



ISCTE Business School

**Developing and Managing the Artist's Career:  
The Visual Artist as Entrepreneur**

**Loizos Petrides**

Thesis specially presented for the fulfillment of the degree of  
Doctor in Management

Supervisor:  
Doctor Alexandra Fernandes, Assistant Professor  
Department of Marketing, Operation and Management (IBS)

December, 2017





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## Developing and Managing the Artist's Career

### **Acknowledgments**

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## Resumo

Este estudo investiga o impacto de processos do mercado (galerias, feiras, e leilões de arte) e decisões curatoriais nas carreiras de artistas visuais. O estudo contribui para a literatura sobre o empreendedorismo artístico, introduzindo o conceito de *business level entrepreneurship* e as qualidades de proatividade, capacidade de gestão, e networking relacionadas com este conceito. O contexto do estudo é o mundo artístico de Lisboa e a sua análise melhora a compreensão das complexidades inerentes e as interações de artistas com outros agentes e processos no mundo de arte. Esta análise contribui para a literatura adicionando ao paradigma global conhecimentos obtidos através deste contexto artístico. Na revisão da literatura, uma abordagem multidisciplinar é utilizada para analisar a complexidade do funcionamento do mercado de arte ocidental. Na parte empírica, foram realizadas 28 entrevistas semiestruturadas com agentes do mundo artístico (14 artistas, 7 agentes do mercado e 7 institucionais) que foram analisadas seguindo as diretrizes da análise temática. A visibilidade do trabalho do artista é o tema principal deste estudo, e os meios para alcançá-la são a afiliação galerística do artista e a presença do seu trabalho em feiras e instituições. Este estudo demonstra que o artista que possui qualidades empresariais pode desenvolver uma carreira com mais visibilidade, reconhecimento, e sucesso no mercado. O estudo tem implicações para a carreira artística e a sua internacionalização, e oferece recomendações de pesquisa relacionadas com o conceito de *business level entrepreneurship*.

## Palavras chave:

Carreiras de artistas visuais; empreendedorismo artístico; mercado de arte contemporânea; internacionalização de carreiras artísticas; mundo de arte; relacionamento artista-galeria; feiras de arte; curadoria; *gatekeepers*.

## Classificação JEL: Z10, Z11

### **Abstract**

This study researches the impact of market-based processes (galleries, art fairs, auctions), and curatorial-led decisions on the career development of visual artists, including its internationalization. The study contributes to the arts entrepreneurship literature by introducing the concept of *business level entrepreneurship* and the qualities of proactiveness, managerial capability, and networking associated with it. The context of the study is the Lisbon art world and its examination enhances the understanding of the intricacies of the art world and the interactions of artists with other art world agents and processes. It also expands the relevant literature aiming to enrich the global paradigm by adding insight obtained from this art world. For the literature review, a multi-disciplinary approach is used to reveal the complexity of the workings of the western art market. For the research, 28 semi-structured interviews with art world agents (14 artists and 14 market/institutional agents) were conducted and analyzed using thematic analysis. Visibility for the artist's work is the main theme, and the artist's gallery affiliation, art fair participation, and institutional presence, are means to achieve it. This research demonstrates that the artist possessing entrepreneurial qualities at the business level can develop a career with more visibility, recognition, and market success. The study has implications for artists and their careers, provides recommendations for state policies for visual arts, and suggests research topics for further developing the concept of *business level entrepreneurship*.

### **Keywords:**

Careers of visual artists; arts entrepreneurship; contemporary art market; internationalization of artistic careers; art world; artist-gallery relationship; art fairs; curating; gatekeepers; artist entrepreneur.

### **JEL Classification:** Z10, Z11





## Contents

Acknowledgments.....	i
Resumo .....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
2. LITERATURE REVIEW .....	7
2.0 Introduction to the Literature Review .....	7
2.0.1 What is art .....	7
2.0.2 How is art different from other products and commodities .....	8
2.0.3 The structure of the Art Market .....	10
2.1 The Artist: Creation/production of art .....	12
2.1.1 Artist motivation .....	12
2.1.2 The artist in the arts/cultural entrepreneurship framework .....	14
2.1.3 The artist as marketer and brand manager .....	16
2.1.3.1 Entrepreneurial Marketing (EM) .....	19
2.1.3.2 Art for art's sake or art for business sake.....	22
2.1.3.3 The importance of the artist's reputation .....	24
2.1.4 Classification of artists and artists' <i>business models</i> .....	25
2.1.5 Experts, gatekeepers and the role of knowledge in the art market.....	28
2.1.5.1 Roles of experts and gatekeepers .....	29
2.1.5.2 Art critics and curators .....	31
2.2 Distribution and Intermediation of Art (galleries, dealers and auctions) .....	34
2.2.1 Galleries and Dealers .....	34
2.2.1.1 Gallery typologies and business models .....	39
2.2.1.2 Galleries' relations with artists .....	42
2.2.1.3 Galleries' relations with collectors.....	43
2.2.1.4 Relations among dealers .....	45
2.2.1.5 Art Fairs and the globalization of the art market .....	46
2.2.2 The Auction Market .....	48
2.2.2.1 The effect of auctions on prices and artists' reputation .....	52
2.3 Demand and Consumption of Art .....	57
2.3.1 The private collector and motives for collecting art .....	58
2.3.2 How collectors affect the art market and artistic careers .....	60
2.3.3 Art as an investment and an alternative asset class.....	62

## Developing and Managing the Artist's Career

2.3.4 The institutional collector (museums).....	64
2.3.4.1 Superstar museums and special exhibitions.....	65
2.3.5 Museum impact on artists' careers.....	67
3. RESEARCH DESIGN.....	71
3.1 Research Problem and Research Questions.....	71
3.1.1 Research Problem.....	71
3.1.2 Research Questions (RQs).....	75
3.2 Research Methods.....	76
3.2.1 Sample.....	78
3.2.2 Interview guide and pre-interview preparation.....	81
3.2.3 Interviewing process.....	84
3.2.4 Qualitative content analysis.....	85
3.3 Research Quality Assessment.....	89
4. FINDINGS.....	95
4.0 The main characteristics of the Lisbon Art world.....	95
4.1 The artist and the gallery system.....	96
4.2 Market processes and their impact on artistic careers.....	102
4.2.1 Auctions.....	102
4.2.2 Art fairs.....	105
4.3 Curatorial impact on artistic careers: Institutions and Biennials.....	107
4.4 Internationalization of artistic careers.....	110
4.5 The artist as entrepreneur.....	111
5. DISCUSSION.....	115
RQ-Artworld: The main characteristics of the Lisbon Art world.....	115
RQ1: The artist and the gallery system.....	127
RQ2.1: The auction market effect/impact on artistic careers.....	171
RQ2.2: International art fairs and their market effect/impact on artistic careers.....	191
RQ3: The impact of curators and the effect of institutions and biennials.....	206
RQ4: Internationalization of artistic careers.....	240
6. CONCLUSION.....	265
6.1 Final Remarks.....	265
6.2 Research limitations.....	267
6.3 Contributions to the literature.....	268
6.4 Implications and policy recommendations.....	270
6.5 Suggestions for further research.....	272

7. REFERENCES .....	275
APPENDIX.....	291
A. Career stage and age distribution of interviewed artists .....	291
B1. Interview guide for auction house owners .....	292
B2. Interview guide for gallery owners .....	294
B3. Interview guide for curators .....	296
B4. Interview guide for artists .....	298



## 1. INTRODUCTION

This research was motivated by my interest in the international contemporary art market and its ability to catapult certain artists to fame and riches in a relatively short amount of time. By 'art', I mean visual<sup>1</sup> art, that is, painting, sculpture, installations, photography, video/film art, and the term 'contemporary' refers to art being currently produced by artists. The artist occupies a central place in the contemporary art scene because he is the producer of a good that has no practical use, yet it can be exchanged for thousands, or in a few cases, millions of euros. These exchanges take place in the art market, a market that is not regulated or supervised in any form, either locally or internationally, and in some cases its processes can be perceived as defying logic, or at least, economic logic (Velthuis, 2005). What gives artistic value to works of art results from the collective evaluation of experts and gatekeepers, such as gallerists, curators, critics, museum directors, other artists, which takes place in what is often referred to as the *art world* (Danto, 1964; Dickie, 1969, 1984; Becker 1982/2008). With the term 'artistic career', I refer to the desire of the artist to share with the widest possible audience the art he is producing and sell this art as a means of subsistence, hence the artist is an economic actor – a producer of artistic goods – but one not necessarily (or mainly) motivated by profits or wealth creation.

Many art world insiders and researchers (Gnyp, 2015; Menger, 1999; Abbing, 2002; Saatchi, 2009) believe that talent alone – an elusive quality to begin with – is not sufficient for developing an artistic career. If one adds to this the observation that there is an excess supply of artists (Menger, 2006; Abbing, 2002) then one is left wondering where to look for explaining how artists manage to develop their careers and make a living by selling their artistic production. Since many artists, among them Marina Abramovic (2016), Eric Fischl (2016), Grayson Perry (2016), believe that the success of the career of an artist is made and measured in the market, this research looked first into the relationship of the artist with the gallery system and its impact on artistic careers since galleries are both important gatekeepers of the art world and the main business partners of artists. Subsequently, auctions and art fairs were examined as market instruments and their influence on artistic careers. Auctions are used in this research as proxies for the secondary market and are often thought of as a barometer, albeit an imperfect one, of the state of the art market. Art fairs, although

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<sup>1</sup> This research does not contemplate architecture or any kind of design (e.g. fashion design).

being an integral part of a gallery's business, are treated autonomously due to their increasing importance in the market and the way they have changed how art is being collected (Gnyp 2015; Zarobell, 2017; Winkleman, 2015). Another category of gatekeepers of the art world are curators who decide which artists are exhibited and collected by institutions and invited to the various biennials around the globe.

The context of the research is the Lisbon art world and by conducting research in this context - the first RQ describes its main characteristics - I also address recent calls in the literature (e.g. Sjöholm and Pasquinelli, 2014) about the need for additional research to enhance the paradigm in further understanding the "contemporary artistic practice", hence the research contributes to the expansion of the relevant literature. 2016, the year during which the collection of data was initiated, was a year marked by the first edition of the ARCO Lisboa art fair and the inauguration of a new cultural institution, the Museum of Art, Architecture and Technology (MAAT). In this sense, conducting research in this context is both relevant and timely (Tracy, 2010).

One objective of the present research is to find out what makes possible the establishment and consolidation of artistic careers by studying how the artist interacts with gatekeepers of the art world like gallerists and curators and what effect market processes (like auctions and art fairs) and curatorial decisions have on artistic careers. Hence three of the five research questions were formulated to examine: (1) the relationship of the artist with the gallery system in the primary market and its impact on artistic careers; (2) the impact of auctions and art fairs on the market for artists' work and career; (3) the impact of curatorial decisions in the ambit of institutions and biennials on artistic careers.

Another objective of this research was the examination of the internationalization processes of careers of Portuguese artists. For many Portuguese artists, having an international career starts with their ambition to exhibit and sell art outside Portugal. Beyond this ambition there are also economic reasons for pursuing an international career: the art market in Portugal was described by this study's participants as 'poor' and 'peripheral' and as a market where institutional acquisitions are limited and exhibition spaces scarce and insufficient to display the local artistic production and its diversity. Added to the limited size of the market, there are shortcomings of the institutional panorama, the state's policy regarding the visual arts (or lack thereof), and the fact that Lisbon is not an art hub or a centrality where an artist by achieving legitimation for his work would

automatically gain access to the international art world. The relevant literature often characterizes artists as entrepreneurs (Klamer, 2011; Singer 1988; Phillips, 2010; Swedberg, 2006; Menger, 2006; Meyer and Even, 1998; Fillis, 2004, 2006, 2011; Fillis and Rentschler, 2005; Poorsoltan, 2012) and as brands and brand managers (Schroeder, 2005, 2006; Fillis, 2015; Muñoz et al., 2014; Preece, 2015; Kerrigan et al., 2011; Sjöholm and Pasquinelli, 2014; Preece and Kerrigan, 2015; Rodner and Kerrigan, 2014). This research demonstrates that the notion of entrepreneurship when it comes to visual artists must be distinguished at two levels: *creative level entrepreneurship* and *business level entrepreneurship*. Creative level entrepreneurship, is present in all artists and is directly linked with the creative decisions artists make regarding their work, their artistic innovations, and with their ability to mobilize resources to create art. The business level entrepreneurship and the three qualities proposed in this research (proactiveness, managerial capability, networking) make the difference between an artistic career with more visibility, recognition, and economic rewards and a less successful career measured in those terms. Success in the market for an artist increasingly means being represented by prestigious galleries, selling work at art fairs, having work collected by known collectors, and ultimately, at the top end of the market, prices paid at auction. Therefore, this research makes a much-needed contribution to the arts entrepreneurship literature, especially considering the observation by Varbanova (2013) that studies of this kind in the academic literature are scarce and the call of Klamer (2011) for researchers to find out what cultural entrepreneurs do.

As a researcher my goal was to gather original material from insiders that are active participants in the art world and whose experiences, opinions, and knowledge, would provide me with the necessary data to address my research questions. My intention was not to find a formula for launching and developing an artistic career (artists assured me that one doesn't exist, besides making artwork with quality), but to uncover the complexity of the interactions between the artist and art world gatekeepers and the impact market instruments and curatorial decisions have on artistic careers. Hence the method chosen for the data collection was qualitative interviews, as used in similar studies, like those of Sjöholm and Pasquinelli (2014), Preece and Kerrigan (2015), Velthuis (2005), Gnyp (2015), and the data was analyzed using guidelines of thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006, 2013; Ryan and Bernard, 2003; Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015). Artists, by definition, were the focus of the research, but artists are not alone in the art world; the art world includes market agents, institutional agents, collectors, specialized press, and the art loving public.

Overall 28 interviews were conducted, half of them with artists and the rest split equally between market agents and curatorial/institutional agents. Owners of galleries active in the primary market and directors of auction houses were interviewed in their quality as market agents. Curators and directors of institutions were interviewed in their quality as curatorial/institutional agents, although in their professional lives often assume additional roles, such as art critics, essayists and authors of artists' monographies, advisors for collections, or university professors.

A recurrent theme in the interviews is the necessity for visibility for the artists' work. Galleries are an important partner for achieving visibility, therefore the decisions artists make regarding their gallery affiliations are crucial. These decisions are influenced by their career stage (emerging, mid-career, established), their willingness and their skills in promoting their work, and the degree of the internationalization of their career. Art fairs have become a key instrument in the internationalization of artistic careers and for offering visibility to artists in the international art world and artists participate at fairs through their galleries, even though fairs attempting to differentiate themselves from their competition include curated sections attempting to deemphasize their commercial character. Auctions can also provide artists with visibility, but artists and galleries associate the auction mechanism in Portugal with rather negative price effects that can impact sales in the primary market. In the pursuit of visibility by artists for their work, curators are essential: first at organizing institutional exhibitions and sometimes when curating gallery exhibitions; second at biennials and especially the most prestigious ones (e.g. Venice Biennale) that are considered by some art world members as the most important events in the art world.

Regarding international careers, artists who are active in their career development, who have managerial qualities, and the capacity to network with art world gatekeepers, have better chances of launching and maintaining an international career. Therefore, it is implied that artists able to have an international career, and in most cases, it means at a European level, can be successful at the national level as well, but the inverse is not true; being considered a successful artist in Portugal does not guarantee any recognition outside the national borders.

This Introduction serves as the first chapter of the monograph. It is followed by the Literature Review chapter where literature from sociology of the arts, cultural economics, management and entrepreneurship was reviewed attempting to provide a description of the relevant actors and



processes of the western art market. The artist is viewed as a producer, brand manager, and marketer, while the role of critics and curators as gatekeepers of artistic production is assessed and their impact on artists' career reviewed. The functioning of the art market is examined by considering galleries and their business models, the workings of auctions and the impact of art fairs. In the last section of the literature review the demand and consumption of art are considered from the point of view of institutions and private collectors, including their motivation for collecting art.

The Research Design chapter describes the research problem and the research questions (RQs), the sampling method, the preparatory work before the interviews, and the interviewing process. Subsequently it explains how the data was transcribed, organized, translated and analyzed. The chapter concludes with a section dedicated to the assessment of quality of qualitative research and the steps taken to demonstrate this throughout the research process, including among others, respondent validation for the findings and triangulation of sources.

The Findings chapter, provides an overview of the research findings based on the analysis carried out in the Discussion chapter, which is divided in sections according to the RQs. The most relevant excerpts (quotes) from the interviews are transcribed to provide insight to the respective RQs and show how these were used for arriving at the Findings. The participants' quotes are not presented in boxes or tables, but as parts of the text aiming to produce a coherent narrative.

The final chapter is Conclusion, which incorporates the final remarks, the study's limitations, contributions to the literature, implications for artistic careers and cultural policy regarding the visual arts, and suggestions for further research.

At the end, the list of references is provided, as well as, an appendix with the interview guides.



## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.0 Introduction to the Literature Review**

The market for works of visual art, namely painting, sculpture, installations, photography, video/film art has been analyzed and studied using a variety of methods across disciplines. Most relevant for the present study are entrepreneurship and management, economics, especially cultural economics, and sociology of art and culture. This multidisciplinary approach (Abbing 2002; Chong 2002; Currid 2007) is necessary for capturing both the essence and the complexity of the art world and the art market. The structure of the art market is not essentially different from the market of any other good or service and for its existence we need to have supply/production, demand/consumption and transactions taking place between buyers and sellers. Specifically, in the art market we need to have supply and demand for works of art and a distribution channel or means of intermediation between buyers and sellers, even though transactions between producers (artists) and consumers (collectors) are not uncommon.

Before I enter into the details of the workings of the art market, two important points need to be addressed for the purposes of this monograph: (a) what is art; (b) how are artworks different from other products and commodities that trade in their respective markets.

#### **2.0.1 What is art**

For the purposes of this monograph, I initially offer some definitions that in many ways are complementary. The first is by Abbing (2002, p. 20) who states that “art is what people call art, acknowledging that some people have a bigger say in it than others have”. Grampp (1989, p. 201) says that “art is what people say it is and will pay for”. In addition to the above, Robertson (2005, p. 4) clarifies that “art is only art when it has passed through certain mechanisms”. Contemporary philosophers like Danto and Dickie also offered definitions for art. Danto (1964, p. 580) in his classic article “The Artworld”, which coined this ubiquitous term, wrote that “[t]o see something as art requires something the eye cannot decry – an atmosphere of artistic theory, a knowledge of the history of art: an artworld”. Dickie (1969, p. 254) in another classic article that gave rise to the so-called institutional theory of art said that: “A work of art in the descriptive sense is (1) an artifact (2) upon which some society or some sub-group of a society has conferred the status of candidate for appreciation”. Throughout the years Dickie revised, refined, and expanded his theory, most

notably with the publication of the book “The Circle of Art” in 1984. Becker (1982/2008, p. 138), who was inspired by Dickie’s institutional theory, offered the following meaning of the term ‘art’:

When we say “art”, we usually mean something like this: a work which has aesthetic value, however that is defined; a work justified by a coherent and defensible aesthetic; a work recognized by appropriate people as having aesthetic value; a work displayed in the appropriate places (hung in museums, played at concerts).

From the above definitions several questions are raised with respect to the following issues: Who are the “appropriate” people who are in a position to define art and why some opinions are more valid than others? How buyers of art determine what to pay for artworks? What are the mechanisms that art must pass through in order to become art? What is the aesthetic value and how is it related to price? What is the role of the “appropriate” places where a work is displayed (i.e. galleries and institutions). Answering these questions, among others, is fundamental in understanding the workings of the art market and by incorporating in the analysis the role of the artist, I aim to provide a deep understanding of the contemporary art market dynamics.

### **2.0.2 How is art different from other products and commodities**

Artworks have several distinctive characteristics that need to be highlighted so that the following discussion is framed in a meaningful way. Throsby (2001) highlights the creativity, the symbolic meaning and some form of intellectual property that the artistic output embodies. Blaug (2001), Throsby (2006) and Robertson (2005) point out the experience goods characteristics of artworks. At the same time, art can also be viewed as a luxury commodity according to Robertson (2005), Grampp (1989), Mandel (2009) and Abbing (2002). Abbing (ibid, p. 27) more precisely labels art as “superfluous and remote” emphasizing its useless (non-functional) character and its remoteness in a sense that is “detached from the needs of everyday life” thus being a luxury. Barrère and Santagata (1999) use the concept of Panofsky (1940) to characterize artworks as semiotic goods, i.e. goods that bear a sign (or symbol). Plattner (1998, p.482) also acknowledges the non-utilitarian character of art and further argues that art as a commodity can also be characterized as a *Veblen* good<sup>2</sup> that “signal[s] the owner’s high cultural status”. Velthuis (2005, p. 164), among other

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<sup>2</sup> A Veblen good (related to the conspicuous consumption concept first developed by Veblen in 1899) is essentially a luxury good/commodity that is desired because of the high price paid for its acquisition. Contrary to normal goods, in Veblen goods as their price increases, so does the demand for them.

scholars (e.g. Currid, 2007; Plattner, 1998), in his work confirms the presence of the *Veblen effect* as defined by Leibenstein (1950) whereby “the utility which consumers derive from art not only depends on its inherent qualities, but also on the price for it”. Hirschman (1983, p. 50) in her seminal article on aesthetics and marketing also points out that aesthetic products compared to other products are more “abstract, subjectively experienced, nonutilitarian, unique and holistic”. Furthermore, one must also take into account that the vast majority of artworks - excluding perhaps some metal sculptures - have very little or no material value (Marshall and Forrest, 2011; Throsby, 2001; Throsby, 1999; Acord, 2010). For example, a diamond ring is also a luxury good associated with conspicuous consumption, conveys (financial) status to its bearer and as a piece of jewelry has no apparent use but as an object it has a monetary value based on the fact that it is a precious stone. On the other hand, a work on canvas as a physical object has zero or negligible material value. What may give value to that particular canvas is the signature of the artist who created it, whose value is determined only if the “appropriate people” deem that it is worthy to be called art in the first place. After this process has been completed and the canvas accepted as art, the artwork may be allowed to enter the art market where its monetary value (price) will be determined. According to Marshall and Forrest (ibid, p. 116) “a work of art as a product carries meaning only within the realm of socially and personally defined symbolic values”. Acord (2010, p. 449) explains that the “artistic value of an artwork resides not in its material properties, but in the individuals, institutions, and processes that mediate between artist and spectator”.

Cultural economists like Baumol (1986), Grampp (1989), and Throsby (1994) consider art to be an asset that yields utility to its owner and in Grampp's (ibid., p. 35) words “[a]rt provides satisfaction, or utility, in the same sense that any object that is desired provides it”. Baumol (ibid, p. 14) labels this satisfaction “aesthetic pleasure”, while Beckert and Rössel (2013, p. 181) use the term “aesthetic benefit”. Throsby (1994) takes his definition further by saying that works of art have also the characteristics of financial assets, implying appreciation in value over time and hence a financial gain upon sale in the future, and as such could serve as inflation hedge, store of value, or instruments of financial speculation. However, Baumol (1986) offers a word of caution by emphasizing the differences between the art market and the securities (stock) market by making the following five points:

1. Shares of a company are homogeneous (perfect substitutes) whereas works of art are unique even if they are by the same artist and of the same theme.
2. Any particular stock is held by many stockowners that trade independently on the open market. The owner of a specific work of art can be considered a monopolist with respect to that work.
3. The transactions on the stock market take place frequently, almost continuously. An artwork may never be resold after its purchase, or if it occurs is not frequently, much less continuously.
4. The price of a stock is known to all those interested in knowing it (i.e. it is public information). The price of transaction of an artwork is usually known only to the parties involved in the transaction<sup>3</sup>.
5. In theory, the *equilibrium* price of a stock is known. Regarding a work of art, the price of equilibrium (if one exists) remains unknown.

### 2.0.3 The structure of the Art Market

As already mentioned, the three necessary building blocks of the contemporary art market are supply, demand and distribution/intermediation (Velthuis 2003a; Chong, 2010; Venkatesh and Meamber, 2006; Preece and Kerrigan, 2015). The supply of art comes from artists who create or produce artworks. Without artists<sup>4</sup> there is no product supplied to the market and without product there is no market. In this sense, the artists are the most important building block of the three. In terms of demand, there are various kinds of consumers (both buyers and non-buyers) who wish to “consume” art, most notably private collectors and institutions, both public and private. Santagata (1995) makes the distinction that demand for art is of two kinds: demand for the actual work and demand for visual consumption. In the first case, the buyer is the person who purchases the work of art. A visual arts consumer is a person who has an aesthetic experience (i.e. obtains aesthetic pleasure) in an environment that includes works of art. For example, a buyer purchases a work by Picasso, while a consumer experiences a work or works by Picasso in a commercial gallery, a museum, an art fair, or any other place that can offer this experience. Chong (2010, p. 200) argues

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<sup>3</sup> All reputable auction houses post their sales results on their web sites thus in this case the information can be considered public. Record breaking auction prices are also frequently commented on social media, specialized websites, reported in major newspapers, and in news bulletins worldwide.

<sup>4</sup> Since the context of this study is the contemporary art market, the suppliers of art are (mostly) living artists. When one considers the broader art market (i.e. art from the Renaissance onwards), the supply includes artworks created by artists no longer living and comes from collections and art dealer inventories.

that wealth is the distinguishing factor between buyers (collectors) and appreciators (spectators), and describes art collecting as an “elite recreational activity”.

The final building block of this market is distribution/intermediation, where supply and demand are matched and transactions take place. Commercial art galleries, private dealers, art advisors, and auction houses handle almost exclusively all the transactions taking place in the art market. In most cases collectors do not directly interact with the artist; the usual way they make art purchases is through the dealers/gallerists, artists' agents and representatives, auction houses, art advisors and directly with other collectors through private transactions (often brokered by art advisors or auction houses as private sales). A notable exception to this practice is direct commission to artists for artworks either by private collectors (individuals or corporate) or public entities (museums, local authorities or the government).

The art market is composed of two sub-markets: the primary market, where artworks are sold for the first time and the secondary market where artworks change hands after they have been introduced in the market (Velthuis 2003a; Robertson and Chong, 2008; Zorloni, 2005). In the primary market, the gallerists handle most of the trade in their role as intermediaries between the artist they represent and the buyer (private or institutional). Some artists, including young ones that are at the initial stage of their career and frequently lack gallery representation, sell their work from their studio - and use the internet and social media to drum up interest - and/or through an agent acting on their behalf who many times does not have a physical gallery. The secondary market is dominated by dealers who buy and sell art and source their inventory either from the auction market or from private collectors. Some authors (Throsby, 1994; Singer and Lynch, 1994; Gérard-Varet, 1995; Chong, 2010) refer to the auction market as the tertiary market and treat it as a distinct sub-market. However, given the increasing role of privately brokered deals between buyers and sellers by the auction houses – in what is called ‘private sales’ - thus “encroaching on the traditional marketplace of dealers” (Robertson and Chong 2008, p. 7), in this monograph the secondary market will be used as a term encompassing all market activities involving the sale of artworks not new to the market. To this effect, Robertson (2005, p. 18) remarks that, “once distinct, the tertiary or auction market is now indistinguishable from the secondary”.

## 2.1 The Artist: Creation/production of art

The artists are in the “heart of the activities” of the contemporary art market (Jyrämä and Äyväri, 2010) in their capacity as creators/producers. In other words, without them there is no contemporary art creation and consequently no contemporary art market to speak of; the market process starts with them (Colbert, 2003; Marshall and Forrest, 2011). This point is also very aptly summarized by one of the leading entrepreneurship scholars and her colleagues by saying that “before we can ‘recognize’ or ‘discover’ great art, that art has to have been created” (Saravathy et al., 2003, p. 157).

### 2.1.1 Artist motivation

Artists create works of art “primarily to express their subjective conceptions of beauty, emotion or some other aesthetic ideal” (Hirschman, 1983, p. 46). Jeffri et al. (1991) in a survey conducted with painters in 10 U.S. locations, asked the artists to define the term “professional painter,” and their highest-ranking reply for first choice (out of 13 possible answers) was “inner drive to make art” with 40%. The researchers also noted that in another question, regarding the most important factor of influence in the pursuit of an artistic career, the highest-ranking answer was the same with 39%. Similarly, Abbing (2002, p. 82) considers artists to be “intrinsically motivated”<sup>5</sup>, while Frey (2003, p.7) underlines the importance of intrinsic motivation (pursuing art for art's sake) at the beginning of their career, although admitting that artists also “systematically respond to monetary (i.e. extrinsic incentives) like all other people” using Salvador Dali as an example of an artist who many times admitted his interest in money. Throsby (2006, p. 2) notes that two features differentiate artists as business enterprises, namely the importance of creativity in their production processes and the likelihood that their “incentive to innovation is likely to be non-financial”. Phillips (2010) posits that what drives art entrepreneurs are precisely innovation and creativity. To that effect, Cowen and Tabarrok (2000) model the trade-offs for artists between pecuniary and non-pecuniary satisfactions and how these affect the artist's pursuit of market sales versus self-satisfaction with respect to changes in wages, lump-sum income and market size. On the other hand, Abbing (2002, p. 89) argues that separating the internal rewards (private satisfaction) and external rewards (e.g. pleasure derived from recognition) is difficult and hence the importance of intrinsic motivation is difficult to be measured. Varbanova (2013, p. 212) makes the point that

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<sup>5</sup> For details on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation see Deci (1972).



“artists by nature seek public recognition, approval and acknowledgement”. Regarding the “nature” of the artist, at this point is appropriate to introduce the key sociological concept of *habitus* developed by Bourdieu. According to Bourdieu (1984, p. 95) the habitus:

...enables an intelligible and necessary relation to be established between practices and a situation, the meaning of which is produced through categories of perception and appreciation that are themselves produced by an observable social condition.

In the case of the visual artist, Velthuis (2005, p. 27) defines habitus as “a set of predispositions and beliefs, which informs behavior of actors within the field”. Abbing (2002, p. 91) argues that the habitus “allows individuals to believe that they understand their social surroundings” and that “it can be seen as a collection of incorporated dispositions such as the inclinations to think, perceive, value and act”. Chan, Bruce, and Gonsalves (2015) argue that usually artists develop their habitus through interactions with mentors and through art. An accompanying concept to the habitus is the concept of *field* (Bourdieu, 1993). According to Chan et al. (2015, p. 24) the art field is “the social space of conflict and competition in which artists struggle to control over various types of capital”. According to Abbing (2002, p. 92) the concept of field “has almost the same meaning as the term ‘world’ as in art world”. The American sociologist Howard Becker author of the frequently cited book<sup>6</sup> “Art Worlds”, originally published in 1982, in an interview included as an epilogue to the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition (Becker, 1982/2008) affirmed that he is fully aware of the almost interchangeable use of the concepts of field and (art) world and pinpoints their differences. In his view, in the field, the notions of power struggle and zero-sum features are prominent, whereas in the art world the collective activity is paramount and it “consists of real people who are trying to get things done, largely by getting other people to do things that will assist them in their project” (ibid, p. 379). Having noted this distinction between these two key concepts in the sociology of art and culture, for the purposes of this monograph I will treat them as near substitutes as Abbing (2002) suggests.

In order to fully understand the relation between habitus and field for the purposes of illustrating the workings of the art market, the various forms of capital introduced by Bourdieu (1986) also need to be briefly presented. In his celebrated essay, Bourdieu, (1986) identified three forms of

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<sup>6</sup> According to De La Fuente (2010) Bourdieu's *Distinction* (1984), *The Field of Cultural Production* (1993) and Becker's *Art Worlds* (1982/2008) are the three most cited works in the sociology of art.

capital: economic, cultural and social. Economic capital is money and assets that can be readily converted into cash, a catchall term for wealth. Social capital represents a network of social relationships or a “membership in a group”. Cultural capital exists in three forms:

- i. The embodied state, which is linked to the body and associated with a person's culture, cultivation and habitus and requires time and effort to attain. It is “work on oneself” or self-improvement and cannot be transmitted by gift or purchase.
- ii. The objectified state, which encompasses material objects like artworks, monuments and artifacts. Due to its material form it is transmissible.
- iii. The institutionalized state, which is commonly referred to as academic credentials in the sense of institutional recognition, like an MBA or a PhD.

Bourdieu (1986, p. 53-54) states that “the different types of capital can be derived from *economic capital*, but only at the cost of a more or less great effort of transformation, which is needed to produce the type of power effective in the field in question”. In addition to the three forms already identified, Bourdieu (1998, p. 47) uses also the term of symbolic capital defined as “any property (any form of capital whether physical, economic, cultural or social) when it is perceived by social agents endowed with categories of perception which cause them to know it and to recognize it, to give it value”. It is often associated with prestige and honor. In the economic field, for instance, Swedberg (2011) associates symbolic capital with brand name.

### **2.1.2 The artist in the arts/cultural entrepreneurship framework**

Many authors in the fields of cultural economics and cultural entrepreneurship (Klamer, 2011; Singer 1988; Phillips, 2010), sociology of art and culture (Swedberg, 2006; Menger, 2006), marketing and management (Meyer and Even, 1998; Fillis, 2004, 2006, 2011; Fillis and Rentschler, 2005; Varbanova, 2013) consider the visual artist as an entrepreneur, as an individual who exhibits entrepreneurial traits in developing an artistic/creative career (Poorsoltan, 2012), as a maker of entrepreneurial decisions (O'Neil, 2008) and a strategist (Baumann, 2007).

Varbanova (2013, p. 17) defines arts entrepreneurship as “an economic as well as sociocultural activity, based on innovations, exploitation of opportunities and risk-taking behaviour. It is a visionary, strategic, innovative and social activity”. Swedberg (2006, p. 260) concludes that cultural entrepreneurship can be defined as “the carrying out of a novel combination that results in something new and appreciated in the cultural sphere”. Poorsoltan (2012) in his survey involving

artists active in various areas of three States in the US, found that artists exhibit three traits broadly associated with entrepreneurs: tolerance for ambiguity, risk-taking, and internal locus of control. With respect to the risk-taking trait that is frequently attributed to artists (Varbanova, 2013; Abbing, 2002; Alper et al., 1996; Grampp, 1989) I believe that the following clarification is due. Artists are risk-takers in the sense that their activity is inherently risky because their earnings are on average low and in the field of visual arts the *superstar effect* is pervasive. Artists are not risk-takers by choice in the way a financial portfolio manager or hedge-fund manager is, i.e. actively seeking risk in order to achieve financial gains. The risk artists are facing is built-in the art world or the artistic field, using Becker's and Bourdieu's concepts respectively. Muñiz et al. (2014, p. 71) in their study of Picasso as brand manager provide another aspect of risk-taking when they say that Picasso at certain instances of his career was willing "to move stylistically as soon as he believed that his work was being imitated", thus being a product innovator. The superstar effect (Rosen, 1981) occurs when a small number of people earn disproportionate income relative to others in the same activity, even though their differences in talent are small, with the fields of professional sports and entertainment industry being prime examples. Adler (1985), building on the work of Rosen (1981), concluded that big differences in earnings can occur even when the individuals have equal talents and this occurs when consumption requires knowledge, with the consumption of visual arts being a case in point. Abbing (2002, p. 114) argues that the attraction of these possible high monetary rewards induces a high number of individuals to pursue an artistic career, thus creating competition, and that is one of the possible explanations for the low income earned by artists. Plattner (1998, p. 482) to that effect states that "[t]he overwhelming majority of artists do not enjoy much, if any, commercial success". Peterson (1997, p. 241) argues that few artists reach high levels of fame and that even though there are some *Picassos*, there are also "many starving artists who cannot make a living from their art". Greffe (2002, p. 109) states that the earnings of most artists are irregular and low and this is due to the fact that they are "unpredictable and unprotected". Because of these low earnings, artists that are less successful in financial terms, engage in other wage-earning activities, i.e. have a "portfolio career" according to Throsby and Zednik (2011) or depend on financial assistance from family members and friends (Abbing, 2002).

From the above affirmations of Plattner (1998) and Peterson (1997) it is evident that individuals choose initially to pursue an artistic career not based on financial grounds (pecuniary motivation or external motivation), albeit the (reduced) possibility of high monetary rewards, but on grounds

of self-expression, self-satisfaction, fame and recognition (non-pecuniary motivation or internal motivation).

### **2.1.3 The artist as marketer and brand manager**

In recent years, in the arts marketing literature<sup>7</sup>, the concept of the artist as brand manager has gained momentum and the role of the artist as a marketer aiming to create a brand and achieve recognition has been a central theme across various peer-reviewed publications that include sociology journals (cultural sociology and arts consumption), arts marketing journals, and arts management journals. Related concepts to the 'artist as brand manager' concept is self-marketing (personal marketing) and entrepreneurial marketing.

The seminal paper in this line of research, as widely acknowledged by subsequent researchers in the field, was written by Schroeder in 2005 and titled "The Artist and the Brand" (Schroeder, 2005, p. 1291) whose purpose was:

to argue that greater awareness of the connections between the traditions and conventions of visual art and the production and consumption of images leads to enhanced ability to understand branding as a strategic signifying practice.

The author used three prominent US artists (Andy Warhol, Barbara Kruger and Cindy Sherman) as case studies because in his opinion the image creation by artists in building a "recognizable look, name and style" (ibid., p. 1292) essentially builds a brand, hence the successful artist being a brand manager. Schroeder considers an artist successful if their work is widely exhibited, bought and collected. He characterized Warhol as "a stunning example of artist as brand" (ibid., p. 1292) and that his "prominent reputation derived both from his phenomenally prolific output and his omnipresence as a famous figure and celebrity endorser" (ibid., p. 1294). Schroeder also suggests that artists interact with brands in various ways: they use brands, logos and symbols in their work (e.g. in the case of Warhol his use of the Campbell soup cans, images of celebrities like Marilyn Monroe, Jacqueline Kennedy and himself among others); the art market treating artists as brands (e.g. Picasso, van Gogh, Rembrandt) in the sense that there is a clear relationship among name

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<sup>7</sup> Bradshaw (2010) provides a literature review about arts marketing; Fillis (2011) provides a longitudinal review of arts marketing research.

recognition, value and branding; the creation of visual brands through the artist's work (style and look).

Following Schroeder's (2005) call on further research into artists engaging in branding, a variety of researchers heeded his call and various articles appeared (and keep appearing) that research the connection between artist and brand creation. Researchers have used various artists as case studies and research subjects like Thomas Kinkade, albeit as a negative case (Schroeder, 2006; Fillis, 2015), Pablo Picasso (Muñiz et al., 2014), Ai Weiwei (Preece, 2015), Andy Warhol (Kerrigan et al., 2011), anonymous London-based artists (Sjöholm and Pasquinelli, 2014; Preece and Kerrigan, 2015), Andy Warhol, Damien Hirst and Takashi Murakami (Rodner and Kerrigan, 2014). All the above-mentioned pieces of research employ qualitative research methods<sup>8</sup> and specifically biographical and archival research in the cases of eponymous artists and in-depth interviews and participant observation in the cases of the anonymous London-based artists.

The above publications offer numerous important observations and among those I distinguish the following: Kerrigan et al. (2011, p. 1519) with respect to Warhol point out that he recognized the power of his art and image and "managed with profitable results, his own Celebrity Brand as a *pop art strategist*". Warhol himself was the "medium that transmitted and extended the awareness of his brand form and function" (ibid., p. 1519) not only in the US but worldwide, with its appeal continuing after his death<sup>9</sup>. Preece (2015) with her case study on the Chinese artist Ai Weiwei builds on the research of Kerrigan et al. (2011) and introduces the element of authenticity in the brand creation, concluding that it is "an important tool that marketers can use to engage with the public and create meaningful connections" (ibid., p. 631). Also important is the use of social media for the artist to present "his artistic and social values<sup>10</sup> and therefore could transmit authenticity" (ibid., p. 632). Ai Weiwei in becoming a celebrity branded artist, was helped by his social and cultural capital that enabled him to reach worldwide audiences through his blog. In the case of Picasso (Muñiz et al., 2014) the authors identified two mechanisms that enabled Picasso to

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<sup>8</sup> Thornton (2008) uses ethnographic methods on her chapter on Takashi Murakami, while Thompson (2014) provides interesting details on the careers of Maurizio Cattelan, Takashi Murakami, Ai Weiwei and Damien Hirst, artists that exhibit brand characteristics in their behavior.

<sup>9</sup> Evidence of the strong appeal of the Warhol brand is provided by the multimillion dollar prices some of his work regularly sells for in the secondary market due to global demand.

<sup>10</sup> Ai Weiwei was considered a political activist and dissident by the Chinese authorities and was prohibited to travel abroad between 2011 and 2015 (<http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2015/jul/22/ai-weiwei-free-to-travel-overseas-again-after-china-returns-his-passport>; accessed: April 2, 2016).

establish his brand: the first is the risk-taking with respect to style innovation (see section 2.1.2) and the second is the relations that he built with “key producers and disseminators of culture” (ibid., p. 71), namely dealers and critics. According to the authors the artist “managed his career strategically, as an MBA might” (ibid., p. 84). Sjöholm and Pasquinelli (2014), somewhat contrary to all the above authors who recognized some sort of deliberate strategic behavior on the part of the artist in their effort to build a brand, find that “art production and brand building coincides with the creation of images and the definition of a recognizable style... [and that] artist brand building is not only and necessarily strategically designed and rationally calculated” (ibid., p. 22). The authors hint at the “role of creativity in branding” and admit that their findings are in line with Fillis (2004, p. 10) who called for a new marketing approach in the arts in what he labeled as a “more creative entrepreneurial form of marketing”. However, Sjöholm and Pasquinelli (ibid., p. 19) argue that a way for artists to gain recognition for their work is by targeting relations with collectors and dealers and by application of strategies to communicate their work to a wider audience and market (ibid., p. 17). These actions clearly demonstrate intent on the part of artists that cannot be unplanned or “unstrategic”, so one is led to the conclusion that in the art world what appears as “unstrategic” has some degree of strategy in it. To that effect, Preece and Kerrigan (2015, p. 1224) admit that brand building “requires strategic behaviour rarely acknowledged by the artworld” and that artists “downplay the importance of their marketing activities when discussing their careers” (ibid., p. 1222). Meyer and Even (1998, p. 281) in their survey with artists and galleries conducted in Germany found out that although both are involved in marketing sometimes they do not admit this fact completely. Abbing (2002, pp. 48-49) makes an interesting point by saying that the “a-commercial” behavior of artists can be profitable but it is not strategic; artists behave like that because it is part of their character (or *habitus*). He further argues that “artists and other people working in the arts have developed skills in the games of both spheres”<sup>11</sup> (ibid., p. 49). Chan et al. (2015, p. 24) also point out that the creative processes of the artists “involve a set of socially and institutionally acquired strategies for surviving in the artworld”. It is evident that creativity is an essential ingredient in an artistic life and career, not only in the artwork production phase but also in the strategic intent of the artist. Furthermore, its presence is considered

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<sup>11</sup> The two spheres are the market and the gift sphere. The gift sphere is anti-market, a-commercial, or art for art's sake and represents disinterest in everything monetary or financial (Abbing, 2002). See also Klammer and Petrova (2007) who consider the Government as a third sphere.

a necessary condition for entrepreneurial marketing as well (see next section). The case study on Thomas Kinkade (Schroeder, 2006), which illustrates the functioning of artist-based brands outside of the “artistic intention” (ibid., p. 96), is an example of a business-focused artist taking this focus to the extreme by extending his brand “into galleries, real estate and equities” (ibid., p. 87). Kinkade became a very well-known and wealthy artist, essentially controlling a business empire whose shares traded on the New York Stock Exchange, but who was never accepted by the art establishment (ibid., p.89, p. 90) and his art was considered kitsch<sup>12</sup> (Fillis, 2015). In the case of Kinkade, who had a great earnings capacity due to the appeal of his brand, Fillis (2015) points out the downside of the celebrity status of an artist when his art can be perceived as an art of lower aesthetic quality, as traditional or conventional, or as kitsch. The author argues about the importance of entrepreneurial marketing competencies in branding and his research “confirms the blurring of the boundaries between popular culture and art, and raises questions about the distinction between kitsch and high art” (ibid., p. 659).

The above discussion brings to the surface the following issues that are central in understanding the actions undertaken by the contemporary artists in their pursuit of market creation:

- The role of entrepreneurial marketing as advocated by Fillis (2010)
- Art for art's sake or art for business sake arguments or what Abbing (2002) calls *gift sphere* and *market sphere*
- The importance of artist's reputation

#### **2.1.3.1 Entrepreneurial Marketing (EM)**

Before I examine the concept of EM and its use in the market creation efforts of artists, it is useful to consider the use of marketing in general in the field of art. Hirschman (1983) argued convincingly<sup>13</sup> that traditional marketing (i.e. the fulfillment of consumer needs) cannot be applied to artists who “create primarily to express their subjective conceptions of beauty, emotion or some other aesthetic ideal” (ibid., p. 45) and “is motivated by the need to achieve self-fulfillment via his/her creativity” (ibid., p. 46). The artist first creates a product and then brings it to the consumer for either acceptance or rejection (Becker, 1982/2008), i.e. the process is the opposite from the

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<sup>12</sup> Merriam-Webster defines kitsch as things (such as movies or works of art) that are of low quality and that many people find amusing and enjoyable. (Source: <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/kitsch>).

<sup>13</sup> For criticism on Hirschman (1983) see Meyer and Even (1998).

traditional marketing approach. Fillis (2006, p. 36) supports this view by saying that the role of marketing is “locating a public for the art work”, using the term “product centered marketing”, while Meyer and Even (1998) call this practice *supply side marketing* on the part of the artist. These anti-traditional marketing viewpoints can be summarized in the words of Marshall and Forrest (2011, p. 112) who state that “[t]he marketing process of a work of fine art naturally begins with the artist”.

Fillis (2010, pp. 96-97) defines EM as “an individual style of doing business shaped by the situation-specific worldview of the individual owner/manager”. The decisions can be both hard (shaped by economic considerations) and soft (shaped by intuition and personal initiative) or alternatively EM can be thought of being artistic and involving effectuation<sup>14</sup> (Lehman et al., 2014). Lehman and co-authors conclude that “from an effectual logic perspective, the artist and the entrepreneurial marketer are the same” (ibid., p. 167). Fillis (2002, p. 379) highlights the role of creativity in the marketing/entrepreneurship interface and links it with innovation, vision, leadership and motivation. Preece and Kerrigan (2015, p. 1223) suggest that for the successful artist it is difficult to disentangle their own identity from their brand image and that the boundaries are blurred among identity, brand, self and work. In the case of the visual artist the brand building effort is essentially self-marketing (personal branding), a concept defined by Shepherd (2005, p. 590) as “varied activities undertaken by individuals to make themselves known in the marketplace, usually, (though not exclusively) for the purpose of obtaining gainful employment”. Movie stars, pop stars and professional athletes have employed these techniques for years, frequently being advised by media consultants and publicists. Aaker (2009, p. 14) suggests that visual artists establish their brand by associating themselves with collectors, dealers, auction houses and museums that bestow credibility on the artists and their art, as well as, by making their personalities visible, using as examples Andy Warhol (outrageous lifestyle) and Tracey Emin (“bad girl” image). O'Reilly (2005b, pp. 582-583) affirms that all brands are socially constructed (in the context of social interaction) and that branding is of strategic importance. The author gives the examples of Tracey Emin and Damien Hirst who have used intensive media management as a strategy to promote themselves as a brand thus securing commercial success; Warhol is cited as

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<sup>14</sup> Effectuation (Sarasvathy, 2001) is a way of entrepreneurial thinking that starts with means (who the entrepreneur is, what they know and whom they know), the belief that the future can be shaped and the desired outcome is new market creation through alliances and cooperative strategies.



self-promoter and a model for the artist as celebrity. McKinsey marketing specialist David Court and his colleagues (Court et al., 1997, p. 27) distinguish among name recognition, brand and power brand.

A name becomes a brand when consumers associate it with a set of tangible or intangible benefits that they obtain from the product or service. As this association grows stronger, consumers' loyalty and willingness to pay a price premium increase. Hence, there is equity in the brand name. A brand without equity is not a brand.

According to Court et al. (1997), for brand equity to exist, the product must be differentiated from others in the market and there has to be an alignment between what is said about the product in its marketing and what it actually delivers. This way the consumer develops a relationship with the brand and, as this alignment grows, so does the brand. For a brand to evolve into a power brand, personality and presence are necessary. Personality refers to the relationship between brand and consumer being stronger, i.e. creating an emotional bond that grows out of the brand's personality. Presence is built when the brand appears to be present at "every turn" reinforcing its distinctiveness, i.e. when the brand is present on national and international levels. For instance, contemporary artists like Jeff Koons and Damien Hirst are prime examples of power brands; their work is easily distinguished from the work of other artists even by people who only have a casual interest in art. Their art is also present in the top primary markets (New York and London), in the secondary market (both at the gallery level and at auction), exhibited in various public and private<sup>15</sup> museums around the world, and is present at the most important art fairs globally.

Branding specialist Douglas Holt (2003) argues that some brands become icons and icons are valued "because, through them, people get to experience powerful myths" (ibid., p. 43). Holt continues his reasoning by saying that people always wanted myths because myths help make sense of the world and in this sense, icons are "encapsulated" myths. Icons many times are people like artists, entertainers, politicians or activists. When a brand creates a myth, the myth is perceived by consumers as embodied in the product, so when they buy the product they forge a relationship with the maker. In the art market and especially in the most expensive segment of the auctions market (the evening sales in New York and London), the phrase "iconic work" by artist X is

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<sup>15</sup> Works of both artists are mostly found in private museums, a fact that can also be associated with conspicuous consumption on the part of the museum owners.

frequently used to denote something as exceptional, a masterpiece, or an artwork of museum quality, whose economic value is expected to be high and commensurate with the status of the work. The forging of a relation between the art consumer and the artist through the artwork (Abbing, 2002) is based on the belief that the original artwork embodies the soul and the spirit of the artist (Abbing, 2002), something that it is also referred to as *aura* (Frey, 2003; Cowen, 2006), which partly explains why authenticity is of such importance when a work of art is evaluated, besides, of course, the economic implication.

Considering artists as brands or artists as entrepreneurial marketers is relatively recent in terms of peer-reviewed literature; however, in the art world the notion of reputation has been used for much longer, effectively since the Renaissance when royalty and nobility commissioned artworks based on the reputation of the artist (for reputation see section 2.1.3.3).

Broadly speaking, the role of marketing (labeled as branding, market creation, entrepreneurial, product centered or supply side) in the construction of an artistic career is undeniable. Lehman and Wickham (2014, p. 682) acknowledge that marketing has a role in “artists’ practice without necessarily jeopardising their creative integrity”. Venkatesh and Meamber (2006) take their reasoning one step further by saying that marketing is important throughout the whole production process, namely production, distribution and consumption, while Meyer and Even (1998) conclude that fine arts and marketing are not in contradiction.

#### *2.1.3.2 Art for art's sake or art for business sake*

Hirschman (1983) identified three types of audiences or consumers for art: the public at large, peers and critics, and the artist himself (in this sense the artist is the initial consumer of the artistic product since he is also the creator). At some point, however a conflict arises when the artist has to decide to which audience to give priority (self and peers on one hand or the public on the other). This conflict is presented as the “art for art's sake or art for business sake” argument (Fillis, 2002, p. 131) or what Abbing (2002) called market and gift spheres. Cowen and Tabarrok (2000) describe that there are tradeoffs made by artists when faced with the choice between selling to the market and earning income (market/external motivation) and creating art for their own pleasure (internal motivation). Usually the art for art's sake argument is associated with high culture and avant-garde art, while the art for business sake argument is associated with low culture, popular art or kitsch (Fillis, 2006). Abbing (2002, p. 49) affirms that artists and other art market participants

(especially art dealers) have developed game skills that allow them to earn a living “by denying the economy and veiling their market activities”. Bourdieu (1980, pp. 261-262) calls this *negation*, which represents a “refusal” of the “commercial” that leads to accumulation of symbolic capital. However, Venkatesh and Meamber (2006, p. 24) citing the work of various philosophers and cultural critics, characterize the separation between “high art” and popular culture as artificial. Bourdieu (1985) makes the same distinction between the *fields of restricted production* (FRP) and *large scale cultural production* (FLP). The products of FRP are destined for an audience composed of peers and experts and their aim is to become symbolic goods and by extension bestow symbolic capital to their holders, with economic profit being subordinated to the symbolic value of the product. In contrast, the FLP products are destined for the consumption of the public at large and have little or no symbolic value, i.e. these products are treated like normal goods and their evaluation is based on market criteria. In the FRP the criteria for evaluation are based on the experts’ subjective definitions that result from their cultural capital and position in the field. In this sense, the FRP is a place of struggle for cultural distinction or “the scene of competition for the power to grant cultural consecration” (ibid., p. 24). These experts are peers, critics, museum curators, art dealers, frequently referred to as gatekeepers, art world insiders, or as the art establishment. It is they who have the cultural power to decide what art is and consecrate and legitimize it as such (see section 2.1.5 on experts and gatekeepers). Even though the art market is where transactions and monetary exchange take place, it is more than just supply and demand (Klamer, 2011; Martin, 2007; Beckert and Rössel, 2013; Bourdieu, 1984) exactly because cultural values are not determined in the market, or at least not only in the market. The relationship between economic value and cultural/aesthetic value is not straightforward. Grampp (1989), a neo-classical economist believes that the market value of artworks is consistent with their aesthetic value. Abbing (2002, p. 76), who is an economics professor and an accomplished artist (painter and photographer), argues that “aesthetic value is a social value, that is influenced by social circumstances including market value”. From his point of view there is interdependency between the aesthetic and the economic value<sup>16</sup>. When the same group of people has both the economic power to buy art and the power to define which art qualifies as good or bad<sup>17</sup> then “the market and

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<sup>16</sup> Moulin (1994) also refers to the interdependence between the market and the cultural field.

<sup>17</sup> Frey (2003, p. 26) argues that from an economics approach “there is no such thing as ‘good’ or ‘bad’ art”.

aesthetic value may correspond” (ibid, p. 76). When these powers are found in different groups, then “low quality [art] can have a high market value as well as vice versa” (ibid., p. 76).

Since artworks are different from other products and commodities (see Section 2.0.2) and their value is not only a result of supply and demand (i.e. it has an economic component as well as a cultural/aesthetic component), their valuation is not straightforward. Beckert and Rössel (2013, p. 178) say that contemporary art buyers face “fundamental uncertainty” because quality is difficult to determine; Wijnberg and Gemser (2000, p. 323) call the valuation of cultural products “problematic”; Bonus and Ronte (1997, p. 103) state that the “quality of visual arts cannot be measured objectively”; Teti et al. (2014, p. 90) conclude in their empirical study that “estimating the value of art in a similar manner as traditional ‘business products’ is likely a fruitless effort”. For all the above reasons, the presence of experts in the art market and the art world is pervasive.

### *2.1.3.3 The importance of the artist's reputation*

Becker (1982/2008) elaborates on artistic reputation from a sociology point of view, with his main argument being that reputations in the art world are the result of social process. Art worlds are responsible through a process of consensus building for making and unmaking reputations not only of artists but of artworks, genres, schools and media. According to Becker (ibid., p. 366) an artwork that continues being appreciated by people for centuries (e.g. the Mona Lisa by Leonardo da Vinci) “is a work that has a good reputation for a long time”. Artists’ reputation is based on their work and the evaluation the art world experts make of it, and it is in this sense that a reputation of an artist is made, maintained or even destroyed. There is a reinforcement effect between the reputation of the artist and his work. Becker (ibid, p. 23) notes that “we value more a work done by an artist we respect, just as we respect more an artist whose work we have admired”. There is also a strong relationship between reputation and distribution; Becker (ibid., p. 95) argues that if something is not distributed it will not be known and will be thought of as not important and end up without reputation. On the other hand, if something does not have a “good” reputation it will not be distributed. Bourdieu (1980, p. 265) argues that reputations are not made by individual experts or individual institutions or even “the whole set of what are sometimes called ‘personalities of the world of arts and letters’” but in the field of (cultural) production emphasizing as always the struggle that takes place within it between agents or institutions for the power to consecrate. It is worthy to mention that in the same essay Bourdieu (ibid., p. 290) mentioned the word *brand* in the

context of schools of art (e.g. American pop art) and characterized it as a pseudo-concept, namely a practical classification tool in the struggle for recognition. Plattner (1998) mentions that from a modern marketing point of view, the impressionist painters along with their dealers and critics created their own brand. This collaborative (art world) view is also shared by Muñiz et al. (2014) in their Picasso case study where they credit Picasso with understanding that reputation building is a collaborative affair. Lehman and Wickham (2014, p. 682) highlight that for reputation building “the cultivation and careful management of external validation by multiple salient stakeholder groups” is necessary, whereas Beckert and Rössel (2013) argue that reputation building is conferred by experts and that reputation itself is a signal of artistic quality used by buyers to evaluate the economic value of a work; i.e. it is used as an uncertainty reduction mechanism when making a purchase decision in the same way as the artistic brand is according to Preece and Kerrigan (2015). Furthermore, Beckert and Rössel (ibid., p. 187) attempt to measure artists' reputation using various indicators such as “the length of their careers, the reputation of their galleries, the arts media awareness of the artist, their awards (such as prizes and grants), and whether they held a professorship at an art school” and find that public awareness (through the media and awards) is the most important indicator when using auction market data. Both de Nooy (2002) and Giuffre (1999) associate reputation with artistic prestige and find a dynamic link between prestige of the artist and prestige of related art institutions such as galleries. Giuffre (1999) notes that the prestige of the artist is defined to a large degree by the status of his gallery; de Nooy (2002) finds that prestige is dependent on past successes and that current prestige influences the course of artistic careers. To that effect, Pusa and Uusitalo (2014) note that well-known artists can help in the marketing of museum exhibitions, while artists yet unknown benefit from the brand image of a renowned museum. However, reputations are not set in stone and various authors refer to their fragility (Peterson, 1997) especially when it comes to art critics who are thought of as capable of both making and breaking reputations (Rodner and Thomson, 2013; Arora and Vermeylen, 2013).

#### **2.1.4 Classification of artists and artists' *business models***

Numerous authors have attempted to classify artists and their creative or business practices or attributes like reputation and prestige in order to study the evolution of artistic careers. Galenson (2000, 2001, 2004, 2005a, 2005b; Galenson and Jensen, 2002) has written extensively on the various aspects of artistic careers and broadly classified the artists of the modern era into two

categories based on the “methods by which they arrive at major contributions [in creating art]” (Galenson, 2004, p. 123). These methods are *aesthetically motivated experimentation* and *conceptual execution*, i.e. the artists are classified as either being *experimental* or *conceptual*. Experimental artists make no detailed plans before executing work and focus on the execution stage of their work, while conceptual artists make a lot of preparatory work and their execution consists of executing the preconceived idea. According to the author, as a result, experimental artists make artistic breakthroughs relatively late in their careers (e.g. Cézanne) while conceptual artists make breakthroughs throughout their careers (e.g. Picasso). This typology however, is not free of criticism by Galenson's peers; Ginsburgh and Weyers (2006), albeit recognizing the innovative approach used by Galenson (2004), conclude that such a typology is not absolute, but rather more probable that artists throughout their careers move from experimentation to conceptualization and vice versa. Accominotti (2009) finds that Galenson's approach, which focuses only on the individual artists' creativity while ignoring the effect of artistic movements on the creativity of the individual artist, is an important factor that could explain why conceptual artists make artistic breakthroughs early in their careers; they benefit from the interaction with fellow artists in terms of collaboration and mutual support within the same movement<sup>18</sup> (e.g. impressionists and abstract expressionists). Chan et al. (2015) using Australian art students and artists in their study classified the vast majority of the artists as experimental and explained this fact using Bourdieu's concepts of field and habitus and concluded that the creative processes of artists are part of the “artists' strategies for surviving in the artworld” (ibid., p. 21).

Other authors (Klamer and Petrova, 2007; Throsby and Zednik, 2010; Preece and Kerrigan, 2015) classify artists according to their “career stage” and use three broad categories: emerging, mid-career and established. As Preece and Kerrigan (2015) point out, there are no clear boundaries and definitions for this classification, albeit the fact that these terms are used regularly in the international art world. For the purposes of their study, they define emerging as being a recent graduate (up to five years since art school graduation), mid-career as an artist working professionally between 6-14 years and established as an artist working for at least 15 years. Lehman and Wickham (2014) use a similar model that has four career stages instead: unknown, emerging, established, and famous. The model they developed, called VAMT (Visual Artists'

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<sup>18</sup> For clustering and migration of artists see O'Hagan and Kelly (2005), Kelly and O'Hagan (2007) and O'Hagan and Hellmanzik (2008).

Marketing Trajectory model), is an important contribution because it underlines the role of marketing in the development of a career in the visual arts. They conclude that the marketing strategy an artist needs to follow depends on where artists are in terms of career stage. Furthermore, they advocate that most of the marketing activities are related to “the cultivation and careful management of external validation by multiple salient stakeholder groups as a means of building reputation” (ibid., p. 682). They also stress the fact that aspiring artists need to be aware of the career trajectory and its challenges “and take deliberate measures to market their output appropriately (i.e. to be able to define their contribution to the art world and to market this contribution effectively in a crowded art marketplace)” (ibid., p. 683).

In 1989, Sir Alan Bowness (1989), a former director of the Tate Gallery between 1980 and 1988, came up with his model, called “The Condition of Success”, to describe the artist's path of recognition to fame. His model contemplated four circles of recognition: peer, critical, market and public recognition<sup>19</sup>. This model highlights once more the importance of art world experts in the development of artistic careers.

Moureau and Sagot-Duvauroux<sup>20</sup> (2012) following the work of Galenson and Weinberg (2001) research the impact of innovation on the artistic career and end up identifying four types of artists<sup>21</sup> (and four corresponding business models) based on evaluations of 2 criteria: novelty<sup>22</sup> (traditional or innovative) and process<sup>23</sup> (artwork or project). The first type is the *salon artist* who produces traditional art, primarily painting and sculpture, sells through commercial galleries, whereby recognition is commercially determined. The second type is the *artisan-entrepreneur* artist, who works with commissions (including government/state commissions) and usually has a team helping with the creative and/or fabrication process. The third type is the *360°* artist, who is similar to the *artisan-entrepreneur* in the sense that he receives commissions and participates in projects like performance art, installations or multimedia art and engages in innovative art using a variety of distribution channels (his social network is an indicator of his success). The fourth type is the *art*

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<sup>19</sup> See Galenson (2005) and Moody (2005) for further discussion.

<sup>20</sup> The context of their research was France where the local and regional authorities initially have an important role in legitimizing artists through public commissions and regional museum exhibitions.

<sup>21</sup> They also develop a gallery typology (see section 2.2.1.1)

<sup>22</sup> Traditional can be thought of as “figurative/decorative” and innovative as “avant-garde”.

<sup>23</sup> Artwork or project: with an artwork, the final product is subject to market evaluation; with a project the evaluation is made during the process of production (i.e. artist's approach is evaluated).

*fair* artist, who produces innovative art that appeals to collectors and institutions, but due to its “innovative nature” the quality of the work is subject to curator evaluation. This research stresses the “very different promotional strategies” that artists must follow according to their business model. Salon artists and artisan-entrepreneurs gain recognition by commercial success and can increase their sales by associating themselves with a network of galleries and local authorities (in the case of the artisan-entrepreneur). Both the 360° artist and the art fair artist “must receive their legitimacy from institutions before being able to claim any kind of commercial success” (ibid., p. 53). The 360° artist benefits from social network connections but to enter the market needs institutional legitimacy. The art fair artist initially also needs access to (local) institutional legitimacy but to enter the international market an influential gallery is essential. Abbing (2002) also provides a classification of artists based on their attitude:

- The first type refers to the *artist-researcher* whose attitude resembles that of scientists that treat studios as laboratories. Their primary concern is peer and critical recognition and because their art is highly self-referential, expert knowledge is needed to understand it and it is also likely not to sell easily in the market (Donald Judd and Dan Flavin given as examples by Abbing (2002)).
- The second type is the *postmodern* artist who ignores the boundaries of art and “move[s] freely between art, design, and applied arts, including advertisement” (ibid., p. 299). This type of artist does both autonomous and commissioned work and establishes a business structure by employing staff (Matthew Barney and Pipilotti Rist given as examples).
- The third type is the *artist-craftsman* who works on his own and has no aspiration in becoming a star (Alex Katz given as example)
- The fourth type is the *artist-entertainer* who aims to please the audience and therefore has a market/commercial orientation. Abbing (2002) believes that this type is likely to be the kind of artist to prevail in the future (Francesco Clemente and Sandro Chia given as examples).

### 2.1.5 Experts, gatekeepers and the role of knowledge in the art market

In Section 2.0.1 we saw that for the definition of art certain “appropriate people” and “mechanisms” are needed. These appropriate people are usually referred to as experts, gatekeepers, the art establishment (Singer, 1981b), the (art) scene (Currid, 2007), while the mechanisms refer



to art and cultural institutions like museums (public and increasingly private), cultural centers and commercial art galleries<sup>24</sup>.

#### *2.1.5.1 Roles of experts and gatekeepers<sup>25</sup>*

Broadly speaking experts such as art critics and art historians are responsible for defining something as art, be that a physical object (paintings, drawings, sculptures of any form and size, installations, photographs), an arts performance (like the work of Marina Abramovic) or art in digital form (film and video). The term gatekeeper has been used in the cultural field since the 1970's (Hirsch, 1972; Crane, 1976; Bystryn, 1978). More recently, Foster et al. (2011, p. 247) defined gatekeepers as playing "a critical role in determining what creative products eventually reach audiences". In the case of visual arts, curators and gallerists are mostly responsible for bringing art in contact with the public comprised of both buyers and art lovers. However, as Moody (2005, p. 78), citing Maraniello (2002), points out there is no clear-cut distinction among experts and gatekeepers "where a combination of curator, critic, reviewer, art manager and academic is not uncommon". To the above categories one can add art schools since they perform a gatekeeping function by admitting some candidates while rejecting others (Abbing, 2002); established artists whose opinion is respected by their peers and other market participants<sup>26</sup>; auction<sup>27</sup> house specialists who make monetary valuation decisions (pre-sale estimates) and artistic status decisions by delegating artworks to prestigious evening sales, "middle-market" day sales or plain generic sales. Also, art market journalists and commentators and even bloggers in websites dedicated to art contribute to public opinion formation regarding art events like gallery openings, museum exhibitions, art fair and auction sale gossip. Social media are extensively being used (Arora and Vermeylen, 2013; Currid, 2007) by all art world players for promoting their work (artists, especially of younger generations), for publicizing various events (gallery openings, museum exhibitions, upcoming auctions), for commenting on art market developments (art fairs, record auction prices, and any art related gossip).

Experts and gatekeepers have an important role in the art market because knowledge and expertise are paramount. Singer (1978; 1981a) characterizes art markets as markets with imperfect

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<sup>24</sup> Galleries and museums are analyzed in subsequent sections.

<sup>25</sup> Throughout the text these two terms are used somewhat interchangeably (Arora and Vermeylen, 2013, p. 210, n.1).

<sup>26</sup> To some degree established artists may serve as role models for the younger generation of artists, as well as, sources of creative inspiration.

<sup>27</sup> Auctions are analyzed in section 2.2.2

knowledge; Becker (1982/2008) says that conventions in the art world are known only to people who have some familiarity with it, while Abbing (2002) believes that even experts have difficulties in predicting long term developments in the field, but still are better informed than the average consumer (art buyer). Grampp (1989) emphasizes the uncertainty embedded in the art market and the efforts buyers, sellers, dealers and auction houses make in order to reduce it by collecting information. The need for art market transaction prices (essentially auction prices) is so great that specialized information providers such as Artnet and Artprice operate profitable businesses by offering auction price data to paying subscribers. Knowledge and expertise are necessary for reducing as much as possible another kind of uncertainty, namely the identification and attribution of works to specific artists. Even though this issue is most relevant for older works (i.e. ranging from old masters to modernism), the Knoedler gallery scandal<sup>28</sup> involving the sale of fake works of art, litigation issues involving the now extinct Warhol authentication board<sup>29</sup>, and other cases of litigation concerning attribution, authentication and forgery (e.g. the Beltracchi forgeries case) act as a reminder of the role of experts in the market and the effects their decisions have on prices. Generally speaking, there is a positive effect on the value of an artwork when its authenticity is certified by the artist himself (Sagot-Duvaurox, 2003) or by the gallery representing him. If the artist is no longer living, the authentication can be carried out by the artist's appointed heirs, by an expert in the artist's work, or by an authentication committee that is usually supported or linked to an artist's foundation, if one exists. Alternatively, when a work is already included (or about to be) in the *catalogue raisonné* (Singer, 1988; Singer and Lynch, 1997) that aims to document an artist's production<sup>30</sup>, is a sign that a work is (most probably) genuine. Having said that, there is always room for error, lack of accuracy, and incompleteness, i.e. if a work is not included in a *catalogue raisonné* that does not automatically mean it is not authentic.

Shanteau et al. (2002) list various reasons why someone can be classified as an expert, and among them are: experience, certification, social acclamation, consensus building and consistency of opinion. Arora and Vermeylen (2013) add to that list institutional linkages, that is the status of the

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<sup>28</sup> <http://www.artnews.com/2016/04/25/the-big-fake-behind-the-scenes-of-knoedler-gallery-s-downfall/> (accessed: September 14, 2017)

<sup>29</sup> <https://artsbeat.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/10/19/warhol-foundation-to-dissolve-authentication-board/?mcubz=1> (accessed: September 14, 2017)

<sup>30</sup> Artists and galleries often provide buyers with certificates of authenticity. Gallery, auction and museum exhibition catalogues also offer some legitimacy that is not always undisputed.

institution the expert is affiliated with, while at the same time they claim that the reasons listed by Shanteau et al. (2002) also indicate the difficulty of judging someone's expertise level. For example, experience is not necessarily synonymous with superior knowledge or consensus building which leads to incorrect decisions regarding authentication and attribution. As Arora and Vermeylen (2013, p. 201) argue, because of these issues, constructing knowledge in the art world "remains contentious and debatable". According to Bonus and Ronte (1997, p. 110) what these experts possess is "cultural knowledge", or cultural capital in embodied form, and ultimately these experts form a "worldwide *network relationship*" where they engage "in reciprocal, preferential, and mutually supportive actions" (ibid., p. 112). Bonus and Ronte (1997, p. 110) also introduce the notion of credibility on the part of experts, i.e. the expert must be deemed credible by the art world in order for their opinion to have validity so that their credibility can be "transferred" to an artist and his work, something Bourdieu (1980; 1985) refers to as *consecration*.

#### **2.1.5.2 Art critics and curators**

Bonus and Ronte (1997, p. 103) state that the "quality of visual arts cannot be measured objectively" and argue that for judging this quality experts are necessary. For the same reason, Arora and Vermeylen (2013, p. 197) call the valuation of art a "nebulous process" and say that this value judgment is left to the experts. Joy and Sherry (2003, pp. 160-161) argue that art criticism is a form of gate-keeping "that evaluates art against what has gone before and locates it within a specific genealogy" and that the critic is also responsible for identifying and promoting new artistic talent. Galenson and Jensen (2002) point out that the relationship between artist and critic predates the artist-dealer relationship and use the example of the impressionists and the relations they had with important figures from literature such as Zola and Mallarmé when the latter assumed also the role of art critic in newspaper columns. Singer (1981b, p. 54) called critics (along with museums) "quasi patent offices" that in essence offer protection to innovative artists by enhancing their reputation, while Cowen and Tabarrok (2000, p. 244) state that artists "pursue artistic styles that are favored by the most prestigious critics". On the other hand, the role of art criticism and the influence of the art critic are being questioned in the last 15-20 years. Plattner (1998) argues that art criticism has lost its authority after impressionism and wonders why today's critics would be

any better<sup>31</sup>. Jeffri (2005, p. 138) makes a similar point by saying that the role of critics has recently been “substantially compromised”, even though in the past critics have legitimated (or not) the work of artists. Horowitz (2011) makes a very salient point regarding the postmodern critics’ evaluation of art: they have declared painting dead on numerous occasions and despite that, it still exists and is being reinvented in new ways. Influential British collector Charles Saatchi (Saatchi, 2009, p. 97) says that “the days when critics could create an art movement by declaring the birth of ‘Abstract Expressionism’, Clement Greenberg<sup>32</sup>-style, are firmly over”. Following this reasoning, if indeed the art critic and criticism are losing some or most of their earlier consecration power, the question to ask is: who is taking their place (partially or totally) and assuming this role? According to Acord (2010, p. 447), the leading British art critic David Sylvester “suggested that the most important people in the cultural world are not artists but curators”, calling them “the true brokers of the art world” (Millard, 2001, cited in Acord, 2010, p. 447). Currid (2007) says that museum curators are responsible for museum purchases and therefore decide which art will be presented to the public, hence providing more visibility than private collector purchases, while Becker (1982/2008, p. 117) argues that the purchase of a contemporary artwork by a museum<sup>33</sup> offers the “highest kind of institutional approval”. Joy and Sherry (2003, p. 163) attribute to curatorial decisions the power to “catapult an object from obscurity to international acclaim” but at the same time question the apparent neutrality of curators by recognizing market orientation on their part and by frequently acting as advisors for private collections (corporate and individual). Moulin (1994) makes the point that curators work together with gallerists to support artists by combining their activities (promotional on the part of the gallerists and curatorial/art historical on the part of the curators) and “produce signals that lead to price increases” (ibid., p. 10). Moulin (1994) refers also to the capability of a “few cosmopolitan star curators with international careers...to assure the recognition of an artist or of an artistic trend” (ibid., p. 10). Currid (2007) refers to cultivation of personal relationships between artists and those who can advance their career, as Muñiz et al. (2014) have argued in the case of Picasso, while Velthuis (2011, p. 195)

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<sup>31</sup> The Academy members, the majority of critics, and the general public used to mock the impressionists and the term “impressionist” was initially used to ridicule that type of art, which was considered “bad” vis-a-vis the “good” or “correct” art advocated and practiced by the Academy members.

<sup>32</sup> See Chong (2005, p. 99, n.3)

<sup>33</sup> Becker (1982/2008, p. 220) attributes the selection to a network made up of curators, museum trustees, patrons, dealers and critics. Nonetheless the input of curators in both purchase decisions (subject to the Board’s approval) and exhibition organization is significant.

speaks of alliances between galleries and “reputation-building agents” such as critics and curators<sup>34</sup>. Once again we see that consensus building (Becker, 1982/2008) and collaboration among various experts and gatekeepers is a key characteristic of the art world: Klammer and Petrova (2007, p. 253) talk about networks of art world professionals who provide endorsement “for an artist’s work through exhibitions, critical appraisal, and private and public purchases”; Chong (2005) says that cooperation is crucial between production and consumption and that intermediaries (critics, curators, collectors) play a role in valuation and certification of artworks; Zorloni (2005) posits that an elite group of collectors, critics, curators and dealers establish pricing hierarchies for art depending on their preferences.

However, one must be aware that not all experts are created equal; some opinions carry more weight and influence than others (Becker, 1982/2008; Abbing, 2002) and also that the entry into the experts’ regime is less based on meritocracy and more based on a network of connections (Negus, 2002). In a nutshell, for experts both cultural capital and social capital are necessary for entering the regime and gaining power in it (Abbing, 2002).

Apart from critics and curators, the government<sup>35</sup> through its cultural policy exercises a certain degree of gatekeeping both directly and indirectly at the national, regional or local authority level by appointing museum board members and directors in state-controlled museums, deciding on the budget of all state-controlled cultural institutions, establishing art prizes and attributing grants and subsidies to artists, commissioning artwork for public places, deciding on the country’s official representation in highly prestigious events such as the Venice Biennale, selecting artists and artwork to represent the country abroad in missions of cultural diplomacy (Grampp, 1989; Chong, 2010; Abbing, 2002; Joy and Sherry, 2003). Recent research has also found gatekeeping characteristics in terms of establishing reputation and gaining commercial success in winning or being shortlisted for the prestigious Turner Prize in Britain (Pénet and Lee, 2014). Rodner et al. (2011) in their study of the Thai and Venezuelan multiple-artist participation in the Venice Biennale highlight its importance as a branding opportunity for artists when these take advantage of their presence by making visible their “artistic individualities” (ibid., p. 331).

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<sup>34</sup> See also Becker (1982/2008, p. 113).

<sup>35</sup> Abbing (2002, chapters 9 and 10) analyzes the government involvement in the arts mostly from the European perspective.

## 2.2 Distribution and Intermediation of Art (galleries, dealers and auctions)

From an economic point of view, the market is the place where demand and supply are matched, transactions take place and the monetary or economic value of the works is established. In the case of the art market and its two sub-segments, primary and secondary, transactions take place after the aesthetic/cultural value of the works has been determined by the experts and gatekeepers (Velthuis, 2011). The main intermediary in the primary market, where an artwork is sold for the first time, is the gallery. Artworks, however, can be introduced in the market by the artists themselves when they sell directly (without intermediaries) to buyers from their studios. This usually applies to artists that don't have exclusive representation agreements with galleries, but even when such agreements are in place, artists may be allowed to do so under specific circumstances (e.g. selling to long-time collectors or friends, accepting commissions). In addition, there are artists like Joana Vasconcelos who have gallery representation internationally but sell to collectors in their home country directly from their studio (Fernandes and Afonso, 2014). In the secondary market, galleries and auction houses (including their so-called private sales) are the dominant players, even though, important transactions are brokered by art advisors, or negotiated directly between private parties (Chong, 2010).

### 2.2.1 Galleries and Dealers<sup>36</sup>

The main function of art galleries in the primary market<sup>37</sup> is representing artists, that is promoting and selling their work (Jyrämä and Äyväri, 2010; Velthuis, 2003a). For emerging artists, galleries act in a gatekeeping capacity, since the entrance of a young artist in the distribution circuit is a mark of his entrance in the market and the art world. An artist's first individual (solo) exhibition is, in other words, a first step in an artistic career with the representing gallery doing what is necessary to promote their work, create demand for it, and ultimately sell it to collectors. To achieve this, galleries must collaborate with other gatekeepers such as critics and curators to establish a reputation and visibility for these artists. Similar promotion activities, albeit to a lesser degree, are necessary for the mid-career artists in order to further advance their career by enhancing their reputation and visibility, broaden their market to other geographic regions and continue the

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<sup>36</sup> Gallerist and dealer are used interchangeably in the text. Galleries sometimes are thought of as mainly sellers of art (primary market activity) of the artists represented by the gallery, while art dealing is the activity of buying and selling art in the secondary market. Kottász and Bennett (2013) argue that the distinction among gallerists, dealers and agents is "fuzzy".

<sup>37</sup> The primary market is the focus of this section.

collaboration with critics and curators that are essential for further legitimation and museum representation through exhibitions and acquisitions. Established artists also may need some promotional effort, especially those who are becoming established in new markets (countries). The usual terms of trade between gallery and artist are mostly consignment (Shubik, 2003; Velthuis, 2003a; Zorloni, 2005), i.e. the artist delivers a certain number of works to the gallery for an exhibition or for its inventory and receives a fixed percentage of the agreed sale price when a sale occurs. For the gallery, this percentage<sup>38</sup> ranges from 30%, or even less, for artists that enjoy mega-artist status, to 60% for emerging artists. It is expected that the higher the reputation of the artist (in terms of recognition, prestige, or market appeal), the better his negotiating position vis-à-vis the gallery will be (Kottász and Bennett, 2013; Prinz et al., 2015).

In the secondary market, galleries do not represent artists per se, even though occasionally organize solo exhibitions, e.g. present an artist's earlier work. The work that is available for sale comes from mainly two sources: private collections who consign, sell, or trade works with the gallery, and from purchases the gallery makes at auctions (Velthuis, 2003a; Robertson and Chong, 2008). In this sense, the dealer acts like a trader or an arbitrageur and their business model can be described as a simplified "buy low, sell high" strategy. Alternatively, galleries also accept works on consignment from collectors acting as brokers and earning a commission. An important feature of the secondary market is that neither the artist nor the gallery representing him have control on either the transaction price or the buyer of the work (Moulin, 1994).

The art trade is a commercial activity with a long history that according to De Marchi and Van Miegroet (2006) can be traced to Florence during the Renaissance and to Flanders (Bruges) at around 1450. Shubik (2003), invoking his earlier research (Shubik, 1983), states that there is evidence of auction sales and art dealing in ancient Rome. Regarding modern art dealing, he cites the research of Montias (1988; 1996) who attributes its roots to Dutch and Flemish dealers. The literature on art dealing (Singer, 1988; Lenman, 1989; Galenson and Jensen, 2002; Greffe, 2002; Robertson and Chong, 2008) reaches a broad consensus with respect to the origins of the modern dealer in the name of Paul Durand-Ruel<sup>39</sup> (1831-1922) *mega-dealer* of the impressionists. In a

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<sup>38</sup> Plattner (1998), Chong (2005), and Robertson and Chong (2008) mention 50% overall; Shubik (2003) for new artists mentions 50% plus or minus 10%; Zorloni (2005) mentions a range between 33% and 60%.

<sup>39</sup> Ambroise Vollard (1866-1939) and Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler (1884-1979) are also frequently mentioned along Durand-Ruel as pioneers in modern art dealing.

recent revised and corrected edition of his memoirs prepared by his descendants (Durand-Ruel and Durand-Ruel, 2014, pp. xii-xvii), these identified seven “key and highly innovative principles” that revolutionized the art dealing profession and, by and large, are still implemented today. Among them are: exclusive representation of artists and their promotion via solo exhibitions, close personal relations with artists as evidenced by surviving correspondence and defense of their interests both artistic and financial<sup>40</sup>, establishment of a network of international galleries and promotion of exhibitions outside France (e.g. opening a gallery in London in 1870 and in New York in 1888) and the publication of specialized art reviews<sup>41</sup> as tools for promoting the artists’ work both nationally and internationally.

Almost all galleries are owner-operated (Jyrämä and Äyväri, 2010; Chong, 2010), closely held individual proprietorships (Shubik, 2003), hence their financial details in terms of sales and profitability are usually not publicly available (Chong, 2010; Benhamou et al., 2002). Abbing (2002) states that in many European and North American cities there are too many galleries and their sales are low and as a result provide little income to their owners, while Shubik (2003) points out that most of these businesses employ only 2-3 people and data from the study of Benhamou et al. (2002, p. 268) indicate that in France both gallery sales and gallery employment are low<sup>42</sup>. Recent research by Resch (2016, p. 37) using data from the US, the UK, and Germany confirm that “very few galleries make really good returns, and the majority are at best only marginally profitable, if at all”. On the other hand, there exist galleries with multiple exhibition spaces spread around the globe that employ a few dozen people as full-time staff, such as: Gagosian (16 locations in 7 countries), David Zwirner (3 locations in 2 countries), Hauser & Wirth (7 locations in 3 countries), Sprüth & Magers (3 locations in 3 countries), Pace Gallery (10 locations in 6 countries), White Cube (3 locations in 2 countries), Marian Goodman (3 locations in 3 countries), Thaddaeus Ropac (5 locations in 3 countries). These galleries (and a few others) sell the most expensive

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<sup>40</sup> Durand-Ruel supported the prices of his artists when their work came up at auction by bidding on it so that the resulting sale price was not (too) low. However, this was not an altruistic act of the dealer, since stabilizing or increasing the prices was ultimately beneficial to him.

<sup>41</sup> These publications (one being launched in 1869 and the other in 1890) were financially unsustainable and none survived for more than two years.

<sup>42</sup> Using data from 1998, these authors found out that the annual average gallery sales were € 430.000 but more than half of the galleries averaged sales of only € 150.000. Regarding employment levels, only 17% of the galleries employed more than 2 employees full-time.



contemporary art and represent both the most well-known artists globally<sup>43</sup>, as well as, the artists whose career prospects are deemed promising (and profitable), i.e. that are expected to make the transition<sup>44</sup> from mid-career to established artist and, more importantly, to further penetrate the international market. According to Velthuis (2003a), the promotion of artists includes - in addition to organizing exhibitions of the artists' work and selling it - the sale to institutions, the solicitation of exhibiting the artists' work in museums, reviews by critics and art historians, and the commission of essays for catalogues. All these actions aim to establish or further enhance the economic value of the art sold by the gallery. Chong (2010, p. 198) points out that for the circulation of art, the market making abilities of the dealer are essential, and for success "both aesthetic taste and social networks" are necessary. An example of this social collaboration occurs when gallerists and critics make the same artistic discovery and collaborate to promote the artists and the works they find "attractive and critically acceptable", with the dealers showing the work and the critics providing the "reasoning which makes it acceptable and worth appreciating" (Becker, 1982/2008, p. 113).

The gallery owners are entrepreneurs (Becker, 1982/2008) not only because they assume business risk but also in their ability to create (i.e. establish and maintain) a market for the artists they represent. Bourdieu (1980) says that essentially dealers are market co-creators along with artists, while Preece and Kerrigan (2015) adopt a multi-stakeholder approach when it comes to artist's brand creation, with the dealer assuming a key role in this process. Chong (2005) also characterizes dealers as entrepreneurs and considers self-promotion and innovation as ingredients for success in the market. Opening and operating an art gallery is a highly risky business as evidenced by the high entry and exit rates (Shubik, 2003; Marshall and Forrest, 2011; Prinz et al., 2015). As we have seen, there is uncertainty inherent in the artistic product because expert opinions, as well as, collector taste and preferences change. For these reasons, Shubik (2003, p. 199) concludes that "entrepreneurial salesmanship and social network skills" are more necessary for dealers than for retailers of any other kind of goods. Benhamou et al. (2002, p. 269) argue that the role of the dealer is based on their expertise and, at least in France, the quality they characterize as the "eye" of the director-owner that "enables him to discern the artistic values of tomorrow in advance. This eye

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<sup>43</sup> These mega-galleries are also frequently chosen by artists' heirs or their foundations to represent their estates (Velthuis, 2005).

<sup>44</sup> Another important and equally profitable transition occurs when an emerging artist reaches the mid-career status.

constitutes the main, if not the only, form of competitiveness of a gallery". Chong (2008) mentions the importance of the charisma and personality of the dealer in this business and the fact that their name, which is usually the gallery's name, is crucial to the "competitive position of the gallery". Hook (2017, p.3) in his historical<sup>45</sup> overview of influential art dealers equally attributes great importance to the personality of the dealer by stating that: "[t]he key to art dealing, and to the history of its most significant exponents, is the personality of the art dealer". Chong (2008) also mentions the ability on behalf of the dealer to spot artistic talent (the *eye*, as mentioned previously) and to manage the career of the artists, while underlining the need for a gallery to represent both new and established artists and making sure of how well these artists and their work fit together. Bourdieu (1980), defines the role of the dealer not only as someone who has to organize exhibitions and place the artwork in prestigious collections and museums but also as a talent spotter who acts as a screen between the market and the artist by helping the latter maintain a "disinterested" image of himself and his activity, by sparing him the tasks associated with the valorizing of his work" (ibid., p. 264, n. 6). For example, Lehman and Wickham (2014) make the point that famous artists are able to outsource all marketing activities to the dealers representing them. Prinz et al. (2015) in their work conclude that the success of art galleries depends on information (provided by gallery about its represented artists to art buyers) and innovation effects (promotion of the artists represented by the gallery). Shubik (2003), basing his opinion on his survey conducted on the Santa Fe art market, makes an interesting point regarding the motivation of art dealers: their decision to become art dealers is not based solely on economic criteria<sup>46</sup>, although the financial incentive is probably weighing the most. Robertson (2005) advocates that dealers have three incentives: excitement of dealing in a unique commodity, the intellectual appeal of art, and the opportunity to possess privileged information. However, as other authors (Meyer and Even, 1998; Hutter et al., 2007) have pointed out, the dealer is not merely a middle man in this process; he is a selector and an interpreter of artistic work and at the same time an educator of the art buyer, or as Becker (1982/2008, p. 113) put it: "dealers try to train appreciators to be collectors".

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<sup>45</sup> Hook covers the period from the 17<sup>th</sup> century up to the 1980's; i.e. it starts its coverage in western Europe and ends in New York with the legendary dealer Leo Castelli, owner of the eponymous gallery.

<sup>46</sup> Other reasons invoked: interest in art, passion for art, personal satisfaction derived from working with artists and artworks.

### 2.2.1.1 Gallery typologies and business models

Like in the case of artists, various typologies of galleries in terms of business models have been identified in the relevant literature. Peterson (1997) builds upon the work of Moulin (1967) and Bystryn (1978) and incorporates uncertainty in her gallery typology, as well as, identifies the relevant strategies employed by the galleries to manage it. Moulin (1967), who is a pioneer in the field of cultural sociology, identified two gallery types: the entrepreneurship type, which deals with the work of emerging artists by trying to build up their reputation, and the negotiation type, which deals with the work of established artists, including the work of deceased ones. Bystryn (1978) makes a similar distinction to Moulin's (1967) using the terms *experimental* and *established*. Peterson (1997) identified four types of galleries according to the levels of uncertainty they face and the artistic resources they have: (1) low uncertainty galleries that represent established artists; (2) high uncertainty galleries that represent emerging artists; (3) middle range uncertainty galleries that represent mid-career artists; (4) middle range uncertainty galleries that use a mixture of high and low uncertainty as counterbalances. The author in her interview-based research - that was also complemented by ethnographic methods (gallery visits) - identifies three strategies that a dealer can implement in dealing with uncertainty. The first one, named "turning liabilities into assets", refers to the situation of young dealers - often having few resources - representing young emerging artists with no reputation, which by definition, is the riskiest combination of resources. The strategy consists of using this apparent lack of resources to cultivate an "art for art's sake" profile and develop a reputation as someone who supports the struggling artists. The second strategy, called "creating risk", is employed by low uncertainty galleries "by trying to re-establish the reputations of forgotten artists<sup>47</sup> or movements" (Peterson, 1997, p. 247). The third strategy is referred to as "[artistic] diversification" and uses the creation of middle range uncertainty by combining "high and low risk objects and/or identifying niches which appeal to more than one kind of clientele" (ibid., p. 248). For example, when a potential client shows interest in a work, the dealer tries to understand the client's motivation (collector type or investor type) so that he can incorporate this information in his sales pitch. If the buyer is perceived as a collector type, the dealer highlights the art historical importance of the work. If the buyer appears more like an investor type, the dealer focuses "on the status of the work in the market" (ibid., p. 257). Joy

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<sup>47</sup> The works of these artists are usually at a price discount compared to their peers and if the dealer succeeds in reestablishing their reputation and artistic merit his potential for realizing substantial gains is considerable.

and Sherry (2003) suggest that galleries adopt strategies of survival that include: product differentiation from other galleries, assumption of risk when trying to establish a new artistic movement in the market, and promotion of the international career of the artist and export of his/her artwork abroad.

Moureaux and Sagot-Duvaurox (2012) using data from four French regions (excluding Paris) develop a typology with 3 gallery types. The first type, named “point-of-sale galleries” involves galleries that function as mere intermediaries without promoting any critical review of artists. An artist usually works with 4-5 such galleries in order to make a living. The second type, named “promotion galleries” support innovative art and these galleries cooperate with Parisian and international galleries as well as museums. They exhibit emerging artists and face survival problems due to the inherent uncertainty of their business model (practically unknown artists and few sales) and also due to the risk of their artists abandoning them in favor of more financially robust galleries that can better promote their work and advance their careers. The third type is the “springboard gallery” which is similar to the promotion gallery but in a not-for-profit configuration thus depending on subsidies and donations. They serve as the first step in the legitimization of the artistic careers of recent art school graduates.

Robertson (2005, p. 25) considers four distinct gallery types calibrated according to the riskiness of art they sell in terms of investment value. Alpha galleries deal in the works of established dead artists and offer “considerable and certain resale and investment value”; Beta galleries deal in contemporary art of the highest quality with high potential for offering resale and investment value; Gamma galleries offer works of art that may become Beta type material or become worthless; Delta galleries essentially sell worthless art without resale value<sup>48</sup>. Santagata (1995, p.194) distinguishes between two gallery types for the young (emerging) artist: the explorer gallery, a gallery with few resources (limited market power and capital), whose strategy is to discover and promote young talented artists by usually having exclusive rights to their work; the commercial gallery that is powerful and market oriented, whose owner has both social (ties with collectors and critics) and economic capital and is considered a “stepping stone to national and international success”. Moulin in her later work (1994) makes a distinction of art market segments

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<sup>48</sup> Robertson (2005, p. 25) uses the terms “souvenir”, “tourist memorabilia” and “art supermarket” to describe this kind of art. The term “shopping mall art” has also been used to describe it.

and galleries catering to these segments, according to the value of artwork offered both in terms of aesthetics and financially. The first market segment is the *chromos* market, which is equivalent to Robertson's Delta type and essentially does not qualify as art. The second segment is the *art classé* and includes art from the old masters up to classical modern art. The supply is theoretically fixed and the aesthetic value of the works has been established in art history. The uncertainty is introduced when experts change their minds in terms of attribution and rediscoveries (new supply). The third segment is the contemporary art market where dealers can engage in monopolistic or oligopolistic strategies. Moulin (1994) argues that these strategies have been present since the times of the Impressionists and work at two levels: first, to control the supply of art, and second, "to intervene in the way works of art are appraised" (ibid., p. 8). The first has to do with the fact that dealers are usually the only intermediaries<sup>49</sup> between artist and collector thus acting as monopolists at least temporarily. The second has to do with the gatekeeping activity of the *leader gallery*<sup>50</sup>, namely selecting artists and creating demand for their work using marketing and cultural diffusion. Singer (1988) makes the point that dealers can control the supply of art in two ways: first, by controlling the number of artists (gatekeeping function), and second, "by designating so-called good periods in the artist's *oeuvre*" (ibid., p. 34). According to Moulin (1994, p. 9) the success of such a strategy in the short term depends on the financial resources of the gallery and increasingly on its "cultural reputation", i.e. its "past ability to have new artistic goods accepted by leading figures of the artistic establishment (influential collectors, museum curators, famous critics)". These short-term "hype" strategies along with promotion at the international level helped young artists<sup>51</sup> to reach stardom in the 1980's<sup>52</sup> that required them to be highly productive during that limited "hype" period. In contrast to this short-term strategy, Moulin (1994) offers the examples of French dealers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century like Durand-Ruel, Vollard and Kahnweiler who "opted for the long-term strategy and postponed success" (ibid., p. 8).

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<sup>49</sup> The tendency of artists to sell directly from their studios (Section 2.2) when they can, erodes the monopolistic power of dealers.

<sup>50</sup> Moulin (1994, p. 9) uses this term to describe a gallery "capable of mobilizing an important network of galleries at the international level... agreeing to promote...the same artistic innovation".

<sup>51</sup> Moulin (1994) could be referring to artists like Chia and Clemente, also mentioned by Abbing (2002) in his artist typology as artist-entertainers (see Section 2.1.4), or Schnabel and Basquiat.

<sup>52</sup> Moulin (1994) associates the 1980's with the birth of new type of actor (gatekeeper), the mega-collector (See 2.3.1).

### 2.2.1.2 Galleries' relations with artists

The most successful artists are linked with galleries because “participation in the established distribution system is one of the important signs by which art world participants distinguish serious artists from amateurs” (Becker, 1982/2008, p. 97; also: Wijnberg, 1995; Giuffre, 1999; Preece and Kerrigan 2015). Meyer and Even (1998, p. 277) refer to the fact that “art galleries are the artists’ most important business partners” and their main source of business. Lenman (1989, p. 125) in her study of the German art market of the period 1850-1914, pointed out that the association of the ambitious artist with one or more dealers was highly desirable”, while for the avant-garde artist it was “practically indispensable”. Chong (2008, p. 119) highlights the importance of artists for the gallery because “who is represented by the gallery is an important signal to collectors”. Given their importance to the gallery, the gallerist needs to manage these relationships with artists on a personal level and for this, the personality of the owner-manager is crucial (Benhamou et al., 2002). These authors point out that in France the representation agreement between artist and gallery is usually verbal and even in the case of existence of a written contract, galleries are aware that its enforcement is difficult since a judicial battle could harm the gallery’s image. On the other hand, in the early 1990’s in the New York market, cases of representation conflict have been resolved in court as evidenced in the case of the artist Peter Halley who was accused by his representing gallery (Sonnabend) of breaking his contract and defecting to the Gagosian gallery (Velthuis, 2005).

Chong (2005) makes the point that in the balance of power between artist and dealer, usually the dealer has the upper hand except in the case of a *superstar* artist, or as Jeffri (2005, p. 136) puts it: “the less well-known the artist, the more powerful the dealer”. Plattner (1998) in order to illustrate the power issues between artist and dealer, argues that in the case of artist-dealer conflict, the former faces a practical and ethical dilemma by making the distinction between an artist who is represented only by one gallery and may fear being dropped from its roster, and an artist who has national reputation and works with other dealers and as a result has alternatives for representation. Peterson (1997, p. 245), who defines mid-career artists as “already established producers whose lasting reputation is still to be made”, considers that the power balance in this case is in favor of the artist because these artists “would be highly desired by competing establishments should they grow discontented with their current situation”. Throsby (1994) considers the case when dealers

can accumulate significant market power that results from by being both a monopsonist<sup>53</sup> and a monopolist regarding an artist's work. On one hand, by being the sole buyer of the artist's production, the dealer makes the artist totally dependent on him; on the other hand, by default, the dealer becomes the sole source of supply of new work in the market and this monopoly offers to him considerable control over pricing and allocation of works. Marshall and Forrest (2011, p. 118) conclude that overall, the galleries are in a strong position vis-à-vis both artists and collectors alleging the lack of organization<sup>54</sup> of both groups and because of this fact the transactions in the art market are "highly dependent on the galleries".

The relationship between artist and dealer is not without its problems. Becker (1982/2008) points out that their interests are not always aligned, since artists many times produce work that cannot be handled by the gallery distribution system and since they need the system for distribution of their work, dealers' influence on the creativity process poses a constraint on the artists. Jeffri (2005, p. 136) gives the example of Frank Lloyd, the owner of Marlborough Fine Arts, and his "unscrupulous" conduct towards the heirs of the estate of Mark Rothko (1903-1970) that resulted in a trial<sup>55</sup>. According to Cohen-Solal (2010, p. 411), when the first court decision came out in 1975, it was "the most publicized legal action ever to hit the art world" and affected the reputation of the art dealing profession at that time.

### *2.2.1.3 Galleries' relations with collectors*

The main source of revenue for galleries comes from sales to collectors, ranging from the occasional art buyer to the mega collector who may even have one or more private museums. Joy and Sherry (2003, p. 164) point out that galleries have an interest in "educating" collectors about the artworks they are offering and for this reason promote scholarship "by encouraging critics and journalists to review them [artworks], and sometimes they solicit the expertise of curators and historians to further enhance the sale". Velthuis (2003a) says that dealers reward good customers with "first choice" of works by an artist whose work is in demand. Robertson (2005) refers to occasional price discounts given to collectors either as a reward for their preference or because the acquired work will be pledged as a gift to a museum. The work of some artists is sometimes in such a high demand that waiting lists are established by the dealer in order to satisfy the collectors'

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<sup>53</sup> This is the case when an artist has an exclusive worldwide representation agreement with the dealer.

<sup>54</sup> Organization is used here in the sense of bargaining power.

<sup>55</sup> Seldes (1996) provides a detailed account of the trial.

demand. Chong (2008, p. 119) says that “who buys the work is important for primary art market dealers”, especially in the case for the artists’ whose work is in high demand because the dealer wants to avoid the sale of such a work to a buyer who will “flip” it. Flipping is the quick sale of a commodity that is in high demand for a substantial profit in a rather short amount of time after purchase. In the case of art, this practice by buyers (known in the art world as flippers or speculators) takes place when they gain access to works that are in high demand that are often subject to a waiting list (whose criteria for inclusion and eventual attribution are very discretionary on the part of the gallery) and sell them usually at auction to maximize their gains (Chong, 2010). For collectors who wish to overcome the waiting list, participating in the auction is often the only way to gain access to the desired work and this frequently implies substantially higher prices paid at auction compared to the ones in the gallery. This speculation is not desired by gallerists because it disturbs their pricing strategy (see section 2.2.1.1) and as a result, speculators are tacitly sanctioned in the market by dealers who deny access to them for acquiring highly desirable works. Robertson (2005) mentions resale agreements<sup>56</sup> between gallery and collector that may accompany works whose demand is high but whose legal enforcement is difficult. In that case, if a collector breaks the agreement, the only thing a dealer can do is to “blacklist” the collector and effectively exclude him from future sales. Controlling the provenance (ownership history) of the works by certain artists is very important for primary dealers in their effort to build the artist’s reputation in the market. For example, many collectors may be willing to pay the \$100.000 price tag for works by a certain artist (possibly some would even pay more); however, the dealer will have a preference for certain collectors who are loyal to the gallery, or who commit to bequeathing the work to a museum, or who are prestigious enough in the art world, so that the acquisition of such work by them is perceived as a seal of approval of the artist’s value, both in cultural terms as well as in economic/investment terms. Robertson (2005) says that a purchase from a gallery involves more than just buying the actual work and buying into the artist’s reputation; the collector also buys into the reputation of the gallery as well. Hutter et al. (2007, p. 249) argue that the galleries do not only sell artworks “but also actively create and provide a club good – namely membership in the community which adheres to the dealer’s aesthetic style – which they sell jointly with the object”.

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<sup>56</sup> Resale agreements stipulate that if the buyer wants to sell that work, he must offer it for sale to the dealer first. Not all collectors agree to sign one, and even if they do, and break it, the consequences are not usually legal but reputational. The high-end art market is a small one and undisciplined buyers (flippers) can be stigmatized by being blacklisted.



To that effect, Giuffre (1999) points out that galleries also have careers. They start out by representing unknown artists, but as some of these artists gain fame and reputation, so does the gallery. This fact makes the gallery known and enables it to add more prestigious artists to its roster (or stable as it is also known) thus increasing its prestige. The author concludes that the success of both artist and gallery depends on each other: “galleries are considered prestigious when they show the work of prestigious artists, and vice versa” (ibid., p. 817). This partially explains why galleries sometimes try to entice artists from other galleries to join them by promising more promotion or higher prices for their works. Singer (1981b) gives the example of Rothko who was persuaded to leave his original gallery (Sidney Janis Gallery) and join Marlborough “in spite of the fact that Rothko deeply resented the art establishment and knew that unlike Janis, Lloyd<sup>57</sup> had very little or no appreciation for his art” (ibid., p. 43).

#### *2.2.1.4 Relations among dealers*

According to Chong (2005) rivalry exists among art dealers for securing resources in their pursuit of being viewed as innovative in the field. On one hand, they compete for artists mainly at the mid-career and established stages (Giuffre, 1999), and on the other hand, for collectors as customers. Moulin (1994) however, argued that there seems to exist a collaboration and cooperation among galleries both at national (e.g. New York and other main US cities), and more importantly, international (mostly US to Europe and vice versa promotions) levels in their effort to establish, maintain and increase the reputations of their artists. Giuffre (1999) points out that galleries also cooperate in order to establish a particular art movement or style. Perhaps the best and most illustrative example of such cooperation is the case of New York dealer Leo Castelli of the eponymous gallery and his use of *satellite* galleries (Cohen-Solal, 2010, p. 374)<sup>58</sup> to promote his artists in the movements of pop art (Warhol, Lichtenstein, Johns, Rauschenberg) minimalism (Judd, Flavin, Serra) and conceptual art (Kosuth). Another type of galleries' cooperation is their clustering to various neighborhoods (e.g. Chelsea in New York, Mayfair in London, St. Germain and Marais in Paris) that according to Ulldemolins (2012, p. 59) “can be interpreted as a collective strategy by the major gallerists in order to keep their leading position within the art gallery system”.

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<sup>57</sup> Marlborough's owner.

<sup>58</sup> Cohen-Solal (2010) provides maps for satellite galleries in the U.S. (p. 369) and Europe (p. 376).

According to the author, this collective behavior is motivated by the dealers' shared goals: attract clients and earn prestige in the gallery world.

#### *2.2.1.5 Art Fairs and the globalization of the art market*

In recent years the importance of art fairs has become evident by the resources devoted to them by galleries, the corporate sponsorship they attract<sup>59</sup> (Findlay, 2012; Thompson, 2014), and the coverage they receive by the specialized press, mainstream media, as well as, society and gossip columns (Thompson, 2014). Thompson (2014, p. 233) defines art fairs as “industry trade shows where dealers come together for several days to showcase themselves and a small group of artists”. Chong (2010, p. 50), inspired by the work of Porter (1998) views art fairs as “temporary economic clusters bringing together main collectors and dealers and other taste makers”. As with almost anything related to the visual arts, there is a widely recognized hierarchy among the many dozens of art fairs around the globe. The most prestigious are considered to be: Art Basel, Art Basel Miami Beach and Frieze (London). These are followed by ARCO in Madrid, FIAC in Paris, Art Basel Hong Kong, among others. Following these, there is a plethora of art fairs that have mainly local, or regional character like: Artissima (Milan), SP-Arte (São Paulo), ARCOLisboa (Lisbon), to name a few. This unofficial ranking has to do with the prestige of the fair, which is determined by the participation of international galleries and the quality of the artworks they bring to it according to the status of the artists represented and the prices of their art. Some authors (Hook, 2013; Findlay, 2012; Thompson, 2014) view art fairs as a rival to auctions, in the sense that they provide a vast number of works and succeed in creating an almost festive atmosphere like the auction weeks in New York and London where the biggest auction houses (Christie's and Sotheby's) hold their most important sales. The access to the most prestigious fairs is restricted and controlled by a committee that includes the fair organizers and internationally reputed dealers who act in a peer-review capacity. This committee decides admittance based on the reputation of the artists represented by the applicant gallery and the quality of the artworks the gallery brings to the fair. In addition, there is also a vetting process of the works that are brought to the fair, that is, experts evaluate their quality and authenticity and works that are not considered up to the standards of the fair are withdrawn (Keller, 2006; Hook, 2013). Gatekeeping makes admittance crucial since the participation in the fair is a status-enhancing event for the gallery and its artists. Artists who want

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<sup>59</sup> The main sponsors are usually banks, followed by a wide array of luxury goods makers (Thompson, 2008).

to initiate or further develop an international career strive to be represented by a gallery that participates regularly in art fairs, which provide opportunities for their work to be viewed by collectors, art advisors, curators, museum board members and trustees, and art world experts. Art fairs enable the galleries to catch up with their international clients, network with prospective clients and art world professionals and of course make sales in a rather more accelerated pace than normal. Samuel Keller (2006) former director of the Art Basel fairs characterizes buying at the fair as making a decision faster than one would make in a gallery but slower than a decision made in the auction room. Art fair participation has considerable costs both in terms of money and time (Thompson, 2008) and dealers often complain of “art fair fatigue” (Thompson, 2014, p. 237), but are aware that art fairs are an essential component of their business model. A frequent criticism of art fairs is that they give the art buying experience a kind of ‘shopping at a mall’ feeling that further contributes to the commodification of art. Authors like Thompson (2008, 2014) even argue that artists can be pressured to produce “art fair art” in order for their dealers to satisfy the collector demand for their work. For the fair visitor and especially the collector or potential buyer, the fair has the advantage that some new artists or new works may be found, contacts with new galleries initiated, relationships with already known dealers further cultivated, and art prices among dealers compared (Keller, 2006; Thompson, 2008; Thompson, 2014; Hook, 2013; Thornton, 2008). Besides the obvious commercial activity of the fair “there is also incessant gossiping, boasting and networking” (Hook, 2013) to the degree that, according to Thornton (2008, p. 81), art fair gossip takes the form of “market intelligence”. For artists, having their work present in a fair could be a boost in their career both in terms of sales and wider recognition but also as an additional source of self-esteem (Velthuis, 2005). Joy and Sherry (2013, p. 168) argue that galleries use their presence in the art fairs to “launch their artists in a global market” and this could be one of the factors taken into account by artists when they are considering changing their gallery representation (Thompson, 2014).

Quemin (2013) has analyzed quantitative data on international art fairs and gallery participation in them and came to the conclusion that the location of the fairs is limited “to a very small geographical, and mainly western space” and also that “the participating galleries come from a small number of Western countries” (ibid., p. 170). This observation also reflects the reality in the auction market where the dominance of the US (New York) and Europe (mostly London and to

some degree Paris) is unquestioned<sup>60</sup>. The above conclusions of Quemin (2013) provide confirmation to his earlier research (Quemin, 2006) that disputed the widely held notion that the contemporary visual arts are truly global, but instead can better be described as a “center and periphery” model. Velthuis (2013) also researched the globalization of the contemporary art market by looking into the nationality of the artists represented by galleries in Berlin and Amsterdam and found out that there is a strong home bias in the selection of artists, a finding that puts a dent in the arguments for the art market being truly global. The author admits that “[g]alleries do in other words operate internationally, but it would be an exaggeration to claim that their business is truly global” (Velthuis, 2013, p. 294). This home bias according to Velthuis (2013) has to do with the practices and conventions of the galleries’ business conduct that lead to some barriers to globalization. Among these barriers are: the search processes followed by galleries in finding emerging artists to represent where they possess “strong local informational advantages”; the importance of physical proximity between gallery and artist in view of the dealer’s role as a moral supporter of the young artist and the creation of a community of other artists, critics and collectors around the gallery’s artists; the cultivation of trust relationships between artists and dealers is easier when there is proximity between them, especially in the cases when both the gallery is relatively new and without many resources and the artist is at the beginning of career. As already mentioned (section 2.2.1.2), most times the business between artist and dealer is conducted without contracts, and even when contracts are used, their enforcement and monitoring can be difficult and litigation is not usually desired even if it has good chances of being successful. Velthuis (2013) points out that only a small number of galleries have the resources (financial and social) to market artists from all over the world. The representation of foreign artists in what is called an “international program” is one of the factors that grants access to the most important fairs and enhances the gallery’s reputation and prestige.

### 2.2.2 The Auction Market

In the secondary market for contemporary art, auctions are another important venue besides the galleries, where transactions take place, record prices paid, and artistic reputations made, enhanced, or sometimes “destroyed”. The actual mechanics of the auction process are not the focus

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<sup>60</sup> Quemin (2006) also mentions China as a major auction market player, however the quality and the veracity of data of the Chinese auction market has been questioned by researchers (e.g. Thompson, 2014).

of this section<sup>61</sup>; what is of interest is the relationship between galleries and auctions, and the effect of auctions on artistic careers. Even though artists do not (normally) conduct business directly with the auction houses<sup>62</sup>, the outcomes of the auctions can impact their career greatly both in terms of artwork pricing and reputation.

One of the recurring themes of the art world and the art market is the existence of brands and hierarchies, and the auction market is no exception. The most prestigious auction houses are considered being Sotheby's and Christie's, each having a history of more than 250 years, that handle almost exclusively the world's most expensive art, antiques and collectibles (Ashenfelter and Graddy, 2003; Hook, 2013; Thompson, 2008, 2014). At a very distant third place there is Phillips that focuses mainly in contemporary art and design, followed by Bonham's. Below these auction houses in the hierarchy, we find many regional/national houses that are dominant in their respective markets; for instance, in Europe alone, most notably, we have: Bukowskis and Stockholms Auktionsverk in Sweden, Dorotheum in Austria, Grisebach and Lempertz in Germany, Artcurial and Drouot<sup>63</sup> in France (Robertson, 2005; Thompson, 2014). The above hierarchy does not include the Chinese auction market whose size in the last decade has increased significantly as the following data show. According to the latest research by McAndrew (2017, p. 100; fig. 3c) in the fine arts segment, in terms of global share by volume (using 2016 data), the US takes the top spot with 22% global share, followed closely by China with 19%, whereas France and the UK have 13% and 12%, respectively. When it comes to the auction houses (ranked by sales across all market segments, i.e. art, collectibles, jewelry, etc.), the same report (ibid., p.98) affirms that Christie's and Sotheby's are the global market leaders, with sales of \$5.4 and \$4.1 billion, respectively. These truly global leaders - since they hold sales in three continents: North America (US), Europe, and Asia (Hong Kong) - are followed by: Poly Auction (China; \$1.3 billion), Heritage Auctions (US; \$850 million), Beijing Council (China; \$768 million), China Guardian (China; \$759 million); Bonham's (UK; \$622 million) and Phillips (UK; \$568 million).

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<sup>61</sup> Ashenfelter and Graddy (2003; 2006) and Pardo-Guerra (2011) provide thorough descriptions of the art auction process; Heath and Luff (2007) and Thornton (2008) provide a sociological perspective; Klemperer (1999) provides an introduction to the economics of auctions.

<sup>62</sup> A notable exception has been the D. Hirst auction at Sotheby's in London on September 15, 2008, coinciding with the day of the Lehman Brothers bankruptcy (Velthuis, 2011; Findlay, 2012; Thornton, 2014; Thompson 2014).

<sup>63</sup> Drouot is composed of dozens of independent auction houses that hold their sales in that Parisian location.

In the previous section (2.2.1.5) referring to art fairs, it was mentioned that the dealers participated in them in an effort to compete with the auction market. This is indeed the case, however the relationship between dealers and auctions is a more complex one; it is a case of co-opetition (Brandenburger and Nalebuff, 1996), where in the context of the contemporary art market sometimes compete and other times cooperate.

Dealers and auctions compete on two fronts: for making sales to collectors and for sourcing quality artworks to sell. Evidence of this fierce competition is the amount of resources committed by the auction houses to their private sales departments, for instance, the \$85 million deal made by Sotheby's in 2015 for the acquisition of Art Agency Partners, an art advisory firm<sup>64</sup>. Essentially what the dealers through the organization of art fairs want to counterbalance is the remarkable ability of the top auction houses to source and market quality works of art by using their brand name, in house expertise in providing suitable value estimates (de Pury, 2006; Meyer, 2006), their vast and detailed databases that include collectors' preferences for desired works and their collection holdings (Thompson, 2014), and the media attention their evening sales attract both as art market events and as social happenings (Thornton, 2008; Findlay, 2012; Thompson, 2014). Dinners organized for a select group of collectors in order to present in advance works to be auctioned (Findlay, 2012; Thompson, 2014), as well as, flying these works to other locations besides the place of auction for the convenience of perspective buyers (Velthuis, 2005) are among the promotional activities undertaken by the auction houses for exceptional works of art. Usually it is these rare and exceptional pieces - most often by impressionist and modern masters and lately increasingly by their post-war and contemporary peers - that attract the collectors' attention and as a result multi-million prices are paid. These record<sup>65</sup> prices are reported in the mainstream media and manage to create a buzz in specialist websites, blogs, and especially the social media. Thornton (2008, p. 5) argues that the high prices paid for art "have turned auctions into a high-society spectator sport" and consequently, artists can make headline news because their artwork reached a high price at auction. These auction results have a positive effect on the overall art market; for

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<sup>64</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/12/arts/sothebys-in-a-gamble-acquires-boutique-art-advisory-firm.html>; accessed: September 14, 2017). The acquisition price was \$50 million, accompanied by a \$35 million performance-related payment. The firm was established in 2014 and employed 15 people.

<sup>65</sup> Notable examples include Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger* and *Garçon à la pipe* (the first artwork ever auctioned for more than \$100 million, commission included), Modigliani's *Nu couché* and Bacon's *Three studies of Lucian Freud*.

instance, dealers are helped in their own marketing efforts by the positive press coverage in terms of price<sup>66</sup>, and collectors who were hesitant to sell pieces from their collections are tempted to do so due to the record breaking prices reached at auction (Thompson, 2008; Heath and Luff, 2007). At a much smaller scale, the auction houses competing at a national/regional level also undertake promotional activities by using their websites, social media, press releases and client databases in order to draw attention and to some degree generate excitement and buzz among collectors when artworks of exceptional quality come up for sale<sup>67</sup>. A central role in this marketing activity is played by the auction catalog (Thornton, 2008; Joy and Sherry, 2003). Geismar (2001, p. 34) characterizes the catalog as “the buyer’s umbilical cord to the auction room”, while Hook (2013, p. 268) describes the explanatory notes accompanying each lot as “salesmanship disguised in the language of art history”. Thompson (2008, p. 116) states that the auction catalog presents the auction house not as a business “but as an institution of scholarship and expertise”, while Pardo-Guerra (2013, p. 208) calls auction houses “epistemic institutions” that create both economic and aesthetic values. Khaire and Wadhvani (2010) in their study of the modern Indian art as a distinct art market category, attributed its creation to three types of art world actors: historians and academics; auction houses; journalists and museums.

Cooperation between auction houses and galleries is not a phenomenon easily noticeable by the casual observer. Secondary market dealers buy part of their inventory at auction, as well as, sell some of their inventory at auction (Robertson and Chong, 2008; Thompson, 2008; Thornton, 2008). On their part, auction houses also approach dealers (and collectors) to take part as risk underwriters when providing auction guarantees and irrevocable bids in an effort to reduce the financial risk associated with these practices and naturally the dealers are compensated for the risk they assume (Thompson, 2008). One should also be reminded that dealers often act as advisors for collectors and bid on their behalf at auction, as well as, in some cases support or defend the prices of their represented artists when their work comes up at auction by bidding on them (Thornton, 2008; Jeffri, 2005). In other cases, when works at auction remain unsold, the auction houses may approach dealers and negotiate with them the private sale of these artworks (Velthuis, 2005).

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<sup>66</sup> Ashenfelter and Graddy (2003) point out that the price information resulting from auctions is an externality for the rest of the market and especially art dealers.

<sup>67</sup> This type of marketing activity in the Portuguese market was undertaken by the auction house *Palácio do Correio Velho* in 2015 in its effort to auction an historically important work by Júlio Pomar (b. 1929). The result was a price record for the artist (€350.000 plus commission).

Overall, these practices are mainly applicable to the top end of the market, i.e. the prestigious evening sales, and on occasion some select material from the so-called day<sup>68</sup> sales, where the number of interested parties is rather limited and as a result people on either side of the trade know who they are dealing with, since in many cases it involves former colleagues (and/or collectors with long established relationships).

Besides the private sales departments that are viewed by dealers as direct competition coming from the auction houses (Robertson and Chong, 2008; Thompson, 2014), auction houses also extend credit – using art as collateral - to select creditworthy clients for acquisition of art (Findlay, 2012; Thompson, 2014), something that most galleries lack the financial resources to offer, even though in some cases provide longtime clients with a payment plan and/or a discount (Hutter et al., 2007). Velthuis (2005, p. 85) argues that this lending practice of auction houses can cause a “price inflation” for art at auction.

#### *2.2.2.1 The effect of auctions on prices and artists' reputation*

Veteran New York dealer Michael Findlay (2012, p. 32) argues that “auction houses make and break the market reputations of mid-career artists whose work they promote with great fanfare”. Auction executives seem to echo that opinion, or at least seem to agree with the “making the reputation” part, by stating that “Jeff Koons was completely born and raised at auction”, that Richard Prince “one time said that he owes more to auction houses than he does to museums for the success of his career” (Cappellazzo, 2006, p. 221), or “Gursky, in a way, is the ultimate auction success story” (Meyer, 2006, p. 237).

Auction house specialists perform also a gatekeeping function by including artists in the most prestigious sales, namely the evening sales of contemporary art in New York, London and sometimes Paris. The fact that an artist's work is included in the catalog of such a sale is a token of recognition of his artistic and market status; the same is also true when an artist starts being part of the morning/day sessions of branded auction houses. However, when an artist is no longer included in the evening sales, i.e. his work is delegated to the other sessions, which include artworks with lower price estimates and many more lots for sale, it can be interpreted by market participants as a signal of decreasing status or as a downgrade (Thompson, 2008).

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<sup>68</sup> These sales occur either in the morning or early afternoon, whereas the evening sales usually start at 7 pm.



Regarding prices paid at auction, the views of primary market dealers and auctions are often in disagreement since their interests can be opposing. From the point of view of the auction house, the higher the price paid for a work the better for the seller (whose interest is represented by the auction house where the artwork was consigned for sale) and the better for its profitability, since it receives higher commissions from both seller and buyer. An intangible benefit to the auction house's reputation and prestige is the positive publicity generated when record prices are achieved. The prices resulting from auction are considered transparent, vis-à-vis the gallery prices, are used as price reference points for transactions both at galleries and between private parties, and the whole auction process is viewed as a "democratic" one, in the sense that the highest bidder is the buyer, in contrast to the gallery practice of waiting lists for highly sought after works of art (Thompson, 2008; Cappellazzo, 2006; Meyer, 2006; de Pury, 2006; Velthuis, 2005). Thornton (2008, p. 14) makes this last point very clearly:

[o]ne reason to buy at auction is to avoid the time-consuming politicking expected by primary dealers, who, in the interest of building their artists' careers, try to sell only to collectors who have the right reputation.

De Pury (2006) explains that at Phillips, where at the time he was co-owner and main auctioneer, some artists (e.g. Rondinone, Rauch, Tuymans) who had long waiting lists for their work, were introduced to the evening sales and their works were sold for much higher prices than the ones in their gallery representing them. At the same time, De Pury (2006) recognizes that the huge price differential can be a "mixed blessing", if the high prices cannot be sustained in the long term. It is precisely the fear of high prices being unsustainable that explains why galleries want to control the price evolution as explained by Velthuis (2005) below.

From the point of view of the primary dealer and his responsibility in managing the artist's career, especially when it comes to emerging and mid-career artists, auction prices may seriously hinder his efforts in achieving the desired effect of price evolution deemed suitable for the advancement of the artist's career. Velthuis (2005) who has examined the pricing practices of dealers in the primary markets of New York and Amsterdam provides the rationale as to why primary market dealers reject auctions as a pricing mechanism. According to this author, the first reason is that the volatility of auction prices is considered harmful to the value of art because the dealers want to "gain control over the diachronic price development of the artist" (Velthuis, 2005, p. 83) in an

attempt to “provide a sense of structure to the market, and keep the uncertainty that prevails about the value of art under control” (ibid., pp. 85-86). The second reason he mentions has to do with the view that some dealers have about the auction houses, namely they consider them as being “parasitic”, in the sense that auction houses do not have business relations with artists and their aim is to market individual works of art rather than foster artistic careers like galleries do. The third reason invoked by Velthuis (2005, p. 84) is that dealers want to control also the “future biography of the artworks”, that is, control who will own the work, thus the existence of waiting lists, formal resale agreements or gentleman’s agreements about an eventual sale of the work in the future that was originally acquired at the gallery. As Velthuis points out “with rationing being based on social rather than just economic principles, the art market is far from a democratic institution” (ibid., p. 91). This explains why auction house executives make the claim that auctions offer a “democratic” way of art allocation, in contrast to the primary market methods of establishing discretionary waiting lists.

In summarizing the price differences between galleries and auctions we have to consider two scenarios. In the case when gallery prices are lower than auction prices the explanation lies in the desire of the dealer to “control the biography” of the work (Velthuis, 2005) by selecting the buyer, thus the lower price accompanied in some cases by resale or gentleman’s agreement about resale. In the case when the gallery price is higher than the auction price, the dealers defend themselves by arguing that they provide an additional service to the auction house, namely that of “educator and confidant” (Velthuis, 2005, p. 95). Velthuis (ibid., p. 93) offers two other reasons for the gallery price premium: the first is that dealers have the work readily available and the collector does not have to wait for something similar to appear at auction, and second, collectors take into account their opportunity cost of time and want to minimize the search costs for locating an alternative work<sup>69</sup>.

The above discussion about gallery prices being higher than auction prices, leads to the question of why dealers do not adjust their prices by lowering them in order not to lose their clients to the auctions. Velthuis (2003b, 2005) researched this pricing “anomaly” and came up with the explanation that the lowering of prices by dealers is avoided because it is perceived in the market

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<sup>69</sup> There is no guarantee that a similar work will appear at auction or found elsewhere that will appeal to the collector’s taste in the same way.

as a signal of decrease of the artistic quality of the work and by association the status of the artist in the art world. This rationale is also supporting the view of art being a luxury good or a Veblen good and that “according to art dealers, the danger of low prices is that collectors do not take the work seriously” (Velthuis 2003b, p. 194). A participant in the research of Velthuis said that decreasing prices “can have a huge backlash and can destroy a career at the beginning” (ibid., p. 195) and for this reason dealers want to start pricing work of emerging artists relatively low and be in control of any possible upward price development in the future, rather than start at a price perceived as high that will be difficult to adjust downwards, since a price decrease is considered “taboo”. Art dealers, being very enterprising, have found ways of achieving price decreases in covert ways. Velthuis (ibid, p. 196) discovered three strategies, excluding the small discounts given to longstanding customers. The first way of concealing a price decrease is to offer bigger works for the same price (when compared to the artist's previous exhibition); the second way is when an artist changes gallery representation, either voluntarily or involuntarily, a downward price adjustment is possible at the new gallery; the third way is when the artist experiments with a new medium or presents a new body of work.

According to Velthuis (2005, p. 179) art prices are “ways of communicating non-economic values” among artists, dealers and collectors. Velthuis has found that art prices tell *stories* “about the caring role which dealers want to enact, about the identity of collectors, about the status of artists, or the artistic value of art” (ibid., p. 179). Velthuis (ibid, p. 117) uses the term *pricing scripts* to describe the way dealers make pricing decisions. These scripts are “a set of routines which function as a cognitive manual for the variety of pricing decisions that a dealer needs to make at different stages of an artist's career” (ibid., p. 117).

Bonus and Ronte (1997, p. 106) argued long before Velthuis (2005) that dealers use pricing in a “strategic manner”, which lacks transparency. The authors claim that galleries even try to conceal the listed price of a sold work. Hutter et al. (2007), in their study that compares dealer and auction prices in contemporary art, also refer to the practice of dealers of keeping “information about actual transactions secret” (ibid., p. 250) and, in addition, find evidence to support the view that dealers are reluctant to lower prices. The authors argue that “feedback loops connect the price developments in the two markets: there are no auction prices without prior price construction activities in the dealer market, and prices in the dealer market are influenced by auction prices”

(ibid., p. 250). Beckert and Rössel (2013) argue that the price of art is determined by the artist's reputation that results from the assessment of experts like dealers, curators, critics, journalists and collectors. Based on this premise and using data from both auctions and galleries, concluded that prices in the primary market are more homogeneous (exhibit less variation) than in the auction market and that galleries implement a strategy of rising prices (and avoid price decreases) in an effort to make "art buyers feel secure in their investment" (ibid., p. 189). Another finding of their study is that media exposure of an artist is interpreted by prospective buyers as a sign of *alleged* artistic quality, for past and future artworks by the artist.

A commonly held belief in the art world is that auctions are "the main barometer of value" (Velthuis 2005, p. 84) and that they represent the "first and best indicator of what the market is doing because auction prices are transparent and widely reported" (Thompson, 2008, p.252). Findlay (2012), attempts to counter these arguments and provides a word of caution regarding overreliance on auction results used in extrapolating art market trends from one auction season<sup>70</sup>, because the results are based on a very small number of artists. Findlay (ibid., p. 66) characterizes as "fallacy" the belief that auction results are indicative of the whole art market because the supply and demand dynamics are very different between the two markets (auction and gallery<sup>71</sup>) and because the auction market is smaller than the private market, hence predictions based on partial or incomplete data are inaccurate. Findlay (2012, pp. 173-174) continues his argumentation by saying that:

[t]he primary market is robust so long as the prices for work by emerging and mid-career artists are kept reasonable and not speculative, and in the secondary market sellers often prefer the greater control they have when working with a dealer to gambling with their work at auction.

He also makes the point that auction outcomes reflect "a unique set of circumstances at a specific point in time" (ibid., p. 38) and that "the price of art, whether sold in the primary or the secondary market, is governed by supply, demand, and marketing" (ibid., p. 21). Regarding these unique circumstances, the role of the auctioneer is important in creating demand by eliciting bids and promoting "rivalry" among bidders (Thompson, 2014), a practice characterized by Herrero (2010)

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<sup>70</sup> Usually this refers to the evening sales of Sotheby's and Christie's (Thompson, 2008).

<sup>71</sup> Findlay (2012, p. 66) uses the word private market instead of gallery or dealer market.

as the “emotional dynamics of the art auction”. Ashenfelter and Graddy (2006, p. 941) recognize that art auctions are not “all that is important in the judgment of art and artists, it is certainly one of the key components of our understanding of what is good and bad”.

It is evident that auctions and galleries both collaborate (often in inconspicuous ways) and compete in the art market for resources, as do firms in any other industry, in a framework that I have referred to earlier as *co-opetition* (Brandenburger and Nalebuff, 1996) where pricing strategies of galleries and prices realized at auction can – and frequently do - have an impact on artistic careers, the market reputations of the intermediaries involved, as well as, collectors' monetary valuation of their art holdings (at least for those who view art as an investment or an alternative asset class; section 2.3.3 provides a brief analysis of this topic). Experienced market participants like de Pury (2006) recognize that the relationship between galleries and auction houses does not have to be “antagonistic”, but on the contrary, he argues that both need each other: “When you have a healthy auction market for an artist, it helps the primary market for that same artist, and vice versa” (ibid., p. 229). Art economist Don Thompson (2014, p. 168) summarizes the auction-dealer relationship very succinctly as follows:

There has always been tension between auction houses and dealers: condescension on the part of auction specialists, and resentment by dealers about encroachment and lost market share. There is also a symbiotic relationship between the two. Some of the work in evening contemporary auctions is consigned by dealers. And dealers are among the important few who provide third-party price guarantees to auction consignors.

## **2.3 Demand and Consumption of Art**

In the visual arts, an important distinction must be made between two kinds of demand for artworks: buyers and non-buyers. Buyers include private individuals, ranging from the occasional art buyer to the mega-collector whose art collection is exhibited in one or more private museums (e.g. Pinault collection in Venice, Rubell family collection in Miami, Saatchi collection in London), museums that are fully or partially state-supported, and corporate collections. Non-buyers include all kinds of people who visit museums, galleries, auction exhibitions, and art fairs for their enjoyment, i.e. they derive aesthetic pleasure from these experiences. Santagata (1995)

distinguishes the demand for contemporary art in two kinds: demand for the original artwork (purchase of art) and demand for visual consumption (consumer experiences involving works of art). Chong (2010) posits that what differentiates between the two groups of art consumers (appreciators/spectators and collectors) is their wealth; collectors have the financial resources to buy and “consume” art, while appreciators can only “consume” what is available to them (e.g. at a museum) because they lack resources to make a purchase. Robertson and Chong (2008) identify a third type of art consumer, in addition to the appreciators and collectors. These are “investors and speculators” that can be private individuals and art funds and are motivated purely by financial gains in their involvement in the art market (e.g. the practice of flipping).

The focus of this section is on art buyers (private collectors and museums) since they are an integral part of the art market structure and their preferences have a direct impact on prices, artistic reputations and careers, and gallery practices and strategies. Art appreciators can have an indirect impact on the art market: a very large and sometimes initially unanticipated number of visitors at a museum exhibition draws media attention both to the museum and the exhibited artist(s) yielding positive publicity to both. Meyer and Even (1998, p. 274) point out that “[r]ecognition and acclaim from the media...are in this case necessary to convince the recipient of the artist's (or artwork's) quality and lead to sales and thus financial success”. Another example of media coverage (mostly specialized media and social media) regards the art fairs where comments on the following are made: the number of visitors<sup>72</sup>, the overall mood and atmosphere of the fair, the prices of the exhibited art, what sold to whom and at what price, the booths that impressed people the most, etc. This kind of coverage - albeit the fact that the accuracy of what is reported is often being questioned by some insiders when it comes to price and sale reports - for some people is perceived as providing a “reading” of the state of the art market capable of even influencing the behavior of some market players (especially collectors).

### **2.3.1 The private collector and motives for collecting art**

In the literature about collecting, we encounter a wide array of motives by private collectors for collecting art. Aaker (2009, p. 14) identifies an investment motive (increase in value) and a social motive as a token of “sophistication and taste”. Velthuis and Coslor (2012) argue that people *consume* artwork for the purposes of decoration, social status and aesthetic appreciation, while

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<sup>72</sup> The vast majority of visitors at art fairs are not buyers, but spectators.

investment reasons according the authors' anecdotal evidence, are not the main reasons for people buying art. These buyers "are interested in the status that art may confer, in gaining access to a cultural elite" (ibid., p. 480). According to Grampp (1989, p. 38) "people do receive from the art they pay for [...] pleasure, pride, instruction, enlightenment, inspiration". Velthuis (2003a) sees conspicuous consumption as a motive in an effort of individuals to differentiate themselves from others. Financial motives for art acquisitions can be present both in the primary and the secondary market. In the primary market, where flippers or speculators are more active than in the secondary, buyers may purchase artworks by one or various emerging artists hoping that at least one of them will become - sooner rather than later - an artist whose work will be in great demand and consequently worth multiple times the initial purchase price. In the secondary market, where the value of art is somewhat established, buyers behave more like art investors, i.e. buy works with a longer-term horizon in mind and in the case of blue-chip artists (i.e. artists whose economic value is firmly established) with a portfolio diversification in mind and/or as a store of value. Marshall and Forrest (2011) identify both investment and symbolic<sup>73</sup> purposes as buyer motivations and classify buyers in three categories: the buyer motivated by personal subjective experience, the collector who accumulates "representative works of a certain artist or of a certain style or theme", and the investor (could also be a speculator/*manipulator*<sup>74</sup>) who buys art and waits for it to appreciate in value. Dennison (2006) lists the following as characteristics of the great collector: believer in the art irrespective of whether it is considered fashionable, lives with his/her art, lends the art to be exhibited and supports both artists and cultural institutions. Thompson (2014, p. 66) uses the Mugrabi family and Charles Saatchi as examples of collectors who are "passionate about art, but seem to view it principally as a business" in contrast to other collectors who are purely passion driven like Patrizia Rebaudengo who has set up an art foundation near Turin and the Vogels in New York who despite their very modest incomes managed to assemble a formidable collection of American art of the second half of the twentieth century primarily because they befriended many artists when these were young and unknown. However, Saatchi (2009) stated that he doesn't buy art as "an entrée to a social circle" (ibid., p. 6) and that "seeing art as an

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<sup>73</sup> The authors interpret symbolic as "existential experiences" involving the "social sharing of symbols between the artist and the observer" (Marshall and Forrest, 2011, p. 119).

<sup>74</sup> Marshall and Forrest (2011) define the manipulator as a collector who buys a large number of an emerging artist's work and then uses his reputation as a collector to promote this artist aiming to achieve an increase of the value of the artist's work.

investment would take away all the fun” (ibid., p. 25). According to Hook (2013) the collector buys art mainly because of the artwork's appeal, but at the same time, the economic value of art cannot be discarded especially because of its current high value. Hook (2013) also argues that collectors are aware of the “trophy” aspect of important works of art and the pleasure associated with exhibiting it to friends. Stourton (2007, p. 10) in his survey of mainly North American and western European collectors of the post-war era, observes that art “collecting today usually has a public dimension” and that collectors are motivated by public exhibition, something also emphasized by the collectors themselves.

Combining the opinions of the authors mentioned above, the motives for collecting art can be classified into three broad categories: aesthetic (art for art's sake argument); economic (art as an asset class, investment/speculation opportunity argument); social (art as status symbol and conspicuous consumption argument). Collector Emily Hall Tremain, cited by Findlay (2012, p. 8), accurately describes collector motivation as follows:

A collector has one of three motives for collecting: a genuine love of art, the investment possibilities or its social promise. I have never known a collector who was not stimulated by all three. For the full joy and reward the dominant motivation must be the love of art but I would question the integrity of any collector who denies an interest in the valuation the market puts on his pictures. The social aspect is another never-ending regard.

### **2.3.2 How collectors affect the art market and artistic careers**

The motivation of collectors does have an effect in the way market transactions take place. Peterson (1997) points out that art dealers adapt their selling strategies according to the perceived collector motivation: if the collector views the artwork as a collection object, the dealer emphasizes its aesthetic value and its importance in the context of the artist's body of work; if the collector appears interested in the work as an investment, the dealer focuses on the market status of the work. Velthuis (2005) believes that primary market art dealers pay attention to collectors' motivation because it “may affect the future biography of artworks” (ibid., p. 43) thus making a distinction between the “right” and “wrong” reasons for a collector to buy art. The “right” reasons include the love for art, following the artists' careers and attending their exhibitions, following the gallery's exhibition program and participating in its events, donating works to museums, buying art for public exhibition at a privately funded museum/foundation, and avoiding reselling work in



a short period of time after its purchase even though in some occasions it leads to fabulous profits for the collector. The “wrong” reasons according to the author are related to investment/speculation purposes, purchasing art as a status symbol or even as decoration. In the words of Velthuis (2005, p. 44):

[b]oth in the hands of status seekers who see the price as something admirable about the work, and in the hands of speculators, the artwork fails to get rid of its commodity character after leaving the commodity phase.

Of course, the dealer behavior is contingent upon the prevailing market and economic conditions, that is, when strong demand exists for the work of certain artists the dealer has more discretion and can be more selective in the placement of artworks in the right collections.

Findlay (2012) makes the point that collectors can be tastemakers in the market and gives the (rather extreme because of its price) example of the acquisition of a work by Gustav Klimt (1862-1918) by Ronald Lauder for a record setting price (\$135 million in 2006) for his private museum in New York<sup>75</sup>. This highly publicized purchase according to the author led other collectors who previously did not have an interest in this type of art or artist to take notice. Hence, Findlay (2012) argues, it is not unusual, especially for art buyers with less experience, to copy the buying patterns of better known collectors based on news reports. Perhaps the most cited example of trend setting behavior on behalf of collectors is found in the Saatchi-YBA<sup>76</sup> relationship, when in the late 1980's Saatchi began supporting, collecting and later exhibiting the work of these recent (at the time) art school graduates in the UK and abroad (Saatchi, 2009; Stourton, 2007; Thompson, 2008, 2014; Thornton, 2008; Aaker, 2009; Chong, 2010). Thompson (2014, p. 64) credits Saatchi as being “the only modern collector to create an art movement” and as someone who “has been described both as the greatest art patron of his time and as an art commodity broker disguised as a patron” (ibid., p. 64). Thornton (2008, pp. 96-97) argues that Saatchi “has manipulated perceptions and gleaned headlines for work by artists he owns by inflating prices by the millions”. Picasso understood the importance of collectors as tastemakers (and co-creators of the Picasso brand) as evidenced by his association with the Stein brothers (Muñiz et al, 2014), a practice still observed today when artists

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<sup>75</sup> Thompson (2008) and Taylor (2011) also refer to this purchase.

<sup>76</sup> Acronym for “Young British Artists”, including among others: Damien Hirst, Tracey Emin, Sarah Lucas, Rachel Whiteread.

pursue relationships with collectors in an effort to gain recognition for their work (Sjöholm and Pasquinelli, 2014). Collectors, especially the ones who are considered trendsetters and tastemakers and their acquisitions are the subject of media coverage and art market gossip, are indispensable in building the reputation/brand of the contemporary artist (Preece and Kerrigan, 2015; Lehman and Wickham, 2014). Thompson (2008) makes the point that in the case of Jeff Koons:

“[t]he first work in each of his series is placed with a museum or with a branded collector, often at a discount. The sale is usually negotiated before the work is completed<sup>77</sup>. Subsequent work in the series is marketed with the announcement that ‘Saatchi, or Broad, or Pinault, or the Museum’ has one” (ibid., p. 89)

On the other hand, when prominent collectors (like Saatchi or Pinault) openly sell works from their collections<sup>78</sup>, these sales can be “damaging to the artist, in both symbolic and financial terms” (Rodner and Thompson, 2013, p. 64).

### 2.3.3 Art as an investment and an alternative asset class

The financial performance of art (mainly paintings) has been the subject of economic and econometric research since the 1970's<sup>79</sup>, most notably with the work of Anderson (1974) and Stein (1977). When Baumol (1986) published his much-referenced paper on art investment and concluded that prediction is a losing strategy when it comes to art investing and that art should be bought based on aesthetic pleasure grounds rather than financial/investing ones, a new field was created aiming to research the financial performance of art as an investment alternative. A review of this vast literature is beyond the scope of this section; however, a few key points are presented that are related to the topics already mentioned in this chapter.

Most of this research, as evidenced by summaries and comparative tables presented in various studies (Ashenfelter and Graddy, 2003; Campbell, 2008; Perrini et al.; 2008; Renneboog and Spaenjers, 2013), concludes that investing in art does not provide superior financial returns vis-à-vis investments in other asset classes, most notably equities and bonds. When interpreting the results and their variation in such studies, one has to take into account various issues, such as:

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<sup>77</sup> Stourton (2007) mentions the financing of production of Koons' work by the collector Dakis Joannou.

<sup>78</sup> This view is partially based on the sale (or *dumping* according to some) of Sandro Chia's work by Saatchi (Thompson, 2008; Saatchi, 2009).

<sup>79</sup> Rush in 1961 published a book titled “Art as an Investment” as a guide to collecting, buying and selling art; peer-reviewed research in economics journals started in the 1970's.

methodology (hedonic regression or repeat sales regression), data sources (almost exclusively auction results), time period used (ranging from 3 centuries to a few decades), type of art considered (e.g. old masters, impressionist, modern, prints, etc.). On the other hand, there are the much-repeated stories of art sales that have generated spectacular financial gains for some collectors, e.g. Victor and Sally Ganz who purchased in 1941 Picasso's painting *The Dream* for \$7,000, which was sold at auction in 1997 for \$48,4 million (Stourton, 2007; Findlay, 2012) or Saatchi who purchased Hirst's famous shark<sup>80</sup> for £50,000 in 1991 and in 2005 sold it privately for a figure between \$8 and \$12 million (Stourton, 2007; Thornton, 2008; Thompson, 2014). Regarding the Ganz-owned Picasso, Thompson (2008) puts the gain in perspective and argues that an investment in small company stocks over the same period would have reached a similar value (\$46 million). Frey and Pommerehne (1989, p. 406) provide reasons as to why it can be rational to invest in art, even though its financial performance is inferior to other forms of investment, namely because of the "high psychic benefit from looking at the objects" as well as possible tax benefits with respect to property or death taxes and tax burden reduction when artworks are offered to museums.

Numerous studies also researched the relationship between the art market and the stock market (Goetzmann, 1993; Ginsburgh and Jeanfils, 1995; Chanel, 1995, Hiraki et al, 2009; Goetzmann et al., 2011) and concluded that stock markets affect the demand and price of art. For instance, Ginsburgh and Jeanfils (1995) point out that this relationship is valid in the short run (financial markets influence art markets), Chanel (1995) finds that the influence of financial markets in the art market happens with a one-year lag and Hiraki et al. (2009) conclude that there was a positive relationship between Japanese asset prices and international art prices during the "bubble period" (mid-1980s to the early 1990s).

Recent research in the field has focused also on the question of whether there exists a "bubble" in the art market. Penasse and Renneboog (2014) argue that because art cannot be sold short, only optimistic views are incorporated in the art prices and this leads to speculation, despite the high transaction costs of the art market (e.g. auction fees and commissions). The econometric model of Kräussl et al. (2016) finds strong evidence supporting the view that a speculative bubble started in

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<sup>80</sup> The actual title of the work is "The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living".

late 2010 and is still continuing in various art market segments like *impressionist and modern* and *post-war and contemporary*.

Overall, the studies that were very briefly presented here support the aesthetic motivation argument, namely that collectors derive psychic or aesthetic benefits from art ownership. That however, does not necessarily mean a neglect of the social aspects and possible future financial benefits. For example, favorable tax policies, mainly in the US, regarding art donations to public museums, do encourage private collectors to donate art that enriches the common cultural heritage, while at the same time, the donors as patrons of the arts gain status and prestige in the local community or, in some cases, at a national or even international level. Museum donations, especially the ones involving works that are considered masterpieces and are “chased” by collectors, may also have market implications. If the donated work is highly desired in the market, when it enters the museum it essentially becomes “withdrawn” from circulation, i.e. the art market (Singer, 1981b; Findlay, 2012). This impacts positively the value of the “remaining” works that are considered close substitutes, since they become scarcer.

#### **2.3.4 The institutional collector (museums)**

Art museums impact the art world and the art market on two levels which are interconnected. On one level, museums in their capacity as institutional collectors constitute part of the demand for art along with the private and, to a lesser degree, corporate collectors. On another level, they are suppliers of cultural experiences to the museum going public. In this section, I will review the role of museums focusing on the impact they have on artistic careers through the curatorial decisions they make regarding exhibitions and acquisitions. The central decision-making figure in a museum with respect to artistic choices is the head curator<sup>81</sup> (see section 2.1.5.2).

The main functions of museums are considered to be: gather/collect, preserve/conserve, research/study/interpret, and display/exhibit artifacts (Noble, 1970; Weil, 2002; Johnson, 2003; Fillis and Rentschler, 2005)<sup>82</sup>. Regarding the contemporary art museums, Moulin (1994) stresses the fact that their number has grown and their focus is on art created in the last twenty-five years. She further points out that these museums determine what is and isn't art (“labeling” function), play a role in promoting art through their exhibitions (and at the same time interpret it in the

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<sup>81</sup> In small museums, the director is also the head curator.

<sup>82</sup> Ginsburgh and Mairesse (1997) offer an alternative view to the above *consensus* definition.

accompanying catalog), and enhance demand for art through their acquisitions. In other words, through the organization of exhibitions and art acquisitions, art museums not only define art, but also act as institutions of consecration (Bourdieu, 1980; 1985), gatekeepers (Alexander, 1996; Currid, 2007; Velthuis, 2003a), trend setters and taste makers (Pachucki, 2012; Alexander, 1996), mechanisms for establishing, recognizing and enhancing artistic reputations and brands (Becker, 1982/2008; Marshall and Forrest, 2011; Meyer and Even, 1998; Preece and Kerrigan, 2015; Aaker, 2009; Beckert and Rössel, 2013) in the contemporary art world. Khaire and Wadhvani (2010) show the important role western museums<sup>83</sup> played – by organizing exhibitions of modern Indian art – in establishing and institutionalizing this kind of art. Similarly, Crossland and Smith (2002) in their research on Boehm porcelain, report that when pieces were added to museum collections (including the Metropolitan Museum of New York) the benefits to the Boehm brand were both in terms of notoriety and monetary appreciation.

Zorloni (2005, p. 67) makes the point that museum validation is necessary for contemporary art for economic reasons (avoiding speculation) and aesthetic reasons (“guarantees the value of art in the absence of objective standards of certification”). This author, in her research of the Italian market for contemporary art, recognizes that the number and quality of museums provides a rough measure of the country's cultural development level and that impacts both its ability to attract blockbuster art exhibitions and the careers of its artists. In her words (ibid., p. 67): “Countries that are ill-equipped to participate in the international museum circuit risk having their artists devalued and marginalized”.

#### *2.3.4.1 Superstar museums and special exhibitions*

Frey and Meier (2006) identify two trends in the field of art museums: the “superstar museum” and the special (blockbuster) exhibition. The term superstar museum was introduced by Frey (1998) and is used to describe museums that are famous internationally and enjoy special status and prestige, e.g. the Louvre, the National Gallery, the Vatican museums, the Prado, the Hermitage, the Metropolitan Museum of New York, and specifically for modern and contemporary art: the Tate modern, the Pompidou, the Reina Sofia, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, among few others. According to Frey (1998) these museums share five characteristics: they are

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<sup>83</sup> The authors refer to the Tate Modern in London and to the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

key tourist destinations, attract large numbers of visitors<sup>84</sup>, have collections that include world-famous artists and world-famous artworks (e.g. the Mona Lisa, Guernica, and Sistine Chapel frescos), have a distinct architectural design (the building by itself is considered as a work of art in architectural terms) and earn significant income from their museum shops and restaurants. Frey and Meier (2006) note that the superstar museum is transformed into a provider of “total experience” (in contrast to the traditional function of preservation) meaning that: (i) museums are always trying “to somehow embed the permanent collection in a context attractive to a large number of visitors” (ibid., p.1038); (ii) provide almost everything ranging from educational activities (both to children and adults) to entertainment, or even a shopping mall (e.g. Le Carrousel du Louvre).

Special exhibitions are temporary exhibitions that focus on a single artist or a group of artists, or a period or type of art (e.g. pop art, arte povera), by bringing together works from the museum's collection with borrowed works coming from other museums and private collections. Frequently, major exhibitions, like a retrospective for an acclaimed artist, are organized by 2-3 museums and as a result the exhibition travels to all these museums (Frey and Meier, 2006). According to the authors, these exhibitions, among other characteristics, have the ability to attract a large number of visitors, thus the use of the word “blockbuster”, and more importantly generate a lot of media attention that benefits both the museum and the participating artist(s). Joy and Sherry (2003) argue that blockbuster exhibitions were introduced in the 1970's and Thomas Hoving, the former Metropolitan Museum of New York director during of the period 1967-1977, is credited for establishing them (Grampp, 1989; Rentschler et al., 2014). Chong (2010) says that blockbusters are driven by sales (admission tickets, sales at museum shops and restaurants) in an effort for museums to gain some financial independence. Jeffri (2005, p. 141) makes the point that because of the publicity and media coverage these exhibitions attract, corporations become associated with them as sponsors and can even “determine, through substantial funding, the kinds of shows that will be exhibited”. Rentschler and her colleagues (Rentschler et al., 2014) conducted research in Australia on blockbuster exhibitions analyzed as museum sub-brands and concluded that these are used by museums to distinguish themselves in a “crowded brandscape” (ibid., p. 62), to satisfy

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<sup>84</sup> For example, the Louvre in 2016 had 7.4 million visitors making it the world's most visited art museum (Source: <http://asemus.museum/news/the-art-newspaper-most-visited-museums-and-exhibitions-in-2016/>; accessed: September 14, 2017).

their audience, and to enhance the visitor experience by offering services like “events, seminars, themed café food and late-night openings” (ibid., p. 62). Pusa and Uusitalo (2014) in their study of museums in Finland found contrary evidence to Jeffri (2005) and Rentschler et al (2014), namely that museum decisions regarding the content of exhibitions were made “independently of audience or sponsor opinions, on the basis of topicality, artistic quality, and how well the exhibitions conformed to the museum’s profile” (ibid., p. 25). Glenn Lowry, director of the Museum of Modern Art (New York), states that exhibition decisions are “*entirely* based on curatorial interest” and that the marketplace is not taken into consideration when these decisions are made (Lowry, 2006, p. 265).

### 2.3.5 Museum impact on artists’ careers

As explained in the previous section, the activity of museums can have a profound impact on artistic careers in a variety of ways: as a gatekeeper and a mechanism for consecration and validation of art, as a trend setting and taste formation agent, as a place for establishing and enhancing artistic reputations. Therefore, their actions are monitored by other art market and art world actors like artists, dealers, collectors, curators, and other institutions. Joy and Sherry (2003, p. 170) state that “[t]he ultimate goal of many artists is to have museums collect their artwork because they can ensure their value and provide a passport to fame and a citation for posterity”. Jeffri (2005) characterizes the relationship between museums and dealers as “symbiotic” with financial impact resulting from the exhibition at a major museum benefiting the artist and his dealer. It is generally believed that the value of the artist’s work rises after the museum exhibition and increases even further if works are purchased by the museum for its collection. Dealers in their efforts to promote the careers of the artists they represent, “stimulate museums to organize exhibitions involving the work of these artists” (Velthuis, 2003a) while, at the same time, museums ask dealers to finance part of these exhibitions. One such famous case was the Murakami retrospective at the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art<sup>85</sup> (2007-2008) when the artist’s dealers contributed with six-figure dollar amounts towards the realization of the exhibition (Thompson, 2014, p. 180). Lindemann (2006) argues that some museum exhibitions “will change the course of an artist’s career and museum activity will ultimately stimulate the artist’s market” (ibid., p. 238) and “often serve as a launch pad for an artist’s commercial success, or as a

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<sup>85</sup> This exhibition had its share of controversy because it included a fully operational Louis Vuitton boutique selling products designed by Murakami for the exhibition (Taylor, 2011; Thornton, 2008).

confirmation of an artist's place in recent history" (ibid., p. 239). Former Guggenheim Museum (New York) director Lisa Dennison (2006, p. 243) acknowledges that "[t]he museum show doesn't guarantee the artist, it can hurt the artist, particular the younger ones, as much as help them, in terms of career and market". She also refers to the pressure a curator can be under, when organizing an exhibition - coming from artists, their dealers and collectors - to include certain artworks in it. Joy and Sherry (2003, p. 163) argue that despite the criticism that the Whitney Biennials<sup>86</sup> are "being subservient to the major New York galleries, [they] are still important to artists' careers". Pusa and Uusitalo (2014) in their research of brand identity in art museums, find that the relationship between museum and artist can go both ways: a branded artist can enhance the quality of the museum to the eyes of its audience, while an artist that has exhibited at a prestigious museum enhances his position in the art world.

Thompson (2008, p. 239) argues that information about future retrospective exhibitions for mid-career artists in an important institution (e.g. the Museum of Modern Art, the Tate, Pompidou) is prized art world gossip because the exhibition leads to price appreciation of the works of the artist. Furthermore, Thompson (2008) claims that museum directors use this information to purchase works by the artist in what is analogous to the illegal practice of trading by using inside information in the stock market. Regarding the use of information, Jeffri (2005) points out that museum board members are bound by law to avoid conflicts of interest, however, this information ends up affecting their collecting decisions. Singer (1981b) makes similar arguments with respect to dealers, who have information about the preferences of certain curators regarding emerging artists, while Hook (2013) suggests that knowing in advance about a major exhibition can help "time the market", i.e. offer for sale work by the featured artist and take advantage of the publicity generated by the museum.

Chong (2010) gives two examples involving the Tate (London) that illustrate both conflict of interest and transparency issues. The first took place in 1982, when the Tate organized an exhibition of the highly sought after - at the time - American artist Julian Schnabel, which included nine works (out of eleven) that were loaned by the collector C. Saatchi who was at the time a "member of an influential patron's group at the Tate" (ibid., p. 97). Loaning the works would

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<sup>86</sup> Organized by the Whitney Museum in New York. They feature the work of emerging and relatively unknown artists, act as surveys of contemporary art (mainly) in the US and are perceived as trend setting events.



benefit the collector directly since the works would gain in value because of their enhanced exhibition history and status of the artist in the market due to the Tate exhibition. The second incident took place in 2006 and regards the purchase of a work by Chris Ofili, who at the same time was also an “artist trustee” of the museum. Nicholas Serota, Tate’s director, said that a quick purchase decision was necessary in order to keep the artwork in a UK collection, and that the purchase price of £600,000 paid to the artist’s dealer was below the current market price. As a result, the UK’s Charity Commission (charities regulatory body) issued recommendations aiming to avoid similar situations, namely conflicts of interest and lack of transparency in transactions.



### 3. RESEARCH DESIGN

#### 3.1 Research Problem and Research Questions

##### 3.1.1 Research Problem

Regarding the creation of markets, DiMaggio (1986, p.88) states that “markets don’t exist in nature, they are created by entrepreneurs”. In the market for contemporary art, these entrepreneurs are gallerists, but also artists. Artists because they create the object that is to be transacted and with the help of gallerists as intermediaries or even alone subsequently engage in activities that ultimately lead to the commercialization of their artistic production. At this point, a clarification is due because as we have seen in the Literature Review chapter, artists, or most of them at least, do not appear to be profit oriented. Artists who participated in this research found the idea of becoming an artist in order to get rich as awkward, explained that being an artist is not a career, but a way of being that results from an interior need and motivation to create art. Gompertz (2015, p. 24) summarized the relation between motivation and profit in the following way: “The intellectual and emotional motivation isn’t profit, but it is an essential component. Profit buys freedom. Freedom provides time. And time, for an artist, is the most valuable of commodities”. On the other hand, I did not expect to find any artist interviewee to openly admit to – even if that was the case - following the Warholian philosophy of “being good in business is the most fascinating kind of art” (Warhol, 1975/2007, p. 92).

According to O’Reilly (2005a), artists are composed by “two selves”: the creative one that is responsible for the decisions regarding the production of their art, and the marketing one that is responsible for the commercial/business decisions, namely the promotion and sales of the art created. The creative decisions and their outcome are the focus of study of art historians, art critics, curators, while the business decisions are the focus of the present research. In other words, my research problem deals with the decisions made and actions undertaken by artists regarding their career. With the term artistic career, I mean the effort of an artist to be recognized as such by the field, his ambition for his art to be seen by the largest possible public, appreciated by art world gatekeepers (gallerists, curators, institutions), bought by collectors and as a result reach a point when his artistic production will allow his economic survival so that he can continue to produce art because that is what artists want to do in their life. Grayson Perry (2016, p. 126) summarizes this very aptly: “Artists are doers! They don’t want to *be* artists, they want to *make art*”. The word

career has sounded a bit strange to some of the interviewed artists because they consider art making to be a vocation and not a profession and that being an artist is a way of life and not an occupation. For instance, the first reactions to the term career of some artist participants were:

A3: I don't properly consider that being an artist is a profession. I think that it is a way of living, a way of being.

A4: I don't think that an artist has an artistic career. For me the idea of an artistic career is a bit problematic. I begin by thinking what is art and what isn't art. Art, the only thing that defines it as an artistic object is its useless character and, in a way, a career calls into question the uselessness of art.

A8: I became an artist when there was no market because it was these [intellectual] issues that I wanted to deal with in my life and it was this way that I wanted to live and occupy the twenty-four hours of each day until the day of my death. This is a sense of life.

However, after I explained to them how I use the term "career" (*carreira* or *percurso* were the words used in Portuguese) any initial "surprise" was quickly overcome. Hook (2017, p. 259) commenting on the notion of career in the current art market, writes, perhaps with a bit of irony, that "artists have long since abandoned having careers; they now enjoy 'journeys' or 'trajectories'".

As argued previously, and illustrated in the Literature Review chapter, artists are the principal actors of the contemporary art world along with:

- Gallerists, dealers and auctioneers that engage in art distribution and intermediation
- Curators who select artists and organize exhibitions and along with art critics interpret art and put it in art historical context
- Institutions, public, semi-public and private, that exhibit, buy and conserve art
- Private collectors ranging from the occasional art buyer to the mega-collector who may display his collection publicly at his own museum
- Art journalists and art world commentators who write about and disseminate art related events, like exhibitions, art fairs and auctions

All the above actors, or players, interact in the art world in various environments like galleries, art fairs, auctions, institutions, biennials, and in private, and the outcomes of those interactions and particularly their interactions with artists impact the development of artistic careers. Hence, RQs were formulated to examine the impact of some of these interactions on artistic careers and how artists make decisions and act in that regard.

In the literature, the market creation activity undertaken by the artist has been highlighted many times. For instance, Bourdieu (1980) attributed to artists the invention of strategies to secure their artistic survival; Meyer and Even (1998, p. 273) attribute to the contemporary artist “the role of a financially dependent innovator and entrepreneur”; Fillis (2004) states that the arts industry is production and artist led and that “[m]any influential artists, for example, create demand rather than respond to it. This is an entrepreneurial marketing act” (Fillis, 2010, p.96); Fillis and Rentschler (2005, p. 280) give the examples of Picasso and Dali as demand creators for their work by using their “unique creative abilities”; Pasquinelli and Sjöholm (2015, p. 80) view the artist as an entrepreneur, new niche markets creator and an educator of “audiences about alternative forms of art consumption”. In addition, it should be noted that the entrepreneurial activities of artists (as studio managers) can be traced back to the times of Italian renaissance (Chong, 2002; Fillis, 2002).

The present research fits in the entrepreneurship literature in two ways. First, with the so-called traits school of entrepreneurship (McClelland, 1961; Litzinger, 1965) that proposes that entrepreneurs have some different characteristics and behavior (i.e. traits) than the rest of the population and that these characteristics is what makes them successful entrepreneurs. This school of thought however, has come under criticism since empirical research has shown that these traits (e.g. risk-taking, leadership, and need for control) are not unique to entrepreneurs (Gartner, 1988; Thornton, 1999). Be that as it may, the fact that some characteristics are not unique to entrepreneurs does not mean that these cannot be employed by artists to succeed in their goals.

Second, this research fits in with the ongoing debate of the origin of entrepreneurial opportunities, that is, whether these opportunities are discovered or created (Alvarez and Barney, 2007; Dimov, 2011; Dutta and Crossan, 2005; Eckhardt and Shane, 2003; Shane and Venkataraman, 2000; Short et al., 2010; Suddaby et al., 2015). Sarasvathy et al. (2003) introduce the following typology of entrepreneurial opportunities:

- Opportunity recognition: If both sources of supply and demand are existent in a rather obvious manner, the opportunity consists of recognizing the fact that matching them is financially advantageous. It is a case of exploitation of existing markets and taking advantage of arbitrage opportunities. An example from the art market would be a secondary market dealer who is alert<sup>87</sup> and is always looking in the art market for underpriced works that knows are desirable by collectors and purchases such works at auction or privately and sells them at higher prices at art fairs.
- Opportunity discovery: If only one side exists (i.e. either supply or demand), then the missing side has to be “discovered” before the matching of supply and demand. It can be a case of exploration of existing and latent markets. The example offered by the authors is cure for diseases, in the sense that the demand is existent but the supply (cure) is absent and needs to be discovered. An example from the art market would be the artist who has easily identifiable artworks, i.e. he is considered a brand, knows that these are in demand and executes them (perhaps in excess) to satisfy the existing demand. The art fair environment is very prone to such practices in what is referred to as “art fair art”.
- Opportunity creation: In this case neither demand nor supply exist in an obvious manner and one or both have to be “created”. The opportunity in this case has to do with market creation; U-Haul, Netscape and the MIR space resort are illustrative examples used by the authors. In the art market, an emerging artist first creates art and then engages in activities to commercialize his work in order to survive in the market. This can be done by himself, or in conjunction with market agents, usually gallerists. In this sense what creates the market for the work, is the work itself; however, since the production of the work is the result of the efforts of the artist, then ultimately the artist is responsible for the creation of the market.

Elaborating on the creation of opportunities, the artist is responsible for producing art in the first place, and art itself may or may not attract interest from gallerists (who as market agents may see an opportunity for profit in its commercialization) and subsequently from collectors (customers). To illustrate this point further, one should understand that the fact that demand exists for artworks by many artists, for example old masters like Rembrandt and Canaletto, impressionists like Renoir

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<sup>87</sup>The active role of the entrepreneur/arbitrageur in the entrepreneurship literature is closely associated with the work of Kirzner (1973).

and Monet, modernists like Picasso and Matisse, post-war like Rothko and Fontana, contemporary like Richter and Koons does not automatically imply that new or emerging artists have an established demand for their work. Artists using their creativity and artistic vision produce artwork and subsequently help create the demand for it by being entrepreneurial and undertaking a variety of actions<sup>88</sup> (Alvarez and Barney, 2007, p.17), especially marketing and strategy<sup>89</sup>, to draw attention of art world gatekeepers to their work. Similarly, mid-career artists also have to continue engaging in those activities to solidify the demand for their work, and to some degree even established artists must be alert to the developments in the art world.

Regarding the terms, 'emerging', 'mid-career', and 'established' artist, art world members do not use them uniformly, but are rather very much context dependent and do not necessarily have to do with an artist's age, even though the age factor usually comes into it, e.g. even if a 30-year-old artist enjoys huge market success in terms of demand for his work and prices paid at auction he cannot be automatically considered mid-career, much less, established. These three career stages describe progress in a variety of aspects: the quality and dimension of the body of work, whether an artist has a style associated with his work (e.g. Pollock's drip paintings or Hirst's spot paintings), the attention his work attracts from curators, institutions, art critics, the prices of his work and the number of sales. The term emerging is closely associated with young age (recent art school graduates), but it can be sometimes misleading because artists may emerge at any age. For example, an artist could be producing work consistently for 20 years and suddenly becomes known in the broader art world, prestigious galleries wish to represent them, their work is in demand by collectors, and institutions start exhibiting their work.

### 3.1.2 Research Questions (RQs)

Bryman and Bell (2015, p. 396) argue that "research questions in qualitative research are stated with varying degrees of explicitness", while Braun and Clarke (2013, p. 44) advocate that these can "evolve and become refined as a study progresses". From the literature review and the preliminary field research conducted, the topics to be researched were identified and involved five interrelated areas: the characteristics of the art world (Lisbon and by extension Portugal) that serves

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<sup>88</sup> The authors identify the following seven actions: leadership, decision making, human resource practices, strategy, finance, marketing and sustaining competitive advantages.

<sup>89</sup> The authors (ibid., p. 19) acknowledge that most entrepreneurs develop strategies and especially in creation contexts these strategies are likely to be "emergent and changing" (ibid., p. 17, table 2).

as the context of this study, the relationship of the artist with the gallery system (primary market), market related phenomena (auctions and fairs), curatorial impact, and the internationalization of artistic careers. Given the definition of the research problem, I sought to answer the following five research questions:

- To identify the main characteristics of the art world where the participants develop their careers (artists and curators) and engage in business activities (galleries and auction houses). This RQ serves two purposes: first, it provides a rich description of the study's context; and second, it is the ground zero (or RQ zero), i.e. an indispensable starting point for putting in perspective the RQs that follow.
- Galleries are an important gatekeeper and business partner of the artist, promote and sell work, and at the same time perform other functions that are closely linked to the launch and development of artistic careers, hence researching the relationship between artists and the gallery system and its impact on their careers is the first RQ.
- The second RQ deals with two market phenomena and is divided into two sub-questions. The first examines the impact of auctions on the artists' market. Auctions are used as a proxy for the secondary market since the secondary dealer market segment is underdeveloped in the local market. The second sub-question examines the impact of art fairs on the careers of artists, beyond their principal role, that is, selling work.
- The third RQ considers the impact of curatorial decisions and the gatekeeping role of curators in different environments like institutions and biennials. The curator as an institutional agent, as a free-lancer (independent curator), or sometimes as a market agent when he acts in an advisory capacity for private collectors, galleries, or corporate collections, is as essential element when examining the contemporary art phenomenon.
- The fourth RQ uses the insights provided by the previous RQs and examines the internationalization process of the careers of Portuguese artists and by looking into this process offers insight into the entrepreneurial characteristics of artists.

### 3.2 Research Methods

Given the nature of the RQs, the appropriate method for researching them was a qualitative approach, rather than a quantitative one. Additionally, recent studies such as those analyzed in the



Literature Review chapter (especially section 2.1.3) predominantly employed qualitative research methods such as case studies, interviews, and ethnography to deal with research topics that were similar to mine in nature, albeit in different contexts. Braun and Clarke (2013, p. 10) consider that qualitative research “captures the complexity, mess and contradiction that characterises the real world, yet allows us to make sense of patterns of meaning”. Among the different qualitative methods, qualitative interviewing was chosen for gathering the data for this research. Brinkmann and Kvale (2015, p. 3) consider that:

The qualitative research interview attempts to understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold the meaning of their experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations. [...] In research interviews we talk to people because we want to know how they describe their experiences or articulate their reasons for action.

Braun and Clarke (2013, p. 78) identify three types of interviews: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured. Structured interviews or “pre-coded interviews” (Fisher 2010, p. 175) are not considered qualitative but rather quantitative in nature since the researcher asks the interviewees a series of identical questions and offers them various options as a possible answer to choose from. Essentially when it comes to qualitative interviews there are two types: unstructured (or “open” in Fisher's (2010) terminology) and semi-structured. Regarding the unstructured interview, both Bryman and Bell (2015) and Fisher (2010) consider that it resembles a conversation where “generally the respondent leads the direction of the interview” (Fisher, 2010, p. 175) prompted to answer to topics introduced by the researcher (Fisher, 2010; Bryman and Bell, 2015). Braun and Clarke (2013) consider the semi-structured interview as the most common type of interview used in qualitative research. The researcher usually has an interview guide (Bryman and Bell, 2015, p. 481), that is “a list of questions on fairly specific topics to be covered...and questions that are not included in the guide may be asked as the interviewer picks up on things said by interviewees”. The semi-structured interview is the data collection method used for this research and the subsequent sections illustrate both the interview guide and pre-interview preparation (3.2.2) and the interviewing process (3.2.3) in detail.

Thematic analysis (3.2.4) was chosen for analyzing the interview data because it is consistent with my research goals that can only be achieved using qualitative methods and because similar methodology was used in recent peer-reviewed research in combination with interviews (Lehman

and Wickham, 2014; Preece and Kerrigan, 2015; Sjöholm and Pasquinelli, 2014). For instance, quantitative methods such as surveys would not allow for detailed description of the phenomena and fine tuning of the interview guides as the data collection process advanced.

In support of qualitative research methods, Brinkmann and Kvale (2015, p. 347) defend that:

...qualitative methods again come to the fore in the increasingly deregulated consumer societies of a postmodern age, centered on an experiential economy, which require contextualized qualitative methods of inquiry.

The art world, and the art market more precisely, is a notoriously unregulated market, that deals with goods that are experiential in nature (visual art), and where the interactions between its actors are complex and often defy economic logic. Hence, using qualitative methods in order to capture these complexities is a justified choice given both the research context and the research questions.

### 3.2.1 Sample

The data necessary for addressing the research questions was gathered by conducting semi-structured qualitative interviews with participants whose professional experience is directly linked to the RQs. To that effect, 28 interviews were conducted with the following type of interviewees:

- 14 with artists with approximate ages between 30 and 80 years so that a broad spectrum of experiences and career stages was covered
- 5 with gallery owners active in the primary market (4 of them were representing some of the 14 artist interviewees)
- 2 auction house owners active in the contemporary art market segment
- 7 critics/curators/artistic directors of institutions that exercise or exercised a wide variety of functions in the Portuguese art world

The sampling method is a factor (among others) that distinguishes between quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitative research is mostly concerned with the generalizability or external validity of its results, that is “whether or not the results of a study can be generalized beyond the specific research context in which it was conducted” (Bryman and Bell, 2015, p. 724) and therefore uses mainly random (probability) sampling. In qualitative research, Braun and Clark (2013, p. 56) assert that “the typical approach to sampling is purposive”, and that according to Bryman and Bell

(2015, p. 727) is “a form of *non-probability sample* in which the researcher aims to sample cases/participants in a strategic way, so that those sampled are relevant to the research questions that are being posed”. According to Patton (2002, p. 230) “the logic and power of purposive sampling lie in selecting *information-rich cases* for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry”.

The sample size used in qualitative studies that employ interviews as the main source of data collection cannot be determined a priori, or in the words of Patton (2002, p. 244), “there are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry” and its size “depends on what you want to know, the purpose of inquiry...what will have credibility, and what can be done with available time and resources”. Braun and Clarke (2013, p. 55) advocate that “a sample size of between 15 and 30 individual interviews tends to be common in research which aims to identify patterns across data”. Mason (2010) in his survey of 560 Ph.D. theses in UK universities that employed qualitative interviewing found that the sample size mean was 31 (with a median on 28 and a range between 1 and 95). For instance, Lehman and Wickham (2014) interviewed 12 artists, Preece and Kerrigan (2015) interviewed 17 artists and 20 other art world stakeholders, and Sjöholm and Pasquinelli (2014) interviewed 12 artists. In this study the sample size is 28, a number that is in line with the above guidelines for thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2013), other Ph.D. theses that employed similar data collection methods (Mason, 2010), and recent peer-reviewed literature in dealing with related research problems. The number of interviews conducted (28) was influenced by the quality (thick descriptions) of the data collected, by the diversity (in terms of experiences and function) of the art world insiders that were interviewed, and ultimately by the fact that after a certain point, I was confident that the collected data was sufficient “to tell a rich story” (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p. 56).

The Lisbon art world is not extensive and this allowed the identification of relevant participants with some ease. Requests for interviews were sent mostly by email, even though in some cases the interview request was via telephone or in a couple of cases in person. In that sense, the sampling method was purposeful (Bryman and Bell, 2015; Braun and Clarke, 2013) at the beginning, but also incorporated snowball sampling (Bryman and Bell, 2015; Braun and Clarke, 2013; Patton 2002) since all the participants were asked at the end of their interviews to name 2-3 persons of interest for my research, and in a few cases, even provided the contact details (email and/or

telephone number) of the persons indicated. Bryman and Bell (2015, p. 728) define snowball sampling as a “technique in which the researcher makes initial contact with a small group of people who are relevant to the research topic and then uses this to establish contacts with others”. In the ambit of this research, artists recommended other artists, their gallerists, or curators; on one occasion a gallerist provided access to one of the gallery's artists; curators indicated other curators and artists. As a result of the snowball process, some names of potential participants were indicated by a number of interviewees, a situation that resembles what Patton (2002, p. 237) describes as “a few key names get mentioned over and over”. As is to be expected, not every person that I wished to interview granted me an interview. Some potential interviewees never replied at all, others declined immediately, and some despite their initial will to participate, never committed to an interview date. All interviews were held in the wider Lisbon area between October 2016 and April 2017, digitally recorded (voice only), and all, except one, were conducted in Portuguese. The average duration of the recordings was 90 minutes, with 45 minutes being the duration of the shortest interview and 150 minutes the duration of the longest one. All participants were guaranteed anonymity in the monograph, hence the use of codes, and confidentiality<sup>90</sup> of the contents of the conversation both on and off the record. Names and locations that could potentially facilitate the identification of the interviewees, their galleries, auction houses, or affiliated institutions were omitted or disguised where necessary.

When choosing the artist participants my aim was to have the broadest range of experiences possible: across generations, across career stages and varied international experiences. Very young artists, i.e. fresh out of art school, or even with 4-5 years of experience, were excluded due to their lack of adequate experience and possibly low integration into the art world for the purposes of my research. The replies to my request for interview were mixed: some of the persons approached readily accepted to participate and doing the interview was only a matter of agreeing on a date; others never replied to the email request and a couple of artists politely declined to take part. Out of the 14 artists, 6 can be considered established or consecrated, 6 as mid-career, and 2 as younger generation artists, but with sufficient art world experience to add value to this research.

Regarding the choice of gallerists, which proved to be the category less responsive to interview requests, the same variation of experiences, expertise and international exposure was desired and

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<sup>90</sup> Confidentiality in the sense that I would not comment or divulge beyond the purposes of the anonymous quotes used in the monograph the contents of the conversations to third parties.

I am confident that it was achieved with the five gallerists that agreed to participate. The other market agents that were approached, namely the auctioneers, in their role as agents of the secondary market, readily accepted my request for an interview.

In the critic/curator category, almost all requests for interviews were successful and the diversity of experiences was assured because in this category almost everyone has held or holds different positions in the art world. For instance, some of the participants have had experience in: art criticism, writing essays and texts for catalogs and monographs, authors of various art related books and catalogs, advisors to collectors (institutional and other), curators for institutions or independent curators, curators in charge of official representations in prestigious events such as the Venice Biennale, artistic directors of cultural institutions and museums, members of prize awarding juries, university professors, etc.

### **3.2.2 Interview guide and pre-interview preparation**

For the composition of the interview guide, of which 4 versions were prepared according to the type of interviewee (artists, gallerists, curators and auctioneers), I followed King's (2004) guidelines about the sources for their elaboration: the literature review, the researcher's own experience of the topic under study and "informal preliminary work such as discussions with people who have personal experience of the research area" (ibid., p. 15). The reason that four versions were prepared had to do with the fact that not all questions and topics included in the unified guide initially were equally relevant to all participants. For example, the auctioneers weren't asked about the criteria gallerists use for inviting artists to collaborate with them and integrate their galleries' programs, or curators explicitly about the auction market. The interviews were semi-structured and the guide was used to provide a compass or a road map, i.e. making sure that the chosen topics were brought up during the interview, or as many of them as possible given the occasional time constraints. As always, in a relatively long conversation (90 minutes on average), some issues were brought up by the participant's initiative, thus anticipating the questions in the guide or even introducing new issues that merited further follow up questions on my part or exploration in subsequent interviews with other participants. For instance, the importance of artistic residencies gained importance during the interviews, especially on the part of younger artists and some curators. In this sense, the guide inevitably underwent fine tuning along the process of data collection: on one hand, new topics that merited further study were included (e.g. artistic residencies), and on the other hand, some topics lost momentum, like the

role of critics and the impact of media on artistic careers. For example, many interviewees said that there are no specialized media in Portugal covering the visual arts and newspapers currently devote a very small amount of space to their coverage in their cultural sections. As a result, although these participants recognize that art criticism is an important activity as such, they perceive the impact of the art critic as diminished because he lacks the appropriate space to exercise his function, namely elaborate (or judge) on artistic quality and relevance.

Before the interview phase began, many published interviews given by Portuguese art world members were read with the aim of improving the guide in terms of language, vocabulary and terminology and both the RTP online archive and YouTube were consulted for the same reason. Furthermore, in September and October 2016, I was part of the audience in the series of conversations between artists and architects that took place in the Atelier-Museu Júlio Pomar, where a number of 12 artists shared their views regarding the relationship between art and architecture. Similarly, in March and April 2017, I was also part of the audience in presentations regarding art collecting and art market related topics held at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chiado. In a nutshell, during the preparatory stage before the interviews, I followed the advice offered by Brinkmann and Kvale (2015, p. 125) who consider “that the better the preparation for an interview, the higher the quality of the knowledge produced in the interview interaction and the more the post-interview treatment of the interviews will be facilitated”.

To further familiarize myself with the context of my research, a number of visits in art related spaces were carried out having in mind primarily my research problem and not my aesthetic preferences. These visits also provided me with further “peripheral vision”, a concept used by Mintzberg (1979, p. 585) and defined as “poking around in relevant places, a good dose of creativity – that is what makes good research, and always has, in all fields”.

To that effect, numerous visits were carried out to commercial art galleries, museums and cultural centers, auction preview exhibitions, actual auction sales and art fairs. In almost all the above occasions, I had short conversations with the various professionals - that many times were initiated by them - and this provided a further opportunity to comprehend the vocabulary and terminology used in this art world. Of special interest was my visit to the art fair *ARCO Lisboa* (May 2016<sup>91</sup>) where casual observation was carried out regarding the general atmosphere of the fair and the behavior of both visitors and exhibitors. This event had generated some euphoria in the market, as

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<sup>91</sup> ARCO Lisboa was also visited in 2017.

evidenced by the positive comments made by the fair's exhibitors to the press at the time. During the interviews, some participants reiterated their positive views, while others remained more skeptical about this recent market phenomenon taking place in Lisbon, and the fact that it was organized by a Spanish entity (ARCO).

Before each interview the necessary preparation was carried out, that is becoming familiar with key career events (artists and curators) or business history (galleries and auction houses) of the participants, which helped in having a meaningful interaction with them and preparation notes were frequently used as probes and prompts to allow for a smooth interview process. For example, in the case of artists it was helpful to know with how many and with which galleries they work, as well as, important exhibitions that featured their work (i.e. international museums and participations in biennials). In the case of galleries, knowledge of the artists represented by the gallery, as well as, their art fair activity was very handy, since fairs have gained importance both in commercial terms, as well as, a visibility enhancing tool for galleries and artists alike. This preparation was beneficial at another level, namely showing expertise and commitment on my part that translated – almost in every occasion - into creating rapport with the interviewees and engaged them in sharing their views, opinions and experiences with me in a way that these often represented “thick descriptions” (Geertz, 1973) of their careers and activities. An added benefit of a good interview preparation, besides increasing the probabilities of obtaining an interview rich in data, is that it facilitated the snowball process; it is more likely that interviewees indicate further persons of interest if they found the whole interview experience interesting and engaging rather than a waste of their time.

To guarantee the anonymity that was promised to all participants in the monograph, a code was attributed to them in the following way:

- A1 through A14: Artists
- C1 through C7: Critics, curators, artistic directors of institutions
- G1 through G5: Gallery owners
- L1 and L2: Auction house owners

For instance, A1 refers to the first artist interviewed, G3 refers to the third gallerist interviewed, C4 refers to the fourth critic/curator interviewed etc. I have decided against the use of pseudonyms, as used sometimes in peer-reviewed literature or even recommended by some authors (e.g. Braun

and Clarke, 2013) in research employing similar methods, because I believe it is a potential source of unnecessary confusion both for the reader, as well as, for the researcher.

### 3.2.3 Interviewing process

The majority of the interviews took place in spaces designated by the participants for their convenience, namely artist studios or homes, galleries, auction houses and various institutions. In some cases, my visit at their premises was prolonged beyond the duration of the recorded interview due to a number of reasons: some artists gave me a tour of their studios and talked about their current work and future projects; in a couple of cases I was received by the artists' assistants and we engaged in conversation and/or a studio tour; with some gallerists we talked about their current exhibition and future exhibition plans and art fair participations; in other cases some participants wanted to share some views "off-the-record". Overall, on top of the 90 minutes of the average duration of the recorded interviews, a further 25 minutes on average can be added to the interview experience, thus making the average interaction time between the participants and myself almost two hours. During all interviews, I took notes of the key issues and events that the interviewees were emphasizing and of other issues that jumped to my mind for follow-up questions or clarifications. When occasionally some of them wanted to add or clarify something off-the-record, the recorder was naturally turned off and no notes - at the time - were made.

All interviews were conducted in Portuguese (except one), digitally recorded (without any technical problems) and transcribed by me, yielding 380 pages of interview transcripts. Interview transcription is a very time-consuming process and one hour of interview is estimated to require approximately 5-6 hours of transcription work (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015; Braun and Clarke, 2013); in my case the average was a bit longer, averaging six and a half hours of transcription per interview hour. Brinkmann and Kvale (2013, p. 207) argue that "researchers who transcribe their own interviews will learn much about their own interviewing style" and Patton (2002, p. 441) argues that the researcher who opts to do some or all the transcription himself benefits from the "opportunity to get immersed in the data, an experience that usually generates emergent insights". Taking into consideration the views expressed above, I made the decision to transcribe all the interviews myself and reap the benefits of this challenging task in the form of becoming a better and more confident interviewer. As a result, and as the number of interviews increased, each subsequent interview was better prepared, both in terms of preliminary research on each



interviewee and refinement of the interview guide. An additional reason for not outsourcing some or all the transcription to a third party (or parties) was confidentiality; since I was promising confidentiality to the participants, I couldn't be sending audio files to third parties, without their consent<sup>92</sup>.

Due to the scheduling of interviews, it was not always possible to have the transcript ready before the next interview took place, and in those cases my notes during the interview - and my memory - served to fine-tune the next interview guide. On two occasions, two interviews took place on the same day, while others were on consecutive days. My work routine during the data gathering process consisted of overlapping actions that included: interview preparation, conduct of interview, and interview transcription. For instance, on some occasions, on the same day an interview was conducted, the previous interview was being transcribed and the next interview was being prepared.

### 3.2.4 Qualitative content analysis

The method chosen for analyzing the data is thematic analysis, which is a qualitative content analysis method and its goal is data reduction in a way that the meaning of a few hundred pages of interview transcripts with respect to the research questions can be reduced to a few main themes. In contrast, content analysis that usually has a rather quantitative character (e.g. counting frequencies of occurrences of words or subjects/themes) that “seeks to quantify content in terms of predetermined categories in a systematic and replicable manner” (Bryman and Bell, 2015, p. 298) is not adequate for answering my research questions.

According to Bryman and Bell (2015, p. 599) thematic analysis is “one of the most common approaches to qualitative data analysis” and in recent years it has been gaining traction on its own merit especially due to the work of Braun and Clarke (2006; 2013). Similarly, Ryan and Bernard (2003, p. 85) state that “theme identification is one of the most fundamental tasks in qualitative research. It also is one of the most mysterious” and to that effect the authors' work seeks to demystify this task. In a recent example of research that deals with career shaping actions, Bosley, Arnold and Cohen (2009, p. 1500) write that their “interview transcripts were analyzed using a thematic approach to identify common and/or recurring career shaper actions and interactions as

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<sup>92</sup> Regarding outsourcing the transcription to third parties, one must also account for the monetary costs and the time needed to verify the quality of transcription provided by the third party.

they were described within and between different career stories.” According to Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 82) a theme “captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of *patterned* response or meaning within the data set”. Bryman and Bell (2015, p. 600) use a broader definition that states that a theme is a category identified by the researcher in the data, is related to his research questions, “builds on codes identified in transcripts” and “provides the researcher with the basis for a theoretical understanding of his or her data that can make a theoretical contribution to the literature relating to the research focus”.

As with other methods of qualitative data analysis, like analytic induction and grounded theory with its many variants, the backbone of this process is coding of the data by the researcher (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2013). Braun and Clarke (2013, p. 231) using a patchwork quilt analogy refer to codes as different pieces of fabric that “contribute towards creating organized and coherent patterns (themes), which are distinct from other patterns, and which work together to make an overall pattern (the analysis)”. Continuing with their analogy, these authors argue that the role of the researcher is to decide what pieces of fabric to use (codes), the best way to combine them and create certain patterns (themes) “that together produce the overall patchwork quilt (analysis)” (ibid., p. 231). Contrary to some qualitative studies, where the researchers claim that themes, categories or patterns “emerge from the data”, it has to be pointed out that it is because of the active role of the researcher that themes become apparent; themes are crafted by the researchers, they are not dug up by a process resembling an archaeological excavation. As Mintzberg (1979, p. 584) succinctly pointed out: “data do not generate the theory – only researchers do that”.

No qualitative data analysis software was used for the data analysis. This decision was based on a cost/benefit analysis with respect to the time needed to learn to use the software efficiently. The data consisted of 380 pages, a considerable amount, but manageable enough by using Microsoft Word. Another consideration was that the software could create a degree of alienation between the data and the researcher since the interviews were in Portuguese but their analysis and subsequent writing of the monograph was in English. Regarding the translation, only the selected excerpts for the monograph were translated that were used in the Discussion chapter and not the entire interviews.

For the data analysis I did not use a recipe or a manual, even though Braun and Clarke (2013) provide one that has seven stages (ibid., pp. 202-203, Table 9.1), but also caution that “good

qualitative analysis is primarily a product of an 'analytic sensibility', not a product of following the rules" (ibid., p. 201). These seven stages are:

1. Transcription
2. Reading and familiarization; taking note of items of potential interest
3. Coding – complete; across entire dataset
4. Searching for themes
5. Reviewing themes (producing a map of the provisional themes and subthemes, and relationships between them)
6. Defining and naming themes
7. Writing – finalizing analysis

Brinkmann and Kvale (2015, pp. 123-124) in their methodology for qualitative interview research also break down their process in seven steps, attempting to help the researcher by “put[ting] forward some rules of thumb for the hands-on issues of the steps...”. The first two steps deal with the preparation of the interview, step 3 with the conduct of the interview, step 4 with transcription, step 5 with analysis (relevant for this research is analysis focused on meaning, not language), step 6 with the “social construction of validity”, and step 7 with producing the report.

Cope (2005) using phenomenological inquiry to research entrepreneurship described four levels in his approach that are similar to the ones used by Braun and Clarke (2013) and Brinkmann and Kvale (2015). The first level refers to transcription and the initial analysis of the transcript; level 2 involves the compilation of a case study for each participant in a narrative form (chronological or thematic); level 3 is a more detailed analysis of the contents of the cases and incorporates a cross-case comparison among them (i.e. what is common among them and what is particular); level 4 clustered evidence that confirmed emergent relationships.

Bosley, Arnold, and Cohen (2009, p. 1500) state that for their research:

Thematic analysis began with total immersion in the transcripts, and then involved: identifying, grouping and classifying meaningful statements; listing and describing focal themes; describing and refining categories; allocating codes; and generating a master list of codes.

Considering the variation that exists in the qualitative data analysis and the fact that each researcher basically follows the methodology used by other researchers and adapts it to his specific research problem, questions and context, in my research I roughly followed the seven-stage process described by Braun and Clarke (2013).

The unit of analysis throughout this study is the individual. In the case of artists and independent curators this is evident; in the cases of businesses like galleries and auction houses, the interviewees were owners and the sole decision makers regarding the strategy followed by the business. Regarding institutions, almost in all cases, the interviewees were in charge of the curatorial decisions and in this sense the programming strategy was defined and executed by them within the budget and overall parameters of their institutional mandate.

The transcription process was the first step of data analysis; in my case, it carried particular weight since the interviewer and the transcriber are the same person. The transcription used was a simplified version of verbatim or orthographic transcription. This means that non-verbal utterances like “er”, “mm” were omitted as well as pausing, hesitation, laughing, etc. Punctuation was added to transform the spoken word into written sentences and, when appropriate, words in brackets were used to complete the meaning of sentences.

Familiarization with the data and initial analysis of the transcript was conducted as soon as the transcription was completed by noting key words in English on the margin of the page and subsequently highlighting relevant excerpts both on paper and in the Word document. These key words can be considered as a first coding attempt where both the words of interviewees were used (its English equivalent) or words/concepts coming from the literature and the pre-interview preparation. In addition, handwritten notes based on each transcript were made in order to summarize the first impressions from its reading, verify which topics of the guide were discussed and in what detail, and aid in fine tuning subsequent interview guides. Hence, the familiarization with the data involved the full transcript and not only the parts linked to the RQs. This stage of the analysis is a crucial one because it allows the researcher to monitor the quality of the data collected and adjust his interview guide accordingly. For instance, if some research topics yield poor (short) replies from interviewees it could mean that the question is irrelevant, badly phrased or incomprehensible.

Ryan and Bernard (2003) offer valuable advice on looking for themes and indicate eight techniques for identifying them. Among those the researcher must be alert when analyzing the transcript and look for:

- Repetitions: topics that are found across the data repeatedly
- Metaphors and analogies: their use by interviewees denotes an underlying theme
- Linguistic connectors: words like “because” and expressions like “as a result” denote causal relations; “if” and “then” indicate conditional relations; “before”, “after”, “then”, “next” used for time-oriented relationships
- Similarities and differences: comparing expressions and understanding how they are similar or different may provide insight regarding subthemes
- Missing data: sometimes interviewees avoid answering certain questions (intentionally or unintentionally) and the researcher may learn much from what is not present as well

### 3.3 Research Quality Assessment

Bryman and Bell (2015, p. 49) consider that reliability, replication (also referred to as replicability), and validity are “three of the most prominent criteria for the evaluation of business and management research”, but at the same time also acknowledge that “there has been a discussion among qualitative researchers concerning the relevance of reliability and validity for qualitative research” (ibid., p. 399). For instance, Braun and Clarke (2013) question the applicability of reliability and validity (that they consider more suitable for quantitative research) as suitable evaluation criteria for qualitative research, as do Amis and Silk (2008) in the case of organizational studies, and Leitch et al. (2010) in the case of interpretivist entrepreneurship research. More specifically Amis and Silk (2008, p. 456) posit that:

traditional and still dominant methods of assessing research quality, founded on a positivistic understanding of the social world, are inherently unsuited to producing the variety of scholarship necessary for a vital, dynamic organizational studies.

In his seminal work, Guba (1981) has pointed out that the rationalistic paradigm - or positivistic as referred to above by Amis and Silk (2008) – differs from the naturalistic paradigm (frequently

referred to as phenomenological, ethnographic, or anthropological) with respect to three key assumptions and therefore proposed the criterion of *trustworthiness* for judging research within the naturalistic paradigm (i.e. research taking place in natural settings rather than in controlled environments or laboratories). According to Guba (1981, p. 77), “the naturalistic paradigm rests on the assumption that there are multiple realities”, that “the inquirer and the respondent are interrelated, with each influencing the other”, and that “generalizations are not possible”. Trustworthiness (Guba, 1981; Lincoln and Guba, 1985) is composed of four criteria that parallel the reliability and validity criteria in rationalistic/quantitative research (Guba, 1981, p. 80, Table 1):

- Credibility (parallel to internal validity): as the name indicates, it has to do with how credible/believable the findings of the study are.
- Transferability (parallel to external validity/generalizability): concerns the applicability of the findings to other contexts.
- Dependability (parallel to reliability): regards whether the findings could be repeated if the study was replicated in the same context, with the same methods, and the same sample.
- Confirmability (parallel to objectivity): whether the researcher has been objective (unbiased) throughout the research process and has stated his underlying assumptions.

In addition to Guba (1981) and Lincoln and Guba (1985), who have provided suggestions on how a researcher may address the above issues in order to demonstrate the study's trustworthiness, other researchers have endorsed (fully or partially), adapted, expanded, and further elaborated on these in order to evaluate the quality of qualitative research. For instance, Shenton (2004) lists a number of provisions that a researcher can make to meet the four criteria of trustworthiness and shares many similarities with Guba's (1981) suggestions. Both Bryman and Bell (2015) and Braun and Clarke (2013) stress the importance of respondent validation (also known as member checking) and triangulation for establishing a study's credibility. Patton (2002, p. 542) “identified five contrasting sets of criteria for judging the quality of qualitative inquiry from different perspectives and within different philosophical frameworks”. In two of these sets (traditional scientific research criteria and social construction and constructivist criteria) we find, among others, the objectivity of the researcher, different types of triangulation, and trustworthiness. Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) who deal exclusively with qualitative research interviewing,

although maintaining the terms 'reliability' and 'validity', adapt them to this particular type of research and emphasize the concept of "validation" that define as: "treating the interdependence of philosophical understandings of objectivity and truth, social science concepts of validity, and the practical issues of verifying interview knowledge" (ibid., p. 277). The authors posit that validation should "permeate all stages" of the research process, i.e. from the beginning (theoretical assumptions and research question formulation) to the end (whether the "report gives a valid account of the main findings... and also the question of the role of readers of the report in validating the results" (ibid., p. 284)). On the other hand, researchers like Yardley (2000) and Tracy (2010) have established what they describe as "flexible" criteria for evaluating the quality of qualitative research, i.e. applicable to different frameworks of research and according to the framework and methods employed some become more relevant than others. Yardley (2000, p. 219, Table 1) has developed four such criteria and Tracy (2010, p. 840, Table 1) eight and both, as it is to be expected, share common elements with the four trustworthiness criteria already mentioned.

In view of the above suggestions and guidelines regarding establishing quality in research, I have taken the steps described below to guarantee the quality of my work:

- Respondent validation (or member checks): According to Bryman and Bell (2015, p. 401) respondent validation "is a process whereby a researcher provides the people on whom he or she has conducted research with an account of his or her findings". Many of the authors cited previously, like Braun and Clarke (2013), Shenton (2004), and Tracy (2010), include member checking as a criterion for establishing credibility. Guba (1981, p. 85) considers that member checks "is the single most important action inquirers can take, for it goes to the heart of the credibility criterion". Hence, following the practical advice provided by both Bryman and Bell (2015) and Braun and Clarke (2013), I have made available to 14 interviewees (all four interviewee types were included) a 17-page document with the findings of my research and solicited their feedback as to the correspondence of these with their own views and experiences in the art world. Eight of the participants responded (6 artists and 2 curators) and all of them expressed their overall agreement with the findings and some also made very positive comments regarding my research and its findings. One two occasions, I have sent to two artists emails clarifying issues that they raised regarding the findings. One artist raised the issue of influence and relations among artists, something that came up occasionally in the Discussion,

especially in relation to networking. The other artist commented on the examples of artists that were given in the Findings, and as a result I have made a small adjustment that improved the clarity of the Findings in that respect.

- Triangulation: Braun and Clarke (2013, p. 285) define triangulation as “a process whereby two or more methods of data collection or sources of data are used to examine the same phenomenon”. It is a method advocated by almost all authors cited above (Guba, 1981; Bryman and Bell, 2015; Braun and Clarke, 2013; Shenton, 2004; Tracy, 2010; Patton, 2002) for establishing credibility. Guba (1981) and Shenton (2004) also posit that it establishes confirmability in the sense that it can be used to “reduce the effect of investigator bias” (Shenton, 2004, p. 72). Patton (2002, p. 556) mentions four types of triangulation: “methods triangulation” (using different data collection methods), “triangulation of sources” (using different data sources with the same method), “analyst triangulation” (using various analysts to review findings), “theory/perspective triangulation” (using multiple theories/perspectives to interpret the data). In the case of my research, I used triangulation of sources by default since it was part of my research design that contemplated interviews with four different types of interviewees (artists, gallerists, auctioneers, and curators) and in all RQs at least two types of interviewees were used as data sources.

In addition to respondent validation and triangulation of sources, in this report I have provided what Shenton (2004, p. 73) calls “in-depth methodological description” through detailed accounts of the following: the sampling process (Section 3.2.1); the pre-interview preparation that includes familiarization with the field of study and research on the interviewees’ careers, business history, or institutional affiliations (Section 3.2.2); the conduct of interviews (Section 3.2.3); the process of data analysis (Section 3.2.4). Shenton (2004) considers that this kind of description can enhance both the dependability and the confirmability of a study, while satisfying the rigor and coherence criteria proposed by Yardley (2000, p. 219, Table 1) and Tracy (2010, p. 840, Table 1).

In the Discussion chapter, I have many times provided extensive quotes (some of them are almost half a page long) from the interviewees, aiming to put their words into context, i.e. provide “thick” (or rich) descriptions (Geertz, 1973) of the issues under study. Patton (2002, p. 437) considers that “thick, rich description provides the foundation for qualitative analysis and reporting”, while



Shenton (2004) and Tracy (2010) consider that thick descriptions enhance credibility. Thick descriptions, especially when related to the study's context also help evaluate the transferability of that particular study to other contexts (Bryman and Bell, 2015; Guba, 1981). In this study, the characteristics of its context are actually the focus of a research question (RQ-Artworld) that uses as data the points of view of all four types of interviewees and is what I have previously described as an "indispensable starting point for putting in perspective" the rest of the RQs. Hence, RQ-Artworld also addresses Shenton's (2004, p. 73) transferability criterion that calls for "provision of background data to establish context of study and detailed description of phenomenon in question to allow comparisons to be made". In essence, judging the transferability of any study is not up to the author of the study, but rather up to the reader of the study. Braun and Clarke (2013, p. 282) summarize this point very aptly:

The key to enhancing the transferability of a study is to describe the *specific* contexts, participants, settings and circumstances of the study in detail, so the reader can evaluate the potential for applying the results to other contexts or participants.



## 4. FINDINGS

### 4.0 The main characteristics of the Lisbon Art world

According to the participants, the Lisbon art world, which serves as the context of this research, is characterized by the following:

1. A small market lacking depth that is sustained primarily by private collectors.

As a result, Portuguese galleries lack adequate financial resources and international influence. All interviewees are aware of the size and state of the local market and frequently used the words “small” and “fragile” to describe it. In general, participants consider Portugal to be a poor and peripheral country within the international contemporary arts panorama.

2. The State does not have a cultural policy for the visual arts sector.

Most participants mentioned the fact that Lisbon doesn't have a museum of contemporary art and that the country also lacks a permanent pavilion in the Venice Biennale, one of the most prestigious cultural events in the world. Furthermore, regarding its institutions, their budgets for acquisitions, programming, and even security are considered low or insufficient. In addition, there doesn't appear to be in place any sort of plan regarding invitations to foreign curators (directors of institutions and curators of the various biennials) to visit Portugal and get to know its contemporary artistic production.

3. The local institutions do not make significant acquisitions and are not considered to be well connected within the international institutional circuit.

The relatively reduced number of institutional acquisitions reflects both the scarcity of resources and the lack of a State policy for the visual arts sector. Regarding the level of connection of Portuguese institutions with their international counterparts, some participants highlighted the fact that exhibitions produced in Portugal, which feature mostly Portuguese artists, do not circulate internationally, with the Helena Almeida exhibition that was co-produced by the Serralves and circulating in three European museums, being a notable exception.

#### 4.1 The artist and the gallery system

In the primary market – where works of art are sold for the first time – the sale of artistic production is accomplished either through intermediaries, almost exclusively galleries, or directly by the artists themselves. This RQ aims to investigate the relationship of the artist with the gallery system and subsequently examine the conditions under which an artist can survive in the marketplace without totally depending on galleries for the promotion, dissemination, and sale of his work.

##### Gallery criteria for selecting artists

Since galleries are the ones that invite artists for collaboration and – if the artist accepts - initiate the gallery-artist relationship, I looked into the criteria used by gallery owners to select artists. The choice is the result of combining two criteria: the personal taste of the gallerist and the how the artists' work contributes to the gallery program.

- The personal taste of the gallerist: Includes the evaluation of the quality of the artist's work and the appreciation of the personality of the artist. This contemplates compatibility with the gallery owner's personality, level of professionalism, and attitude towards life.
- The contribution of the artist's work to the gallery program: The gallery program is usually built around the gallerist's taste, and influenced by market related considerations, i.e. what an artist will contribute to the gallery, in terms of sales and in which time frame (short-run versus long-run). In their responses, some gallerists chose to downplay the sales criterion in an effort to emphasize the cultural aspect of their work.

##### Artists' criteria for deciding on gallery representation

Artists' decision to accept a gallery invitation for collaboration is influenced by:

- The career stage they are in (i.e. beginning of career/emerging, mid-career, established)
- The degree of internationalization of their career

Artists base their decision for collaborating with galleries on three criteria:

- The program of the gallery: artists want to be associated with a gallery whose program (i.e. fellow artists collaborating with gallery) they respect and feel affinity for.

- The personality of the gallerist: artists appreciate a gallerist who is committed to them, understands their work, and is an honest and reliable business partner.
- The expectations of the artist regarding the gallery functions: promotion efforts, art fair presence, and regular sales.

These criteria can also influence an artist's decision to terminate a relationship with a gallery. For instance, one interviewee provided two examples when he felt that gallery relationships would harm his career in the long term. In the first case, he left the gallery because his career had outgrown the gallery's focus: namely he was an artist entering a mid-career status, whereas the gallery was considered as an emerging artist's gallery. In the second case, he exited the gallery because he did not identify himself anymore with the gallery's program. Another interviewee revealed that at least one gallery had been deceitful in its transactions with the artist, while a third interviewee referred to a legal dispute with a gallery.

### Gallery functions

According to gallerists, representing an artist means: promotion and dissemination of the artist's work, organization of individual and group exhibitions in the gallery and elsewhere (e.g. institutions), establishing links with institutions, curators, and other galleries for the purposes of dissemination and exhibitions, presenting the work of artists at international fairs, and making sales regularly. In addition, there is a series of so-called bureaucratic tasks that galleries undertake on behalf of the artists such as: updating curricula, dealing with transportation and other logistics, keeping records of works, and preparing publications.

Gallerists adjust their functions according to the career stage of each artist. It is natural that artists at the beginning of their careers need or solicit advice, need financial support for the execution of their work, intense promotion, introduction to curatorial and institutional circles. As artists accumulate experience, visibility, and recognition in the art world, including regular sales, it is likely that the gallery will adapt its functions accordingly, e.g. less intensive promotion, less or no financial support for work execution. Galleries that represent artists with international careers, or in the process of internationalization, will incorporate this in their art fair strategy by including the artist's work at the fairs they participate in.

From the artists' point of view, the degree of fulfilment of the gallery functions determines the scope of their affiliation with galleries. For instance, some artists believe that galleries in Portugal are not well prepared for establishing institutional links, thus prompting artists to assume this function themselves.

Portuguese artists that are based in Portugal have three types of affiliations with the domestic gallery system:

1. Exclusive representation: they use one gallery to sell their production, expect the most from the gallery in terms of fulfilling its representation functions, including the presence in international fairs. In this case, usually the gallery retains 50% of the sale price of the artwork as its commission. Sometimes, artists have agreements with their galleries regarding sales made by them to collectors from their studio.
2. Ad-hoc collaboration: they use galleries as intermediaries to sell their work, but the relationship is not exclusive. They can also sell work from the studio directly to buyers and/or establish collaborations with other market agents. In this case the gallery does not perform all the gallery functions and the commission it receives could be less than 50% of the sale price.
3. No affiliation: they either sell their work directly to collectors or through agents that are not galleries (e.g. auctions).

In Portugal, the gallery-artist relationship is not governed by formal written agreements, but by gentleman's agreements (as is the norm internationally), which explains why both gallerists and artists place such an importance on the personality factor. As is the case with all relationships, personal and business alike, they are functional when mutual trust and respect are present, which are more likely to be established if the personalities of those involved are somehow compatible.

A clarification needs to be made for artists who have no gallery affiliation in Portugal by choice but are represented by or collaborate with galleries abroad. This happens because the focus of their career is the international market, but also because they can distribute their work domestically either themselves, and/or through their galleries abroad. The fact that an artist doesn't have a gallery affiliation in Portugal, does not imply that he is operating outside the gallery system, since

he is integrated in it at a broader level, be that regional, European, or global (essentially the western art market, i.e. Europe and North America).

All artists believe that galleries are an important partner for having access to the market, and for many of them it is the only one. This applies to those who admitted that they lack the skills and/or are not willing to sacrifice their time in the studio for making art, to pursue activities such as: promotion, dissemination, and sales of their work, as well as, establishing and maintaining links with collectors and curators, and dealing with a series of bureaucratic tasks. For those artists, who are unable or unwilling to perform these tasks, a gallery is an indispensable partner who secures market access to allow them to continue to work as artists. For artists who can perform these tasks either themselves, or who have a team of collaborators to assist them, their dependence on the domestic gallery system is partial or even zero.

Some artists believe that Portuguese galleries are rather weak or inefficient in performing the following functions:

- Establishing links with institutional actors and curators
- Financing artistic production

The fulfillment of the first function may differ according to the context, local or international. It is expected that galleries have some local influence (varies according to the gallery owner's social and economic capital), and almost zero influence internationally, even though some Portuguese galleries have managed to establish links with foreign curators and attracted their attention to their represented artists. A factor influencing the apparent lack of links between galleries and curators in Portugal is the attitude of some curators who wish to appear as 'artist discoverers'<sup>93</sup>. In their effort to cultivate this image, curators try to avoid overt links with galleries fearing that they may appear influenced or biased in their selections. For this reason, gallerists urge their artists to try and forge these links themselves, which are especially important for artists at the beginning of their careers. Most artists acknowledge that these relations with curators and institutions are necessary to some degree for achieving further visibility for their work.

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<sup>93</sup> G1 very aptly described this as the "Pedro Álvares Cabral" complex.

The second function, is mostly relevant for artists whose work is executed by third parties, i.e. craftsmen and fabricators, and for artists whose production is costly. These need large quantities of materials for sculptures of monumental scale or installations, or opt to use facilities abroad for printing purposes (photographs, graphic work) and executing sculptures. In addition to production costs, one has also to cover, elevated costs of transportation, installation, and storage. Given the reduced size of the Portuguese art market, the financial resources of the galleries are limited and often fall short of the expectations of artists whose production is costly. On the other hand, for painters, financing is not an issue as they usually execute the work themselves and the materials they use are not (relatively) as expensive.

Hence the integration of the artist in the gallery system depends on the type of work they create as far as production costs are concerned and their ability to establish links with other art world actors. Artists who can successfully associate themselves with an institutional player and a curator who can provide visibility to their work may rely less on the gallery system. Similarly, artists who can find the resources to execute their work will depend less on the financial support of the gallery, albeit they may become dependent on the person or institution who is financing their production, e.g. if it is a commission it usually comes with some strings attached.

Curators and directors of institutions acknowledge the importance of galleries in the art world and consider that without galleries the system (i.e. art world) would be incomplete. They also think that gallerists may assume the role of advisor for the artists and may attempt to influence them in certain ways related to their work development. They highlighted the role of galleries as intermediaries in the economic sense, since the collectors' money goes through them, and as the place where curators themselves go to appreciate art and be informed about artists' work. Some artists and gallerists also argued that the usual trajectory of art is from the gallery to the institution and not the other way around, which confirms that the most recent contemporary artistic production usually passes through the galleries first. It should be added that auctioneers also view primary market galleries as indispensable in the market, since their supply of artworks depends largely on galleries that supported artistic careers in the first place.

Beyond the functions galleries perform in representing their artists, there is another dimension of their relationship that has to do with how the gallerist and the artist interact. For younger artists, the gallerist may assume the role of mentor and advisor, that is someone who tries to protect the artist from pitfalls, both with regard to creative work (e.g. the work is sufficiently developed to be



exhibited), as well as, career (e.g. where to exhibit). For more experienced artists (mid-career and established), the relationship can range from mere delegation of the representation functions to the gallery, to a more profound relationship where the artist sees his gallerist as an advisor and sometimes as a peer. This depends on the one hand, on the ability and experience of the gallerist to play that role and, on the other, the understanding by the artist that his gallerist's interests are aligned with his, not only in market terms, but also in terms of career.

To put this last point in perspective, there are gallerists who view their relationship with artists as working together (partnership) and as being complementary in co-creating market for the artist's work and co-managing the artist's career. There are artists who accept and encourage that type of relationship and others who don't. If gallerists attempt to play that role without the artists' consent, this relationship may deteriorate to the point of rupture. One artist<sup>94</sup>, for instance, explained that such attempts were perceived as unacceptable control over artistic and career choices that led to the decision of leaving the galleries.

#### Artists outside the gallery system

Gallerists were divided about whether an artist can survive in the market without an affiliation with the gallery system. Some gallerists doubt that this is possible either because throughout history artists had some support - from the church, royalty, nobility, patrons, galleries – or because they believe that an artist should limit himself to his creative work only. Other gallerists believe that some artists are capable of surviving outside the gallery system if several conditions are present: existing market demand for their work, special interpersonal skills that enable them to relate to people, being able to both promote themselves and sell their art, being able to have access to exhibition places that offer visibility, secure the necessary means for producing their art, frequently work with commissions. In sum, by being able to undertake themselves all the necessary gallery functions, artists can become independent of the gallery system. However, this independence comes at a big risk if some of these conditions are not met, or cease to exist, because integration or reintegration to the system could be very difficult.

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<sup>94</sup> It is rather rare for artists to talk about problems or negative issues that involve galleries. Two artists opted to do so in their attempts to pinpoint specific aspects of the artist-gallery relationship.

For artists who never integrated the gallery system, the recognition of their artistic value may never come, or come late. For artists at the beginning of their career, or for those who have not yet achieved sufficient legitimation for their work and established some market demand for it, being outside the gallery system is not advisable according to their peers. For artists who have at least reached the mid-career point or are established in the art world and the market, is possible, but with a lot of effort, since in addition to their creative work they must be involved in all market or business-related decisions and actions. However, even well-known international artists whose work has a lot of demand by collectors internationally and their status in the art world – and perhaps even in art history – is undisputed, and theoretically could survive outside the gallery system, opt to stay affiliated with galleries because these provide them with a valuable connection to the art world.

## **4.2 Market processes and their impact on artistic careers**

The success of an artist's career is increasingly being measured in market terms, e.g. the price their work is sold for and in many (if not most) cases this monetary value is considered as an indicator of artistic value and merit. The market processes studied here, namely auctions and art fairs are essential for transactions where monetary values are established.

### **4.2.1 Auctions**

As one of the characteristics of the Portuguese context – that became apparent during the field work prior to the interviewing phase - is the absence of a developed secondary dealer segment, auctions are used as a proxy for the secondary market. Beyond auctions, in the secondary market we find some traditional antique shops dealing occasionally in contemporary art, very few dealers that deal in art from various periods, and some individuals who act as brokers between collectors. Primary market galleries under specific circumstances are also active in the secondary market. The fact that beyond auctions, the secondary market is not well developed became evident during the recent economic crisis<sup>95</sup>. During that period collectors seeking liquidity sold art and other collectibles (silver, Chinese porcelain, antique furniture, etc.) at auctions as it was the only mechanism in place to accommodate such sales. If Portuguese artists had a market for their work

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<sup>95</sup> Between 2011 and 2014, Portugal underwent an economic and financial adjustment program under the auspices of the European Union (EU), the European Central Bank (ECB), and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), collectively called the “Troika”.

outside Portugal (except for a select few), collectors would have alternative sale options abroad. Since this is not the case, only the local market and its mechanisms were available to sellers, and that meant sales through auctions.

Regarding the operations of the auction houses in Portugal, most artists expressed a negative opinion, and some used harsh words in their comments, referring to manipulated prices, and accused auction houses of incompetence and ignorance, of disrespect of artistic work, and of treating art like junk. The estimated price auctioneers place on works was the focus of the artists' complaints as being very low in comparison to their gallery price, which is considered by the artists and their gallerists as the 'correct' one. Some artists were more neutral in their approach and considered auctions as just another market phenomenon that is beyond their control. Equally indifferent, were artists whose work doesn't appear frequently at auctions. However, all artists expressed to varying degrees their interest in being informed about the auction activity of their works. Indicating the importance attributed to auctions, two artists even expressed the opinion that galleries should defend or support the prices of the works of their artists when these appear at auction. Defend or support the prices of works at auction, means that the gallerist bids until the price reaches a level considered 'correct', i.e. close to the gallery price.

For the artists who believe that auctions have some impact on the market for their works, the auction results are judged either as positive or negative: if the work sells near or above the gallery price they perceive it as positive and interpret it as an indication that there is demand and interest for their work; if the work remains unsold or sells at a much lower price than the gallery price it is negative.

Gallerists are also interested in being informed about the broader auction market and specifically about the artists they represent. Some gallerists are aware of the arguments for defending or supporting their artists' prices at auction and admitted that they do it under very specific circumstances. However, they caution against this practice as sending the wrong signal to the market, i.e. if collectors know that prices will be supported, they may have an incentive to sell (that perhaps didn't have before), and that would make supporting prices unsustainable. They also put forward the argument of limited financial resources of the galleries which renders this process infeasible.

Like artists, gallerists view auction results as factors that may impact the primary market. If the auction sales of an artist's work are not frequent, they don't see an impact; the danger for their

business is when works are sold at low prices and are perceived by the market as the reference levels (i.e. the 'correct' price). A large price disparity between auction price and gallery price makes the primary market sales more difficult. The gallerist may have to offer some sort of justification regarding this price disparity to his clients, and on their part collectors may reconsider potential gallery purchases hoping for more attractive auction opportunities.

Essentially, both artists and gallerists, view the auction process as a mechanism that produces only price related effects. Auctioneers, on the other hand, view the impact of their activity on other levels besides the obvious price-related one.

Auctioneers, confirmed that they are recipients of complaints from various artists and in some cases the language used was considered abusive. They defended their practices by arguing that transactions in galleries occur at lower than advertised prices and that these are much nearer the prices resulting from auctions. In essence, what is considered or advertised as the 'correct' price for an artwork (the gallery price) is not the actual transaction price. Auctioneers also believe that good auction results (i.e. when the auction price is near or above the gallery price) are invoked by gallerists as selling arguments, whereas the negative results are blamed on the auction process or the auctioneers.

Beyond the impact of auction prices on the primary market, auctioneers believe that their work affects artistic careers in more aspects. One aspect has to do with the buzz that the auction process generates and the visibility it offers to artists whose works appear at auctions. Another aspect is the proliferation of the information available on these artists, especially information concerning prices, since this can be consulted on the auction house's website and on the subscriber-only price databases such as Artnet and Artprice. One more aspect invoked by the auctioneers is the legitimization/consecration effect, qualifying auctions as another legitimization agent for artistic work and consecration mechanism for an artist in market terms.

On the other hand, almost all artists and gallerists refuse to attribute to auctions these effects and generally feel that the sole effect the auction process has on artistic careers, is related to prices and it is usually negative.

Auctioneers affirmed that few artists, gallerists, and some dealers consign works for sale at their auctions, which is something that did not surface during my interviews<sup>96</sup> with artists and gallerists.

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<sup>96</sup> It is possible that none of the 14 artists and 5 gallerists that were interviewed engage in this practice. One artist however, mentioned that he was approached by auction houses to sell works through them.

According to the auctioneers, the reasons behind this practice can be financial and/or generating visibility for the artist and may also serve as an introduction of new artists to the market by offering them exposure.

Auctioneers know that they are competitors of galleries and are aware that gallerists view them as such. Auctioneers, however, consider that galleries and auctions are complementary, even though most gallerists don't share this view.

In all art markets, there is an interdependency between the primary and the secondary market and Portugal is no exception. Auctioneers are aware that for them to remain active in the secondary market the good functioning of the gallery system is essential to sustain a constant supply of works of art. Similarly, gallerists realize that for the primary market to function, a secondary market is necessary to transmit confidence to the primary market buyers that the art they collect has a resale value.

It is evident that the recent economic crisis has left its imprint on the local art market and it is debatable whether the market has fully recovered or is still in recovery mode. Small steps are already taken towards improving the quality of auctions, such as, better selection criteria for works to be auctioned and improved auction catalogs containing more information. So far, very few artists and gallerists acknowledge these steps. Consequently, for auctions to play the role of legitimization agents and visibility enhancers for artists, and be recognized as such, more needs to be done by the auctioneers in terms of improving their image as market agents and raising their level of expertise.

### 4.2.2 Art fairs

Galleries view their participation in international art fairs as necessary, not only because it boosts their sales and contributes to their recognition and prestige abroad, but also because their artists – Portuguese and foreign – expect them to participate. For Portuguese galleries aiming to conduct business in the international art market and enhance their own and their represented artists' visibility, international art fair participation is an integral part of their business, aiming at the following:

- Sales: The commercial character of the art fair is undeniable and galleries participate in them aiming to sell art. Galleries use art fairs as a venue to meet various types of collectors

who would otherwise not be in contact with, since there is a shift in the attitude of collectors from visiting galleries to visiting fairs.

- **Visibility:** Fairs, and particularly the most prestigious ones like Art Basel and Frieze, offer great visibility to the participating galleries and to the artists whose work galleries choose to show there. Participating in a prestigious fair is a mark for distinction for a gallery and a seal of quality for its program and its artists, and provides opportunities for interaction with key art world figures. Besides collectors, the prestigious art fairs are visited by various institutional decision makers like board members, trustees, directors, and curators acting in various capacities (e.g. advisors for collections, institutional, independent).
- **Networking:** Gallerists use fairs as an opportunity to network with peers. While at fairs, gallerists notice artists whose work appeals to their taste and could potentially become additions to their programs. They also use the fairs to promote their artists to other galleries hoping to establish collaborations with them.

Participating at international fairs is a considerable financial burden for Portuguese galleries, and the more prestigious the fair, the higher the associated costs. The prices of Portuguese artists compared to the prices of their international peers are lower - for emerging artists are low anyway - which makes participating in fairs a challenge from an economic point of view. Galleries by including international artists in their programs, not only increase their profile in the international art market, but also mitigate fair costs. Evidently this is relevant for galleries who wish to be part of the broader international art market, because for galleries who pursue other strategies like being a regional player or even a national one, participation in ARCO (in Madrid) and the newly launched ARCO Lisboa<sup>97</sup> can be sufficient. Some gallerists expressed the opinion that participation in international art fairs should be partially subsidized by the State because they perceive themselves as contributors to the promotion of the cultural image of the country abroad.

Artists view fairs from two angles: as a place to see and appreciate art and as a commercial venue. Practically all artists consider the environment of the art fair as inappropriate to exhibit and view art and usually avoid visiting them. However, they recognize fairs as commercial venues that have importance for the market, galleries and collectors. Like gallerists, artists view fairs as an opportunity to meet other art world actors, keep in touch with their international peers, and

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<sup>97</sup> The first edition of ARCO Lisboa took place in 2016.

generally survey the broader artistic field, i.e. the most recent artistic production internationally. In terms of impact, beyond the sales that occasionally take place or originate at fairs, they admit that there is also a visibility effect that could lead to new gallery collaborations and expressions of curatorial interest. Some artists commented very positively their galleries' decision to dedicate their art fair booth exclusively to their work, which by itself yields increased visibility, and equally commented favorably invitations by fair organizers to execute a special project in the ambit of the fair. In sum, the fact that some artists pay attention to their gallery's fair participation strategy proves that they attach higher importance to the art fairs than was initially implied by their comments. They generally recognize the effects that art fairs have on their market (economic in terms of sales) and career (image and diffusion in terms of visibility). Artists and curators also commented what is referred to as "art fair art", which is a term used to describe artworks that are executed to fit in the rather festive environment of an art fair and capture the visitor's attention by being excessively large, or loud, or colorful. Art fair art also serves the purpose of providing to the market easily recognizable pieces by certain artists that are in demand and some artists frequently execute this type of work for economic reasons, as well as, for brand building purposes.

### **4.3 Curatorial impact on artistic careers: Institutions and Biennials**

#### Artists' point of view

Artists expressed a wide variety of opinions about curators and their role in artists' careers. For some, curators were considered indispensable for organizing exhibitions and offering visibility to artists' work; others acknowledged their influence with the formation of "curatorial pressure groups" that can open many doors for artists in the art world and pinpointed to relations between curators, institutions and galleries that characterized as "incestuous"; yet others underlined that they enjoy working with curators and develop dialogs with them, but don't allow curators to interfere with the creation of their work. Many artists chose to express their criticism regarding certain curatorial attitudes; for instance, curators wanting to assume the role of artists as creators or authors or accused curators of incompetency and lack of knowledge of art history.

Regarding the role of institutions, artists perceive their impact on two levels:

- Exhibitions: artists focus their attention on the impact an exhibition in an institution could have in terms of visibility, legitimation, and consecration of their work, and the fact that their work could circulate and integrate other exhibitions. For some artists, the essence is not whether an institution acquires their work, but rather that their work is regularly exhibited and preferably loaned to other institutions that may want to show it in other contexts or in other countries.
- Acquisitions: the economic impact of institutional purchases was disregarded by artists; in fact, most didn't mention it at all, despite having their work bought by institutions in Portugal and in many cases abroad. Few artists chose to highlight the fact that when an institution acquires a work of art is implicitly responsible for its conservation and preservation, and for some artists this is a token of recognition of the historical importance of their work at the time when the acquisition is made.

Some artists feel that their institutional presence has effects on their market and their career more broadly, but are unable to specify these effects, even though some have observed increased interest from potential buyers. For artists with long careers, retrospective exhibitions have a personal impact, namely these offer an opportunity to evaluate themselves and their body of work.

Regarding biennials - this term is used here to describe large-scale curatorial events that aim to survey the state of artistic production at various levels: national, regional, and international – artists who have participated in them refer to them positively as events offering visibility, legitimation, and prestige. However, artists were unable to pinpoint a linkage of their presence in biennials to specific developments in their career. Other artists, who haven't had this experience, view the participation of their peers in such events as a form of recognition of artistic quality and relevance and characterized biennials as a turning point in some artistic careers. On the other hand, a few artists questioned whether these events still make sense and whether such importance should be attributed to them.

#### Gallerists' point of view

The views of gallerists regarding curators and their role were split between those who often collaborate with them and invite them to curate exhibitions in their galleries, hence recognizing their role as positive for artists and their own business, and those who criticized certain curatorial practices and attitudes. Some gallerists believe that curatorial influence and power exist and result



from the institutional affiliation of a curator, as well as, from the context (country) where the curator is active. Other gallerists, criticized what they perceive as an excessive focus of certain curators on the discovery of young artists and/or the rediscovery of older ones aiming to advance their own curatorial status and make a name for themselves.

Regarding institutional impact, all gallerists emphasize the role of institutions as legitimization agents and visibility enhancing opportunities for artists, while acquisitions were not deemed significant due to the limited financial resources of the Portuguese institutions.

All gallerists affirmed the importance of biennials and some described them as the most important events in the art world, because they offer an opportunity for them to promote their artists and generate sales, and in some cases, facilitate the internationalization of careers. However, some gallerists when discussing the Venice Biennale, which is considered the most prestigious of these events, said that the participation itself does not necessarily translate into commercial impact, which is something that may or may not happen, but according to one gallerist it has better chances of happening when the participating artists are at an initial phase of their career.

#### Curators' point of view

Curators believe that due to their institutional affiliations, network of contacts in the art world, and the amount of symbolic capital they possess, they have the potential to influence artistic careers. Artists associated with curators, who are perceived in the field as important, benefit because their work gains more visibility by being selected and included in exhibitions and curatorial projects of those curators.

Some curators commented on the criticism directed at them and their practices by saying that working frequently with the same artists (something that leads to formation of circles of artists) is based on their taste and is part of the process of becoming better acquainted with the artists' work. Regarding their focus on continuously discovering new artists, curators offered two justifications. One is the consumerist nature of society and its constant quest for novelty. The other is the programming policies of institutions favoring exhibitions of younger artists (and established ones for that matter) thus making them obvious curatorial choices. Some curators confessed that being a mid-career artist in Portugal is not easy, which can be partly explained by the institutional policies mentioned above.

Referring to the visibility institutions offer to artists, curators note that its impact depends on the quality of curatorial work. A curator with a deep knowledge of the artist's work can create a good exhibition, which will enhance the artist's profile, or the contrary may happen due to the curator's inadequate exhibition setup. Beyond the curatorial input, the impact of the exhibition also depends on how this opportunity is used, for example, by the artist's gallerist to capitalize on it and generate sales. According to curators, biennials can influence artists' careers, and indeed they have, as evidenced by the examples of artists they mentioned that have participated, for instance, in the Documenta or the Venice Biennale. The importance of biennials is acknowledged across the spectrum of interviewees and was attributed to a great degree to the presence of key decision makers of the international art world who have the capacity to impact artistic careers.

#### **4.4 Internationalization of artistic careers**

Based on the findings of the previous RQs, for the internationalization of the career of a Portuguese artist living in Portugal a combination of the following factors is necessary, but may not be sufficient to sustain an international career if they are not matched with continuous efforts by the artists and their gallerists:

- Presence of the artist at international art fairs and biennials
- Attracting the attention of foreign curators to the artist's work and encouraging Portuguese curators to include the work of national artists in their international projects
- Participation of the artist in residencies
- Representation of the artist by foreign galleries

Fairs and biennials provide artists with great visibility and the opportunity to have their work seen by influential decision makers of the international art world that are market and curatorial/institutional related. On both types of venues, it depends primarily on the gallery to use its artist's presence to promote his work to market and institutional agents and sell it to international collectors. In addition, the artist himself can use his presence there to establish and maintain links with international peers, curators, collectors, and market and institutional agents.

It is more likely for an artist to be invited to biennials if he has already established contacts with curators who are responsible for these events. Establishing and maintaining these contacts can be up to the artist himself, and/or facilitated during the country visits of the curators in preparation of these biennials. These visits may originate from invitations by the Ministry of Culture, institutions like Gulbenkian, the artists' own galleries, or in the ambit of the ARCO Lisboa art fair.

Participation in artistic residencies abroad is most relevant for the younger generation of artists, even though some are destined for mid-career artists, and serve many purposes: produce artwork, network with art world actors, experience other contexts, and overall provide artists with an opportunity to enrich their life experiences.

For artists with international career aspirations, being invited to integrate the program of foreign galleries is an important development, as well as, showing their work in institutions abroad. Internationalization is a continuous process (that could even be helped by fortuitous encounters and events), but merely being present in a biennial won't automatically launch an international career, much less maintain it. The same goes for commercial exhibitions, or integration in temporary exhibitions at institutions. A continuous process involves representation by a gallery with a profile commensurate with the artist's career stage, aspirations, and participation in exhibitions that provide visibility to his work. It is also noteworthy to mention that internationalization of artistic careers is not something homogeneous. Internationalization can be more market-based or more curatorial-based (one is not necessarily incompatible with the other); the first is linked mostly to the market and sales and the second is more linked to circulation among curatorial events.

### 4.5 The artist as entrepreneur

This research identified two levels of entrepreneurship regarding visual artists. The first level incorporates the conception and production of the artist's work. The artist must materialize his creative idea using appropriate materials and securing financial resources especially for works whose execution is costly. For these activities I use the term *creative level entrepreneurship*, which is inherent in all artists driven by their desire to make art.

For the second level, I use the term *business level entrepreneurship* which requires the artist to develop certain qualities (proactiveness, managerial capabilities, networking) in order to launch and manage a career. An underlying distinction between a local and an international career is the

level of ambition of the artist. To achieve some international status the ambitious artist needs to generate the necessary visibility for his work by employing these qualities. No matter how innovative, creative, ground-breaking, or cutting edge the work of an artist is thought to be, if it doesn't become visible to art world gatekeepers and experts, it will never be appreciated by a wider audience and consequently bought by collectors. Put differently, you cannot appreciate something, much less buy it, if you ignore its existence. In the hyper-competitive environment of the art world where competing for visibility and collectors' money is inevitable, the enterprising artist at both the creative and the business level has better chances of success.

Some artists consider themselves and some of their peers, especially when referring to their international careers, as entrepreneurs capitalizing on their ambition to become internationally known and their proactiveness to make things happen. Another entrepreneurial quality they possess is their networking ability to relate themselves with art world gatekeepers that can offer visibility to their work. Examples of their proactiveness at the international level was the decision of artists to establish themselves in a second location outside Portugal to gain better access to the international art world. Being proactive also means taking initiatives to secure the necessary financial support to realize institutional exhibitions abroad.

Various interviewees made the point that international careers were the result not only of the quality of artistic work (i.e. *creative level entrepreneurship*), but of other qualities as well. These other qualities constitute the elements of *business level entrepreneurship*, which can be defined as follows:

- Proactiveness: Taking initiatives, being in control of situations and doing whatever is in their power to accomplish their goals.
- Managerial capabilities: The ability to manage the international aspects of their career and having the necessary structure to do so effectively.
- Networking: Establishing and maintaining relationships with influential gatekeepers of the international art world who can grant them access to events of high visibility and prestige.

Mastering the above qualities leads to a degree of autonomy, i.e. avoiding relationships of total dependency from gatekeepers who may wish to interfere with artistic vision or expression. This autonomy also implies that the artist has some freedom of choice regarding gallery collaborations, as well as, to whom they sell or where they exhibit their work.

The internationalization process would have been easier for Portuguese artists, had Portugal been considered a European art hub, or a centrality. Interviewees repeatedly referred to Portugal as “poor” and “peripheral”, forcing Portuguese artists with international career aspirations to achieve their internationalization from other centralities. The international careers of contemporary Portuguese artists are different from the trajectories of their older peers like Vieira da Silva (1908-1992) and Paula Rego (b. 1935), who are broadly considered the Portuguese artists with the most international recognition. Vieira da Silva and Paula Rego integrated other artistic contexts, Paris and London respectively, which is not the case of the younger generation of Portuguese artists who are active internationally while living in Portugal. These artists develop and maintain their international status by putting into action their business level entrepreneurship qualities assisted by technological advances in telecommunications and travel.

Various interviewees believe that the ease with which people relate to others depends on their character, i.e. introvert or extrovert, and that the “shyness” some Portuguese artists exhibit must be overcome for their own good. Artists, either alone or assisted by market agents, who are adept at promoting their work and networking, have more chances to achieve market success. Gallerists admit that the sociable artist who can relate with other art world agents with greater ease - compared to the artist who is a studio loner - is likely to facilitate the work of his gallerist in his promotional efforts. Some artists also believe that the networking and marketing efforts of an artist can contribute to the visibility of his work and help achieve economic success. Curators believe that some degree of networking is necessary, but this will not assure long-term success for an artist if the quality of work is not present. Curators and artists expressed the opinion that artistic legitimacy at different time frames can be influenced by different factors: in the short-run by the market, its processes, and its agents, and in the long-run by the judgments of art history. Therefore, we cannot rule out the possibility that in the short-run artistic careers can be fabricated as long as the art world actors wish to do so by using (or abusing) the tools and mechanisms at their disposal.



## 5. DISCUSSION

### **RQ-Artworld: The main characteristics of the Lisbon Art world**

The main characteristics of the Lisbon art world (and broadly speaking of the Portuguese art world) need to be identified in order to provide the necessary understanding of the context of this research. In a way, this RQ serves as the backdrop of the subsequent RQs. According to the participants, and especially artists, Portugal is a poor and peripheral (or marginal) country within the international contemporary art panorama and more specifically has the following characteristics:

- A small market that lacks depth, primarily sustained by private collectors, which results in Portuguese galleries lacking financial resources and international influence
- A State without a cultural policy for the visual arts sector
- Institutions that do not make significant acquisitions and considered not to be well connected within the international institutional circuit

### Portugal: A poor and peripheral country within the international contemporary art panorama

Two established artists with international careers succinctly summarize this point by saying:

A8: When you go to Brussels, Cologne, Amsterdam, there is a center and there are institutions and small museums and large museums and there is a circulation of curators and ease from the point of view of logistics and support that in Portugal does not exist; in this sense, we are three times marginal: marginal geographically, marginal because we don't have money and marginal because the communication is very difficult.

A7: It is a negative stigma being Portuguese; this may sound very strange to you but it is true. Being Portuguese is negative regarding the [visual] arts. Nobody wants to know about Portugal; Portugal has zero geostrategic importance, zero at artistic level, zero at economic level, zero at curatorial level, so Portugal does not matter. Being Portuguese is a stigma for an artist.

A11, another artist with international presence, summed up his experience abroad by concluding that “in these things, usually, being Portuguese is a handicap” and added:

A11: we are a peripheral country; Portugal is not a *strong* country in terms of the image it projects, but this has to do with the market itself.

Replying to a question about the international circulation of Portuguese artists, or lack thereof, C6 in her answer mentioned also the poor and peripheral characteristics and added:

C6: it has to do with absence of official support, but maybe it is not this so much; there are issues of symbolic capital...if you are not French, English, German, American or Russian, you don't attract much interest in principle.

C1, replying to a similar question stated: "Portugal is a small and poor country and it cannot have more than 2-3 artists present in big international exhibitions; this distribution is a bit planned". A case in point regarding this last statement is the presence of two Portuguese artists, Joaquim Rodrigo (1912-1997) and Júlio Pomar (b. 1926) in the large survey-type exhibition that took place in 2016 in Munich, titled "Art between the Pacific and the Atlantic 1945-1965", and curated by the renowned curator Okwui Enwezor.

#### The small size of the art market

All interviewees are aware of the size and state of the local market and frequently used the word "small" to describe it. A gallerist, after acknowledging that Portuguese galleries generally lack adequate economic resources, gave the example of his gallery:

G1: A gallery like mine, with the work that it does, instead of having 2-3 people working, it should have 6-7, but it can't. The market here in Portugal doesn't work. The museums that used to buy are without money and the private banks ... all stopped buying, they went bankrupt.

Another gallerist at the beginning of his interview, on two occasions, described the local market as "short" and "narrow". To illustrate this further, he then added:

G2: The probability of making institutional sales here [in Portugal] are effectively very reduced. Now we have the EDP Foundation that could contribute somehow.... I continue to believe that the Portuguese market is essentially a private [collector's] market and it will continue to be.



Both auctioneers (L1 and L2) confirmed that the market is driven on the buy side by private collectors and their views almost coincided regarding the nature of the market, namely characterized by an almost total absence of institutional buyers and only sporadic acquisitions from foreign buyers. L1 even said that any kind of institutional acquisitions “will have some impact because they are practically zero”. His colleague, L2, after stating that institutional buyers amount to “zero” went a step further and offered his interpretation of this fact:

L2: We have been thinking a lot about why the institutional buyers never buy at auction...it is because there are no under the table payments. The price [at auction], everybody can see it and everybody knows it. If I were a buyer for an institution, I would only buy at auction [in order] to protect myself.

Regarding foreign buyers at auctions, L1 said that they exist but they don't have any significant presence, but when they buy, they buy quality works. L2 said that foreign buyers only buy very exceptionally and that “one of the problems of contemporary Portuguese art is that it is in fact an internal circuit”.

Artists are fully aware of the state of the local market and its lack of resources at all levels (gallery, collector, and institutional) as made evident by their comments.

A2 remarked that “I sell abroad many of my bigger works rather than in Portugal”; A4 explained that he went to an art school abroad because he was unhappy with the art school curriculum in Lisbon and also because “Lisbon is a small city and there weren't many exhibitions, there were few galleries, it was a small field”; A8 in an overall comment said “we don't have big collectors, in the sense that there aren't big patrons, there aren't any big museums, the whole artistic structure is enormously fragile” and further characterized the collections in Portugal as “incipient and fragile”; A12, a younger generation artist, offered a more balanced view:

A12: The market in Portugal is very interesting, is very developed, very sophisticated, there are great artists, galleries do a good job, maybe contrary to what many people think; it is important to take it abroad, because the market here doesn't have sufficient depth. The art world here and its organization is very sophisticated but there isn't economic sustainability for all this sophistication and this market lives a lot from exports, it is a market of exports basically.

A13, an artist with a 50-year career, after affirming that the best way to defend his work was by exporting it, concluded that “Portuguese galleries don’t have expensive art to sell...we are not part of the [international] art market; Madrid is also fooled, that is [also] a small art market”.

Curators, critics, and institutional agents, provided an insider's view when it comes to the Portuguese art world, especially regarding the institutional panorama. Questioning C1 about the consolidation of artistic careers, I received the following reply:

C1: To consolidate a career a decisive thing is also the existence of a strong national market and strong museological structure. Neither the market is strong here, nor the official structures of contemporary art are credible.

C2 said that “... our artists go abroad and if they are not known, it is not because of their work. They are not known because there haven’t been any big movements of support for the Portuguese artists to go abroad and internationalize themselves”.

Gallerists also praised the quality of the work of the Portuguese artists:

G4: The Portuguese artistic field is on the European map because our artists are very good. Even in comparison with other nationalities, I would say, that the percentage of good [Portuguese] artists is high.

G5: We have very good artists, but we are a country that complicates things...if you knew the bureaucracy that we have....

### The State policy for visual arts

The impression one gets from the participants' comments regarding the policy of the Portuguese State with respect to the visual arts, is that there isn't one. Recurrent themes among the interviews were the following:

- No State-owned permanent collection of contemporary art in Lisbon
- No permanent pavilion in the Venice Biennale

- Low or insufficient budgets for acquisitions and programming (and apparently security<sup>98</sup>) by cultural institutions
- No strategy regarding invitations to international museum directors and curators (e.g. to the members of the curatorial teams of the various biennials)

Regarding the absence of a State-owned museum exhibiting permanently and prominently (in Lisbon) the contemporary production of mainly Portuguese artists, I would like to provide a brief description of the institutional panorama through the lenses of ownership and contemporaneity of the exhibited art:

- The Berardo collection is a private collection of 20<sup>th</sup> century art (international and national in scope), housed in a public space (Cultural Center of Belem).
- The Gulbenkian collection belongs to a private foundation and exhibits a wide variety of artifacts, including antiquities, old master paintings, and Portuguese art of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- The EDP collection that is partly being presented in the recently inaugurated MAAT museum (October 2016) is also property of a foundation linked to a private company. Parts of its contemporary Portuguese art collection are gradually being exhibited, even though the scope of the museum, besides art, includes architecture and technology.
- The MNAC – the National Museum of Contemporary Art (Chiado) – is in fact state-owned but it is not a contemporary art museum per se. Its collection covers parts of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, but not the most recent and contemporary artistic production. In addition, its size is rather limited and its configuration perhaps inadequate for certain types of contemporary art (e.g. installations).

All the institutions mentioned above, besides exhibiting works from their permanent collections, also have programs of temporary exhibitions that exhibit both national and sometimes international artists. If one considers the institutional panorama at the national level, then we must add the Serralves Museum in Oporto to the list above, which is the result of a public-private partnership. This institution however, also lacks the necessary space to adequately exhibit its permanent collection composed of works of both Portuguese and international artists. The museum's space

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<sup>98</sup> It was reported in the press that the National Museum of Ancient Art (MNAA) had to close some of its wings due to lack of sufficient security staff (Source: <http://visao.sapo.pt/actualidade/sociedade/2017-07-07-Museu-Nacional-de-Arte-Antiga-Em-30-anos-perdeu-metade-dos-seus-vigilantes>; accessed September 29, 2017)

does not allow for simultaneous exhibitions of its permanent collection – which is extensive regarding the work of Portuguese artists - and temporary exhibitions of larger scale, a situation that can only be improved by expanding the museum.

A3 elaborated on the issues commented above:

A3: Museum exhibitions are important because of the presence [of the artist] in the cultural field; in fact, museums have this role, or should have this role. It is very important to have spaces where the works can be seen and that is a problem we have in Portugal; there are no museums where you can go and see Portuguese contemporary art. [...] The works [of Portuguese artists] exist, they are in the reserves, they are in storage. Today it is easier to see contemporary art in private museums or private collections – the Cachola collection in Elvas, the CAMB in Oeiras, or places like that – rather than in public or semi-public museums like the CCB [Cultural Center of Belem] or Serralves.

G4, acknowledges that in Lisbon there is no permanent collection of contemporary art, because it was never created:

G4: The State never had a policy of having a collection. There are things deposited here and there, but this consolidation wasn't made...there is no consistent cultural strategy in the country, independently of who the minister [of culture] is.

Fellow gallerist G5, identified as problems the lack of a permanent collection and the inability of exporting the exhibitions of Portuguese artists abroad:

G5: If we don't show what is ours, we won't be able to export. There must be an effort on the part of the institutions and the Ministry of Culture to export. The Ministry of Culture doesn't serve for anything; lots of paperwork, the institutions don't buy work from the galleries. There are [budget] cuts and then [appear] highways and more highways and bridges. There is money for everything, but there is also something called "there is no will". I sometimes refer to the Cachola collection...and sometimes they tell me: "there is no money". No, there is no will, there is no know-how.

C1 commented on the lack of museum of contemporary art in Lisbon and why it is important to have one:

C1: In Lisbon there isn't a museum that presents the continuity of Portuguese production, or the Portuguese production in relation to the international one. The existing museums, like Chiado [MNAC], the Gulbenkian, and the Berardo [Collection] are constantly installing and de-installing their collections and don't create a sedimentation of knowledge and prominence that would occur if we had a permanent collection that included the [works of the] most outstanding [artistic] figures.

C2 also characterized as a serious failure the lack of (permanent) collections featuring the work of Portuguese artists:

C2: It is very important that institutions have their own collections of what was made in the country, this is indispensable and I think it is a serious failure in Portugal. We are not well represented, either because collections had acquisition problems, or internal organization problems. I think it is very important to put together good collections, the country to have good collections and a good representation of the work of its artists.

With respect to the absence of a permanent pavilion in Venice, this is a fact that some interviewees chose to highlight. A3 believes that having a permanent pavilion in Venice is fundamental "for avoiding each time things being done on the 11<sup>th</sup> hour", an opinion shared by curator C5 who believes that "looking always for [a suitable] space is a problem". C5 also said that "Portugal had the possibility of having a permanent space, but that was not the decision of a former Secretary of State for Culture and in my opinion, it was wrong". A3 also pointed to the fact that the Ministry of Culture does not make the necessary funding available to the participating artists: "I know of cases [of artists] who have to finance [their presence] with their own money because the State doesn't". A11 argues that "it is a pity that Portugal doesn't have its own pavilion, [because] that would change completely the image of Portuguese art". C3 believes that being present in the Venice Biennale is "a fundamental vector of the policy of national representations abroad, not only for contemporary art, but also for architecture".

As far as acquisition budgets go, it has become evident that overall, they are considered by many participants as nonexistent or insufficient. G2 described the acquisition budgets of Portuguese institutions as “very, very, low”, an opinion shared by C3 who said that:

C3: you have to understand that the Portuguese context buys little; the institutions don't buy, or almost don't buy.

L2 when referring to artworks that usually are destined for institutions, like installations, concluded:

L2: Who will buy an installation? Either an institution or a big collector. In Portugal, the institutions are dead, they want to sell, they don't want to buy anything. The big collectors, there may be one or two, but with one or two, you can't do anything.

His colleague L1, looking at the issue more broadly, stated: “What we have here [in Portugal] are budgets for culture that are extremely reduced, or almost inexistent”.

Regarding the programming, there exists the perception that Portuguese artists are not shown as much as they should and that the institutions are not able to export or co-produce exhibitions for an international circulation. Logically, if there are no funds, or even limited funds available, the possibilities for large-scale retrospectives even of Portuguese artists are reduced, let alone importing or co-producing an international exhibition by a major international artist. On the other hand, the criticism that Portuguese art is not exported, or better said not seen circulating in foreign institutions, needs some clarifications. Exporting any good, cannot be done by decree, or as C3 said museums don't have “a magic stick ... to spread Portuguese artists around the world”; i.e. there must be another party that is willing to import. C6 referred to the reply she got some years ago from a director of an important exhibition space in a European capital when she proposed to him to do an exhibition of an established Portuguese artist: “the financing that I get depends on the ticket sales that I make; I can't risk putting here an artist that no one knows and have almost zero ticket sales, I can't”.

The cultural policy of the State, to a certain degree, should be looked at from the standpoint of each category of participants. Overall, it is to be expected that all the art world actors, and especially everyone involved in the art market - probably the dominant part of the art world - would like to see more State funds dedicated to the visual arts sector:

- a) An increase in the acquisition budgets of public institutions would benefit gallerists and artists (economically and also in terms of visibility and legitimation) in the first place that manage to sell to institutions. It is also possible that auctions could be a source of some works if these are judged to be of museum quality and importance. Institution directors and curators would also benefit by having an opportunity to purchase works that they deem necessary for their collections and accordingly create new exhibitions to showcase them. Increased budgets in private institutions would yield similar results.
- b) An increase in programming budgets, would allow the institutions to organize more ambitious and larger exhibitions and be able to co-produce exhibitions with foreign institutions. This would result in visibility and legitimation for the participating artists, an opportunity for promotion by their galleries, and the chance of local directors and curators to showcase their work abroad. If some exhibitions are co-produced and circulate internationally, then the target of “exporting” Portuguese art, or exhibitions originating in Portugal, would be achieved to some degree.

Portuguese institutions: Acquisitions and integration into the international panorama

C3 believes that there is a certain “vagueness of the museological system” citing as examples developments at the National Museum of Contemporary Art (MNAC – Museu do Chiado), Serralves and Gulbenkian. C5, a programmer in charge of a cultural institution, first observed that “the whole terminology in Portugal is a bit odd” and elaborated as follows:

C5: The Cultural Center of Belem (CCB) was converted in a museum, but it is a private museum in a public space; the Modern Art Center of the Gulbenkian, is in fact s museum, but it is a museum that lacks the conditions of exhibition of its permanent collection; the only museum as such is Serralves, and even that one with difficulties in articulating between the [permanent] collection and the temporary [exhibition] zone, but it is the only one that has this nomenclature since its origin.

Regarding the policy of acquisitions, C5 acknowledged the existence of insufficient budgets, or total absence of them, but he noted that acquisitions is a worry for him and his colleagues and that the boards of the various institutions need to be convinced that “acquiring is not spending money, it is investing in workable assets for the institution”. Furthermore, in his case, acquisitions “could

pay more attention to Portuguese artists because the Portuguese artistic fabric is fragile and needs acquisitions". He also pinpointed that in Portugal "cultural mediation is not systematically worked upon" and that:

C5: There are no policies of inviting international curators to visit Portugal; the State does not invest in such a simple thing as looking into hosting the congress of IKT (International Association of Curators of Contemporary Art), or the meeting of AICA International (International Association of Art Critics) or of the ICOM (International Council of Museums), so that critical mass circulates here.

C6, a curator for an institution, when asked about the acquisition strategy of her institution, confirmed that "most of the institutions had this problem [stopped buying], but we never stopped buying... and in the last 2-3 years we even increased more [the acquisitions budget], contrary to the general crisis". After commenting on the importance of the exhibition catalog, especially one edited for a retrospective exhibition of an artist that also incorporates critical texts on the artist's work, added that "it is not always done, because there aren't always available funds to do it and I suspect that in the future there will be even less".

C7, a younger generation independent curator, mentioned the lack of influence of the national galleries at the international level and attributed this fact to "the fragile market that ends up contaminating and weakening the strength of the galleries' work". Regarding the institutional panorama, he said:

C7: We have few institutions. We don't have a network of medium-sized institutions that allows to satisfy the circulation needs of our artists. It is a big shortcoming that we have in Portugal, the fact that we don't have mid-sized institutions. We have large institutions, but we lack mid-sized ones, like the Kunsthalle that exist in the center of Europe. We don't have Kunsthalle and we should have. I am talking about structures that are oriented towards exhibitions of contemporary art and financed regionally or even locally, like a cultural center of the Upper Alentejo, or of the Algarve. We don't have a network of spaces and exhibition instruments that allow to satisfy the circulation needs of our artists after the circuit of large institutions has been exhausted.



A6 believes that “in Portugal we almost don't have any museums; in Spain every city has a museum”. A case in point, is also the lack of a museum in the Algarve region, something that for A3 is incomprehensible, “given the exposure the Algarve has”. As a solution he proposed “a cultural center that wouldn't need a lot of means and could exhibit works of existing collections, from the Gulbenkian, Serralves, or other kind of collections”.

Regarding the level of connection or articulation of Portuguese institutions with their international counterparts, some participants highlighted the fact that exhibitions produced in Portugal, which feature almost exclusively Portuguese artists, do not circulate internationally. A recent very notable exception to this perception has been the Helena Almeida retrospective exhibition that was co-produced by the Serralves, the Jeu de Paume in Paris, the Wiels Contemporary Art Center in Brussels and the IVAM of Valencia with the exhibitions taking place in all four institutions sequentially, starting in Serralves in October 2015 and ending in IVAM in June 2017. For instance, C1 advocates that “the efficacy of these [Portuguese] institutions is practically zero in international terms because they never managed to consolidate in a situation of effective prestige of the institutions”. Furthermore, he acknowledged that “the museum that is most related with the exterior is Serralves, but practically hasn't managed to place its exhibitions abroad, or has to a very low degree”. For example, the large retrospective exhibition organized by Serralves showing 40 years of Julião Sarmento's work that took place between November 2012 and March 2013 was not shown outside Portugal even though the artist has been exhibiting internationally with a lot of success both in galleries and important institutions, first in Europe since the late 1970's and in the US since the 1990's and is without a doubt one of the better-known Portuguese artists abroad.

G1 believes that “museums should stop constantly importing foreign art and try to export something by the Portuguese artists by sponsoring their exhibitions abroad”. G3 offered his opinion on the subject:

G3: I started to understand that there is a series of exhibitions that circulate throughout Europe and that creating exhibitions becomes more accessible to whom collaborates with them [foreign institutions], the costs are shared, the [Portuguese] exhibition space enters in the circuit and I think that lacking this is a huge gap. An exhibition of a heavy weight artist logically has insurance costs and loan issues that are huge and maybe we can't do it, but there are other exhibitions that we could do; one should be informed, one should be in the

circuit. I think that Serralves and the others live on the margin. These institutions have a huge responsibility to affirm the presence of Portuguese artists abroad through these negotiations, these dialogues: 'I receive this, but you should take that'. This is an enormous gap.

Regarding the invitation to foreign curators to visit Portugal and get to know its artistic production, A3 said that "institutions should have the capacity when they make an important exhibition to invite foreign curators and collectors, other museum and institution directors to come and see the exhibitions in Portugal". Fellow artist A6 believes that:

A6: In the last 2-3 years there are many more curators and museum directors that come here, but we are very peripheral. Ten years ago, we had to make a great effort, we had to pay curators to come here...and even then, there existed some prejudice; people came to see, but there weren't any big developments. I don't know how many curators came to Portugal at the invitation of the Gulbenkian and the Ministry of Culture, but what resulted from it wasn't much.

G4 confirmed that in the past foreign curators didn't visit Portugal much, but today the situation is different: "a lot of people that I know come; the Documenta curators have been here [in Portugal] for studio visits". Fellow gallerist G5, makes an important point in this respect, and clarifies that these curator visits happen not because of the State, but because of gallery efforts:

G5: For example, for the Venice Biennale and the Documenta, usually the countries invite the curators to visit the countries. Here, nobody invites anyone, it is a kind of isolation. Who is achieving to make this slowly disappear, it is not the State that should have a notion for culture or the ministers of culture, but the private sector: the gallerists with a huge effort.

Even though what the role of the State regarding its cultural policy is not one of the research objectives of this study, it becomes apparent from the opinions of the interviewees that they expect the State to have some sort of cultural policy in place. A3 believes that "the State has disappeared from the [arts] panorama" and praises the private sector for doing whatever it can in that regard, while C5 acknowledges that:

C5: There is really an enormous importance of the private sector in the construction of the [art] market, but this importance can never substitute the public [State] responsibility in relation to the conservation, preservation, study, and presentation of works of art.

A4 believes that “culture is little valued” in Portugal and that “in Portugal never existed a vision for the visual arts”. G1 attributes this to the small size of the country and to the “lack of culture of the so-called elite that prefers having the newest car model than a painting on the wall”. G3 believes that being poor is not a reason to stop things from being accomplished:

G3: You have to be creative and not lazy. I think that there is a lot of laziness in Portugal and lack of creativity also. They say there is no money; we are a poor country, but that shouldn't be a reason to impede doing many things.

A13 also linked the wealth of a country with its cultural policy:

A13: In rich countries there is [cultural policy], in poor countries there isn't. In rich countries like Germany, France, England, Holland, the galleries are influential and there is a strong State support; here there isn't. We are in a dramatic situation regarding support in these things. [...] Art is not for poor countries, art is for rich countries.

### **RQ1: The artist and the gallery system**

As we have seen in the Literature Review Chapter, the relationship between the artist and the gallery is a strong one, having its roots in Paris during the period of Impressionism, i.e. the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Paul Durand-Ruel - the most important dealer of impressionism - played a central role as promoter and seller of artwork, was a source of financing for the artists, and disseminator of impressionism abroad. RQ1 examines precisely this relationship: how the artist-gallery relationship currently impacts the career of the visual artist.

To this effect, the interested parties, namely artists and primary market gallerists, were interviewed and my analysis is mostly based on their experiences and evaluations, even though, curators and auctioneers also responded on related questions. In the first place, we need to understand how this relationship starts, and second, to identify the functions a gallery performs when representing an artist.

The criteria gallerists use for selecting artists

These relationships are almost exclusively initiated by the gallery owners/directors, i.e. they invite artists to join their gallery whose work they perceive as relevant to their programming; hence, I began by asking them about their criteria for inviting an artist to work with them by integrating the gallery's program.

According to G1, whose gallery is constantly being visited by aspiring young artists who wish to develop an artistic career, "it is always very important - besides looking at the work, because you can never guess how it will evolve in the future – [to understand] their attitude towards the world". Similarly, G3, a gallerist who is mostly working with artists that are at the beginning of their careers, in answering the question about what he must see in the work of an artist to become sufficiently interested in it, elaborated as follows:

G3: It is a language that resists to my view, that poses questions. I reject something that is presented to me in a masticated form, or if it is in some way very commercial. There is always this image of the gallery - because it is a commercial space - that the dollar sign guides all choices. In my case it never is; it is the way that I work.

G2, a gallerist who works with Portuguese and international artists, explains that the determining criterion for the choice of artists is his taste:

G2: I never choose an artist whose work doesn't interest me personally. I never choose exclusively guided by what I think the market potential may be. In most cases, I need to feel that there is some market potential, but not always. I have made choices, in which from the start I recognized that the probabilities of the artist having a strong market penetration are low...; regarding young Portuguese artists, I am more flexible in this sense. I never wanted to be a gallery of established Portuguese artists; that never interested me, and in that sense, I always assumed more risk. I was never worried about choosing Portuguese artists that were established, or that had wide curatorial support, or [large] market in Portugal, that was never my vision. I always thought that the Portuguese market is a relatively small market and that when an artist is established in the Portuguese market, is either near the exhaustion of his market, or already has exhausted his market. That means

that, either he moves to the international level [market], or that the gallerist working with him will have many problems satisfying his [the artist's] needs.

This rather extensive answer from G2, beyond offering some insight on the criterion of choice, namely that the choice is guided by personal preferences and taste, introduces two other important elements: first, the risk-taking behavior of a gallerist who works with young/emerging artists, and second, the relation between market potential and internationalization of artistic careers. However, the answer provided by G2, can be interpreted as follows: his gallery doesn't represent established Portuguese artists, precisely because they already reached, or are near, the point of exhaustion of their market, and that means that perhaps the market potential criterion carries more weight during the process of choice than one is led initially to believe. Regarding the risk-taking behavior, G3 also considers his job as "very entrepreneurial in the sense of revealing, of taking risks...". When gallerists work with younger artists - who, by definition, lack an established market for their work and to continue to work as artists they need to survive in the marketplace, which is accomplished by selling work - the risk that is assumed by them in this respect is related to whether they can develop and sustain a market for the work of these artists.

G4, outlined the selection process in the following way:

Usually the most efficient way is when an artist who works with us recommends [to us] another artist, and this makes sense, doesn't it? Because this artist knows us, knows the [gallery] program well, knows the type of things the gallerist likes, and understands if it makes sense for the group or not. This is the most efficient way. The uncommon way is to receive a portfolio...and I had artists whose portfolio I received via email, I did an interview and started working with them. Then, obviously, a person is alert, participates in fairs, has relations with other galleries, but the most efficient way is recommendation by artists.

Even though the answer provided by G4 is not as explicit regarding the criteria of selection, we can deduce that the recommendations made by the other artists of the gallery regarding possible entries into the program, reflect the taste and/or the strategy of the gallerist. What is also pertinent in this reply is the existence of possible sources of finding artists to enter the gallery program, namely: other artists, art fairs and artists taking the initiative to approach galleries instead of the other way around, by submitting their portfolios. Artists recommending artists, can be an

expression of camaraderie, an example of artists' networking and use of their social capital, i.e. trying to promote and/or help colleagues finding initial gallery representation, or changing their gallery representation, and to some extent illustrate the influence of the artist in the marketplace. The impact of art fairs is the focus of RQ2.2, but now we are provided with a first glimpse of their wider importance in the art world, that goes beyond their often-discussed role as merely a place of transaction between galleries and art buyers, or a cultural/social event. Artists approaching galleries and submitting their portfolios for appreciation, is a practice that was more common in the past; today many galleries, especially in cities that are considered as art market hubs or centers, like New York, London, or Berlin, often in their websites state that they do not wish to receive artists' portfolios<sup>99</sup>. The fact that some artists, apparently few and rather at the beginning of their careers, may choose to do this, clearly demonstrates the importance they attribute to having gallery representation.

G5 is the gallerist who devoted more time in providing an elaborate answer to the selection criteria used for developing the gallery's program. Even though this gallery currently opts for not working with emerging artists, the owner explained the selection process for foreign artists:

G5: The first [criterion], is being interested in the work. If I have interest in the work, then I have to meet the artist to understand [him] a bit better and then I ask the question whether he wants to work with me or not. I explain who I am, that I am in Portugal, etc. This is the first approach; I like the work and then I have to understand the artist and I have to like the artist as well, because many times, I don't like the person, so it is not worth it [working with him] because we won't get along well. That was the more affective and emotional side; now let's see the more rational side, the side of logic. What is the side of logic? The artist's curriculum, the artist's age, where he exhibits; basically, for me today it is a basic criterion. Today, I am interested in the work, the person, but then I have to look into this situation: the country where he works, the galleries with which he works, the museum [exhibitions] he has done. Today, there is a much more rational side for selecting an artist and I think 20 times before I emotionally say, 'I like immensely this artist, I will work with him'; today, I don't do that. There is a question of strategy and the person ought to be more

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<sup>99</sup> For example, the Marian Goodman Gallery mentions on its website that "The gallery does not review unsolicited artists' submissions. Submissions sent to the gallery will not be returned". (Source: <http://www.mariangoodman.com/contact>; accessed: September 27, 2017)

rational. I have to weigh everything and think about what this artist will bring to the gallery. If he brings something long term, I am not interested.

This reply highlights three ingredients necessary for selecting an artist: the work itself, the artist's personality, and the fit of the artist into the overall gallery strategy by evaluating his contribution to it (short term, versus long term). This gallerist's opinion about the contribution of the artist to the gallery is linked to the market potential of the artist as the following excerpt demonstrates, when G5 described a recent experience with a young German artist:

G5: I talked to the director [of his gallery] and said: 'OK, you choose a Portuguese artist with the same age and we do a trade<sup>100</sup>'; like that [without the other gallery accepting a Portuguese artist], it doesn't work. On the other side, they think exactly like I do. If an artist suddenly starts to rise a lot commercially, most of the good [foreign] galleries are interested. If there is [still] work to be done, they are not interested, because it is very complicated. An art fair is a very expensive thing.... Often, there are many artists that are good, but don't stand a chance in entering the gallery [program], that is the conclusion I come to.

As it is to be expected, there is a close link between the gallery program and the strategy that the gallery owner has for his gallery. In G5's case, an artist whose career needs to be worked on, will not contribute in the short run to the gallery in financial terms. The gallery needs this cashflow to finance its running expenses and various activities, like, artists' production and promotion, art fair participation, etc. In a sense, an artist has to pull his own weight within the gallery program, and for this reason when there is "work to be done" a gallery may not be willing to commit resources now for a reward in the future that may not materialize or be less than expected.

#### Artists' criteria for accepting gallery collaboration invitations

Before considering the criteria that artists use for deciding upon gallery representation, i.e. what are the determining factors of accepting an invitation from a gallery - or in other cases how they decide when more than one invitations are on the table - the participant artists were asked whether

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<sup>100</sup> Trade in this case refers to the Portuguese gallery starts collaborating with the German artist and for the foreign gallery to start collaborating with a Portuguese artist already represented by the Portuguese gallery.

galleries are the most important partners for providing them with access to the art market. In most cases artists confirmed that their galleries, or the gallery system more broadly, is the most important partner for an artist to have access to the art market, that is, sell work.

For instance, for a group of artists their relationship with their galleries is of paramount importance because they admit that they lack the necessary skills for making sales, prefer to avoid receiving collectors in their studios, hate dealing with bureaucracies (e.g. logistics and transportation), prefer to dedicate all their time to their artistic work in their studios.

A1 described his expectations regarding his exclusive<sup>101</sup> relationship with a gallery as follows:

A1: I expect that the gallery, in the first place, is capable of selling my work, that is, it either already has clients, or is looking for them, so that it isn't my concern. I don't have to look for people to buy my work. Another thing is, taking care of some bureaucratic aspects and disseminating the work to other places. It is a thing that all of us hope for, but at times it is difficult to do either because they have many artists or because of lack of capital. What one is looking for is divulgation, commercialization of work, and its regular exhibition.

A3, is against a relationship of exclusivity between an artist and a gallery and chooses to be a "free-lancer" in this aspect, i.e. "having privileged relationships with some galleries, working with some galleries, but without being [exclusively] linked to one". He thinks that in Portugal this is difficult to be done because "Portuguese galleries lack the financial capacity and influence to solve the problems inherent in an artist's career".

A4, an artist represented both by a gallery in Portugal and by another gallery in a European capital, replied as follows:

A4: For me [the gallery] is the preferred method because I lack the patience to deal with collectors, I don't want to deal with money, I am not interested in that. The gallery, in this sense, is the best way because it really goes after collectors, gives visibility and deals with a bureaucratic part that I am not interested in; I don't want to waste my time. The world is

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<sup>101</sup> Exclusive meaning that the artist only sells work through his gallery or galleries representing him.



constructed in this way: the economic system around the power structures is in favor of the galleries.

A4 also provided important insight regarding his gallery selection criteria when at a time received various collaboration proposals from Portuguese galleries:

A4: The criteria are simple; a person has a certain profile and galleries have certain profiles and then the person should think what the potential of the gallery is in terms of growth, how they can support an artist and how they will respond to the artist's needs. In my case, gallery X [names the gallery] could guarantee more stability and capacity of growth. All other galleries seemed to me insufficient; they lacked this capacity, but maybe for a younger artist they would be better because they could give them more visibility, but that wasn't the thing that I was after.

Here we witness the importance of profile matching between artist and gallery that may be interpreted in two ways: one is the profile of the gallery owner/director in terms of personality and the other is the profile of the gallery or its programming/strategy. The two are of course related since the programming/strategy of the gallery is based on the owner's taste and business strategy. However, A4 evaluated the strength of the gallery and its adequacy to his needs (himself being a mid-career artist), hence linking the career stage of the artist to the profile of the gallery.

A5 is a mid-career artist with an international career, represented both by a Portuguese gallery and galleries abroad, who affirmed that "I don't have any skills for selling things or for dealing with these things directly; it is very good to deal with galleries that do their job and that is to approach clients and sell the work". A bit later he reiterated his views:

A5: I couldn't survive without galleries because the economic question is always [treated] through the gallery and I don't have selling skills to approach collectors and I don't have patience for this. I prefer to be in my studio working and to delegate to other people that are gallerists.

Clearly for artists who admit that they lack any marketing skills, having an agent for commercializing their work is a necessity. The same artist replied to the follow-up question regarding the notion of being represented by a gallery as follows:

A5: I understand it as something wide-ranging: from showing the work in the gallery, namely solo and collective exhibitions, as well as, establishing relations with the various actors in this process. Firstly, in the case of galleries, with collectors and then at other levels the gallery has a role that is not limited to that; this includes other agents, such as, museums, museum directors, curators and the public, as well as dissemination of the work to newspapers, the media, art criticism. It is not exclusively the gallerist's task, but I think that the galleries' work includes dissemination in all the breadth of that term.

A6 is another mid-career artist represented by galleries both in Portugal and internationally who opted to collaborate with one of her international galleries because of the quality of its program. Regarding her relationship with another foreign gallery, she underlined the personality of the gallerist:

A6: She is an extremely intelligent person and completely involved; the gallery for her is a project, the steps she takes are not for making money, it is to place the artists in the best possible situation. She is a very dedicated person that is always alert, always going to conferences, always learning and that differentiates this gallery from the very commercial gallery type. It is a very successful gallery, but it is a gallery that has a project that interests me a lot as an artist; that for me is more important than selling a lot. If I had to choose between a gallery that sells more than mine, but doesn't have the same interest, I would [still] choose my gallery.

Here again we see that some artists, like some gallerists, do not make decisions based primarily on economic terms or economic potential, but use rather more "qualitative" criteria, such as personality and gallery programming. Subsequently, A6 replied to the question about how she sees the representation function: "It is a support; it is having someone who understands my work...where the best places for me to work are, the projects I should accept...they help me think a bit on my career, because I think in my work". In this case, we see the nature of the artist-gallery relationship taking a different turn; the gallerist is allowed by the artist to assume the role of advisor or even of co-manager of the artist's career. This new facet in the relationship was explored further with the following question-answer sequence:

LP: Would you say that you delegate this *career management* role to the gallery?

A6: I cannot say that I delegate; they support me and I trust them, that is, I trust the proposals that come from the galleries. When they say to me that “you can sell this piece” or “you should accept this project” or not, I trust that they are doing it not out of monetary interest, but because they are seriously thinking about how it is best for me to develop my work in the best possible way and the most interesting way.

A3, who as we have seen earlier prefers to be a free-lancer and not exclusively linked to a gallery, also used the notion of management of the artist's career jointly with a gallery:

A3: I think that galleries ideally could have a role in collaboration with the artist in managing the artist's career. This, I think, if it worked that way, could benefit the artist working in exclusivity with the gallery. I think that there is no gallery in Portugal that could fully fulfill this desideratum and that is why I think that in Portugal it doesn't make any sense to be attached to a single gallery and have exclusivity with one gallery.

When asked about how he views the notion of career management, he elaborated:

A3: I am talking in the field of the ideal; a gallery should create the material conditions for the artist to do his work with the least of worries, function as a facilitator...I think that the gallery should have this capacity to allow the artist to be focused on his work and solve most of the possible problems around it; keep a record of his work, make contacts with other galleries outside Portugal, organize contacts with collectors, concern itself with placing the work in good collections, do this kind of work.

Comparing the comments of A3 and A6 regarding the concept of career management, we observe that for A6 it functions more at an advisory or strategic level, whereas in the case of A3, it is rather linked to more practical issues, with the word facilitator describing the role of the gallery as a go-between and link-maker between artist and other (international) galleries and collectors. This difference of perspectives can be attributed to two factors: career stage and internationalization of career. A3 is an established artist in Portugal, but without international gallery representation and A6 is a mid-career artist in Portugal, but with international gallery representation in two European capitals, hence their differences in perspective. A6 was talking about her experience with international galleries, while A3 explained what his desideratum is and why it cannot be fulfilled in Portugal; because as he argued before, the Portuguese gallery system lacks financial resources.

This further explains why A6 works exclusively with galleries that commercialize her work, covering different geographic zones, and why A3 is against exclusivity in the Portuguese context.

A7 is a consecrated artist in Portugal with international career and multiple foreign gallery representations. When asked whether galleries are the most important partners for market access he replied that it all depends on the context and the power of the gallery in question and illustrated this using the following example:

A7: If you are an artist of the David Zwirner gallery or the Marian Goodman gallery, then you don't need anything else, it is all done. But if you are an artist of a gallery, like Bortolami, then you need other things; you need a privileged relation with a certain critic, a certain curator, a certain group of collectors, so it depends on the power of each gallery in the context that is in. If you have a great gallery, but let's assume it is in Italy, it is not New York, the context is completely different. It [Italian gallery] has power in its local area, while Goodman and Zwirner have global [power].

It is evident that a powerful (i.e. influential) gallery at the international level – and here the power consists of economic power, as well as connections and potential influence of the gallery on other art world actors, such as critics, curators and collectors – can be more impactful on the development of an artistic career than a gallery with power in a restricted context. However, A7 cautions that an artist should not be dependent on one gallery: "...being in the hands of just one person [gallerist] is dangerous; I wouldn't do that. But you don't need 20 galleries or 10, you need 2 or 3". Regarding his selection criteria, he favors quality of programming over sales potential and reveals that "I had a lot of proposals from galleries who wanted to work with me, powerful galleries, but whose program I didn't respect and said no". In his view, for a gallery to represent its artists well it must:

... know profoundly the work of the artist, frequent his studio and know what problems the artist has, what interests him or not, make sure that he is constantly represented at various points, because today what matters are not [gallery] exhibitions but art fairs, as everybody knows. (...) Then it needs to have excellent relations with museums so that the artists could be well represented in them, etc. [A7]

Here we have further evidence that artists give great importance to their art fair presence – something that is only made possible by the galleries representing them – and relations with other art world actors, in this case museums. The impact of participating in art fairs and the importance of connecting, interacting and networking with other art world actors such as curators are dealt with in RQ2.2 and RQ3 respectively, but we should keep in mind that these criteria are always present on the minds of artists when they make choices about their gallery representations.

We also note that A7 considers the in-depth knowledge of the artist's work and frequent studio visits as necessary ingredients for good representation. G4 elaborated on this aspect of the artist-gallery relation:

G4: For me, the work of the gallerist must be of proximity to the artist, otherwise in my view it doesn't make any sense, but there are gallerists who are not like that; they do the exhibitions, but they don't have a close relationship with the artists. I do, and if it is not that way, for me it doesn't make sense because the more time I spend with them, the more I visit their studios, the better I understand their work, so I think that we work together...each one in his functions helping in what each one is better at.

G5 did not use the words “work together” about the nature of the relationship between artist and gallerist but expressed her view as follows: “I think that a gallerist and an artist today...there is a complicity: they complete and complement each other”.

These gallerists' views point towards the concept of managing an artist's career, although a better term would be co-managing, since all the terms used by them (work together, complete, complement) demonstrate a joint effort towards a common goal. For this partnership - and I'm not suggesting that it is on equal terms, despite the customary 50%-50% split between artist and gallery of the artworks' selling price - to function and bear fruits, it must be based on mutual trust and have the functions of each partner as clearly defined as possible. Traditionally, the artist was responsible for the production of art and the gallery responsible for its the promotion and sale.

A8 is another established artist with almost 40 years of career and multiple foreign gallery representations who thinks that the art market is organized around galleries and art fairs and explained the importance of a gallerist understanding the work of the artist:

A8: Above all, what the gallery needs to do is understand my work, understand what is behind these works, then show it and give it adequate visibility. Sales are the result of that.

What is implicit here is that a gallery must understand the work of an artist in order to sell it, which is not something straightforward when it comes to art due to its non-utilitarian character and the lack of objective criteria for its evaluation. A8 also admitted that he delegates all the commercialization of his work to the galleries because he wants to be “spared of receiving clients”. In his view, a good gallerist:

A8: works on the work of the artist 24 hours a day, or on the 10-15 artists he represents; it a person who always works around that. There are other gallerists that are not interesting; those that have a franchise of big names.

A10, an artist with a long career and representation abroad, but who no longer privileges exclusive representation agreements in Portugal, also views the interest of the gallery in the work of the artist as fundamental, but cautions that:

A10: [The gallery] system is not the only system; there are artists that don't work within the gallery system and make sales at their studio. In the normal system of the arts there is that triad: institutions, galleries, ... actually [there are] four: institutions that are museums, galleries, curators and artists.

At the same time, A10 explained that some artists sell to collectors directly from their studio, when collectors try to circumvent the gallery and approach the artist directly hoping this way to achieve a lower price than the gallery price:

A10: Artists who did that, hurt [themselves] because galleries stopped being interested in their work. The galleries stopped selling because there was another place where [art] was sold cheaper. I always wanted to have my freedom and do my projects and eventually make a sale, but I always respected [the gallery price] and it was a condition that I always imposed on people who appear here [in the studio] and I have lost buyers because of it, but I would have lost more if I didn't respect the law of the market and it is in my interest when I work with a gallery for it to understand that I am not competing with them [...] I don't want to transform my studio into a shop, because I am here to work...and I have various diversified points of sale that allow me to try and sell more regularly.

This phenomenon of art buyers or collectors trying to circumvent the gallery representing an artist hoping to obtain a lower price than the gallery price was also commented by G1:

G1: Some opportunists appear in the market who like art, visit galleries, know how much the works cost and then call the artist and offer him half [of the gallery price]. This is a phenomenon that exists in Portugal because these people are trying to put together collections, trying to obtain social status, promote themselves socially....

These two excerpts bring to the surface two issues. First, the nature of the relation of the artist with the gallery system, that demonstrates that artists are either part of the system - using relations that range from exclusive representation to having multiple points of sale and collaborating with them in an ad-hoc way - or not part of the system, which leads to the question about how these artists survive in the market without being in the gallery system. The second issue regards the practices of collectors within the Portuguese context (and probably elsewhere), an issue that merits further study, but one that is beyond the scope of the present research. It should be added that artists, like A11, condemn this attitude adopted by some collectors and characterize it as “immoral”.

When other artists were asked about their gallery selection criteria, for instance A9, said that the desired elements that need to be present are three:

A9: First, the gallerist being a good person, that is a person you can trust; honesty and sincerity are important, because everything has happened to me: I was cheated, robbed, everything. Second, he must have money...and then the [gallery exhibition] space must be good.

Likewise, A11, also in his answer highlights the quality of the gallery's exhibition space, even though he attributes greater importance to the personality of the gallerist:

A11: Professionalism is very important; the English use the word *commitment*. A person that is clearly committed and involved in what they are doing and passionate about what they are doing.... What is common in all the galleries that I enjoyed working with, is great frankness, even a feeling of a certain parity, that is, the galleries understand the importance that quality has in my work, the level of rigorousness that I have when I work, when I exhibit, in everything that I do, and if the galleries value that, it's fantastic; if not, the relationship doesn't work because we are in different universes.

The quality of the gallery's exhibition space is a legitimate concern for artists, and especially for those whose work is mainly sculptural, or at least, sculpture is one of the media that they use. The integrity and commitment of the gallerist are among the most desired characteristics in the personality of a gallerist, especially if we consider that in the art market the relationships are mostly governed by gentleman's agreements rather than written contracts.

A13, an artist whose career spans 50 years in Portugal and 40 at the international level, explained his relations with galleries:

A13: When I started out, I had, let's say, the luck to work with some galleries in Portugal and abroad and one of the things that I learned at the beginning is that the artist's role is not to sell; the role of the artist is to produce his work and put it in circulation through the professionals [galleries] and something that an artist should never do, is cheat in this game. That is, to have an exhibition in a gallery and say to people: "in my home I can sell for half the price", because what I was taught is that a work of art should be sold in the market, like shares are sold in the market where they must be sold: the stock exchange, the bank, etc. This is a rule I always followed and 99% of my work was put in circulation through galleries.

Furthermore, despite A13's long career and experience in the art world and the art market, he considers that an artist can survive without gallery relations with great difficulty. Reflecting upon his personal situation, he explained:

A13: I don't have any selling skills, that is not my role, it bothers me. I work with galleries and these people are busy with that [selling work]. People must respect this work [of the gallerists], because a gallery invests in the artists, exhibits in art fairs and all that, and if an artist disrespects that....

A12 and A14 were the two youngest artists interviewed, both were born in the 1980's and their careers span about 10 years. In both cases, their early steps in the art world were made by organizing and participating in group exhibitions with their colleagues and art school classmates, driven by their willingness to exhibit their work. They used this alternative circuit (alternative vis-



à-vis the gallery circuit) to promote themselves by showing their work, as did generations of artists before them, both in Portugal and abroad<sup>102</sup>:

A12: Of course, when a person has the willingness to exhibit, finds places, motivates himself. We did [exhibitions] in abandoned warehouses, in a deserted shop downtown...in various places. [...] At the time, our main desire was to show the work we had and we wanted to show it together and the things worked out well at a personal level and at the level of artistic work.

A14: It all started in the art school when I met a group of people, my current friends. There was mutual follow-up and we were experiencing boredom at school and we wanted to start doing exhibitions and find a place to put them into action. So, we started during our second year at art school to organize our exhibition.... From then onwards, we were always looking for spaces and projects to involve ourselves.... We were motivated by our willingness to do things and we didn't subject ourselves just to what we learned [at school].

Both artists have been shortlisted for the *EDP Prize for Young Artists*<sup>103</sup> and currently are represented by galleries, and in the case of A14 by a foreign gallery as well. Regarding their relationships with their galleries, A12 expects his work to be shown at fairs and by providing his gallery with quality work, his work will be “shown and above all sold, because it is one of the [gallery] functions and with x [his gallerist] this aspect works well, there exist regular sales”. He also admits that when he receives emails through his website from people that are interested in his work he directs them to the gallery:

A12: Since I am paying 50% of what I am making, I delegate. Of course, this delegating is delegating in a certain way...I think that no artist today is disconnected from the commercial part and from making contacts. The artists, even if the gallery is very good and even if it sells well, I think are always doing a part of the work of the gallery; commercial work and promotion.

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<sup>102</sup> Artists organized the *Salon des Indépendants* in Paris in 1884, even though the independence they were looking for was from the aesthetic style imposed by the academy of fine arts and promoted in its official salon exhibitions.

<sup>103</sup> EDP Prémio Novos Artistas: Art prize organized and sponsored every 2 years by the EDP energy company destined for new/young artists. Its recent editions have attracted approximately 700 candidatures from artists and the shortlist usually is made up of 6-9 artists. The shortlisted artists receive some funds for production and all participate in a curated exhibition resulting in one participant being chosen as a winner by a jury and receiving a prize of €20.000.

A14, expects that the gallery doesn't limit its action on commercialization only, but it becomes "a means through which more people can get to know my work, to disseminate it". Furthermore, she replied to the question about whether the gallery is the most important partner for an artist's work to achieve more visibility, in the following way:

A14: I think it is just a part. If the other system doesn't function well, galleries don't serve for anything. The other system, that is, curators, artists, ... if there isn't a good flow among them, I think that the gallerist cannot do much. The artist can't be expecting the gallerist only to do that part. I think that the gallerist is important, it is a part, but it is not just that.

A follow up question about whether an artist can survive without a gallery, that is the artist becoming his own commercial agent, was asked and A14 replied as follows:

A14: It is a bit ungrateful for the artist to have to do this part. In my generation, I don't know of any artist who is his own dealer at the same time; I think that is really complicated. I couldn't do it, if I didn't have this intermediary [gallery] I think it would be a problem to sell my work. Maybe there are artists that do it and do it well.

When I asked the artist to further elaborate on this point, she said:

A14: I think it can interfere with [my] work, however the artist must do this part somehow. I go nuts if I must think of values and I don't like to feel that side. It is important, I think, that the artist limits himself to the creative part of what he is doing.

Both artists of the younger generation acknowledge that the artist cannot expect the gallery to completely fulfill all functions, namely sales, promotion and dissemination of work and contacts with other actors in the art world like curators. Recognizing this fact is one thing; being able to do it to some degree is an entirely different thing, as the last answer from A14 clearly illustrates. As we have already seen, some artists openly admit to lacking market-related skills and/or patience to deal with these issues, therefore their galleries do so. On the other hand, even artists that have these skills don't put them into practice in a way that jeopardizes their gallery relations regarding the commercialization part because they want to remain integrated in the gallery system. At this point, however, a closer look at the gallery functions is necessary before proceeding to examining the next related topic that deals with the survival of the artist without gallery representation.

Gallery functions – viewed by gallerists

Art galleries are commercial, for profit, enterprises by nature. However, their role is not limited to just selling art to their clients. All gallerists interviewed for this project described how they see their role and what functions they perform - beyond the obvious one i.e. selling art – when they represent artists. In most cases, the interviewed gallerists have a strategy of internationalization of their artists, Portuguese and foreign alike, hence their efforts on being present at international art fairs and cultivating relations with institutions, curators and collectors, both in Portugal and abroad. Even though the role of art fairs and the internationalization of artistic careers are treated in RQ2.2 and RQ4 respectively, it is better if one bears that in mind when interpreting the answers given below regarding how they see their role as gallerists. For instance, in the reply given by G1 the focus is clearly on the internationalization function:

G1: The important is to promote; the galleries going to fairs, doing deals with other galleries, doing exchanges<sup>104</sup>, trying that foreign museums become interested in the art. This is truly the obligation of the gallerist. I am not talking about art dealers; I am talking about gallerists, because art dealing is a totally different thing. A gallerist is always the bad guy that smokes cigars and explores the artists. That is not true.

It is noteworthy that this gallerist sees as his obligation to promote his artists by engaging in the functions described, in contrast with other market agents like dealers who according to G1 have no such obligation. As we have seen in the Literature Review chapter, gallerists are representing artists, by engaging in a series of actions to promote their career, whereas a dealer is someone who doesn't represent artists and is only involved in buying and selling work. The gallerist is active in the primary market, and some - if not most - in the secondary market as well, while the dealer is active only in the secondary market. In this sense, the dealer doesn't feel obligated to promote the artist, only to trade in artworks.

G2 split his answer in two parts because he wanted to highlight the different expectations and needs artists have based on their career stage; in this case emerging artists in comparison to mid-career artists:

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<sup>104</sup> See footnote #100 for what is meant by exchange or trade in this context.

G2: Artists don't have the same needs and mainly don't have the same needs at the same time. Younger artists have one type of needs; evidently there are things that vary according to the personality of each one. There are artists that expect different things from galleries.

Regarding the emerging Portuguese artists, he sees the role of the gallery as fulfilling the expectations of the artist: "An emerging Portuguese artist expects from his Portuguese gallerist the generation of some sales and being able to support him in his art production; that is today a critical factor". He also mentions that these artists expect to be shown at international art fairs and that artists expect that "their gallerists keep their curricula and portfolios updated so that they can transmit that information to curators, work in close collaboration with museum directors, do [exhibition] proposals for museums".

With respect to mid-career artists, G2 underlines that they mostly expect from their gallerist the generation of sales that would enable them to achieve "a stable way of life":

G2: Evidently, if the gallery can cumulatively continue to develop some work on promotion and tries that this artist has exhibitions in museums, in international institutions, that would be the icing on the cake, but I think that no Portuguese artist really expects that at this life, or career, stage something extraordinary happens to him because of the action of his Portuguese gallerist. He is mainly hoping that his Portuguese gallerist provides him with a stable way of life.

From the views expressed above, we see that making sales is a top priority for a gallerist and that is also expected of him by his artists at all career stages. This is far from surprising; on one hand, a gallery is a for-profit entity, and on the other, an artist who cannot sell a minimum amount of work will inevitably face a survival problem and probably a career change if this occurs in the beginning or early stages of his career. Supporting the production of an artist's work is another critical function, especially for emerging artists who lack the financial resources to do so on their own, hence their dependence on the gallery (or on sponsors, patrons of the arts, or institutions for that matter). According to G2, this is especially pertinent for artists whose work is not executed by their own hand, but rather outsourced to craftspeople and specialized fabricators. Keeping the artists' curricula and portfolios updated is something that can be considered a rather bureaucratic task that artists prefer to delegate to their galleries because they view it as a waste of their time; their time could be better employed by making art, for instance. Working in collaboration with

museums and curators is an essential part of promoting artists and galleries try to fulfill this role, however with mixed results as it has become evident from the artists' replies. This gallerist recognizes that at the international level, promoting Portuguese artists is difficult and apparently has a low probability of success if in fact mid-career artists don't really expect something extraordinary to happen to them because of the action of their Portuguese gallerist. This can be interpreted in two ways: first, that something extraordinary is possible to happen, but Portuguese galleries are not able to do it due to lack of economic resources and international influence; second, something extraordinary is not possible to happen because it is too late; i.e. if an artist has reached a mid-career status without already having some international presence, is perceived as a sign that the internationalization window has closed.

Regarding the first interpretation, we have already seen that all interviewees and particularly gallerists admit that the local market size is small and that Portuguese galleries (and institutions) lack both resources and international influence. Regarding the second interpretation, some participants see a connection between age, career stage and success, while others don't. For instance, A10, whose internationalization happened rather later in his career acknowledged that he is "rather old for some circuits". G1, noted that when established artists are selected as the official national participants in the Venice Biennale, the event doesn't usually contribute much to their career in commercial terms. G5 thinks that for a 40-year-old plus artist it can be too late, but for a 32-35-year-old everything is (still) possible. On the other hand, G3 believes that talent is always recognized, sooner or later, using the example of Helena Almeida (b. 1934) and the international recognition her work is achieving lately<sup>105</sup>, despite that fact that she is 83 years old. Similarly, C4 believes that "artists can emerge at any point", and according to her emerging doesn't necessarily mean *young*.

Overall, G2 describes his relationship with the gallery's artists as professional:

G2: For some I feel more empathy and friendship than for others, with some I have more contacts, I am closer to them than to others, this is natural. There are a lot of artists, each one has his personality, I have mine; this is the least important. The most important is in fact a professional relationship where everybody feels, more or less, comfortable with it.

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<sup>105</sup> Refer also to RQ-Artworld for more details.

G3, who mostly represents young and emerging artists, says that revealing the work of an artist consists of “making exhibitions, showing it at art fairs and divulging it to critics, curators and collectors” and that this work is not spontaneous, but a result of a planned strategy by him. He closely follows the work of his artists and gives the following example:

G3: This artist that I am currently showing, it has been a work of 2 years; that is, I have been following the [evolution of the] work, discussing with her this and that and what didn't look right to me, but note: this is not like giving instructions ‘do this or that’. This dialog I think should exist between the gallerist and the artist in private.... I feel that today there is more professionalism on the part of artists, but still a lot of complacency [as well].

This attitude is in line with that of other gallerists (e.g. G4 who also follows closely the artists by making frequent studio visits, or using skype when necessary) and it is understandable, since young artists are expected to need more guidance than artists with more experience. Here we see once more the gallerist assuming the role of an advisor, something that is naturally easier to assume when the artist is at an early career stage. As the interview with G3 progressed, at some point he mentioned that “it is up to the gallerist as well to control things a bit” and I asked him to elaborate:

G3: It is not forcing the artist to produce at a fast pace; [one should] respect the moments of cocooning in the studio, which is a work of *investigation*. The market, at times, is harmful, especially if it is a work that is more commercial and attracts more [interest]. The more festive the work, the more public it draws. [...] If an artist is lured by the public, he must be careful; it is not about producing or painting everything pink because it is the color that sells.

This reply further highlights the role of advisor, or even mentor, a gallerist may assume in relation to the artist, especially with an artist that has little experience in the art world. This also shows that some gallerists are, or try to appear to be, protectors of the artist in detriment to their common market interests, since from a purely mercantile perspective, both the gallerist and the artist stand to gain economically by making available to the market what it demands (e.g. pink paintings, to use the example above).

G4, who likes to work closely with artists and considers that gallerist and artist work together, albeit each one with different functions, summarized her functions as a gallerist:

G4: I work with them so that what they do has more echo, more success – even though this success is not necessarily a result in sales – it is considering their needs, what they need that I can provide and then of course it is a daily work: have their works shown here [at the gallery], disseminate their work, show their work to fairs and obviously sell. [...] I am here to help them in what they need, in addition to basic things like: exhibit, produce, sell, show work at fairs.

This gallerist, like G3, opts for not highlighting the commercial aspect of the gallery, that is making sales, and focuses instead on her role as a facilitator of things and a supporter of the artists. She also made a distinction between the needs of experienced artists versus relatively young ones:

G4: A mid-career or established artist doesn't need help to put together a portfolio, doesn't need a publication, or another publication, whereas a relatively young artist doesn't have a single book that shows his work. A young artist normally has more necessity of studio visits, help with production....

Regardless of the career stage an artist is in, G4 considers that the main role of the gallery is to promote the work of artists to other agents, namely curators and institutions, and that “the gallery must do what it can for things to happen” even to help financially the production of the artist's work, because “museums frequently lack the necessary means”. This is an example of the gallery playing the role of facilitator and promoter for the artist. It facilitates things by assuming a part of the production costs and at the same time promotes the artist because that same artwork will be shown in an institutional context. Without the gallery financing part of the production of the artwork, the artist's participation in an institutional exhibition is uncertain or at least not at the level the artist deems appropriate for that exhibition space.

G4 acknowledges that among the daily functions a gallery performs, also exist bureaucratic issues to be dealt with; for instance: “when an artist will exhibit in a museum, normally the gallery helps, because there is paperwork, bureaucracy, transportation, insurance, dissemination...”. These are the kinds of tasks that some artists consider unproductive or a waste of their time and delegate them either to their galleries or their assistants (if they have any).

#### Gallery role – viewed by artists

So far, we have seen various types of relationships between artists and their galleries. Some artists privilege exclusive agreements between them and a gallery or various galleries in different geographic regions according to their international presence, while other artists collaborate with many galleries in an ad-hoc basis and see themselves as free-lancers. Given that there is the necessary interest in the artwork and a certain compatibility of character and personalities, we could so far attempt to classify the nature of these relationships across two dimensions:

- The career stage the artist is in: initial/emerging, mid-career, or established that determines the degree and type of support the artist needs and the gallery offers.
- The perception and attitude of the artist towards the gallerist: is the gallerist perceived as an advisor, mentor, or even peer, and in this capacity, performs his representation function, or just a business partner performing some functions, including the commercialization of the artist's production, which is crucial for his survival and his ability to continue to produce art?

Having these two dimensions in mind, we should also consider the cases when a gallery also assumes cultivating relationships with other art world actors because some artists, like A1 for instance, confess that they lack the skills or patience to do it themselves:

A1: It ought to be the gallery doing it because I won't. Besides, I don't like it, I feel out of place; from me, they [art buyers] won't buy anything, but the gallery must do it.

For these reasons, A1 considers that for an artist who is making high quality art in the first place, being part of a good gallery is essential for the artist's work to gain visibility:

A1: You should note that is very rare, if it has ever happened, artists having a retrospective or an anthological exhibition without being linked to a gallery. [...] Regarding the gallery, I don't know if this relationship is well thought, if the terms are the best...but it gives a guarantee. It is a specific public that goes there: curators, journalists, critics. It is from there that your work ends up in the institution; it is not from the institution to the gallery, it is the opposite.

This reply shows the gatekeeping function of the gallery as a guarantee of artistic quality and the "right" place to see art. It also demonstrates the role of the gallery in establishing and/or sustaining



institutional links. G5 also shares this opinion, namely that “contemporary art is first seen in galleries before it gets to the museums”.

Other artists, like A2, expect the gallery to be a business:

A2: I always worked well and understood that the best way to finance my work is by having a gallery that made it possible. Galleries are not charities, they won't pay [for] your work if they don't have a return. The gallery has an ever-increasing commercial role and that is what you should expect from a gallery.... The notion that I have of the galleries is that they should be a business. Galleries are important for establishing contacts with collectors, for being a means of visibility in fairs. A gallery is a commercial system that must secure its own survival. [...] They [galleries] in a certain way, put my work in collections, they are intermediaries for people interested in collecting my work. The institutions and their interest for your work comes later or in parallel.

A2 places emphasizes the business character of the gallery because he is aware that his artistic production is dependent upon it; only a gallery that does well economically will be in a position to support his production and this is done by finding collectors interested in his work. His comments are also in agreement with A1 and G5 who believe that contemporary art passes first through the gallery system and then shown in institutions.

A2, who is a mid-career artist, also shared with me his experiences regarding the end of his relationships with two international galleries for different reasons. Regarding the first case:

A2: Sometimes, it is preferable for an artist not to have a gallery – I know that it is difficult to say this because an artist who hasn't got one is anxious to have and be part of the system – and deny all this market and continue in the truth of his work rather than enter a gallery that merely follows a trend, because this will hurt your work. I think it is preferable not being [in a gallery] rather than being in the wrong one.

Regarding the second case:

A2: It was a gallery that I worked with and enjoyed a lot working there, but then came a time when we couldn't work together anymore. It was a young and alternative gallery and I couldn't fit into that system. I was a more expensive artist, I was used to a different work

rhythm and I had other expectations regarding the gallery, that is, if the gallery demands, I also demand. It was a gallery for younger artists, more emerging, it had other prices. I am not consecrated, but I am also not emerging; I am mid-way.

These two excerpts illustrate the importance for the artist having commensurate gallery representation with his career stage and integrated into a gallery program that he identifies with, even in detriment of sales and belonging to the gallery system. A2 confided at the beginning of his interview that “an artistic career is a long-term career, not an immediate one” and this makes more understandable his decisions to sever gallery ties thus making a short-term sacrifice in terms of sales for the benefit of his career in the long-term.

A9 is another artist who talked about the difficulties in relations with galleries. On one occasion, she decided to leave the gallery because the gallerist did not want a work executed that was destined for an international art fair as a project. Similarly, she ended the collaboration with another gallery because the gallerist did not approve of the artist exhibiting in conjunction with a certain product brand:

A9: Gallerist A [names gallerist] didn't want me to do this artwork, gallerist B [names gallerist] didn't want me to exhibit with brand X [names brand], the other didn't want me to...and I always leave. When they don't want, OK; the space is yours, the gallery is yours, and I will continue to do my things. You go away because gallerists always want to control your production, because economically speaking, they want to get hold of the money and since they are the ones selling they think about how things should be done, for them to sell more because it is a business. [...] The question is when they start [saying]: “don't do this, do that”.

LP: They really want to control...

A9: They, at a certain point, want to control what I do.

LP: In terms of work? In terms of career?

A9: Exactly. They always end up having an opinion, and it is their right, because from their perspective you must make the best choice; the best choice for selling more, but the artist's objective is not to sell more.

This is another example of an artist making career choices in terms of producing work and in which context to exhibit it that are not in accordance with what the gallerist may think as a correct course of action. A9 strongly believes that galleries focus only in the commercial or monetary aspect of their role and - at least in these two cases - that was contrary to the artist's career choices. This artist privileges artistic freedom over potential economic gains and ends the relationship with the gallery aiming to exercise control. This notion of gallery control has different meanings according to context, but also according to the personalities of those involved. What G3 meant as "controlling things a bit" was at an advisory level and attempting to halt a potential temptation of his artists to produce more commercial work. However, in the experience of A9, this control is going in the opposite direction, namely producing works that sell so that the gallerist - who is depicted here as solely profit oriented - will earn more. Apparently, in some cases, such as this, exists a conflict of interest, or even a power struggle, between the artist's motivation (freedom to produce the works that she wants and exhibit where and with whom she wants) and the gallerist's motivation (profit oriented). Artists with long term career goals probably will forego any short-term economic benefits and choose to preserve their artistic integrity and freedom regarding career moves.

On the other hand, it is known that some artists produce what is perceived as a rather commercial work, also referred to as 'art fair art', i.e. work that is easier to sell because it is in demand by collectors, it is easily identifiable as a piece by that artist, which also may serve to capture the attention of the collectors (and the public in general) at art fairs with the objective of generating visibility for the artist and the gallery. A2 who is an artist that thrives on experimentation in his studio elaborated on this:

A2: It is important for work to finance other work. I have a work that is more shown in the gallery, the fairs, and I have a parallel work that is my main work that many times is not shown; not many people were interested in understanding what I was doing, in seeing what I was making.

This further shows that artists may execute what are perceived as rather commercial pieces on their own initiative and not just because they succumb to gallery pressure and control; it is out of necessity to pursue different artistic endeavors that would remain unrealized unless the necessary resources were found. In most cases, these resources are provided by the art market (and sometimes by patrons of the arts or institutions) and are dependent on how successful an artist is in it. Whether

artists fall under the spell of the market, either on their own or are also being encouraged towards that direction by their galleries, is not something that is always easily perceptible.

A4 is an artist who delegates bureaucratic tasks to his gallery, like preparing a curriculum with images to be sent to curators. However, he is doubtful about the capacity of the Portuguese galleries to create links with other art world actors:

A4: They [galleries] do many things. A person always has more expectations than those they can meet. A big part of the job is done by artists; there is often an incapacity of the gallery to do more: promote work, get a larger number of institutional people interested, bring along a certain number of critics and people that could give more visibility, get in touch with certain curators who will extend invitations for other type of exhibitions. In most cases, in the end, it is the artists who do this work because they have a connection or because they created this network. Galleries have a lot of difficulty, at least in Portugal; [galleries] abroad sometimes do it better, but in Portugal there is great incapacity in that matter.

G2, in his answer about how galleries create and sustain a market for their artists, also touched upon this point:

G2: In Portugal, the institutions do not have these relations with galleries, there exists a huge puritanism about art commerce and art. This puritanism makes it very complicated in Portugal to work with curators, with museum directors, because all of them think that they must be the protagonists: they discover the artists, they can't appear to be influenced, nobody can talk to them because it may look like we are trying to influence them. What is done in the whole world, in Portugal you cannot do it. In this regard, it is very difficult to generate sales for artists initiated by an institutional recognition promoted by the gallery. The gallery has few tools in Portugal to promote this institutional recognition. The only thing that we can do is ask our own artists to relate to these people. What is important is that young and emerging artists relate with all those people who will legitimate [their work] and from there onwards we can develop our role as sellers of their product; it is very complicated being me, the gallerist, trying to obtain this legitimization.

In the answer given by G2 we are provided with a possible explanation for the apparent shortcomings of the Portuguese galleries regarding their networking capabilities, as pointed out by A4 (and other artists, like A10 and A14, who also think that the artist must do work in addition to the gallery). It appears, that in the Portuguese context the apparent relations between galleries and institutions do not seem to be welcome if perceived as influencing curatorial choices. The effect of curators and how their actions and decisions impact artistic careers is researched in RQ3, but it seems that networking with curators and institutions is something that artists apparently need to do. On the other hand, we should bear in mind, as G4 pointed out, that institutions with very few resources seem rather open to receive any resources (financial or other) that a gallery may make available towards the realization of an exhibition that features its artist(s). It could be that in relating with institutions in Portugal, appearances matter most, i.e. it must always appear that the institution, or its curator, are the originators and catalysts for an exhibition to happen, regardless of the reality behind the scenes. The main point here is, that the artist has a central role to play in forging and cultivating these institutional relations, not only locally, but internationally as well, especially if the gallery is unable to do it, or does it at a degree that does not satisfy the artist.

### Gallery role/functions – viewed by curators

The role of galleries in the development of artistic careers was a topic that I brought up during my interviews with curators and directors of institutions. On their part, there is a consensus on the important role - in many cases considered indispensable - galleries have in launching and sustaining the careers of their represented artists.

C2: Sometimes people are embarrassed to speak about the commercial aspect [of art] and the commercial system, but there is nothing to be embarrassed about; you must recognize its role. I usually say that artists are professionals that must live from their work and attain a professionalization status that allows them to live with dignity from what they do.... They don't have to know how to negotiate, they must know how to make art. Many times, they are good at promoting their work, but they don't have to know how to do it; they may even have to be protected from this aspect of negotiating. The gallerist exists for that, it is someone specialized and has an important role in promoting and selling work. Without galleries, the system would be incomplete: I don't know what the artists would do to sell

their work, because they need time to produce it and they don't have to be looking for buyers and collectors to sell to. I do not imagine the system without galleries.

In her answer C2 chose to emphasize the commercial aspect of the gallery-artist relationship and attribute to the galleries an indispensable role. For an artist who is integrated into the gallery system, that is, his work is commercialized mostly through galleries, then galleries can be considered indispensable. When I further prompted her about which other functions the gallery may assume - beyond the strictly commercial ones – she replied:

C2: They have other functions. There are gallerists that are more informed, less informed, and even gallerists with artistic education that are almost a peer for the artist. There are many gallerists who discuss with the artist about his work in a knowledgeable way. We have gallerists that lack this capability of peer-to-peer discussion, but they always have a function beyond selling; they always have the function to promote, to protect when the artist isn't in a good phase, help determine prices, give advice like: “don't exhibit here, exhibit there”. I think they could have this role.

Again, we see the gallerist in the potential role of advisor and peer, depending on his capacity (knowledge and experience) to assume this role. However, what is important here, is how his role is interpreted by the artist. We have seen examples of artists like A6 who welcome, or even encourage, the fact that their gallerist is a career advice giver, and the example of A9 who ended gallery relationships because the gallerist wanted to assume this role, which was perceived by the artist as an attempt to control her work and career.

I followed up on this by asking C2 to explain what she meant by the gallerist protecting the artist:

C2: Protect or even encourage. I am speculating, but let's imagine that the artist is in a bad phase of his production, in a dead end. He [gallerist] can encourage him by saying: “this will work out well, let's plan an exhibition in x amount of time”; or say the contrary: “this won't work, maybe we should postpone”. Protect in the sense of giving advice. Protect the artist from falling into certain traps, e.g. an exhibition that will not yield anything to him. There are gallerists capable of this type of intuition.

How in practice these “protect” and “advise” functions really work - as mentioned above - depends on the status and personalities of those involved. In C2's answer, the gallerist is assumed as a

rather benevolent person whose interests are fully aligned with the artist's. This has prompted me to ask whether a gallerist can do the opposite, i.e. pressure the artist to produce, or continue to produce, a certain type of commercially appealing works:

C2: Yes, it may happen; to interfere in commercial terms in favor of what is selling more, try that the artist doesn't move away from what is certain, safe, and sells. I believe that artists can understand this type of advice and what type of interference is upon their work and put a stop to it. Gallerists tend to do that when artists are younger, less experienced. In principle, if gallerists represent certain artists it is because they believe in them, in their capacities, in their career. I think that artists don't let themselves influenced up to the point to allow to someone to interfere in their creative work.

C2 admits that interference is possible, especially in the cases of artists with less experience, but credits artists with resilience, integrity and faith in their work. C6, answered a similar question on possible effects of gallery pressure on the type of work an artist does, as follows:

C6: Usually the [effects] are negative, because if the artist doesn't follow his authenticity and does what he thinks he should do and as he pleases, and instead does what the gallerist says he should do, usually it works out badly. Because you feel that it is not a vivacious thing, something that it's not his, and I have seen cases like that; the exhibition looks soulless. But it is not that important, because then the artist understands that he has screwed up and steps back and does it in another manner; he corrects his way. Sometimes it is not that important, but it is a waste of time.

C4 acknowledges that galleries are an integral part of what she calls a "golden circle", which is comprised of artists, gallerists, curators and collectors. Regarding the nature of the relationship between galleries and artists, she believes that it has changed:

C4: I think there are a few artists that have the good fortune to have an amazingly devoted gallerist, who, for example, allows them to work peacefully behind closed doors and promotes their career, but that doesn't happen very often. [...] I think 20 or 30 years ago it [the relationship] was very close and in a way very slow and personal and it was about actually looking at the artist and going to the studio and talking about it.

C5 spoke more broadly about the role of galleries in the art world and highlighted the role of big galleries in it, not so much in economic terms, something that is implicit in a big gallery, but in terms of connections and influence with institutions. In the pan-European context, Portuguese galleries cannot be considered big and influential, despite their presence at various international art fairs and their ability to somehow penetrate the neighboring – and much larger – Spanish market. However, if we look solely at the Portuguese context, we would expect them to possess some degree of influence and institutional connections, or at least that their role as facilitators is not diminished, since many institutions in Portugal are short on resources.

C5: They [galleries] have a huge role, because who is channeling collectors' money into the art world are the gallerists. This means that gallerists have a lot of power in the art world and the big galleries really have a capacity of placing their artists in institutions of reference that stems from their ability of being important facilitators. With the limitations that institutions face at this moment, they need facilitators, namely economic ones. In a certain way, institutions are dependent upon their relations with big galleries, because they also facilitate the relations with collectors who loan works. You feel this less in smaller countries, but in bigger countries you feel immensely the weight of the market and of collectors; in England, it is a gigantic thing, let alone in the U.S., because there you almost don't have a public sector. Galleries are having a big and ever-increasing role.

C7, after acknowledging that galleries are “an absolutely central instrument in the careers of artists” said that:

C7: Galleries, when they work very well, they end up doing an incredible service for artists in terms of dissemination of their work to a group of agents that visit galleries to be informed and to be in contact with what contemporary artists are doing, because there is lack of opportunity to visit a studio. Many times, it is in the galleries that curators, programmers and directors [of institutions] get to know for the first time an artist or new works by an artist and there it plays between the public's interest and the institutional interest an artist may capture. In commercial terms, it is the same thing because collectors also end up circulating a lot among galleries....

This view also favors the notion that galleries are the “right” place to see and buy art. The art-loving public, institutional actors, and collectors frequent their spaces, albeit for different reasons.



The gallery continues to be an important, if not the most important, gatekeeper of the art world. Even when other interviewees, like G4, who advocate that it is possible for artists to make their career via other routes like “museums, curators, and institutions” - thus putting more emphasis on the role of curators and museums - at the end, admit that the “normal, or more usual way”, is via galleries, namely the market.

Can an artist survive without galleries?

The logic behind this question that was put to artists and gallerists, was an attempt of isolating the role of the gallery from the role of the artist in the development of his career. In their replies, gallerists were divided between those who reject that an artist can survive without galleries and those who admit that it is possible under certain conditions.

G1, G5 and G3 reject the idea that an artist can survive in the art world without having relations with galleries:

G1: Look at history: since the middle ages artists always had someone helping them; patrons functioned in that way. Picasso wouldn't be Picasso if he didn't have the big gallerists to support him, and the other artists. In Portugal, we have a few artists that enjoy some international projection who refuse to work with Portuguese galleries because they are conscious that the Portuguese gallery is a gallery that does not have big economic power.

G5: Artist X [names artist] is out of the system; artist Y [names artist] is out of the system. A Portuguese artist that doesn't work with a gallery in Portugal, while living in Portugal, it is a bit odd. The others [artists] when they are in the system, they are in the system and of course must give 50% to the galleries. Maybe they [X and Y] prefer not to be in Portuguese galleries because they can sell directly to Portugal through their galleries abroad. They [X and Y] are in a way in the system, but at the same time they are not. X uses the galleries more; he uses the system and exits the system...and I understand why. The type of work X does is so demanding in economic terms that needs financing and it is himself that obtains it. Therefore, he is interested in galleries [when he wants] to use the gallery system but doesn't want to be in the system when it suits him to do other things. [...] If he were starting today, it would have been more complicated because the system is

much harder on the artists. The artist who sells outside the gallery [system], is outside the gallery [system], unless he is an exceptional artist, a historic artist, like A [names artist] or B [names artist], and yet they<sup>106</sup> don't do it because they won't get [back] in, they will remain out.

G3: I think that the work of an artist is a creative work that is implanted in its own space, that is the studio. I don't like to see an artist play instruments that are not his to play: either he is concerned with his work of *investigation* that is the work in the studio, or he is doing other things and waste his energy on those things. Therefore, I think that the trajectory is: studio, public space through the gallery and then the consequences of that in the public space. An artist is the same thing as a scientist, it is a work of *investigation* and when I meet an artist for the first time I want to find out what his level of professionalism is. This degree of professionalism is the work of *investigation* in the studio, because things are not spontaneous, it is necessary to do a lot, throw away a lot, to reach a conclusion. All that takes time; if he, at the same time, is promoting the work to the exterior, I think it is a waste of time. I think that the gallery has one function and the artist another function. There must be a combination of these two entities in relating with the exterior.

G1 essentially divides his answer in two parts. In the first, he refutes the idea because historically the artists have been supported by patrons such as the church, royalty, aristocracy and later by gallerists like, for instance, Vollard, Kahnweiler and the Rosenberg brothers who supported Picasso and were his main commercial partners at different stages of his career. Implicit in his answer is that if this practice has been going on for that much time, can only mean that artists will always need some type of support. In the second part of the answer, that goes more towards the spirit of my question, he explains why some Portuguese artists don't have a gallery in Portugal, namely because local galleries lack the financial resources necessary to support these artists in their production. The fact that artists opt against having a gallery in Portugal, doesn't mean that they are outside the broader (international) gallery system. This point is made clearer by G5 who explained that since foreign galleries can satisfy the demand in the Portuguese market, it may become redundant for the artist to collaborate with a local gallery as well<sup>107</sup>. In the case of artist

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<sup>106</sup> The names of A and B were omitted to avoid identifying the gallerist collaborating with them.

<sup>107</sup> It is known that some artists sell directly to the Portuguese collectors while collaborating with galleries for their international sales.

X, whose work apparently is demanding in terms of production financing, once it is him who secures that financing, it is not necessary to have a gallery for that; in this case, a collaboration with a local gallery will be of little value to the artist. Seen from the artist's perspective, it doesn't make any sense, at least financially, to forego 50% (or even less) of the sale price to a gallery. G5 also points out that the gallery system is not something an artist can abdicate entirely because it is, or appears to be, impossible to re-enter and even artists (e.g. A and B) with historical importance that perhaps could do without it, continue integrated in it. G3 doesn't respond to the question directly, but in his answer, it is made clear that an artist should only be concerned with his work and everything else ought to be taken care of by someone else, namely the gallerist. In his line of reasoning the artist appears being totally dependent on the gallerist for exhibiting, promoting and selling work. Given that G3 works primarily with younger and emerging artists, we can conclude that at least for that group of artists, the gallery system is viewed as indispensable.

G2 and G4, on the other hand, believe that at least some artists can survive without galleries:

G2: An artist can live without galleries, I have no doubt about it. It is necessary to possess very special characteristics; he must be an artist with a special gift for human relationships. [...] One of my artists could perfectly live without galleries: Z [names a mid-career artist of the gallery]. He is a person, besides being an excellent artist, with excellent capacities for relationships. He is a person who can very easily captivate a collector to become interested in his work and make him a loyal follower of his artistic production, which means that it is relatively common to find collectors that own a high number of his works. [...] Z showed me exactly that: in some cases, it is possible for an artist to achieve survival without the support of a gallery.

G4: I think that today this is easier, just look at Instagram, but an artist must be very autonomous and know how to sell himself; that is, it is one thing an artist knowing how to self-promote and another thing knowing how to sell. Given that today exist many more artists than galleries, there are artists doing this. Normally – and I repeat that there are always exceptions – the recognition takes longer because the system has a way of being and functioning. The gallery exists, and today there are discussions if it makes sense, because auctions appeared. I think that it has to do, above all, with personalities, and it happens many times that things start going well at the beginning and they [artists] think it

is not necessary. I believe that when people work together usually the results are better and the effort is at least shared.

Both G2 and G4 link the capacity of an artist to survive without galleries to his personality and capabilities: adept at human relationships, autonomous and with the ability to self-promote and sell the art himself. G2 implies that people who relate easily and have good artistic work as in the example of artist Z of his gallery, can sell with success and develop their own collector base. G4, on the other hand, distinguishes the ability of self-promotion from the ability to sell. In her experience the recognition takes longer because the artist has to do all the work himself, instead of sharing it with a gallery. Overall, from the gallerists' point of view, it seems that only in exceptional cases an artist can survive in the market today without some connection to the gallery system that could assume two forms: exclusive relations with galleries in different locations, or ad-hoc/free-lance type opportunistic collaborations.

When this question of survival outside the gallery system was put to artists, some answered using only their own personal experience – and as we have seen some said no for various reasons like lack of skill and patience in dealing with sales and collectors – while others shared their broader art world experiences. Regarding younger artists in particular, who by definition are at the start of their careers, interviewees like A1 and A2 dismissed that possibility entirely. A14 - a younger generation artist - also stated that she didn't know of any examples from her generation. A3 replied that many artists like himself today privilege a free-lance status, instead of exclusive relations with galleries, but when it comes to younger artists he specified:

A3: I heard that they [younger artists] try to short-circuit the galleries and go directly to institutions, collectors, do exhibitions in places outside the circuits, alternative places or present their work - especially artists who work with newer media like video and film - to institutions and not to galleries and enter the market directly through these processes.

We have already seen that young artists (like A12 and A14) choose to exhibit very early, e.g. during their art school years, driven by their willingness to show work, using whatever spaces are available to them (e.g. abandoned warehouses and empty shops) and not galleries. At a very early stage, and especially as students, the possibility of having access to a precious commercial space like a gallery is very near to zero. From the interviews conducted with these two younger generation artists, who later found gallery representation, my impression is that their intention was

not to bypass the gallery system at the time, rather than enter it when their work became better developed and already gained some visibility, partly due to these exhibitions at alternative spaces. Another pertinent issue brought up by A3 regards the type of medium the artists use: video and film, that can be characterized as more institutional rather than domestic-type art that people usually look for and buy from galleries. Typically works on video and film are acquired and shown by institutional collectors rather than private collectors in their homes, so it makes sense for artists working in those media to directly approach potential collectors, in this case institutions. Regarding this medium, and its market appeal, when auctioneer L2 was asked if he was ever approached to sell any installations or videos, he said: "Never, which is significant, isn't it? Neither I had to appraise any in a collection; I only see them in museums".

Other artists linked the survival of the artist without galleries to his status in the art world and especially the market:

A1: [Market access] passes necessarily through galleries. There are no artists selling stuff on their own, unless they have a status that allows them to do that and they went through this phase years ago; as a start, it is not possible. In this circuit, the gallery is very important. It is a place of legitimation and appreciation of work where people who matter go. An artist can do without when he has the possibility to sell to institutions and collectors himself and doesn't need that intermediary. They are rare cases and usually advanced in their careers.

A2: I think he can. He must have an elaborate system and himself be an artist in demand. If someone's work has a wide circulation and many people want to possess and institutions want to possess, then an intermediary is not needed in this sense. Galleries build a good relationship between the market and the art world. Artists who don't have a gallery and manage to work within those dynamics are consecrated artists with well-established careers. I think that for a young artist is very difficult not to integrate the [gallery] system. [...] For most artists, it is important to have this [gallery] because the gallery ends up establishing a price in the market, establishes a course, positions an artist. I think that not having [a gallery] is only when an artist attains a high status and becomes autonomous and influential and doesn't need to have these galleries.

When I mentioned the German artist Gerhard Richter as an example of a top ranking international artist (both in terms of market and art history recognition), A1 commented:

A1: Even he has a gallery [in order] to be integrated in the world where these things are happening at a high level. He, maybe, only gives 10% to the gallery, but has this [gallery] because it is his [means of] integration in this world.

Both artists mention the status of the artist as a prerequisite for survival in the market without gallery support. In this sense status refers to artists whose work is in demand, with rather long careers commensurate with skills necessary to navigate the art world, sell their work and overall able to perform themselves (or their own team) all the necessary gallery functions (autonomy). However, both A1 and A2 in their answers make clear that this is impossible or very difficult for younger artists to achieve – who by definition either completely lack or start building up their artistic status and market – and underline once more the role of galleries in the system, that further enhances the view that it is possible, but not very probable. The example of Gerhard Richter illustrates exactly this: even though at a global level he has an undeniable artistic status, established market demand for his work, enjoys the respect and acclaim of his peers, and influence, i.e. he potentially works with galleries in more favorable terms than most artists (foregoes less than 50% of the sale price), he opts to use a gallery<sup>108</sup> for the sole purpose of being linked to the art world.

When discussing the 50%-50% price split between artist and gallery with A7, I asked if these terms were applicable to mega-artists like Jeff Koons and Gerhard Richter:

A7: In practice, legally, it is that, but I think galleries take less. I am not seeing [Richard] Serra giving 50% to Gagosian [gallery]. I am speculating, because maybe it isn't like that, maybe they give them 50%, I don't know. I think that when artists achieve such an influence like Koons or Richter, maybe they say [to the gallery]: "take 10%" and they [galleries] are happy because it is better to receive 10% from a 6 million Richter work, than..., I think. But this is just speculation, because in practical terms and publicly it is 50%.

Even if we don't know the exact details of the financial arrangements between high-status artists and their galleries<sup>109</sup>, the fact that other artists (A1 and A7 in this case) suspect that they can get

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<sup>108</sup> Richter is represented worldwide by the Marian Goodman Gallery.

<sup>109</sup> For instance, Resch (2016) reports that artist Richard Prince in his arrangement with the Gagosian Gallery received 60% of the sale price, instead of the usual 50%.

better terms than the usual 50% reveals the importance they place on the status of the artist and the potential bargaining power it yields to dealing with galleries.

A4 approached this issue from a different perspective:

A4: He can, there are so many examples. There are people who can live with €500 or €1000 [a month] and there are people who cannot live with less than €5000. It is an adjustment issue; maybe their means of production are less and don't need much to live on and to continue to work and develop their work, because they have a cheap studio, they don't have a mortgage, and maybe they don't need to make that much money and they don't have to be accountable to anyone. What they are really interested in is having this total liberty. This has to do with the character and the material needs of each person, or to think about what is more important for work: to have 10 [studio] assistants and they do the work, or to work [alone] and do your things with another production logic, thus lacking the [production] scale and money the other one has.

This view brings to the surface the dimension of the character and ambition of each artist that will determine the course of action to take regarding this matter. A4 implies that artists who don't have a gallery enjoy more freedom, i.e. by not being accountable to a gallery, but also possibly less commercial success. In another part of the interview he mentioned that "there are artists that don't have a gallery and do their deals and they like to be in control of the situations", a comment that can be interpreted as galleries limiting the freedom of artists in some way. If, however, commercial success is not the first motivating factor for an artist, and many times it isn't – or if it, it is usually very cleverly disguised – probably he will adopt a stance that does not pursue this end. If an artist is ambitious from a market perspective then his choices regarding the gallery and the market in general will reflect that. It is also conceivable for an artist to become an *accidental market success*, i.e. successful in the market without actively pursuing it himself, due to the actions of other players, including the combined efforts of galleries, collectors, auctions and curators/institutions.

A12 in his reply touched upon these issues:

A12: There are many artists with very interesting artistic productions who are not interested in having a career in the art world, people who have a job and don't want to be bothered; they want to do their own things without being accountable to the gallerist or the market.

Then there are more ambitious people and this isn't bad. [...] You can be an excellent artist without ever leaving your house; to sell, is a different thing, it has to do with ambition. There are people whose ambition is to do their work, they don't want to influence others, they only want to do what they want to do. Other people want to establish themselves as artists, it is a question of personality.

Influencing others, in the words of C4, requires the artist to be actively pursuing this:

C4: I think that it [artistic career] is like any career. You cannot exist in isolation if you want to have an impact. Whether you are a scientist, an engineer or an architect..., I think an artist is like any other job: you can work in isolation, you can push your practice forward, but if you want people to talk about it and see it then you have to be active.

This comment further enhances the view that the artists' ambition and career goals guide their decisions and actions in that regard, as in any other profession.

A7 also believes that an artist can survive without galleries:

A7: I believe so, absolutely. We have an example in Portugal [names the artist<sup>110</sup>] who doesn't have galleries by option. There are artists who don't have a gallery by option and others who don't have because they cannot find one. I think it is possible to survive without galleries economically, of course.

A7 distinguishes between those artists who choose not to have a gallery affiliation, but could have one if they wanted to, and those who don't have because no gallery has showed interest in inviting them for a collaboration. This second category of artists could include those whose work is not deemed of interest by gallerists (whatever their selection criteria maybe) or artists who have been excluded by the gallery system due to their "difficult" character, a term encompassing anything from eccentric behavior to extreme lack of professionalism.

When I followed up on his answer by asking what this opting out depends on, he explained:

A7: I think it relates to the way of being of the artist, how the artist wants to function. Imagine an artist without gallery who sells from his studio; he will never have the [art] critical credibility that an artist has who works with galleries because he is outside the

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<sup>110</sup> The artist named by A7 has gallery representation abroad.



status quo. Don't ask me why, but it is like that. There is an important triumvirate that is made up of the artist, the critic and the gallerist and this triumvirate must always function well and in the same way.

What is implied here, as in other replies before, is that an artist who has the ambition to be taken seriously and affirm himself in the art world needs to establish gallery relations, that will potentially allow him to achieve some art critical/curatorial legitimation for his work, that is, being part of the status quo. In other words, in the current state of art world affairs, it is expected of an artist to have some sort of gallery affiliation.

The following experiences are of artists who for some time didn't have gallery representation (some by choice, others because of the circumstances at the time), and of artists who produce work that in some cases is not commercialized through galleries.

A6: An artist can always survive, even under rocks. An artist is always thinking about making his work visible, or the artist is involved in some group that has a strong presence and action and has the attention of criticism and there eventually his work could be visible independently of having a gallery. My work was visible during the 10 years I was without a gallery, but I don't know if I could have lasted much longer without a gallery. The truth is this: galleries move within a circuit and give great visibility to the work of artists.

Undeniably, the artist without gallery must play the gallerist's role and split his time and effort between making work and creating visibility (and sales) for that work. As the experience of A6 indicates this additional effort, even if it was somehow shared by being part of a dynamic group, eventually takes its toll on the artist, to the point of almost giving up. A8, an artist who delegates all non-creative work to the gallery, regarding effort said:

A8: The world is so complex that I think it is possible [without a gallery], but not easy. There are artists who are willing to do this work, for example [name of artist] who opted for this way because he thought that the gallery's work did not deserve the 50% it was asking. This forces him to have considerably more work, even receiving clients, a thing that I want to be spared of.

In this example, the burden of additional work is acknowledged, but assumed by the artist because it is judged as not heavy enough to justify the 50% of the sale price he must forego in favor of the gallery.

A10 who is an established artist and has gallery affiliations/collaborations in Portugal, but not exclusive representation, regarding the 50% commission practice said: “The 50% is for the gallery that in fact works more with the artist, promotes him and has a privileged relation, when both recognize that this relation deserves the 50%”. In addition, he stated “that there are works that I do with architects, commissions and projects that don't go through the gallery, but the prices are the same and I guarantee that”. He mentioned also the phenomenon, as he put it, of “cultural agents” who act as intermediaries between artists and, for example, interior designers, or companies that wish to decorate a hotel. In his words: “It is another market force, but the percentages agreed with these agents are less than the ones with galleries”. He also explained that in some exceptional cases very few sales have occurred in his studio, but always at the gallery price:

A10: What happens with some people who call me up, I say: “go and see the works that I have in this or that place and if nothing appeals [to you]” ... because there are galleries who don't sell works on paper and I end up having more works on paper and sometimes there are new collectors, young collectors, who wish to acquire their first work and galleries sometimes don't have this variety to offer, so some situations like that arise.

This is another case when the type of work the artist makes, and at the same time the artist's willingness to accept commissioned work, make it possible to bypass the gallery completely, even more so if an exclusive representation is not in place. On the occasion that a commission or a project is brought to the artist by a third party, i.e. a “cultural agent”, in strict financial terms the artist is better off, because of the reduced, compared to the gallery, commission percentage.

A11 believes that galleries still provide the fundamental link of an artist with the market, even though “at this moment the link with the market is not only made by galleries; there exist curators, who know collectors, who know museums and can give visibility to an artist, organize an important exhibition, nationally or internationally...”. When asked about whether an artist can survive without galleries, he said:

A11: An artist can only live without galleries if he has created a structure that in some way allows him to do exhibitions in places with visibility, if he knows collectors, if he can promote and make contacts, and if himself can do the sales. This is possible.

When I pointed out that he went through this phase some years ago and today he has gallery representation, he elaborated:

A11: I was selling here at the studio. I was only receiving people that I knew: collectors or friends of collectors, people that were really interested in my work. This structure still exists - even though I have a gallery - and at this moment it benefits the gallery as well. I have an agreement with the gallery in the sense that I can bring here my collectors, but I give the gallery its percentage; that is the way it should be.

When A11 was prompted on providing more details on this arrangement between artist and gallery, he explained:

A11: I have direct relations with collectors and they function very well and because they function so well, the agreement that I have with my gallerists allows me to continue to have these [relations with collectors] without harming the [galleries'] work. They know that I receive [collectors], whom I receive, which works I sell, and they receive their commission on those works. The price is the price of the gallery and I think that it should be that way. When a known collector comes to the studio, he should have a discount, but it is a discount with the same degree of loyalty that the gallery would [offer]. I think that there should be a parity; when people work together, it should be like that.

A11 is the artist who went into more detail regarding this subject because he was talking from his own experience. He created the necessary structure that allowed him to be independent from the gallery system during several years. The proof that his structure was, and still is, successful lies in the fact that the galleries representing him now are also benefiting from its existence by receiving a commission on the sales realized by the artist himself. Regarding collectors, it is evident that these are relationships cultivated by the artist himself when he senses that the buyers are truly interested in his work. As he said, he receives collectors or their friends, which means that his collector base is growing by word of mouth. Since the artist has established some familiarity with them, by transacting with them, these can in a way be considered his own collectors. It is

conceivable that if he simply started directing them to his gallery, and effectively refusing to sell to them directly anymore, he could damage his relations with his collector base. From the gallery's economic perspective, this arrangement is meaningful because it receives a commission without having to "work for it"; all the work was carried out by the artist and the transaction occurs because the collector appreciates the work of this artist, not because of the gallery's promotional work. Overall, for such an agreement to work between an artist and his galleries, the necessary element is strong mutual trust and confidence. Regarding the structure per se, we see that several ingredients must be present for it to achieve its goals, namely be a substitute for gallery functions. A11 is a mid-career artist with a curriculum that includes exhibitions in places offering him visibility and someone whose work has been recognized by art critics, curators, and the market. On top of that, he has successfully promoted his work to the point of creating a growing following among collectors - who apparently recommend his work to their friends – an indication not only of his quality as an artist, but of his interpersonal qualities as well. The fact that he can manage the sales and financial transactions on his own is an indication of his commercial acumen.

A9 is a mid-career artist who currently opts against having relations with galleries in Portugal but collaborates with various galleries abroad having both long-term and case-by case collaborations. When asked whether an artist can survive without galleries, she replied: "He can, that's what I do". When I pointed out to her that she collaborates with galleries abroad, she said:

A9: Yes, but I don't survive because of them; they are a part, like auctions are. [...] There are many ways of surviving, not just one. [...] Today there is such a multiplicity of situations that one can survive without having participated in a fair, without having participated in a biennial, and without having done anything at auction; none of that is important for survival. [...] Perhaps the best characteristic of the art world is that there is no recipe you can apply and it will be successful, there isn't. I am a proof of this: I don't have a big gallery or a great curator behind me, and yet I survive. [...] I have entered and exited galleries, worked with various curators - no one really supported me - they helped me at that moment because I helped them, so it was a direct exchange. [...] I think there are more people that survive like I do: by doing one thing here, another thing there. Today the field is much more open for you to have to do it only one way.

This artist does not attribute any special importance to the galleries' role in the economic survival of the artist. According to her, galleries are a part of the art world as other actors or mechanisms are, e.g. auctions, fairs, biennials, curators. Her comment about the existence of a "multiplicity of situations" and lack of a "recipe" points towards this: in the art world there are instruments available for an artist to use in order to survive. The fact that she is not part of a large gallery's roster or a member of an influential curator's inner circle is proof that these instruments may become less necessary once an artist has reached a certain status, both in the market and in curatorial circles. This becomes evident when the artist acknowledges that she has worked with various galleries and curators in the past. From this we can infer that once an artist has learned to interact with the other art world actors and acquired a certain dexterity in the use of the available instruments in the art world it is possible to reach a level of autonomy in the artistic field, including less dependence on the gallery system. Regarding the comment on curators, the artist sees the relationship between her and them as a *quid pro quo*, as a mutually beneficial relationship, or something that could even be described as opportunistic.

When I asked what makes this survival possible, A9 elaborated:

A9: It has to do with people and another important factor: the world has changed, it is much more open, easier to communicate and easier to reach others than it has ever been. [...] I can now manage my work in a much more dynamic way than I could before, so I have less need for local support from the structures: I need the gallery less, the collector less, or the curator, because the artist can do it himself. The conjugation of factors is important; you have to be a person up for it..., because those who have to produce on a large scale - and not on a small scale because that is different - are people that must be able to communicate in a certain way, it is inherent to the work. You must communicate in a certain way because the work is like that, you must be able to make the work communicate and for that you must mobilize yourself. [...]. The work itself forces you into being an extrovert, not an introvert. Therefore, the personal characteristics are important? Yes. The people being able to mobilize themselves? Yes. [Capable of] speaking about these things? Yes, but it was like that in Rubens's time also. It is a characteristic of the work itself, to be expansive, to be the result of a group, of a team. Rubens's studio had plenty of people painting: either you can manage that thing or not; either you can do large works, or you can't. In the end,

if you are capable of doing large works, all the rest has to do with the person's attitude, the work, the field....

A9 believes that the type of work an artist makes and the magnitude of his production is the principal factor that propels the artist to adopt the necessary attitude for being less dependent on other structures including the gallery. The large scale the artist refers to includes both the physical dimensions of the work, as well as, the quantity of work produced. This artist who has a large team of collaborators for producing work and for bureaucratic and promotional tasks, is capable of this autonomy because, as she put it: "I learned to do the things myself". In this case "myself" refers to the team assembled (or 'structure' as already referred to by other artists) for exactly handling all the issues a gallery would, namely promotion, sales, dissemination, providing links to other art world players. Making works of large dimensions and producing works in a large scale that require the combined efforts of many different craftsmen and fabricators, that some by definition have higher production costs than other works in different media have (e.g. painting, sculpture of smaller dimension, certain types of conceptual artworks), and whose assembly, transportation, installation and storage is both complicated and costly, in sum all these elements that characterize a large part of the work of this artist, force her to adopt an attitude towards managing all aspects of her work in a more "dynamic way". The characteristics she mentions such as, being extrovert, mobilizing yourself, communicating your work, and being able to manage such an operation successfully, indicate that an artist must assume a more active role in the development of his career. The characteristic of a person, in this case a visual artist, being able to mobilize himself is often encountered in the literature of entrepreneurship as being one of the characteristics of entrepreneurs, also referred to as entrepreneurial traits<sup>111</sup>.

In addition to A9 who affirmed that "I learned to do the things myself", some of the interviewed artists mentioned explicitly that they consider either themselves or artists in general as entrepreneurs, while others underlined their active role in the development and management of their careers:

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<sup>111</sup> Refer to Section 3.1.1.

A6: I think I was a great entrepreneur, I did everything: I chose the [exhibition] place, I did the art, I transported it, I sent the invitations, in fact I did everything. And still today I do it, but not all artists do it.

A8: The entrepreneurial spirit is normal for an artist because an artist must be entrepreneurial to do a sculpture, to do a painting, he must be entrepreneurial and reinvent the resources that he doesn't have in order to succeed in producing [art].

A10: The artist must be entrepreneurial in his work in the first place.

A11: An important issue in my case is the willingness and the necessity to manage almost all aspects of my career and my exhibitions.

A7: Something that always interested me is for things to happen and when they didn't, I made them happen; I am very proactive at this level.

Considering the above, in the case of visual artists, entrepreneurship or the presence of entrepreneurial spirit is distinct at two levels:

- Production or creative level: all artists are entrepreneurs in the production of their work. They look for new or additional resources, leverage existing resources, transform resources that will enable to produce art and realize their artistic vision.
- Business or non-creative level: there are varying degrees of entrepreneurship present in artists at this level, ranging from zero activity and total delegation of these matters to the gallery system (and their dependence from it), to as much control as possible across all career aspects, including low dependence on other art world actors and processes for shaping their career.

### **RQ2.1: The auction market effect/impact on artistic careers**

As we have seen in the Literature Review chapter (section 2.2.2), the auction market is perceived by some art market participants and many art world commentators as a barometer of the overall art market due to the public character of its procedures even though it almost exclusively depicts specific areas of the secondary market, i.e. what sellers decided - or were forced - to sell and what the auction houses accepted for sale. In Portugal, where the market for art – both primary and secondary – is limited, and especially since there are almost no dedicated secondary market art

dealers (or at least these do not operate as visibly or prominently as the primary market galleries and auction houses do), the auction market essentially is the secondary market. The secondary market activity in Portugal has oftentimes been carried out by antique dealers who also dealt in art – traditionally focusing mostly in 19<sup>th</sup> century and established names of the 20<sup>th</sup> century art rather than contemporary art - and by some private individuals who assume at times the role of art broker, go-between or private dealer. As it happens in other art markets, the Portuguese primary market galleries may also deal in the secondary market and not necessarily limiting their activity to the work of their represented artists. Artists and gallerists were asked about their auction experiences in the national market and auctioneers<sup>112</sup> replied to a series of questions tailored to their contemporary art segment activity. Most interviewees recognized some degree of impact of the auction process on the market for the artist's work with the focal point being the price achieved at auction. Overall, all interested parties, i.e. artists and by extension their affiliated galleries, stated that they try to follow the auction market, or at least stay informed when it comes to artworks either made by them (artists) or associated with them (galleries).

Many artists had nothing positive to say about the auction market in Portugal (and some about the auction process in general) and used the following words to express their opinion:

A1: Normally the works that appear at auction are not very good; sometimes they are, but the majority isn't. [...] If I were a collector, I would never buy at auction.

A4: Auctions are a terrible thing. Auctioneers are people without scruples basically. In most cases they are opportunists: never produce anything, never create anything, don't do anything, and depend on speculation and opportunism. [...] When they put at auction 25-year-old artists, they are destroying the career of these artists. [...] It is auctions that are destroying the art market, mainly the international market: there exists connivance between big galleries and the way they [auctioneers] create the artificial prices for certain artists and [thus] legitimate speculation.

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<sup>112</sup> Both auctioneers (L1 and L2) organize specialized sales for modern and contemporary art that occasionally may also include works by foreign artists.



A7: Terrible. I have the worst possible opinion, the worst. I think they only have negative effects, not positive. Auctions are fake and lower artificially or raise artificially the market quotation<sup>113</sup> of an artist.

A8: The auction houses we have in Portugal, and especially during the crisis, sold [art] very cheaply, are deeply ignorant, don't know anything at all about art history and artists. [...] They treat works of art like junk and then they sell them at junk prices.

A13: During the [economic] crisis, works of art appeared [for sale] and auctioneers - instead of having respect for the works; they only want to earn a commission even if it is just a small amount - instead of pushing [prices] up, they pushed down, and that is very bad because it discredits the artist's quotation. This happens many times.

The artists' complaints exist in two levels: prices achieved and the working practices of auctioneers. It is evident that artists - and their gallerists - do not want their work to change hands at lower prices than those established by galleries, which according to them, should be considered as being the "correct" ones (also referred to as quotation) for artworks:

G4: I think that the price of an artist is made in the primary market and not the secondary.

G5: The primary market really sets the artist's quotation, not auctions as often people say to me. The auction is only a reference for the price at that specific moment.

The opinion of some artists that auction prices are not real, but artificial or manipulated, directly questions the business ethics and practices of auctioneers and the auction market as a whole. Other artists complain that artworks are not respected, where the word respect can mean either their economic or cultural value, or both. Overall, it seems that within the artists' community, part of it has a very negative opinion of auctioneers and their role in the market. It is a commonly held belief that in Portugal during the Troika<sup>114</sup> years (2011-2014) the art market was in dire straits and some of the interviewed artists (e.g. A8, A13) attribute this partly to the role of the auction houses. Owners of works who needed to raise cash for whatever reason, liquidated part or all their art holdings through the auction market because it was the only way available to most of them.

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<sup>113</sup> The word quotation is the English translation of the Portuguese word "cotação" used to refer to the market price of the work of an artist. Depending on the context it usually means gallery price.

<sup>114</sup> Refers to the period when Portugal was subject to an economic/financial adjustment program led by the EU, the ECB and the IMF.

Following this line of reasoning, if auction houses did not exist, these transactions would not have taken place, or if they had taken place it would have been in private, assuming that this was feasible given the volume of the sales. The public nature of auctions is what makes the auction results impactful in a positive or negative way. However, auctioneer L2 regarding the public character of auctions offered a word of caution: “The fact that auctions are public and the sale is visible... my dear friend, if they [auctioneers] wanted to, they could be very fraudulent”.

Other artists did not seem very worried about the existence of auctions and that allowed them to adopt a more balanced view considering both positive and negative impact. Some artists recognize auctions as a market phenomenon that is beyond their control, while others - because very few (or none) of their artworks have been auctioned - did not concern themselves with it:

A2: The luck that I have is that [the auctioned works] are not big pieces, they are smaller pieces. I am not talking the pieces down, but they are not key works. On the one hand, I am afraid that they are undervalued; on the other hand, it is good that they are sold at a slightly higher price. It is a sign that there is demand.

A3: I think that some seriousness has started to emerge in the contemporary art auctions in Portugal that was lacking until relatively recently. Many times, contemporary art was badly exhibited at auction exhibitions. In some cases, I had to go and reassemble my sculptures that were badly assembled. There wasn't much care regarding the provenance of the works, many fake [works] appeared in the market..., therefore I think that [auctions] have had sometimes a negative role in the Portuguese art market. [...] Fortunately, there hasn't been much presence of my things at auction and sometimes they were sold at reasonable prices, so I cannot complain too much.

A5: I think that at auctions, not so much in my case because I was not very much affected, what has happened in recent years is that a lot of things ended up at auction with prices inferior to their market price.... Since I am not producing very much, there are not many works in that situation. In a country like ours - where the whole art world, including the art market, is such a fragile thing - auctions can have very perverse effects on what is going on.

A6: The people who have bought some of my work [from galleries], was because they really wanted that piece and many of those are people close to me. I have very little work in Portuguese private collections. The collectors who have bought my work are private collectors – many from Latin America – that have bought it recently and also I am not an artist whose prices are very high, so that it is worth it to put at auction. I don't foresee a large part of those works going to auctions.

A9: The impact of auctions is important. For me it is not the most important, or the most relevant, but it is an area on which the system that exists today is based. [...] I never made any money at auctions because it was always the collectors who put the works for sale. [...] You can't say no; the work is not yours anymore. It is a thing that happens without your decision. [...] Collectors today think that you need economic robustness for being a great artist, you need to be an economic asset, and if you don't go through actions, you are not.

A10: Auction houses really give derisory [estimate] values for works that appear in the market. For me, at this moment, neither legitimate nor define the value that works could have. I never directly put anything at auction; there have been auction houses who asked me about dealing in my work - older or more recent - and I said no. There are artists who put [their work] up for auction to legitimate some value, but I, since I am in the gallery system, I don't intend to legitimate [my work] in this way.

A11: What happened with auctions in the last few years, on one hand it was disastrous, on the other, it was the result of the economic crisis we were living in and of the market's fragility at all levels. 2013 was the worst year... [and] one of my works appeared, I went to see and it was well sold fortunately, but I was a bit worried because it was the first time that appeared. I wanted to see whether it was well sold or not, because these things are also important, it is news that go around. It was well sold and the others that have appeared since, sold always well and at a price almost equal to the gallery's, which is very good. [...] Afterwards, I met a person who is responsible for the art department of an auction house – [the one] where this work appeared - and she confessed to me that they were looking to include my works at auction for years, but people didn't want to part with them. This is fantastic, it is the best that can happen.

From the wide variety of experiences and opinions expressed by the artists above we see that they consider the auction market as an integral part of the art world and pay some attention to it, or at least are informed about the works to be auctioned and the results. Their level of involvement ranges from natural curiosity to the point of visiting the pre-auction exhibition with the intent to set up their work in the correct way (e.g. A3), thus providing some support to the complaint of their colleagues about how their work is handled (with respect, in the correct way) and whether auctioneers are knowledgeable and competent enough about art to exercise their functions. The appearance of fake works and forgeries, albeit a rare phenomenon, may also have contributed towards building mistrust between some artists and the auction process in Portugal.

Some artists, especially those who admit that their artistic production is limited (e.g. A5), or that most of it is either abroad or in the hands of persons close to them (e.g. A6) are not very worried, at least for now, about any potential auction effects – positive or negative – for their market or career. Other artists like A2 and A11 saw a positive aspect when their works were auctioned: the existence of demand for their works outside the gallery circuit and in the case of A11, the reluctance of collectors to sell his work, a fact that he described as “fantastic”. A9 sees auctions as being part of the market – and as something beyond the artist's control – but a part important to collectors, or at least to the ones buying art for investment purposes and judging its quality based on financial performance. A10, introduces two different elements in this discussion: first, that there exist artists who consign their own work for auction in an attempt to legitimate it, which means that for them the auction mechanism is a legitimation agent (like gallery representation or institutional presence and acquisitions are); and second, that auction houses also approach artists to consign their own work. This last element can be seen from two angles that are not necessarily mutually exclusive: one, as part of the auctioneers' strategy to find works of an artist that they know are in demand in the market, and two, since auction houses know that some artists are willing to sell work through auctions, approach them in the same fashion as they would approach any other potential seller.

Regarding the two youngest artists, A12 said that he wasn't aware of any of his works being auctioned, while A14 had one of her works present at auction but it wasn't sold. She described her experience as follows:

A14: At the time, it was a piece that was relatively recently bought [from the gallery] and it is a bit ungrateful for an artist after a year to see a piece at auction. [...] I was worried because it appeared [at auction] so soon and because of the price it could have been sold for.

Even though this artist confessed that: “I don’t know if it were sold what would that cause; it depends on the price...”, this illustrates that artists of the younger generation are also aware of the potential effects of auctions once their work starts appearing at auction sales.

Among artists, few were also advocating that the artists’ galleries should *defend*<sup>115</sup> the work of their artists when it was up for auction:

A7: One of the things that gallerists should do is defend the work of artists at auction, but the majority of them don’t do that.

A10: In the ideal system where the artist only works with a single gallery that receives its 50% and the gallery does everything for the artist, the gallerist should support – also because it is in his own interest – and bid up the work up to the values he thinks correct in comparison to the ones in the gallery. The gallerists have given up on this, they don’t do it. Artists do not have the means to buy their own work, although it has occurred that some artists have bought back their own works [at auction].

Clearly, artists do not want to see their work devalued (i.e. sold cheaply vis-à-vis the gallery price), and established artists like A7 and A10 would have liked the gallerists to prevent this from happening by “defending” or “supporting” it at auction. Before analyzing the opinions of gallerists about this issue and about auctions in general, we need to address the notion of defending or supporting the work of an artist at auction, through the lens of auction mechanics in Portugal<sup>116</sup>. Assuming that a work appears at auction with similar characteristics as one in a gallery (in terms of size and period) carrying a much lower price estimate vis-à-vis the comparable work in the gallery, if no one bids on it, it will remain unsold. If there is only one person interested in it (the gallerist, his representative, or any other buyer), that person will buy the work at that low price (low auction

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<sup>115</sup> Defend (or support) means that the gallery will bid on the work so that it doesn’t get sold below a price that is considered correct for it.

<sup>116</sup> In Portugal, usually the low estimate of a work serves also as its reserve price, i.e. a price below which the work will not be sold.

estimate). For the price of any work to be bid up and reach its gallery price and that way be defended or supported, it needs at least two bidders. If there is at least one bidder, and the gallerist bidding on the work, then the work will be sold for a price above the low estimate; how much above is unknown. If there is no bidder interested in that work, then the gallerist must have an accomplice to play the role of another bidder and both bid alternately (simulating a bidding war) in order for the price to reach the desired level<sup>117</sup>. However, when artists talk about artificial or manipulated prices, this doesn't mean necessarily that the auctioneer is to blame. Collectors, other dealers, art advisors, art investors, or simply speculators in an effort to protect their interests may influence the auction outcome by simulating bidding wars.

Gallerists are also following the auction market, firstly because it is part of the art market where they operate, and secondly to be informed about the works of their artists that appear for sale. G1 believes that auctions can be manipulated and that "in Portugal auctions are killing the quotation of some artists". When I asked him whether he follows the auction activity of his artists, he replied:

G1: There are various opinions. There is the opinion that a gallerist has the obligation to defend the artist at auctions. The other opinion is no; the market must [be left to] respond. If artist X has a large body of work and in every auction works of his appear, evidently a Portuguese gallerist does not have the economic power to do it.

In this case the gallerist acknowledges the existence of the argument for gallery support of auction prices but also that the financial resources for its implementation are lacking, especially for an artist whose work constantly appears at auction. The same gallerist however, gave me an example of this kind of support, when he bought a work of one of his artists at auction and explained why he opted for doing so:

G1: If a fantastic work - whose starting estimate at auction is equal to the price of a photograph by a young artist - appears, and at any day it will become a historic Portuguese work, evidently, I could buy it because I know that this artist [names the artist] doesn't have a large body of work and rarely or with difficulty other works will appear at auction. I bought it for the gallery and it was a big investment, but it was out of love for the work of a great artist, one of the main Portuguese artists of the twentieth century. This work one

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<sup>117</sup> I am not in a position to know whether this behavior is taking place in the Portuguese auction market.

day, either a collector will pay the fair value that it's worth, or the gallery could manage to place it in a museum at a special price so that the artist is represented in that museum.

The gallerist reveals here under what circumstances he will intervene in the auction market to defend the work of one of his artists. In this example, the initial low estimate placed on the work by the auction house and its historic importance, reinforced by the fact that this artist does not have a large production, motivated the gallerist's action. This motivation can also be justified with the one invoked by the gallerist, namely the "love for the work of a great artist". It must be noted though, that G1 revealed that in the future this work will be either sold or placed, and in both cases, it will serve his interests: in a direct way, financially if sold to a collector for a (substantial) profit; in an indirect way if it ends up in a museum where the reputation and the visibility of the represented artist will probably be enhanced, something that potentially could be positive for the artist's market and the gallery involved in it.

G2 is another gallerist who - by his own admission - "is alert on everything that regards the art market" and elaborated on his view regarding the link between the primary and secondary market:

G2: My gallery is active in the art market. I am a primary market gallery, but I cannot, and should not, miss opportunities in the secondary market when they arise with my artists or other artists. [...] Most galleries in the world finance their primary market activity with deals on the secondary market. [...] We work with art, we are all market agents and the art market cannot be exhausted after the first sale. The art market must go beyond the first sale because otherwise it will end. Nobody has confidence in the art market if we exhaust the market on the first sale. If the first transaction is the first and only one that I can execute, I won't be able to transmit any confidence in the market.

This is an important point because it shows that the two markets – primary and secondary – are interdependent; simply put, without one the other cannot exist. Also, worthy of mention is that the secondary market can be a source of precious financial means for galleries to support their primary market activities. G2, unlike G1, avoided providing examples of this happening in his case or in other cases within the Portuguese context, so the extent of this phenomenon cannot be evaluated. When asked about whether he intervenes in auctions to support his artists' prices, he said:

G2: It is a double-edged sword; there is no uniform doctrine about what to do in this situation. First, there is the obvious temptation to support the work and bring the price in line with the primary market prices because it is a way of generating confidence in the [gallery] buyer. If the [gallery] buyer sees a work being sold at auction for a lower, or much lower price than what is practiced in the primary market, then we are creating a problem for the future sales in the primary market.

As in all markets, people will participate in a market if they are confident of what they are buying is worth the money spent for it, and this is valid for artworks as well, especially since they are increasingly being viewed as economic/financial assets. Hence, it can be argued that gallerists have an incentive to bid on their artists' works (if necessary) for boosting buyer confidence in their primary market sales.

Regarding the second edge of the sword, G2 said that: "most clients don't put a work for sale at auction with the perspective of losing money relative to their investment". In his example below, if a work today sells in the gallery for 20 and a similar work (in dimensions and other characteristics) appears at auction for 10, probably it was acquired for 10; however, the market will not see it that way, and since it does not self-correct (i.e. realizing that something that is worth 20 is being sold for 10):

G2: The temptation exists for gallerists to inflate the price at auction to reach [the primary market] level, but they are bearing a great risk because on the following day, all people who bought works at 10, feel confident to bring them to auction because they know they will sell for 20; so, we are creating a problem. That is why I say it has two sides, there is no perfect solution for this. It is necessary to look case by case, moment by moment, what is the best attitude to have. Sometimes it is necessary to defend the quotation of the work at auction. Other times it is necessary to let it go, let the market work and when collectors come to the gallery and say: "did you see that work of your artist that sold for half the price?", we ought to give this explanation: it did not sell for half the price, it was sold [at auction] at least for the price which was sold [initially at the gallery] ....

In the reasoning presented by G2 there are two underlying assumptions, both of which are not always true:



1. Works of art always appreciate, i.e. the price always goes from 10 to 20.
2. The price of the gallery is “correct”. If works of an artist are priced in the primary market for 20, but nobody buys them, then from an economic point of view the price of 20 is meaningless since no transactions take place. If we assume that some works are sold at that price (20), then it can be considered “correct”, i.e. a market clearing price. Only if transactions take place at 20, collectors can interpret the auction price of 10 as being a good deal, especially if we are dealing with buyers who adopt the “art as an investment” approach.

Having made this necessary remark, the negative side-effect of supporting auction prices is that it potentially encourages holders of works of the artist or artists being supported to sell them at auction. This potential oversupply will make it impossible financially for a gallery to continue supporting the auction prices. Another added danger, is that a potential flooding of the market with works of certain artist, can be interpreted negatively, exactly in the same way as in the stock market, namely that there is something wrong or something negative about to happen. In the case of art, it could be an interpretation of an artist not being *cool, fashionable, radical, cutting edge, or investment grade material* anymore and collectors are selling his work as fast as they can.

G3 linked the recent economic crisis the country went through with the auction market because many owners of artworks needed to sell:

G3: Auctions were the recipients of those works. They were harmful because they put the works [for sale] at very low prices. One should distinguish between auctions and auctioneers and in Portugal there is only one auctioneer that has tried to approximate the works to their real values.

When I asked if by “real values” he meant the prices practiced by the gallery representing the artist, he answered yes. This view provides further evidence of the importance gallerists attribute to the correct price of art and anything that disturbs this, is harmful to their interest and their artists' interest. G3 feels the need to highlight that there is some progress in this matter, since one auction house is trying to do things the right way, namely close the gap between auction and gallery prices. Answering the question about following the auction market for his artists, he replied:

G3: I always follow it. I always try to see the value they reached and sometimes try to see who buys because...sometimes is necessary to do a survey of the works for an anthological exhibition and it is also up to the gallery to disclose their whereabouts. If these works changed hands, I often try to find out where they went.

The first of the reasons given above, knowing the price of sale, is evident and understandable for a gallerist, since it is related to the commercial interests of the gallery. The second reason invoked, namely knowing the identity of the new owner for potential use in the future, is plausible, and can at the same time also be perceived as a token of the level of professionalism and dedication of the gallerist to his artists and their careers.

G4 acknowledges that auctions are a part of the market and gallerists “have to live with it”. In her opinion:

G4: What is happening is that works that normally would be in the primary market, are very soon in the secondary market. It is very good if the works are sold above the [gallery] price and bad if remain unsold or sold below. There was a crisis and many private collectors went to the auctions [to sell] and there exist auction houses that neither respect the artist nor the artwork. They put prices that make no sense; we have no control, neither does the artist. [...] I don't have many artists appearing at auctions and usually the works are sold very near or above [the gallery price], but never at scandalous prices. [...] Because there are many people that frequent auctions, it is obvious that it draws away [collectors from the galleries], because if a collector really wants [a work] of an artist of the gallery, but it is in an auction and can achieve a great price, it is obvious that if the auction didn't exist he would buy from the gallery and not at auction. [...] I would like auctions to respect more the artist and the work. In Portugal, we have one case and I think they don't respect much. The works many times are not in a good condition [and] they price works at prices that I think are disrespectful. What they want is to sell; for them it is indifferent. I think that selling silverware or art is not the same thing.

The elements of criticism of auctions that G4 refers to were already encountered both in the replies of artists and other gallerists. The price impact of auctions is again perceived as a binary outcome: positive if sold near or above and negative if unsold or sold at a low price compared to gallery prices. The two points I would like to underline are: (a) works appearing in the secondary market

that were normally found in the primary market; (b) auctions are recognized by galleries as their competitors. Both points are related and if among collectors it is widely thought that works of artist A or B, will soon appear at auction (and probably at a lower price than the gallery price), then collectors interested in the works of those artists may postpone a gallery purchase hoping and waiting for similar works of these artists to appear at auction. If this indeed is confirmed, then the galleries representing artists A and B will probably face some difficulty in selling their work. What would be interesting to know - but beyond the scope of this research - is how 'primary market' artworks appear so soon in the auction market.

When G4 reiterated her answer about the impact of auctions by saying: "the impact is good if it goes very well, if it goes badly, it is not bad, but we would have liked to be the opposite", I commented that in many cases things going badly doesn't help galleries, she explained:

G4: Yes, but I don't know if it [auction results] have the weight to harm like that. We are talking about one moment, one public, one divulgation, one concrete thing. If it was something very continuous, then yes, but normally it doesn't happen.

In effect, the frequency of appearance, or in other words the number of works of an artist at auction, is also an influencing factor on the impact auctions may have in the market of an artist.

G5 acknowledges that she follows auctions as much as necessary because she must be abreast of the market and thinks that there is no primary market without the existence of the secondary market. Regarding her experience with auction prices, she elaborated:

G5: Portugal has a small market. The artists with whom I have been working for some time, their prices are maintained - more or less - identical to the price I sell in the gallery and there are not that many works in the market; the market is not *overflowing*. When someone is selling, I can find out who it is selling and why. [...] Regarding the [auction] prices today, auctions want to sell...and put a low price, because then it rises. What happens is that people many times don't buy and the price reference is that one that is very low and it is a bit complicated.

The reduced market size is considered positive in this case because by default the number of works in the market is reduced and this allows the gallerist even to be able to identify the auction seller and his motives for selling. On the other hand, the market size – exactly because of its reduced

size – can have potentially very negative effects if works by certain artists start appearing at auction with higher than normal frequency or larger numbers than before. It is conceivable that supply will outstrip demand resulting in lower prices or even no sales taking place. As G5 explained, if works remain unsold there is the danger of the low auction price estimate to gain reference or benchmark status in the market thus making sales in the primary market more difficult for the gallery representing the artist.

The experiences of the two auctioneers interviewed provide further insight into the workings of the local auction market and its impact on artistic careers and especially in the market for their work. By the time these two interviews took place, I was already familiar with the views of artists and gallerists on this subject (some of them were already interviewed) and naturally my questions to them were also aiming towards hearing the experiences of the actors on the other side of the auction market. Since the main complaint of artists was related to the price – described as very low, disrespectful and scandalous - their work was being estimated at, I asked the auctioneers if they received complaints from artists or gallerists regarding this issue and both confirmed that they have:

L1: Many times. What they see is an auction house selling a work of theirs for a very low price; they don't do the math; they don't understand why and sometimes they don't want to know and this originates dissatisfaction. [...] Rarely a collector goes to a gallery and pays the full price; they [galleries] do at least 20% discount and may as well do 30% or 40%, which means that many times they are selling very close to [the price] where the auction sells.

L2: Not from galleries, many from artists. Maybe 10-15 artists have sent us emails, some very unpleasant, unpolite, accusing us of incompetence, of total lack of knowledge of values of the works, and all that. We reply and explain how the market values are formed and wonder if the prices charged by galleries are real. There is an artist that sells for €1000 in the gallery representing him. I put here [at auction] a work at €300 and it doesn't sell? So, we are saying that the art market is stupid; nobody wants to buy a work for €300 that is worth €1000? The problem is that probably that artist is not worth €1000. There are underlying things that are complicated: when a work is listed in a gallery for €1000, what is effectively the price it will sell for?

Since artists are feeling that their work is badly treated and sold cheaply at auctions, it is no surprise that they complain to the ones that they feel are responsible for this phenomenon. It is also conceivable that some of the complaining artists are seeing their gallery sales drop because buyers prefer to buy their work at auction at usually lower prices than the ones charged by the gallery. Both auctioneers in their replies essentially say that galleries have a stipulated price for works, but transactions take place (when they take place) at a lower price and this lower price is near the price realized at auction.

However, both auctioneers said that nobody complains – especially galleries - if the auction prices go well above the gallery prices:

L1: It would be an historic event if someone complained about that. This is what they want the most, to tell the collector that: “I sell for 10, but at auction the other day it sold for 15”. Maybe even the following day they think about raising their prices. [...] For them it is always an argument; it is this positive impact that it could have in the artists' careers and their prices. Auctions have the capacity to do this and create a buzz. A sale in a gallery is a very private thing; a sale at auction is very public. We create much more buzz than any other agent.

L2: I know that when this happens, the gallerist has my catalog and shows it: “it was sold yesterday at auction for ‘X’, look at the appreciation it is having”. When it goes badly, our catalog is hidden below the table, that's life. [...] When it goes well, auctions are the best in the world; when it goes badly, auctions are the worst in the world.

Auctioneers, recognize that the results of their activity have an impact on the rest of the art market. When they achieve better price results than galleries, these can be used by galleries as selling arguments, especially from the investment perspective, to convince a buyer about purchasing the work of an artist. This is only feasible because the auction process and its results are public, or at least easily obtainable by those interested in the art market in general, or just in a few artists in particular. The transactions in a gallery are private, despite the fact that the pricelist of works is available - sometimes on request - when one visits a gallery. What is clear in these remarks by auctioneers is that galleries welcome and may even take advantage of positive auction results, but when the opposite happens readily blame the auctioneers for it.

When auctioneers were asked about what they considered the auction impact was on an artist's market, both recognized that their activity has an impact. L1 distinguished between positive and negative impact:

L1: When auction houses exist that sell art like selling merchandise, it could have a very negative impact, because including certain artists without knowledge and proper information in a logic just to sell could influence the reference price of an artist downwards ... and it could be [like] giving away works at opportunity prices. It always ends up influencing in some way the [price] performance of the artist and his auction [price] history.

As expected, L1 recognizes that there is a potential danger for an artist's market when low auction prices become reference prices. The underlying assumption made by L1 is that auction prices are the reference price for an artist, while gallerists contest that by saying that the correct price (quotation) is set in the primary market. If a large disparity between gallery and auction price is observed – and this is the central complaint of the artists – then the artist's primary market can be hurt in terms of sales.

Regarding what auctioneers consider as positive impact:

L1: Today people easily consult information, which is very public and transparent. If I am a careful auction house in that regard, the impact of my work by including an artist at auction, I think today it has an international impact, because tomorrow any international auction house from any part of the world will consult the same information we all have access to...and function according to this information that was created. I am convinced that auction houses could have a spectacular impact on the artists' career. Many gallerists believe not, because I think they mostly see the image of another auction house.... They only see that side and then forget that a big part of the buzz that is created today, at the international level above all, in the press has to do with the auction market.

L2: The consecration of the artist occurs when he comes out of the closed circuit - gallery, institutions, collectors – and goes in the open market; it is the most complicated step in the career of an artist. When he does that successfully he is consecrated. Doing it successfully is very complicated. The impact is huge. [...] If I as an artist with 8, 10, or 12 years of career, [and] within 5 years, I start selling regularly my works at similar to gallery prices

at auctions and in [secondary market] dealers, then I am consecrated. It means that there is a market...it means that there is an increasing number of people interested in his work and it is then that works from his older periods will start rising in value. [...] Effectively he [the artist] becomes a public figure.

L1 considers positive the fact that auctions can build up the information available on an artist - and the fact that this information is widely available - enhances the profile of an artist. The publicity generated by auction results in the international press (and increasingly in social media platforms) may contribute to enhancing the visibility, fame, or notoriety of a relatively reduced number of living artists, a factor that doesn't seem presently as important in the local market, hence the clarification of L1 that it mostly regards the international market. This auctioneer also distinguishes between his company and at least another competitor and believes that his competitor's practices adversely affect the overall image of auctions in the market. L2 sees auctions as a market consecration factor for artists and when that happens, the benefits for the artist are not only economic in terms of increasing market demand for his works, but also in terms of image and fame. He elaborated on this point as follows:

L2: The art market functions a lot through imitation: people influence and copy each other. This is one of the reasons why in the contemporary art market the best-selling artists, are the artists that people know about. On the other hand, the art market has a sociological aspect. There exist artists who appear regularly on the market, self-promote themselves and [this] creates the tendency for other market agents to want them. There also exist artists that are very rare; they never appear in the market and nobody knows who they are, a specialist or two may know, but that doesn't count.

This supports the view that auctions can be seen in the market as visibility building or visibility enhancing tools, hence the interviewee's separation between well-known artists, whose work is in demand, and unknown artists, implying that these lack market interest for their work. What we know from the international auction market is that market participants attribute importance to the entry of an artist's work in the prestigious evening sales of major auction houses,<sup>118</sup> which are held in New York and London. This fact is interpreted as the artist's work having gained sufficient

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<sup>118</sup> Sotheby's and Christie's and to a lesser degree Phillips (refer to section 2.2.2 of the Literature Review).

market interest – and to some degree artistic importance - to be worthy of inclusion in these high visibility sales.

The auctioneers were also asked to provide a profile of the sellers of art at auction, and both confirmed that these include - besides collectors - galleries, artists, and dealers:

L1: There was this moment of [economic] crisis and ... there were galleries who started putting works for sale at auction directly and, in most cases, works of artists that were in their inventory, but not of artists that they were representing. I think they did it mostly to meet financial needs since the gallery market was in great difficulty. I believe this served as a test and then they realized that it could make sense to collaborate with auction houses. [...] Those [gallerists], who think better how the market works, sometimes introduce young artists at auction because they know that this creates a buzz, a big exposure for the artist, it creates value - above all for quality artworks - that is always reflected in good results. They hold on to the top artworks – I think correctly – and then there are other works that they could put for auction that help meet financial needs and create a quotation for the artists. [...] Many galleries today are working with auction houses. There are artists – and we have done that as well – who want to consign their work directly. Today, I have some reservations about this, unless they are artists that we believe makes sense to have in our auctions, but since these artists have contracts with galleries, they cannot easily do this directly. Therefore, the artists who approach us today are artists at an initial [career] phase and for us it doesn't make sense.

L2: We have some dealers [as sellers], not gallerists, and a way for them to move their inventory is to put it [for sale] at auction. There are dealers that need to raise money because business must go on and the business at galleries and dealerships is tough. [...] There is one or another artist that puts at auction some works himself, but not many, two or three. At some points, we had a gallery that was representing two artists and with the artists' consent put works at auction and had good results; in fact, one of them is growing a lot and the first works weren't sold here. Then one or another gallery at a certain moment contacts us because it has in inventory several works and sometimes things happen for prosaic reasons, but it is sporadic. I don't have any agreement with galleries, like I do with collectors or dealers, to go and pick up works to include in every auction.



It appears that galleries also consign works to auctions aiming to achieve various objectives, something that did not come up in the five interviews with gallerists<sup>119</sup>. According to L1 it is for raising money and giving visibility to their artists, essentially the younger ones. In his opinion, the consigned works are not always the best ones, but when top works are consigned, usually this is reflected in the price results they achieve. It is important to note that in L1's case the consigned works can be of artists no longer related to the gallery or of younger artists that the gallery aims to promote. Since some galleries opt to do this, it follows that they also recognize the auction process as a visibility generating mechanism. L2 sporadically had to deal with galleries who sell part of their inventory for, as he described it, "prosaic reasons", but a good guess would be raising cash, like all agents who were affected by the recent economic crisis. The fact that a gallery chose to put works of two of its artists for sale with their consent - be that for economic, promotional, or other reasons - provides some support to the view that auctions can be a partner for galleries, even in the Portuguese context. In addition, both auction houses were approached by artists directly to consign works, and both have done so. The fact that artists are willing to sell their work through auctions should be viewed through two lenses: career stage of the artist, and existence of gallery relationships, while also considering their motivation for doing so (economic and/or self-promotion reasons).

If we consider the most famous case of such a practice, i.e. the Damien Hirst Sotheby's auction in London in 2008 on the day of the Lehman Brothers bankruptcy, we see that it involved one of the most famous artists in the world, who had established market demand for his work and his motivation was both economic, as well as, reputation and visibility enhancing. By all accounts it was a superbly organized self-promotion event<sup>120</sup>. A young, emerging artist, whose career is at its initial phase, may wish to sell work through auctions, because he lacks gallery representation and aims to draw attention to his name and work, benefiting also economically from a successful sale. L1, stated that including this kind of artists doesn't make sense for him, possibly because he feels that there is no demand yet for their work. Artists who have gallery representation, cannot do that directly, unless it is done jointly with their gallery, as described by L2. Artists whose work has

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<sup>119</sup> It is possible that none of the interviewed gallerists engages in this practice, or if some of them did, they preferred not to mention it during the interview.

<sup>120</sup> At the time of the auction, Hirst was represented by powerful and influential galleries, like Gagosian and White Cube.

market demand and don't have gallery representation, may use auctions to sell some of their artistic production.

Auctioneers know that they are viewed by galleries as competitors and vice versa:

L1: We are competitors because a collector perhaps doesn't need to go to a gallery to make a certain type of acquisitions; he can perfectly make them at auction and in principle with some financial advantage. [...] Auction houses are always competing with galleries; however, I believe that we are extremely complementary insofar as we very much need the galleries because without galleries there aren't any new artists and we can't always function with the same formula and present the same things. We need new artists, new works, we need the market to flow. We are a very good vitamin for the galleries...the impact that we may have on the artists' quotations and the buzz we create around artists.

L2: We depend a lot on the gallerists, not for now, but for the future. If the gallerist doesn't work well now, in 10-15 or 20 years I will have nothing to sell. [...] Everything that goes well in the art market for any of the agents is good for the market in general. Everything that goes badly, is bad for the market in general. I don't benefit from a bad auction at auction house A or B, or from a bad exhibition at any of the galleries, or from a museum exhibition that has few visitors. [...] We are competitors [of the galleries]. The auctioneers, the gallerists, the art dealers, the antique dealers are agents of the art market who deal with the same type of objects, but in a different way. All are important, all are needed, all are useful. Each one has his role and I think we should all be careful, but auction houses more than others, because auction houses have more visibility and it is easier for them - if they wanted to compete unfairly - to do so. We have special responsibilities not to do so and we try not to hurt either the dealers or the gallerists.

Both auctioneers recognize the vital role that galleries perform in the art world, namely in supporting and promoting artists, albeit for self-serving purposes, since without a supply of artworks, that are created by artists and initially brought to the market by galleries, the auctioneers will not have a flow of *raw material* for their sales. It is true that most of art consigned to them is coming from private collections, but it ended there in the first place because it was sold in galleries, or by artists directly. Put simply, without the primary market there is no secondary market, and as we have seen, the opposite is also true. One has to look no further than the international market for

old masters with its limited stock that gets increasingly more limited as time passes, precisely because it cannot - by its nature - be renewed. The competition side of their relation is evident: all market agents compete for the collectors' money and for building a business relationship with them. In the art market, when it comes to collectors, a buyer today is a potential seller tomorrow and a seller today could be a buyer tomorrow. L1 believes that the relationship with galleries is not only competitive, but also complementary, i.e. galleries have also to gain by working with auction houses and it seems that some already have done so. The relation is not as developed as in more mature markets (where it resembles co-opetition<sup>121</sup>), and only the near future will reveal if we are heading in that direction in Portugal. L2 views the art market as unified, where all market agents have their importance and play a role, but attributes to auctions a special status because of their public nature and the visibility they enjoy.

#### **RQ2.2: International art fairs and their market effect/impact on artistic careers**

From the analysis of RQ1 (relationship between the artist and the gallery system), it became evident that most gallerists place great importance on their participation at various international art fairs. On one hand, it is another opportunity to conduct business and expand their client portfolio, on the other hand, it is something that their artists expect of them as fulfilling part of their representation functions. What galleries are aiming for is creating visibility for their artists in a wider context, that of the international art world:

G1: Fairs for me are extremely important. It is a way for the gallery, or its artists, to be seen by a lot of people in a short period of time. You go to ARCO [Madrid art fair] and see people from all over the world. The other day a curator was here from a museum in New York who is organizing an exhibition of x [names artist], and when I talked to her about one of my artists, she said: "I know her work very well; I have seen work of hers", and I said: "of course you did; it was in my booth at a fair in London".

G2: There are fairs whose main vocation is to generate deals and other fairs whose main vocation is to generate recognition. ARCO Lisboa is a fair [suited] for conducting business in the national market. [...] If we are talking about Art Basel, the objective is not the same.

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<sup>121</sup> Literature Review, section 2.2.2.

Obviously, we also want to do business in Basel – and Basel is a fair when many deals are generated – but the main objective in a fair like Basel is recognition: either of the gallery, or of the artist. I think it is the only fair where the gallery artists, who are not represented there, don't take it badly because they are equally satisfied that their gallery is present at the fair; it has direct and indirect effects. As you know, this fair is very difficult to gain entry to - it is the most difficult to access in the world - therefore, the inclusion in the fair is a seal of quality that reflects on the [gallery's] year-round activity and it should be viewed like that. We want to make sales at the fair – it is evident – but the big objective is to be present. All [artists] benefit from the gallery's presence at the fair.

G2 attributes to the Art Basel fair an important role as a “seal of quality” for the gallery and for the artists it represents. Fairs of this status – Art Basel is not only considered the most prestigious fair, but also one of the main events in the global art world calendar – perform a gatekeeping function; by taking part you signal your status to the rest of the art world. Artists benefit directly from fair presence when sales are made<sup>122</sup> and indirectly because their work is seen by many art world insiders: collectors (current and potential), other gallerists, art advisors who make proposal to collectors (private and institutional), and curators who visit fairs in various capacities, including making potential acquisition proposals or surveying the art field and looking for artists to include in their projects. Recently curators are also increasingly involved with fairs by being asked to curate a section or sections of them, a fact also confirmed by some of the interviewees:

C1: Fairs are in fact an important phenomenon, they compete with the large biennials that have multiplied as well. [...] Fairs, or parts of them, are becoming curated by critics and curators. The circulation of people among the management of a biennial, a museum and a fair is now very frequent.

C3: Today fairs are also curated, have sections with curators as instances of legitimization and valorization of work and therefore curators are called upon to play this role.

Fairs are also venues for collaboration opportunities among gallerists from the international market:

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<sup>122</sup> Many times, the sale is not concluded during the fair, but results from subsequent contacts between the gallery and interested buyers that may occur months after the event.

G2: We [gallerists] use fairs to do market research. Many times, fairs are used to initiate conversations with other gallerists about artists, this happens frequently. Usually it is not exhausted in the fair, it is not something decided at the fair; it is the start of a conversation that later has developments.

G4: Fairs are very important because it is a concentration of specialists: gallerists, artists, curators and collectors. For the gallerists, it is important because we meet with our peers. There exist gallerists with whom the contacts started when we were together at a fair; they are people from other parts of the world that I don't normally see and we meet at fairs, discuss common problems, ask their opinion about other fairs that they participated in and I haven't, or they challenge us to participate in other fairs. Fairs are a large concentration of people who dedicate themselves to it [art market], therefore, it has this important role of bringing people together and creating synergies. [...] At this moment, it is not my case, but I know of various national and international galleries where most of their sales are made at fairs, more than in the gallery [space] itself and this shows the role of the fairs. There are galleries that participate in 10 or 12 fairs each year, while only doing 5 or 6 exhibitions; they are doing more fairs than exhibitions.

All gallerists referred to the fact that the monetary costs of fair participation put a strain on their finances. Some also referred to the proliferation of fairs and confirmed that the art fair fatigue phenomenon exists:

G1: It is not with works that cost €1000-1500 that you can cover expenses. I don't have foreign artists that will allow me, by selling their work, to cover the [fair] expenses that are above €60-70.000. Fair participation should be State supported like it is for the shoe and fashion industry, otherwise it is impossible. [...] Fairs continue to be important after all, but it is not always a rewarding investment; it is losses after losses.

G2: [Artists] expect as much as possible that their gallerists take [show] them to international fairs and that is a problem because it is not always possible. We should understand that the work of a young Portuguese artist has a low [monetary] value compared to the average of the international market and art fair costs are very steep.

G3: The price of art fair booths has risen astronomically and a gallery must pay for it, therefore it is not with young artists that it can be achieved. I think the art market has ruined completely the art fair principle: someone goes to a fair to get to know what is going on; a person goes to [Art] Basel and everybody has the same stuff, they [galleries] all work with the big [artist] names. For that a fair is not needed; there exist museums, collective exhibitions, biennials and all that. In the meantime, there exist some fairs that have this spirit of opening the field and appeared as an alternative to these blockbuster fairs. [...] They are cheap fairs, focusing on emerging artists with lower prices; they are fairs that I can do because even if I sell little or nothing, the loss is not large and it is a way of promoting the gallery...and I am very satisfied with the results that I obtained because it is a way of revealing new Portuguese artists and succeed in arranging exhibitions for them and other type of initiatives. [...] They are very attractive fairs for collectors and critics and curators. They are fairs with special focus and the results can be easier through these fairs than the other gigantic ones where there is a lot of confusion and visual pollution.

G4: The role of fairs today is enormous; just look at the quantity of fairs that exist, the difficulty to gain entry to them, etc. I think we are at a turning point, there was an explosion and I think it cannot continue because both gallerists and collectors are tired. [...] Sometimes there are invitations [to participate in fairs], but there is a limit, and to do fairs I cannot be here [in the gallery] and, [also] I am making a big investment – because fairs are very expensive – that I could have put into to production, for example.

G5: A fair is an expensive thing. For instance, the artworks of a photographer cost €6.000; it is a tragedy. It is impossible [this way] to pay for a 60 square-meter booth that costs €100.000.

The financial effort necessary for Portuguese galleries to participate in fairs is exacerbated by the fact that in most cases the prices of the works of the Portuguese artists that they represent is lower than those of their international peers. For younger Portuguese artists whose prices are very low to begin with, seeing their work exhibited in a major fair is difficult, if not impossible, hence G3's strategy - who mainly works with younger artists - that specifically targets fairs that specialize in that market segment. All the Portuguese galleries that participate in fairs need to represent or at least collaborate with international artists – whose prices and international recognition are more

elevated – to help mitigate the high costs of the fairs. G5 reflecting on this point, at the time when she first started participating at fairs said: “Had I appeared [at fairs] only with Portuguese artists, nobody would have known who they were”, implying that beyond the obvious economic considerations there was also a contextualization reason for combining foreign artists with unknown internationally (at that time) Portuguese ones.

Considering the large number of international fairs in existence and the trend to launch even more – Winkleman (2015) has counted over 220, while Zarobell (2017) puts that number closer to 250 – galleries must have an art fair strategy in place. Their strategy, beyond the obvious financial and logistical considerations, also contemplates two interrelated issues: at which fairs to apply for participation and which artists (and which works from the chosen artists) to show. For instance, G2 said: “I have to show those [artists] that I perceive that at that moment better serve the common interest of the gallery and many times this doesn't coincide with the particular interests of a certain artist”. C2 elaborated on this:

C2: I think that gallerists choose [which artists to show at a fair] based on where they are going; if they go to Latin America they take a certain type of artists, the burden doesn't always fall on the same artists. There are strategies because the collectors of each artist are not in the same places.

G4 mentioned that despite the large number of fairs, not all of them are important:

G4: There are some [fairs] that are very important, but we don't have [expensive] artists to be able to afford them, namely Basel. [...] There also exist fairs that we want to enter, but we don't gain entrance. I am part of a fair's [organizing] committee and I know how they work and at times it is very competitive and it has to do with the strategy of the fair and the markets.

Curators also acknowledged the important role of fairs in the contemporary art market:

C3: There is one important fair, Art Basel, and it is important in the sense that it can sell to mega collections. Also, Art Basel in Miami, the Armory Show [New York] and Frieze [London] are fairs that enable sales to a lot of collections and many very big collections go there and buy. For the big gallerists, fairs are a species of an overall get-together with the big collections.

C4: I think that galleries are much less rooted than they used to be and the art fair is much more important...and now it is probably about making sure that the artist is shown in the right art fair and less about developing a slow relationship with the artist and maybe a few local collectors. [...] Now they [collectors] would go to Basel, Miami [Art Basel at Miami Beach], wherever, and see what the gallery has, so it is a huge shift and it seems at the moment there is a kind of saturation of art fairs; I don't see how it can continue. It seems to me that the galleries themselves are unable to cope.

The proliferation of art fairs around the globe, is supported on one hand by the willingness - or more accurately by the necessity - of galleries to participate in them, and on the other, by the flow of art buyers, curators and institutional decision makers like museum directors and trustees. Essentially the way potential buyers and other actors interact with the market has changed. The place of viewing art and (potentially) acquiring it has shifted from the gallery space to the booth of the gallery in the fair. Consequently, the way of promoting artists and selling art at the international level has changed and adapted to this shift. However, one ought to be conscious that the main actors of the market are still the same; what has changed is the venue, namely the fair booth instead of the gallery premises. When a collector says that he purchased a work at a fair, what really happened is that he visited a gallery that was temporarily present at a location that was not its usual space (a booth at an art fair), where also other galleries were present in their respective booths, and bought a work of art from one of those booths. In other words, the collector doesn't have to go and visit his preferred galleries at their locations – and these could be spread around the world – but visit the fair locations of his choice (also spread around the world), but with the added benefit of having the opportunity to view many more galleries and a larger variety of works than he would have in the traditional way i.e. visiting each gallery at its location. In economic terms fairs offer the benefits of agglomeration externalities, that is firms benefit by locating near each other. Art market authors like Chong (2010) have very aptly described fairs as “temporary economic clusters”, Zarobell (2017) as “pop-up free-trade zones” and Thompson (2014) as “industry trade shows”. This shift from the gallery space to the fair booth is the reason why fairs compete among themselves for attracting galleries that will bring quality works, secure a flow of important collectors, use curated sections to differentiate themselves from competitors and organize sessions with talks given by art world insiders, like curators, museum directors, artists, collectors. At the same time galleries devote considerable economic and other resources to ensure



their presence there and visitors – collectors, art aficionados, curators, museum trustees, etc. – plan their traveling agendas according to the annual calendar of these events.

When curators were asked about the potential effects of art fairs on artistic careers, their answers were mixed:

C3: I really think it is of little relevance.

C4: I think it is positive for a few artists, but I think it will lead to less variety and less distinctiveness; I think things will become more homogeneous, like a small number of brands that survive in the world rather than a wider variety of lower level shops.

C5: I don't know how to answer. At the velocity of contemporary artistic consumption, it is inevitable. If for the career is positive or negative, I don't know. It could have some positive areas...if for an artist it surprisingly catalyzes attention at a given time, at a certain fair, it could even be positive.

C5 confirms, once more, that art fair participation is inevitable in the current market practice, especially if galleries want to pursue an internationalization strategy. If C4 is right in her prediction – and some elements point towards that direction, i.e. the 'art fair art' phenomenon – then fairs will be, or in some cases are, a very powerful tool for artists to become brands. G3's comment about everyone having the same stuff at Art Basel was in this precise sense: galleries present branded artists that most art buyers recognize and want. This also reinforces the imitative behavior that takes place among collectors:

C5: For example, at ARCO [Madrid fair] there are collectors who do their shopping on the first day. For instance, Helga de Alvear<sup>123</sup> goes there on the first day in the morning and purchases €500.000 worth of art and in the same afternoon it is known that Helga bought there and there. It is a part of an imitative reaction to use this; she is a complete insider with a high level of knowledge.

Before examining the artists' experiences with art fairs, it should be made clear that artists cannot participate at a fair alone, that is without being integrated in a gallery's fair presence. A possible derogation of this practice occurs when the fair organizers or the curators of a section of the fair

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<sup>123</sup> Veteran gallery owner based in Madrid whose art collection is exhibited in her foundation in Cáceres (Spain).

ask an artist to present his work as part of a curated section or a special project (e.g. Frieze Projects in the ambit of the Frieze art fair in London, or *Art Unlimited* in the ambit of Art Basel), but even in those circumstances the artist's galleries have a role is supporting their artist when invited, since they will directly benefit from any interest this special presence may generate. Another development, that is mostly - if not exclusively - a New York<sup>124</sup> based practice, are fairs aiming to attract emerging artists who can participate on their own as exhibitors and sell their work to collectors directly without intermediaries. However, the fact that these fairs take place in New York, one of the key locations of the international art market, is probably because these are used by curators and by galleries - that specialize in representing younger artists - as a potential source of new talent. Therefore, artists may use these fairs for generating sales, visibility and as a stepping stone towards finding gallery representation.

Artists were asked about the importance they attribute to their presence at fairs and its impact on their careers. What became obvious after the first interviews was that most artists believe that an art fair is a bad place to see art, but at the same time, it is important, at least to some of them, that their works are shown there and is in fact one of the functions that they expect their gallerists to perform. A5, a mid-career artist represented both by a Portuguese and two foreign galleries that regularly include his work at the fairs they participate in, shows two distinct points of view held by artists regarding fairs:

A5: I haven't been at an art fair for ages. I don't like that confusion, the immense quantity of things, I don't like the fair atmosphere, therefore I don't go. This is my relationship with them as a spectator. On the other hand, I know that fairs are extremely important in terms of giving visibility, dissemination and all that, and therefore, I am in favor of them. Fairs are very important and have been gaining more importance and perhaps there is an excess of them. [...] There are a lot of people who get to know my work through what they see at the fairs, but for me the emphasis continues to be on the individual exhibition.

We see that, on the one hand artists have one opinion – usually negative – regarding the fair as a place of viewing works of art. At the same time, they have another opinion as indirect<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> For example: Clio Art Fair, The Other Art Fair, ArteExpo NY, all based in New York.

<sup>125</sup> I use the word indirect because they are dependent on their gallery for participation and inclusion of their work. Special projects and invitations by curators or fair organizers are more likely to materialize when the artist's gallery (or galleries) is participating at the fair.

participants whose interests are directly linked to the fair. Those could be purely economic that result from sales of their work, could be in terms of image and visibility, or other non-tangibles in the form of expressions of interest for collaboration with other galleries or manifestations of curatorial interest. Hence, when talking to an artist about this issue, one must understand which hat the artist is wearing when expressing an opinion: the hat of the art maker and art appreciator who has a deep understanding of art, or the hat of someone who stands to benefit in various ways. For instance, A1 knows that his work is not suitable for the art fair format; yet is aware of the economic importance of fairs for galleries and the potential it offers for them in terms of 'trading' artists.

A1: My artistic opinion on art fairs is that they are a disgrace, a disaster. [...] Work like mine has a lot of difficulty to survive and get noticed; with a painting is more difficult than with an installation. Art fair lighting ruins all my works and I am horrified of fairs because of that. I understand that for galleries is a moment of concentration and they can make money and trades<sup>126</sup> with [galleries from] abroad.

A7 doesn't like how artists are treated in the fairs, albeit recognizing both the economic aspect of the fair for the galleries, as well as the visibility it creates for an artist:

A7: I detest fairs; artists are treated like pieces of meat at the fairs. I honestly don't like them, but I must recognize that all the power today is found at fairs. It is more important to have an exhibition at a fair than in a gallery; 90% of the economic deals are done at fairs, not galleries. There are galleries saying that they only keep the gallery open today for prestige because 99% of the sales they do are done at fairs.

A4 is an artist whose opinion is very much in line with the opinions of his peers, but in his view, fairs shouldn't be used by curators for viewing work:

A4: Art fairs are horrible; they shouldn't be for artists, even though there exist artists who like them. It is the worst visual experience you can have, it is visual junk, it doesn't have any sense, it is an accumulation of thousands of works, it is an overdose. Everything is badly installed, badly lit, 90% of the times without a selection criterion. The art fair is for

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<sup>126</sup> Refer to footnote #100.

collectors and gallerists, it shouldn't even be for curators, but unfortunately there are many curators who see the [artist's] work at fairs.

A11 elaborated on the importance that a fair may have on the image of an artist and his gallery, especially in an attempt to create a brand for the artist and also for the gallery. His own experience with one artwork exemplifies this:

A11: Presence at fairs is important. I am expecting that galleries take me to fairs because they are important for the dissemination of the work; the work achieves a level of visibility that it would [otherwise] lack if not shown at fairs. My galleries have taken my work to fairs and the work has circulated, has been seen by many people – at times has been sold, not all, but some pieces were sold – it has been well exhibited. From the fairs I have participated in, I highlight one presence when my gallerist exhibited a work of large dimensions and it was a piece with a lot of visibility at the fair...it was reported in the media – it was really very photogenic – therefore it fulfilled this function. [...] Both at exhibitions and at fairs, it could be counterproductive to think only in terms of sales and not in terms of image, even more so at fairs. I believe that art fair presence must be thought through the image that the work will trigger and the curiosity it will trigger; this brings medium- to long-term benefits. This is done by many gallerists who sometimes present an installation at their booth that is hard to sell – and they don't manage to sell it – but perhaps they created an important thing, which is a brand image. The image that the gallery presents and the image of the artist with his work, are more important than sales. This is a marathon, it is a long race, it is not [something] to be rushed.

By presenting artworks that are likely to capture the interest of the visitors of the fair, the gallery together with the artist are taking a step towards creating - or in the case of artists that already have an art fair presence, further enhancing – an artistic brand. It seems that art fairs are a suitable vehicle for those pursuing such a strategy due to the visibility - which includes both traditional and social media coverage – it offers to the participants, galleries and artists alike. The fact that this participant views image building as a long-term process indicates that a succession of such image-building events must take place until the artistic brand is developed and appreciated by the target consumer, hence the importance of the artist being shown regularly at fairs (among other things). This answer also provides evidence to support the view that at least some artists think strategically

about their careers and understand that it is something that takes time (“marathon”) and creating an artistic brand could be a part of such a strategy.

Other artists find at fairs an opportunity to survey the field and meet fellow artists and collectors:

A2: It is a love-hate relationship. Fairs are a display window for galleries to show works, there are project rooms, there are many things happening in parallel [to the fair]. I think it is interesting for an artist to see things like an index, to have a general idea of what is happening.

A6: For about 10 years I almost couldn't go to a fair; I went to install my work and left very annoyed. I found it horrible because I don't like to see many things at the same time, I couldn't see anything, I found all the works badly exhibited, the lighting was horrible, there is no natural light and then there is that momentum of money, of buying and selling.... Afterwards something nice happened; that is, it is at fairs that we meet the other artists that we get to know from other places. It has become very pleasant when there is a fair – I don't go to all of them – and turns into a meeting place, not only with artists, but also with collectors – because as we sell our work – there are people following us [our careers], they look at our work, they buy it and many become our friends because they are passionate about our work, our ideas, and therefore the fair becomes a meeting place. Obviously, it is a place of tension because it is the moment when we find out if we have sold any work, or not, but that it is not the most important part. I think fairs have tried and become increasingly less commercial and have more experimental projects because otherwise the dynamic of the fairs will run out.

A9: I don't find any joy at fairs. I think it is a bad place to exhibit an artist's work. [...] It is a meeting point, because the rest of the time the artist is very much alone: he is part of a group show, a solo show in his gallery, in a very individualistic production and in a sense, doesn't meet the others. If it weren't for the biennials – that is why the biennial has a lot of importance – or the fairs, people wouldn't see each other. Fairs have this importance: you see other people, you see little things that are not important, you see the commerce, you see the collector, you see the gallerist. It has its role and it is important in the way how [the art] society is organized.

Artists also see a social function in the existence of fairs, namely an opportunity to socialize with their international peers, establish or deepen relationships with collectors, thus being active at maintaining their collector base, and get a feel for the international art world, something that they cannot do if they are absorbed in their work at the studio. A6 believes that fairs are becoming less commercial, and maybe this explains the curated sections and new gallery/new artist sections some fairs are including in their programs to prevent the “dynamic of the fairs” from running out. C4, who has curated sections of art fairs in the past, shed some light on this aspect:

C4: It seems that everyone is trying to do the same thing and it looks superficially slightly different, but in the end, is all about the market and what the galleries will pay for and whether they think it is worth their while commercially, because they still must pay to be in the show and they still have to make sales, so it's a very commercial space. It is not a non-commercial space.

From this statement, we get the idea that curated sections are part of a differentiation strategy of the fair organizers, due to the increasing competition among them on an international scale. In any case, the *raison d'être* of the fair has been and will remain a commercial one, but this doesn't exclude other activities that artists themselves consider important, like maintaining and expanding relationships with other art world actors; on the contrary the fair (biennials as well) serves as a venue for it. Yet, there exist artists who don't like to network, as is the case of A8:

A8: I go to fairs when I really need to install [my work] or when there is something specific. I was at this fair [names the fair] when my gallerist showed my work and I was the gallery's only participating artist. Also, in another occasion when they [fair organizers] asked me to because it was a special project and had a space available only for myself. In these cases, it makes sense [to go], otherwise not [because] my work at the studio is very focused and demands being present a lot. [...] I go to the fair, I install and then leave. I never cultivated many relationships with galleries, collectors, and curators. There are other artists that are much more into public relations.

Here we observe two decisions by the artist that may appear incongruent: this artist recognizes that a gallery booth dedicated exclusively to his work or a special project at a fair is something worthy of sacrificing his time in the studio to take part in. However, he participates in a very limited way: he installs his work but doesn't like to do public relations or networking like some of his

colleagues. Having in mind that this artist prefers to delegate to his galleries and stated that he prefers to be spared of contacts with collectors, it is not surprising when he says that he doesn't "cultivate many relationships" with other art world actors. The incongruency lies in the fact that although the artist is fully conscious of the valuable opportunity to showcase his work at a fair (something that in the opinion of A7 expressed above, is more important than a gallery exhibition), he personally does nothing to "capitalize" on this opportunity, beyond installing his work and being dependent on the gallerist. Again, we see that the personality of the artist is determining his action (or inaction) in the artistic field.

A3, like all his colleagues so far, doesn't like fairs, but takes part by default when his gallerists choose to show his work there. In his opinion, art fairs are a "necessary evil", a phenomenon already entrenched deeply in the art world to the degree that it is pointless to try and go against:

A3: I have a bad relationship with fairs: I don't like the model, the format, I think it is complicated, it is not art friendly; it is very unpleasant to see art at fairs and above all there is art created for fairs and it is a weird phenomenon, therefore I don't think it is a good thing, but it is a necessary evil, something difficult to fight against. I am not going to say that I don't participate in fairs – it wouldn't make sense – I participate when the galleries I work with participate, I participate also.

The interviewee by mentioning "art created for fairs" refers to what is commonly called by insiders as "art fair art", a term that for some members of the art world, and especially artists, carries a negative connotation. When A1 previously said that his type of work (painting) is more difficult to get noticed in the fair compared to an installation, I urged him to elaborate:

A1: There are works that have an immediate reception [at the fair]; for works that need more time, it's not possible. There are works that need more attention and at the fair you can't give it to them. The biggest hits at fairs are those that fit its environment; the only thing missing from them is to have bells ringing and lights...it is increasingly like this.

On this issue, C4 said that: "I suppose that there are some works in their practice that would suit the art fair and some that wouldn't; they need to be kind of robust and have some quick impact...". Taking these views into consideration, one could argue that the work presented at a fair by A11

fits this definition and confirms that indeed well-made works of this kind can have the desired impact if one has set this as a goal. C5 offered his view on the subject:

C5: Of course, larger pieces, pieces that are visually more attractive, similar to works that the artists made in the past and had success; there is this pressure of the gallerists. Let's not romanticize: artists are not saints that have an illumination. They are people developing careers and to develop careers sometimes they must stretch their production zones - at times even to mannerist zones - to achieve producing other things.

In C5's opinion 'art fair art' can also refer to works by artists that are easily identified as their own, are desirable and most likely will lead to sales. The proceeds from these works are used by the artist to finance the development of other types of work. In a nutshell, art fair art, can be used for income generation, when an artist already has a style of work that is recognizable and in demand by buyers, i.e. he is a brand, or as a device for drawing attention to his work when he is in the process of building a brand.

So far, we have seen that fairs, from the artists' point of view, have an economic impact when sales of their work occur, can be an opportunity to meet others and network, can be a way of initiating or maintaining an international presence and provide visibility for their work. The following experiences of two artists will help put these factors in perspective. In the first case, A6 talks about developments in her career that were directly related to her presence at a fair where one of her international galleries dedicated the whole booth to her work:

A6: This exhibition at the gallery in the United States emerges – there was already a conversation, an interest – and with my work present at the fair, the relationship was consolidated completely. This has also happened with another gallery in Latin America where I will do a project maybe in a year from now. There were also other galleries that showed interest, but we can't accept everything. All the work was practically sold, one piece wasn't sold at the fair; in commercial terms, it was a success. A fair has thousands of excellent artists, there are thousands of things going on and the results normally are not instantaneous. What a fair creates, and this I have learned, is something long term; it is a very important dynamic for the galleries and the artists.



The decision of the gallerist to dedicate the whole booth to this artist was the catalyst that led to new exhibitions at two galleries where the artist had not – at least individually - exhibited her work. Fairs, as A6 reiterates, are a part of a long-term process, that when planned strategically between gallerist and artist can have tangible effects in the artist's career, like in this case, when the artist is entering new markets. The American gallery had shown interest in collaborating with the artist before the fair, but apparently what sealed the deal was on one hand the bet of the artist's gallery to dedicate the booth to her work – a bold move by itself – and on the other hand, that her work was practically sold out, indicating that the artist's work is in demand.

In the second case, A5 describes his experience at Madrid's ARCO fair:

A5: I did an exhibition at my [Portuguese] gallery and then the gallerist presented some works at ARCO and at that time this curator [names curator] was at the fair and liked my work and acquired two pieces for ARCO's collection. At that time, the gallery exhibition didn't have much visibility and most of the work remained [unsold] at the gallery. As a result of that curator having liked my work and acquired it, things cleared up for me and from then onwards the gallerist managed to sell the [remaining] works and my work gained visibility, etc. Sometimes, there exist certain moments and certain agents: the fair, a curator, and they create a series of things that will lead from one to the other.

In this case we don't only have the role of the fair in helping that artist sell work, but also the impact of a curator<sup>127</sup>. However, the fair is an important link in the chain of these events because it provided the opportunity for this curator to appreciate and buy the work of the artist, a fact that later had other ramifications, namely the artist selling more work at his gallery.

When it comes to the impact of fairs on artistic careers we must differentiate between the appreciation artists have for them - and they clearly expressed their opinion judging them as a rather unsuitable place to exhibit and appreciate art - and the impact on their market and careers. Fairs are, and probably will continue to be, one of the drivers of developments in artists' careers and have economic, reputational, and visibility enhancing (including brand creation) impact, while at the same time, offer artists the opportunity for initiating new gallery collaborations, generation of curatorial and institutional interest, and networking with other actors, including international

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<sup>127</sup> The impact of curators and their choices is the subject of RQ3.

peers. The fact that galleries can use their art fair presence for generating a considerable amount of sales, expanding their client base, gaining visibility for their program and disseminating the work of their artists, and as a networking opportunity with various actors from other contexts, will probably sustain the art fair phenomenon, albeit at a slower growth rate.

### **RQ3: The impact of curators and the effect of institutions and biennials**

In the previous RQs we considered the impact of auctions (RQ2.1) and art fairs (RQ2.2) on artistic careers, both of which are directly linked with the economic or mercantile aspect of an artist's career, even though both, and especially art fairs, are increasingly being used for visibility and brand building purposes. This research question is centered around the role of the curator in the development of artistic careers. The curator has assumed a key role in the art world as a gatekeeper – a role whose importance has been rising since the late 1960's with Harald Szeemann being a seminal figure – who many times holds the keys to various kinds of exhibitions taking place in museums (both public and private), cultural institutions of varying sizes, big art events like biennials, or specially curated exhibitions at commercial art galleries and fairs. Curators also assume another role, many times in parallel with that of exhibition-making, that of the acquisitions advisor. All collecting institutions have some sort of decision making body for considering possible acquisitions and curators (either as members of staff or external advisors) are an integral part of them. Also, in many private collections that have, or aspire to attain, an institutional character, curators or art advisors/consultants are responsible for making acquisition proposals. This RQ focuses precisely on all these activities that depend on curatorial actions and how these affect and impact artistic careers. Their impact is assessed from the perspective of three types of participants: artists, gallerists, and from the curators' own point of view.

Artists were first asked about how they perceive the influence of curators on their career and their answers mostly focused on two themes: curatorial power/influence and criticism of curators.

Some artists (A1, A10) view curators as “indispensable” or necessary for making an exhibition, because for the artist a key objective is to have his work shown. A1 links the curatorial decision making with the market and this explains why it is in the gallery's interests to have its artists chosen for an exhibition by a curator who is known, implying that the selections of known curators have

positive effects on the market of an artist. A10, on the other hand, seems to attribute to curating no special role calling it “just another situation”.

A1: The artist must be in exhibitions and there are two ways to do it: artists get together and do an exhibition that normally doesn't yield significant results or are chosen by a curator, or they choose a curator. The curator is increasingly an indispensable figure in the artist's career. [...] Curators choose in function of the market; the gallery has all the interest that its artists are selected by a known curator.

A10: Indeed, today an artist can hardly do an exhibition somewhere without having a curator; there is always someone taking care of things in this sense. I don't think that the success or the quality of art is dependent on this situation; it is just another situation that exists in the market.

A5 doesn't think that so far curators have had decisive impact on his career, or to put it differently, he is having a career (with international presence) even though his work hasn't yet participated in “large-scale events linked to curating”. He admits to having positive experiences when collaborating with curators and establishing a dialog with them.

A5: Not much [of an impact], punctually it may have, but it hasn't been decisive in my trajectory, unless we see it from the negative side, because my work hasn't been present in most of these large-scale events linked to curating. There have been curators that I worked with for certain exhibitions and it was very prolific, interesting, and enriching to work with and a kind of dialog was created with them.

Other artists like A2 and A6 also admit that they find it interesting to work with curators, but at the same time alert that it comes with certain risks. A2 believes that if an artist allows himself to be over-dependent on the curator it is not positive for him, i.e. the relationship is beneficial only if it is on an equal footing (“dialog”) and does not evolve into something like “vassalage”. In A2's view this “vassalage” occurs only if an artist allows it. When curators try to influence the artists' work - and apparently this is something that curators try to do, otherwise artists wouldn't comment

on it - A6 states that artists should look for an alternative, but without specifying what this could be<sup>128</sup>.

A2: It is a new profession. This [influence of curators] is allowed because artists have allowed it. I think it is extremely useful in the sense that you have someone who is establishing a dialog with you and works in parallel to you.... This way the curator is someone who takes care of the relations between the artist and the institution and I think it is a correct thing. There are artists that become stars, curators that become stars, these things are unpredictable. What I think is worse is a kind of vassalage between artist and curator, when the artist is highly dependent upon the curator; it is not healthy, it is not productive.

A6: I think it is very interesting that artists work with curators, but it is also interesting that artists do projects without them especially if they feel that suddenly there is an influence that is imposed on art's own power and on artists' work and at that time artists have the responsibility to create something alternative. [...] When big events [involving] a lot of power take place, like biennials and big museums, there is always a situation of power and always choices of one [artist] in detriment of another. What is necessary is to be alert and understand how this choice is made.

A12 focused his answer precisely on the issue of power and characterized curators as being "the biggest power grab of the last 20 years". He acknowledges the existence of these power struggles where what is disputed is the authorship of the exhibition. A12 also believes that curators have an agenda and for achieving their goals the use of artists is necessary, something that he is not against. Viewed from his perspective – and always keeping in mind that A12 belongs to the younger generation of artists (born in the 1980's) - one crucial point remains unclear: if for curators to advance their agendas it is necessary to impose on artists and their work. If the answer is yes, then the artist willingly becomes dependent on the curator and therefore "loses" the power struggle; if along with it loses also part of his artistic identity can only be known to the artist himself.

A12: Curators are the biggest power grab of the last 20 years; I don't like it and I think that a good curator doesn't do that. A good curator is a parallel voice, not an overlapping one.

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<sup>128</sup> A6 in other parts of her interview said that she assumes the curatorial role herself if necessary and that when she was younger it was common for peers to assume the curator's role for the work of each other.

The question with curators is the question of the voice; is it the voice of the artist or of the curator? This is the curatorial power: there exist curators who wish to impose their voice, they want others to say: “this exhibition wasn’t of artist x or y, it was curator z’s”. There are curators more interested in this power than in working with the artists, they place artists in their service. I can say that I am not interested in this, but can be perfectly guilty of participating in these ‘games’. These negotiations are constant, people are always bargaining for power. There are curators interested in advancing their ideas, their agenda; it is a political agenda and for this they use the artists, a thing against which I don’t have a problem with.

Established artist A8 is critical of the attempts of curators to assume the creative role that belongs to the artist as author of the artworks:

A8: Curators form a very large crowd; not all are equal and some are very interesting, but curators have come to be considered as creators and artists as creatures; it is an inversion of roles, isn’t it? [...] First appears the name of the curator and then the artist with a lesser role, isn’t it? Whereas, without the works of art, curators wouldn’t do anything and many times they don’t achieve anything because the artists they choose are at the same level as they are.

A8, before expressing his criticism on curators, acknowledged that “some are very interesting”, even though he considers that the attention curators receive as creators is an inversion of roles. Furthermore, he openly says that without the art, curators wouldn’t have a reason of existing and then goes even a step further challenging the competence and choices of curators. Especially on this point, his colleague A10 remarked: “there are lots of curators who have promoted completely mediocre artists”.

Another established artist (A13) also voiced his criticism of curators about their wish “to be artists” and “influencers”, questioned their competency (lack of art history knowledge) and called into question their apparently unnecessary large number:

A13: Curators are a recent phenomenon. The problem of curating and curators is that they want to overlap artists, they want to be artists. I have never seen a curator write a decent book about an artist; on the contrary, there existed great museum directors who were also

[art] historians and were writing and they knew...and this is what is missing many times in the contemporary phenomenon. These curators [now] are not historians, they are sometimes a kind of adventurers that need to have a way of life. [...] Today there are more curators than artists; I mean, anyone is a curator. I think curators always existed, in the past they were called commissaries or museum directors; today they want to be influencers. [Harald] Szeemann was a great man and a great curator, Pontus Hultén was fabulous....

His esteem and admiration for Szeemann (1933-2005) and Hultén (1924-2006) are understandable since both were extremely influential and respected as curators. For instance, C2 described Szeemann as “the father of curating”, Balzer (2015, p. 41) wrote that Szeemann is “probably the most discussed and romanticized curator of the era”, while George (2015, p.5) in the introduction of his book “The Curator’s Handbook” said that: “Ground-breaking projects were produced by luminary postwar curators such as Pontus Hultén and Harald Szeemann”. The influential Swiss curator Hans Ulrich Obrist (2015) says that one of the reasons he became a curator was the effect that one of Szeemann’s exhibitions had on him during his adolescence, while for Hultén he said that his “innovative exhibitions expanded the scope of curatorial practice and redefined the function of the museum” (ibid., p. 73). In view of the praise for these two legendary figures of curating, perhaps we can understand what is bothering A13: he feels that part of the current generation of curators behave as if they were Szeemann or Hultén, without first having earned the respect and gained the influence in the art world that these two curators managed to accumulate during their long careers.

Another artist who is also extremely critical of curatorial practices is A4, whose views are in accordance with those of his older peers:

A4: A curator who selects artists for an exhibition because he saw one work at a fair, is usually a bad curator. He ought to do his homework and it is not at a fair that you see art; you see it at the studios, at individual and group exhibitions, it is there that they must do their work. You don’t see [art] on the internet; they see everything on the internet. In most cases they are visually illiterate because they don’t have the experience of looking, they only read. [...] Ninety percent of curators don’t know how to put together an exhibition because they never learned to see. Most of them have studied anthropology, sociology;

they always had a bookish knowledge. There is no need for so many curators; we have good curators, but we don't need that many.

A4's criticism is directed across various levels: lack of professional rigor, i.e. they don't do their "homework" and look for art in the wrong places; incompetence, since they don't know how to set up an exhibition properly; inadequate educational background, i.e. subjects not directly related to the visual arts. Apparently, this artist also thinks that there are too many curators but only a few are good. His younger colleague, A14, believes that curating as a profession has become "more desired"; whether this can be attributed to the desire of curators seeking "adventures", as suggested by A13, or by their necessity to assume the role of authors/creators, as suggested - with various nuances - by all the artists above, is something outside the scope of this research question.

A14: What I feel is that maybe this profession started being more desired. I feel that curators are invited in the first place to select artists and do exhibitions. It is fundamental that they also produce knowledge, manage to bring together artists of various kinds and manage to find a narrative or points they [artists] have in common to transmit to the spectator. There exist artists that do this well, but maybe, in most cases, it is good to have this intermediary so that the artist doesn't have to do everything.

A14 considers fundamental that curators "produce knowledge" by transmitting a narrative to the audience in addition to selecting artists and organizing exhibitions. However, if her colleagues are correct in their assessment of curators, many of these cannot execute their functions satisfactorily because they lack the skills, the educational background, and more importantly, they don't know how to "see". Curators also admitted that very often the part of their tasks they call "research work" remains unfulfilled. C3 stated that it is missing in some cases because some curators opt for limiting their functions to exhibition making and don't undertake any sort of analysis and reflection, while C5 attributes its lack to the difficult economic situation many institutions find themselves in that results in curatorial teams without the necessary diversification in terms of human resources to undertake time-consuming research projects.

A7 and A3 recognize that a curator can help an artist and impact his career. A7 provided an example from the international context where, in his view, this power and influence is real to the point that if one manages to integrate such a group he will gain access to "millions of places". This interviewee considers the swiss curator Hans Ulrich Obrist as being the central figure of one such

group that, besides artists, includes other curators and even galleries. The term “pressure group” implies that its members coordinate efforts and exercise pressure in order to achieve some goals (or have an “agenda”):

A7: A curator today can help an artist immensely. There exist curators and pressure groups, like the group of Hans Ulrich Obrist [with the artists]: Philippe Perrenno, Pierre Huyghe, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Rirkrit Tiravanija, Liam Gillick. It is a cohesive group, they all function together and have huge international influence. And why? They are around a curator, who is Obrist, and around him circulate others, like Jens Hoffmann, Adriano Pedrosa, etc., but basically it is Obrist who agglutinates this group and it has real influence. I am not saying that I think is bad or good, I am not judging, I am stating a fact, it is real influence and if you become a member of this group you have open doors to millions of places.

A3: A curator may have a lot of impact, I think that today curators have a lot of power, both the institutional, as well as the independent [curator]. The curator has assumed this role of including or excluding, organizes exhibitions and includes or excludes a certain artist, includes or not an artist in a collection, therefore I think he has more perverse power in this sense where he can leave an artist out or not. His power of decision is very strong and this gives him influence and normally there is a close relationship – sometimes too close – with certain collectors who work with certain curators and certain galleries. There exists this incestuous side in this relationship and many times reaches museums because they are commercially and financially supported by galleries and collectors who in their turn have relationships with galleries and auction houses and all this is a bit....

A3 talked about the connections between curators and collectors, museums and galleries and described them as “incestuous” because of the financial support involved, i.e. collectors and galleries can make curators and institutions dependent on their economic support that eventually leads to the existence of multiple conflicts of interest. For instance, as we have already seen in the literature review, big galleries are financing important museum exhibitions of their represented artists and the cases of “incestuous” relations identified in Tate Modern. In such cases, one can argue, that the curatorial decision for exhibiting artist A (and not B) was not decided on purely artistic merit or relevance, but by the fact that the gallery (or galleries) representing artist A



contributed economically (directly or indirectly, e.g. financing the publication of the catalog and contacting private collectors to loan their works) towards that purpose. More interesting is the fact that some curators openly acknowledge the existence of such conflicts of interest:

C4: The lines are very hard to distinguish and I think there is also more and more blending between commercial and non-commercial. People are quite poor at recognizing a conflict of interest. [...] Yes, I think the art world is all about conflicts of interest.

Curators, either as staff members of institutions or working independently as free-lancers<sup>129</sup>, while performing their curatorial functions exercise influence on what is seen and acquired by the institutions. Institutional curators appear under a variety of titles depending on the size of the organization and occupy top positions such as museum director or artistic director or programmer, and lead curatorial teams that include among its ranks, positions such as: head curator, assistant curator, curator-at-large, junior curator etc. In small institutions it is very common to find the director assuming (by default) the role of curator and being the sole decision maker in that respect. The artists were asked to share their experiences regarding institutional exhibitions (individual and group exhibitions at both public and private institutions) of their work and institutional acquisitions. The potential impact of being present at institutions works at least at two levels for an artist: having his work exhibited in an institution (temporarily or permanently) and acquired by an institution. It is evident that selling work to museums brings an economic benefit to the artist, although in their answers they did not consider this important enough to mention<sup>130</sup>. Therefore, as far as museum sales are concerned, the benefit that mostly is of interest to them is non-monetary. A5 referred to one of his experiences:

A5: It is not so much for monetary reasons, but for the circulation the work will have and the dissemination it will get. In the case of works that I have in foundations or institutions, even if they are not permanently exhibited, sometimes there are exhibitions that include one work and reach a wider audience. For instance, [due to] this [temporary] exhibition, people who weren't familiar with my work went to the gallery and asked to see more things.

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<sup>129</sup> Independent curators frequently collaborate with institutions by planning and realizing exhibitions for them.

<sup>130</sup> Museums and institutions in general are granted price discounts and extended payment periods.

It is very gratifying to have work that is accessible to every person in any circumstances and to know that the institution takes care of it, preserves it and disseminates it.

Taking A5's experience as a starting point we see that there are two factors he considers important: the work being visible to a broader audience and being taken care of by the institution (preservation and conservation). The impact of this broader visibility gained can be economic when the part of the audience who is in an economic position to purchase artworks go to the gallery representing the artist and show interest in his work and possibly some transactions take place. The same artist also talked about his experience at the Gulbenkian when an exhibition (not a retrospective one) of his works took place and he chose again to highlight the visibility effect:

A5: It was an important exhibition for me, I enjoyed doing it, it gave me a lot of visibility. A place like Gulbenkian always offers more visibility than a gallery.

These two themes of visibility and conservation were also important for other artists, like A4, A6, and A11:

A4: It is preferable to sell to museums because you know that they [artworks] will not end up at auction, they are preserved and can be integrated into exhibitions and have public visibility. In most cases, private collections are closed [to the public] and the works will never be seen again.

A6: It is very important. For instance, one of the marvelous experiences is to have a work that belongs to a Spanish collection [names the collection] and this work has integrated beautiful exhibitions in Mexico and other countries and it is marvelous. It is fantastic to have pieces in museums, but it is fantastic only if they circulate. I have a work in Serralves that circulated a few years ago, but during the last five, it hasn't. My works [in the collection] of EDP were never shown and that is terrible.

A11: It is always important to have pieces in important collections, this is curriculum. It is an information that makes the work more convincing. Then it is good to have good pieces in these collections because these pieces are shown at exhibitions that always change. At this moment, there is an exhibition at Gulbenkian that has works of mine. Another museum [at a European capital] has various works and has shown them regularly.

A4 explains his preference for having works in museums vis-à-vis private collections not only because of the potential visibility effect, but also because the work won't end up for sale in the auction market, clearly associating the auction market with negative effects on his market or career more broadly. A6, says it is positive to have works in museums, if these are "circulating", i.e. shown with some regularity and clearly laments the fact that her pieces in Portuguese institutional collections do not circulate at all, or at least, not enough, in stark contrast to the practice of the Spanish institution she referred. Her observation comes to support the consensus view (see also RQ-Artworld) that Portuguese institutions lack the capacity to exhibit adequately parts of their collections. A11 also provides evidence in this respect by giving the example of a European museum that integrates his works regularly in its exhibitions and confirms the role of the museum as a legitimization agent for artistic work by saying: "it makes work more convincing". This last point is partly contradicted, at first glance, by his colleague A8 who said that:

A8: You know what happens with exhibitions? In the time we are living, there is a tremendous lack of memory, therefore 3-4 years go by and nobody remembers them. Those that do, are the people who in any case acknowledged your work without needing the museum's endorsement.

For this artist when his work is acquired by institutions, even if it is not shown, has an importance:

A8: It is as if they told me that my work has historic value, it enters history and that they will take care of it, preserve, safe keep and could sometimes be shown in this context. Independently of being exhibited or not, they [my works] are archived and are part of that collection. It is as if they were telling me that my work, besides the importance it has now that it was made, it has an historic importance, even though we are talking about recent history and therefore, subject to revisions.

For A8, the act of a museum deciding to acquire his work, besides the fact that it will be conserved, is viewed as the first and necessary step, albeit without guaranteeing future success because art history is always and continuously revising its contents, of entering art history. In effect, for A8 the acquisition is the legitimization and not the fact that his work was temporarily shown at institutions. The acquisition decision, where curators have a lot of influence in, is important in the sense that works that have integrated museum collections have higher probabilities of becoming part of the history of art than those that haven't. For the artists who are interested in integrating

history, it is obvious that their works must be preserved and for this to happen the museum (in most cases) must own them.

The connection between having work exhibited and acquired by institutions is not something that necessarily influences the market for the artist's work. A3, who in the past had a large retrospective at the Gulbenkian, answered as follows:

A3: I believe it has a bit of an impact, but I think that our field is a bit weird. If you read some statements about the evolution of artistic careers and the evolution of the prices of artists' work, one of the things that is always mentioned is that by having an important exhibition in an important museum you get an incremental jump in the artist's career. I had a large retrospective exhibition at the Gulbenkian and there wasn't that exponential increase in demand for my work; it went up a bit, but not something extremely noticeable.

Other artists like A7 and A11 share his views:

A7: I believe so [they do have impact], but you know, these things are diluted among so many others, certainly it had, but things are not apparent. You cannot understand how, but of course it had [impact].

A11: I cannot evaluate yet the link between the museum and the gallery and these things don't work immediately, they work in the medium term. It is important to organize events around the [museum] exhibition...the gallery also is more mobilized to have there its collectors and this has produced sales at the gallery, small things. [Museum exhibitions] produce events, draw attention and then produce sales.

What seems to be the case is that the institutional impact is something that exists, but it is elusive; there is no cause and effect relationship that we can easily observe, let alone quantify. It could have market impact if the exhibition manages to provide wide visibility for the work of the artist and this can perhaps originate some sales. Most artists appear concerned about the preservation and conservation of their work and are pleased when institutions fulfill this function. For those interested in entering and becoming part of the history of art, acquisition and preservation of the work is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition to achieve it.

Another issue that was brought up in this discussion is something that has impact for the artist on a strictly personal level, namely retrospective exhibitions providing a unique opportunity for the artist to look upon his work and evaluate his artistic effort up to that point. A7 and A13 who are the artists with the longest careers among the participants, elaborated on this as follows:

A7: Museum exhibitions give a perspective to the things that the artist has done up to a point and the artist has the possibility to understand if what he is doing is in fact relevant. I like to look at these large-scale exhibitions that I do in museums and think: “is it worth it that I did this [work], or not?” If I think it is worth it, I am very satisfied.

A13: The importance is to be able in a single space to show an [artistic] production and evaluate where you stand; it is important to do this evaluation. When you think about the history of art, when you think about artists like van Gogh, they never had during their lifetime any exhibition, only after [their death]. Often, there is no time to do big exhibitions for artists; for example [Cy] Twombly only had this big exhibition now at the Pompidou<sup>131</sup>, after his death.

C2 also attributed importance to this moment of the artist evaluating his work and its development:

C2: [Museum exhibitions] are very important because they ratify, they consecrate. On the other hand, in my view, there are always viewed as a moment for the artist to evaluate himself. For them it is more than a passive thing, only of consecration, to look at what they have done and understand if they can further evolve; it is an opportunity for them too.

Curators are also involved in an ever-increasing number of events around the globe that aim to survey the state of the contemporary artistic production at a local, regional and global level. Curators are responsible for selecting, as always, the participating artists, and these events usually have a central theme around which their exhibition is conceived. The most prominent among these events - most of which occur every two years - is the Venice Biennale (started in 1895), followed by a plethora of similar events, like the biennials of São Paulo (started in 1951), of Sydney (started in 1973), of Istanbul (started in 1987), of Lyon (started in 1991), among many others. Another event of this kind is the Documenta (started in 1955) taking place in the German city of Kassel

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<sup>131</sup> Refers to the Cy Twombly retrospective exhibition at the Centre Pompidou (Paris) held between November 2016 and April 2017.

every 5 years. Among the interviewed artists, numerous participated in such events and some of them more than once in the same event. What is common among these events is that they are by curatorial invitation only and the team of the appointed curators of each edition invites those artists that believes best fit the theme or central idea it defined for that edition. In the case of Venice, there are also the national pavilions, or representations, where each country is free to choose its representative(s) for that edition. In this case also, the selection of the artist(s) is made by a curator or through the procedures chosen by each country to make that decision. In Portugal, this decision is made by the Ministry of Culture that appoints a curator responsible for choosing the artist(s), a process sometimes criticized by various actors of the Portuguese art world. Artists were asked about their experiences from participating in these events and if this has affected their careers. The artists who haven't participated expressed their opinion as art world insiders with knowledge based on the experiences of their peers who have participated.

By first looking at the answers of artists who have not participated in these events, we observe that they attribute great importance to these because a participation in the most prestigious events of this kind is viewed as a seal of guarantee of artistic quality and relevance that provides legitimization for the artist's work. It also seems to be an opportunity for the participating artist to be invited to integrate the programming of foreign galleries:

A3: I think it has a lot of impact; they are display windows at an international level that could have a great influence on an artist's career. I know various cases of colleagues of mine who had exhibited in Venice and that was a moment of transformation in their career and [they] started working with galleries of various other countries and gained much more visibility, therefore, I think these things have their importance. In the case of Documenta, there haven't been many Portuguese participating since the 1990's, practically there hasn't been Portuguese presence.

A2: I would love to be invited, [but] never was. I think it is something unpredictable: someone may see your work and think it fits, someone may recommend your work, or it may be something that follows a trend, a conjecture of the moment that picks names whose work has visibility. There are artists that had a career without this and now are beyond mid-career, they are established, and other very young artists who never did anything and are already [present] there. Of course, being invited for the Venice Biennale or the Documenta

is a huge upgrade; it is a very strong legitimating agent. In Portugal, it has a repercussion: if you were once considered a dunce, now you are a genius.

A2 says that being invited is something unpredictable because precisely it depends on various factors that the artist cannot control: the choice of the curatorial team for the event, the theme that the head curator will define (explicitly or implicitly) for that edition, and in the case of national representations it depends also on the person or persons that the Ministry of Culture appoints to oversee the selection process. More interesting is perhaps A2's comment on how the participating artist is viewed in the Portuguese context: if nobody thought highly of the artist's work before his participation at that event, after his presence there is considered a genius. Some artists acknowledge that these events impact an artist's career, but question the necessity of such events existing and the format they have:

A5: I think it still has impact on an artist's career. Whether it makes sense that it still has this impact, is another question. Whether it continues making sense [having] this model of large biennials, is also another question. I was never present at the big biennials and therefore, I cannot speak of myself, but I imagine it brings something in terms of dissemination, in terms of reaching new players.

A10: They are exhibitions with international character and have a lot of visibility, even though every year they are being questioned, they have visibility because...in the case of the Venice Biennale, there exists this side of wanting to be a world representation of artistic production at a certain point and some Portuguese artists have been present, besides the individual and collective exhibitions, but were also involved in group exhibitions organized by the Biennale's director and this has even more repercussion for an artist in his international circulation.

A10 believes that being invited by the Biennale's curator carries more weight than being selected as the national representative and this has importance in the "international circulation" of the artist. This is plausible since the curator who defined the theme of the event is in better position than others to know which artists fit in it within the global contemporary artistic production panorama, whereas a national participation is strictly a choice based on whatever criteria (or personal agendas) the people responsible for making the selection of each country used. A8, another artist who has participated in these events, characterized them in terms of career importance as "just another

chapter” and the Venice Biennale as something that “has always a lot of visibility”. A9 referring to her participation in the Venice Biennale and its importance for pursuing an international career said:

A9: I understood what I needed to do to become an international artist; there are three things that you understand at the Venice Biennale: first, you have to have work, without a body of work you are not going anywhere; second, you can't do it without political power, that is, without a curator, a gallery, political power in the sense of having a structure; third, you can't do it if you don't sell, which is the economic power.

All artists who have participated in these events acknowledge their importance in terms of the visibility they generate for their work, especially within influential members of the art world, and that participating contributes to the artist's prestige. However, as we have seen in the preceding topic about the impact of institutional exhibitions, artists again are not able of distinguishing specific effects resulting from their presence there. A7 says that directly he doesn't know of something happening in his career because of his presence in these events, even though their impact cannot be discarded:

A7: It is always prestigious [for an artist]. In terms of dissemination, it is obvious because the work is seen by thousands and thousands of people. It is very different from any normal exhibition in any other place, because they are exhibitions with a large inflow of people. Now what comes from it, I don't know; to me directly nothing. It has never happened to me that someone tells me: “I saw that work and I think you are the greatest and I will buy everything”. That doesn't mean that there weren't things that occurred because of my presence there, but that I know of directly, no. I have been approached many times but it was never said to me it was because my work was seen here or there, which doesn't mean that it hasn't been the case.

A4 alerted for the danger of negative side-effects that result from “excessive visibility” that can be harmful to an artist.

A4: Of course, it has [impact], fortunately or unfortunately. It gives visibility and, in my case, even more so, because painting is a bit remote from these situations of institutional discourse and institutional critique. [...] So far [it yielded] little results, it isn't something



that changes...things are being constructed. Our base of work increases, but it is not a thing that changes; in some cases, it happens and it is bad that it happens, because I think it produces excessive visibility, exhaustion and lack of capacity of the artist to have his necessary [recovery] time. One observes that the artists who participate in the Documenta, for the next 3 years, many of them will have excessive visibility and most of them will ruin their work. And why? Because bad curators are always looking for what is in the air, they don't have the capacity to decide. Most of the people, the agents, lack convictions...they make decisions out of opportunism and in a consensual way; [i.e.] what the consensus says. They must have enormous insecurity and they don't want to be wrong, but people err when they follow others.

A4 touches upon the potential negative effects of excessive visibility and openly blames "bad" curators for causing this, because they prefer the works that have been 'sanctioned' by the Documenta, where the Documenta is perceived as a validator of the prevailing consensus or zeitgeist. A5 also associates curators with the zeitgeist and with another phenomenon, namely the existence of a kind of art referred to as "curator's art" or "biennial art":

A5: I think that a certain type of art exists, at least some artists call it 'curator's art', that addresses questions that are within this zeitgeist and that are always the same...therefore, there is an art that is always the same – not by the same names, there are various – but things look like they have no authorship, as if they are in auto-production that can be found in almost all biennials and all places where this phenomenon of the contemporary occurs. I believe that this, in great part, is associated to the exaggeration regarding the curatorial figure. The artist should continue to be the main figure and this implies disobedience to a series of rules and disrespect for certain imperatives of this zeitgeist.

A5 described 'curator's art' as "extremely boring and interchangeable" while C5 acknowledged that "curator's art" or "biennial art" is a reality:

C5: They are those pieces that are on top of the political moment, they live out of the opportunity of the moment and circulate among various biennials. I have seen pieces in different biennials; the same piece with different names because in one place it was [titled] 'Kosovo' and in the other 'Iraq', but it was the same piece.

Gallerists were asked about how they perceive the curatorial impact on artists' career, especially on the artists' market, the importance of museum exhibitions and acquisitions, and their experiences on the impact of large survey-type exhibitions like the various biennials, focusing on the most prestigious of all, the Venice Biennale. Their experiences are valuable because they are in a unique position to gauge the market impact that may result from the artist's presence in museums and biennials. Some gallerists also used their answers as an opportunity to express their criticism on certain curatorial practices.

G1 and G3 acknowledge the importance of museums and G3 considers the museum as the place where the work of an artist is consecrated. However, their answers contain a fair amount of criticism on curators that centers on two issues: excessive focus on young artists and questionable curatorial competency:

G1: All museum directors, whoever wants to make a collection, the curators, have the Pedro Álvares Cabral complex: they all want to discover something. [...] There are some interesting [curators] in Portugal; they ignore the past. It is always about the young [artists], discovering an artist and including him in the exhibition, it is a bit like that. Having a critical conscience, is a bit complicated. [...] It is important to be in the collection of a museum, even though museums for economic reasons buy young [artists].

G3: I think that the role of curators in recent years has driven the public away from the arts. Many of these curators have background in art history, yet they know very little about art; they come from the field of aesthetics, of theory, and in the visual domain are very poor. [...] In a trajectory which begins at the studio and [then] passes through the gallery, [the artist's work] is consecrated at the institution. It may be at temporary exhibitions, mid-career exhibitions or exhibitions towards the end of the [artist's] life that the evaluation of the work is done, and there could be confirmations, but also revelations. One of the things that I commend is the institution that is alert, that is not showing what others are, but has a function that is prospective and is looking for artists that have been ignored for long periods of time.

G1 is criticizing what he apparently considers being a wide-spread phenomenon, namely curators constantly looking for new artists (discovery) to include in exhibitions, in detriment to older artists. G1 himself provides part of the explanation for this, and that is directly related to the economic resources available to the collecting institutions. Another part of the explanation may be associated with the ambition of curators for achieving professional distinction through the constant introduction of new artists to the art world. The lack of critical conscience can be added to the criticism of curatorial competency - something expressed by various artists - along with the criticism expressed by G3 about their limited art knowledge. The comment of G3 about curators driving the public away from the arts is in line with similar criticism already voiced regarding the phenomena of “curator’s art” and “biennial art”. On the other hand, G3 praises institutions that accomplish two things: first, they choose not to show what others are, something that could be interpreted as looking beyond the mainstream and the art within the prevailing zeitgeist; and second, they also exhibit the work of artists who have been ignored by institutions. In order for institutions to do this, they need human resources (curators) that are aware of the past (knowledge of art history and artists’ body of work) and that are able to undertake the necessary research and make the case why this is relevant now. If indeed curators themselves lack the necessary knowledge and institutions lack the resources to support research, it is not surprising that when a curator, or a curatorial team, in an institutional setting manages to bring to light the work of a “forgotten” artist, these actions are praised by G3 and other art world members who think along the same lines.

G2 shares the opinions of G1 and G3 relative to curatorial practices and views the eagerness of curators in their attempts to establish themselves as artist discoverers as an impediment for gallerists building relationships with institutions:

G2: Gallerists, especially in Portugal, are much more dependent on the private market than on institutions, but the private market is a market that pays attention to the international recognition of artists. For a gallerist to convince his clients to collect an artist, he must first try to obtain some critical and curatorial support for him. [...] It is complicated in Portugal to work with institutions, curators, museum directors, because all of them think that they must be the protagonists: it must be them the ones who discover the artists, they cannot appear to be influenced; nobody can talk to them because it appears that we are trying to

influence them. [...] We have young curators who either launch young artists in the market or try to rehabilitate artists with a certain age, [with] a relevant trajectory, that for some reason lacked market recognition at that time. I am a bit critical of these practices, but there is nothing to do against it.

G2 recognizes that the support of critics and curators is essential for his selling arguments in addition to the international recognition of artists, however achieving this in the Portuguese context is “complicated” because of the attitude of institutions, or more specifically, because of their artistic directors and curators who want to claim the leading role as ‘discoverers’ of young artists or rehabilitators of older ones (‘rediscoverers’). Regarding the rediscovery of artists, it is not clear if G2 is against this practice or just against the fact that curators wish to monopolize it.

G4 and G5, did not voice any criticism at curatorial practices. Both welcome and cultivate relations with curators and often organize in their galleries curated exhibitions, something that, for example, G3 admitted to rarely doing anymore. After having acknowledged that curators are important, they linked their importance to the institutional positions they occupy and the context they are inserted in or work in:

G4: I think that they have influence because they have earned it, that is, a curator is someone who doesn't have any commercial interest in the work of the artists they believe in. I think it is an important role and it was earned with merit and I don't have anything against that; I think that they can help us with our work and I think it is great. [...] Curators have always, or almost always, artists that everybody knows that they like, and normally - the ones that I know - are very faithful to the artists they believe in. [...] As in everything, there are good and bad [curators], there are better and worse, there are important ones and less important ones. Many times, obviously, their importance depends upon the positions they occupy: there is a difference in being a curator at the Tate or being at a museum without any importance.

G4 links the importance of a curator to his institutional affiliation, e.g. a Tate curator has importance because he works at the Tate - an influential institution in the global contemporary arts panorama - hence by association the curators working for that institution also are or perceived to be. G5 links the importance of a curator to the context they work in; if they come from countries that are considered influential in the arts, then curators working in these contexts also are. Since

the Portuguese context is not as relevant as the others mentioned by this gallerist, curators working in Portugal are lesser known and consequently less influential. To substantiate her argument, she points out two problems<sup>132</sup>: first, the inexistence of a museum of contemporary art in Lisbon; and second, the incapacity of museum directors in Portugal to put in circulation or export some of their exhibitions abroad.

G5: I always thought that [curatorial impact] was important, not just at the present. The curatorial impact of a very good Portuguese or Spanish curator cannot be compared to the curatorial impact of a very good English, German, or Swiss curator. The former is unknown, the latter is known and that is another Portuguese problem. For example, not having a museum is the first point. Let's go to the second point: which is the Portuguese exhibition by a Portuguese museum that its director managed to place abroad? If you think about it, none.

After G5 gave me the above reply, I answered her (rhetorical) question and this brief dialog originated:

LP: The exhibition of Pedro Cabrita Reis in 2011 at the Berardo Museum circulated in two other countries; the director [then] was Jean-François Chougnet.

G5: Who made the proposal? How did that happen?

LP: This, I don't know.

G5: Pedro Cabrita Reis. But who proposes, who makes the connections? It is the artist himself.

The reason that I transcribed this brief dialog here is twofold: First, to show that certain artists, like Pedro Cabrita Reis, are perceived as having the ability, the necessary connections and the influence to make things happen themselves in their career. Second, to add some facts related to the international circulation of Portuguese exhibitions abroad. Both the exhibitions of Pedro Cabrita Reis and of Helena Almeida<sup>133</sup> circulated internationally when in both cases the heads of the Portuguese institutions involved were foreigners: Jean-François Chougnet of the Berardo

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<sup>132</sup> These issues were also identified in RQ-Artworld.

<sup>133</sup> See RQ-Artworld for details. The exhibition was curated by João Ribas, Deputy Director and Senior Curator, and Marta Moreira de Almeida, Head of Exhibitions of the Serralves Museum.

Museum in the first case and Suzanne Cotter of the Serralves Museum in the second case. By stating these facts, I am not arguing that these exhibitions circulated abroad because of the possible influence these directors had. The determining aspect for international circulation most probably is the importance foreign institutions (i.e. their directors and curatorial teams) attribute to the artist's relevance, interest, and even appeal. A case can be made that certain Portuguese artists have more international appeal and art historical interest than their national peers, independently of the efforts of institutions in Portugal (or elsewhere) to promote their exhibitions. What is certain is that some gallerists, artists and even curators are fully conscious of the difficulties of exporting "made in Portugal" exhibitions; some blame it on the Portuguese context in general and some on the curators of the Portuguese institutions.

All gallerists recognize the importance of large-scale survey-type curatorial events in an artist's career. G4 characterizes the Documenta and the Venice Biennale as "the most important events in the art world", while her colleague G3 considers them "a must" for promoting work, even though he believes that "all these great events will be reviewed". G2 also sees these events as an opportunity for galleries to do business:

G2: The impact is big. The presence at the most relevant exhibitions that most of the public recognizes as such is important in an artist's career. It will enable immediately a series of transactions. Effectively, many times [the Venice Biennale] looks like a fair and a place where galleries position themselves to do business.

Contrary to G2, G5 was more reserved in her reply regarding the immediacy of results:

G5: Many times, artists participate in biennials and don't have any immediate consequences. Normally it is a thing that takes time and it either happens or not.

Her view seems more in accordance with the artists who see these events as "just another chapter", with a presence not guaranteeing anything by itself.

G1 highlighted other aspects of this phenomenon in his answer:

G1: These are the most important cultural happenings. Evidently, the artist that participates is under a lot of scrutiny and has a lot of possibilities of finding someone who can represent

him abroad. Portugal chooses, apart from Paiva/Gusmão<sup>134</sup>, mid-career artists that can hardly make a commercial leap. I believe that the last participations at this level [Venice Biennale] didn't have significant commercial results [for the artists who participated there].

First, G1 considers the Biennale an opportunity for artists to attract interest from international galleries, which can lead to a further internationalization of their careers, or if they are very young to the start of this process. Second, he finds that these (commercial) effects are more likely to be seen if the participating artists are at an initial stage of their career, giving the example of Paiva/Gusmão who were 30 years old at the time of their participation. In his opinion, when older artists were selected as national representatives this “commercial leap” didn't materialize. It is noteworthy, however, the contradiction in G1's opinions depending on the context: he expressed his criticism of curators and accused them of suffering from the “Pedro Álvares Cabral complex” when they “discover” young artists and exhibit them, in detriment perhaps to older ones, while in the context of the Biennale, is in favor of exactly the opposite, namely selecting younger artists as national representatives because their chances of international career and commercial potential are higher. This contradiction highlights once more how careful one must be when examining the relationships between art world actors and art world phenomena. As we have seen in the case of artists with fairs, one should understand which “hat” the interviewee is wearing when answering a question or when expressing views on an issue.

Curators as members of the art world with varying degrees of power in it can potentially influence artistic careers when exercising their functions on various occasions: at institutions by selecting artists when making exhibitions and deciding acquisitions; as jury members of committees that attribute art prizes, grants or scholarships; as curators of biennials and similar events; as members of selection committees responsible for choosing projects to be funded, like for instance, public art. The curators that were interviewed view their role in the art world as legitimating agents of artistic production (C2, C3), as proponents of an external look to the artists' work (C6), as gatekeepers (C5), as part of a “golden circle” that includes artists, galleries and collectors (C4<sup>135</sup>),

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<sup>134</sup> A two-member team of artists consisting of João Maria Gusmão (b. 1979) and Pedro Paiva (b. 1978), usually known as Paiva/Gusmão. They represented Portugal in the Venice Biennale in 2009.

<sup>135</sup> See RQ1, Section: Gallery role/functions – viewed by curators.

and as holders of symbolic capital (C7). They all acknowledge that curatorial power exists and can influence artistic careers in various ways:

C2: This legitimation power starts at the moment of choice by choosing ones and not others and then [continues] with the discourse [curators] create about the work.

C3: The presence of an artist at certain exhibitions is relevant when these are significant and the integration of the artist in one of those allows him to reach another level of recognition. In this sense, the curator's role is very relevant in this legitimation.

C6: I believe the curator is important because the artist needs an external view to be projected on his body of work and helps define a legibility, which doesn't mean that artists couldn't do without the curator. But, as a rule, it is very useful that external looks exist and above all create a discourse around the work because I don't believe in the existence of things by themselves. The curator is a mediator who proposes a view and writes about it...but that doesn't mean it is obligatory; it is a thing left open and the visitor sees it however he wants. It makes sense that there is a proposed view and I think it gives value to the work.

The opinions of C2, C3 and C6 illustrate that for a work of art to be perceived as such by the audience needs to go through a process of legitimation, i.e. identified as such, and curators (among other agents) are able to do this, hence their power. When C6 says that she doesn't "believe in the existence of things by themselves", she implies that someone (the mediator, to use her terminology) is needed to explain the transformation of that object into an artwork. Consequently, the power of choosing the objects of one artist over the others, and thereby legitimating them as art, is enormous.

Obviously, not all curators have the same power and influence in the field. Some gallerists, as we have seen, believe that the institutional affiliations and work context are important determinants of curatorial power. C5 and C7, confirmed this and further commented on how the level of curatorial power can benefit an artist when a relationship between curator and artist is established:

C5: There exist relationships between artists and curators that could be – depending also on the power of the relationship that the curator has with the artistic system – very beneficial for an artist's career. Obviously, artists who during long periods worked with



curators who included them in various projects they did, this relationship can translate – depending on the situation of the curator – into a collaboration that implies a growth of an artist in terms of career and in the public visibility of his work. This depends a lot on how the curator is inserted in the power system of the arts, namely what is his responsibility of gatekeeping. If he is someone who has an elevated gatekeeping responsibility at a certain time, obviously a privileged relation with an artist can be important in the development of his [the artist's] career. [...] There exist curators with immense power in the field whose activity has a [broad] geographical reach or work at institutions with enormous economic power; therefore, they can grant a much more solid affirmation. Some built this power based on institutions, others built it on their own, let's call it the independent curator type.

C7: The curator works and moves in a symbolic field, where he possesses symbolic capital and can “lend” this capital to the artists he is working with. An artist working with a curator that has more leverage and circulation capacity than another curator, in principle has the conditions to have a bigger impact in the career or the evolution of the career of the artist than another with less symbolic capital. Assuming that all artists want to reach the biggest possible number of people, then an artist who works with a curator who has a larger capacity of exhibitions and more symbolic capital, has more chances to reach a wider public.

What is evident in the above statements, is that an artist that is selected for exhibitions repeatedly by a powerful/influential curator - and the source of this power and influence can be institutional or established by a curator independently - secures a visibility that will allow him to reach “a wider public”. For artists - especially those wishing to brand themselves through their work, or harbor international career aspirations, or many times both - an association with curators whose power and influence is acknowledged in the (international) art world is a very important means for reaching those goals. C7 elaborated further on the issue of visibility and its importance for artists:

C7: There is a question of power in curatorial practice, but it is not an artificial question, or something invented by curators; the power was always there and it has to do with the power of visibility, of giving visibility. This is simple to explain because you must make choices, you can't show everything...if an institution shows everything, then there is no criterion: everything is equally good or bad.

According to C7, the curator by making the choice of exhibiting something, not only legitimates it as an artwork, but also grants it an approval of “good quality”. In the myriad of possible objects that can be selected for an exhibition, only the “good” ones are exhibited and the person distinguishing the “good” from the “bad” is the curator. The consequences of these curatorial actions can also be, and very often are, market related:

C7: The influence [of curatorial power] on the artists' careers today is important. The place of the exhibition, the event of the exhibition, ends up being the gauge of interest in an artist's career. An artist that nobody exhibits and nobody gives visibility to his work, in principle will not attract the interest that others attract and these others will not only obtain more interest than him but also a higher capacity of market placement. The exhibition and commercial valency of an artist ends up rising this way and consequently curators have some influence and a lot of power in this domain.

An artist whose work lacks visibility, probably in commercial terms will not be as successful as his peers whose work has received more visibility. To put it differently: gallerists wouldn't devote so many of their resources in creating and maintaining visibility for the work of their artists if they didn't believe that they would derive some economic benefits from it<sup>136</sup>. As A1 put it very aptly: “the gallery has all the interest that its artists are selected by a *known* curator” (my italics). The reason for it is evident: the selection of an artist by a known curator (i.e. where the word known is synonymous with powerful and influential) significantly enhances the gallery's visibility creation efforts, hoping that these will translate into commercial results.

C4 considers that the impact of curatorial interest works at many levels on an artist's career:

C4: It works on so many levels. I think there is quite a big impact especially at the beginning of an artist's career. If an artist gets taken up and suddenly begins to seem fashionable then other curators want to work with the same artist so it is a kind of snowball effect. So, a relatively small number of artists are sought after by quite a large number of curators. [...] What I think I have noticed in my career is that once a curator has established

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<sup>136</sup> Galleries in their programs may also include artists whose work is more difficult to commercialize. In those cases, the commercial success of other gallery artists makes it possible for them to be part of the gallery's program. Essentially, part of the profits the gallery makes on some of its artists can “subsidize” the presence of others (the least successful ones commercially) in the gallery program.

a kind of circle of artists with whom they work that is often quite static, so that they work with the same artists two or three times over their careers and many curators don't change their circle very much, so very often has to do with the people that you first encounter when you start out in your first 5 or 10 years, I think.

First, the impact is more pronounced if the artist is at the beginning of his career, where the interest of one curator may lead to the interest of others wishing to work with that artist, hence leading to the phenomenon of few artists being pursued by many curators. In those circumstances, these few chosen artists, who end up getting extreme visibility since they integrate the projects of many curators, are likely to become the most known, their work present at many exhibitions turning it ubiquitous and some of them may even reach the status of superstars or mega-artists. Second, when a curator establishes this circle of artists, there is a tendency for it not to change much. An artist being part of such a circle can benefit especially if the curator whose circle he integrates, increases his influence, power or symbolic capital through time. A good example of such a circle is the one provided by A7 with reference to the curator Hans Ulrich Obrist and his circle of artists that includes curators as well.

Regarding the first point, gallerist G2 alerted that an artist being selected or preferred by a curator does not automatically lead to a positive snowball effect. G2 considers that the curators' world is segmented and if an artist is discovered or launched by a senior curator, then younger curators may think that:

G2: That's not our war and since the artist is in that phase, it doesn't interest us because it is not us who will place him in the market; it is already done by someone at a different level than ours.

This shows that if an artist is already discovered, other curators may lose interest in working with him since they cannot claim the glory of discovery, if indeed that is their strategy or ambition as curators. G2 also introduced another factor he considers important when discussing the contemporary art field and applies to the relationship between curating and artist. This factor – which he calls 'coolness' – is present not only at the level of artists, galleries, collectors and their collections, but also at the level of curators and institutions:

G2: The fact that a curator is part of a very influential and consolidated institution in the world and the fact that he supports a Portuguese artist doesn't immediately mean that the rest of the curators will follow that tendency and that discourse. A lot of curators, would try - in my opinion - to stay away. If the image of the institution is cool, that's perfect, if not, then we have a problem.

Put simply, curatorial support is beneficial if the curator is considered cool in the art world, otherwise it may not have the desired positive effects. Even though, the word "cool" was not defined by G2, it could be interpreted as something trendy, fashionable, or being part of the prevailing zeitgeist, attributes that some artists abhor to see associated with their art.

In the last three interviews with curators I asked them to comment on some of the criticism that occasionally is directed towards their activity. Regarding the cultivation of relationships with artists and the so-called formation of "circles of artists", they responded as follows:

C5: I, for instance, like to work several times with the same artists. You can only build a relationship that yields interesting work if you work various times with the same artists. I think it is a natural tendency and a part of a slow learning process. We cannot criticize curators for being obsessed with the new and at the same time deny them the possibility of developing continuous relationships of work.

C6: I never had a group of artists protected by me, I am not their mother, I don't do that. I know that it is done sometimes, probably because of the convenience of people who specialize in a certain group and because they like and identify themselves with the work. I am not criticizing this, it is legitimate, it is just not my option.

Curators find it natural to work with the artists whose work they appreciate and identify with. From their perspective, it is a professional option and it must be understood as such. Regarding the critique that curators are constantly looking for new artists to promote, discover, or launch into the art world, their replies yielded insightful perspectives:

C6: This has to do with the consumerist matrix of our society; we are consumers in everything and in art we don't escape from this. Many curators cannot resist looking for the new artist, which is still little known, almost as if the curator wanted to place there a patent [saying]: "this is mine, I discovered it, it was I who brought it to light". For 4-5 years

they vampirize the artist, while he can manage to give something, and when the curator or the system gets tired of him and needs new blood, it goes and gets new blood. I call this a system of vampirization [sic] and I don't identify myself with it. Of course, we need to discover new artists, we are here for that, but I don't like this cruel thing of exhausting an artist and then finding another one and exhausting him too, to the point that artists who are 40-50 years old - and everybody forgets, even though they are still working, and no one proposes them anything - are no longer seen [exhibited]; it is absurd. These are consumerist logics that I don't like.

C7: It is easy to communicate this idea of the new and it [also] needs little effort. Communicating the new or the consecrated is simple and you have some guarantees in terms of public repercussion. Communicating the past or bringing to light mid-career trajectories, is more complicated because it is less easy to communicate, therefore the public has more difficulty to immediately understand why that is important and why we are looking at it now. It needs a lot of effort especially if the past is - more or less - obscure.

C6 associates, at first, the constant search for new artists with the consumerist nature of our society, but also with the zeal of curators to "patent" artists as their discoveries, a statement that coming from a curator regarding the practice of some of her colleagues provides support to the "Pedro Álvares Cabral complex" critique. According to this curator, the repeated practice of discovering and using artists until exhaustion or depletion of their creativity during a period of 4-5 years – because apparently after that they are not "new" anymore and others need to be discovered to take their pace – leads to an increasing number of mid-career artists without visibility for their work and consequently weaker market prospects in many cases. C7 believes that looking for the new is not something entirely up to curators, but something linked to institutions and the programming they wish to present to the public. In his opinion, it is easier to present and to communicate the new, something that is also valid for the work of consecrated artists, perhaps even more so, since the public repercussion (admission ticket sales and number of visitors) will be higher than in the case of showing work of mid-career artists, especially if it is considered "more or less obscure". If some institutions indeed follow such a bipolar policy – showing the new because new artists need a break and showing the established because it is good for the institution's finances and public image, as well as, because both options are easy to defend – then the creation of a generation of

mid-career artists who receive little institutional attention, have less curatorial support and the visibility that comes with it, and weaker market prospects, is inevitable. In a follow up question, both C6 and C7 admitted that being a mid-career artist in Portugal is not easy for most of these artists, something that artists A4 (a mid-career artist himself) and A3 (an established artist) confirmed:

A4: It is very difficult to sell work today; the market is not made for artists of our...it is either for very young artists who cost next to nothing or for artists of another segment. Either because they have a huge growth potential, they are bought and sold and go through auctions and enjoy a very strong circulation, or it is for the heavy weights that cost millions and are a form of investment. Who buys art today are investors, the collectors are few, very few; there are almost no collectors.

A3: The international art world today is increasingly focusing on the so-called blue-chip artists who have a very consolidated career and are undisputable – like [Gerhard] Richter or [Richard] Serra – and then there is constantly a lot of demand for novelties: finding women artists of the 60's that were - more or less - unknown; now it is important to find Afro-American artists from the 40's, artists who are working in Syria....

The exhibition space is where the result of the work of the curator takes shape and form. We have already seen that the power and influence of a curator is linked most of the times to the institution where the exhibition takes place and this serves as a recognition, legitimation and visibility enhancing mechanism for the participating artists. Curators were asked about the impact of institutional exhibitions and acquisitions on the career of an artist.

C3 chose to highlight the importance of the temporary exhibition that he considers more impactful for an artist's career than the integration of his work in the permanent collection. This is so because museums – and in the larger museums with thousands of works in their collections this is more pronounced – can only show a very small percentage of the works they own. Hence the inclusion of an artist in a temporary exhibition offers a lot more visibility than being part of the museum's collection:

C3: The role of the temporary [museum] exhibition has increased, not that it was not important, but has profoundly risen as a legitimation instance as well, not only the museum

and what enters in it, but above all the temporary exhibition. The temporary exhibition articulates with a generalized system of production, that of the circulation, and in this sense the legitimization starts occurring a lot sooner with the recurrence and permanence in certain high quality temporary exhibitions by certain names [of curators]. Many times, this legitimization becomes more relevant than the one stemming from being in a museum. This [having work in a museum's collection] is an indication among many others, and one of these others that artists pay a lot of attention to, is undoubtedly that of circulation. These processes of circulation, connected to the economic dynamics of capitalism that deal with increasingly global circulations, are many times conditioned by the role of the mega galleries that now also function at a global scale.

In these “processes of circulation” that provide artists with visibility on a global level, the gallery has a role as supporter and facilitator for their materialization. This, however, is not a role that any gallery can play; at the international level only the “mega galleries” can afford to support such exhibitions, which explains why - in most exhibitions of this kind - the artists that feature prominently in them are associated with such galleries.

C1 commented that for artists entering private collections that have their own exhibition space is also beneficial in terms of visibility, but provided also the following caveat:

C1: One thing are the acquisitions made by the collector and another thing the choices made by curators who take care of these collections, i.e. what they wish to show.

This was also echoed in the words of A2:

A2: The collector bought your work, collected it, but the curator doesn't show it.

It is evident that in such cases, on the one hand, if the collection the work belongs to is prestigious, then the artist gains in legitimization, recognition and prestige; on the other hand, if the curator does not exhibit the work then any potential visibility impact is non-existent. Which effect of the two (legitimation/recognition or circulation/visibility) is more appreciated by artists depends on their aspirations. For instance, we have seen that for A6 it is a fantastic experience as long as the works are circulating, while A7 admitted that he would love to have his work acquired by collections such as those put together by [Eli] Broad, [François] Pinault, [Bernard] Arnault, or the Rubell family, because of the prestige they confer to an artist, while recognizing at the same time that the

work would be perhaps only sporadically exhibited. When I asked if he would offer price discounts<sup>137</sup> to achieve this, he replied:

A7: Without a doubt, of course yes, because these things are prestigious. Of course, all artists will tell you 'no', but I say yes; I speak truthfully.

C5 distinguished between two effects when it comes to institutional acquisitions and described them first as fundamental because "artists must live from their work" and then continued by adding: "Acquisitions are fundamental in economic terms and symbolic terms, symbolizing a recognition that goes to the point of wanting to acquire, to take care and to promote the divulgation [of the work]". Regarding private collections with institutional character and their power of legitimation, he said that in some cases these offer more legitimation than some public institutions and put this in context by saying: "Just ask any Portuguese artist if he prefers to exhibit here<sup>138</sup> or at the Prada Foundation". When I prompted him for an illustration of the impact of museum exhibitions on the artist's career he offered the following example:

C5: It could have an impact or not; it depends on how it was worked upon and it could even have a negative impact. The impact depends more on the curator's work than the artist's work. The artist's [work] is what it is, it's done, it existed before and it will continue to exist, therefore, it clearly depends on the curatorial job and other mediation jobs developed around it, for example, the work that the gallerist does with his collectors or others for the purposes of the exhibition. I will give you an example: when I did the exhibition of this artist [names artist] and asked for works, 85% of them came from the artist's studio. At the end of the exhibition, when I returned the works, maybe only 10% went back to the artist's studio. All the rest was sold; the gallery sold [works] during the exhibition. The exhibition radically changed the artist's career and the public's awareness of the artist in Portugal, not internationally. It was an important moment for the dissemination of the artist's work and completely changed the artist's market.

In this example, we see two different forces at work that according to C5 are not directly dependent on the artist's input, except of course that he created work deemed worthy of a museum exhibition in the first place. The first is the exhibition itself that gives visibility to the work of the artist

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<sup>137</sup> Galleries and artists often offer price discounts when a work is 'placed' in a prestigious institutional collection.

<sup>138</sup> "Here" refers to the institution where the interview was taking place.



(“public awareness”) that results from the curatorial effort, that will be obviously enhanced by taking place in an exhibition space with prestige. The second, is the action of the gallerist, who takes advantage of the event (both the visibility generated and the recognition/legitimation conferred) to sell the artist's work. One can easily argue that in this example everything worked out well because the artist's work was outstanding. However, even with an outstanding body of work present, if a curator does an average job, the exhibition space lacks prestige, the event is not disseminated properly and the gallery of the artist (if he is represented by one) is inactive during this process, then probably the artist will not benefit greatly from its existence; it may even hurt the artist if the curator actually does a lousy job. C4, offered examples from the international context of retrospective exhibitions and evaluated their curatorial aspects:

C4: I just went to the Twombly exhibition at the Pompidou<sup>139</sup>, which was incredibly well received. I think people were already expecting it to be good, but they didn't expect it to be so good and then I would say the Anish Kapoor retrospective at the Royal Academy [2009]; most people thought it was terrible and it was a kind of kiss of death for him, I would say, in Britain.

C6 acknowledges that in the Portuguese context the effects of being present in a museological exhibition are difficult to measure but in the case of a retrospective exhibition at a prestigious institution like Gulbenkian it can offer to the artist multiple benefits in terms of visibility, legitimation and even economic ones:

C6: These things are difficult to measure. Evidently, if an artist can put in his curriculum that he participated in an exhibition at the Gulbenkian, it is important for him. If he is a Portuguese artist, it is not just a line in the CV, it is all the visibility that this offered him, divulgation and legitimation. So, if it is a retrospective with a good catalog – another important thing that remains – that covers all the work and has a text, or two, or three, that reflect on his trajectory etc., this is extremely important for the artist; it even has economic [impact], but that is another issue. [...] It is more for the emerging and mid-career [artist]. The established artist will be glad to have a nice catalog, a review of his work, but it is not this that will change prices that much; it could move them up a little bit.

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<sup>139</sup> See footnote #131.

In the Portuguese institutional context, when Gulbenkian organizes a retrospective exhibition for an artist, it is expected to have an impact given the status of the institution in the Portuguese art world. On this specific point, C7 elaborated by saying:

C7: [The impact is] great in the artist's progression, because it ends up being an institutional confirmation of the relevance of the work, and the smaller the chance of institutional confirmation, the bigger the impact on the artist's career. The lower the chances of doing institutional exhibitions in a certain territory, the higher the capacity that these exhibitions have of catapulting artists within the artistic panorama.

In Portugal, where the number of the relevant exhibition spaces capable of holding such exhibitions is rather reduced, and the economic limitations some of these institutions are facing are limiting both the number and the scale of the exhibitions organized, when one such exhibition takes place it is bound to influence careers (on multiple fronts and with varying degrees) as the experiences of A3 and A5 regarding their exhibitions at Gulbenkian already illustrated.

Curators believe that large-scale curatorial events (e.g. the various biennials, the Documenta) have an impact on artists' careers. They base their opinion on their direct involvement in curating these events, on their frequent visits to them, and on the experiences that participating artists communicate to them.

C7 believes that such events are important for artists because of the large number of key art world players that circulate among these events:

C7: [The impact] is enormous because the capacity of exhibition of the decision makers, like curators, museum directors, critics, collectors, gallerists, is gigantic. Suddenly, in a handful of days circulate in the exhibitions of the selected artists an absurd quantity of artistic agents with the capacity and power to catapult the exhibited artists to other spheres, therefore, that is the opportunity. The participation in these events is very important.

C4 believes that Documenta can be transformative in the way an artist is viewed, an opinion shared also by C3 who gives the examples of the two contemporary artists who have participated in this event:

C4: I don't think there is a fixed recipe, but it is a combination of either having a very active curator who is interested in the work, an active gallerist, a sudden moment of being included in a big exhibition like Documenta, for example, or a big survey. I think biennials are less useful and art fairs are less useful, but I would say that serious curatorial activity and Documenta is probably the best example and can really change how an artist is viewed.

C3: [Documenta] had a great impact in the careers of Julião Sarmiento and Pedro Cabrita Reis, undoubtedly; any one of them<sup>140</sup> will confirm it and we know what the Documenta is. Whether we like it or not, it continues to be the most referential exhibition in the world of contemporary art. Documenta continues to be – because of its past, the means that it has and the nature of the project – the main exhibition that aims to make a big statement about the state of art.

C1 believes that a participation at the Venice Biennale open various doors for the artist in terms of exhibitions, but that by itself doesn't guarantee an impact beyond the short-term. It could be that after a period of 2-3 years the interest in the artist dries up:

C1: It has an impact. Any artist that represents his country at the Venice Biennale has secured for the following years exhibitions and invitations for various places. The question is: is this prolonged or is it all gone in 2-3 years, that is, if after the promotion he [the artist] received there he can continue.

C2 and C5 chose to give examples of artists whose participation had an impact on their careers. C2 couldn't specify what that impact is, but artists have admitted to her that for them is important. C5 gave the example of the impact the Venice participation had in the dissemination of the work of Julião Sarmiento in the US thanks to the efforts of his American gallerist.

C2: I believe that they [Venice Biennale and Documenta] are the two most relevant events in the art world, even though, there exist Manifestas<sup>141</sup> and this and that, these continue to be “the events” and really have importance for whom participates in them; this is what artists transmit to us. [...] I will talk about those [Venice Biennale Portuguese participations] that I have seen with my own eyes: I remember Helena Almeida aroused a

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<sup>140</sup> Sarmiento participated in 1982 and 1987 and Cabrita Reis in 1992.

<sup>141</sup> Manifesta is a biennial that started in 1996 that takes place in a different European location each time.

lot of interest within the foreign community. We know that Joana Vasconcelos was also present and that had some repercussion for her, she expanded a lot as well. Pedro Cabrita Reis also had a lot of impact. It ends up having a lot of impact; I cannot exactly say what. Francisco Tropa also said that yes, it had a lot of impact. That is a moment of convergence of key people, of the protagonists of the field: critics, curators, institution directors, other artists, gallerists, all are present there; it is an effervescent field.

C5: The effect on an artist's career... [it] can have significant impact. For Francisco Tropa, for example, it had a determining impact on his career. [...] I witnessed the importance of Sean Kelly, the American gallerist of Julião Sarmiento in Venice<sup>142</sup>, and he was more important for the divulgation [of the work]; just look in which collections are the works that were in this exhibition of Julião Sarmiento in Venice: they were surgically placed in American collections. The work of the gallerist is very important; he really took advantage of the fact that he had a great exhibition of his artist at an international forum with a gigantic public exposure and that was remarkable.

These events can have an impact on the career of an artist on many different levels: visibility, prestige, legitimation, career internationalization, market for works. They offer to the participating artists a unique opportunity to exhibit their work in front of the most influential actors of the international art world. What the artists themselves and their commercial representatives (galleries) do to take advantage of this opportunity depends on their skills and capabilities that are put to work according to the objectives they established. Going back to the question of curatorial power, it now becomes obvious that curators as the gatekeepers of these events that enable artists to participate and potentially take advantage of these opportunities have real power. Furthermore, since these events are perceived by many insiders as making a statement about the contemporary art production, for most artists having their work included in them carries a special recognition and legitimation for their work that perhaps is more valued than any potential career ramifications.

#### **RQ4: Internationalization of artistic careers**

This RQ looks into the instruments, mechanisms, and processes available to Portuguese artists for internationalizing their career. By international career I mean that an artist has work exhibited (at

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<sup>142</sup> Julião Sarmiento was the artist who represented Portugal at the Venice Biennale in 1997.

institutions and galleries) and sold beyond the Portuguese borders. For any artist who wishes to show his art to the widest possible audience, harboring international career ambitions is natural. If one considers the Portuguese context which has often been described by the participants of this study as “poor” and “peripheral” and its market as “fragile”, “limited”, and “incipient”, economic considerations can be added to these ambitions. Some Portuguese galleries, including the ones whose owners were interviewed for the purposes of this research, implement an internationalization strategy for the same economic reasons that artists do. Their internationalization efforts aim at gaining visibility and prestige for the gallery and its program, which helps them attract foreign artists to collaborate with them, while at the same time, contributing towards the internationalization of the careers of their Portuguese artists.

From the analysis already presented regarding the previous RQs we can identify some of the instruments and mechanisms that can be used by artists and their galleries to try to gain access to the international art world.

1. The presence at international art fairs is an opportunity for artists to have their work viewed by collectors, foreign galleries, and curators. Portuguese galleries that aim to be known internationally, and despite the heavy financial burden these participations represent – especially when we account for the relatively low prices that Portuguese artists have compared with their international peers – have managed to be present in the international fair circuit. In the same way that Portuguese gallerists are alert at fairs for opportunities to find new foreign artists to invite for collaboration, foreign galleries are also engaging in this practice. Fairs are also visited by curators, where it is possible for them to express their interest in an artist and interact with the exhibiting gallery to that effect. Beyond the obvious commercial purpose, fairs present an excellent opportunity for artists to meet with their international peers and a networking opportunity for further contacts with galleries and curators. It is not uncommon for an artist to introduce his artist friends to his gallerists or to curators they collaborate or are friends with.
2. Large-scale curatorial events such as the various biennials - with the Venice Biennale enjoying the top spot in terms of visibility and prestige - offer an opportunity for artists to show their work to a large crowd of influential art world protagonists: gallerists, curators, institutional decision makers (directors and trustees) and collectors. We have seen that artists who have

participated in such events (e.g. A4, A7, A8, A9) recognize their importance for their careers, while other artists who also participated in them admitted their impact to other interviewees (mostly curators) of this study.

3. Curators can also play a role in the internationalization process, not only when they circulate among fairs and biennials, but perhaps more importantly when they make targeted visits to the studios of artists in Portugal. These visits occur when Portuguese entities (the Ministry of Culture, institutions like Gulbenkian, or Portuguese galleries) or organizers of events like ARCO Lisboa invite foreign curators to visit Portugal to that effect. Curators also visit various countries at their own initiative in preparation for these survey-type curatorial events (i.e. a kind of scouting or reconnaissance mission) and at least according to a few of the interviewees, Portugal lately is being included in their travels. Artists can also be fundamental in attracting foreign curators to visit Portugal by using their networks and the relationships they have created with them:

A4: Usually we [Portuguese artists] are never invited [to important curatorial events]. Punctually yes, there is one or another, but a State strategy never existed. [...] In this case, there are relationships that a person creates and artists have their networks and people with whom they worked with and they trust. [...] What matters is that people [curators] see and at a certain time, if things work out, there is an invitation.

A6: Through relationships that artists have in the international panorama the curators who have worked with these artists became interested and come to Portugal and want to see more. [...] This work was carried out by a group of artists who created a network of international contacts and at this moment it is finally yielding some results.

Another mechanism that can be instrumental in the internationalization process (especially for younger artists) is the artistic residency. Even though the term is not used uniformly across the art world, a residency offers to an artist an opportunity to work and/or reflect upon his artistic practice at a location that is different from his usual place of work. It is an opportunity to experience another culture and meet new people from other artistic contexts. Usually a part of the living expenses is supported by the hosting institution and/or by some entity sponsoring the residency and its duration can range from a few weeks to various months. Most residencies are obtained through a competitive application process (e.g. the ones offered by Gulbenkian), but there are also other types, i.e. by invitation from the hosting institution or sponsor.

Mid-career artist A6, considers residencies very important for an artist's development, even more important than art school because of the diversity of experiences they offer to artists:

A6: Unfortunately, when I was a young artist, we didn't have these possibilities; this format did not exist in Portugal. This support for artists to do these programs didn't exist and we didn't have money of our own to do them. Today, there is a very broad range of residencies and I think it is one of the most important practices for an artist. [...] Many times, I advise Portuguese institutions to use part of the money they have for making exhibitions, for providing some support [for residencies], because not a lot is needed for residencies. It is one of the most important things, more important than being at art school because it is a contact with diverse situations and people that is fundamental for the artists' work and then it creates immediately these bonds....

A6 mentions that when she was younger the possibilities for residencies did not exist; the only thing comparable were grants and scholarships offered by the Gulbenkian Foundation, a policy that benefited hundreds of artists during decades (and for which the artists always express their gratitude) and still continues today supplemented by an offer of international residencies.

The younger generation of artists (A12 and A14) recognize the importance of residencies and admitted that they participate in various processes for obtaining one:

A12: The residency that Gulbenkian sponsors in New York is another residency for making contacts and meeting people.... I think it is a hybrid enabling the development of work and showing it to a new audience, without being the context of the gallery or the fair. People understand that there exist networks, as in everything, and the art market is more of a network than other markets. It is very much based on A knowing B, B knowing C, and A introducing himself to C through B; just like the story with my gallery: my friend introduced me and I went there with his recommendation. The main advantage of residencies, especially when they are at good institutions, is that they present a new set of nodes in a network. [...] The market here is basically an export market. It is important for galleries to do fairs and for artists to do residencies.

For A12, residencies offer two types of opportunities: making and exhibiting work and networking. He considers that the art market is a network and to make his point he mentioned how he

approached his current gallery, namely via a fellow artist who provided the necessary introduction. His view that the Portuguese market is an export market supports the economic argument for internationalization for both artists and galleries; the first by doing residencies (where contacts are made and networks are expanded) and the second by participating in fairs.

A14 was asked about the importance she attributes to residencies:

A14: Personal experience mainly; the way of dealing with issues in another country I think is very important. [...] It is always about the willingness to be in another country for some months and think and work in that country.

Since in her answer she didn't mention networking explicitly but chose to highlight the personal experience factor, I asked a follow-up question about the impact of networking resulting from her residency experiences:

A14: None of these [residencies] in terms of networking was important, nothing happened. It was important for the work that I did and for being with a group of artists, some I knew, others I didn't. It is important for these reasons, but I don't have any experience of a residency that has had any other ramifications that led to other projects.

From her answer, we see that it was important to her that she met other artists – which by itself is a form of networking since new contacts were created – but at least so far, no tangible effects (projects) resulted from her participation in residencies. This fact reinforces the view expressed by other artists that many times there is no visible “cause-effect” in many things that artists take part in, or at least, it is not something that is immediately observable.

Curators also consider residencies important for artists. C2 believes that residencies contribute towards internationalization, but their scope is wider and identified three levels of impact. The first level is that of knowledge. Residencies are an opportunity for artists to get to know more about art by experiencing in vivo the works of art they have only seen images of. The second level, is to experience the realities, albeit temporarily, of other art worlds, which are more developed and more central than the Portuguese. The third, which is more directly linked to internationalization, deals with networking: establishing links with art world professionals.



C2: I think it has impact at various levels. One, is the opportunity that artists have to see in reality for the first time the works of art that they have seen their whole life in books. Then, to understand what is going on in the world of art at that point: they go to England, to São Paulo, to New York, to Berlin; they are metropolises, therefore, the more contemporary things are supposedly happening there, even though the most interesting things happening are not always at these centers; sometimes they are at the periphery at very special projects. Then, they have the opportunity to establish contacts within the field, with professionals. This institution where we send an artist, what it does is to put them in contact with institutions [and] curators. [...] We are also contributing towards their internationalization because during their stay they get to know other curators, other museums, other institutions, other artists, therefore, the networks are being established.

C6 chose to highlight in her answer the importance of networking and the increase she has been noticing in recent times regarding the presence of Portuguese artists abroad. While she considers this as “not very spectacular and very visible”, the important thing is that artists circulate and network:

C6: The artists will create networks and presence at these places [where residencies are], therefore, artists who were educated at Goldsmith's, or in Berlin, or anywhere else, are creating their network and have galleries abroad showing their work and are being present. It may not be very spectacular and very visible, but they are there and it is very different than it was before on this level. Therefore, not everything has to be done by institutions; there is already a lot more circulation and a lot more networking.

C7 shares the opinions of his colleagues about the importance of international networking for artists. However, he pinpointed also to the usefulness of residencies for mid-career artists as well:

C7: Residencies are the opportunities that artists have to establish relations and networks of contacts and partnerships at the international level. It is through these that the field is opening because artists - by achieving to have residencies abroad - create these links and complicities. It is easier to argue that residencies are for younger artists because they are starting to create these relations...and the idea and bias exist that mid-career artists don't need them, but sometimes they still do.

Even though C7 did not elaborate further on this need for mid-career artists, having in mind his view expressed earlier that it is easier for institutions to exhibit young and established artists, perhaps residencies for mid-career artists would help attenuate this apparent institutional indifference towards them.

The four internationalization mechanisms and processes identified above (fairs, biennials, foreign curator visits to Portugal, residencies) will help the internationalization process of an artist's career if they are used to that effect by the artist and his gallery; i.e. an artist's participation in fairs and biennials alone does not guarantee an international career. There exist fortuitous events and moments of extraordinary luck in artistic careers but for these to occur the work of the artist must be deemed good enough or interesting enough and be present at the right places where it can be visible to as many agents as possible.

One of the aspects that interviewees stressed about internationalization is that it is a continuous process. C2 put it as follows:

C2: International consecration is a continuous thing, it doesn't happen instantaneously. A moment may help but relationships need to be looked after.

To that effect I asked artists the question if it is sufficient for the launch of an international career to have work included in an important exhibition abroad at a first-class institution (e.g. Tate, MOMA, Pompidou, Reina Sofia, etc.) and the answer was that it helps, but it is not sufficient:

A3: It would help for sure. The problem is, in order to launch a career properly, a follow-up is needed; a happening at a museum is not enough, but obviously it helps that an artist was present at the Tate or at the Reina Sofia, but from that point on it needs continuity. Many Portuguese artists exist today - of younger generations than mine - who have some international career, or some international visibility, but they hardly achieve a lot of visibility; that is, there are one among many who are part of this circuit but then they never reach that point of being present - ubiquitous - mainly in the US and Europe. This is needed for being a global artist.

In a follow-up question about what is missing for starting to consolidate an international career, A3 replied:

A3: I don't know. I think it has to do with luck, with public relations, being at the right place at the right time, knowing the right people at the right time. [...] Some manage to do it for reasons that have to do exclusively with their own merit, resilience, insistence, and can stay afloat for a long period of time; others have their moment of visibility, the so-called 15 minutes of fame and then....

Luck and public relations or networking are factors for artistic success (not only in international terms) that some artists invoked as being essential in addition to artistic work. Some artists indeed recognize that during their careers they had some lucky moments or benefited from fortuitous events:

A5: If this curator [names the curator] hadn't seen my exhibition or hadn't been in Lisbon at the time, probably a series of other things<sup>143</sup> wouldn't have happened, at least in the same way.

A11: I was lucky; my first two exhibitions went very well, practically everything was sold. My work created interest and collectors also expressed interest. Also, things were affordable; I was at the beginning [of my career] and the works were affordable due to their scale.

A6 believes that a lot depends on the artist, beginning with where one wants to be situated within the various circuits of contemporary art and, after deciding on that, making sure that one is linked to the desired circuit:

A6: The main thing is the work and then being included in an exhibition, in a biennial, in a context of great visibility, but one which is extremely respected. We have various circuits within the contemporary art; there are many people doing many things and we must understand which is the circuit where we want to be known at, respected and disseminated. There are artists who have a luxurious lifestyle, who sell [artwork] for millions and are in a circuit that doesn't interest me, that is a more commercial circuit, very much linked to money, to the decorative side, but it is a circuit; depends where you want to be situated. I believe that for an artist the most important thing is to develop his work in the most rigorous

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<sup>143</sup> A5 refers to the fact that this curator included his work in an international exhibition where it was noticed by two foreign galleries that became interested in it and today these galleries are his international representatives.

possible way according to what he feels and thinks and breaks the rules and surprises and brings new things. It is very important, either having a good gallery, but more than that – because there are artists with good galleries but whose work doesn't have that much visibility or it takes a long time [to achieve it] – is to be linked to the circuits: do residencies, do exhibitions with other artists that have an impact within the artistic community and things are being talked about and create a buzz based on the artist's work, an interest. But not everything is in the hands of artists.

When I asked if an artist can gain visibility by cultivating relations with curators, A6 replied:

A6: It could be, but not only. I know of artists who refuse all that, artists who are extremely difficult to talk to, they don't receive emails, they don't disseminate their work and yet they are very sought after by curators, because their work is in fact very interesting. The work is the most important thing of all. If the work is very, very interesting, curators will get to it because they are very smart and look always for the very new and very critical. I don't know whether an artist must worry much about such a strategy. I believe an artist should be very worried about doing his work in the most incredible way and make it visible: people must know that it exists. [...] The first thing is the work, then as with everything in life, it is luck; being at the right moment at the right place.

Other artists also highlighted in their answers the importance of an artist's work and according to A7 artists must be "faithful to their own work so that things appear naturally, and never stop working". When I asked if talent comes into it, he provided the following answer:

A7: Today, I absolutely believe that talent, the quality of work, for an artist now is 0.1% relevant. The 99.9% is all the rest: the context, the people one knows, the artist's age. The work by itself, its quality is 0.1%. This means in absolute terms that any crappy artist can do whatever he wants; it is indifferent what the artist does. What is important is all the rest.

Talent, however, is an elusive quality to begin with:

C1: Talent is always very difficult to define and a large part of the evolution in art in the twentieth century is an opposition to talent, for example, *bad painting*, work like Dubuffet's or Basquiat's.

On the other hand, G3 believes that talent is an indispensable ingredient, among others (including luck), for good artistic work:

G3: Work does not exist without talent. If the work is good, slowly it will clear the way and that could take more time or less time. Luck too; look at two cases: [Francis] Bacon and [Lucian] Freud. While Bacon was a name with a large repercussion in the UK, and not only, nobody knew Freud. This has to do with the language, the circuits, the opportunities that come up.

When I asked A7 what he meant by “all the rest” he replied, “public relations” and acknowledged that luck also plays its part. Intrigued by his answer that talent basically accounts for nothing, I asked him to describe the qualities necessary for a successful international career:

A7: I think that all artists in Portugal that now have a certain international relevance are entrepreneurs, without a doubt, without exception.

This view is shared also by A8 (an artist with international presence), who thinks that artists are - above all else - entrepreneurial in making art, but also entrepreneurial in another way:

A8: There is another kind of entrepreneurship; the person needs to go where the curators are, have [professional] relationships, do networking, that takes time out of the studio time. Therefore, artists that have a broad international visibility are artists with the capacity to deploy themselves. I don't have [it] and I am not interested in it.

We see that some artists consider networking to be an entrepreneurial quality necessary for an international career. It is a time-consuming activity according to A8, a view shared also by A1 who does not actively pursue an international presence exactly because he wants to stay focused in his work at the studio, even though he admitted to being open to exhibiting abroad if a foreign gallery shows interest and makes the necessary arrangements with his Portuguese gallery.

Another entrepreneurial quality is proactiveness, i.e. taking the initiative, as is demonstrated by the following actions of artists:

- A4 decided to interrupt his art education in Portugal and start over in a European capital because he was dissatisfied with the quality of education in Lisbon and more importantly

because he wanted to create a structure abroad, since he considered that “Lisbon is a very small city, without many exhibitions, few galleries, and a small field”.

- A7 started establishing international contacts long before his first solo exhibition abroad and characterizes his approach to his career as proactive: “one of the things that I care about is for things to happen, and when they didn’t, I acted for them to happen; I am very proactive at this level”.
- A11 expressed his willingness and necessity to manage almost all aspect of his career. When in the recent past an opportunity came up for exhibiting at a museum abroad, but the museum was unable to offer any financial support for realizing the exhibition, the artist took the matter in his own hands: “I said that this wasn’t a problem and that I would find a way to do the exhibition. I spent months knocking on various doors and I was fortunate to find two sponsors that allowed me to do it”.
- A12 and A14, both artists of the younger generation, organized groups with their art school colleagues and started exhibiting and making their work known before graduating. We have already seen how A12 used a colleague to get an introduction to his gallerist and said that at the time he adopted this attitude because: “I developed work that nobody had seen and couldn’t be eternally waiting for someone to come and see it”.
- A13 some years ago made the decision to establish a second studio in a European capital because “at that time, Portugal was not a country that was known [artistically]. Consequently, we went ahead and got closer to where everything was happening since nobody was coming to Portugal and Lisbon”.

When discussing the topic of international careers, a lot of interviewees (artists, gallerists, curators) often mentioned the careers of Julião Sarmiento (b. 1948) and Pedro Cabrita Reis (b. 1956) and to a lesser extent the cases of younger artists like Joana Vasconcelos (b. 1971) and the artistic duo Paiva/Gusmão (b. 1978/79) as success stories of artists based in Portugal who managed to achieve and maintain international recognition:

A11: Pedro Cabrita Reis, Julião Sarmiento and Joana Vasconcelos are 3 exemplary cases of people who took the wheel [of their career] in their own hands and build their own careers with a huge talent for social relations and contacts; they are managers, they are good artists, but also have the talent of being good career managers, good communicators,

that is very important. We are talking about another level that doesn't have to do with the quality of work; it has to do with other qualities and capacities that a Portuguese artist must possess in order to place his work within the international panorama and they have clearly achieved it through networking and through contacts.

G1: Pedro Cabrita Reis and Julião Sarmento always had the notion that it was necessary to go out, to circulate. Sarmento was at the right places, where he should be and had his connections...he had a professionalism long before many people today have.

C1: Who launches careers are artists themselves. Now, it is necessary to have a strong managerial capability to manage your career. In fact, the careers that have been affirmed are managed by the artists themselves: Julião Sarmento, Pedro Cabrita Reis, and Joana Vasconcelos - not many more - managed to break away from external control. Either the artist is reverent, thankful and dependent on a critic, a curator, an institution, or possesses a strong enough personality and work [enabling him] to turn things around and [make] others dependent on him.

When I asked C1 to elaborate on what he meant by “managing a career”, he explained:

C1: It means, for instance, not to exhibit at any place, start to exhibit or only accept invitations from entities or galleries that have a place in the art market. Another thing, even stranger, is not to sell to anybody; choose from the beginning to whom you sell. Top galleries assume this role very firmly and try and sell works that will give prestige to the artist. It is not a question of selling the whole exhibition; it is selling to x, y, and z. Then you learn to be present at important exhibitions...all this logic of relationships is essential.

In the 3 views expressed above by using specific examples of artists whose trajectories are well known and documented in monographs, exhibition catalogs and interviews, we get a clearer idea of the skills and qualities that art world insiders consider essential for launching and maintaining a relevant international career, in addition to the skills and qualities needed for the creative part of their career, namely making art. On top of proactiveness and networking we should add professionalism or managerial capability and the willingness to take matters in their own hands (autonomy or breaking away from the control of others). However, before all that is put into action, especially at the international level, the artist must make an important decision: to actively pursue

the internationalization of his career, as opposed to having an international career because things turned up that way (i.e. favorable sequence of events that sped up this process, e.g. A5's case, or things that appeared along the way, like A10 describes below). A3 and C4 alerted for this factor that can be decisive from an artist's strategy perspective:

A3: I think that up to a point it is a personal choice. The person who has global ambitions must have a certain posture; if a person doesn't have these ambitions, or at least doesn't do anything for them, maybe is satisfied with the local artist status. [...] Julião Sarmento has the career that he has and it is because of his own merit. With Pedro Cabrita Reis is the same thing, with Paiva/Gusmão as well; they all fought for that and it was they who achieved it, nobody did anything for them and they deserve credit for what they have achieved.

C4: I think in the end that is probably, you might almost say, the way they want to, because if they really wanted to be international they would change it: they would go and live in Berlin or go and live in London. It seems to me the ones who wanted to be international left Portugal or spent time away or found a gallery abroad and they have done it very well. [...] Certainly, Cabrita Reis and Sarmento were among the most active being international and being out there, they didn't wait for it to happen, so I think they made things happen for themselves.

A7 summarizes his attitude towards the internationalization of his career as follows:

A7: Because I'm very proactive, because I'm very willing, and because I wanted this to happen and I worked to make it happen. Most of my colleagues from the younger generations want this to happen, but they only say: "I want this to happen". Maybe it will fall from the sky? They do not do anything to make it happen; I did, the difference is this. This is not a criticism, it is a fact. I wanted things to happen to me and I did everything to make them happen; I worked desperately for them to happen. Most artists, I would say 95% of the artists, are sitting on their chairs and say: "great that it would happen", but things do not happen if people do not ... if they are not active. That's what I think.

A10, an artist with an international presence and international gallery representation, also talked about the examples of Sarmento and Cabrita Reis as:



...artists who went there [abroad], talked to people, were charming and did marketing to achieve this. I didn't do any of that, therefore the things that appeared along my way, were the things that appeared and, in some cases, it is a question of the person being at the right moment at the right place with the right person that has eventually met. [A10]

Considering A10's experience, we can again confirm that it is possible to benefit from fortuitous events and achieve international presence, but the artists who are currently considered as the ones with the most significant international presence, are artists who grasped every available opportunity and created the conditions to have their work shown abroad, were very active in it, and above everything else, had the desire to do so.

C3 characterized the internationalization process as not being a homogeneous one and distinguished between a market and a curatorial context. By market context he meant the integration of a Portuguese artist in the program of a powerful and influential gallery that "ends up having inevitable consequences: residencies here, exhibitions there; it all starts happening immediately". By curatorial context he meant:

C3: If an artist enters a more curatorial context where his work is relevant for different curatorial approaches is also significant; it may happen. I think that the most recent case of this are Paiva/Gusmão: they circulate essentially in a very diversified curatorial context where very different curators include their work [in exhibitions].

C7 considers that the most usual path for an artist with international aspirations is to find an international gallery and for that to happen an artist must be present in important events where:

an international gallerist sees your work and thinks that a collaboration is a good idea, therefore the normal route is this. I think that most of the artists that have galleries abroad had this type of trajectory: they started attracting interest with their work, then went through some events that had a broad capacity of public exposure and then ended up with foreign gallery collaborations. Then these [galleries], do the work of promoting and connecting with local and international communities through fairs etc., and then create a field with collectors and a broader institutional interest. [C7]

C5 explained how a Portuguese artist can integrate a foreign gallery and the importance the Portuguese gallery of the artist may have in this process:

C5: The [artist's] work must be noticed by the [foreign] gallerists that interest him. Portuguese galleries may have an important role in this at international fairs, and with the relationships they have with other galleries to promote their artists to other galleries; this has happened. Many times, at international fairs foreign gallerists see at the booths of their Portuguese colleagues artists that interest them and end up in absorbing them into their program and frequently [these artists] maintain as their center of diffusion the foreign gallery.

Entering the program of a foreign gallery – especially a powerful and influential gallery at a global level - is easier said than done<sup>144</sup>, but if one has this aspiration, then being in the 'right' Portuguese gallery – i.e. a gallery that participates regularly at relevant fairs - is a good start, which underlines the importance of gallery affiliation in the national context. G5 provided some insight on the considerations foreign galleries may have when looking for foreign artists to represent – in these case Portuguese:

G5: What kind of artist are they [foreign galleries] going to select? The best artist of the country because immediately they will capture all the collectors of the country. After some time, they are not interested either in the country or in the artist; they are interested in the clients they captured in that country.

C1 points to another factor that foreign galleries may consider before inviting artists to integrate their programs (Portuguese or other), namely the scale of the artist's production:

C1: With the Portuguese market being very small, with few collectors, artists produce little. To have access to an international gallery it is necessary to have a production that is compatible with the distribution network that these galleries have.

G2 confirmed that the level of production in Portugal is low and attributed this fact to the limited availability of financial resources. In his view, this is incongruent since "it is relatively cheap to produce in Portugal". When he suggested to his international artists to execute part of their production in Portugal (this applies to artists whose work is executed by third parties and not directly by the artists themselves) he found out that "the values are between 5 and 10 times less

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<sup>144</sup> Among the reasons for this is that a lot of collectors buy with investment in mind (A11) and many foreign collectors buy mainly the work of their local or national artists (A10).

than producing in their country of origin". The logic of this becomes evident when we especially consider galleries that have more than one locations, are present in many fairs and capable of organizing participations for their artists in multiple institutional spaces. Most probably, no such gallery will commit resources in promoting an artist whose production won't be sufficient to satisfy the collector demand resulting from these efforts. An artist cannot build an international presence - at least in market terms - without having enough work circulating at the international level.

On the other hand, an artist will have increased chances of achieving some degree of international presence via the curatorial route if he has participated in residencies and established links with the curators circulating in those contexts. The same is valid if he is in contact with curators who either visit Portugal as part of scouting missions when responsible for large-scale international events (e.g. biennials), or when these are invited by Portuguese institutions, or even by their own gallery, if it has in place such a practice. Another possibility is having their work included in projects abroad when these are curated by Portuguese curators who probably are more familiar with their work than foreign curators might be.

Another factor, that does not depend on the artists, but greatly affects their careers and especially the market for their work, is related to the size of the Portuguese market. C1 and A11 (among other interviewees) mentioned Maria Helena Vieira da Silva (1908-1992) - whose works sometimes appear in European auctions in the post-war category - and Paula Rego (b. 1935) as being the Portuguese artists<sup>145</sup> with the highest degree of international recognition and attribute this to the fact that their lives and careers were based abroad (France and England, respectively). It is also a fact that their work at international auctions has transacted for prices exceeding one million euros, something not yet achieved by any of their younger peers.

A11 argues that both artists:

reached that level because they were inserted in a context, that was the local context of their country that had conditions to promote them; we don't have this in our country. [...]  
If our market were strong, it would sustain the projection of our artists abroad. [A11]

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<sup>145</sup> Often in the international market Vieira da Silva is considered a French artist and Paula Rego an English one.

C1 believes that despite the fragility of the Portuguese art market, this market has provided both for Vieira da Silva and Paula Rego a kind of “safety net” in the sense that Portuguese collectors bought their work and assured their economic survival at different points of their careers:

C1 (regarding Vieira da Silva): in the 1960's and 1970's Vieira da Silva's [work] was systematically bought by a big collector, Jorge de Brito. This allowed Vieira da Silva not to have the market decline that all the artists of her generation had; all the artists of the French lyrical abstraction declined [in price].

C1 (regarding Paula Rego): Paula Rego was in England for 10 years before having her first individual exhibition there and during those years had a ‘rearguard’ in the Portuguese market.

C5 argues that Portuguese artists do not initiate their international circulation from Portugal, but from the various “centralities” like, for instance, Berlin and that explains why they are attracted to such locations and want to place themselves there. In his opinion, the artistic diffusion starts at the centralities and reaches the periphery (and Portugal is considered a periphery) not the other way around. To support his view, he provides the following examples:

C5: They did not affirm themselves from here; they affirmed themselves from some centrality that they managed to create: Leonor Antunes<sup>146</sup> (b. 1972) from Berlin, Pedro Barateiro (b. 1979) from the Kunsthalle Basel, Paiva/Gusmão based on the success they had in Switzerland and Germany, Julião Sarmento from his success in Germany and Spain, when Spain was a zone of diffusion; it is always from a centrality that it is created. Portugal does not have the capacity to create its centrality because it lacks a unified vision regarding its artistic fabric.

C5's view regarding the Portuguese context can be added to the other views expressed by C1 and A11 about the low relevance of the local context in the international panorama. Essentially, artists who harbor international career aspirations, are forced by the peripheral Portuguese context to find ways to affirm themselves abroad because being a Portuguese artist – even with excellent artistic work – does not guarantee an international career. In other words, in their pursuit of international affirmation, artists engage in a series of actions that I call entrepreneurial which are necessary for

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<sup>146</sup> Leonor Antunes lives in Berlin.

inserting themselves and adapting to one or various other contexts (centralities) that are more relevant than the Portuguese in the contemporary arts panorama. These entrepreneurial actions can be described as:

- The desire or the aspiration to have an international career accompanied by the understanding that the artist himself must be active in this process (proactiveness).
- The ability to manage this process remotely (i.e. whether living in Portugal or another part of the world) depends on their professionalization (creating a support structure) and capacity of acting autonomously.
- The understanding of the need of establishing networks and maintaining relationships with a variety of other agents in the field: peers, market agents (the “right” galleries), institutional agents (especially curators), and occasionally prestigious collectors.

We have seen that a few artists at different points during their interviews acknowledged the role of luck and the occurrence of fortuitous events in their careers - or in artistic careers in general - but what is of interest is their reply when it comes to planned actions like networking and marketing (i.e. promoting their work to other agents). Artists like A4 and A5 believe that networking, marketing, and public relations can help an artist succeed in the market and, up to point, can even be employed to compensate for the lack of artistic quality:

A4: I believe that bad artists need a lot of networking and live from it. They develop networking and the work suffers the consequences of that networking and a mirror of that networking is their willingness to always be up to date. Other artists prefer a longer route, where the merit takes more time, but it is more consolidated. There are artists who have the same logic as a company and think that everything is marketing; art is not marketing, but many times they are more successful in commercial terms or even in institutional terms. [...] In some cases, you see that there is nowhere to go and [they] reach a certain stage in their career and all that has been constructed in an artificial way and it cannot be sustained.

A4 considers “bad artists” the ones who prefer to develop their networks instead of their work, something that results in producing work just to be up to date, perhaps in an attempt to integrate themselves in the zeitgeist as this is manifested in the various art fairs and biennials. Contrary to them, artists who remain faithful to their own work, artistic expression, and language, may not

enjoy the (early and perhaps ephemeral) market success the former enjoy, but may enjoy a longer lasting consolidation. A5 also admits that artists whose work is of little interest may enjoy visibility (“very strong presence”) resulting from their networking and public relations efforts:

A5: Other aspects like networking and public relations could be very important and ultimately could be absolutely decisive. There are artists whose artistic work is of very little interest, but they have a very strong presence maybe because they can manage a number of things at that level and complement what perhaps is missing from [their] work and its intensity, as such, in isolated terms. I think it has always been like that.

A8 expressed a similar opinion to A4's about careers being artificially constructed and distinguished between artistic work and career:

A8: It is possible to have a career based on nothing, but when the career ends, nothing remains. The history of the career remains, but not the history of the work, because the work never existed.

Since most careers entail a market component – another component is curatorial or institutional related – and according to many artists and gallerists it is the art market that dictates many of the rules, it is conceivable that some artistic careers were, and indeed are, fabricated by market agents, namely galleries, auctions, the artists themselves, collectors/speculators, with or without the input of curators and institutions.

C6 and C3 alerted to the fact that the legitimization of an artist's work happens at, at least, two distinct time frames: the short-term, i.e. during our lifetimes when we experience it, and the long-term, i.e. when art history in the future will judge our contemporary experiences and choices:

C6: Now we say this from a microscopic point of view that is ours, the time we are living; it is impossible to say if in 200 years this artist is important, maybe he won't be. History takes many turns. When I am saying this, it is within the range of the 10-20 years in which we are living, it is important because it is our life, but for history it may not be.

C3 believes that in the short-term the market has a strong role in providing legitimization for artists' work, something that can support the views of all those who believe that some artistic careers can be (or are) the result of market fabrications and - as time passes and art history assumes its role -

things could be judged by the historian of the future very differently from the way we evaluate them presently:

C3: When you talk about legitimation, are you talking about the short term, the medium term or the long term? If you are talking about the short term, I can tell you that galleries and the market have a very strong role here, as well as, some exhibitions - that circulate - by certain curators. If you are referring to legitimacy in a historical sense, all these things appear and then disappear because the market is very voracious and the role that, for example, Jeff Koons had a few years ago maybe today isn't so much, neither Damien Hirst; this tends to fade out. These are very characteristic symptoms of market-based legitimacy and of certain powerful circulations that this market establishes. There are many revisions that are made in the history of art, the various art histories are making revisions of all this, and there will be many other different perspectives, perhaps less conditioned by the contingencies of the moment that will surely establish other orders of values.

All artists consider their work as the cornerstone of their career. Two artists attributed to their work a capacity of resisting on its own and defending itself as the time progresses, until art history in the future makes its judgment:

A13: In these things where subjectivity rules, either the work defends itself even without the artist existing, without art criticism existing, etc., or it fails, because what fails is the work. That is why years are needed; it is [art] history that will clear things up. That is, when an artist makes a painting and needs to have 10 articles about it saying that this is transcendent, etc., otherwise - without those articles saying it is transcendent - it ends there. Then, there are artists who wait for the time to pass [and] to judge the work, but it is necessary for the work to exist. It is the work that one day - when the artist dies, when the critic dies - will defend itself or not.

A9: Luck counts as well, obviously, networking also and all those things. I would say that the thing that counts the most is being or not being an artist. There are very few that are really artists. There are very few that manage to have a body of work that resists without the rest: without the gallery, without the networking, without economic [power], without the curator; a body of work that resists in time.

A13 and A9 by using the expressions “defend” and “resist”, respectively, mean that a work of art can be meaningful on its own without support or assistance from the artist, the critic, the curator, etc. These views somehow contradict the already expressed opinion of C6 who doesn't “believe in the existence of things by themselves” and that in her opinion it is preferable - but not obligatory - that someone acts as a mediator for a possible meaning for them, in her case, a curator.

Curators, like C6 and C7, also acknowledged the importance of networking. C6 believes it must be developed in “the right measure”, i.e. not in detriment of artistic work. C6 also associated networking with the character of the artist, namely that it is easy or natural for some and difficult for others:

C6: Objectively, [networking] has some importance because there is a minimum of it that needs to be done; if not, there is no visibility or no circulation. Again, it must be in the right measure, because if the artist occupies 60% of his time in this instead of making art, something wrong is going on; there must be a balance. Then, it depends on the profile, the character of the artists. For some, is natural; there are others who must force themselves immensely to do this and when it is too forced and not natural it becomes burdensome.

C7 believes that in the long-run, factors like networking and luck cannot be substitutes for lack of artistic quality, even though in the short-run someone can jumpstart a career by networking:

C7: Networking and building these relationships is very important and then of course a bit of luck. But neither is enough if there isn't quality in the work. Normally, sooner rather than later, the thing breaks down. You could, in fact, manage to climb and even to establish yourself, but then it is very difficult to last if the quality of work is not there.

We have seen in RQ1 that the character and personality of the artist is something that most gallerists consider when inviting artists to collaborate with them. There is one element in an artist's personality that is especially linked to market success and that is, according to G2 and G3, how socially adept an artist is and his ease of relating to others:

G3: The sociable artist has more success than the less sociable one.

G2: Everything becomes much easier for a gallerist when he is working with an artist who has this ability to relate on his own with other market players. If an artist is a so-called



"studio loner" who never leaves the studio, doesn't go to inaugurations, doesn't relate to anyone, however extraordinary his work may be - and there are many examples of absolutely extraordinary artists who do not relate to the mundane things in the world – their lack of relating [to others] is an added problem for the gallerist.

What G2 views as an added problem for the gallerist (i.e. promoting this kind of artist becomes more difficult) is something that his colleague G5 also identified with respect to some of the Portuguese artists her gallery represents in comparison with the attitude of foreign artists of her gallery:

G5: When you work with a 40-year old American or German artist there is a way of doing things that has nothing to do with the Portuguese way; with them [Portuguese artists] I have to do everything as if they were emerging. [...] I think that the Portuguese artist is a bit of a romantic: he is convinced that being in the studio doing his work is enough for things to happen, and today things don't happen like that.

G5 believes that today some Portuguese artists are starting to adopt a more extroverted attitude, but there is still a lot of work to be done in this field – i.e. overcoming their timidity - something that in her view can only be accomplished by the artists themselves:

G5: Assuming that an artist is really good, while a foreign artist who is in the center of Europe where everything is easier ... and when he goes to one place meets the director, the curator and establishes relationships, the Portuguese artist establishes these relationships with difficulty; he is extremely introverted and thinks it is not necessary. Today things are beginning to change a little, but he is always expecting for things to happen to him. This is the great difficulty with the younger people – there are some that are different – but the vast majority is very weak in establishing relationships. [...] There is a learning curve in all this and a timid side of them that needs to be defeated and it is a thing that needs to be done by them - no matter how annoyed they become - because some of them are little sociable.

A11, a mid-career artist himself, agrees with G5 that artists must overcome their timidity and also describes the idea of the artist working alone in his studio as “romantic”:

A11: [Artists] must somehow get out of this prison, this territory, and this shyness. [...] There are many people who are never discovered. When the market dictates the rules, there must be something there that makes the thing possible and easy for the market; if not, nobody takes the trouble to create the market, the truth is this. With the number of artists that exist and with the number of things happening, there is [still] this romantic idea: "you are working in the studio and then one day you will be known ..."; I think there will always be cases like these, because the market itself needs exceptions to legitimate itself.

A11 admits that he personally detests networking and that he doesn't need to do it, but advises his younger peers that when one is young and the work lacks visibility it is necessary to engage in networking:

A11: I hate doing networking, I hate going to openings. I really enjoy being with the people that I like, but just a few people. [...] I am not a person that is much seen in openings, but I also do not need this networking. As I am making exhibitions – fortunately my exhibitions have been successful - there is visibility and work that is known.... When you are young, it is necessary to do it; when you don't have [known] work yet, when you don't have visibility yet, you must do it.

According to A6, art students in Portugal are not very curious and not involved in art world activities and suggests that they should be more like architects who need interaction with others to develop their work:

A6: I criticize a lot the arts education in Portugal because there is very little curiosity; I think artists should learn something from architects. Architects need very much each other in order to develop their work. An architect doesn't work alone in the studio: they go to conferences, they are very active, they are very curious and I feel that art students are not very curious. You don't see many [art] students at art exhibitions, at conferences and it is crucial for a student to listen, to go to conferences about politics, about art, to listen to others.

A14, who was born in the 1980's, referred to her experience when she was an art student in Lisbon that supports A6's views:

A14: Reflecting on my [class] year, maybe only 10% of the people at art school were really interested in what was happening in terms of exhibitions. The exhibition is the easiest way to follow what is going on in a certain culture at the time.



## 6. CONCLUSION

### 6.1 Final Remarks

The art world is a complex environment for an outsider to understand: many times, its actors compete for resources (e.g. public institutions compete for state funding and wealthy patrons, collectors for quality artworks and galleries for artistic talent), and other times collaborate (e.g. galleries co-create with artists market demand for artworks; curators work with artists, galleries, and institutions for making exhibitions). Given the idiosyncrasies of the Portuguese artistic context, the complexity inherent in all art worlds, and the ever-increasing number of visual artists, this study advocates that artists beyond putting the necessary energy, effort, creativity, imagination, and innovation in executing work, should also dedicate efforts for gaining visibility for their art. Only the art that is visible, that circulates outside the artist's studio and integrates both commercial and institutional spaces can be appreciated and transacted, at least during the artist's lifetime. Therefore, the three qualities associated with the concept of *business level entrepreneurship* (proactiveness, managerial capability, networking) can aid artists in their quest for visibility. For artists who truly view art making as a vocation and a way of life, financial success, fame, or celebrity status, are not ends; they are the means that will allow them to continue to produce art.

As the art world is apparently dominated by the market, galleries for the majority of artists are the most important business partners. Therefore, the nature of the relationship of any artist with the gallery system is crucial. Galleries, beyond their business role to sell art, which provides artists with the means to continue to work, also perform a continuous gatekeeping role in the market for artists and more importantly for artists at the beginning of their career. In my research, I did not encounter any artist who during his career did not have some sort of link with the gallery system. For artists with international careers, even if they opt against having gallery affiliations in Portugal, foreign galleries are indispensable. The artist's integration in the gallery system is determined by career stage, the degree of internationalization of career, and the artist's expectations regarding the role of the gallery in their career, namely the functions it can perform. For artists who are not able or willing to promote their work and network with influential members of the art world, a delegation of these tasks to the gallery is necessary and this may create partial or total dependence

of the artist on the gallery. Artists who are more capable and active in these matters usually depend less on the gallery system for fulfilling certain functions.

Art fairs internationally have become the preferred way for many collectors to engage with art to the detriment of gallery visits and, as a consequence, galleries and by extension some artists (the ones whose work usually sells well at fairs) conduct a lot of their business there. Art fairs are visibility enhancing venues for artists and galleries alike and an important instrument for developing an international career.

Auctions in the Portuguese art market is a controversial topic for artists and gallerists who view this market instrument as negatively affecting their attempts to sell work in the primary market because of the price disparity between gallery prices and auction prices, where in many cases (if not the most) the first are higher than the second. As a result, some artists have complained to auction houses about their pricing policies and the way they handle art, and auctioneers, in their defense, questioned the veracity of the gallery prices as true transaction prices. The underdevelopment or even absence of a secondary dealer market has put auctions in the spotlight, since collectors interested in selling art practically have no alternative than resort to auctions. Auctions at the international level, besides being a venue for transactions in art, offer also market based legitimation and visibility for artists; however, the Portuguese auction houses are not viewed in this way by artists and gallerists who only recognize the price effects of this process.

Curators are essential gatekeepers of the art world and determine the access of artists and more importantly the visibility that comes with it, in a number of venues, including various types of institutions, curated exhibitions in galleries and art fairs, and a growing number of biennials. In addition, the ones who also have advisory roles for acquisitions by institutions, private collectors, or corporate collections, have an economic impact on artistic careers. Artists and gallerists that establish and maintain links with curators are more likely to have their work considered for inclusion in visibility enhancing venues and/or acquisitions. It should also be taken into account that curators, like all other professionals, pursue their own careers and set goals accordingly. Finding new artists to exhibit and promote, rediscovering older artists by re-interpreting their work and inserting it in a new context, are ways for them to distinguish themselves from their peers and make a name for themselves if their choices are embraced by the art world and more importantly by the market. Consequently, the nature of the collaboration between artist and curator will not

only be determined by the artist's work (quality, relevance, etc.), but also by the curator's career objectives and by the programming strategy of the institutions involved.

For many Portuguese artists trying to establish an international presence is a legitimate personal ambition that can be motivated by economic factors as well, since the size of the Portuguese art market is limited. Despite the richness and the elevated artistic quality of the work of Portuguese artists, the context they initiate their careers (Portugal), is perceived by them - and by other members of the art world, market and institutional agents alike - as poor and peripheral, due to its limited market size and the lack of State policy regarding visual arts. Therefore, Portuguese artists seek artistic legitimization and market opportunities elsewhere, mostly in other European cities that are considered art hubs or centralities, like London, Berlin, Paris. One way of achieving this is by having their work present at international fairs, either through their Portuguese galleries and/or more importantly by being integrated to the program of foreign ones. In addition to these market-based processes, their international circulation can be accomplished by curatorial-led processes like invitations extended by curators for exhibitions in institutions and survey-type events like biennials. The younger generation of artists (and few of their mid-career peers as well) seek opportunities to do residencies abroad and benefit not only from life and work experiences there, but perhaps more importantly from temporarily integrating different contexts – especially if these are considered centralities - and networking with international peers and art world members.

## **6.2 Research limitations**

This research took place in a specific context, the Lisbon art world, and a priori all its findings cannot be transferred to other contexts/art worlds; for instance, the idiosyncrasies of the institutional panorama or the underdevelopment of the secondary market are very specific characteristics of this art world. However, the findings related to the artist-gallery relationship do provide insights that are likely applicable to other contexts, as are the findings for the internationalization process relevant for other art worlds that are not considered art hubs or centralities.

The concept of artistic career used in this research refers to the artist whose work is exhibited publicly, its sale provides a source of economic subsistence, and is a full-time professional activity. Therefore, the findings of the research cannot be applied to artists who by choice restrict the access

to their artistic production to a very select group of peers and friends, or at the extreme wish to remain disconnected from the art world or even from society.

Private collectors are art world players, but none were interviewed. Market agents, artists, and my preparatory field work provided a clear understanding that in this context the importance of collectors is solely of economic nature and also indicated that in the local market there are no collectors that are perceived as legitimation agents, despite the existence of private collections that are accessible to the public.

The distribution of participant artists according to career stage (6 established, 6 mid-career, 2 younger generation), is numerically unbalanced, since only two younger generation artists were interviewed. However, for my research purposes, I needed participants with the widest possible experience, with a minimum of a few years of integration in the art world, and a distribution of artists across various decades. As is the case with all studies using qualitative interviews for data collection, the willingness and availability for interviews of the individuals that were approached as potential participants is a determining factor in the composition of the sample.

### 6.3 Contributions to the literature

The first contribution is relevant for the literature that deals with the workings and the complexity of the contemporary art world. The present research is an addition to the number of contexts/art worlds studied by making visible the workings of the Lisbon art world and enhances our understanding of the complexity of relations and interactions of artists with art world agents and market mechanisms. Besides the recent call by Sjöholm and Pasquinelli (2014) for researchers to examine other contexts in order to enrich the paradigm, anyone interested in the contemporary art phenomenon easily observes that a considerable amount of this literature, academic and other, focuses on the Anglo-Saxon art world and some art hubs like Berlin, Paris, or Amsterdam. New York and London are undisputedly the most important trading centers for western art, however the contemporary artistic production is not taking place (only) there; some would argue that the most interesting artistic production can be found outside those hubs, therefore studying other contexts is important for providing a more comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon. Regarding the art market more specifically, it is true that most headlines refer to record prices paid at auction, or commercial success of artist A or B in terms of sales in this or that art fair, but these are phenomena related to a very small portion of the global art market in terms of number of



transactions. Looking beyond the news headlines and the social media activity concerning mega-artists, mega-galleries, blockbuster museum exhibitions, collectors with private museums, the Venice Biennale, etc. there is a whole universe composed of many different art worlds - that don't involve million-dollar transactions and celebrity artists - where the overwhelming majority of art world professionals operate, develop careers, and aim to make a living from their professional activities. The present research by examining the relationship between the artist and the gallery system, also answers calls for further research made by a number of authors: Kottász and Bennett (2013) called for examining the impact of the personal branding efforts of the artist on their dealings with their business partners (e.g. galleries), as did Marshall and Forrest (2011) who suggested exploring the expectations artists have regarding their marketing intermediaries (e.g. galleries). This study also complements the work of Lehman and Wickham (2014) who pointed out the connection between the career stage of artists and their marketing activities, by adding that the career stage also determines (among other factors) the nature of the artist's relation with the gallery system and expectations regarding the fulfillment of the representation function on the part of the gallery.

The second contribution is made to the entrepreneurship literature and more specifically to the one focusing on arts and culture. Many researchers have described the artist as an entrepreneur, however few have provided details on what this entrepreneur does. Even those that attribute entrepreneurial skills, qualities, or traits to artists, rarely illustrate how these are employed by artists to achieve their goals. This research contributes to the literature by distinguishing and defining two levels of entrepreneurship that are linked to artists. *Creative level entrepreneurship* is present in all artists and has to do with the decisions that are related to the production of art: the imagination that was put into its making and sourcing the resources for its execution. *Business level entrepreneurship* can be associated with three qualities (proactiveness, managerial capability, networking) that can aid artists in achieving visibility for their work and gaining some independence or freedom of decision on career issues from other gatekeepers and influential members of the art world. *Business level entrepreneurship* was illustrated by examples given by artists themselves regarding their own careers or the careers of their peers, while other interviewees like gallerists and curators were instrumental for putting these in context, either locally, and more importantly internationally, where these qualities are essential for establishing and developing a career. Hence the present research is well situated within the recent literature, and its findings

provide both a confirmation and a continuation of the work by various authors in different contexts employing different methodologies: Poorsoltan (2012) who concluded that artists have an internal locus of control, which is a characteristic related to proactiveness; Fernandes and Afonso (2014) who demonstrated the importance of the artist's managerial skills at both levels of entrepreneurship; Fillis (2015) who has examined the use of entrepreneurial marketing, that includes proactivity (proactiveness) and communication skills (networking), among its attributes for brand building by artists.

#### **6.4 Implications and policy recommendations**

This study has numerous implications for artists. For the younger generation of artists, it is evident that they must be prepared at the business level to compete for visibility. Artists who have some preparation on this level during their art studies will be in a better position to navigate the art world, hence art schools should consider including in their curricula business level issues as well. Networking and immersion in art world events for a young artist is necessary, even though excessive networking could be counterproductive and take away valuable time from pure art-making activities. Each artist must find a balance according to his social skills and personality. I believe that up to a certain degree, all the related qualities at the business level entrepreneurship (proactiveness, managerial capability, networking) can be developed, hence the suggestion for incorporating them in art school curricula.

The entrepreneurial artist does not have to do everything himself, either at the creative or the business level; finding the right partners for each project is also essential for success not only in art making, but also in business. For instance, either knowing where to find the technical staff or even employing this staff for executing work is an example of creative level entrepreneurship. On the business level, not all artists have the same qualities or are willing to employ them. For instance, being aware of their lack of selling or marketing skills, or unable or unwilling to relate directly with collectors, consequently makes imperative the managing of the relationships with galleries that serve as intermediaries and link the artist to the art market. Becoming proactive for an artist means that they don't expect that working diligently in the studios is sufficient for achieving recognition and selling work, therefore they should take matters in their own hands: apply for residencies, mobilize themselves to realize exhibitions (many times by pooling resources with peers) that will offer visibility to their work, find the necessary financing for their projects,

etc. Artists who are timid, must make an effort to overcome their timidity for the benefit of their art and try and obtain visibility for it. A good starting point would be putting into use the relations they have - even if these are limited in number - with peers in obtaining introductions to gallerists and curators and other art world members.

Regarding the relationship between artists and galleries with auctions, both artists and galleries need to understand that once a work is sold for the first time, it will have a life of its own that may - positively or negatively - influence the market, or the more broadly, the career of an artist. On the other hand, for the auctioneers who wish to differentiate themselves from their competitors and improve their image as market agents (and especially start changing the negative opinion most artists have about them), treating artworks as cultural goods, having better criteria for admitting work at auctions, and elaborating catalogs with more complete and accurate information, will likely assist them in accomplishing this.

Artists wishing to establish an international presence need to elaborate a plan about how to achieve this and realize that the internationalization process is a continuous process that requires efforts at different levels (market-based, curatorial/institutional based). Visibility opportunities abroad must be grasped, or better, created by using the available market mechanisms (fairs) and processes (residencies and links with curators). This highlights the importance of gallery affiliations regarding fairs, being active in pursuing residencies, and able of forging and maintaining links with curators. The internationalization process is relatively easier for younger artists than mid-career ones, but both can increase their chances of achieving some international presence by being entrepreneurial at the business level.

This study also offers policy recommendations for the visual arts at the State level, provided that the State wishes to assume a more active role as a cultural agent. The Ministry of Culture should elaborate a plan for inviting directors and members of curatorial teams of the most important events (e.g. the Venice Biennale, the Documenta, the Biennale of São Paulo) to visit Portugal and make studio visits, increasing this way the probabilities of participation of Portuguese artists to those events. In addition, actions of cultural diplomacy, i.e. sponsoring exhibitions of contemporary artists at institutions abroad, would enhance the international image of the country in terms of cultural importance and at the same time support the internationalization efforts of its artists, institutions, and galleries. At a different level, which also implies a stronger commitment in terms

of financial resources, the State should consider the opening of a contemporary art museum in the capital with one main objective: a permanent exhibition of works by contemporary Portuguese artists. Another alternative, which is much more cost effective and easier to implement, would be a reconfiguration of the Berardo museum in order to integrate more works by Portuguese artists in its permanent exhibition, or alternatively create a nucleus with the objective already mentioned. Yet another possibility is for the city of Lisbon to undertake such a project, like the nearby municipalities of Oeiras (CAMB – Centro de Arte Manuel de Brito) and Cascais (Cascais Cultural Center and Casa das Histórias Paula Rego) have, albeit at a different scale. Such a move, besides enriching the cultural life of Lisbon for the benefit of its residents and visitors, could potentially offer economic benefits in the form of additional revenues from tourism.

### 6.5 Suggestions for further research

This study describes in detail the relationship between artists and the gallery system, something that can be further researched in order to provide additional insights into this collaboration. One line of research could focus on the factors that determine the longevity of the artist-gallery relationship, i.e. why in some cases artist and gallery collaborate during many years and in other cases artists change gallery representation more frequently. Another line of research could look into whether artists who are represented by many galleries enjoy a lesser degree of commitment of these galleries towards their career than artists who are represented by fewer galleries, where the degree of commitment could be measured by the number of solo exhibitions and their frequency at the gallery and the times the artist's work integrates the gallery's art fair booths. Investigating the contribution of artist-run spaces as an alternative to the gallery system on the careers of artists is another promising direction for research.

In terms of the internationalization of artistic careers, a study focusing solely on younger artists and their internationalization efforts would provide further insight into how these artists are using the available mechanisms and processes to achieve this; for instance, the impact of residencies is something that merits further research. Another related topic would be examining how foreign galleries get to know the work of Portuguese artists and initiate their affiliation with them; e.g. it results from the artist's networking efforts, from a fortuitous encounter of the gallery owner/manager with the artist's work at an art fair, associated with the presence of the artist at a residency, a result of the Portuguese gallery's networking efforts, etc.

Regarding the business level entrepreneurship, further research needs to be carried out in different contexts to enrich and expand this concept, i.e. the existence of additional qualities - beyond proactiveness, managerial capability, and networking - that can be associated with it. For example, one could use individual artists as case studies and examine to what extent turning points in their careers can be attributed to these qualities. A different way of approaching the business level entrepreneurship is by examining the presence of the associated qualities and their relation to the career stage of the artist. For instance, one could examine the validity of the argument made by some interviewees about the importance of networking at the beginning of the artist's career and whether it diminishes as the career progresses, remains constant, or increases.

Another possible direction for research is related to the context of this study. First, one could examine the impact of the ARCO Lisboa art fair on various levels: on the sales of the participating Portuguese galleries; on the circulation of foreign collectors and curators. Second, the impact of the MAAT museum could be researched in terms of its contribution towards putting Lisbon in the European cultural circuit by hosting exhibitions of important foreign artists, exporting its exhibitions abroad, and attracting the interest of foreign curators to the local art scene. Both the fair and the museum are recent additions to the Lisbon art world, are broadly considered positive developments, and provide fertile ground for researching certain aspects of the topics analyzed in the present research. A topic that also merits examination is the impact of artistic prizes on careers, something that a few participants briefly mentioned in relation to the EDP prize for young artists (Prémio Novos Artistas) as being a legitimation agent for work and an entry point to the local art world.



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## APPENDIX

### A. Career stage and age distribution of interviewed artists

Artist Code	Decade born
A1	1950's
A2	1970's
A3	1950's
A4	1970's
A5	1960's
A6	1960's
A7	1940's
A8	1950's
A9	1970's
A10	1950's
A11	1960's
A12	1980's
A13	1930's
A14	1980's

Distribution of artists' age		
Decade born	Frequency	%
1930's	1	7.1
1940's	1	7.1
1950's	4	28.6
1960's	3	21.4
1970's	3	21.4
1980's	2	14.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100</b>

For the purposes of this research, artists born in the 1930's, 40's and 50's were considered established/consecrated and artists born in the 1960's and 70's were considered mid-career. The two artists born in the 1980's were considered artists of the younger generation, but not "emerging", since they already have accumulated a 10-year experience in the art world.

## **B1. Interview guide for auction house owners**

### Pre-interview text:

Thank you for agreeing to do this interview for my PhD research whose topic is the development of careers of visual artists. Your contribution is greatly appreciated. As mentioned in our previous communication, our conversation will be digitally recorded and your anonymity in my thesis guaranteed by using a code. Elements such as names or locations that can make the identification of you or your auction house possible will be disguised or omitted where appropriate.

### Opening Questions:

What are your objectives regarding the segment of modern and contemporary art?

Besides the auctions, are you also active in the private sales segment and art advisory segment? [if yes: what are your objectives regarding these activities?]

### Sellers:

Can you describe the profiles of the various sellers that consign works to you?

What is your strategy for capturing emblematic works by well-known artists?

Which criteria do you use for accepting works for auction?

How do you determine the estimates for the works to be auctioned?

Do artists and galleries sell work at auctions?

### Buyers:

Can you describe the profiles of the various buyers that purchase art at your auctions?

Are there foreign buyers of Portuguese art?

Are there institutional buyers of Portuguese art?

### Auction impact on artist's career and market:

Do you think that auction outcomes have an impact on the market or on the career of an artist? [If yes: elaborate on this impact; is it positive or negative?]

Have you had complaints either by artists or by galleries (representing artists) regarding the auction estimates you publish in the catalog and the auction outcome? [If yes: how do you deal with these complaints?]

Do you consider galleries as your competitors?

### Internationalization of artists' careers:



As a market agent, what do you think is missing so that more Portuguese artists develop international careers?

Do you think that instruments/mechanisms exist for internationalization of artistic careers?

Ending the interview:

Is there anything more that you would like to add to the above?

Is there any topic that we didn't touch upon, but you believe I should be aware of for the purposes of my research?

Could you indicate 2-3 persons whose experiences are related to the issues we discussed that I should interview?

## **B2. Interview guide for gallery owners**

### Pre-interview text:

Thank you for agreeing to do this interview for my PhD research whose topic is the development of careers of visual artists. Your contribution is greatly appreciated. As mentioned in our previous communication, our conversation will be digitally recorded and your anonymity in my thesis guaranteed by using a code. Elements such as names or locations that can make the identification of you or your gallery possible will be disguised or omitted where appropriate.

### Gallery-Artist relationship:

Which are your criteria for selecting the artists that you collaborate/represent?

Can you describe the function of representing artist “X”?

Are galleries the most important partner for artists in terms of career evolution and promotion in the market?

An artist can survive in the market without gallery relationships?

How does a gallery create and sustain the market of its artists?

Is your gallery active in the secondary market?

### Gallery and the art market (art fairs and auctions):

What is the importance of fairs in the market?

Participating in fairs is indispensable for your gallery?

Is it fundamental for artists to be shown at fairs?

Artists expect to be shown at fairs by their gallery?

Do you think that the new fair (ARCO Lisboa) will have an impact on the local market?

What is the impact of auctions in the career development and market for an artist?

Is there any impact if a Portuguese artist is included at important international auction sales (e.g. Sotheby's, Christie's, etc.)?

Do you consider auctions as competitors for galleries?

Do you monitor the auction presence/activity of you artists?

### Art critics/curators and Biennials:

How do you view the role of art critics in the art world?

Do critics have an impact on the career/market of an artist? [if yes: elaborate]

How do you view the role of curators in the art world?

Do curators have an impact on the career/market of an artist? [if yes: elaborate]

What is the impact for an artist in terms of career and market when included in curatorial events like biennials (e.g. the Venice biennale)?

A curator associated with an important international institution (e.g. Tate, Pompidou, Reina Sofia, etc.), by including the work of a Portuguese artist in an exhibition taking place there, can launch/establish the international career of that artist?

Institutions (exhibitions and acquisitions):

What is the importance of the presence of an artist's work in museum exhibitions (temporary exhibitions, individual or group exhibitions, anthological, retrospective)?

How this presence impacts the career/market of the artist?

What is the importance of institutional acquisitions?

How these acquisitions impact the career/market of the artist?

What is the impact on career/market of an artist of acquisitions by private collectors with prestige that sometimes have their collections accessible to the public (e.g. private museums)?

Affirmation, legitimization and internationalization:

Which are the tools/mechanisms for an artist's work to attain wider visibility?

Which are the most relevant factors for the internationalization of the careers of Portuguese artists?

What carries the most weight in the legitimization/validation of works of art? [e.g.: other artists, collectors, galleries, critics, curators, institutions, the media, the public, etc.]

Ending the interview:

Is there anything more that you would like to add to the above?

Is there any topic that we didn't touch upon, but you believe I should be aware of for the purposes of my research?

Could you indicate 2-3 persons whose experiences are related to the issues we discussed that I should interview? [E.g. artists, other market actors, institutional agents]

### **B3. Interview guide for curators**

#### Pre-interview text:

Thank you for agreeing to do this interview for my PhD research whose topic is the development of careers of visual artists. Your contribution is greatly appreciated. As mentioned in our previous communication, our conversation will be digitally recorded and your anonymity in my thesis guaranteed by using a code. Elements such as names or locations that can make the identification of you or your institution possible will be disguised or omitted where appropriate.

#### Opening Questions:

Note: In each case these opening questions were different and adapted to the institution affiliated with the interviewee (C1 and C7 did not have institutional affiliations). Usually the interviewees were asked to comment on recent developments regarding their institutions (e.g. exhibitions) and how they viewed the role of their institution in the Portuguese institutional panorama.

#### Curators and critics:

For the past 10-15 years, we have been hearing about the increasing importance of curators and curatorial power in the art world.

What is the role of curators in the art world?

Do curators have an impact on the development of artistic careers? [If yes: in which way]

A curator associated with an important international institution (e.g. Tate, Pompidou, Reina Sofia, etc.), by including the work of a Portuguese artist in an exhibition taking place there, can launch/establish the international career of that artist?

Do critics have an impact on the career/market of an artist? [if yes: elaborate]

#### Internationalization of careers:

There are Portuguese artists whose work is on par with their international peers, but there is an impression that their presence abroad (e.g. large-scale curatorial events, institutional presence) is not commensurate with their quality of work. Do you agree with this view?

If yes: what can be done to change this “under-representation” of Portuguese artists abroad?

If no: how do you explain, for instance, that in Documenta we had the presence of Julião Sarmento in 1982 and 1987 and Pedro Cabrita Reis in 1992 and since then no Portuguese artist has been invited?

Are there instruments/mechanisms that can be used for the internationalization of artistic careers?

Is there an impact on the artist's career/market when one participates in events like the biennials (e.g. the Venice Biennale)?

Galleries and fairs:

What is the role of the gallerist in the career of an artist?

Do art fairs have an impact on the career/market of an artist?

Do you think that the new fair (ARCO Lisboa) will have an impact on the local market?

Institutions (exhibitions and acquisitions):

What is the importance of the presence of an artist's work in museum exhibitions (temporary exhibitions, individual or group exhibitions, anthological, retrospective)?

How this presence impacts the career/market of the artist?

What is the importance of institutional acquisitions?

How these acquisitions impact the career/market of the artist?

What is the impact on career/market of an artist of acquisitions by private collectors with prestige that sometimes have their collections accessible to the public (e.g. private museums)?

Affirmation and legitimation:

What are the tools/mechanisms for an artist's work to gain visibility?

What carries the most weight in the legitimation/validation of works of art? [e.g.: other artists, collectors, galleries, critics, curators, institutions, the media, the public, etc.]

Ending the interview:

Is there anything more that you would like to add to the above?

Is there any topic that we didn't touch upon, but you believe I should be aware of for the purposes of my research?

Could you indicate 2-3 persons whose experiences are related to the issues we discussed that I should interview? [E.g. artists, market agents, other institutional agents]

#### **B4. Interview guide for artists**

Due to the differences in careers (e.g. experience, international presence), many questions were adapted to the career of each interviewee based on the preparation I made prior to the interview.

##### Pre-interview text:

Thank you for agreeing to do this interview for my PhD research whose topic is the development of careers of visual artists. Your contribution is greatly appreciated. As mentioned in our previous communication, our conversation will be digitally recorded and your anonymity in my thesis guaranteed by using a code. Elements such as names or locations that can make your identification possible will be disguised or omitted where appropriate.

Opening Question: Either about the start of their career or recent developments in their career.

##### Artist-gallery relationship:

Throughout your career, you have collaborated with many galleries. Are galleries the most important partner for an artist to have access to the market?

When you receive invitations by galleries for collaboration/representation, what are your criteria for choosing to accept working with them?

When you are collaborating/being represented by a gallery, what are your expectations regarding what the gallery can do for you and your career?

An artist can survive in the market without gallery relationships?

##### Art fairs and auctions:

It is widely believed that art fairs in recent years have changed the way art buyers around the world engage with art.

What is your experience/opinion on fairs (spectator; interested party)?

Do you feel that fairs have had or are having an impact on the market for your work and by extension on your career?

Do you think that the new fair (ARCO Lisboa) will have an impact on the local market?

Do auctions of your work have an impact on your career/market?

Do you monitor the auction presence/activity of your work? [if yes: explain why; if no: is this done by someone else, e.g. your gallery?]

##### Biennials:

If the artist has participated:

Can you share your experience at this event?

Has your participation in these events had any impact on your career/market?

If the artist has not participated:

Do you believe that a participation in such events can influence an artistic career/market?

Critics and curators:

Do you think that art critics have an influence on how an artist's work is viewed in the art world?  
[if yes: does it have an impact on the artist's career/market?]

For the past 10-15 years, we have been hearing about the increasing importance of curators and curatorial power in the art world. What is the role of curators in the art world?

Do curators have an impact on the development of careers? [If yes: how; examples from own career]

A curator associated with an important international institution (e.g. Tate, Pompidou, Reina Sofia, etc.), by including the work of a Portuguese artist in an exhibition taking place there, can launch/establish the international career of that artist?

Institutions (exhibitions and acquisitions):

What is the importance of having your work exhibited in an institution (temporary exhibitions, individual or group exhibitions, anthological, retrospective)?

Have these exhibitions had an impact on your career/market?

What is the importance for you when an institution acquires your work?

Have these acquisitions had an impact on your career/market?

What is the impact on the career/market of an artist of acquisitions by private collectors with prestige that sometimes have their collection accessible to the public (e.g. private museums)?

Internationalization of careers and legitimation:

There is the impression that the presence of Portuguese artists abroad (in influential galleries, large-scale curatorial events, institutional presence) is not commensurate with their quality of work. Do you agree?

If yes: what can be done to change this "under-representation" of Portuguese artists abroad?

If no: provide examples.

Are there instruments/mechanisms that can be employed to internationalize an artistic career?

What carries the most weight in the legitimation/validation of works of art? [e.g.: other artists, collectors, galleries, critics, curators, institutions, the media, the public, etc.]

Ending the interview:

Is there anything more that you would like to add to the above?

Is there any topic that we didn't touch upon, but you believe I should be aware of for the purposes of my research?

Could you indicate 2-3 persons whose experiences are related to the issues we discussed that I should interview? [E.g. other artists, gallerists, curators, institutional agents]