are living in an age of unprecedented access to art because of the Internet and technology, yet the art world has lagged so far behind in comparison to other creative industries. We still have a chance to recoup on mistakes that the world at-large has made. If you think about it, the art world remains one of the only industries in which for-profit lags behind non-profit when it comes to

technology. As a practice, art is inherently a chance to slow down, to meditate, evaluate and re-evaluate. As access to technology expands to the rest of the world, we can learn from its successes and missteps and be very strategic about our next step. The only thing that I do know for certain about the future is that the only constant is change. Thank you for listening.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND QUESTIONS (C/Q) FROM THE AUDIENCE

Q1. Thank you very much for your talk and for being here with us today. I was just wondering, how do these data and privacy issues affect a museum? Do you think a museum that doesn't use any social platform is not adequately...

J.F. Today, if a museum isn't on social media, it doesn't exist. The question of data exists in two different realms. On the one hand, social media is kind of the exterior presentation of one's brand online, and though we do collect data from things like that, there are privacy laws in place—more and more so every day—that prevent the museum, entity or business in question from using that data. So, as a user, you're signing up for access to “free” use of the platform and agree to their terms and conditions, then platforms like Facebook will take your data and sell it back to you, in some way, as an ad.

“TODAY, IF A MUSEUM ISN'T ON SOCIAL MEDIA, IT DOESN'T EXIST.”

The other realm of data that's more important to institutions is the fact that you need a system to control it. Just to revisit Emmanuel Perrotin's presentation from earlier today, does anyone know what that system is called? It's called CRM, which stands for “Customer Relationship Management,” and it's a database. It's basically a system that collects all of your spreadsheets—which contain data from your businesses, your constituents, your customers and so on—and brings it all together in an integrated way, so that you're not connecting multiple spreadsheets. That dimension of data is something that institutions, and in fact all businesses, need to continue to leverage. Of course, there are also off-

the-shelf solutions that you can all take advantage of. It doesn't have to be custom; you don't need twelve engineers to build it. Before any business—especially a gallery—thinks about all of these other things that are very trendy, like AI, VR and AR, the key method to improve your understanding of how people are using information is managing that data.

Q2. I would like to pick up on Instagram. We talked about it during last year's Talking Galleries and also in today's previous forum discussion. Yesterday, I read an article about the visibility of art as a business model and the prediction that art is probably going to disappear, because Instagram is the for-free version of Artsy. We are a small gallery, we have about 1500 followers, of which, somehow, 500 are jewellery artists, even though we have absolutely nothing to do with jewellery apart for one show per year. I would say that the other 990 are other artists and the remaining 10 are galleries. Not a single collector or potential art buyer is following us—yes, I have basically disclosed it. I would like to hear what other galleries' experiences are and how they feel about Instagram, considering that I also spend most of my social media time on Instagram and that every fourth picture I see is an advertisement. Can you please elaborate a little bit on this and maybe give us hope?

J.F. I know there's someone here in the audience who works at Artsy, so I'll say on her behalf that it probably will not replace Instagram. Understanding that social media and any type of public digital branding will not have an immediate KPI (key performance indicator, like sales or traffic) is very important. Results completely depend on how you use the technology and what your goals are, but in most cases, it's about having presence and being able to tell a story. When it comes to galleries, you're really small businesses and I'm sure you don't have many resources to dedicate to publicity, but it's still valuable to have a presence. I think, with a social media feed, you get as much as you put into it. Because creating your story through a content strategy—and having authenticity—helps you achieve some type of representation. If you think about it, Instagram is almost as critical as a search engine like Google. When I hear about something I'm interested in, the first thing I do is google it. 50% of site traffic, across the board for most businesses, comes through Google. And these days, when everyone is on a cell phone, they will go on Instagram to search for your gallery. If you're not there, in some ways you don't exist. Sorry.

Q3. I have a question about the Instagram algorithm. I know that it used to be chronological and then, I'm not sure when, but a few years ago, it changed. The way it works now is that maybe I posted something twenty minutes ago and you posted something an hour ago, but because I don't have as many followers as you, for instance, your post will be way up on other people's feeds, whereas mine will be nowhere to be seen. What's interesting about this is that we were originally talking about democratising the art world, but what does that mean? That should mean that I can be seen by anybody. Or, if I have a gallery, that everyone will see my work just as much as they'll see your work. However, it increasingly seems like that's no longer the case because of the way this algorithm works, so I think it's interesting to address this kind of issues.

J.F. Definitely. The algorithm works that way because they want you to buy ads. If you think about it, the only content that comes in chronologically on your computer or device these days is your email. Nothing else is chronological. Facebook did it first, then Twitter and then Instagram. Facebook, of course, owns Instagram, it's the same advertising platform. If you need to buy an ad on Instagram, you do it through Facebook now. And, again, it's because they're asking you to pay to play. To be able to use these services for free, you're giving away data, but then you're also leveraging that data to be able to hyper-target your audience. Let's say that, as an advertiser, you have \$100 to spend. You can't buy an ad with \$100, but you can target by zip code interest what other people are following on Instagram, and you know your content will reach that person. That's really the value of it and what you have to give up in response.

Q4. Hi. You were talking about the fact that people don't really use native art apps. Does that mean that apps like Instagram are going to continue to enforce their stranglehold on the way that people view art?

J.F. I would put that in a different category. What I meant by native art apps is that, when I go to a museum, I'm not going to use that museum's app. No one's going to download an app for that. Most people are just going to use the ones they already have. I think this trend started a few years ago, when everyone decided to create apps because everyone was downloading them, so institutions and businesses thought they needed to create their own. But the truth is that most people will just continue to use apps like Instagram or Google, social media on

their phone, their camera and little more. They're not going to use the proprietary app of the museum in order to access content.

Q4. Because it means having lots of extra apps, which you're just not going to use.

J.F. You're just going to use them once. The trend now is creating web-based content, so when all websites are mobile-friendly, you can continue to serve either audio or video—whatever you were going to put in that app—on your website, for mobile.

**“TECHNOLOGY AND BEING ABLE
TO LEAVE A VERY QUICK COMMENT
ON A PLATFORM HAVE NOT
REPLACED EXPERIENCE, IN-PERSON
CONVERSATION AND DISCOURSE.”**

Q5. Hi. At the beginning of your presentation, you made some very interesting comments about Web 3, but then for the most part you talked about the evolution of Web 2. Could you give us just one or two brief hints at whether Web 2 will be supplanted by something that we could recognise as a potential Web 3 model? Or are we doomed to be dominated by the increasing power and influence of what are essentially centralising platform models, as opposed to a decentralised Web 3?

J.F. There's a presentation on blockchain and bitcoin later on today, so I'd rather not go too much into it now. That being said, using blockchain to authenticate works of art is a very good use case. It's hard to say at this point how much of that transition is going to be quick —because it's so early on and also because that technology encapsulates such a broad user base. Unfortunately, I don't have all the answers.

Q6. Hello, I wanted to know your opinion about the importance of social events going hand in hand with the social media world. How relevant is networking?

J.F. I think there's a reason we're all here. Look at attendance in museums: more and more people are going to galleries and art fairs around the world, so technology and being able to leave a very quick

comment on a platform have not replaced experience, in-person conversation and discourse. It's very clear in the metrics that people continue to have in-person experiences. You have the ease of being able to connect with people all over the world through platforms like social media, but the end goal has always been to have a physical, on-site interaction.

Q6. I agree. I hope it stays that way too.

Q7. Hi. I'm just curious about what you think about the innovative technology being used in the Gulf. For instance, Abu Dhabi with the Louvre: they launched this billboard about guided tours on the highway, which uses radio connection as well—I don't know if you have heard about it. Do you think that kind of initiative is a one-off? Or could it be developed elsewhere?

J.F. I haven't seen it yet. What is it exactly?

Q7. It was for the launch of the Louvre Abu Dhabi. Basically, they put on billboards along one of the main highways—from Dubai to Abu Dhabi, if I recall correctly. If you had your radio tuned to a certain frequency, it would automatically pick up the billboards and you would get an image...

J.F. I think that's Bluetooth. Has anyone seen the David Bowie show that was travelling through America? The exhibition design was pretty similar. You can use beacons to connect to different devices so that as you walk by—it's location-based positioning—they will deliver content to your phone. I think that's what that is.

Q7. It is, yeah.

J.F. I think it can work well for interactive exhibitions. The David Bowie example is a very smart use of technology, because, of course, it was a music exhibition and the balance of audio versus physical ephemera made it an applicable use of technology in that case. Well, thank you all for your time and contributions.

Tim Schneider

is the art business reporter for artnet News and the writer behind The Gray Market. His work combines nearly a decade of first-hand 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, and the potential for innovation to create lasting change in the trade. These themes formed the core of his 2017 book *The Great Reframing: How Technology Will—and Won't—Change the Gallery System Forever*.

**BEYOND BLOCKCHAIN:
OTHER TECHNOLOGIES
WORTH EVERY GALLERY'S
ATTENTION**

SPEAKER
Tim Schneider



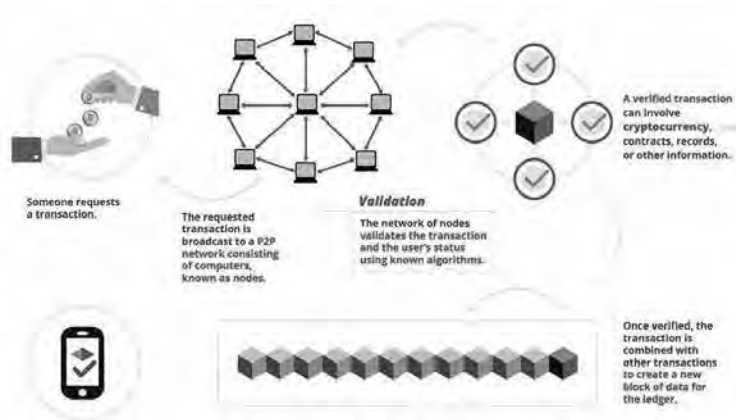
BEYOND BLOCKCHAIN: OTHER TECHNOLOGIES WORTH EVERY GALLERY'S ATTENTION

Tim Schneider (T.S.) About two or three months ago, Lluçia Homs and the Talking Galleries team reached out to me to ask if I would do a presentation on blockchain and art. This is a subject that I spent a lot of time reading, thinking and writing about over the course of the past year, so I have opinions about it.

The deal that I struck with Talking Galleries is that I would be happy to talk about blockchain and art, but there is one more thing that I have concluded after reflecting on it and think is really important to note: so much attention has been paid to blockchain over the past year that some other really exciting technologies with actual use cases just aren't getting any attention. I want to split the talk up. First, I will talk about blockchain and what I've learned, what I think it's good for, and what I don't think it's good for. Then, I will get into a few of these other things, some of which JiaJia Fei nodded to in her talk.

I will start with a personal history of art and blockchain. I didn't know anything at all about this subject about fourteen months ago and then, by the end of 2017, bitcoin—the one blockchain use case everyone has at least heard of—became so unavoidable that I decided I just had to immerse myself in the technology and learn what was actually going on.

At the beginning of 2018, I started this three-part series at artnet News, where I'm a staff writer. The first piece in the series was an explainer. Basically: what is blockchain? We will return to this in a minute, but to give you the broader context, the second piece in the series was about the way that artists are actually using blockchain to create works. The third part of the series, which we will get into deeper as well, is about the business use cases for blockchain in the art world, or at least potential business uses.



All that context leads us to the question: what the hell is blockchain? To really explain this in-depth—which I have done on-stage three different times now—if we really wanted to get into the nitty-gritty of the technology, I would need three things. One, I would need a complicated graphic. Two, I would need about seven and a half solid minutes of your time. And three, I would need a drink, because blockchain is painful. It is really difficult to explain this technology to people who are not at least a little bit versed in it already. Because I think some of the larger issues around blockchain are more worth talking about than some of the nitty-gritty technical stuff, I'm just going to give you a very basic overview.

So, what is blockchain? There are three key components. First and foremost, blockchain is just a database. What you're doing with the technology is tracking information. When reading articles about blockchain, you will often see people use the phrase “a digital ledger,” and that is all blockchain refers to. All you are doing is tracking information. The second important point is that blockchain is decentralized. What does that mean? When a set of information is guarded by one particular central authority—whether it's a federal government or a financial institution like a bank—that necessarily makes you vulnerable to either something catastrophic happening to that one central authority, or to that one central authority doing things with your assets that you do not want them to do. One of the appeals of blockchain is that you are not siloing your information with one entity. Instead, you are spreading out this record of information across

many different computers. In many cases, they are nowhere near each other geographically and they are not owned by the same person. The only thing that these computers have in relationship to one another is that they are all tracking the same set of information.

WTH is a blockchain?

- Database = record of information
- Decentralized = tracked on many computers
- Encrypted = solve a math problem to update

The last point is that blockchain is encrypted. It is an encrypted database, which means that any time you want to update it, you need a computer to crack a very complex mathematical problem. This is where the “crypto-” prefix comes in. The word comes from “encryption” and “cryptography,” which is what you use to update blockchain. That is the most basic way I can explain it.

In terms of what you can use blockchain to do in the art world right now, there are three main use cases. Number one is cryptocurrencies. Again, bitcoin is the prime example, although there are others. Cryptocurrencies are essentially borderless money, money that is not minted by any central government. They're not subject to any particular set of laws. We can come back to some of the implications of that later.

The second use case is artwork title registries, which are public databases of provenance. We don't have these in the art world right now. They do exist in other industries that people like to invest in, such as real estate or cars. You can find title registries for individual assets in those areas very easily. They are public record. In theory, blockchain is something that people think can lead us to that kind of end game.

The third case is an abstract concept called “smart contracts.” Smart contracts are essentially automated legal agreements. The idea is that you can write a contract that you will no longer need a lawyer to make sure is executed properly. Weirdly enough, the best explanation I have ever found to help make a smart contract real is in Stanley Kubrick’s *Dr. Strangelove*. There is a point late in the plot where it is revealed that Russia—which is in the Cold War with the United States at this point—has developed this thing called the Doomsday Machine. The Doomsday Machine is a nuclear apparatus that ensures that if the United States were to strike Russia first, Russia would still be able to strike back, even if the entire Russian government and military apparatus were wiped out first, because the doomsday device is designed to trigger itself automatically under a specific and clearly defined set of circumstances programmed into a gigantic complex of computers. This is basically a smart contract, albeit an apocalyptic one. I should say before moving on that the main thing people talk about using smart contracts for is artist resale rights.

If you combine all of these things together, the blockchain promised land would mean access to many wealthy new buyers who are all rich with cryptocurrency, making them one of my favourite terms in this entire weird ecosystem: the “crypto-wealthy.” We would also have unprecedented market transparency courtesy of these public provenance databases, as well as a new level of fairness and ease, especially for artists, by using smart contracts to ensure that they get artists’ resale rights.

The Blockchain Promised Land

- Access to many new, wealthy buyers
- Unprecedented market transparency
- New level of fairness + ease, especially for artists

All of this sounds really appealing, doesn’t it? In that sense, maybe it’s not surprising that the art world went crazy for blockchain. As a small sample of the blockchain and art events that happened last year, in May, there was an auction at a tech world blockchain summit called the Ethereum Summit. \$190,000 worth of blockchain-based artworks were sold there, and by the end of the year, you had a panel on art and blockchain at Art Basel Miami Beach, which was the second art and blockchain conference Art Basel had run that year. The first was in June; I moderated that one. At NADA Miami, a blockchain art platform called Snark.art sponsored a talks series entirely about blockchain and art, and four separate art and blockchain conferences happened in Florida simultaneously that week.

“DO YOU NEED BLOCKCHAIN? THE ANSWER IS NO.”

This is a lot of stuff about a technology that I have spent a lot of time dealing with. At the beginning, I was really excited about it. In January of 2018, I was young, fresh-faced and optimistic, like, “Man, this is really going to be cool.” Twelve months later, I was haggard and beaten down. I was like, “I don’t know if any of this stuff really works.”

A guy named Vint Cerf is regarded as one of the founders of the Internet for reasons we don’t have to go into. He is somebody that people in the tech industry generally regard as a sage. Last year he did a talk on blockchain and, very helpfully, created a flowchart that tells you when you need blockchain and when you don’t. After a lot of time spent in the art world, I decided that it’s pretty easy to adapt his flowchart to our market. Every flow chart has a central question. In this case, that central question is, “Do you need blockchain?” The answer is no. Why do I feel this way?

Let’s go back to the blockchain promised land. Again, the idea is access to many wealthy new buyers using cryptocurrency, unprecedented market transparency, and a new level of fairness and ease, especially for artists. When you get into the weeds of what these things actually do, here are the problems.

Three Art World Uses for Blockchain

- Cryptocurrencies = borderless money
- Artwork Title Registries = public provenance databases
- Smart Contracts = automated legal agreements

Three Art World Uses Realities of Blockchain

- Smart Contracts = powerless in the physical world
- Artwork Title Registries = hidden vetting process
- Cryptocurrencies = unregulated money

Smart contracts are great in principle. The problem is that they only apply to things that are digital. The moment you move out of the digital world and into the physical one, they are useless. Consider buying a house with a blockchain-based smart contract, for example. If I show up on move-in day and the previous owner has barricaded themselves inside with an arsenal saying, "I'm not leaving," blockchain is not going to help me.

I have issues with artwork title registries too, though they are a great idea in principle. I will preface this by saying that I think a lot of people working on this really do have the best intentions and are really trying. However, after talking to people who are trying to run artwork title registries, they don't appear to do anything resembling what blockchain is supposed to do, which is to create a system where you don't have to rely on a central authority to trust what is happening.

Instead, a start-up that wants to be a blockchain database for provenance goes to collectors who, as we all know, have not been particularly willing to just come out and tell you anything about what is in their collections. It is very secretly-guarded information for good reason. The start-ups say, "OK, we will vet the thing for you and we'll make sure that the public—unless you want to divulge your own identity—won't have to know who you are, but we will tell them that everything is OK." This doesn't strike me as being particularly transparent. In fact, it strikes me as the opposite. This segues into the whole problem with cryptocurrencies, which are unregulated money.

**"THE IDEA THAT WE ARE GOING
TO USHER IN A NEW ERA OF
TRANSPARENCY IN THE ART WORLD BY
USING THIS CURRENCY SEEMS TO ME A
BIT TOO OPTIMISTIC."**

The idea that we are going to usher in a new era of transparency in the art world by using this currency seems to me a bit too optimistic. One gallery owner—who I will not name—went on a BBC podcast and explained the reason that she had decided to get involved with cryptocurrencies: she started accepting them because the gallery was trying to establish relationships with collectors in places like China and Russia, where it is illegal to move large sums of money out of the country. With cryptocurrency, that problem is solved. Does this sound like a super-transparent, progressive art market? Not to me. In fact, it brings to mind one of my all-time favourite art world quotes from the one and only Jeff Koons: "I sometimes take a helicopter to travel to my farm, but I don't live a luxurious lifestyle."

Here's my issue: ultimately—and this goes back to people having the best intentions involving the blockchain world—I think that people really want to solve these problems. The issue is that what they are trying to solve are not technological problems. They are behavioural problems. I think the idea that we need blockchain to track the provenance of an artwork is misguided. You see people say this is a great idea because we have title registries in real estate and we have title registries in the car market, but we didn't need the blockchain to do that. We just needed people to say, "This is a good idea. I am going to volunteer information. We are going to make this thing happen." If

we are asking the art world to play by different rules—rules that give people the opportunity to be more secretive with what they do—I don't think that's pointing us in the right direction. It's pretty obvious that the same thing goes for cryptocurrencies.

**“THE ISSUE IS THAT WHAT THEY
ARE TRYING TO SOLVE ARE NOT
TECHNOLOGICAL PROBLEMS. THEY ARE
BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEMS.”**

Smart contracts are another interesting example because, technically speaking, we don't need any software in order to enforce artist resale rights. To give you an example, a famous artist resale rights contract was written in 1971 by Seth Siegel and Robert Projansky. It has been around for almost fifty years now. Practically no one uses it, but that's not because it doesn't work; in theory, it's because people just don't seem to be interested. I am therefore highly sceptical that blockchain is going to solve these problems, which are ultimately choices that people in the art market are making about what to prioritise.

In my most extreme moments, I would say that blockchain is a cop-out for making bigger, scarier changes to the art trade. It allows us the fantasy of saying that we can change the way the business works without having to change the way that we work, and that we can get all these benefits without really having to sacrifice anything in the process. I think that's a little dubious.

All of this begs the question: what else out there is technologically interesting at this point? I have consciously made the decision to focus on some of the sexier things that are happening as opposed to more basic operational things (like cyber security), although I think galleries should pay attention to that too.

Let's talk about virtual reality. JiaJia Fei touched on it very briefly, so maybe you already have some concept of it. We can define virtual reality as a fully-immersive, 360-degree software environment. When you are in a virtual reality environment, you are entirely shut out of the physical world. That's why you wear goggles and usually have headphones on—in the really high-end versions, run off of a pretty serious desktop computer rig, you might have joysticks, among other things.

Virtual reality is already being used in an art world context in some fairly interesting ways that may have implications for galleries. One potential use case is virtual walkthroughs of traditional exhibitions. For example, the Kremer Collection is a physical collection consisting of seventy-four 17th-century Dutch and Flemish masterworks owned by George and Ilone Kremer, who started collecting in 1994. The collection has swelled to dozens and dozens of works and, up until recently, they had mostly been sharing those works by loaning them out to institutions, which is admirable and useful, but also necessarily limits your reach.

**“WHAT ELSE OUT THERE IS
TECHNOLOGICALLY INTERESTING AT
THIS POINT?”**

The Kremers thought, “We would like to really get more people in and more exposure for the collection.” They considered creating their own physical private museum, but decided that they weren't going to do that. What they did instead was to collaborate with their son—who works in tech—as well as with an architect from Daniel Libeskind's studio, to digitise their collection and create a virtual space for the collection to be seen. When I say digitise, I don't mean that they just shot two photos of each work and moved on. They shot between 2,500 and 3,500 photos of each piece so that they could create super-specific digitised versions in 3D. Once they had those versions, they worked with the architect to create this virtual space. Anybody with a virtual reality headset can now walk into the Kremer Collection and tour it just like a regular museum. This is a fairly interesting proposition.

Obviously, galleries are having an increasingly hard time getting a high number of people into their space with so much travel and other obligations. If you really want to give someone an up-close and personal view of something, no matter how good your static installation shots are, there is only so much you can do. Even a video walkthrough is only going to do so much. The prospect that you could create an entirely rendered virtual space that visitors could jump into at any point and wander around certainly has an appeal.

There's an even more extreme version of virtual reality which opens up even broader business propositions. The name of the institution sounds redundant at first, but isn't: DiMoDA, the Digital Museum of

Digital Art, is a completely virtual space, like the Kremer Collection. The difference is that the artworks shown there are strictly virtual reality works. This organisation commissions digital artists to create virtual reality works which are then only shown in DiMoDA. It's an entirely virtual art experience. You can support it too, just like you would a normal institution.

This model opens up the possibility of something I call "stay-tronage," that is, "stay-at-home patronage." Instead of saying, "We could get somewhat of an idea of what it might be like to go to the MoMA or the Whitney if those places created virtual reality experiences," you can visit the actual thing by going into a completely virtual reality environment, which is potentially exciting.

At the same time, as with anything else, there are obstacles to VR. At this point, it may not shock you to hear that I am ultimately a VR sceptic. One problem is the equipment, which is not super expensive, but is not super cheap either. You are going to spend a few thousand dollars to get a high-end VR set-up, which, to people who buy high-end art, is not a big deal.

The issue is that it is something you have ask people to buy, learn and dedicate time to. This is similar to what JiaJia Fei was saying about how if you download lots of different individual apps, you may ultimately use them once and then never again, except that it's a much more expensive proposition to buy a dedicated set of virtual reality hardware for the sake of a few virtual reality experiences. I talked to a collector who made his money in tech and who has really tried to be at the forefront of collecting in virtual reality. He said that he owned six or seven virtual reality works. I asked him, "How many times do you actually use them?" and his answer was zero. That gives me pause.

There is also this issue of the isolation effect. One thing we are seeing is that people generally want to see or experience art that is communal, like music festivals, major exhibitions or art fairs, where visitors spend time with others on an event-like basis. Right now, VR is the opposite of that. You isolate yourself in a virtual environment and there aren't very many opportunities to have another person in the same space as you. There are developers working on that, but it's not easily accessible right now.

The ultimate issue with both of these things is the adoption rate: how widely and how quickly are people going to get interested in VR technology? Ostensibly, we are in the golden age of virtual reality, which started in June of 2014, when Facebook spent \$2 billion to buy Oculus, a virtual reality hardware maker. *Wired* wrote a big cover story about it and, to their credit, they said, "Look, we really think this is the turning point in VR. This is going to be the moment when people start taking it seriously and the general populace truly gets involved. However, we have made this prediction before." They had a little sidebar where they showed all of the other cover stories in which they had mentioned that this might be VR's moment. If you're curious, those other cover stories were in June of 2008, August of 2001, November of 1999, August of 1996 and December of 1993. VR has been "just about to happen" for twenty-six years. Again, this gives me pause.

"PEOPLE GENERALLY WANT TO SEE OR EXPERIENCE ART THAT IS COMMUNAL... ON AN EVENT-LIKE BASIS. RIGHT NOW, VR IS THE OPPOSITE OF THAT."

That leads us to augmented reality, which is a sister technology to virtual reality where digital elements are mixed with the physical world. That's why it is also sometimes referred to as "mixed reality." People usually know about augmented reality for one of two reasons. The first is Google Glass, something Prince Charles himself has modelled. It was a piece of hardware that Google originally released in 2012. Google Glass stopped being a consumer product in 2015 for a variety of reasons, one of which was that it was inciting general hatred and actual violence in the San Francisco Bay area, largely associated with privacy concerns. If you saw somebody out on the street and they were wearing Google Glass, some people would get concerned that they were being recorded. This can incite violent reactions in some cases. In fact, people who wore Google Glass were actually referred to as "glassholes" for a while. Google Glass may come back at some point, but for now, it's not happening.

The other augmented reality use case that people in the general population know about is *Pokémon Go*. For anyone who doesn't know, *Pokémon Go* is an app-based game version of the popular kids' franchise. The way that *Pokémon Go* works is that you download an

app and then go out and use your smartphone lens in actual spaces in the physical world to hunt down and catch digital creatures according to your job or duty. *Pokémon Go* was a phenomenon. It is still one of the most downloaded apps of all time—500 million downloads in 2016. Stating the obvious, nothing in the art world has ever been that popular. Nothing in almost any space has ever been that popular.

**“THERE ARE CASES WHERE
AUGMENTED REALITY IS ALREADY
BEING USED TO DO THINGS IN THE
ART WORLD.”**

This leads us back into art, because there are cases where augmented reality is already being used to do things in the art world. About a year ago, my colleague at artnet News, Sarah Cascone, wrote an article about an augmented reality app called *Hacking the Heist*. The heist referred to is a famous theft at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston. For anyone who doesn't know, in 1990, thieves impersonated police, broke in, cut thirteen works out of their frames and absconded into the night. To this day, they still have not been found. As a matter of fact, there is still a reward of \$10 million out for information leading to the resolution of this case.

The idea behind *Hacking the Heist* was not dissimilar to what *Pokémon Go* was doing. Developers created digital renderings of the actual works that used to be in those frames. If you download the app and go into the museum—which still has the frames up as a kind of “in memoriam”—you can hold up your smartphone while running the app and actually see the works back in their rightful places.

Commercial uses for this same technology are also already out there. There are a number of apps with the same function that try to help you figure out whether or not you want to live with a piece of artwork for the rest of your life—or at least until you decide you can't get a better price for it and you sell it. Saatchi Art is a developer of one of these apps and the concept is pretty simple. You select an artwork from their online store and go over to a space in your home or office. You scan the space where you're thinking of hanging that work and then, through the magic of augmented reality, you can see a digital rendering of that piece hanging exactly where you want it to hang.

This simplifies the process of sending out work on approval, one that gallerists are familiar with. This process involves sending a work to a client so that they can live with it for a limited period of time for the sake of trying to sell the work. It is possible and sometimes it works. It is also risky, though, and many galleries would prefer not to do it if they did not absolutely have to. Augmented reality, in theory, is something you could use to resolve that situation in a different way.

**“MY 2019 PREDICTION: ARTIFICIAL
INTELLIGENCE WILL REPLACE
BLOCKCHAIN AS THE SINGLE
TECHNOLOGY THAT PEOPLE IN THE ART
WORLD CAN FOCUS ON THIS YEAR.”**

There are fewer obstacles to augmented reality than virtual reality. The equipment concerns aren't really there because, as we just saw, you use the technology you already have in a lot of cases: your smartphone. The isolation effect isn't there either because the entire point is that you are trying to mix the digital world and the physical world. As a matter of fact, part of the reason that *Pokémon Go* was such a phenomenon is that friends would download the app and then go out together, turning it into a social activity. That is a major difference from VR. And, obviously, the adoption rate is not an issue if people are using technology they already have and are not being asked to silo themselves in their homes so that they can experience whatever it is that you want them to. That leaves investment and development: how much money or resources do you want to put into this new thing? Obviously, that's an open question right now.

The last thing I want to talk about is artificial intelligence. I wrote an “Art market predictions for 2019” column a few weeks ago, and one of my predictions was that artificial intelligence will replace blockchain as the single technology that people in the art world can focus on this year. I'm kind of rigging the game by talking about it here, but I'm being honest about it.

What does artificial intelligence mean? This is really important to establish because you are going to be hearing about this a lot. If you

ask an average person what their concept of artificial intelligence is, usually the answer is something similar to a thinking, feeling machine with software that can learn on its own without direction and can potentially experience emotions. Basically, an artificial life form. This set of characteristics actually describes something called artificial general intelligence. That is not what we're addressing when we talk about artificial intelligence in the art world or any other industry. Right now, we are nowhere near achieving artificial general intelligence. In fact, the only people really concerned about it are Peter Thiel, Elon Musk and a few other extremely wealthy white guys who have no other concerns in the world to occupy their time.

The artificial intelligence we're talking about is synonymous with another term you hear thrown around: "machine learning." This term gives you a much better sense of what we are really talking about. Machine learning describes a development process wherein a piece of software can learn to do one specific thing if humans feed it a very specific set of information to train it so that it can understand what you want it to do.

To frame things a little better, let's talk about where artificial intelligence is already happening in your lives. One use case is autocorrect. Any time you have ever typed a text or written an email and the software has told you what you are actually trying to say—whether or not it's right—that's machine learning/artificial intelligence at work. Another simple and familiar use case is Uber route optimisation. When you open Uber and call for a ride and it tells you that it's figuring out the best route to get you to your destination, then selects the best driver to pick you up, all of that is based on machine learning. Historical data is used to figure out what to do next. One last example would be recommendation engines. Any time you watch a movie on Netflix and it says, "Since you watched X, you might also like Y," that's machine learning. The software examines what customers have already watched, as well as what you watched before or after that, and uses that information to figure out what you want before you realise that you want it.

These examples give us a preview of some of the things that artificial intelligence might be useful for in the art world. In fact, it is already being used. You may have heard of a start-up called ARTA. In their own words, ARTA applies modern technology to fine art shipping. There are two ways that ARTA can do this. What they did until very recently is

have a team of experts to whom you can outsource registrarial duties instead of having to individually email five or six art shippers for their rates on a shipment and when they could get the shipment to its destination. ARTA had, and still has, a standardised online submission form and a network of vetted art shippers they already work with. You fill out one form, then let their team handle the rest and get back to you. If you do it that way, they claim that they can take the process from two weeks—which is what your registrar would take working on their own—to nine days. That is already a big savings.

**“IN ITS QUEST TO CONTINUALLY GO
BEYOND SELLING WORK AT AN AUCTION
ROSTRUM, SOTHEBY'S BOUGHT A
START-UP CALLED THREAD GENIUS, A
RECOMMENDATION ENGINE.”**

However, they have recently introduced another feature called Instant Quote, which uses machine learning based on prior shipment data to automate the entire process. You no longer use their human experts. You are actually just trusting the software. If you use Instant Quote, their claim is that you go from two weeks from the initial request to confirming shipment to four minutes, which is almost unbelievable. Again, in theory, this is what machine learning and artificial intelligence can do.

Another use case is recommendation engines. Last year, in its quest to continually go beyond selling work at an auction rostrum, Sotheby's bought a start-up called Thread Genius. Thread Genius is a recommendation engine for art and design objects, and the idea is pretty simple: if you have an idea of what you are looking for and you can't get it—or even if you can get it—Sotheby's will be able to offer you other ideas based on actual data instead of what their experts might subjectively think you want.

The last and probably most boring case is art market data analytics. Working with data has become very hot in the art market, and it is one of the reasons I have a job; looking at auction data and trying to find patterns is something that I am paid to do. However, with machine learning and artificial intelligence working on those same data sets, in theory, you may be able to come up with either new insights or the

same insights faster and more efficiently than if you were paying a flesh-and-blood human to run the same numbers. That's the potential.

**“WORKING WITH DATA HAS BECOME
VERY HOT IN THE ART MARKET.”**

There are issues with artificial intelligence, of course. The first one is that it's a small art world after all. Artificial intelligence runs on data. The more data you have, the better you can train software. If you don't have very much data, you are not going to be able to come up with anything functional. Sotheby's can use Thread Genius because they run dozens of auctions every year with hundreds of lots in each one, so they are doing thousands upon thousands of transactions. That is a sufficient amount of data. If you are an emerging market gallery or even a modestly-sized gallery, you are not going to be able to dump your art-based sales history into an algorithm and be told which collectors you should be offering work to at which prices and at which times of year. There is not enough information for that. If everybody in the industry made all of their sales data public, then maybe we would have something, but I think the prospects of that are pretty low.

The second issue with the recommendation engine idea is what nerds like me refer to as “brand inelasticity.” This means that sometimes people do not want something *like* the thing that they want; they want that *actual* thing. To give you an example, imagine I were to walk into Sotheby's and say that I wanted a gold Rudolf Stingel. I would probably not be very happy if they replied, “We can't get you that, but we can get you a silver Jacob Kassay, which, based on our algorithm, has many of the same characteristics.” The problem is that I didn't want a set of characteristics to hang on my wall; I wanted a Rudolf Stingel. It's sort of like saying, if I got rich and I wanted to buy a loft in SoHo and a piece of machine learning software told me, “You can get all the same features at a way better price if you buy a loft in New Jersey instead.” Sure, but I don't care. It doesn't matter, because that's not what I want. By the way, I am not saying that Sotheby's is not aware of this or that there aren't cases where some collectors might be OK with that approach. I am saying that when you get into the really high-end level of the market, its usefulness is much more limited.

The last thing I want to talk about is the most important one of all. I am going to refer to it as “bias preservation.” One of the things that tends to get lost when people talk about artificial intelligence is the fact that artificial intelligence only exists because of organic intelligence. When we talk about big data and algorithms, there's a natural tendency to trust that this information is coming in objectively and therefore, we can trust it, because it is all based on data. The problem with that is that, when you trust an algorithm, what you are actually doing is trusting the person who wrote the algorithm, and people are not objective. People have biases. People have predilections. People have tendencies. Sometimes they're aware of them. Sometimes they're not.

**“WHEN YOU TRUST AN ALGORITHM,
WHAT YOU ARE ACTUALLY DOING IS
TRUSTING THE PERSON WHO WROTE
THE ALGORITHM, AND PEOPLE ARE NOT
OBJECTIVE. PEOPLE HAVE BIASES.”**

There is an AI pioneer named Fei-Fei Li who is now a professor at Stanford and who summed this up very well: “There is nothing artificial about AI. It's inspired by people, it's created by people, and most importantly, it impacts people... With proper guidance, AI will make life better. But without it, the technology stands to widen the wealth divide even further, make tech even more exclusive, and reinforce biases we've spent generations trying to overcome.” I would say that all of these things are true in the art market as well.

In fact, a great example of this happened very recently. For anyone who doesn't know, a Parisian trio that calls themselves Obvious created an artwork entitled *Portrait of Edmond de Belamy*. This piece was produced with the help of artificial intelligence. They had an algorithm, which they may or may not have taken as a piece of open source code, though that's a separate issue. Essentially, they trained it on thousands and thousands of Renaissance portraits and got it to produce their image. The piece was consigned by Christie's and had a high estimate of \$10,000 in October of last year. It ultimately sold for \$432,500, so basically, it went insane. I also went insane, but for entirely separate reasons. This piece infuriates me, and it is not because of the aesthetics, although I certainly don't think that those are anything to write home about. This drives me crazy because of bias preservation and what

people are not thinking about when it comes to artificial intelligence in art and technology more broadly.

First things first: one of the things that Obvious did was to convince Christie's to list the painting as a work by the algorithm, not by them. If you look in the catalogue, the algorithm is listed as the artist. This is nonsense. The algorithm did not create this thing on its own. It created this portrait because three specific people fed it a specific set of information. Christie's also proposed that this was the first AI-generated piece of art that has come to auction, which is not true for reasons we can talk about separately.

The specific set of information they fed it is the second problem. An artist named LaTurbo Avedon was the first to point this out, as far as I can tell: "Of course the entire community working on machine learning and predictive analytics in art get beaten to the auction block by this white guy portrait." Obviously, we live in a time where the representation of women, of artists, of non-white ethnicities and of non-heterosexual orientations has become a big topic in art. If the traditional art world now sees *Portrait of Edmond de Belamy* as the standard-bearer for this technology, that is a big problem, because it essentially directs art about three hundred years back into the past, when a common understanding of art was "portraits of aristocratic white people." I do not think this is a definition of art that we should be particularly keen to accept right now.

In fact, the idea that it was such a big deal is the most depressing part of all, because it means that we—and I mean us collectively as the art world—effectively took a technology that is extremely progressive and put our trust in people who either do not properly understand it or are not willing to be transparent about what they are doing. They created something that was incredibly regressive from a thematic standpoint, and we celebrated it. From a technological standpoint, this is as depressing to me as if someone had created a technology that allowed you to teleport to other habitable planets and the only outcome that mattered was the fact that you got rich because people found a place where you could still go hunt bald eagles. This is not what I want people to be thinking about when it comes to technology in art.

The point is: what are we thinking about? What are we prioritising? What are we really talking about when we talk about technology in

the art market? Are we just talking about new, cool things that could potentially be used to do *something*, whatever that might be? Or are we saying, "We're going to really understand what this technology is. We're going to direct it towards specific problems. We're going to think about it ethically and we are going to try to make sure that it can be used to make this industry a better place than it was before"? I don't see a lot of that happening right now, but I think it's possible. And if it is possible to take this gleaming new technology and apply it to the most ancient principles of what art is, then maybe we could end up in a more harmonious future. That's up to us, and I think it's something that we all have to keep in mind. Thank you.

Eugenio Re Rebaudengo

is an entrepreneur, collector, and curator. He founded ARTUNER in 2013 with the goal of creating an innovative hybrid art platform for artists and collectors.

Since then, he has organised over 25 international exhibitions with over 100 artists. Re Rebaudengo is on the Board of Directors of Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, on the Committee of the Tate Young Patrons, Serpentine Gallery Future Contemporaries, and Whitechapel First Future. He got in *Apollo* Magazine's "40 Under 40 Europe" in 2014 and "40 Under 40 Global" in 2017.

**ART MARKET HYBRIDS.
EMBRACING NEW
BUSINESS MODELS**



SPEAKER

Eugenio Re Rebaudengo



ART MARKET HYBRIDS. EMBRACING NEW BUSINESS MODELS

Eugenio Re Rebaudengo (E.R.R.) Thank you to the Talking Galleries team for inviting me. I'm very happy to be here today to talk about my experiences.

I have been part of the art world for a very long time, since my childhood. My mother started collecting contemporary art in the early 1990s and created the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo in Torino shortly thereafter. The Fondazione is a non-profit organisation dedicated to supporting international artists early on in their careers by not just showcasing their works, but also producing new works to show. I was privileged that my mother was such a great mentor and set an example for me in starting to collect artists early on. She started in her early thirties, mostly with artists from our generation.

Around seven years ago, I decided to move to London, where I did my master's degree in management at the London School of Economics. During that time, I decided that I didn't want to simply keep collecting passively. I wanted to find a way to engage with the art world on a full-time basis. With this in mind, I decided to do some market analysis around five and a half to six years ago and try to understand where the market was going.

Two clear macro trends were really reshaping the art world, and we have discussed them partially during this symposium. The two macro trends I observed were the proliferation of international art fairs and the rise of the Internet. Let's say the two combined meant basically one simple word: globalisation, which is increasingly important in the art world. Globalisation means that a lot of collectors are not afraid to buy from international galleries from other countries anymore. They buy from art fairs booths, and sometimes even base their decisions on digital images alone.

We have experienced a revolution over the last couple of decades, and this was important to me. I didn't want to replicate something that already existed. That's why it is very difficult to label what we are doing with Artuner with a single specific definition. What we wanted to do was to create a hybrid platform with an online and offline presence that stages commercial shows, which are always curated and can be bought digitally. Sometimes they are only digital, but they often have physical, nomadic pop-up counterparts.

“WITH ARTUNER WE WANTED TO CREATE A HYBRID PLATFORM WITH AN ONLINE AND OFFLINE PRESENCE THAT STAGES COMMERCIAL SHOWS, WHICH ARE ALWAYS CURATED AND CAN BE BOUGHT DIGITALLY.”

It is very important to have a strong educational element to what we do, so we provide a lot of information online about the artists that goes way beyond a simple bio, like essays and insights, which I think are very important. Additionally, we want to give access to this to as many people as possible.

BAD NEWS

Table 1.1 | The Global Art Market: Value and Volume of Transactions

Year	Value (\$m)	Volume (m)
2007	\$65,875	49.8
2008	\$62,020	43.7
2009	\$59,511	31.0
2010	\$57,025	35.1
2011	\$64,550	36.8
2012	\$56,698	35.5
2013	\$63,287	36.5
2014	\$68,237	38.8
2015	\$63,751	38.1
2016	\$56,948	36.1
2017	\$63,739	39.0
Growth 2016-2017	11.9%	8.0%
Growth 2007-2017	-3.2%	-21.7%
Growth 2009-2017	61.3%	25.8%

© Arts Economics (2018)

ARTUNER

I would like to thank Clare McAndrew for data on the value and volume of art market transactions from 2007 to today, some of which I would like to comment on here. This is a very important point that is not analysed often, so I studied all the talks that happened at Talking Galleries last year. The struggles of mid-sized galleries were the focus of most talks, which is a good point, but that hasn't only happened over the last year or two. When I was thinking about what to do six years ago, it was quite apparent that if a small mid-sized gallery tried to replicate exactly the big business model of a big mega-gallery, it would be very difficult to sustain that financial proposition, and that was a problem.

Unfortunately, looking at the numbers, it looks like this data is bad news. If you ask an outsider how he imagines the art world has performed over the last ten years, I think everyone would give a fairly bullish answer. Instead, looking at the numbers since 2007, overall turnover by value has decreased by 3%. But what is very scary is that the overall transactions by volume have decreased around 22%, which means that, as we all can see, the very high end is still doing very well, but everyone else is in a much more complicated situation.

“THE VERY HIGH END IS STILL DOING VERY WELL, BUT EVERYONE ELSE IS IN A MUCH MORE COMPLICATED SITUATION.”

So, the question is, what can we do in order to expand the market? What new small and mid-sized models can be implemented effectively? It is important to research millennials and how they approach their lives in general. Research says that millennials are much less prone to spend money on ownership and much more experience-driven. In the Talking Galleries conversation between Simon de Pury and Kenny Schachter, Simon said he believes that experiences are going to play a bigger part in the art world, and I agree that this is an interesting direction, though I don't exactly know all the different ways this could develop. That experience art mentioned—such as Kusama's *Infinity Mirrors* and teamLab—was interesting, but how we experience art could change in general.

What we are doing with Artuner is trying to identify settings in different cities, countries and venues that challenge both the artists—by confronting them with specific architectures—and the viewer. We see it as an opportunity for them to have a different and memorable experience compared to the one they usually have when viewing art.

“CONTEXTUALISATION IS CRITICAL. IT IS IMPORTANT TO LOOK AT HOW TO CONTEXTUALISE ARTISTS’ WORK MORE BROADLY AND IN A BETTER WAY.”

It is also important to stress the role of contextualisation. This word is critical. Artists are very keen on contextualisation, because they understand that it’s a way in which their work can be understood better. Sometimes this means that art is organised in ambitious group shows where artists from different generations are placed in dialogue, and sometimes they are given a lot of space in immersive experiences. We talked about Instagram, its role and importance, which is definitely there, but it is also important to look at how to contextualise artists’ work more broadly and in a better way.



Installation view of *Memories Arrested in Space*, curated by ARTUNER at the Italian Cultural Institute, London 2018. Works by Rebecca Salter, Paul Kneale, Serena Vestrucci, and Bea Bonafini.

I would now like to tell you about some of the shows we have done in the last three years or so to give a sense of the range of our activity. At the Italian Cultural Institute in London, for instance, we showed works by Rebecca Salter, Serena Vestrucci and Bea Bonafini, among others. We have organised several group shows in Chelsea, New York, where we brought Rose Wylie, for example.



Installation view of Palazzo Capris, Turin, *Micheal Armitage, Paul Kneale and Tabor Robak*, November 2015. Works by Michael Armitage.

We also showed a Michael Armitage room four years ago in a Baroque palace in Torino. There was another show in Brussels, with work by an Italian artist called Manuele Cerutti, which we showed again in a very different setting. And we were involved in organising a sculpture presentation in Venice with Canadian artist Paul Kneale during the last biennale.

We supported a show by a German artist called David Czupryn in Kunsthalle Darmstadt and organised another very different project connected with a residency in Greece. There was a show by an American artist, Stephen Felton, on a small island in Greece and one in another palace in Turin, in addition to a work by Juan Antonio Olivares. Hopefully this illustrates the range and the variety of the projects we have been doing.



Installation view of *Fermi Paradox II*, by Juan Antonio Olivares as part of *The World's Your Oyster* at Palazzo Capris, Turin 2018.

It is very important to focus more on artist studio visits. Personally, going to meet artists in their studio and really learning from them about their works is my favourite activity. Simon de Pury mentioned that it was his favourite too. I think this is very rewarding for many collectors. So, it's important to try to organise more studio visits and to make it easier for people to visit artists' studios. We developed a format with Artuner called Studioscape. At the moment, it's focused on London. The idea is to identify two, three or four interesting artists in a specific area of the city and put together a presentation of their studios, like a tour. This will really help people discover the works much more profoundly and establish strong connections with them.

Another key point is that it's crucial for the art world to develop even more collaboration. We collaborated with Schiff Fine Art—Lisa Schiff spoke yesterday—and in three Max Hetzler gallery spaces, two in Berlin and one in Paris. In the Paris show, artists from different generations, such as established artists from Max Hetzler's roster like Christopher Wool and Albert Oehlen, were in dialogue with much younger artists from my generation, like Katja Novitskova, Bernadette Corporation and Pamela Rosenkranz, for example.

In my opinion, this is one of the most important things we need to discuss. There are two kinds of collaboration, the most immediate being horizontal, which means collaboration between galleries or stakeholders of more or less the same size. Horizontal collaboration is a good way to reduce costs, but it's critical that we also find a way to develop better vertical collaboration between galleries of different sizes and standing. The big question is, "How do we do that?" While I don't have the answers, I will try to suggest some possible solutions. It is important to look at the current scenario.

CURRENT ART MARKET STRUCTURE



One of the biggest and most frequently-discussed problems is that, right now, smaller and mid-sized galleries do a lot of the work in terms of nurturing emerging artists. They put a lot of passion, effort and financial resources into the beginning of artists' careers and everything is great as long as the artist doesn't become very successful. Artists do not always want to leave the gallery when they become successful, but it happens often enough that we can use this idea as a study case. We should regulate this dynamic a bit better somehow. I am offering up a couple of proposals that think outside the box by looking at different industries and some successful collaborations happening within them.

In the music industry, indie label Octone and entertainment giant Sony collaborated around ten years ago. Octone was the company that first discovered and launched Maroon 5, amongst others. What is interesting is that Octone had the know-how to successfully scout talent as well as the capacity to nurture emerging musicians' careers—like a lot of small mid-sized galleries do—, while Sony has the purchasing power and authority to give artists the international launch and visibility that they need at a certain point in their careers.

“I AM OFFERING UP A COUPLE OF PROPOSALS THAT THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX BY LOOKING AT DIFFERENT INDUSTRIES AND SOME SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATIONS HAPPENING WITHIN THEM.”

What is interesting is that Sony realised that it was better for them not to try to poach artists like Maroon 5, but instead to structure a more complex deal in collaboration with Octone so as to get them on board, due to Octone's capacity for innovation and ability to attract new talent and nurture it. The two reached a deal in which Sony would cover most of the costs while Octone helped manage the artist and got a share of the profits, even during the following years when the artists were working with Sony only.

Similarly, it is interesting to look at the healthcare sector. We often read about mergers and acquisitions that have happened over the last few years. Big pharma is really excited about acquiring small, innovative biotech companies. This is very similar to the previous example, because big pharmaceutical companies are interested in not just acquiring licences for specific new drugs, but also in understanding the importance of the culture, relationships and talent pool that smaller biotech companies provide. So, they reach deals that encapsulate the small biotech, who still maintain their autonomy. These are examples of collaboration between two stakeholders of different sizes where the smaller brand's identity is preserved, which I argue is also key in the art world.

So, why aren't we seeing this happening in the art world? When we heard the conversation between Emmanuel Perrotin and Georgina

Adam yesterday, Perrotin emphasised how much pressure and stress he felt about making sure the artist did not leave him to go to a big gallery. We are talking about Galerie Perrotin, so it is not just happening to small or mid-sized galleries. This tension exists at all levels. And while this tension could be useful for him in the sense that it created the stimulus to then grow much more in order to retain the artist, sometimes too much pressure can drive a lot of galleries to overspend, overinvest and then go bankrupt, so we should look at a better way of regulating this situation.

“THERE ARE EXAMPLES OF COLLABORATION BETWEEN TWO STAKEHOLDERS OF DIFFERENT SIZES WHERE THE SMALLER BRAND'S IDENTITY IS PRESERVED. WHY AREN'T WE SEEING THIS HAPPENING IN THE ART WORLD?”

In general, current wisdom says that mid-sized galleries should buy artists' inventory for those who are performing well, and do so as long as they can. Galleries should keep the inventory and that's it. While this solution could be very effective, sometimes galleries do not have the financial means to buy inventory to start with, and in any case, it is not the most ethical or fairest solution to the problem.

What we really need is a better regulatory body. I compare this to FIFA because I am a big football fan. We are in Barcelona, so the comparison is well-placed. I am not necessarily suggesting one specific way of regulating it in the art world. I don't know if it's better to have a one-off fee like in football, or whether it is better to have some kind of revenue sharing, or if the artist could give works to the gallery for free when they leave. There could be a variety of formulas. It would be good to discuss this and my feeling when talking with a lot of people in the art world about this is that the majority are interested in tackling this problem, starting with the artists. They too would benefit from a more regulated environment.

We would obtain some critical advantages. There would be more transparency among galleries, artists and stakeholders, and I think this would lead to expansion in the overall market. More specifically, it

would definitely be very positive for the small and mid-sized players, who would have more financial stability and more reliable business plans. With more reliable business plans, you gain easier access to finance and credit from banks, which is something that currently happens significantly less frequently in the art world than in most other industries. This is very important and would bring about two positive outcomes.

“TRANSPARENCY WOULD DEFINITELY BE VERY POSITIVE FOR THE SMALL AND MID-SIZED PLAYERS, WHO WOULD HAVE MORE FINANCIAL STABILITY AND MORE RELIABLE BUSINESS PLANS.”

One—and this is very important—, galleries would have the cash flow to finally pay their artists on time, which is a very pressing issue. Secondly, they would have more means to do more ambitious projects, both in terms of shows and producing more ambitious works. Small and mid-sized galleries would definitely reap all of these benefits, as would the art world at large. These consequences would ensure a healthier ecosystem and reduce the risk of losing generations of galleries or artists.

Today I am sharing the experiences I’ve had with Artuner and suggesting a few ways of taking the art market into the future in a more sustainable way. We need to remember why we got involved in the art world in the first place: because of the artists. They are the real driving force of the art world. There are a lot of great artists out there that we need to support and promote. Gerhard Richter said that art is the highest form of hope, to which Hans-Ulrich Obrist added that art is the best form of resistance against annihilation through standardisation. It is extremely important to remember this right now and to fight for it with all our strength. Thank you.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND QUESTIONS (C/Q) FROM THE AUDIENCE

Q1. Thank you, Eugenio. Could you talk about your experience displaying work online?

E.R.R. Part of what we are doing is organising an average of six to eight shows a year. Some of them are only online. It’s important to develop online-only models. For example, I mentioned the Studioscape programme. For us, that is an online-only show in the sense that there isn’t a physical space where all the works are assembled, it’s just digital. I feel that the Internet has underdelivered in terms of sales, compared to many people’s expectations for the online market. However, it is definitely a crucial tool for discovering art and new artists and getting involved with them.

“INTERNET HAS UNDERDELIVERED IN TERMS OF SALES, COMPARED TO MANY PEOPLE’S EXPECTATIONS FOR THE ONLINE MARKET. HOWEVER, IT IS DEFINITELY A CRUCIAL TOOL FOR DISCOVERING ART AND NEW ARTISTS AND GETTING INVOLVED WITH THEM.”

At Artuner, we spend a lot of time developing online content. Most of the team focuses on creating material that can be shared online. It is smart to have some kind of hybrid of physical supports—which is still very important if you want to work with artists in the primary market and to get them excited about a project and give you great works—as well as pushing digital content more, because that is how we will be able to reach and educate a much broader audience.

Q2. Eugenio, how many people work at Artuner?

E.R.R. We have a small, effective team of four full-time people and we have a couple of part-time people. The whole concept is based on a lot of collaboration, so sometimes the team becomes much bigger because we partner up with other people. Sometimes we work within specific geographies, so we take someone on board to help with that specific project in that location. This is helpful when you are focused on an upcoming artist. You cannot have a huge team, but you can make

the team much bigger when collaborating with people from different countries and therefore develop the project more dynamically than you otherwise would.

Q3. Hi, Eugenio. I have a question about your FIFA observation. My whole life, I've been thinking and hoping for more structure in the art market and less standardisation. How do you imagine going about establishing a structure?

“ART FAIRS ARE IN A GOOD POSITION TO PROVIDE MORE STRUCTURE TO THE MARKET, BECAUSE THEY HAVE THE POWER TO ENFORCE RULES.”

E.R.R. Well, art fairs are often criticised, but they are in a potentially good position to be involved in the process, in the sense that they have the power to enforce rules if agreed upon beforehand. All the big galleries care about showing at Art Basel, Frieze or FIAC, for example. What is important, of course, is to have a preliminary stage during which at least ten or fifteen people from different parts of the art world sit down together and try to agree on a document.

That document needs to be shared with a much broader audience. Once critical mass is reached with agreement on this document, you need someone to make sure that the people who don't follow the rules receive some kind of punishment. One of the most immediate ways is to have the art fairs call meetings and say they are including this document in their ethics code. I think Basel has one. Once that has been reached, whoever doesn't follow the rules is not admitted to the fair.

This could be a start in terms of implementation. It's not easy, but it's not impossible. In the last couple of years, I have heard a lot of people complain about how difficult things are, how the mid-sized market is struggling, and it's likely true to a great extent. However, I think it is important to not just complain, but also try to find solutions to the problem. We are not yet in a dire situation. Mega-galleries are doing their job very well, so these measures don't have to be seen as an attack on them. If we said, "Let's find a fairer proposition for everyone," they probably would be interested in getting involved, at the very least for the sake of their image.



Joe Kennedy

Entrepreneur and gallerist, Joe Kennedy, is the co-founder of Unit London. Using new technologies and pioneering approaches to digital media, the gallery is recognised for diversifying and expanding contemporary art audiences and has already garnered a dynamic following of over 310,00 followers. Earlier this year, Unit London launched their UK flagship, covering over 6,000 square feet in London's Mayfair. Kennedy is a Future Contemporaries patron with the Serpentine, a regular speaker at Christie's Education and also sits on the board of the HIX annual art prize. More recently he was named ambassador of the MTV Re:Define Programme.

IN THE CONSUMER-CENTERED WORLD, HOW DO GALLERIES REMAIN RELEVANT?

SPEAKER
Joe Kennedy



IN THE CONSUMER-CENTERED WORLD, HOW DO GALLERIES REMAIN RELEVANT?

Joe Kennedy (J.K.) In relation to what Eugenio [Re Rebaudengo] was talking about, I think the problem of artist retention for smaller and mid-sized galleries is very interesting. It's something that we hear about a lot and it is a big issue. He has proposed some really interesting models, which I think are very applicable and will have real relevance as we move forward. However, I also believe that if we, as small and mid-sized galleries, work within the same frameworks and value systems as the mega-galleries, then in a capitalist society, of course we're going to be cannibalised. Of course, we're going to lose our talent and of course, you're going to become a part of the monopoly that structure engenders. My talk today is quite a loose presentation, but hopefully it will provide some insight in terms of the changing cultural values that we're seeing in society today and how they are informing and changing the way that we go about our business.

For those of you who may not know, I'm the co-founder and director of Unit London, which we started five years ago. I'm an artist myself and, in a sense, the gallery was born from a frustration with the industry from the perspective of an outsider, since we had not worked in a gallery or an auction house before and we don't have family in the art world or in collecting. We were frustrated from the artists' side because we knew that there were extremely talented artists out there who didn't necessarily have the means or access to the industry structures which would allow them to have a voice, and we felt there was an injustice there. Visiting galleries as somebody who was probably not a collector or somebody "of value," I felt that there wasn't enough active communication or engagement from the galleries to welcome me into the gallery or to give me a sense of value.

So we came up with the idea of Unit London. When you say Unit London, phonetically, the first thing that you say is “you.” A core principle of our gallery is inviting and welcoming human engagement in the art process, regardless of whether you are a collector, an artist, a dealer, or a museum director. That doesn’t matter to us. It’s all about creating engagement, which, as I think we all know, is the currency of the 21st century.

**“IT’S ALL ABOUT CREATING
ENGAGEMENT, THE CURRENCY OF THE
21ST CENTURY.”**

To give you a bit of context, five years ago we hosted our first show in a small, old charity shop in Chiswick. We really started from scratch—to the point my mum was helping to mop the floors in that first space. On the window I had painted, “It’s all about U,” a phrase that has very much informed our business and that is still one of our driving forces today.

When we started, we didn’t want to just host an exhibition, but wanted to try and build a brand that could be an agent of change in the art world. Over the last couple of years, we have seen amazing expansion and growth in our business, and it has been organic. The space that we opened last year in Mayfair on Hanover Square is 6,500 ft² and now offers an incredible platform for us to be able to promote and tell the stories of the artists that we represent.



View of Unit London gallery space at Mayfair, London

We work with twenty-five or so amazing contemporary artists from all over the world, of different genders, races, ages and backgrounds. Our selection process is based on the quality of the work and the artist’s originality as opposed to any of the other factors that might come into play: we don’t look at where they went to school; don’t look at where they studied. We have a flat selection structure and we choose works based on what we feel is deserving of the platform. Obviously, when we started, we had a meek voice and a small platform. It was literally ten of our friends and families. But now, our content gets five million impressions a week, globally. Sales are through the roof and we’re helping to nurture and develop the cultural narratives of the artists that we show.

So yes, *you* is what this talk is all about. “U” is our gallery logo, and what is incredibly important is this idea of putting *you* at the heart of the experience. Obviously, as artists, we are responsible for engaging new audiences within our industry, and this idea of “U,” bringing you into the heart of the experience, is how we do that.

**“YOU IS WHAT THIS TALK IS ALL ABOUT.
‘U’ IS OUR GALLERY LOGO, AND WHAT
IS INCREDIBLY IMPORTANT IS THIS IDEA
OF PUTTING YOU AT THE HEART OF THE
EXPERIENCE.”**

We live in an age of unprecedented access to information. This is probably one of the biggest cultural shifts of the last twenty years and it’s fundamentally changing our behaviours. The way that we communicate with one another, the way that we consume information and the way that we learn about the world are completely different. The access that we all have now to brand new cultures, brand new ideologies and brand new lines of thinking is changing the way that we fundamentally behave as human beings.

What I think is really interesting is that probably up until the late 1990s and the advent of the Internet, brands across culture—not just in the art world, but all brands—enjoyed this amazing monopoly of the market and this almost tyrannical, autocratic relationship with consumers. A brand used to say, “This is our product. It’s great. You as the consumer take it and deal with it,” and consumers were kind of swept up by this model of capitalism which has dominated western civilisation for a very long time.

What we have now is the industry succumbing to democracy. As consumers and individuals have become more intelligent and empowered, as we have access to new ideas and information, what brands are now saying to us is, “What do *you* think? Tell us what you want and we will go out and make that happen for you. We’ll keep optimising and making our service better based on your preferences.” This is a crazy power shift, and I think it’s something the art world is still learning to deal with.

There are many examples of brands that have not just become billion-dollar businesses and the starlings of our culture, but have also completely revolutionised the industries in which they exist. Spotify has completely changed the way that we think about listening to music. We never go out and buy CDs or vinyl anymore—it’s all streamed whenever we want it, however we want it. Deliveroo is an app that I probably prop up—anyone who’s been hung over and has access to this app, you know what I’m talking about. Netflix allows us to binge-watch movies now so broadcasters don’t have the opportunity to string out series of programmes to allow for advertising revenue. Everything is done on *our* terms, and I think this is a remarkably interesting change. Apps like Uber are also very relevant: this weekend all the cabs in Barcelona are up in arms because a consumer-driven company like Uber is putting them out of business—and there are probably some comparisons to be drawn to our industry here.

“THE ECONOMY THAT WE LIVE IN IS DRIVEN BY TRANSPARENCY, AND THIS POSES A PROBLEM FOR THE ART WORLD, WHICH HAS OPERATED ON THE IDEA OF OPACITY FOR A LONG TIME.”

The economy that we live in is driven by transparency, and this poses a problem for the art world. This is a sharing economy. It requires a flat structure where people have access to information. People want to feel empowered. All of these successful new-age businesses empower the individual. They provide access to information and they’re completely transparent in the way they deliver their messaging and how they create their products. This is why we have gluten-free. This is why we have ethically-sourced products. Independent brands have usurped the big corporate brands because they are transparent.

But how does this work out for the art world? Obviously, the art world has operated for a long time on this idea of opacity. The withholding of information or not being totally clear about information—knowing what’s available, what’s not available, how long is the waiting list, all of these things. So there is a big clash here. Culture is changing so fast and the expectations of the modern consumer are very, very different to the ideals that we’ve built our industry upon. Something has to give.

“THE EMPOWERED INDIVIDUAL IS TYPICALLY CHARACTERISED BY THE MILLENNIAL GENERATION, OF WHICH I AM A PART.”

The empowered individual is typically characterised by the millennial generation, of which I am a part. We get kicked about in the press quite a lot for being self-entitled and lazy. Don’t get me wrong, I do know millennials who subscribe to those notions, but actually, I think modern society has created a monster with the idea that millennials are entitled, because *of course* they’re entitled—they live in a consumer-driven capitalist society which is now marketing to them and telling them that they are great and they should have a central part to play in the direction of business and in economy. So it’s no wonder there is an entitlement among this generation.

If we look at some recent examples, *Black Mirror: Bandersnatch* is a new show on Netflix which actually allowed the viewer to choose the decisions of the protagonist interactively. You could choose whether the protagonist would eat Corn Flakes or Sugar Puffs, and later, as the plot thickened and got more interesting, you could choose whether to kill your father with a knife or to hit him over the head with a keyboard. At its core, this has to do with consumers having an unprecedented level of power and influence within a branded piece of content.

By the same token, NIKEiD is another example where a big brand is allowing the individual to be a part of the creation and production process of their product, and using Instagram polls, big brands on social media are now actually actively going out and asking their audiences for their opinion. We are now, more than ever, valuing the opinion of mass audiences, and it’s a much more democratic way to get to an answer.

Let's drill down from that empowered individual to a more specific, plurocratic example and the idea of the new collector. Who is the *new* collector? It's somebody I know quite well. To a large extent, my business is built on people like this and it happens to be the fastest-growing global wealth class. These are people who have all of the characteristics of the empowered individual. They expect transparency. They expect to be part of the conversation. But they also are very, very busy. These people run their own businesses. They run banks, they run hedge funds, they might even be venture capitalists. Whatever they're doing, they are extremely busy and they have very little time.

“GALLERIES’ IDEALS AND SELLING TOOLS TO APPROACH THE LEISURE-CLASS CONNOISSEUR COLLECTOR AREN’T SO RELEVANT ANYMORE.”

Lots of mid-sized galleries are struggling with footfall and they don't know where to get their collectors from, so they're going to fairs and spending all their money taking booths. They get into this horrible vicious cycle because they're basing their marketing plans on the idea of the connoisseur collector who has loads of time, who's inherited their money, who deeply researches the market and who has hours on end to spend walking around galleries and talking to gallerists. That collector obviously still exists, but more and more, it's being replaced by this incredibly busy, time-poor individual who has lots of money to spend and who maybe feels disillusioned or unwelcomed in the art world because of its structure. Yet, they want to get involved in buying art and start collecting.

Galleries' ideals and selling tools to approach the leisure-class connoisseur collector aren't so relevant anymore. These new collectors don't want to go into a gallery and see somebody at the front desk who doesn't smile to them or who doesn't have the information to give them. They want fast information; they want transparency and they want a human experience. We have to recognise that this new collector exists and is growing quickly. We need to understand how we as businesses can make them feel special and how we can service their needs.

What's interesting for me is that if we leave galleries to one side, the two big models of the current industry, the auction houses and the art fairs, are actually servicing these collectors quite well. They're serving a lot of their stress points and a lot of their motivational drives. Auction houses are a competitive environment with public records of pricing. For people outside the industry who want transparency, this feels like a very open and transparent place to go and shop, so auction houses are doing well amongst this new breed of collector.

Art fairs, by the same token, are also benefitting, because they are offering a quick, one-stop shop. If you're a super-busy-running-five-businesses kind of guy, you probably use advisors and you might have one or two days a year where you can go and get a quick snapshot of the market, however unrepresentative that might be. You can buy works. You can start collecting in a place and time that is very concentrated. These two models are doing decidedly well, and obviously, art fairs have proliferated to no end. But how do *galleries* remain relevant in this new culture with these new collectors in this new environment?

“WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND HOW WE CAN MAKE THIS NEW TYPE OF COLLECTOR FEEL SPECIAL AND SERVICE THEIR NEEDS.”

As these changes are happening, it's important to realise that we are in the business of perceived value and to consider what our value is as gallerists. I see our business at Unit London as more than just a gallery; we are almost an agency. We create content for our artists. We help them develop their narratives. We help them develop their work. We help them with studio space. All of these things are allowing our artists to grow and develop. We're not just selling art; we're in the business of perceived value.

What I mean by perceived value is psychological value. It's value that you can't see or quantify or touch and it's generated in all sorts of ways that are baffling to lots of us a lot of the time. We all write books trying to figure out what this value is. How can you take something that costs five hundred pounds to produce and sell it for five hundred thousand pounds? That gap in value from material to market value is all generated and it's so important for us to understand the relevance of that perceived value.

If you ask anybody how perceived value is generated, especially in the advertising world, they will tell you that it's all about storytelling. From time immemorial, storytelling has been the way that we create value and belief systems. If you go back to tribal times, it was always the elders of the group who were allowed to tell the story. They were the ones who held the platform to shape the beliefs of that community. And that has held throughout time. The Bible is probably the fundamental story of western civilisation. That one story has influenced our entire being in the western world. It has influenced mass behaviour. It has incited all sorts of atrocities and great things too. If you go forward in time, the monopolisation of media is another example where influential stories are being told by a select few. You have an eminently centralised model of information that is now changing in a very interesting way.

“STORYTELLING CAN NOW HAPPEN ANYWHERE AND IS OPENING UP EXCITING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ARTISTS AND SMALL BUSINESSES.”

Galleries use a myriad of storytelling tools to create value: things like column inches, curated shows, critical essays, auction results and museum exhibitions. These are all tools that help to tell artists' stories and are used to build perceived value, which ultimately creates real value within the art world and the art market.

This idea of a centralised model of information where only a few people are allowed to tell the story has now completely changed and I think Unit London is a very good example of that. We started out with no contacts in the industry and no real right to make a mark in the art world, but now we have built a platform that has an incredible global voice. We connect with collectors, dealers and individuals all across the world every single day. As I mentioned, we have five million impressions a week right now and that number is growing every single day. That level of global engagement is remarkable and we're doing this by storytelling. We now have the platforms and the tools to be able to not have to rely on the system to tell our own stories.

One billion people are using Instagram now. I use Instagram as an example because it is the most visual and most relevant app for our industry. It actually mimics the psychology of what collectors want from collecting, because it is not just a click-and-buy service. It's not

actually sales-related at all. Instagram mimics the social equity that collectors derive from collecting and visiting galleries and it fosters conversation. It builds community around a set of shared principles and values.

Every single person in this room can tell their own story now. As long as your story is relevant and good enough, people will come and listen. I can equate it to taking a box and standing on it out in Hyde Park. If you are singing and you sound like a strangled cat, chances are that nobody is going to listen. But if you have the voice of an angel and you sound like Charlotte Church, then after a while, you are going to have a group of people around you who are interested in what you are saying (or what you are singing). It is really important for us to acknowledge that online storytelling can now happen anywhere and this is opening up really exciting opportunities for artists and small businesses who previously had to overcome insane barriers to enter the market.

“ART SALES ARE NOW HAPPENING ONLINE MORE THAN IN PHYSICAL SPACES, SO WHY SPEND INSANE AMOUNTS OF MONEY ON A PHYSICAL SPACE?”

I always like to use Ed Sheeran as an example, because he is somebody we all know and love who, traditionally, would never have been picked up by an A&R at Sony or Warner. He has gone on to become the world's number-one global recording artist, but the reason he got there is because he started posting videos of himself playing the guitar and singing on YouTube. He bypassed the traditional system, which would never have selected him and given him the platform, so he created his platform himself. He reached a point where his critical mass audience was so big that the A&Rs and the labels had no option but to sign him and take him on, and now the rest is history.

Continuing with storytelling in the 21st century, if we play into the traditional value systems, then we are going to be cannibalised; smaller galleries will always struggle with artist retention and other big issues. What we have to do is try and derive value or build value systems that are different, that are unique and that will give us currency.

For me, creating experiences is the big thing. Art sales are now happening online more than in physical spaces, so why spend insane amounts of money on a physical space? It's a constant battle and galleries are now closing down brick-and-mortar spaces in favour of going online. For me, the importance of experience today is bigger than ever, and nothing beats the human and physical experience of interacting with an artwork or even meeting an artist in their space and having that real, tangible experience. Nothing beats that.

That is part of why we as a gallery focus on content creation, trying to break down the barriers and allow greater access—again, in the name of transparency—to the artists' practices. Rather than having a doctored piece of communication coming from the galleries' mouth on behalf of the artist, we are trying to facilitate an open discourse between the artists and the collectors or the audiences we're speaking to. For example, we'll do studio visits which will be fully recorded and go out to our entire audience so that our whole community can hear first-hand about what the artist is doing and why they're doing it.

It's also very important to create dialogue with people. Lots of potential collectors who could be extremely valuable for our industry feel alienated because they're not being communicated to in the right ways. If we can create the right type of content and experiences and involve them in the dialogue, then new audiences will start collecting and help to expand our industry and turn visual art into much more of a mainstream phenomenon.

“LOTS OF POTENTIAL COLLECTORS WHO COULD BE EXTREMELY VALUABLE FOR OUR INDUSTRY FEEL ALIENATED BECAUSE THEY'RE NOT BEING COMMUNICATED TO IN THE RIGHT WAYS.”

On that point, a big part of what we do is pay attention to traditional value metrics and work with institutions. We work with museums to get our artists using those traditional storytelling tools to help build their value, but rather than spending money on art fairs—which we don't do—we would much rather use our resources to build a community around our values, to build ambassadorship and to use earned media to our advantage. Actually, popularity has a real currency nowadays.

To put you in the driving seat, what we do with our gallery is use machine learning, algorithms and artificial intelligence, which Tim Schneider touched on nicely. We take insights and data from our community and we allow people to inform our content delivery in the same way that Netflix is now producing original content, which is wildly successful: based on the viewing habits of their audience. We are now doing a similar thing in our industry. We take people's preferences and allow that to inform, to a certain degree, the programme of content that we produce, as well as even our exhibition programme, at times.

“WHAT WE DO WITH OUR GALLERY IS USE MACHINE LEARNING, ALGORITHMS AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TO TAKE DATA FROM OUR COMMUNITY AND ALLOW PEOPLE TO INFORM OUR CONTENT DELIVERY.”

Obviously, this is a dangerous game and the art world doesn't like it because, traditionally, the tastemakers are only the top curators, the top museums and the mega-galleries. They are the ones who define taste. If we are allowing the consumer or the collector to play a greater role in defining taste and if we are constantly optimising and augmenting what we show based on their preferences, you can very quickly end up in a bubble where you have preferences from a sample pool that get accentuated and intensified into something which becomes homogenised, which means you have an aesthetic that is not representative of broader society. In this new age of machine learning within our data-driven society, we have a *responsibility* to constantly allow new ideas to flourish and to constantly re-calibrate the preferences of the community to help drive tastes.

We did a show for Frieze last year called “21st Century Women,” which is an example of having to re-calibrate the audience's preferences. It's important for us to shine a light on the marginalised or the lesser-shown parts of the art world. In “21st Century Women,” Fru Tholstrup and Jane Neal curated eighteen British female artists. It was an amazing show celebrating the freedom of women to be able to create and it is a good example of us understanding what's happening with our audience by understanding their desires and then allowing it to inform our programming.

So, what's next? To summarise, we are moving into a new age, and a notably dramatic cultural shift is taking place. If we want to stay relevant and be successful—especially small businesses, young artists and mid-sized galleries—you need to stop relying on the idea of the leisure-class collector. You need to understand who this new individual is, what motivates and drives them, and how to communicate to them. What we need to start doing is listening to people more and more, thereby allowing them and empowering them, in some capacity, to become a part of our industry. Let them in. Let them have a say. Let them have a voice because that is what they want, and if you can do that, we're going to have engagement, and we are hopefully going to drive change.

I also think about experimentation and willingness to fail. Ever since we started, we have always embraced failure. We had nine pop-ups in the space of four years; we now have our first permanent space and twenty staff members. Things are growing rather fast. We're opening our first international space this year in Asia, which is exciting. The embracing of failure is crucial though, especially in an age where everything is being optimised and constantly perfected. We have to encourage failure. We have to encourage experimentation because that is probably how we're going to incite change. Thank you.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND QUESTIONS (C/Q) FROM THE AUDIENCE

Q1. Hi. I have several questions. I'll just pose a few of them and you can answer them as you wish. My biggest concern is whether artists should be in conversation with consumers. It seems like the gallery model you propose is the trading floor for that conversation. In your model, is there now a role for fostering artists and protecting them from exploitation? How do you represent artists? What is your end game in terms of developing a direct line between artists and consumers? Do you feel that galleries or the traditional gallery model is completely irrelevant? And therefore, will Unit set up a situation where it doesn't need to be a space, such that artists can work directly with consumers without any gallery mediation whatsoever?

J.K. That is a very good question. By facilitating discourse between a collector and an artist, you directly question the value of a gallery, which traditionally has provided access to institutions, museums and

collectors. If we're providing a collector direct access to an artist, that compromises our traditional position. What I am proposing, and what we do, is to re-define the gallery's value. First of all, it is essential to have a foundational trust with the artist you are working with. I know that I can introduce an artist to a collector without any kind of fear that anything is going to happen there, commercially speaking. Additionally, our role is much more about building that artist's narrative and working with them so that they can focus on their work. We can pick up the slack there and build a community around their practice and their narrative. Galleries are really moving into this agency-like role where marketing and storytelling become central.

Q2. Hello. Thank you for your explanations, they are all very interesting. This is a completely new model, but I think it's also extremely dangerous. You give the example of the shoes by Nike, where consumers can say what they want and Nike adapts to that and creates models according to the preferences of consumers. Zara is also doing that. When they release their collections, they immediately produce more of what they sell and don't continue to produce what doesn't work. But in your model, artists are going to do things according to what people like, and I don't think they should. Artists have always been independent; they have to create something new, something of their own. If artists are going to adapt to the market of the public's tastes, they're going to create things according to the tastes of other people and eventually lose their personality. I think it is extremely dangerous.

J.K. Absolutely, and that is, sadly, what happens with a lot of young artists who aren't educated properly.

Q2. Yes, but you are promoting that.

J.K. Actually, we are not promoting that. We are trying to dictate...

Q2. Even worse.

J.K. No, no, there has to be a push-and-pull. What I mentioned was the responsibility that we have as a business to re-calibrate, to dictate taste and to do things that actually push the needle. The big danger of the society that we live in—which is inevitable—is homogeneity. Things are constantly being optimised and pushed back to us based on our preferences, and it's just the way society works. If you go onto Instagram, which is now the biggest art platform out there, young artists are creating things for likes. People want popularity. Popularity

is the new currency and it's massively dangerous. You are totally right and it is terrifying, because it turns into a homogeneous situation where things become popular because they are supposed to be popular. Our responsibility as galleries and as opinion-formers in the art world is to re-calibrate things and to allow new ideas to flourish. It is so important for us to bear that responsibility and to constantly re-calibrate, to do things differently and to push the needle so that we actually open up people's minds to new ideas, new ideologies and new lines of thinking. That is our fundamental responsibility, because the culture isn't changing. The behaviours aren't changing. Our responsibility is to acknowledge that and then act accordingly.

Q2. Yes, but I still think that you are homogenising at a low level. Maybe the standards and preferences of the majority of consumers who have never seen art or have no idea about it are not very valuable. The art they ask for might be popular, but if everything comes down to the level of popularity, I think we are lost...

J.K. Well, that is the big issue in the 21st century, the idea of popularity as a currency. It is terrifying and dangerous, but it's happening, and we need to figure out how we can make sure that the proper cultural values of the artists out there are allowed to have a voice and, secondly, are allowed to produce new lines of thinking.



Elizabeth Dee

is a cultural entrepreneur, curator, activist, publisher, consultant and producer. After two decades of dedication to gallery practice and collaborative initiatives, she now runs Independent Art Fairs in New York and Brussels as CEO and Co-Founder. Independent is now the only independently owned and operated art fair corporation in the world operating and evolving with its core mission to serve the future of culture. Dee regularly lectures on topics of relevance to the field, particularly gallery and fair culture, innovation and the art market—and has been profiled in many international publications, including *The Wall Street Journal*, *Vogue* and *The New York Times*.

Maribel López

holds a BA in Art History from the University of Barcelona. From 1999-2007 she was vice director of Galeria Estrany-de la Mota in Barcelona and from 2007-2010 she led the Maribel López gallery in Berlin. She has also been a founding member of two curatorial groups: Creatures in Barcelona from 1994-2000 and THE OFFICE in Berlin from 2007-2010. In 2011 she was the first curator of the section Opening: Jóvenes Galerías at ARCOMadrid. Between 2011 and 2018 she has been director of sales and curated programmes at ARCOMadrid and ARCOLisboa. Since 2018 she has co-directed ARCOMadrid together with Carlos Urroz.

Melanie Gerlis

A journalist, Art Market Columnist for the *Financial Times*, former Art Market Editor at *The Art Newspaper*, has reported 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.

IS THE ART FAIRS SYSTEM UNFAIR?

SPEAKERS

Elizabeth Dee & Maribel López

MODERATOR

Melanie Gerlis

Elizabeth Dee Independent Art Fairs
Maribel López ARCOmadrid
moderated by **Melanie Gerlis** Financial Times
40min + 20min Q&A



IS THE ART FAIRS SYSTEM UNFAIR?

Melanie Gerlis (M.G.) Kenny Schachter suggested that we have a three-day seminar on art fairs. We are not here for that long, but he has got a point. The question I am asked most by people in this industry is how sustainable the art fair and the pace of art fairs are. I always have a very unsatisfactory answer, which is that they are not sustainable, but they are not going away either. There was a new fair in Taiwan just last weekend and Frieze LA is launching in a few weeks' time. But we have also had Art Stage Singapore cancelled at the last minute, a fair in the Alps that wasn't able to go ahead because it was too congested, and now we have had MCH announce that they are pulling out of regional fairs, which I think has huge implications.

In the past, I've called fairs the "frenemy" of galleries. They seem to be a fantastic way to drum up business, but they also cost so much time, money and effort that they can be make-or-break for some galleries, and of course, not all galleries get into all fairs.

We are incredibly lucky to have the perfect pair to discuss some of the implications and the problems of art fairs, and hopefully, their solutions. They both run very different art fairs and have both worked as gallerists, so their thoughts are invaluable here. Elizabeth Dee does so much in the cultural sphere, but for the purposes of this morning, I'm going to introduce her as one of the people who co-founded Independent nearly ten years ago in New York. Their next edition is in March 2019, and now, they also run a fair in Brussels. A bit closer to home, we have Maribel López, co-director of ARCO, whose 38th edition will run even sooner than Elizabeth's fair. Maribel has been at ARCO since 2011 as director of sales and curated programmes. ARCO now also has a second edition in Lisbon.

So, let's hear from you. I'm going to ask you both the same first question, which is the one I started with. Are art fairs part of the problem for galleries? How would you say your fair addresses that and makes fairs fair?

Elizabeth Dee (E.D.) Art fairs have been a problem for more than a decade. That's part of the reason why we started Independent. It was a generational concept to take back the fair model, which was not working for our generation of galleries because of the lack of transparency. We saw an increasing class divide and inequality in the gallery class system, which has only grown. We wanted to have a level and democratic playing field. We felt we were losing the culture of the gallery with the decrease in footfall and we wanted to bring some of the time and the experience of seeing exhibitions into a platform.

“ART FAIRS HAVE BEEN A PROBLEM FOR MORE THAN A DECADE. THAT’S PART OF THE REASON WHY WE STARTED INDEPENDENT.”

Because the fair market was very different ten years ago, we used that platform as a way to model and prototype something different, something that was more experience-driven and created, introduced and brought new concepts forward. We wanted to do this as a community of galleries and founded Independent based on those principles, and we've stayed true to that core mission.

M.G. Can I unpack that idea of new experiences? How would you say your fair is different from what was there?

E.D. Because we all came from gallery practice, we approached the project from a curatorial perspective. For instance, the first thing that we did was secure a former museum, the Dia Center for the Arts, which was in the centre of West Chelsea at the time. That was the gallery district before the Lower East Side began.

We worked with a scenographer and exhibition designer to engage a different narrative of going through each space. What we loved about the building is that it was a museum experience: you saw the show on multiple vertical levels rather than one big convention centre or football field, or what I call a refugee camp, or whatever your reference might be to those kinds of expos. That already put us in a nice context.

I go back to what Eugenio Re Rebaudengo was saying earlier about context being at the forefront of how we address space and about

working with artists rather than asking and pressuring them to produce for these events. I value working from the native environment of the studio with the gallery as an extension of that native environment. This is about how we can facilitate and bring about projects that are uniquely created for Independent rather than as by-products of another exhibition elsewhere. We have more uniquely-produced commissions than in a typical environment.

We also have no aisles, so there is no ability to miss anything. You really do walk through each floor in a process. One room leads you to the next and you are driven by the content of the art that is being presented and showcased there rather than the gallery brand and the dominance of a vertical hierarchy. It has been that way from the beginning. What we realised is that collectors were starting to get fatigued ten years ago and we were seeing it as a revelation. Independent was a place where they could slow down, do research and have discourse about what they were looking at.

“COLLECTORS WERE STARTING TO GET FATIGUED TEN YEARS AGO AND WE WERE SEEING IT AS A REVELATION. INDEPENDENT WAS A PLACE WHERE THEY COULD SLOW DOWN.”

When you take out the public element and you just work with people who are already devoted, very curious and interested in evolving their eye and their process, and you mix museum culture and collecting culture together with gallery culture, it can be a really fruitful exchange. That is part of the environment and that's why people value the project so much. It has grown very naturally in a way that I feel is very sustainable.

M.G. Thank you very much. Maribel, you might want to react to the football field comment because you are in a big expo centre.

Maribel López (M.L.) We are. Yes, ARCOmadrid is, of course, part of IFEMA and it has two huge halls. The truth is that, from that perspective, we are an older, classic art fair. When Elizabeth was speaking, I was thinking, “Oh, we also think that this is what we are doing.” We also think these kinds of things, and when Tim Schneider was mentioning

the idea of the slower movements, I remember that, at some point, my colleague and I even thought, “OK, maybe we can use the concept ‘the slower fair,’” and then we looked at each other like, “No, that’s marketing drama.”

What we wanted to say is that we really try to work with galleries in a way that they can present their artists in-depth. It’s such a big fair and we offer them as many options as we can invent so that they can work with their artists and translate the way they work in their own spaces in their galleries and bring it here. We understand there are many fairs and we all need to explain a different story too. Fairs need to try to be important to the galleries.

I was thinking about your question of whether fairs were part of the problem for the galleries. I think they are—I mean, we are. But I also think people went a little crazy at some point and galleries were too scared that people would not visit their spaces. Some galleries would just do one fair after the other and that really drained their resources.

“GALLERIES SHOULD REALLY THINK WHERE THEY BELONG BECAUSE ALL FAIRS ARE NOW OFFERING DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES.”

Maybe things have levelled a bit right now, or if not, they should. Galleries should really think where they belong because all fairs are now offering different perspectives. We are investigating Latin American art in Madrid. We are working with the galleries to really present fewer artists. It’s even in our regulations; galleries cannot present many artists unless they have a big booth. This is how we are trying to explain ways of going further in-depth.

Regarding fairness, how do we try to be fair to galleries? We work very hard to establish a pricing policy that is positive for them. It starts low. Of course, it’s expensive to invest in an art fair, but this helps younger galleries be there, and then we offer discounts when galleries get a bit bigger. We have formulas and we invest most or a lot of the money that galleries pay into bringing in the right collectors, curators and audiences for their projects.

M.G. So, your system is that if a small gallery wants a bigger size, you’ll help them. You’ll have a discount at that level.

M.L. We have several formulas. We try to make it as organic as possible and respond to their needs as much as we can, even if it’s a big company. It takes time and it’s a nightmare, let me tell you. The galleries that are just opening or the younger galleries who are under 6,000 can only stay in the section for two years if the curator selected them for the two years. The third year, they have to apply and enter the main programme, which is really a big step. It’s difficult, so when they are accepted...

“HOW DO WE TRY TO BE FAIR TO GALLERIES? WE WORK VERY HARD TO ESTABLISH A PRICING POLICY THAT IS POSITIVE FOR THEM.”

M.G. You help them graduate.

E.D. I think there is something about the traditional fair structure that infantilises the gallery in the idea that you are the client, but then you have to apply to be accepted. The politics of that is a huge conflict of interest, because some of these people may be your collaborators or your partners, but they are also your competitors. I’m not sure that’s really working. We’re starting to see lots of changes, as you have said. People are reacting positively to new models, like Independent and others, which can easily be implemented into more traditional fair structures like ARCO.

M.L. How do you do the selection, through a curatorial team? By invitation through a curatorial team?

E.D. For instance, Frieze LA has decided that smaller is better.

M.G. Yes. Reducing size is interesting.

E.D. They have also decided that they are going to work with invitations, rather than through an application process. Those are things that Independent started ten years ago. What you were saying is building some of the methodology around design. Those things are being taken from the perspective of, “How do we make this experience—which, in

some ways, is overwhelming—more intimate or more about the value of the artwork and getting people to focus?” How do we get people to focus?

What Independent does so well is that it either introduces historical material to a marketplace that’s in development for it or, in other cases, it introduces new work by living artists, and the outcomes are very different because of that focus. There are people who, every year, say, “I never thought that we would have such a strong reaction in terms of museum placements and new trustee-level collectors who are really serious signing up for their first artwork by this artist.” We know that had we taken it to a big marketplace fair, this would have been lost.

“HOW DO WE MAKE THIS EXPERIENCE MORE INTIMATE, MORE ABOUT THE VALUE OF THE ARTWORK, AND GET PEOPLE TO FOCUS?”

M.G. What do you think about moves from some of these existing fairs? I do think it becomes harder for older ones. It takes longer to move the beast.

E.D. It’s a challenge.

M.G. Do you think Art Basel’s changed pricing system does enough to help?

E.D. I think anything that fairs do as big organisations in the support and service of galleries should be applauded. I really do. I have a more “Let’s take a giant step back and rethink” approach. I’d like to look at the mechanisms of these engagements from a macro level and say, “Can we change the infrastructure? Can we change the entire foundation of how this works?” That’s been my interest from the beginning, but I do believe there are a lot of quick wins that help galleries and we should be exploring all of them.

M.G. Are there any quick wins you can think of just now? Are you including the pricing side of things?

E.D. Pricing is just one element of it. Sharing with galleries how much things truly cost versus what the profit margin is would be very

interesting for them, because then they would understand where something is of value to them. I want to empower the galleries as much as possible to make their own decisions both curatorially and in terms of what services they need from the fairs. To me, the future of fair innovation in the next ten years is going to be really interesting because we are able to be more reactive to the change in collector behaviour than traditional galleries due to the way that they’re structured. We can be the bridge between those changes and the gallery in supporting the artists.

“I DO BELIEVE THERE ARE A LOT OF QUICK WINS THAT HELP GALLERIES AND WE SHOULD BE EXPLORING ALL OF THEM.”

We can also do a lot by sharing our network. We have a vast network of collectors and museum professionals who have been supporting these galleries for more than a decade. They have brought together and partnered with galleries throughout the course of the year. That’s sustainable engagement: not just having a discovery and an acquisition take place that are meaningful for the gallery and collector or the gallery and museum, but also sustaining a broad, twelve-month-a-year engagement where they don’t lose the story and they are still evolving.

M.G. This is a question for both of you: how do you measure success? Isn’t it ultimately a matter of sales?

M.L. It’s always difficult for us. I’m sure it’s different for Elizabeth, because maybe they are much closer to the galleries in that sense. For us, the structure makes it more difficult. It is easier for us to have a taste of that in Lisbon, for instance.

M.G. How big is your fair in Lisbon?

M.L. It’s around seventy galleries, maximum.

M.G. That’s similar to Frieze LA.

M.L. It has also only been three years. This year will be the fourth edition. It’s difficult, but the way we measure success is through gallery engagement: when they want to continue with the fair, when they want

to be there again, when they understand there is a place for them, then we understand that we've been successful. Of course, we ask all the time. We do every kind of survey possible, but it's always difficult.

We also have to understand that ARCO is such an old fair that we all have memories of it, even me, as having been around since the 1990s, so it carries the burden of this background. The way in which you measure success has changed. In the past, success was that people would go and buy and that was it. Now we understand that fairs might take six months to convert and maybe that connection that someone made in Madrid will end up buying at Independent Brussels or at another fair. It's very difficult to measure that, for all of us.

“IN THE PAST, SUCCESS WAS THAT PEOPLE WOULD GO AND BUY AND THAT WAS IT. NOW WE UNDERSTAND THAT FAIRS MIGHT TAKE SIX MONTHS TO CONVERT.”

E.D. As Eugenio was saying, there has been a change in the volume of transactions. They have shifted radically in the last year, such that pressure has been placed on the market fairs. The return on investment has to be very, very quick for a gallery, because if you're going to spend \$50,000 or \$100,000 for a stand at Art Basel, they had better deliver that market for you. It's not a sustainable enterprise to wait a year or two to get that return on investment. More curatorially-engaged fairs with a unique point of view, Independent being one of them, are not working under that economy. We have no \$50,000 booths.

M.G. But it is still an effort. I suppose there is a trend at the moment for all fairs to say they are not a fair, but it is still a fair. People do still have to take time out. There are other costs and I don't know how much of that is in your control.

E.D. There are costs. There's a massive investment. But I think that you approach a fair like Independent as a gallery differently than you approach a fair like Art Basel. Both are equally meaningful, but they do different things. Independent is a place where you will get more time with a more sophisticated collector. If you are one of the 90% of galleries in the world that do not dominate the top end of the market, but are, instead, developing art and artists, that gives you a sense of it.

For instance, our tenth anniversary is coming up in March and it is a tradition for collectors from all over the world to come to New York at that time of year to visit and spend all day at the fair. That sophisticated level of collector and museum trustee brings their trustees as groups. Museum directors come to see all of their patrons as well, and to see the artists. Artists come to our fair in a way that you don't normally see, because they don't necessarily see it as a completely commercial experience, but as something that balances the commercial and curatorial. As a result, you have fifty galleries with their target audience at any fair in the world. That would be the VIP programme, and here, that is the entire fair experience. What we see is a lot more high-touch experiences. That makes a huge impact on how the galleries build their relationships with collectors. Really, it's a relationship-based business, and they just need more time together in order to evolve together.

“IF YOU'RE GOING TO SPEND \$50,000 OR \$100,000 FOR A STAND AT ART BASEL, THEY HAD BETTER DELIVER THAT MARKET FOR YOU. IT'S NOT A SUSTAINABLE ENTERPRISE TO WAIT A YEAR OR TWO.”

M.G. If fairs are getting more curatorial, or if that is the mood and that's how you keep them relevant, what impact is that having on the galleries, when, traditionally, your curated show would happen in your own space?

M.L. I think our curated shows are a way of supporting that. When we first gave them that space, it was a way of paying respect to the work galleries do. For instance, the curated sections have been very important to ARCO since the beginning and it's one of our traditions. It's one of the distinctive features of the fair.

M.G. Plus you have a guest country and a contemporary section, don't you?

M.L. We have a guest country and a concept that changes every two years, as well as a young artist section. We also have a new section called “Dialogues,” which is a way of working on those curatorial approaches. We also invented the “solo-duo,” which is neither a

section nor a concept; it's an invitation for galleries to go deeper when presenting their artists. We also created other spaces for special projects so galleries can present just one artist. We are all making those efforts to help artists work in a way that is more similar to the way they work in the galleries.

“WE ARE MAKING EFFORTS TO HELP ARTISTS WORK IN A WAY THAT IS MORE SIMILAR TO THE WAY THEY WORK IN THE GALLERIES.”

M.G. You understand, however, that if I were an art gallery, actually, I'm thinking, “OK, I'm away from my space for this number of weeks a year. I have to think curatorially about what I'm bringing to these fairs. I don't really need my physical space. But if I don't have a physical space, I won't get into a fair.” Where do you stand on that?

M.L. Right now, we are still keeping that as a rule, also due to the structure, as well as having exhibitions. But being a bit romantic, I think that the space the galleries have with their artists is essential for creating art. If we skip that, we're missing out on half of the possibilities. In fact, something we do that is both very symbolic and important—because the relevance you have in your own context is very important to maintain and take care of—is we organise walks around the city to galleries one week before ARCO and for the opening season. We call them “GalleryWalks.” We do it to bring people to the galleries in Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia and we will do it in Palma de Mallorca next year. If we ask the galleries to keep their own spaces, we also have to support a local scene by somehow taking people to their spaces. Losing that is what I would consider to be an obvious and tremendous loss.

M.G. To me, that sounds like the role of a regional fair, and I want to use the word “regional” in a positive way. Do you consider yourself a regional fair?

M.L. No.

M.G. No one does.

M.L. No, we're not a regional fair. That's something to explore.

M.G. It's interesting.

M.L. With Lisbon, for example, its size corresponds to the scene. The fair there started as a request from the Portuguese galleries.

M.G. In Lisbon. Joe Kennedy will be happy; it came from the people.

M.L. It came from the galleries. In that case, the percentage from the local scene has to be very strong. That's also how Madrid started back in the 1980s. From there, fairs grow and they take on another entity and they become international. We now look towards Latin America for obvious reasons and are trying to go a bit deeper, acquiring and sharing that knowledge.

“FOR A GALLERY THAT IS STARTING, I WOULD SAY THREE OR FOUR FAIRS A YEAR IS ENOUGH.”

E.D. I think fairs can easily be a place for exploration and testing things. It's a great territory for that. When you have a traditional gallery, you might have the potential to do six or seven exhibitions a year with your artists. You represent, on average, between twenty and eighty artists, depending on the scale of your gallery, and you want to have an ongoing conversation with your artists' patrons throughout the course of the year. Sometimes there are more experimental practices happening in the studio that don't necessarily require a duration of six weeks. They can happen for a weekend.

Most of the galleries that I respect and admire think of the fair as a satellite exhibition programme, not as a selling marketplace, so they approach those presentations at fairs with the same level of detail and design. They will communicate. They will invite writers to come in to iterate conversations around what the artist is producing for the fair, and there will sometimes even be a public programme during the fair as well as ongoing engagement afterwards. We are a part of that support team. We are there to serve galleries and artists, to bring them closer to their ideal audience and to make sure their voice is really singular and autonomous within our platform.

M.G. I agree with your romantic ideal as well. It would be wonderful if you could have your gallery and do fairs. If a gallery is to see a fair as a satellite, a sort of addition to their programme, and you are a one- or two-venue gallery, how many fairs would you advise a gallerist to do a year and of what sort? Do you mix them up if you have the option?

“MOST OF THE GALLERIES THAT I RESPECT AND ADMIRE THINK OF THE FAIR AS A SATELLITE EXHIBITION PROGRAMME, NOT AS A SELLING MARKETPLACE.”

M.L. If you have the option, yes. That’s probably one of the most difficult strategic decisions for a gallery. I was a gallerist for a short time, so it’s not comparable, but I think it’s common for many young galleries to have the fantasy that they are going to be accepted at Basel. Then they realise that’s not for them, because they are a very young gallery or not positioned at that level.

First, you really need to visit the fairs you think will be yours. Try to make contacts and engage with local collectors. You cannot just go there and set up shop. It’s very difficult; it’s a really competitive world. Apart from working with your artists and presenting your shows, you need to investigate art fairs before doing them. The number you should do depends on the amount of money, energy and team resources the gallery has. For a gallery that is starting, I would say three or four is enough.

E.D. I don’t know that I can make such a generalisation because every gallery is so uniquely different and the climate affects things too. We’re living in a time where there’s more regionalisation in the marketplace, so it might make more sense to do some self-reflection as a gallery and say, “Do I have a lot of Belgian collectors? How do I keep our relationship with them? I might not see them. They may not be buying at Frieze London this year. Maybe I want to do something unique for them.” But that doesn’t necessarily always have to be a fair. I have a very open mind about that because we have always had an exhibition programme where we work with one gallery at a time to find the space for them to do an exhibition.

We did this through Independent Projects. We even had our own gallery space for three years that gallerists could take and we subsidised that. Rather than risking a new marketplace without any root system for four days, we would always suggest coming and doing an exhibition for six weeks in a uniquely tailored space that addressed some of the concerns that their artists wanted to take on. We would then support that structure through introductions, communication and by staffing the space so they didn’t always have to be there. It was almost like a residency programme. We would love to do more of that. Space is becoming increasingly expensive.

“FOR A GALLERY THAT IS STARTING, I WOULD SAY THREE OR FOUR IS ENOUGH.”

We have also supported former gallerists like Jay Gorney, who has done our fair. Before he became a partner at Paula Cooper Gallery, he operated as an independent curator collaborating with galleries to bring forward the new artists he was looking at. He did that with such regularity and with such great interest to collectors and museum curators that we thought, “Why shouldn’t Jay be invited to do an exhibition in Independent?” He was so happy to have his own platform for that weekend and that worked well. We’re very open in terms of those boundaries.

M.G. Are there other ways you work for your galleries during the other fifty or fifty-one weeks of the year, perhaps digitally? Do you do other things outside of the fair dates?

M.L. Yes, like digital strategies. On the one hand, we’ve been talking a lot about technology, which is, of course, essential, but from another position, I think the innovation we are offering to the world is conceptual. We need to use technology because it’s one tool in our kit, but we shouldn’t go crazy with it, especially not from the start, because what we are offering is an experience.

M.G. A tangible experience, yes.

M.L. On the other hand, of course, we think all the time about how to use Instagram. What’s the best way for an art fair to use Instagram? I haven’t seen the perfect formula yet. We have also tried to create

platforms over the years, such as capsule platforms, so galleries can present that way. Last November or December, we did this little project that we called “Me Compro Una Obra”—meaning, “I Buy an Artwork.”

M.G. I wrote about it.

M.L. Really?

M.G. I like it, because you now do it online.

M.L. It’s really nice, yes. We did it with a platform from Barcelona called KOYAC (Kicking Off Young Art-Collecting). It was a way of offering another possibility to galleries. One of our obsessions at all fairs is creating new collectors and new buyers who will become collectors in the future, so “Me Compro Una Obra” was one of the messages.

“WHAT’S THE BEST WAY FOR AN ART FAIR TO USE INSTAGRAM? I HAVEN’T SEEN THE PERFECT FORMULA YET.”

M.G. That’s the area I am particularly interested in. I think you will get people to your fairs because, actually, a fair is an experience, and everything we’ve heard is that people like experiences. You may get different people every year, but people come. How do you turn visitors into buyers, though? What do you say to your exhibitors? Do you say, “Just wait, be patient?”

E.D. I think technology is where we are going to see the most innovation in the next ten years with fairs. However, I find the way technology has happened in the art world up until this point to be very ineffective. Whether it’s Artsy or other platforms, the goal seems to be to replicate the art world as it currently is rather than what the future of culture could look like. Once we start having a broader, forward-facing conversation that tries to forecast the future, it’s going to get a lot more interesting.

M.G. I’m going to open up to questions very soon, but you have segued beautifully into somewhere I wanted to go: what will the art fair scene be like in five years’ time?

E.D. I can only speak for Independent, but I think it will be a deeper, more 360-day—and probably with technology, 24-hour a day—experience. We’re going to see more opportunities in the territory of telling the stories of the creator, the artist and the gallery as a programme and as a kind of innovator. I think we’re going to have a broader context of what each gallery represents and what its true voice is than we do today, because communication is really where we talk a lot about the limitations of brick and mortar with gallery stages.

“I FIND THE WAY TECHNOLOGY HAS HAPPENED IN THE ART WORLD UP UNTIL THIS POINT TO BE VERY INEFFECTIVE.”

I think the way to transcend that problem which is being embraced is communication: telling the narratives of why artists are in a programme and what their relationships are to one another, the story of how the gallery formed and evolved, the personalities behind the brick-and-mortar gallery and how shows come into being, what their life cycle is and then what happens after the shows, once they go out into the world and are disseminated into homes and museums, exhibitions... There are so many stories we’re beginning to tell with Independent. For example, at the last conference I was in, David Zwirner talked about discovering Jordan Wolfson at Independent. We haven’t told that story. He did.

M.G. You’ve told it now.

E.D. We have so many stories, because they’re such unique moments. I love the picture Emmanuel Perrotin painted about the Gramercy International, which was one of our cornerstone models, and how so many artists discovered his artists there, and then he went on to other fairs worldwide and discovered some of his most important artists that have been with his gallery. It’s broader than a commercial context. It is so much more. I think this is where we’re going to move in the next ten years.

M.G. Hopefully with some sales.

E.D. Sales are important, yes.

M.G. Do you have a vision of the art fair, either the whole landscape or something related to your fair?

M.L. I was thinking about this landscape and how it is going to change a lot because we are all thinking and talking about it now. I can't say this or that is going to happen, but I'm sure we are going to see changes and we are all going to work very hard. I think it's what Elizabeth was saying: communicating what we do, and through that communication, through the exploration of how to communicate, we are all going to evolve to a new and better context with new ways of reshaping what we want to do. I'm just starting in this position, so I have a lot of thinking to do, but this will help me a lot.

M.G. Yes, that's exciting. Change will come from here. I am going to open it up to questions. It's probably a bit of a biased question to ask two fair organisers—if fairs are fair—, so I would be quite interested if there are any questions from the floor.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND QUESTIONS (C/Q) FROM THE AUDIENCE

Q1 (Marion Papillon). Hi. We've been talking a lot about transparency in the art market and we think we all agree that galleries need art fairs, but don't you think that we really need more transparency from art fairs, as you were saying? You talked about having two models, selection and invitation, but I'm not sure we really know exactly how they work. We don't know how you work with VIP, for example, and I think that if we want to collaborate more, we should find a solution. Galleries wait to apply and then wait for the answer to the application. It takes more than a few months sometimes, so it is really hard to organise your programme and create a one- or two-year programme strategy. I think that, in the future, we would need to have better collaboration among galleries and more engagement from the fairs. You have good collaboration with mega-galleries, but not so much with mid-sized galleries.

M.G. That is to say, "Could we be fairer?"

E.D. I am so glad you brought that up because this is where we're seeing collaborative partnerships playing out among generations of

galleries and they need to become more vertical in terms of hierarchy. There is so much potential there. Art fair VIP initiatives have typically been completely ineffective because they never hired people who had relationships with a track record of getting collectors to buy with them at galleries. So often, they hired people who maybe come from the gallery world, but their role was just to update the collector mailing list and make sure that they had the right emails and the right VIP card. That is not effective. That does nothing for the galleries. That's something we really heard in that conversation and built a totally different structure. We built that conversation with galleries with a high level of communication, openness and trust, because they're trusting us with their client bases and we are the aggregate of those galleries' client bases.

“ART FAIR VIP INITIATIVES HAVE TYPICALLY BEEN COMPLETELY INEFFECTIVE.”

In ten years, we have now collaborated with over 300 galleries, so we should be leveraging that as a resource for every gallery, whether they're in our fair that year or choose to sit out that year or are rotated. We have a high rotation in our project because of the scale and we don't want to get bigger. We as fairs should be really working on that. That is the other territory we're going to see change and I think that's a positive.

M.G. Do you think ARCO could also be more open about how it's letting people in?

M.L. As a public institution, changing our application process is really complicated. The way selection is done is very clear. The galleries that apply know how they're going to be judged and according to which concepts, but it is true that we need to renew that and start from zero every year. Of course, it's not good to plan for only one or two years. Regarding the VIP and collectors' programme, we really tried to do that working closely with the galleries, getting their collectors lists every year. Of course, that information comes from them. We cannot just go to the one hundred most powerful people and invite them, because maybe ARCO is not the place for them. We really try to handpick every single person.

M.G. But how do you do that with so many galleries?

M.L. We ask them. Every year they bring us the names and then we invite the collectors they select on their behalf. We really try to make that connection in a way that it's not our connection, but one between the galleries and the collectors. We review the list of confirmations and really try to make that transparent and help galleries to work in the best way possible.

M.G. Was there another question? An art fair organiser.

Q2. Yes. The title of this panel is interesting. We talk about the problems that galleries might have and about applying to a fair, but I think we can also reverse the question and ask how the fair is doing with the galleries—for example, with their lack of commitment. They usually apply and are accepted, but they don't pay on time. There's a lot of other problems the galleries cause that fairs have to deal with. I think transparency goes both ways. When a fair wants to apply, they are basically committed to doing a fair. I know that in the past, we had galleries apply with the idea of participating, but then they were not really happy with the application process starting as early as it did.

“WE CAN ALSO REVERSE THE QUESTION AND ASK HOW THE FAIR IS DOING WITH THE GALLERIES AND THEIR LACK OF COMMITMENT. THEY USUALLY APPLY AND ARE ACCEPTED, BUT THEY DON'T PAY ON TIME.”

M.G. Because they didn't want to commit too soon. Yes, you're right, maybe you can't win.

Q2. Exactly. Something that is happening more and more now is that galleries are applying, they are accepted and then they determine the terms. They decide when they want to pay. Sometimes I had big galleries telling me, “This is how we do things. We pay at this time and you don't really have a choice. Either you want us or you don't.” Even smaller galleries can behave like this sometimes. In my case, I deal with all sorts of sizes of galleries in Africa, so the question is really for the bigger fairs, where I see a bigger problem with the application process.

I know it's by invitation, but who is part of that selection committee? I feel that there's a problem, in general.

M.G. Yes. This is where I think we could do a Kenny Schachter three-day seminar, when we started on selection. I suppose the question is, “Are galleries fair to you, the fairs?” You get quite a lot of stick as an art fair organiser from potentially 300 galleries, right?

E.D. It's a parallel to having a gallery. It is very similar. Metaphorically, the art fair is the gallery and the artists are the gallerists. Some of the most interesting voices that contribute some of the most valued presentations are the most idiosyncratic and not the most professional ones, and they're selected regardless. They occupy a space that's very important to preserve and protect.

It comes down to having really good dialogue. Sometimes when you need to reach out to galleries about the urgency of something, it's not part of their agenda whatsoever because they don't even have a purview into why it would be urgent. So to me, it's just about sharing how similar our systems and worlds are, and letting them know why something might need to happen this week versus in two months—whether it's what they want to bring, their shipping, or their insurance documents to make sure that their work is protected, or any of those more boring things we could talk about offline. I'm not on the front line of that as a co-founder, but whenever the team says, “How do we communicate this?” I say always open it up and share what is happening on the team side: “We've been thinking about how to best serve you here and if we had this information beforehand it would be so much better,” for instance, with promotion of the fair in the press, so that people like Melanie know what's going to be on view and they can come and cover it. These are things that are challenging.

We need to communicate our situation and our needs. Also, sharing what other galleries are bringing gives them a sense of context. Galleries function on context. They might think, “I didn't realise Maureen Paley was bringing that sculpture. I should really figure out which sculpture object to bring. Do I need a pedestal? Do I need a plinth? Do I need this, do I need to get an image for the press team?” Suddenly, there's an urgency. Maybe it's because we have a smaller situation. I don't know if this could be done at ARCO, for instance.

M.L. We do it, yes. And I agree with everything you were saying. Galleries are to artists what artists are to galleries, I totally agree. We take care of them and share with them. Every situation is different. It's true that they make us suffer sometimes, but it's all about sharing and having time and devoting time to those situations.



Dr JJ Charlesworth

is a writer and art critic. Since 2006 he has worked on the editorial staff of *ArtReview*, where he is senior editor. JJ has written for publications such as *Art Monthly*, *Modern Painters*, *Time Out*, *Tate Etc.*, *Third Text* and the *Daily Telegraph*, and online platforms such as art-agenda, artnet.news and CNN Style. In 2016 he completed a doctoral thesis on the history of British art criticism and art magazines during the 1970s. His book on the subject will be published by Routledge in 2019.

Alison McDonald

has been the Publishing Director at Gagosian for sixteen years. During her tenure she has worked closely with Larry Gagosian to shape every aspect of the gallery's extensive publishing program and has personally overseen over 400 publications dedicated to the gallery's artists. She is editor in chief of *Gagosian Quarterly*.

Jane Morris

is an editor-at-large of *The Art Newspaper* and a multimedia editorial consultant at CultureShock. She writes for many titles including *Monocle*, the *Economist*, artnet and In Other Words on arts and culture. She was the editor of *The Art Newspaper* for almost a decade. She was part of a team that launched Art World magazine in 2007, is a former head of publications at the Museums Association. She has contributed to Radio 3, Radio 4 and Monocle 24 radio, and has written for national newspapers including *The Guardian* and *The Independent*.

Anna Brady

is the *The Art Newspaper's* art market editor and has reported on the art and antiques industry for over 10 years. She was previously features editor at *Harper's Bazaar Art* and *Interiors* magazines in Dubai, and before that wrote for the weekly *Antiques Trade Gazette*. As a freelance journalist, she has written for *Apollo*, *Wallpaper*, *BOAT International*, *House & Garden* and *World of Interiors*, among others.

NEW PLAYERS ON THE TRADITIONAL PUBLISHING MARKET

SPEAKERS

**Dr JJ Charlesworth, Alison McDonald &
Jane Morris**

MODERATOR

Anna Brady



NEW PLAYERS ON THE TRADITIONAL PUBLISHING MARKET

Anna Brady (A.B.) Hi, everyone. It is quite a contradictory time for publishing at the moment. We are told that print is dead, which I don't think is true, but we'll come to that later. At the same time, some independent arts publications are struggling to survive and having to cut budgets. There is huge growth in in-house content provision and the big galleries and auction houses are investing more and more in their own publications. Joe Kennedy talked about building value through storytelling, and what better way to do it than through a glossy paper publication like the *Gagosian Quarterly*?

Alison McDonald comes from a family of printers, so print is very much in her blood. Jane Morris sees things from both sides of the fence, and JJ Charlesworth should be able to provide some historical context for us. Jane, you look at the wider trends within the publishing industry. From your perspective, what is going on at the moment? What changes and trends are we seeing within publishing?

Jane Morris (J.M.) The impact of digital has been a theme running throughout this conference. There are many different areas in the publishing industry and we will probably end up discussing those in some detail, but while I absolutely appreciate that digital has had a strong impact on the gallery scene and the art world, I don't think it's anything like the level of what has been going on in the wider publishing industry.

From my perspective, we are now in the third wave of the digital revolution. For most of us, the first one was very positive, though it is not the one that you tend to hear about so much. This was in the late 1980s or early 1990s. Emmanuel Perrotin was talking about the era when we were sending transparencies back and forward and you got information by phone and fax machines. I am sorry to say I

am old enough that I remember the publishing industry in that era. Nonetheless, the only reason I remember the publishing industry in that era is because desktop publishing software like QuarkXPress and then PageMaker were becoming available—now we all use InDesign. Even more crucially, there were major changes in the pre-press process.

This might sound really nerdy to you all, but with a few exceptions, a lot of the titles in the art world that you know today came into existence during that period. That was because up until then, printing and publishing were so expensive that only the really big newspapers could do it. It is no surprise, then, that *The Art Newspaper* came into existence in 1990. We benefitted from greatly reduced production prices and being able to actually lay out magazines and newspapers in-house. We could send them without having to stand with a sub-editor on one side and a unionised printer on the other with a hot metal linotype machine making up the pages. So, the first digital revolution was fantastic for us.

“THE FIRST DIGITAL REVOLUTION WAS FANTASTIC FOR THE PUBLISHING INDUSTRY. THE PROBLEM IS THE NEXT TWO, WHICH HAVE GIVEN GREAT OPPORTUNITIES, BUT HAVE KNOCKED US SIDWAYS.”

The problem is the next two, which have given us great opportunities, but have knocked us sideways. The combination of shrinking advertising, the impact of social media and the still-present uncertainty amongst publishers about how far they can push subscription models has had a profound impact. The Reuter’s Institute does a survey every year of about two hundred of the world’s biggest newspapers and publishers, and it has described the situation as a “hollowing-out” of journalism caused by these huge structural changes. I’m sorry to be doom-and-gloomy, but they are predicting the biggest round of layoffs ever in the past many years amongst the national newspapers across the world. They paint a fairly dark picture and raise a key question: to what extent will the mainstream publishers be able to hold politicians and big corporations to account? The report is very big and there are bright chinks in it, but that’s the general publishing background against which we’re working.

In many ways, I suspect this panel was sparked by a piece that Richard Polsky did in *artnet*. He talked about the launch of *Gagosian* and some other magazines, and he speculated about the future of what he called “the big three.” The big three for him—he’s American—were *Art in America*, *Artforum* and *ARTnews*. Neither he nor I know what their balance sheets are.

I certainly do know that in our arts publishing industry, we have, to some extent, been protected from the worst parts of the nightmare scenario I am describing to you, but I have many friends in the wider publishing industry. Unlike a lot of arts journalists, I did actually go to a mainstream post-grad journalism training programme—the City University in London—where a lot of the people who work for *The Guardian* and the BBC go. I know from conversations with them that this picture of constant layoffs and shrinking budgets—as I say, a hollowing-out—is real. That’s the kind of starting point for me.

“REUTER’S HAS DESCRIBED THE SITUATION AS A ‘HOLLOWING-OUT’ OF JOURNALISM CAUSED BY THESE HUGE STRUCTURAL CHANGES.”

A.B. J.J., what are you noticing at the moment with arts publications particularly? Is there any discernible trend?

JJ Charlesworth (J.J.C.) Yes. First, there are not that many of them anymore. To talk about “print is dead,” it is certainly the case that all the titles I cut my teeth on, the ones that gave me the opportunity to start writing about art right at the end of the 1990s, are all gone, apart from *ArtReview*.

A.B. Can you tell us about some of them?

J.J.C. I started writing for publications like *Contemporary Visual Arts*. Scotland had *MAP*, and *Modern Painters* was re-launched. It was quite a string of publications. I hope it’s not because I wrote for them that they failed, but it was very interesting that, at the beginning of the 2000s, there was a huge moment of activity where investment was going in to re-launch glossy art magazines. That managed for a time,

until the wider advertising and commercial context for art publications started to be challenged.

There is also the fact that the subsidies to art publications, which were particularly substantial for certain art magazines from the Arts Council in Britain, also shrank. *MAP*, for example, was very much driven by the Scottish Arts Council. Things like that, and *Circa* in Ireland, all fell victim to the withdrawal of public arts subsidy. In the commercial sector, however, I have to be quite careful about the issue of the market. Art magazines don't tend to make money, right? When we say print is dead, we have to bear in mind that there are wider industry commercial contexts. Magazine publishing and the print magazine sector has shrunk year on year over the last decade, so it's an industry issue.

One has to remember that art magazines are not necessarily published to make money. They are often backed by people who want to see them happen. If you look at the history of art magazines in the United Kingdom and elsewhere, broadly speaking, you find a story of interested collectors, galleries or other supporters who want to see those publications exist.

“GALLERIES PRODUCING THEIR OWN MAGAZINES IS NOT A NEW PHENOMENON.”

It is also important to realise that galleries producing their own magazines is not a new phenomenon. If you go back to 1940s France, for example, modernism started to become the new culture to market and establish. What you notice is that the big modernist art galleries set up their own magazines. They are not catalogues, they are magazines. For instance, Galerie Maeght publishes *Derrière le Miroir*. There is a whole string of publications produced by galleries—and this is where it's interesting to deal with the ambiguities we can talk about—both to promote their artists and also to produce a critical space and a publishing culture to offer a wider context to their activities.

A.B. So they weren't just covering their own artists, they were writing more broadly?

J.J.C. Some magazines principally covered their own artists. There are constantly moments when people are setting up magazines to promote not just their artists, but the wider context. In Britain, a good example is *Art Monthly*, which is one of the longest-surviving and most interesting critically-minded art publications. It was backed by Jack Wendler, a significant American collector who moved to the United Kingdom. *Artscribe* went defunct in the early 1990s, but was started by a group of artists and was later backed by Waddington's gallery. In our own experience, *Frieze* was backed by two wealthy individuals and did not make money for the first six or seven years of its existence. When it did finally make money, it was not huge sums.

“WHAT IS THE CULTURAL AND CRITICAL VALUE OF THE ARTWORKS AND HOW IS THAT VALUE FIGURED OUT?”

Similarly, *ArtReview*—which is now celebrating its 70th anniversary—was always supported through the difficult times by an interested backer, collector or group. It is important to realise that there is a bigger issue at stake than just money and media. That is what we need to pay attention to, because one thing I have not heard much about so far in these sessions is, “What is the cultural and critical value of the artworks and how is that value figured out?” That's where we still need to have a serious discussion for the future.

A.B. What you are saying is that there is a myth about being independent. We tend to picture independent publications against those produced in-house, whereas the idea of a totally independent yet also profit-making arts publication is a myth.

J.J.C. I think it is a bit of a fiction. It's certainly possible. You can do everything you can to run an effective, efficient editorial business, but it is a small niche sector within wider publishing commerce, and it is not always done purely to satisfy the bottom line. Yes, I think there is more at stake than simply talking about whether the market is destroying art publications because, in a sense, many of them were never properly bound to commercial imperative in the first place.

A.B. I see. Alison, why did you decide to launch *Gagosian Quarterly*? You obviously still value print. Can you tell us a little bit about how this came about?

Alison McDonald (A.M.) The gallery has many artists in many locations, so there is always a lot happening with our programming internationally. Our publication is an opportunity to give people the stories that our artists want them to know, whether it's the context behind why they are making what they are making, interviews with them or studio visits. We decided to make it because we wanted people to have a sense of what was happening at our galleries internationally. We had made a journal for about five years before we launched the magazine, which was two years ago.

A.B. Was that a print channel?

A.M. It was print, yes.

A.B. And what's the difference?

**“GAGOSIAN QUATERLY IS AN
OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE PEOPLE THE
STORIES THAT OUR ARTISTS WANT
THEM TO KNOW.”**

A.M. That was a smaller format. It did not have advertising in the beginning and it was more inward-facing. It was specifically about our programming. This magazine is more about what our artists are doing in the world. It does cover our programming, but we also have more interviews with filmmakers, architects, musicians and other kinds of interesting artists.

A.B. Who decides your content?

A.M. Me, mostly.

A.B. Just you?

A.M. Yes, and my team.

A.B. Do you get clearance for it? Do you have to take it to Larry and tell him what you want to do or does he let you do what you like?

A.M. We talk about it, but no, most of the editorial decisions are made by my team and me.

A.B. You do quite a lot of Q&A's with artists, but not so many critical reviews.

A.M. We try not to review exhibitions, whether they are ours or someone else's. We are trying to engage more with the artists, lifting a little bit of this veil of secrecy that everyone is always saying surrounds our gallery—or any gallery. So, for instance, we might give people a sense of how we installed a massive sculpture, what crew it takes to do it and how we handle whatever trials they have along the way. These are more insider things that happen.

**“WE ARE TRYING TO ENGAGE MORE WITH
THE ARTISTS, LIFTING A LITTLE BIT OF THIS
VEIL OF SECRECY THAT EVERYONE IS ALWAYS
SAYING SURROUNDS OUR GALLERY.”**

A.B. Can I ask how generous your budget is?

A.M. It's expensive to make a magazine.

A.B. It's always beautifully produced. This heavy-stock paper looks “no expense spared.”

A.M. Yes.

A.B. It always makes us so jealous when we look at publications like this.

A.M. Yes, it is generous. It is very true that not a lot of people are making money on any kind of print. We are doing print more to let people see beautiful reproductions of works of art. Maybe that is a bit different.

A.B. Is it profit-making?

A.M. The magazine as an entity? No.

A.B. No, OK. You get some amazing advertising. It is really interesting to see how the luxury fashion brands obviously want to be allied with Gagosian's luxury brand. It's like opening up *Vogue*. The same goes for *Ursula*, Hauser and Wirth's new publication.

A.M. I was really pleased to see how many people were excited about advertising in the magazine when we opened up to that possibility. That was a bit of an unknown when we were talking about it two years ago.

A.B. It means that they still consider print to be relevant. Regarding that massive question of, “What is the value of print today?” Well, you believed in it. Jane, what do you think the value of print is today? Do you think people still have an interest?

J.M. Definitely. I think people in the publishing world are wrestling with how to do it, but we understand that print is good for certain things, digital is good for certain things, and social media, audio and film are each best for certain things. That has been one of the big shifts. It’s ironic, because I actually started in radio and TV and only later became a print journalist. It is interesting to see how we are all starting to think across those platforms more.

**“ONE OF THE THINGS THAT HAS
PROBABLY PROTECTED ART—
AND CERTAINLY PROTECTED
THE ART NEWSPAPER—IS THAT
ADVERTISERS IN THE ART WORLD
STILL LIKE PRINT.”**

One of the things that has probably protected art—and certainly protected *The Art Newspaper*—is that advertisers in the art world still like print. Readers still like print, particularly because it is a great way to reproduce art works. There are definitely places where print works. A lot of people still see it as quite luxurious and people like the fact that it has got a start, a middle and an end. You’re not disappearing down a wormhole of a website. I don’t think anyone now thinks print is dead. It probably is dead in the mainstream news media to some degree, but even they are not certain about that.

A.B. We are sort of protected by being in a niche.

J.M. Yes, that is one of the things.

A.B. JJ., do you think that print is seen as being more trustworthy?

There used to be a dearth of information. That is certainly not the case now; there is so much being written. We now face the issue of reduced attention spans and trustworthiness.

J.J.C. I don’t see a division between print and digital there. I’m preoccupied with value. There are only two questions at the top of my notes here. The first one is, “What is the purpose of critical publishing for the industry, for the sector and for the culture?” And the second one is, “If there is any purpose to it, what commercial model can sustain it?” That is all that we have to concern ourselves about. One is a critical and intellectual problem, while the other is a viability or sustainability problem.

**“I DON’T SEE A DIVISION BETWEEN
PRINT AND DIGITAL THERE. I’M
PREOCCUPIED WITH VALUE. WHAT
IS THE PURPOSE OF CRITICAL
PUBLISHING?”**

It is important to note that a lot of art magazines have served the function of circulating information for many years, but the Internet and digital communications have tended to entirely replace that function. Notices about exhibition dates, openings, gallery adverts and so on served that function in the past. A wider space for the transmission of information about the sector—what is on where, who is doing what and so forth—has largely been taken away as a kind of revenue model within art publications. When *Art News and Review* (*ArtReview’s* predecessor) started, it published substantial listings, comprehensive ones, in fact. If you look at *Art News and Review* in the 1950s through the 1970s, you have comprehensive listings of what was shown where, a record which nobody else holds. All that has disappeared.

J.M. *The Art Newspaper* still does it.

J.J.C. Yes. I think it’s more to do with the questions of what do we want writing about art to be for and who needs it? To be honest, the current contemporary art sector needs to reboot its thinking about what critical commentary, discussion and debate are valuable for. I think they are very valuable because, essentially, a lot of the attention galleries paid to the shift to digital marketing, getting into social media

and making sure that they were visible on all the platforms was driven by confusion about how to get themselves a presence in the field with the suspicion that nobody was noticing them. The sentiment was, “We don’t know what to do next.”

At the same time, what that has produced, or has tended to produce, is a huge amount of information-pushing and a dearth of actually supporting a sustained culture of discussion. My issue with the in-house phenomenon is that I don’t see commercial galleries writing material which is critical of its own artists. There is obviously a deficit there for the wider culture.

“MY ISSUE WITH THE IN-HOUSE PHENOMENON IS THAT I DON’T SEE COMMERCIAL GALLERIES WRITING MATERIAL WHICH IS CRITICAL OF ITS OWN ARTISTS.”

We have to pay attention to and not simply talk about commercial galleries and their powerful shift to in-house publishing. We should also see that big institutions are publishing their own magazines, like *Tate Etc.*, the *RA Magazine* and the *Art Quarterly*. If *Tate Etc.* is sent to the whole Tate membership, that’s 140,000 copies. Everybody gets a copy if you buy a membership to Tate. What that means is that the big institutions also do narration of their programmes, which is very interesting, but it does not have independence.

A.B. It’s narration. It’s not criticism.

JJ.C. It’s promotional, and inasmuch as it is promotional it cannot be critical, right? That would be my argument.

J.M. We are all coming from different perspectives. For me, there are actually three questions. The first two are very similar to yours, J.J., the first one being around independent art world news: “What is the value of that?” The second one is, “How are we going to sustain that?” We are not in the existential crisis that I indicated at the beginning and, indeed, some of the big publishers are beginning to find solutions. However, art news publications are very likely to follow the same footsteps. In sum, the second question is, “How are we going to sustain independent arts news publishing if we think it is valuable?”

The third question is a bit different. It’s about how we are going to do different forms of publishing that engage wide audiences. While I would love 150,000 people to read *The Art Newspaper*, that is not its target readership. It is focused on an inside art world. That means we are not the solution to reaching wider audiences. Magazines like the ones the Tate does are one of the ways to reach wider audiences. I very much take your point about criticism, J.J., but who are the specialist critical magazines writing for? Are you writing for a wider audience or are you writing for the same reader that *The Art Newspaper* writes for?

“HOW ARE WE GOING TO SUSTAIN INDEPENDENT ARTS NEWS PUBLISHING IF WE THINK IT IS VALUABLE?”

JJ.C. Our ambition at *ArtReview* is always to write for as broad a readership as we can achieve just by being very clear about how we edit. We face both ways in that sense: we are very attentive to the people who are really interested in the enthusiast market and we try to act as a kind of journal or record. We are very intolerant of sloppy writing and jargon, because that is how you get people to like good writing. It’s not always easy to achieve, but we like really good writing as much as we can commission it and edit it.

J.M. Who are your readers?

JJ.C. Our readers are the people you would expect: people between 25 and 45...

A.B. That’s quite young.

J.M. That is young.

JJ.C. That’s because the focus is on living art. As a rule, *ArtReview* doesn’t cover dead artists. I apologise to them! But we are trying to leave a critical trace of the present in the magazine and to do it in a way which does not purely repeat the notes of a press release. We do get young writers who have not learnt how to see a show and then write about it without repeating the press release. Even in that regard, there are tensions about how we make sure that our perspective is distinct from simply facilitating PR.

A.B. Do you get much feedback from your readers about what they want?

J.J.C. Not much, no. They buy the subscription.

A.B. You give them what they should want.

J.J.C. No, I think there is a trust issue. We have spent a long time trying to make sure that *ArtReview* achieves the kind of level of authority and accessibility that we would hope for. There have been moments in *ArtReview's* long history where it has not been that good. Under our current editorial project, if you want to call it that, we have done our best to set up something that is attentive and enthusiastic about what is going on in contemporary art without being slavish and sycophantic. There is a bit of play there, which is very important at the moment.

**“WE NEED TO BE ATTENTIVE
TO HOW WE CAN REGENERATE
OR DEVELOP A CULTURE OF
DISCUSSION AND CRITICISM AND
COMMENTARY.”**

I think people are very eager for discussion at the moment. It is a very strange time to be in. When people say, “Well, everybody only looks at Instagram and blah-blah-blah,” or, “They’ve got the attention span of a goldfish,” that is not necessarily the people you want to be writing for. I have noticed that I am reading fairly long-form writing more and more. It’s not necessarily in art magazines or websites for art magazines. I’m reading political, social or cultural commentary at length on what are quite ambitious independent websites like *The Atlantic* or *Jacobin*, a very leftist magazine that I’m into.

There are all kinds of things out there. *e-flux* is a very interesting example that is incredibly influential online and is very able to transmit extensive, detailed and quite partisan theoretical texts about what is going on in contemporary art. It’s not impossible. We need to be attentive to how we can regenerate or develop a culture of discussion and criticism and commentary.

A.M. I love print, don’t get me wrong, I really embrace it, but there is so much potential in online editorial. In a way, what both of you do is not necessarily tied to print.

J.M. No, I don’t feel it’s tied to print either, I agree. It is about trying to deliver things in formats that make sense for what you are trying to do and for the reader. Obviously, the great thing about digital is that it does make it easier for people to give you feedback. To be honest, it also makes it easier if you have the systems to do this. Again, for those of us in the smaller end of publishing, we don’t have all the tools that the big publishers have. *The New York Times* and *The Times* are doing a very good job with digital. We don’t have—at least yet—the technology to be able to follow what people are reading like they do, but that will come and it will be a very useful indication of how people are actually engaging with our content. As I say, it makes it easier for them to interact with us, which I think is a good thing.

**“THOSE OF US IN THE SMALLER END OF
PUBLISHING DON’T HAVE ALL THE TOOLS
THAT THE BIG PUBLISHERS HAVE.”**

A.M. Online, there is so much potential in terms of how fast you can put things out and how big the reach can be.

J.M. Sure, although speed can have its problems. We might come to that later.

A.B. Yes, it can. First, let’s talk more about your publication, Alison. Who reads *Gagosian Quarterly*?

A.M. We have a large mailing list.

A.B. It goes to your clients?

A.M. All of our clients, yes. We distribute it at art fairs, we’re on newsstands, we’re in museum bookstores... We are trying to get anybody who is interested in what we are doing and in our artists. We are developing an online magazine as well and we’re doing a lot of video content for it. We are really trying to put a lot of that out there regularly on social media platforms, because that is how you get the new audience who doesn’t know you yet.

A.B. I'm interested in these different platforms. How are you approaching that at the moment? You do video. Do you have much data on who is consuming this content on different platforms and what they like?

A.M. We have some, but there is a lot of work to be done there. The online magazine is still relatively new. We have a lot of social media followers and we are trying to give them storytelling moments, whether it's a specific work of art, an exhibition or something about why we are doing what we are doing. It has worked very well in terms of getting people to the site, having people stay on it and remain engaged, and increasing our social media following. It has had a big impact there as well.

A.B. You were talking about what stories people like earlier. To be honest, when we look at data analytics on our website, it can be quite misleading. If we were to publish a story about Ai Weiwei and cats or Marina Abramovi falling down or an Anish Kapoor sculpture, we would break the Internet.

When we looked at all of our top stories last year, it was "Banksy being shredded" by a million miles. Then it was "Man falls into Anish Kapoor sculpture" and then something to do with Marina Abramovi. It can be very misleading about what sort of content we should be providing.

J.M. Yes, but it has always been an issue. People say, "Look at your most popular stories"—which very often include some of this kind of stuff—"that's what you must publish," and I don't think of it like that. I don't think any editor really thinks of it like that. Those things are just useful indicators. This is what I mean about us not having the kind of software that more sophisticated big publishers have. They're not just looking at that.

A.B. The headlines.

J.M. Yes, but they are looking at what their subscribers are doing. If you subscribe to *The Times* or *The New York Times* or the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* or any of these—I am not an expert in this, I do sometimes go to conferences and feel a bit depressed because they have got such amazing tech that they are trying out, while here we are with our basic Google Analytics—, they are able to look at what readers and

their subscribers are doing in much more detail and feed that back to editorial. Then it is up to the editors to make decisions. To me, that's not a great deal different from letters pages. I think *The Art Newspaper* still does have a letters page.

If you are at *The Times*, you get an enormous letters bag. I think there are two members of staff, two full-time journalists, who decide what goes in *The Times'* letters page every day. That's another indication of what your readers think.

A.B. Do you get letters? Do you have "ye old mailbag?"

A.M. Actual letters? No.

A.B. People send them in. That's interesting because I feel like ten years ago, people sent far more letters than they do now.

J.M. You get a lot of emails that are not really publishable as letters because they tend to be short. Instead, people spend time doing forum testing of their readers. There are a lot of different ways you can get information from readers and it is useful information for an editor. I don't think that you want to be working silently where it's you and your thoughts and just shoving it out there and hoping everybody loves it. It's supposed to be a process of engagement, but you still use common sense. *The Art Newspaper* was an "Ai Weiwei Central" for a short while; it did seem that there were an awful lot of stories about him. But if you do that, it almost becomes a little joke inside the publication and you stop it. We know that's not what readers want in general.

A.B. There is so much content out there and people's attention spans are getting shorter. What can you do to stand out? How can you get people's attention?

J.J.C. I am always a little bit nervous of the snap judgement, "There is too much content and people's attention spans..." etc. Those arguments have been made every year for the last hundred years. You find these kinds of arguments about the acceleration of information and people's dwindling attention spans in the 1960s, alright? We are always complaining that there is too much information and that people can't pay attention to it all.

If you're interested, you slow down, and if you invest yourself, you start to pay attention to certain things. I switched off Facebook; I'm not interested in the conversations that are had there. I don't go on Twitter every day. I wonder, certainly, if those platforms are here forever. There is no law that says that Facebook and Twitter will be here forever, or Instagram.

What motivates me is to see people try to set up platforms which sustain their interests and which they hope will build and develop the interests of others. It's very difficult, but it's very much about that 1990s culture industry term, "the prosumer," the pro-consumer, the enthusiast or the person who is engaged. That is the readership we want to be interested in. We want to create that readership too, which does mean that we have to engage with people's curiosities and interests, but by and large, what we are doing at the magazine is trying to track and pay attention to where the mood is.

**"THERE IS NO LAW THAT SAYS THAT
FACEBOOK AND TWITTER WILL BE HERE
FOREVER, OR INSTAGRAM."**

Certainly there have been many years in the *ArtReview* where we have looked much more closely at artists who are trying to deal with the social and the political without losing sight of everything else. That is where we try to be responsive to the general cultural mood so that we can prioritise our attention in the magazine. That has an effect in terms of sustaining the brand's identity. It is a precarious thing to do all the time.

But I have to say, technology is something I would like to have more of. It is an expensive investment and a lot of publications have struggled to make that shift. I think the last five years have not been the time to do it because, essentially, the big mass media industry, dominated or driven by the developments of the big techs, was innovating so quickly and with such varied results that it was very difficult to be able to mimic or respond to those technologies, systems and innovations cost-effectively.

We have had to hold back a little bit, but we now see that there is a real shift. Everybody is trying to work out how to monetise and that has

been the big issue for tech media or network media content generators for the last few years. It is starting to get to the point where maybe we will see some ways in and out.

A.B. What are your thoughts on that?

JJ.C. You are starting to see lots of young people going to Patreon to set up the subscriber-philanthropist model. *The Guardian* is making more and more money from its donation and subscriber system, even though it has been losing money hand over fist for the last few years. Its plan is to try to push on those developments.

A.B. It's voluntary rather than a paywall.

JJ.C. Well, I subscribe to things as well.

A.B. Do you believe in the voluntary approach?

JJ.C. It's also interesting that paywall technology and design have become a lot more subtle. That also requires innovation and investment.

J.M. If it's good, it's expensive.

JJ.C. It is expensive and it requires chief data officers.

A.B. What does *ArtReview* do?

JJ.C. We don't have them.

A.B. Is your content all online?

JJ.C. We tried a paywall, which was very difficult to justify in the market. At the moment, we sell subscriptions to print and we make digital content free but with a delay. For the time being, it's enough whilst we try to work out how to make the next move, which is very tricky. It is interesting that just having a good subscriptions engine works. That sells. Some people say, "It's just selling online subscriptions." No, it's not. All that business about frictionless journeys through the subscriptions management and purchase is really important. It costs money.

We also have to think about the next phase and the next investment. We can see now that not only is the idea of an editorial platform in cultural, social and political commentary becoming a much more important place for people to go and read, but monetisation technologies and work methods are becoming more sophisticated. It's probably a good time to put some effort into that.

A.B. I'm going to flip the subject now onto podcasts, which are another area of grief. Alison, you don't do one at Gagosian, right?

A.M. We do not.

A.B. Have you considered it?

A.M. I have ideas. We are doing a lot of video at the moment, so we have really been focusing on that. As a visual arts organisation, video has huge benefits because you can see the work. Podcasts require a lot of time from the listener and I think they have to be truly engaging. I listen to podcasts because I am fond of the host or I'm super-interested in the political topic, but I am not totally sure if there is a podcast in the arts space that has figured out that chemistry.

“PODCASTS REQUIRE A LOT OF TIME FROM THE LISTENER AND HAVE TO BE TRULY ENGAGING. I AM NOT TOTALLY SURE IF THERE IS A PODCAST IN THE ARTS SPACE THAT HAS FIGURED OUT THAT CHEMISTRY.”

A.B. There are people like David Zwirner, Lisson Gallery, Sean Kelly...

A.M. There are a lot of podcasts, yeah, and they are all trying different things. Some of them are focusing on collecting and others more on collaborations or conversations with artists. They're interesting, but longevity with podcasts... I'm just not sure yet, personally.

A.B. Is it the format? You are not sure that podcasts as a format will continue to thrive?

A.M. No, I mean in the arts base. What we are trying to do is so visual. "A picture is worth a thousand words."

A.B. Yeah. Jane, what do you think about podcasts?

J.M. I started in radio and I am a BBC radio addict. For me, the idea that radio is popular is no surprise. It's quite interesting that it seems to have taken about thirty years for people to realise that an awful lot of people really like speech radio. There has been a lot of research around podcasts and there's no doubt that the audience for podcasts is growing. In fact, it's growing in a young audience in that 25-35-year-old age group, so, a lot of people want to tap into that. But what a lot of people are calling podcasts are actually BBC Radio programmes, and that's true in America too. This is a bit of a long-winded way of saying I think you could do really good stuff with radio—I'm going to call it radio rather than podcasts—and the BBC really shows that.

“IF SOMEBODY IS THINKING OF LAUNCHING A PODCAST, THEY NEED TO THINK ABOUT MUCH MORE INNOVATIVE FORMATS.”

At the moment, though, there are rather a lot of very similar and not particularly distinctive long interviews. They are not edited very well or very much. There is clearly a space for that, but it's already quite a crowded space. If somebody is thinking of launching a podcast, they need to think about much more innovative formats. I don't know if you've heard it, but Neil MacGregor, the ex-director of the British Museum, did a series called *A History of The World in 100 Objects*. It is just speech and you can go and look at the objects online, but you sort of don't need to. He describes them brilliantly. I think there is space for different formats, but there isn't much point in putting out person A talking to person B and running it for 40 minutes. They need to have more thought, more creativity than that.

A.B. We need to go to Q&A, but can I just ask one question? Alison, you work for the Gagosian, pretty much the biggest commercial art gallery out there. Our audience is made up of a lot of mid-level galleries. If you are a mid-level gallery and you're thinking about trying to do your own storytelling through content, what can you do? Is there anything if you haven't got the funds to produce something like your glossy magazine?

A.M. There is so much. There is a lot that could be done. When you figure out what it is that you want to communicate to your audience and who your audience is, that is the beauty of digital technology: you can do it in a very short form on social media, if it's quality. It has to really be well done, and by that I mean well-informed. Give it time. Don't just put things in the world flippantly. Really think about what it is you are trying to say. Do something in a series over a period of weeks. Keep people interested. I am very fortunate to be in a position to make a beautiful print magazine, but it is the ideas that people are interested in. If you have good ideas and you share them, there is so much potential.

A.B. It's images, ideas, quality and regularity, as well?

A.M. Yes. Think of things in the long-term. Don't just do this now and then do something completely different later. Have some sense of definition. "What is it that you are trying to do through this platform?" People will respond.

**"I AM VERY FORTUNATE TO BE IN A
POSITION TO MAKE A BEAUTIFUL PRINT
MAGAZINE, BUT IT IS THE IDEAS THAT
PEOPLE ARE INTERESTED IN."**

A.B. And a strong tone of voice. Does that play into it or is it about consistency?

A.M. Consistency, yes, and humour. Having a little levity. It doesn't have to be so serious.

A.B. Does your content have humour?

A.M. Sometimes, I hope so.

A.B. Great. We have to go to questions.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND QUESTIONS (C/Q) FROM THE AUDIENCE

Q1. Hello, this question is for J.J.: you were talking about fostering the criticism in *ArtReview*. The most-read edition is the "Power 100," but it seems a little bit controversial because the edition also finds supporters for the publication.

J.J.C. The "Power 100" is always an unusual thing for us, every year. Our usual slogan is, "It's the way the art world is, not the way we would like it to be," and it is the one time where we look at the system very closely. It started out as a euphoric, boosterish feature at the time when celebrity and status were very coveted. It has been running for fourteen years now and we have tried to make it a little bit more sober and a lot more critical, in the sense that it is trying to provide a true picture of who actually wields influence. That's it. The criteria of influence we apply have to do with commercial, institutional, critical and artistic influence. Those are the four criteria we bring to it.

A.B. Who are they influencing?

J.J.C. What we're interested in with the "Power 100" is to put people who were influential on the spot, as it were, or to expose or shine a light on them and leave a record of the people who had the power to make things happen. That is what the "Power 100" tries to do every year. Does that answer your question? Are you asking whether there's a problem with it?

Q1. The listing as a solution seems a little bit controversial. It seems like this solution is less about fostering criticism. Also, it's not clear who is identifying the "Power 100." The idea of listing is a little bit strange for me as well, in terms of philosophy.

J.J.C. It might be our most popular issue and people like it. The people who hate it most are the people who are on the list, because they always have an opinion as to whether they should be at their position. We have advertisers who won't advertise because they are not on the list. We get these weird emails every September from galleries just happening to tell us how much they have done this year.

A.B. I'm interested in that. How much pressure do you get with the "Power 100," particularly from your advertisers?

JJ.C. None. People have withdrawn their advertising because they've come off the list. The rest of the time everybody tolerates it.

A.B. Do they get back on the list then?

JJ.C. No. Not unless they have done something more than they've done the previous year.

A.B. Do they come back again?

JJ.C. Oh yeah. Plenty of times. But again, it's not driven by that.

Q2. Hi, could you explore a bit more the question of advertising and its impact or influence, together with PR?

A.B. That was one question we didn't get to, conflicts of interests. There are two elements, PRs and friendships with PRs, as well as advertising and pressures from advertisers. JJ, when we were on the phone, I think you said the *ArtReview* had quite a strict code of conduct when it came to these things. Could you explain a bit about that?

JJ.C. Yes, though I don't want to get too grouchy about the internal politics of these things. PRs have expanded. The market for PR has grown and grown. That has always been a bit of a bug for us because it means that galleries' budgets are redirected to intermediaries rather than to our advertising. We therefore have a somewhat tense relationship, not just because of that, but because we at *ArtReview* don't see why we need to be sold to. We make the decisions about what we think is good or bad and what we want to cover. Things like press trips have to be very carefully regulated. We don't take press trips unless it facilitates something we are already intending to cover and we won't sign up to press trips where there is a condition of coverage. Simple as that.

A.B. Press trips are a difficult one because if you do take them—which, let's face it, in most publications you have to—you wouldn't otherwise be able to afford to go to Taiwan or wherever. Do you have to be born with a silver spoon in your mouth in order to be a freelance journalist and to pay your way around the world? It does raise the question.

JJ.C. No. That is just to say that we accept press trips when it is something that we want to do anyway and the press trip facilitates us

covering it. Obviously and inevitably, there is a useful relationship to be had with certain PRs, the ones who actually bother about the culture of the magazine and know what we want.

That's the other thing. Good conversations with PRs are very useful. Random email-spamming PR companies that are staffed by a hundred minimum-wage account salespeople trying to get through to you saying, "Are you interested in this?" are not. No, I'm not interested. The PRs who will entertain a sensible, long-lead discussion with you, as in, "We need to know from you what the likely programme of your gallery clients is going to be so that we can plan," are good, and that has always been good.

**"IN THE NEWS MEDIA, CONFLICTS
OF INTEREST ARE AN EVERYDAY
ISSUE. YOU SHOULD BE WELL-
PREPARED FOR IT."**

A.B. Jane, what would you say on this?

J.M. I was just going to say that most publications—I cannot speak for the other arts news titles or platforms, but I imagine it is very similar—should have a set of guidelines around these matters. *The Art Newspaper* has one. I would say there are two main areas of conflict of interest. One is what I call internal pressures. That's all the stuff that surrounds your friendships, your business relationships, those kinds of things, issues of disclosure and editors being careful about constantly covering activities that come from the same PR company. That is part of an editor's job, keeping an eye on that stuff.

Then there is the stuff that I think of as external pressures. Those are things like advertisers putting the pressure on. It won't usually be directly on editorial. It will go in some other bit of the business. In the news media, it's often people that don't like a story or a point of view. Then again, the company should have codes of practice for dealing with that. In the news media, this is an everyday issue. You should be well-prepared for it and it should be something that is discussed periodically within the company.

A.B. One area that is specifically interesting is catalogue essays. A lot of journalists write catalogue essays.

J.M. That's the same issue as disclosure.

A.B. If you disclose it, then it's OK?

J.M. This isn't quite so relevant for most people at *The Art Newspaper*, but no, disclosure can mean a number of things. It could mean that you tell the editor when they want to make the commission. Number one, the editor will then have a discussion with you about whether or not you are the right person to take that commission. Number two, you might take a commission, it might be accepted and it may be decided that something's got to be printed in the paper.

**“I BELIEVE THAT WE NEED TO BE
DOING BETTER JOURNALISM THAN
WE ARE DOING.”**

There are no totally hard and fast rules. It is a question of discussing with the writer whether they should be the person writing that article or whether that commission should be given to somebody else. You could be married to a gallerist, for example. That happens. Journalists do actually end up married to gallerists, so, you just need to think about those things. But as I say, this stuff is a routine part of a professional independent publishing operation.

A.B. Alison, do you get pressures from advertisers?

A.M. Not really, no.

J.M. I rather want your job. But I suppose you're not writing about your advertisers because you take advertising from a totally different pool altogether.

A.M. Exactly, we're not covering them.

A.B. Maybe that's what we should all do, just have luxury fashion brand advertising to avoid the pressure.

Q2. Hello. It's great listening to you all, thank you. The economy of storytelling seems to be eclipsing the economy of journalism and there is a conflict there. I can hear it and see it in you. I feel conflicted with the catalogue essay versus journalism. Is there a mechanism to address that? I do think there is a wider issue, so that's my question to you, Jane, in terms of the economy of storytelling. Do you edit? Once you have commissioned a journalist to do a story, is that edited by you or does it go directly online?

**“WHAT I FEAR MOST FOR AT THE
MOMENT IS GOOD INVESTIGATIVE
REPORTING, THOUGH IT IS VERY
LABOUR-INTENSIVE.”**

J.M. I should explain that I am no longer the editor of *The Art Newspaper*, but I can certainly speak to how editing works because there is a very standard procedure. The issue for me is that we need to invest more in our journalism. The frustration and angst you are probably getting from me on the independent side is that I believe that we need to be doing better journalism than we are doing. I think we need to be increasingly relevant to our readers.

A lot of the things that are most relevant are expensive to do, whether it's a really good profile interview where you need a lot of background views and in-depth research, investigative stories, or even something very beautiful where, in a more consumer mode, you have actually filmed your interview with the artist and you can put up a beautiful gallery of their works, whatever it is. That's where I'm coming from. There is an imbalance between what the in-house sector is able to pay for and what we are able to spend as independent publications. Obviously, I do both sides, so I know where there is more funding.

You were asking about editing. Everywhere I work, there is a really careful editing process. Normally, a piece would be edited and then sub-edited. Next, it will be fact-checked and later be proofed, usually by two or three more people. There is slightly less thorough process if you are going online because you don't have to fit onto the page, but it is essentially the same for digital.

A.B. We certainly uphold that standard at *The Art Newspaper*. There are other places, though. I won't mention any names, but I did work for a glossy magazine where, quite often, you would have written, subbed, laid out, and then proofread the article yourself. I had to explain what a sub-editor was to my boss there.

J.M. Our journalists notoriously can't cut themselves. If I've written an article and I am really invested in it, I can't see that it could be a third shorter and it would be better. If you're convinced something is right, you are convinced it's right. That's why these processes are important.

**“IT WAS ALWAYS DIFFICULT TO GET
ADVERTISING OUT OF GALLERIES,
BECAUSE THEY FORGET THAT IT'S NOT
ABOUT INFORMATION. IT'S ABOUT
DISCUSSION.”**

A.B. I like your point about storytelling versus journalism. I think that there is a valid place for both of them. Richard Polsky said something about opening up *Gagosian Quarterly*, turning on some jazz and kicking back with a glass of wine. There's a place for that storytelling. What I fear most for at the moment is good investigative reporting, though it is very labour-intensive.

J.M. Time is an issue for everything. If you want to do a really good artist interview, you do not want to end up with half a day's research, an hour in front of the artist, and half a day to write up. That's not ideal.

A.B. You need the time. But you also need to pay the people who do it. Market writing is what I do—what both previous art market editors at *The Art Newspaper* do—but we have not actually spoken that much about it. That's another beast altogether, criticism. Again, these investigative pieces are brilliant to do, but they take a long time and you should be paying good money for them.

J.M. This is what people value. If we want readers to take us seriously, this is the kind of more in-depth writing we need to be doing. You were talking about more critical thinking as well. If a reviewer is very young, has not seen a lot of shows and is given half a day to write something, then it is not going to be the same as somebody who has been thinking

and looking and discussing art for twenty years and has the time to really investigate an artist's work.

J.J.C. I do think there is big confusion amongst pretty much everybody in the sector. How many gallerists take out an ad in a magazine? Here's the greater issue: do you want to create spaces where there is some other voice trying to deal with this same topic? Otherwise, what you end up with is a system where the power that dominates the institutions produces the stories. The politics aren't very complicated.

**“THE STRUCTURAL PROBLEM IS
ALWAYS THAT: IF YOU ARE THE
SELLER, YOU ARE ONLY GOING TO
SAY GOOD THINGS.”**

This is why early on, in the more active and dynamic period of post-war modernism—the perception of post-World War I, and then, in the 1970s and 1980s, the reception of post-modernism—small galleries were actively producing publishing spaces and supporting publishing spaces where those debates and those questions were being had. Indeed, one of the major reasons that people set up art publications is because the discussions they want to have are not happening in existing public spaces.

I understand that the middle market is feeling the squeeze, but it was always difficult to get advertising out of galleries, because they forget that it's not about information. It's about discussion. To support those spaces is to support the life that informs how the art makes sense. At the moment, people are so obsessed with the commercial realities of the market and the problems of disseminating one's own programme, presence and activity that they think that just because they tell a story in a press release, catalogue essay or in-house magazine, it means that's the story and other people will just buy it.

You need space for improvisation, trying things out and having different voices argue over what art production means. Otherwise, there is no purpose to criticism. If we knew what it meant, you wouldn't need criticism. It's a theoretical problem. The reality is that, culturally, if you just have people telling you, “This is what my artists do. This is why it's great,” all the time and no space in which that is actually tested,

assessed, disputed or confirmed, the whole culture becomes more and more sclerotic. That's the best word. It becomes atrophied and it loses its life.

It's very interesting listening to Elizabeth Dee talk about Independent and the idea of thoughtfully re-constructing or coming back to the issues of, "What discussion do we want to have? What stories do we want to debate and confirm? Who's going to do it?" The structural problem is always that, if you are the seller, you are only going to say good things. Sorry to be blunt about it, but that's it. Neither the Internet nor social media nor millennials alter that principle one atom.

"THE CONCERNS ARE COMING FROM THOSE OF US THAT ARE IN THE MEDIA. MY ARGUMENT IS THAT OUR DIFFICULTIES IN THE INDEPENDENT MEDIA ARE NOT GAGOSIAN OR TATE ETC.'S FAULT."

Iris Clert, the French gallerist, launched her newspaper *Iris Today* in 1962. It ran for fifteen years or so. She and many other gallerists who were publishing their own print publications tried to get their periodicals licensed by the French state press licensing system. A letter came back to her saying, "Very sorry, we can't license *Iris Today* as a newspaper periodical because it is essentially propaganda for your gallery." She obviously didn't like that, but the point is that that's the problem: where is commentary in media and where does it actually enhance the general culture we are working in?

A.B. Alison, what is your view on injecting some light and shade into gallery publications? Do you think it's their place or not?

A.M. We cover the artists that we believe in. There are so many stories that can be told or context that can be given for the different works they are making, so there is a place for a critical discourse on the show and there is also a place for, "This is what's happening in the studio before the show."

A.B. Do you feel there is a place for shade within gallery publications?

A.M. It says *Gagosian* on the cover, right?

A.B. Yes, it's pretty clear.

A.M. We are pretty forthcoming with what it is, so if you are opening it, by default you understand that there is a set of principles here.

"IF WE DO NOT MAKE A REALLY GOOD PRODUCT, NOBODY IS GOING TO WANT TO READ US AND WE WILL NOT BE RELEVANT."

J.M. There is a long history of museums doing their own publishing and brands doing their own publishing. Waitrose famously has its own magazine and people who buy it know what they are getting. They do not expect to get a critique of Waitrose, they expect to get nice recipes and that is perfectly valid. The concerns are coming from those of us that are in the media. My argument is that our difficulties in the independent media are not *Gagosian* or *Tate Etc.*'s fault. These difficulties are caused by massive shifts that have been washing over us for twenty years in the publishing industry. We haven't got much time to talk about solutions, though some are coming.

A.B. I was about to ask you about solutions.

J.M. We need to invest in journalism. If we do not make a really good product, nobody is going to want to read us and we will not be relevant. That is my biggest concern, trying to make what we do better and more relevant, and engaging our readers. I am hoping, and I guess other publishers are too, that this will partially be managed by the very welcome sign that more people are willing to subscribe to things than many of us thought.

We don't know how far we can push that model, but those of us in the business can probably agree that high-quality journalism pumped out free to air with the hope that it would be ad-supported was, as it turns out, a disastrous yet understandable strategy. Of course, it wasn't ad-supported because whatever advertising there is online is going to the social media platforms. I take quite a lot of hope from the fact that I find myself subscribing to eight or nine things. We will probably see something similar starting to happen amongst the arts

news publishers. We are going to hope that readers will believe in us and will support us by subscribing to us. In a weird way, that is a more comfortable relationship than relying on advertising.

The truth is, we are going to have to diversify business as well. I would expect to see conferences, events, training, data research... whatever you can do that takes your intellectual capital and uses it in some way that helps support publishing. That is what I would expect.

**“I SUSPECT WE WILL SEE THE
EMERGENCE OF A MUCH MORE
INVOLVED SUPPORTER READERSHIP
SYSTEM.”**

J.J.C. Jane’s points about diversification is key. It is certainly important to us. We are taking the *ArtReview* brand and doing other things with it, like organising conferences or panel discussions in partnership with events. We have been running a discussion programme at Chart Art Fair in Copenhagen for four years now. That model is very sensible because it takes the intellectual capital or the cultural position that you have anyway as an editorial and you send it into a different format, in a different situation, and it becomes a commercial proposition.

We need to look at the next move in digital platforms and digital reading. People don’t need to listen to podcasts about things that they can see on a screen. I totally take the point that it is a bit mad to publish lots and lots of podcasts with people describing something you could have a picture of. But I do think that that’s going to move and we need to be ready to push into that soon. Just the general diversification of how people are prepared to support things is really clearly an opportunity now. The other point is, do not forget that the advertising revenue-based model that Jane alluded to is going to be under a lot of pressure.

J.M. It already is.

J.J.C. Regulation is already causing a lot of trouble. I have a friend who runs a successful news aggregator website, but he is just waiting for the moment where regulation starts to impinge on traffic and how revenue is generated from ad spots.

Weird technical things will come along too, which we have to be aware of at the regulatory level. Facebook and Twitter are obviously under a lot of pressure. They are not going to last doing what they do the way they do it forever. The EU’s proposed regulations on copyright and the so-called link tax is very under the radar, but things will come along to bite even the current big revenue models. It will change. I suspect we will see the emergence of a much more involved supporter readership system.

A.B. We’re almost going to consumer-driven, again, then?

J.J.C. It’s a bit different, actually. I think it is going to be very exciting because people who actually believe in you will be the ones paying.

J.M. If we’re good enough.

A.B. Would you agree with that, Alison? Should priorities be audience over advertisers in some ways?

A.M. We are also advertisers. I have to say, we value advertising. I oversee a lot of that as well.

A.B. So you do both sides.

A.M. Yes. There is still huge value in the audiences that are paying attention to *The Art Newspaper* and *ArtReview* and a lot of magazines. We’re also doing more mainstream advertising in *The New York Times* and *The Financial Times*, and we see results from that. I’m the eternal optimist. I think there is still a huge value in spending money in that way for the gallery.

A.B. So, this is in no way a replacement for advertising more broadly around? You still need that breadth of media.

A.M. Since launching the *Quarterly*, we have continued or even increased our advertising spend in other magazines and newspapers.

A.B. Interesting. Thank you so much for listening and thank you for having us.

Süreyya Wille

Specializing in contemporary art from Asia and the Middle East, Süreyya Wille has worked with auction houses, galleries and online platforms promoting these growing markets. Süreyya currently works on the Global Strategic Partnerships team at global art platform Artsy, based in London. In this role, she drives partnerships with the world's most noteworthy art fairs, gallery weekends and gallery associations, to help them reach a wider audience of collectors and art lovers. Her work seeks to make art accessible to the rapidly growing audience of the digital age.

STRATEGIES FOR GOING ONLINE

SPEAKER
Süreyya Wille



STRATEGIES FOR GOING ONLINE

Süreyya Wille (S.W.) My intersection with the art world and technology began at artnet, in New York, where I was working with Asian and Middle Eastern galleries and bringing them onto the platform. From there, I moved to Hong Kong and opened Artsy's first office in Asia, where I got to work with Asian and Oceanic galleries. Now, I'm in London. So, I have gotten to experience galleries in many different markets. But I think we can agree one thing is the same for all of them: sales are important. They are make-or-break when it comes to opening and closing your doors at times.

In this sense, hopefully, this talk will be of some assistance to some of you. I believe that with a careful digital strategy and the help of the various channels we have now, you can tell your story, connect with institutions and artists, meet new clients, and make sales. What follows are some tips on that strategy that we've humbly put together based on testimonials from our galleries and what Artsy has learned over the last few years.

For those of you who might not know what Artsy is, we are the largest online art marketplace connecting buyers with inventory from a global network of galleries, auction houses, art fairs and institutions. Artsy partners with leading players in the art world and uses best-in-class technology to expand the art market and create more opportunities for artists. Here is how we collaborate with you, the gallery: we work with over three thousand partner galleries around the world who list works via Artsy, have access to our large global audience and have control over how their pages on Artsy work.



Let's talk about the growth of the online market. The same themes have kept coming up over the last two days. We can all agree that integrating the digital world into your business and using the Internet is of utmost importance, and buying and selling art online is increasingly popular. Over the last year, 70% of galleries sold art online to international collectors and 78% of millennial collectors purchased art online. By 2020, the online art market is predicted to be worth \$8.37 billion.

“OVER THE LAST YEAR, 70% OF GALLERIES SOLD ART ONLINE TO INTERNATIONAL COLLECTORS AND 78% OF MILLENNIAL COLLECTORS PURCHASED ART ONLINE.”

I'm going to review some key goals to think about when bringing your business online. These tips are directed primarily at galleries, but I think there are also relevant ideas here for museums, art advisors, art dealers, and other market players too.

The first goal to work on is establishing your brand's presence online. Get your artists and works discovered by collectors on the hunt. Drive sales online with an elevated customer experience and build lasting relationships with collectors.

Today, you can meet an art collector in far more ways than you could before. Aside from walking into your gallery or meeting you at your booth at an art fair, now you can be approached through a variety of online channels as well. When developing a strategy, a gallery business needs to map out its owned and operated channels—for example, its own website and social media feeds—as well as the third-party platforms they might be working with. Use social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram to increase awareness and cultivate relationships with potential collectors. Robust social media campaigns—paid or unpaid—should be initiated year-round in order to create content that will inspire and instill passion about art in a broader audience.

“ROBUST SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS—PAID OR UNPAID—SHOULD BE INITIATED YEAR-ROUND IN ORDER TO CREATE CONTENT THAT WILL INSPIRE AND INSTILL PASSION ABOUT ART IN A BROADER AUDIENCE.”

Because Instagram has come up so much at Talking Galleries, we should talk about the power of Instagram. When you upload a post to Instagram or Facebook, it gets surfaced to a sampling of your following. How it performs with that sample audience determines whether or not it will continue to get served, ultimately determining total engagement. In other words, if people do not immediately engage with your post, that post will not be pushed to a bigger audience. While it's hard to fully master the algorithm, there is a lot in your control to maximise your presence and make sure you get noticed.

Something else you can do is spend some time looking at your followers' feeds to understand what interests them. Engage with the content of followers whose brands and content align with yours, especially if they are influencers and have a lot of followers themselves.

Learn to take great photos. It does take practice, but it makes a huge difference. Not to be completely pedantic, but here are a couple of quick tips on how to take great photos on Instagram. I especially want to call out the importance of placing a person in the image, whether it's a real visitor to your gallery or a member of your team who is posing.

It can do a lot for the image because it shows people how to connect with the work. It also gives the work a sense of dimension.

The Power of Instagram *Taking a Great Instagram Photo*

1. Find the best light and keep your lines straight
2. Add a person to your shot
3. Process before posting—some great apps include Snapseed, Priime, and VSCO



Another part of your digital strategy is SEO, which is a very elusive term, at least to me. It stands for “search engine optimisation” and is an integral part of supporting a potential collector who is discovering your art. This is the practice of increasing the quantity and quality of traffic to your website through organic search results, meaning search results that are not paid.

SEO can be pretty complex and it is a difficult concept to wrap your head around, but there are many great resources out there to get you going. Just starting to pay attention to it to begin with is a great first step. Some ways to improve SEO are through original written content and optimised images with clear titles. Ultimately, developing traffic to your website and SEO can take years, so using a third-party platform with high SEO, such as Artsy, can assist in kick-starting your presence online.

On to third-party platforms: there are quite a few out there and—much like art fairs—you have to find the ones that fit your programme and attract your target audience. Third-party platforms can assist with building your brand, connecting you with new collectors and, most importantly, making sales. One way of doing this is to see where your competitors are. And, while nothing will ever replace viewing an artwork in person, you can certainly augment the experience with online tools

and promotion. There is no point in participating in an art fair if you are not going to promote your booth and events before, during and after the fair. The investment in time and money is too great, so use online tools to amplify your investment on the ground.

“THERE IS NO POINT IN PARTICIPATING IN AN ART FAIR IF YOU ARE NOT GOING TO PROMOTE YOUR BOOTH AND EVENTS BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER THE FAIR.”

Now I’m going to quickly run through a collector’s journey on a gallery website from their initial motivation to purchase all the way through to post-payment. By using the channels at your fingertips and a 360° approach, you can connect with buyers each step of the way to best address their needs, no matter which channel you are on.



First, initial motivation: how can your website assist a collector once they have decided to search for a work? Provide tools to build their confidence, including artist bios. Give context to the works that they can view.

Next, discovery. How can you support a collector discovering an artwork they want to buy? Make sure your inventory is available, up-to-date and visible on multiple online channels. How do you plan on making your unknown artists discoverable?

Here's where SEO development comes in. How should you navigate the more-saturated secondary market? By increasing your share of voice and engaging and interacting with your audience. Post interesting, unique content and know your competition.

Then, there will be some decision-making. How can you support a collector's decision to purchase? Upload multiple high-quality images of your works. If this collector is in a completely different country, they may never see it in person, so I cannot stress the importance of image quality enough.

“WORKS WITH VISIBLE PRICING INFORMATION ARE FOUR TIMES AS LIKELY TO CONVERT FROM INQUIRY TO PURCHASE.”

Transparency has been another theme at Talking Galleries. Be as transparent as possible with pricing and other information about the work. Some fun facts we've learned from our experience at Artsy are that over 40% of the for-sale works on Artsy have a visible price—or at the very least, a price range—and those works with visible pricing information are four times as likely to convert from inquiry to purchase.

Stay engaged with these inquiries and be available for communication with prospective collectors. Another important and really interesting fact that we have learned is that two-thirds of all reported sales on Artsy occurred when a gallery responded within 24 hours. This is the world of instant gratification. People need an immediate answer.

So let's suppose you've made it to payment. How do you make this as easy and painless as possible for the collector? Again, be transparent about additional fees, taxes, shipping costs, etc. Be up-front about the payment options that your gallery offers. There should be no surprises whatsoever about this.

Now you're in the post-payment phase. You have made the sale. How do you develop and maintain this relationship with a collector you may never meet in person? I think this is the really difficult part of the journey, because after all, the relationship you established is a bit weird. You have never met this person and you may never meet them. When a

collector makes an online purchase, place them into a category so that when new works by that artist or a related artist become available, you have a mailing list ready. You can alert your collectors when the artist they purchased is in a museum show or when an article is published about their work. Keep the dialogue going; it is now easier than ever before.

“TWO-THIRDS OF ALL REPORTED SALES ON ARTSY OCCURRED WHEN A GALLERY RESPONDED WITHIN 24 HOURS. THIS IS THE WORLD OF INSTANT GRATIFICATION.”

Lastly, I wanted to leave you with a little homework to take home and think about. There are four very easy steps you can do right now when thinking about your gallery's digital strategy.

4 Things That You Can Do Now—

Action Items

- 1.** List your channels—gallery, website, social media channels, email, contact database, third-party platforms.
- 2.** Plan specific online touch-points in between in-person opportunities to further promote your gallery and artists.
- 3.** List out the 2019 fairs and gallery weekend your gallery will participate in, and plan how you will use each of these channels to promote your artists and artwork before, during and after these key in-person moments in the year.
- 4.** Go through your contact list, and categorize your collectors taking into account their interests, budget, and taste.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND QUESTIONS (C/Q) FROM THE AUDIENCE

Q1. Thank you for the presentation. I'm a member of Artsy, so I use it and have had a very good experience. I have a question: why will a work be acquired more quickly if we state the price? I don't do it. I just write: "Price upon request."

S.W. Because it means that the person who is inquiring about the piece knows what they're supposed to be spending. Also, you don't want to waste your time when someone writes to you and they're only willing to spend \$1,000 when the price is \$10,000. Giving the price manages the expectations of both the buyer and the seller. I also invite the other galleries to impart their wisdom.

“HOW DO YOU DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN THIS RELATIONSHIP WITH A COLLECTOR YOU MAY NEVER MEET IN PERSON? KEEP THE DIALOGUE GOING; IT IS NOW EASIER THAN EVER BEFORE.”

Q2. Hi. Having heard a little bit about the redundancy of certain online platforms in relation to art and selling art, how is Artsy doing? Artsy was at the fore of this online market, but how is it adapting to the technological tides? How will it survive the next wave of technology?

S.W. As I was telling someone else, we're actually about 60% engineers, so we are constantly thinking about how to innovate. One of the newest features on the website is that—going back to what Tim Schneider was saying—we have an augmented reality feature in beta testing at the moment where you can lift up the piece and put it on your wall from your phone. When we did the zoom-in room, that was the first time it had ever been done, and at one point, the zoom-in capabilities were better than what auction houses had.

Q3. Hello. You gave us a lot of data at the beginning of and throughout your presentation. Was that all data you had collected from your own website or was that from surveys?

S.W. We don't ever ask galleries to report on what they have sold, but we do receive a lot of testimonials from both buyers and sellers. So yes, this is all data we've collected over the years.

Q3. Are you using a particular approach? If you're not asking for data, is there a specific survey?

S.W. We send out surveys, exactly.

Q4. Hi. I'm wondering if you notice any trends in sales activity around art fairs or at certain times of year or times of day.

S.W. Absolutely. I wish our social media director was here now to share some data. Just like in the rest of the art world, there is a seasonality, and that affects everything, from the time of day that our newsletter goes out to when we post an Instagram post or tell galleries they should be putting their works online. I think Thursday mornings between 9 and 11 a.m. is a time when everybody looks at their email, for example. In terms of buying, I wish we knew; that would really be the million-dollar answer and question.

“FOR WORKS UNDER \$10,000, PUBLIC PRICING IS BEST, BECAUSE THAT'S WHERE THE COMFORT LEVEL IN THE ONLINE LUXURY MARKETS AT LARGE IS NOW.”

We always see a surge in traffic on the website around an art fair. They're coming for the news. They're coming to look at the inventory posted on the art fair. In August, the website traffic remains constant, but there's no surge because, like the rest of the art world hopefully, we're on holiday.

Q5. Can you tell us what the highest price ever achieved on Artsy is?

S.W. Of a piece sold? Actually, it was last year. It was \$2.1 million. A London collector bought from a New York gallery off the app and it took three days. That's an outlier, obviously, but it was pretty exciting.

Q6. I think you said something along the lines of, “Works where prices are public on your platform are four times more likely to sell.” Is that for a particular price category, or would you say that’s across the board?

S.W. We usually tell galleries that for works under \$10,000, public pricing is best, because that’s where the comfort level in the online luxury markets at large is now. People are comfortable spending about \$10,000 sight unseen on a work. For works that are more expensive, most galleries will do a price range or not state a price at all. For the works that are more expensive and do have public pricing, it’s usually for well-known artists and multiples, for example. Unique works are still mostly just “contact gallery.” For less-expensive works, I would always recommend being up-front. You’ll see a faster sale.



Lerato Bereng

is a curator who was born and raised in Maseru, Lesotho. She is an associate director at Stevenson (Johannesburg and Cape Town). Bereng has curated numerous group exhibitions and projects. In 2010, Bereng was one of 10 curators from around the world to be selected for the Berlin Biennale's curatorial workshop. Bereng was selected as one of five young curators to participate in CAPE Africa Platform's Young Curator's Programme in 2008 for which she curated Thank You Driver, an exhibition on minibus taxis as part of the Cape '09 Biennale.

Touria El Glaoui

was listed amongst the 100 most powerful women in Africa by *Forbes*; amongst the 50 most powerful women in Africa by *Jeune Afrique* in 2015 and in 2018; and the 100 most influential Africans in business by *New African* in 2013. She is the Founding Director of leading international art fair, 1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair, which takes place in London, New York and Marrakech every year. She has spoken widely and chaired numerous discussions on contemporary African art and women in leadership at international organisations. El Glaoui is also on the advisory board of Christie's Education in London.

Peter Gerdman

is the Head of Market Analysis and Products for ArtTactic, the global market leader in producing dynamic research, analytics and intelligence reports for the art market. Gerdman oversees research and ArtTactic's portfolio of products and has a track record of developing insightful analytical tools and reports for the company's clients, ranging from individual members to major partners. Prior to joining ArtTactic in 2016 Gerdman had worked for Sotheby's in London and Bukowskis in Stockholm, as well as for various companies in the art industry, including *The Art Newspaper*.

Bomi Odufunade

co-founded Dash & Rallo Art Advisory, an international bespoke consultancy specialising in contemporary art from all regions of Africa and the American and Caribbean diaspora. Odufunade has over two decades of experience in the arts, having held roles at leading publisher Thames & Hudson, world-renowned museum Tate Modern, and contemporary art galleries Haunch of Venison and Timothy Taylor in the UK.

AFRICA'S GROWING MARKET

SPEAKERS

**Lerato Bereng, Touria El Glaoui
& Peter Gerdman**

MODERATOR

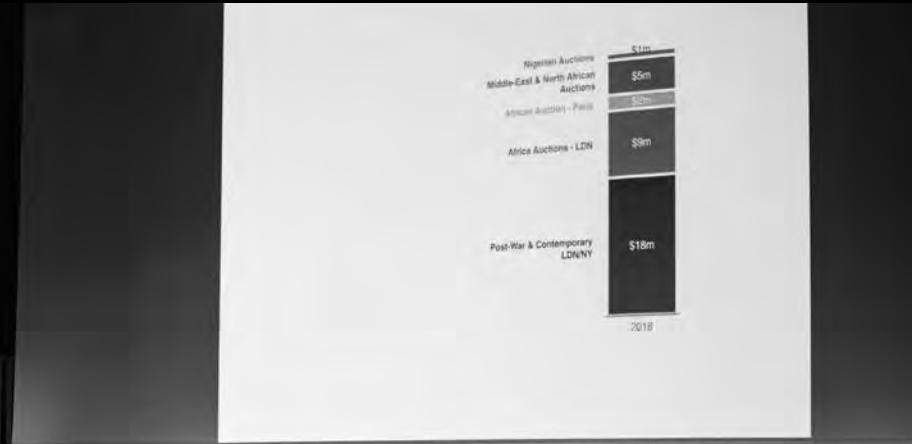
Bomi Odufunade

AFRICA'S GROWING MARKET

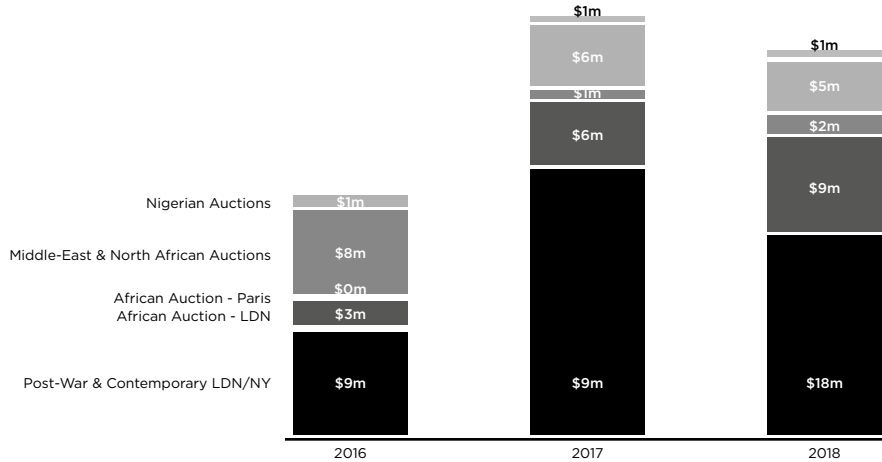
Bomi Odunade (B.O.) Hi and welcome. Everybody on this panel has different elements to contribute. We are going to mix in working in the cultural vein, biennales and how the market has restructured in the last decade or so. We'll start with Peter Gerdman, who will present some data upon which we can later start a debate.

Peter Gerdman (P.G.) You can approach the 2018 market overview in many different ways. You could look at the diaspora, the second generation, or you could look at artists who are based in Africa. For the purpose of the data I am presenting here, I look at artists who were born in Africa, but may have moved somewhere else. We are going to talk about modern and contemporary African artists who were born in Africa with data sourced from various sales channels. In 2018, we saw \$34 million in African artists' sales at auction, which is slightly down from 2017, but there might be a reason for that, which we can look at later. Most importantly, there is substantial growth from 2016 in both the one-year and two-year horizon.

If we break those numbers down by sales channel, the largest section of the 2018 figures comes from regular post-war and contemporary day and evening sales in London and New York. These are African artists being sold across Phillips, Sotheby's and Christie's. The second-largest channel in this market overview is the London dedicated sales of modern and contemporary African art, so, Sotheby's and Bonhams' regular sales taking place in London. A smaller section of the total African artists' sales for 2018 are the PIASA dedicated

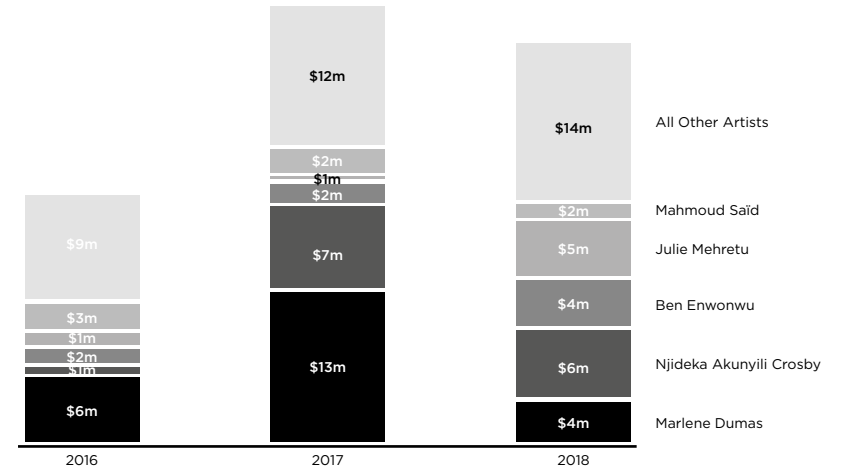


African sales in Paris. The share of North African artists in the Middle Eastern sales in both Dubai and in London is larger than the PIASA share but smaller than the London dedicated sales. Finally, the smallest section corresponds to Arthouse, a Nigerian auction house. A shortage of time left me data-less, so Strauss, a South African auction house, would have contributed another bit to the total, but perhaps those numbers will come out in a future report.



If we see how the same type of breakdown compares with the numbers from 2017 and 2016, the 2017 regular post-war and contemporary sales in London and New York made up a huge chunk of the 2017 total. This is primarily due to a few top results from some of the highest-selling artists from the African continent. However, the really interesting thing is the dedicated sales. In 2016, the African auctions in London and Paris come in at just over \$3 million, whereas in 2018 they reached \$11 million. That is quite some growth within a very specific dedicated sector of the African art market.

If we break the sales numbers down by top artist, which is always quite fun, Marlene Dumas is the top name. Over the three-year period, though not in 2018, her market was the biggest out of all artists coming out of this region, followed by Njideka Crosby and Ben Enwonwu, Nigerian artists; there is also Julie Mehretu, and an Egyptian artist, Mahmoud Saïd. A section adding up all the other 630 artists from this data set make up the remainder for the year.



The distribution of just the top five compared to the remaining 630 is quite interesting and rather falls in line with what we would see in other markets, where you have a few top artists controlling the majority of auction sales. If we focus on the top artists, what is really nice is that you have three living artists in the top five and they are all women.

“AMONG THE TOP FIVE ARTISTS, THREE ARE LIVING ARTISTS AND THEY ARE ALL WOMEN”.

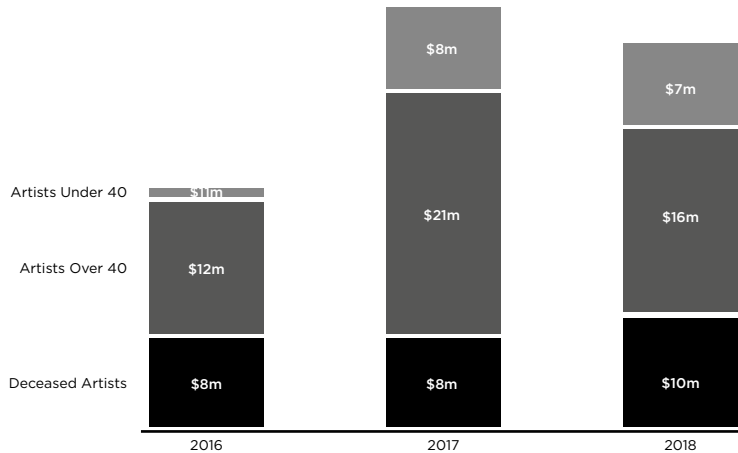
Although it doesn't come from the same data set, a comparison with American artists across all major sales in London and New York produces five men and they are all dead. What if we compare the African data to the United Kingdom? The United Kingdom's top five are not all dead, but they are another five men. This obviously ties back to the “Women Artists on the Market” talk.

I wanted to briefly mention Njideka Crosby. We put out a report late last year called the “NextGen Report” where we looked at artists under 40 globally. We looked at some 1,300 artists and not at the market. The market was a very small bit. We looked at museums, exhibitions and both private and public collections, as well as social media following. We looked at everything you could possibly look at in an artist's career and tried to come up with a system we could grade. Ultimately, it cannot be graded, but we can look at who is most important in the

eyes of everyone from all different angles. We mapped out the full career paths of these 1,300 artists and Crosby came in as number one.

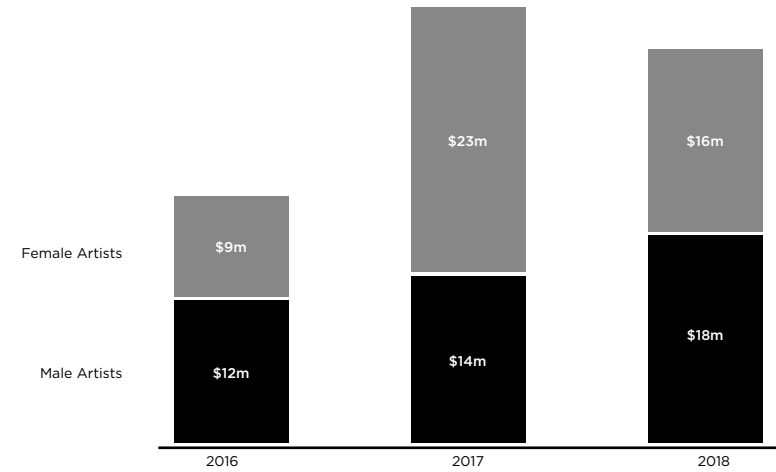
I highlighted a few other names from the African continent. There are more in the research, of course, but the names of the ones who scored the highest are Tunisian, Moroccan, Algerian, South African, Angolan and Congolese artists. It's a nice mix.

If we look at the age groups for the auction figures, perhaps "deceased artists" is not an age group per se, but nonetheless relevant. We had artists over 40 and under 40 as the other two groups. The result is quite a contrast within the market, with a larger living artist portion and deceased artist percentage.



Often, the age grouping figures would be the exact opposite, where deceased artists would have a fairly larger chunk and then you would have living artists at the top end of the market.

Another data breakdown looks at the gender splits between male and female artists, which splits relatively evenly. It is really nice to see much more balanced figures, because I often see 95% men and 5% women when we do summaries of auction sales and various markets.



I could break this data set down in a million different ways, which, indeed, is what we do. Before we move on, however, I thought we could have a quick look ahead to 2019. At the beginning of each year, we do something called an outlook survey. We ask people in the industry from all over the world how they feel about the market regarding the next twelve months and we ask the same question about each of the major regions or continents. What we got on Africa is that 47.6% believed the market will go up, 41.3% believed the market would be stable with no immediate change and only 11.1% thought it would go down.

“47.6% OF THE PROFESSIONALS WE SURVEYED BELIEVED THE AFRICAN MARKET WILL GO UP, 41.3% THAT IT WOULD BE STABLE AND ONLY 11% THAT IT WOULD GO DOWN.”

This is the strongest result we saw out of all the different regions among the Middle East, Latin America, America, Europe, Asia... you name it. While last year's result was significantly stronger, I believe that really comes down to the economic and political situation we're in and that it really doesn't have anything to do with the African art market. Africa is the top market in this survey.

B.O. The list of top artists from Africa is really interesting because one of the most difficult things about the continent's growth is that

people never realise that there are 54 countries. If you compare it to something like Latin America, where there are twelve countries that all speak the same language except for one country speaking Portuguese, we have 54 countries that speak French, English and Portuguese. What is very definitive about Peter's list is that the diversity of the artists' nationalities gives you a real sense of the intercontinental nature of breadth of the market's growth. That contribution has really spiked interest in the arts.

“WHEN I STARTED 1-54, IN 2013, IT WAS DIFFICULT JUST TO FIND THINGS THAT WERE GOING ON OR HAPPENING AROUND CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN ART.”

Many different factors have contributed to the way in which this has happened, but two of the key ones are artists, especially those remaining and working on the continent, in addition to art fairs in the market, one of the biggest factors in terms of selling. Touria, you started 1-54 in 2013. Before that, there was practically nothing, only at the top end with people like El Anatsui.

Touria El Glaoui (T.E.G.) Yes, though let's be fair, there was the Johannesburg Art Fair.

B.O. Joburg Art Fair, yes, but not internationally. Tell us a bit about the connections.

T.E.G. The mission of 1-54 was always to give visibility to artists that have not been visible over the past twenty or thirty years. I laugh a bit about this data, as much as it is true, because when you think about it, the top category of artists have been in auction houses for decades. Take Marlene Dumas. She has been around for so long, for so many decades already. There is a lot of hope for the new generation coming up.

I remember that when I started 1-54, it was difficult just to find things that were going on or happening around contemporary African art. Simon de Pury's sale, which I think took place in New York in 2010, was one of the only sales I knew about. Bonhams also started a sale that focused on contemporary African art. When I was looking at this business model, not coming from the art world, I was sure that

somebody would tell me, “Hold on, there are already three fairs that are dealing with contemporary African art on the global stage.” I was a bit shocked by the fact that it had never taken place in Europe or the United States.

“CURATORS DID AN AMAZING JOB OF PROMOTING AFRICAN ARTISTS BEFORE THERE WERE ANY ART MARKET PLATFORMS FOR THEM.”

Obviously, the landscape has changed enormously since 2013, which is evident through the fact that we started with seventeen galleries at Somerset House in 2013. I think we had 6,000 visitors. This is a fair that started with no group behind it, no capital or anything, so we never advertised. I never paid for a page of advert. I'm sorry to all the publishers, but we never had the money to do that. However, we had very strong editorial from the beginning, which I do thank publishers for, because that really helped the fair's reputation and credibility. I remember doing research about finding exhibitions and there were some very strong curatorial exhibitions that took place before 1-54, but they happened at a pace of five years. Every five years, there was a big African exhibition somewhere. Curators did an amazing job of promoting those artists before there were any art market platforms for them.

Today we welcome 43 galleries in London with 18,000 visitors to what I guess is our flagship fair, the biggest of the three. In 2015, we were able to go to New York and start a fair in Brooklyn at Pioneer Works. We are now celebrating our five-year anniversary there and it has been getting stronger and stronger. Plus, we were finally able to get back to the continent with the fair in Morocco. Today, we send a newsletter to all our collectors about what is happening in contemporary African art, and I remember that in 2013 this newsletter could not exist because there were not enough contemporary exhibitions around the world. Now we have to curate it, because there are so many events happening around contemporary African art.

At the beginning I also remember everybody trying to compare African art with Asian or Latin American art as a trend. I hoped so, but there was not enough happening yet to make it a trend. Obviously, you want

constant growth in all those markets, but what is very interesting now is that, for the first time, I went to Art Basel Miami and I felt like it was a trend. Every fair had invited all the galleries from Africa. All the galleries had either African-American artists or African artists. They all had picked some up, so now I feel like there is real engagement with the contemporary African arts. I'm really excited to see those numbers and how they are going to evolve in a couple of years' time. From 2013 to 2018, things have changed drastically for me in terms of what we do, the application demand we receive and also the type and quality of collectors that go to the fair.

**“NOW I FEEL LIKE THERE IS
REAL ENGAGEMENT WITH THE
CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN
ARTS.”**

B.O. Lerato, you work in a country where the art scene was pretty much derelict until 1994.

Lerato Bereng (L.B.) I wouldn't say it was derelict. I think the structures were few and far between, but there has always been a very significant practicing art world. When the gallery started, sixteen years ago, two of our partners had gone to Documenta. When they came back, they had started thinking differently about what a gallery could be, looking at a different model and thinking strategically about visibility.

I use the word “strategically” carefully because I think the practices of the gallery and the way we operate are really quite thoughtful and slow. We really do put a lot of care and love into putting it together and figuring out how we want it to be presented in the world, how our artists are perceived elsewhere and how to reach broader audiences. One of the core parts of our programme is our publications, for instance, which we distribute far and wide, because, for better or worse, we are at the bottom part of the world. It is essential for us to be seen on an international stage and to participate in these international dialogues.

B.O. When was the first time the gallery decided to do a fair? Was it in Joburg or Cape Town first?

L.B. No.

B.O. It wasn't? How long were you just selling to the local community and then how did it expand from the domestic level?

L.B. From the very beginning, we have been doing Paris Photo. It was our very first fair. We've been doing Paris Photo for about ten years. I think we celebrated our tenth anniversary last year. It was apparent from the very beginning that we needed to get out in order to be seen, taken seriously and not to miss out on international dialogue. As much as we pride ourselves on being located on the continent—and our location is very important to us—it is equally important for this location to be seen on the world platform.

**“PARIS PHOTO WAS OUR VERY FIRST FAIR.
FROM THE VERY BEGINNING WE NEEDED
TO GET OUT IN ORDER TO BE SEEN,
TAKEN SERIOUSLY AND NOT TO MISS OUT
ON INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE.”**

B.O. How did the difference between selling to the domestic market and selling at international houses affect the dynamics within the fair?

L.B. Joburg was the first fair that we did on the African continent and it took a few years to get going. It took about six years for us to start seeing progress and growth in the fair. There was a moment when, suddenly, the continent was receiving attention and I think one can attribute it to the strength of the local fairs, which, of course, did very important work. However, I think the visibility at the international fairs was, again, one of our biggest turning points, for example, being in Art Basel. Suddenly, we were in the same neighbourhood as the top ten galleries in the world for three days. It really does make a difference. It really does cast a light on the work we are doing at the gallery in South Africa. Initially, I think there was only one African gallery at Art Basel. Now there are three, so it is growing and that is really exciting for us. That is really important, and of course it is very important that platforms like 1-54 exist to amplify this visibility. There is a lot to be said about playing on a different scale as well, though.

B.O. One of the things that I find really interesting is the fact that even though you are a South African gallery, the programme now represents artists throughout the continent. Even though the fair looks throughout

the continent, sometimes I hear things like, “80% of the African market is one country, the rest is just two other countries.” How did you go about reaching out of the continent from within the continent and not just locating the gallery to South Africa?

“UP UNTIL SIX YEARS AGO, IN SOUTH AFRICA THERE WERE VERY FEW ART INSTITUTIONS THAT WERE ABLE TO DO AMBITIOUS SHOWS AND KEEP THE PULSE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE.”

L.B. From the onset, we were looking at artists elsewhere, including artists in African diaspora. Our programme started with what was around us, and the artists that were doing really important work in South Africa, then southern Africa, and then Africa, and then America and everywhere else. It is about looking at a particular kind of sensibility, dialogue and politic that I think aligns to where we are in the world, but we are not an exclusively African-representing gallery. We work with Viviane Sassen, who is Dutch and lives in Amsterdam. There is space and fluidity in our programme, and that has always been really important. We started a forex programme many years ago, long before I worked at the gallery, which created international dialogue and brought artists to South Africa, often for the very first time.

This was also in response to the situation in South Africa, where there were very few art institutions up until six years ago. There were very few art institutions that were able to do ambitious shows and to keep the pulse on the international dialogue. We started it as a response to that, partially because there was very little going on our part of the continent. Fortunately, these institutions have sprung up in the past couple of years, so now we have a little less responsibility on that front. I don't think it's healthy for it to have remained in a commercial space. I think it is important that this happen in independent public spaces.

B.O. Peter, how do you feel about this? One of the feelings I get is that the market is still relatively young in terms of the effects of the auction market. What do you feel the pluses and minuses are for the contemporary art scene in Africa? Is it a good thing that you are documenting all these things now, or does it need five or ten years to grow?

P.G. From a global perspective, you cannot really compare it to the big London-New York sales. If you look at the market share of the whole African continent within the big post-war sales last year, it is comparable to Romania's. And that is all the African countries together. Romania had Adrian Ghenie, of course, who has superstar status, but we are seeing similar superstars in Njideka Crosby, for instance. There is a lot less out there on the market, so you can't really look at it this way now.

“THE AUDIENCE THAT VISITS US EXPECTS TO SEE MORE SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN ART THAN NORTH AFRICAN ART.”

B.O. Do you feel that the results represent a conciseness of the continent or do you think it is still a little bit one-sided? When you look at the map and what is going on, there are countries where there is literally nothing and then there are various other countries where there is so much going on.

P.G. For sure, that's true. But Bonhams is almost like a Nigerian sale, so therefore we will see a huge portion of the market being Nigerian art, which is not at all true looking at the bigger art world. It is, nevertheless, what we are seeing being channelled into London, Paris and New York in the major sales there, or the North African artists that appear in Dubai or the Middle Eastern sales.

B.O. These sales don't include North Africa, so we are talking about literally the south of the continent.

P.G. No, these included North Africa as well.

B.O. Oh, they do? They are usually separate sales.

P.G. Usually, yes. Middle Eastern and North African sales are usually just called Middle Eastern modern and contemporary sales. That's where you see Egyptian, Algerian, Tunisian and Moroccan artists. If you only look at the Africa-dedicated sales or most sales on the continent, you wouldn't see a lot of North African artists, because they are primarily picked up within the Middle Eastern market context.

T.E.G. This is now changing with Sotheby's. They are including more North African artists in the African sales. I think they are getting back that North African part from Middle Eastern North Africa. I don't know if it's a good thing or a bad thing, but they have tried to include more North African artists in those sales.

P.G. That's good. We are also to blame for the divide. Our report on the Middle East includes North African artists, so when we look at that market, we look at that region, because that is how the sales are structured.

“WE ARE ENTIRELY INVESTED IN HAVING ACTIVE RELATIONSHIPS AND DIALOGUES WITH OUR ARTISTS. IT'S NOT ABOUT HAVING A BLOCKBUSTER LIST.”

B.O. Touria, you are doing that with your fair, which is the most interesting thing. You are looking at 54 countries.

T.E.G. Yes, we have always included North Africa, but it is true that even the audience that visits us expects to see more sub-Saharan African art than North African art. We never made a point of separating anything, but the reality is that people expect to see more of that at 1-54. Even for us, even though I'm Moroccan, it took a bit longer at first to convince North African galleries to do 1-54. Now, they are all for it, but it took a good two or three years to convince them to do the fair.

B.O. I want to talk about some of the challenges of representing artists as a dealer in the south of the continent. Lerato, you are far away. How have relationships with artists evolved over the years? How has that contributed to the uniqueness of your situation? This is one of the few avenues where there is positive growth in every aspect. Even though it's slow, it is still getting there.

L.B. I think our difficulties are international. Of course, we are additionally tasked with our geographical situation, but I call it a situation, not a problem, because I think there are a lot of positive aspects to being located on the African continent. But yes, we are very far away, everything is very, very expensive and our currency is absolute shit, so it is hard, but it's not impossible.

Just looking at the gallery model and how we have grown is the clearest sense of progress I could speak to. We now have eleven partners. We are all part-owners of the gallery, which is a very interesting structure that is found few and far between. We really work in a collective sense and I think we succeed at that. We take the principle of collective sensibility into account with how we work with artists too.

“PEOPLE DIDN'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN ART, SO WE MADE SURE 1-54 HAPPENED IN PARALLEL TO AN IMPORTANT CONTEMPORARY FAIR.”

The fact is that we have great relationships with the artists with whom we work. We keep our list very alive, very fresh, very connected. It's not about having a blockbuster list. We are entirely invested in having active relationships and dialogues with our artists, and I think that goes a long way in terms of nurturing these relationships, nurturing their careers, even establishing a form of co-dependency, where we would not exist without our artists. If anything, we really would not exist without artists and that has been acknowledged internationally. I was looking at our list and just under 50% of the artists that we work with also work with galleries abroad, meaning galleries in Europe and the United States. Most of these relationships have developed in the past five years or so, which is interesting.

B.O. Touria, with 1-54, one of the things you do is work with artists, but you also work with curators. What other elements have contributed to the growth in the market in this sense? I know when you were doing the fair in Marrakesh, you were originally going to time it with the biennale, which then didn't happen. Have those other avenues been a positive influence?

T.E.G. Our strategy from the beginning was always to piggyback on something else. We knew we were not big and important enough to be on our own in London at that particular time period. People didn't know much about contemporary African art, so we made sure we happened in parallel to an important contemporary fair. That is why we strategically chose to be during Frieze and leverage the fact that their collectors were in town to discover contemporary African art.

We also knew that a lot of people would discover contemporary African art for the first time there, so we thought it was very important to have what we now call 1-54 FORUM, which was basically a platform for critical discussions, artists' talks, performances and anything that could surround and give more gravitas to the fair. People who wanted to know more could also attend that programme.

**“AFRICA IS PROBABLY THE ONLY
CONTINENT WITH THIS MANY PROJECTS,
NEW MUSEUMS OR PRIVATE ART SPACES
OPENING UP.”**

We did something else completely different from the large fairs. Instead of having a selection committee made up of galleries that did the fair, we created an independent selection committee with a curator, the director of a famous gallery in London—who had nothing to do with contemporary African art—and myself. I played a referee kind of role with them, since I knew more of the stories about the galleries.

That system was quite important, because the director of a London gallery had a good eye for what would work for the London audience and for the people coming from Frieze. The curator had the respect of all the artists because she had worked with them in a couple of exhibitions. She was amazing about letting us know which galleries had strong programmes that were based on the continent, because she had worked with them in the past. Honestly, all those factors were extremely important for building the fair's reputation.

I think it is a more curated fair because we are small and we are able to do that. We don't have to manage 300 galleries. Our largest fair is only forty-three galleries, so we do have a personal relationship with all the galleries. For a lot of them, it was their first time participating at an international art fair, or at least a fair based in London. For a lot of the artists, it was the first time that they had ever been in an international exhibition. It was their first appearance on a global stage.

Even thinking about the catalogue, most fairs have catalogues that promote the galleries. We had to do the opposite, where we were promoting the artists instead of the gallery because a lot of those artists were completely unknown to the visitors and were very difficult

to find on the Internet. I'm talking 2013 and things have changed, but a lot of the biographies did not exist for those artists, so we had to create a catalogue that gave you a reference point you could consult later on if you wanted to know more about an artist after you left the fair.

We have the opposite situation to other fairs regarding all of those things that seem to be issues like gallery turnover or not having enough galleries. There are so many new galleries opening up on the continent. It is probably the only continent with this many projects, new museums or private art spaces opening up. Every year, there are at least five or six new things coming from the six or seven countries you are talking about. I still don't see that many new museums in the United States or in Europe. When a new one opens up, we all know about it because there is only one. In contrast, I have to keep up with so many different things happening on the continent.

The ideas of being smaller and having a more curated show are the models that many fairs are now discussing. We started like that, so that is our model. We are small and we have strong relationships with the galleries. We know the artists. They all come to the fair. It is very important to us to have them there too. Most of the fair's success is due to this very intimate experience where artists still have galleries who are willing to explain things to them and are present often. I know a lot of artists don't like big fairs, but in our case, we are lucky enough that they love to be there. We make sure that if the artists are not present at FORUM and the talks, the galleries have to bring one as part of the fair, so there is always a nice group of artists present during the fair.

B.O. I am sure you get many people applying to the fair, but is there any time when you find things and then go to someone and request that they come?

T.E.G. Yes. A lot of fairs do that and we have special projects as well. What we have realised is that even though there is increased interest from the international audience in African art, they still do not travel to Africa to discover something. They are willing to come to the fair in London or in New York, but they are not yet willing to go there. I'm not talking about Cape Town, of course, I'm talking about coming to Dakar for the biennale or the Bamako biennale.

We thought we could help in that regard by providing special spaces to highlight some events that are taking place in Africa. For instance, one year we did the Addis Foto Fest, where we gave them a space. One year we gave a space to Fondation Zinsou, which takes place in Benin. We had the chance to do an exchange collaboration with Simon Njami in New York with the Dakar biennale. A lot of the New York collectors did not know about the Dakar biennale, so it was a very nice way to engage them with it and a lot of them signed up to go the following year.

“EVEN THOUGH THERE IS INCREASED INTEREST FROM THE INTERNATIONAL AUDIENCE IN AFRICAN ART, THEY STILL DO NOT TRAVEL TO AFRICA TO DISCOVER SOMETHING.”

The only time we work directly with the artists is at every fair, but it's on a project basis. For example, we have this very ambitious large-scale sculpture at Somerset House which we commissioned an artist to do. Obviously, a gallery is involved, but it is about us choosing a project that will benefit the fair. Somerset House also has to agree to have that sculpture because it is a public sculpture in their courtyard, so a lot of things come into play. We do work directly with artists when it comes to special projects, but not as a booth or as a fair. The project could be a performance, a sculpture or a video that we will show by a certain artist, but mainly, our clients are the galleries and that is our business, to sell. In the end, you want the gallery to sell.

B.O. You briefly mentioned that biennales, which we discussed earlier this morning, are a very important part of this growth. It's about curators placing artists in the contexts of their works, especially with Angola winning the Golden Lion in 2013 and South Africa coming back in 2011. One of the key biennales we always talk about, which really ignited growth on the continent, though, was the Johannesburg biennale in 1996 or 1997. Tell us a little bit about why it was a spark.

L.B. It was a seminal moment when we had a lot of the world's attention, or some of it at least, and for South Africa and the continent it was the largest curated project. Olafur Eliasson was there. Big moments happened. It was the first time that a lot of international artists were

seen on the continent. Conceptually, it really was a turning point for a lot of galleries, and not just for them, but the whole arts landscape on the continent and the imagination of what was possible and what could be done. That is why it is always a reference point and continues to inspire exhibitions. It inspired the birth of our gallery and other galleries, so it certainly is a seminal moment.

“THE 1996 JOHANNESBURG BIENNALE WAS A SEMINAL MOMENT WHEN WE HAD A LOT OF THE WORLD'S ATTENTION.”

It is off-topic, but I wanted to go back to something Touria said about trends and about South Africa being a space on the continent where multiple museums and art spaces are coming up. I'm cautious about the term “trends.” I don't think anybody necessarily wants to be a trend, because a trend is something that starts and could disappear. However, this does speak to an increase in interest in the African continent, which really just means that we are not being ignored anymore, if I were to reduce it to one point. As a result, more spaces are emerging on the continent because there is a market. Suddenly, there is visibility and a sense of attention. People are coming. To say that there is exponential growth in the number of spaces is absolutely correct and true. However, we had to start from scratch. There was nothing and now there is something. It is difficult to look at statistics like that as a boom or a particular kind of, “we've got the attention of the world.” I think we are just normal now. We are being looked at in the way that a lot of places have been looked at and people are even over it.

B.O. Drawing from that, tell us about the way forward. What do you want that you haven't reached or aspired to yet?

L.B. I think a lot has been done, but there is still a lot to be done. If the galleries listening to this talk all looked at their programmes and added an African artist, then we would be talking about something. That is visible change. But we're not there yet and there is certainly a lot we can all do to contribute and pay dues where they are due.

T.E.G. Yes. I definitely think that for all us Africans, the aspiration is definitely to increase our collector base locally. When I see the numbers in Marrakech, which is based on the continent, 95% of the work is still being bought by international collectors. If I wanted this growth to go somewhere, it would definitely be to get the troops on the continent to start buying their own art and hopefully not go straight from not buying art to buying a Picasso. We would like them to first support African artists from either their region or their city. They don't have to go far. They just have to support their local art scene.

“WE ARE NOT BEING IGNORED ANYMORE. MORE SPACES ARE EMERGING ON THE CONTINENT BECAUSE THERE IS A MARKET. SUDDENLY, THERE IS VISIBILITY.”

But I am also very optimistic, because all the collectors that I have met on the continent, who are many, are not your usual collector as defined by the international market, meaning that they just buy at auctions or galleries. For a long time, they have been the only patrons of certain artists in their country. It is very hard for them to understand that now they have to go through a middle-man, through a fair or through galleries and pay that commission when before they had this personal relationship with their artist, who dined at their table every night.

It is a completely different model, so there is a lot of education to be done. We do a lot of that in-between the fairs, trying to go meet more collectors from Africa, trying to convince them to see the work that, normally, a good gallery does, like a catalogue, promoting artists internationally, placing them in international collections in museums, etcetera. Honestly, I am very hopeful, but if we really want a sustainable market from the perspective of the African continent, this is definitely where we see and need to see more growth.

B.O. Peter, going back to your auction reports, was there a way within those that you could break down the buyers in terms of their origins?

P.G. The buyers? No. I would love to have that data.

B.O. Yes, it would be interesting. I wondered if you were able to look at what Touria said, to see which countries are buying within the continent at African art fairs in comparison to the European Union buyers.

P.G. No. The only part I would have that kind of data for would be the big evening sales in London and New York, because then we can spot buyers or track the expert on the phone and so on, but it's such a small portion anyway.

“FOR ALL US AFRICANS, THE ASPIRATION IS DEFINITELY TO INCREASE OUR COLLECTOR BASE LOCALLY.”

L.B. It's similar for us. I would say 70% of our sales are to international collectors, so there is a very small collector base on the continent, and even of that 70%, half of it is art fairs and the other half is following an art fair.

The point is that there is a small collector base on the continent and this is where the local fairs come into play. That feels like the opportunity for local fairs to really become active. Cape Town Art Fair and Johannesburg Art Fair, just two of the fairs we do out of three on the continent, have really been growing. They really have been trying to nurture and cultivate this local collector base. I imagine you are doing the same, Touria.

B.O. Are you taking the same kind of work from Joburg to, say, Nigeria?

L.B. It is an experiment every time. We have a much smaller booth at ART X Lagos, which we have been doing for three years—since the beginning, actually. Obviously, we can do way more at Joburg and Cape Town because that's home base and we can walk artworks over and not ship them. It is much easier to play around with what we do at the local fairs.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND QUESTIONS (C/Q) FROM THE AUDIENCE

Q1. We read a lot in the general press about Chinese economic interests in Africa. I'm just curious to know whether that is reflected in any way in the art scene.

T.E.G. Not at the fair. I have not yet seen any group of Chinese collectors coming to buy contemporary African art. Maybe I should go and check it out, but there are not enough to think that there is a strong interest being reflected back from investment in Africa to their investment in art coming from the continent.

Q1. So there are not so many Chinese visitors?

L.B. No. Those figures predominantly come from infrastructural investment and not the cultural side in any way at all—at least, not from our end.

B.O. That said, I did sell my first work by an African painter to a Hong Kong collector. That was a first in ten years.

Q2. (Süreyya Wille) Based on my experience with other emerging markets in Asia and the Middle East, what you sometimes see is a lack of infrastructure and the governments not taking care of their own contemporary market or arts and culture. Is this all backed by private individuals and private interests?

B.O. All private.

Q2. (S.W.) Does that hinder the market and keep it closed? It seems to be doing fine and growing, but do you think that the governments of various countries will eventually get on the bandwagon and stand behind their artists?

B.O. It's 99% private. I think it probably needs to remain that way to stop all the political shenanigans that go on. You need to keep them separate. Also, countries have got other things to be concerned with. Personally, I'm Nigerian and I would rather my Nigerian government concentrate on building infrastructure and let private wealth deal with the arts side. I think it's a good balance. You can have things like biennales where they get involved.

L.B. I think the opposite. It would be amazing. I don't think it is going to happen any time soon, but it would be wonderful if governments were interested in culture. I think there's a function that culture fulfils. Of course, there are pressing demands, that is a reality. When there is no housing, you need to address that situation before you can pay for a biennale. That said, there is a value and there are ways that the government could think laterally about the question of culture. It's always a last-minute thought. It is de-motivating that, in order to fund a project on the continent, you need to appeal to the foreign funding institutions like Goethe-Institut and Pro Helvetia and not the South African ones. It would be nice if it wasn't only privatised. There is important value to public funding.

“FINANCIAL SUPPORT IS 99% PRIVATE. IT PROBABLY NEEDS TO REMAIN THAT WAY TO STOP ALL THE POLITICAL SHENANIGANS THAT GO ON.”

T.E.G. I'm trying to think of examples. Most of the newer biennales that we see on the continent are privately funded. They are actually often started by artists or through that kind of initiative because there is absolutely no infrastructure for art in their country and they think it's a great way to get people engaged with art in general.

I know that we have huge problems and you mentioned that. The Marrakech biennale, which was great for ten years, was privately started and funded. At one point, that person said, “I don't want to fund it anymore, so the government has to take over if they want to continue it,” and that is where the problem started. The government had not really been involved with the project from the start and they didn't know why, suddenly, after ten years, they had to take over a project they had not started.

But, in an example I was extremely surprised by, the Moroccan Minister of Culture did something amazing, which was to finance Moroccan galleries showcasing their artists in international art fairs by 50%. For two or three Moroccan galleries, the government was paying for 50% of their booth at the fair. That was the only occasion where I have seen that and obviously, with a different Minister of Culture, this nice initiative changed. But to be fair, I can talk about some countries or projects

where I see governments really trying to get involved, being much more open about what is going on or getting a clearer understanding of where it is going. Morocco is one. I know Tunisia has a lot of support. Maybe the Arab Spring slowed down things, but there was a time when they had different structures that helped cultural platforms.

Everything is mainly funded privately. In a way, you might be right, Bomi, about not having any obligations to the government, like having to do a specific exhibition for them when they fund something. I don't want to criticise Johannesburg Art Fair, but I think they receive city funding and then they have to show local works.

L.B. I think the Department of Trade and Industry funded the booth.

T.E.G. Then you have an obligation which does not have the quality you would probably like to show or support. I would feel very annoyed if I suddenly had the government in Marrakech telling me, "No, not this, but this," and, "You have to give us a space" just because they gave me some support. I might go with Bomi on this privately-funded initiative at the moment.

B.O. One aspect that has reared its head is reparations of classical works. A lot of governments are very keen on that, watching Senegal open a museum. There are a lot of governments announcing, "We want our works back, so we'll build something." That has been interesting.

L.B. I come from Lesotho, a landlocked country surrounded by South Africa and where for years we haven't had a museum. We just don't. There isn't one. There was a small kind of museum project and then suddenly they decided to build a national museum. That is an incredible moment, but at the same time, I know that government funding and commitment towards a project like that is limited. They are going to build a structure—which they have—and that's it. That's the end of it. I think my argument is that we need to see it all the way through. We need to understand and be involved in the cultural dialogue, to contribute towards a national imagination on this matter. If governments allocated actual programming funding to Johannesburg Art Gallery, for instance, that is currently an incredible treasure with an amazing collection and it's dilapidated.

B.O. A stunning museum.

L.B. But the roof is falling in because the government doesn't care. They just keep erasing posts and essentially won't let them have a website. It's not there, even though it really is there and has incredible things in its collection. They have Duchamps. That is more where I was going, not so much in the commercial realm. I don't think governments should necessarily pay for commercial galleries per se.

Q3. Hello, and thank you very much to all of you for being here today. I imagine that, like me, nobody knew about the African art market before, so I want to thank you for that. My question goes to Touria. You briefly mentioned that you didn't come from an art background and now you are running three international art fairs. Could you tell us a bit about what made you take the initiative to go from a completely different sphere of business and create what wasn't there?

T.E.G. To say I was not in the art world was a bit misleading, because my dad was an artist and he was probably one of the most established artists in Morocco, often considered figurative modern. I never thought I would follow in anywhere close to his path, except that in the last ten years, he gave me the chance. I also saw him slow down, so I was working with and supporting him on different exhibitions. He didn't need me to build a reputation or anything like that, but I really enjoyed collaborating with him and I think that probably made me want to do this at some point.

I also had the chance to work for a professional American company that often sent me to parts of the African continent I might not have visited otherwise. I was selling different solutions for governments in Africa. Fortunately, when you have meetings there, a meeting may happen one day, but then it might happen a week later. Part of my old professional life made me stay and discover some local art scenes on the continent, so I had the chance to see all this amazing art while I was stuck there on weekends and holidays. But when I came back to London—where I was living—or when I was travelling in the United States for my job, I couldn't see any trace of what I was seeing on the continent. I was very surprised because I really liked it. I thought that if I was so passionate and enthusiastic about what I was seeing, somebody else in the world must be too.

I also have to thank that job for giving me the option to actually come back from Africa and live in London and cover the United Kingdom

market for them. That is where I decided that I was ready to start working with what I was seeing on the continent, thanks to them. I basically took whatever savings they were offering and was able to actually start the project and take two years of my life to concentrate and build the fair.

**“IN NEW YORK, I NEVER
THOUGHT THAT I WOULD
MIX AFRICAN-AMERICAN
ART WITH 1-54.”**

I don't come from the art world, but from the business world. Part of my job was business development, developing a market that didn't exist. I'm not saying that we can compare things, but I know I built expertise in a whole different corporate world which maybe helped me not to be too scared of certain aspects of building a fair. I saw it more as building a new market and how to start a business model from there.

What's more, I had the chance to surround myself with great people who gave me amazing advice. I had a great advisory board and a lot of them are still on my advisory board. At some point, you need people telling you that it's a good idea, because being an entrepreneur is a long path, especially if you really believe in an idea but it hasn't been done yet. It wasn't done in London the way I wanted it to be done and I was not coming from that industry. People were very welcoming in general and they gave me time to explore that idea and what I was trying to do.

I thank her every time and she says, “Stop, stop doing this, I just had one hour with you,” but Sheena Wagstaff was the head curator of the Tate at that time. Somebody introduced me to her and said, “She is giving you one hour of her time, but you have to have your question ready. Make sure you don't embarrass yourself.” She was, first of all, the sweetest lady I had ever met. She made me realise how important the project was in general, which I didn't really realise. I thought I would do a fair and it was a nice project, etcetera, but she said, “Remember that, often, this will be the first time those artists will be represented on a global stage. You have to give them justice. You can't do it lightly. You can't do it just thinking of it as your own little project. A lot of those artists will be exhibited to international collectors for the first

time.” That conversation really made me realise the weight I had on my shoulders and the responsibility to not do it very lightly, so I tried to be very serious when I chose the artists, not being from the art world, and trying not to mess up too much with the three fairs.

Q4. Hi, I have two questions. Which African countries are the most important for art? That is one question, and the other one is, what about African-American artists?

T.E.G. My opinion—which is not based on any fact—is that there is a huge correlation between the stability of a country in Africa, their economy and how developed the art scene is in that country. So, you still see, as you saw with Bonhams, the sense that there is not much happening in some countries, but that's not about auctions. It really reflects the fact that there is no infrastructure or that there are no galleries there yet. To be honest, today we are working with six to seven countries where there are dynamic art scenes. In the rest, you might have one gallery, who is the local agent for changing everything because they are the only gallery in that particular city.

In New York, for example, I never thought that I would mix African-American art with 1-54, or that there would be an interest for African-American artists to be part of 1-54. We suddenly had requests from somewhat established artists who really felt that they had African heritage and wanted to be at 1-54, so we started working with galleries who had some African-American artists that wanted to be part of this narrative and diaspora. We now have artists that belong to this African-American group.

We also have something in the United States that we don't have in London, which is a large group of African-American collectors who are collecting African-American artists in addition to African artists. This is very specific to 1-54 New York. I think it's because this group of collectors doesn't travel to London for 1-54. They come from different states of the United States to New York and they buy either African-American artists or African artists that we are showing, but this is very specific.

As I said in the beginning, we have always had quite an interesting challenge in convincing North African galleries. They often turn towards the Middle East more than Africa because of the Arabic language. It's

more about the culture than where they belong geographically. This is where we also complete what we are doing with Morocco, because it's a French-speaking country. We track a lot of French and Belgian collectors, something we don't automatically have in New York or London because they are less attracted to a country where they don't speak the language. We don't have many, but we definitely have more African French-speaking collectors coming to Marrakech because it's French-speaking. I never thought of the language as a variable that would help one fair or the other or make it very specific to Morocco. We have more North African artists and more French-speaking collectors. Go figure.

Q4. Which countries in Africa are most active in the continent?

T.E.G. With the name, I always wanted to underline the fact that we are talking about fifty-four countries. I wanted people to realise the diversity. Now you are going to leave this room knowing there are fifty-four countries in Africa, but a lot of people don't know that. I did not want to categorise all African artists into one big country. Plenty of friends still tell me, "Oh last summer, I went to Africa." I ask, "Where? You have to tell me the country you visited," but it is still something that they say. To respond to your question, it's Nigeria, Morocco, Tunisia and South Africa—though South Africa has been leading the way for a very long time—and then Kenya and Ghana. Also Ethiopia. So seven countries.

B.O. And you've got Angola, maybe.

T.E.G. Yes. There are also people who decide to come on the global stage. There might be something in their country, but they are not interested in crossing over to 1-54 to do any international fairs yet. Sometimes they come by themselves first, then apply the following year. A lot of those galleries have their first fair experience at 1-54. They had never gone to any fair before. Now in a lot of those countries, you have five, seven, ten galleries and it's just the beginning.

Q4. Are these countries interested in international artists?

T.E.G. Ah, good question. If you are a French collector, you might start with French artists. It is very unlikely for somebody from Nigeria to feel connected to an artist from North Africa right away. If you start

collecting, you will probably start collecting a Nigerian artist with whom you have interaction.

B.O. Yes, normally, you start domestically, and then you move outward. It may also depend on language, like you said. If you are Nigerian, you start with Nigeria, then English-speaking Africa, then you might go to the French, and then you think about the Portuguese-speaking side.

Q4. A very cultural influence, and it's conservative.

**“CULTIVATING A LOCAL
COLLECTOR AUDIENCE IS A
SLOW PROCESS. THE PROBLEM
BEGINS THERE.”**

T.E.G. Yes, I think so. At the beginning, and I think you see more contemporary African collectors going to auction houses now. They might be introduced by Bonhams or by Sotheby's to others, and I am sure this is what Sotheby's and Bonhams are hoping for. They hope collectors with large amounts of money who are starting to collect African artists from their country will transition into collecting bigger artists from their night or day sales.

L.B. I don't think it's conservative per se. That's too general a statement. I do know a number of local collectors—particularly South African, just because I know more South African collectors than others—who are collecting on an international scale. Some are on committees in museums, internationally. It isn't just African collectors buying African art, and similarly, African galleries don't just represent African artists.

T.E.G. I think I know the collectors you're talking about, but if you think about it, there are only two or three from South Africa who are on boards.

L.B. What I'm saying is, how many? How big a collector pool are we discussing?

T.E.G. No, and it's because they live between New York and South Africa. They are very unique cases, but you are right.

L.B. I think there is growth. I think it's slow, sure, but as you have pointed out, getting local collectors and cultivating a local collector audience is a slow process. The problem begins there.

B.O. I also think it's not just us. It is also some aspects of the Western world. It seems like when they want to buy African art, they have a very limited view of it. If you say something like Julie Mehretu, the response is, "Oh, she's African?" It works both ways. Americans are the most evolved market because they have been collecting African-American and African art for much longer and they have no colonialist history, so they don't see any gender in terms of the different spheres of languages.

Q5. (Simon de Pury) First of all, this has been a fascinating panel. Peter, one of your questions was the projections for 2019. I would be interested in how this panel sees projections of the African art market for ten years from now, because it is so interesting when you look at all the geographical waves that have taken place in the market, as well as more local waves, much like there was the East German wave in Europe at one stage. The auction houses were the first to always perceive these regional phenomena and I was very happy that you mentioned the African sale that we did in 2010, Touria.

However, consistency is absolutely key to making it more than a wave and turning it into something that really becomes a major factor. If I had to make a prognosis, I would be—and am—extremely optimistic about the future of the African art market, because you have the combined support of the auction world and the gallery world. The key is your fair, 1-54, because you don't have other fairs that are specifically devoted to one region.

In fact, the big disappointment is when you go to many art fairs all over the globe. We are a traveling circus going to a different place every day of the year and basically, we look at the same things everywhere. This year, for instance, during Frieze, I was slightly jaded. I always love to see any art fair and I have never been bored looking at them. The way I judge it is in terms of whether there is anything that I desperately want to buy for myself, not thinking of any clients, and I didn't have that at Frieze this time. On the last day, I went to 1-54 and I was so excited. I was stimulated. I loved it, and so did my 18-year old daughter. We had coffee there and met some of the artists. It was a fantastic experience.

So, this two-pronged approach with what is happening in the auction world on the one hand and what is happening in the fair world on the other is creating a solid basis for future development. If there is no consistency, then it's just a wave that comes and goes. When you look at what has happened with Russian art or Indian art, the difference between these phenomena is very interesting. What you very much need to do is develop the local market, because it is not sustainable long-term if it has purely or mostly non-African collectors. It is very important to develop the African collector base. My question is how you see it long-term.

“CONSISTENCY IS ABSOLUTELY KEY TO MAKING IT MORE THAN A WAVE AND TURNING IT INTO SOMETHING THAT REALLY BECOMES A MAJOR FACTOR.”

T.E.G. To be honest, I agree. I only see positive and I am very optimistic about it, even regarding the artists, because what Bonhams or Sotheby's don't show is that, as I was explaining this morning, we are lucky enough to have the fair price list from 2013 to now. There are some artists that you don't see, but they have grown by 200%. OK, they started very low, but where they are now, where they have been placed and their career paths in six years is just incredible.

This is with just a few players in the game, too. As much as I love my fair, it is also a very independent project. There is no big group behind 1-54. We are simply doing whatever we can to the extent that we can. We do a lot of events locally as well, trying to meet the collectors, etcetera, but this is a continent job. It's not a 1-54 job. Every stakeholder in the country needs to play their part to develop those collectors.

There is potential and we do have constant growth. I don't see a bubble. In Miami, I saw so many African artists for the first time and galleries or artists trying to showcase a particular artist at that moment in time, which I had never seen before. It was quite new. I went to Art Basel and thought, "Oh my God, what is going on?" I went to Untitled and suddenly seven of my galleries were there. I was like, "Oh really, they invited seven of them in one go?" It was a very different picture from the way I had been seeing things, so I am very excited to see that they are included more and more at international fairs.

I really hope that we can go to places where people have not yet discovered contemporary art from the continent. Maybe that's the future too, giving a taste of what we have done in different countries and continents that didn't have access to contemporary art from Africa. I definitely know that in ten years, those numbers are going to change. The number of millions you see in the data is going to be a completely different landscape. I see it with just the 450 or so artists we have represented over six years at the fair and how their career paths have changed since 2013.

Simon is right. We are benefitting from an amazing landscape of auction houses that are really supporting what we do. It is also true that all the directors of contemporary African art sales deal with galleries and with artists too much sometimes. They are too involved with artists, but there are no borders between an auction house, a gallery and the fair. All those people mingle all the time.

L.B. I hope that the future is good. I hope it moves upward, but I cannot make a prediction. Based on the interest we have gotten over the past couple of years, we are growing and growing, which is a good upward sign. I would like to say the list of top artists is amazing, but contrary to the auction results, only three are women. These statistics are often warped like the women artists' panel pointed out. We are not really on the right side of the women thing either. Although we strive to be.

S.G.G. I think it has been very enlightening for many of us today to be able to know more about the African art scene. Thank you so much.



STAFF BARCELONA SYMPOSIUM 2019

Llucà Homs

Director

Sol García Galland

General Coordinator

Anna Drozhzina

Communication Manager

Isa Casanellas

Production Manager

Araceli Antón

Assistant to Coordination

Inoutsiel Studio

Art Direction & Design

PUBLICATION

Coordination & Editing

Sol García Galland

Gaizka Ramón

Transcriptions

Rebecca Reddin

Art Direction

Inoutsiel Studio

Photography

Xavier Torrent

Talking Galleries

The Think Tank for Galleries

Enric Granados, 3

08007 Barcelona, Spain

+34 93 215 52 60

talking@talkinggalleries.com

www.talkinggalleries.com

Talking Galleries is organised by SCREEN PROJECTS, a cultural agency based in Barcelona dedicated to developing cultural projects in the field of contemporary art. It is also the agency behind LOOP Barcelona, a platform dedicated to the study and promotion of the moving image that unfolds into a Festival, a Fair and the Studies programme, taking place yearly. SCREEN PROJECTS is involved with art professionals worldwide and is open to collaborations.

Emilio Álvarez, Carlos Durán & LLucià Homs, Directors of Screen Projects



SUPPORTED BY



CONTRIBUTORS

Georgina Adam, Lerato Bereng, Anna Brady, Vanessa Carlos, JJ Charlesworth, Elizabeth Dee, Simon de Pury, Touria El Glaoui, JiaJia Fei, Peter Gerdman, Melanie Gerlis, Joe Kennedy, Maribel López, Clare McAndrew, Alison McDonald, Ani Molnár, Jane Morris, Bomi Odunade, Emmanuel Perrotin, Eugenio Re Rebaudengo, Kenny Schachter, Lisa Schiff, Tim Schneider, Anny Shaw and Süreyya Wille.

Talking Galleries was launched in 2011 to provide art gallery professionals with a much-needed space where they could exchange ideas, share their expertise and assess the changes impacting their industry. Thanks to the generous support of many people and institutions, what began as an annual symposium in Barcelona has been steadily evolving into a multi-faceted international think tank.

From 21 to 22 January 2019, the 7th edition of the Barcelona Symposium brought together a diverse audience of art market professionals, including some of the world's leading gallerists, auctioneers, curators and analysts. If the event was a unique opportunity to provide a sense of community and to share specialized knowledge, this publication serves another key purpose: to help spread that experience beyond a specific time and place. To that end, this book collects the keynote session, panels and presentations that shaped the symposium's programme.

“The Talking Galleries notebooks contain transcripts of the debates, conversations and presentations held over the course of two days, every year in Barcelona. For those who were present, they are an invaluable reminder, and for those who missed the conference or some of the sessions, they provide an important resource.”

Georgina Adam

Published by

talkinggalleries.com

