

Navigare necesse est

Relations and
Transactions Within
the Institutional
Frame of Art

János Szoboszlai

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Introduction

„Navigare necesse est,
vivere non est necesse”

Cnaeus Pompeius Magnus¹

This study support book is addressed to graduate students of fine arts and design, and master classes of curatorial studies. The book attempts to provide *the very basics* about institutions of contemporary visual art world, in order to facilitate and support emerging artists, designers and curators in communication, and collaboration with art organizations, and to enable them to understand comprehensively the big picture of the art world, which is a system of relations and transactions.

However, this book is not a manual for guaranteed social, or, professional acknowledgement, acceptance, success, or, fame. Artist just cannot escape from institutions; therefore, it is better to learn about their mission, activity and long-term goal. Communication, cooperation, collaboration, and partnership with art institutions and organizations are indispensable. Even for institutional critique, it is fundamental to know and understand the mission, programs and projects of institutions, whether public or private. Critical consciousness should be the regulator of artists' decisions and actions. However, critical attitude is accepted and trustworthy only if it is based on proper knowledge of connections, relations, contexts and transactions of the art world.

Although this book refers to relevant theories of art, current cultural policies, institutional critique, and management studies, the book focuses on overall relations and transactions of the art world. The scope of the book is global in terms of reference and terminology, however, special attention is paid to the conditions of the post-soc region. All the subject matters are supported by references, or, brief presentations of case studies.

1 Roman consul, governor and member of the first Triumvirate, who lived in the 1st Century BC. Originally the sentence referred to his ruthlessness. I use the quote to emphasise the necessity to understand the institutional framework in which beginner artists wish to act.

The book is in English, which became the language of international communication in the post-soc region since the geopolitical transformation from the early '90s. However, even it is not my mother tongue, the vocabulary and grammar of this publication are the very same I use as lecturer and tutor, or, curator, when I communicate with art students, artists and art professionals from our region.

I hope this book will support the students in art-, design- and curatorial studies to navigate within the institutional frame of art.

SzJ, 2020

post scriptum: When I closed the manuscript of this book in December 2020, a pop up window appeared on my screen advertising a newly published book: *Navigating The Art World – Professional Practice For The Early Career Artist*² A book on the very same topic, with the very similar title, focusing on the UK context. However, I decided to keep my original Latin title to keep the emphasis on certain necessities. Moreover, I hope the suggestions and conclusions of the two books overlap one another. I also hope that the reader will find, and add that new book to the bibliography.

János György Szoboszlai

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² *Navigating the Art World–Professional Practice For The Early Career Artist*. London: Delphian Gallery. 2020.



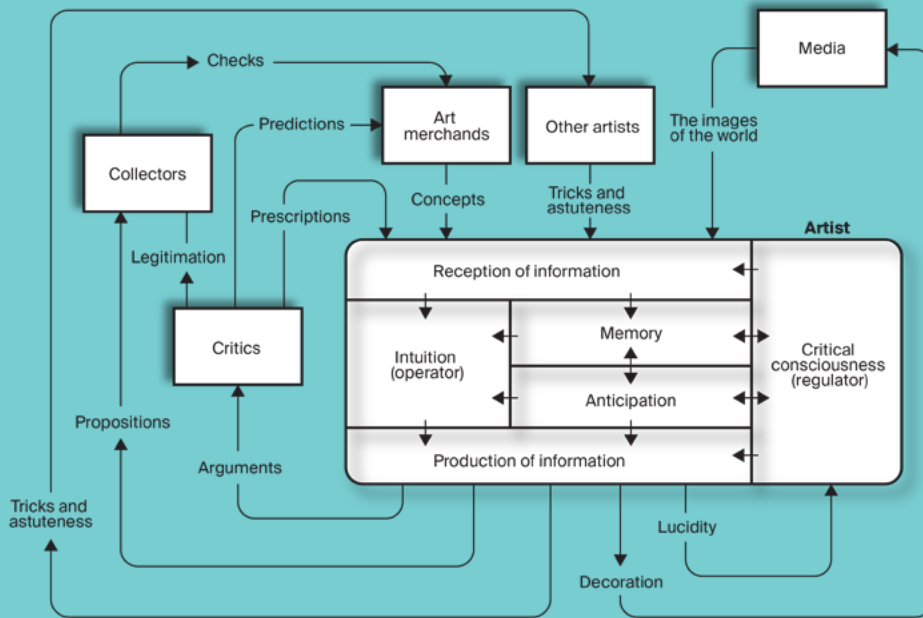
Chapter 1

The institutional frame of art

The artist as open system

Look at this diagram. The large rectangle portrays the artist. We can peep into the internal process of the artist's mind, who is open to receive information, whose memory and anticipation collaborate with critical consciousness and intuition in order to produce new information. To keep it simple, this internal process is the progress of art making, and the new information is the artwork itself. The artist is surrounded by a few participants from the world of art (critics, collectors, art merchants, and others), and the diagram shows what transactions happen between the artist and these actors. The new information/artwork represents a proposition for the concept for art, and this argument is welcomed, accepted, or refused by the critics, whose publication may legitimate and support the decision of a collector for purchasing the artwork. In this lucky case, the collector sends a check to the art merchant, who reads the critical text as well, and makes further concepts and decisions for the collaboration with the artist. Therefore, these participants (including the artist) are obviously related, and transactions take place between them.

Of course, this diagram cannot show the complexity and the entire big picture of the art world, with its all participants, relations and transactions. Nevertheless, at least we know where we are, as the diagram tells us a lot about how the world of art operates.



Who, or, what is the source of the meaning and/or the value of the work of art?

The key to understand how the world of art operates is the definition of art itself. Since the antiquity art practice, philosophy and later the modern humanities provided several definitions for art. Since the middle of 19th Century and particularly since the early avant-garde the number of definitions and propositions increases. The ready-made, the pop art, the concept art, the institutional critique, or, the socially and politically engaged art (just to name a few prominent examples from the last century), proposed slightly, or, radically different definitions. What do a ready-made, an abstract expressionist painting, a minimalist public sculpture, a Fluxus event, a dematerialised concept art piece, a community cooking, an activist protest action, a lecture performance, or, a graffiti have in common?

These works are different and various in concept and medium. However, what they have in common is the place where they can be found, and the same participants take part in the discussion about them. Last several decades artists, scholars and researchers increasingly paid attention to the place and discourse where these artworks and these propositions are produced, published and discussed.

The question that concerns the common aspects of artworks also refers to another fundamental question. Who or, what is the source of the meaning and/or the value of the work of art? Experts of art found the answer in the complex of the institutional context of art. The *institutional frame of art* as the key term was introduced in the '60s and was extensively discussed in the '70s and the '80s. The institutional frame is the hardware and software of the art world, a system of institutions, a network of agents, a field of actions, a complicated and dynamic entity that cannot be separated from the artwork, and from the process of art making. Obviously, the artwork and the process of art making cannot be isolated from the institutional frame either.

The theories of the frame are uncountable; the science of art history provides huge data about its relations and transactions. Craig Owens wrote one of the very precise descriptions of the frame³. The next paragraphs summarize the very basic argumentation and references of the frame, following Owens' thread.

Roland Barthes

Owens refers to the post-structuralist Roland Barthes' famous essay, *The Death of the Author*⁴. Barthes questions the position and the power of the author: „The explanation of a work is always sought in the man or woman who produced it (...).The author is a modern figure, a product of our society insofar, as, emerging from the Middle Ages and English empiricism... The Author, when believed in, is always conceived of as the past of his own book (...). The Author is thought to nourish the book, which is to say that he exists before it, thinks, suffers, lives for it, is in the same relation of antecedence to his work as a father to his child.“ Instead of staying at this relationship between the artist and the artworks, Barthes argues that „... it is langue which speaks, not the author...“. He proposes that the meaning and the value of art should be found somewhere between the artwork and the reader/viewer. „We know that the text is not a line of words releasing a single „theological“ meaning (the „message“ of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of the original, blend and clash... it is necessary to overthrow the myth: the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author.“ Of course, the Author (the artist) is still a key actor of art making, but it seems that the author cannot be longer responsible alone for a single set of meanings and values.

Craig Owens

One of the main occupation of art practices in the '60s and '70s was the investigation of the apparatus, the institutions, the agents working for art, or, setting their activities based on art productions. The main topics of this very intensive discourse were the crisis of artistic authorship, the question of originality, the debates about appropriation art, and the institutional critique. Several trendsetter artists attempted to reclaim the privileges that have traditionally attributed to the author. They represented the new postmodern approach to fill „the empty space left by the author's disappearance“⁵. Just to name a few: Marcel Broodthaers, Daniel Buren, Hans Haacke, Louise Lawler, Martha Rosler, and Sherrie Levine.

Craig Owens, when studying „the empty space“ asks the very basic question: „If, as Barthes argued the author could not – or could no longer – claim to be the unique source of the meaning and/or value of the work of art, then who – or what – could make such a claim?“ Owens' main interest is that „where do exchanges between readers and viewers take place? Who is free to define, manipulate, and, ultimately to benefit from the codes and conventions of cultural production? This questions shift attention from the work and its producer onto the frame of art making – the first, by focusing on the location in which the work of art is encountered, the second, by insisting on the social nature of artistic production and reception.“ Owens' conclusion is that the artistic production is a collective production: namely the production of the institutional frame of art.

4 Barthes

5 Owens

Hans Haacke

Hans Haacke as an artist comes to the same conclusion. He talks about the world of art as „industry“: „I believe the use of the term 'industry' for the entire range of activities of those who are employed or working on a freelance basis in the art field has a salutary effect. With one stroke that term cuts through the romantic clouds that envelop the often misleading and mythical notions widely held about the production, distribution, and consumption of art. Artists, as much as galleries, museums, and journalists (not excluding art historians), hesitate to discuss the industrial aspects of their activities.“⁶ The three key terms Haacke emphasises are production, distribution, and consumption. These are phases of the process of producing art, and Haacke claims that the process of art making can be described by these phases as well. It is not difficult to identify the players of the process: artist (from the production side); public and private collections, museums, galleries, exhibition spaces (representing the distribution side), and viewers, buyers, readers (who consume art). Of course, this scheme is far too simplified, but explains well that art making does not end when a piece is completed in the artists' studio. Again, Haacke calls the institutional frame „industry“.

Martha Rosler

Martha Rosler summarizes in very similar manner and with similar words how the network of art institutions operates: „The "art world" (revealing term!) includes the producers of high art, a segment of its regular consumers and supporters, the institutions that bring the consumers and work together, including specialized publications and physical spaces, and the people who run them. Since the art world is fundamentally a set of relations, it also encompasses all the transactions, personal and social, between the sets of participants.“⁷

As Owens explains, the source of meaning and/or value of the work of art is the institutional frame. This frame is the result of historical development. Haacke calls this network "industry". In Rosler's opinion, *the institutional frame of art is a system of relations where transactions take place*. This latest definition looks very useful for beginner artists who attempt to communicate and cooperate with art organizations, and wishes to comprehensively understand the big picture of the art world.

⁶ Haacke

⁷ Rosler

Institutions

What is an institution? Beyond the dictionary definition⁸, let us use a functional and pragmatic definition. The institutions of art influence every aspect of art production, including concepts for art, economy of art, and discourse on art. Briefly, institutions are the agents of production, distribution, and consumption. The most obvious examples (just to name a few) are museums, exhibition spaces, galleries, public collections, auction houses, art fairs, private collections, archives, art schools and colleges, artists' associations. Art papers and the critics who publish critical texts in these papers are also institutions. Furthermore, all the sciences and the explicitly art related sciences/humanities are prominent institutions: art history, aesthetics, art sociology, art psychology, visual culture, gender studies, cultural anthropology, etc. All the governments and their cultural ministries, or, offices; the local decision makers bodies, the public and private cultural funds are very influential art institutions. Moreover, mass media and news media can be considered art institutions. Owens calls „anonymous powerful agents“ institutions like cultural policy, the entire system of economy and taxation, and the law system in its complexity. These latest examples may sound little abstract, but they undoubtedly influence lots of aspect of art production. These are the most obvious examples for the players of the institutional frame of art, which is a system of relations where transactions take place.

The artist has relations with all these institutions. The goal is to have transactions from these relationships. As in another chapter it will be discussed, the comprehensive report about an artist's transactions is the curriculum vitae, which contains the references of these transactions, and which demonstrates very precisely the position of the artist within the institutional frame of art.

Nevertheless, before that let us see how an institution operates.

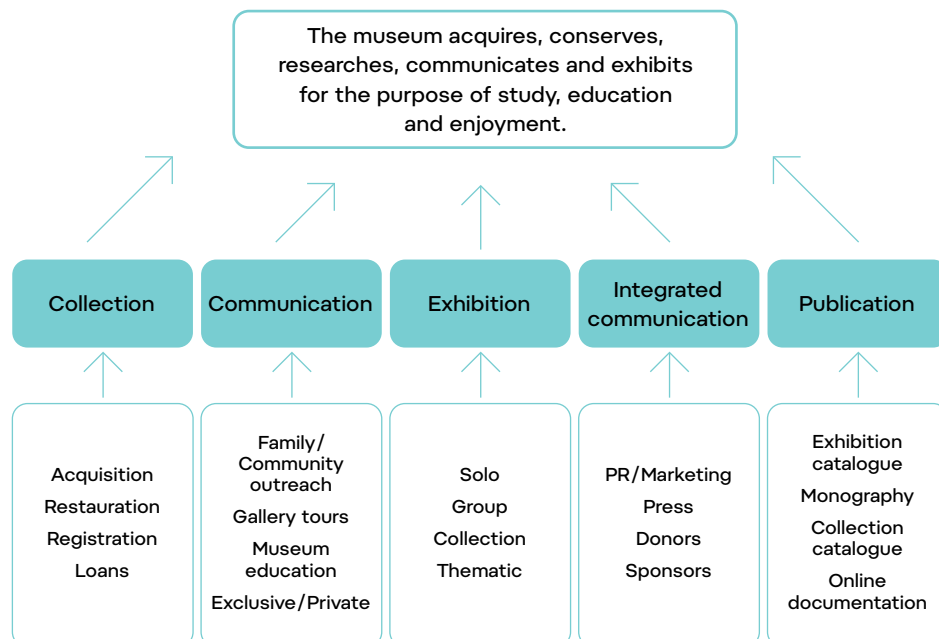
8 Institution: a noun

1. an organization, establishment, foundation, society, or the like, devoted to the promotion of a particular cause or program, especially one of a public, educational, or charitable character: This college is the best institution of its kind.
 2. the building devoted to such work.
 3. a public or private place for the care or confinement of inmates, especially mental patients or other persons with physical or mental disabilities.
 4. Sociology. a well established and structured pattern of behavior or of relationships that is accepted as a fundamental part of a culture, as marriage: the institution of the family.
 5. any established law, custom, etc.
 6. any familiar, long-established person, thing, or practice; fixture.
 7. the act of instituting or setting up; establishment: the institution of laws.
- [online] [last download 30. 12. 2020] Available: <https://www.dictionary.com/>

Diagram 1
The general structure of the activities of an art institution/organization



Diagram 2
The structure of the activities of an art museum



Chapter 2

The mission, structure and activity of art institutions

The structure of the institutions

Look at these two diagrams. Institutions vary in mission, function, goal and structure. Furthermore, an institution could be public, or private, depending on what resources it uses. Private organizations spend private money, and if they do not break the law, they can finance (therefore promote values of) any kinds of cultural projects. Public money comes from the taxes, and spent, or, distributed by public institutions. In democracies, public money and public institutions are subjects of public scrutiny, especially in countries where the powers (legislature, executive, and judiciary) are separated, and the investigative journalism keeps an eye on the decision-making procedures.

Whether private or public, the general structure of institutions is very similar. Every institution has a mission; short-, middle and long-term goals; and a vision for the future. The Tate Modern has a very precisely described and articulated mission and vision: „Our mission is to increase the public’s enjoyment and understanding of British art from the 16th century to the present day and of international modern and contemporary art”⁹ This statement is clear, and it is easy to find. However, not every institution publishes a precisely described and articulated mission and vision.¹⁰

Mission, programs, projects

Programs support the mission. The programs are general categories, these are the activities required to achieve the objectives of the institutions. An institution usually has several programs. Under the umbrella of a program, the institution realizes several projects. A project has specific, usually well-defined and precisely articulated goal, period, expected result, outputs and outcomes. These projects support the successful realization of the programs. The programs support the successful achievement of the mission.

⁹ [online] [last download 30. 12. 2020] Available: <https://www.tate.org.uk/about-us/our-priorities>

¹⁰ In addition, if a mission statement is published, we have to be vigilant and compare the big words to the real actions of the institution. In some cases, the image on oneself promoted on an official document (e.g. website) is not supported by the practice.

Mission

Now let us see the structure of a museum. This is the general mission of a museum: "The museum acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits for the purpose of study, education and enjoyment."¹¹ The mission statement of each museum describes the general and the specific objectives of the given museum.¹²

Programs

Most museums (including art museums) run the following programs: collection-, exhibition-, publication-, research-, and communication programs.

¹¹ Edson and Dean

¹² Two examples:

„The Museum of Contemporary Art Zagreb is a living place of creation, display, interpretation, and preservation of contemporary art in all its forms. Its goal is to encourage and uphold the understanding of contemporary art through professional, innovative, and educative usage of exhibitions and collections, thus enabling different groups of visitors to learn, be creative, and get a unique experience. As a multi-program institution it mediates heritage and the contemporary scene, reaching from visual to performing and film art, thus making it an active and critical part of our community. The Museum of Contemporary Art primarily attempts to be a public and autonomous venue where the categories of social engagement, responsibility, and equal opportunities for everybody are tested and examined on daily basis. Let us question that which has been already achieved through direct communication with artists and the public, through our respect for their experience, so that we have been able to change and gain strength."

[online] [last download 30. 12. 2020] Available: <http://www.msu.hr/stranice/About%20us/1/en.html>

„The Ludwig Museum - Museum of Contemporary Art aims at being: professional in researching, collecting, presenting, mediating and propagating contemporary art open-minded towards new ideas and perspectives multi-colored in terms of the exhibited artists and artworks, the hosting of events and activities, as well as in terms of the presentation of the allied arts active in finding new partners, cooperative parties, and sponsors. Our daily work is realized along the following principles: The Ludwig Museum's collection building, exhibitions and events aim at enabling a wider public to form a closer acquaintance with contemporary art, as well as the preservation of its values. Professional activities are performed by specifically qualified colleagues. We make regular re-assessment of our goals and achievements and we are open to changes if the need arises. We provide continuous dialogue between past and present, between mainstream art and experimental artistic initiations. The Museum functions as a public space open to the widest possible public. Following the principle of inclusivity the Museum is continually working on providing ever better conditions of access to its collection and events. We strive to conduct our daily work in an economically and environmentally sustainable form."

[online] [last download 30. 12. 2020] Available: <https://www.ludwigmuseum.hu/en/mission-statement>

Projects

The collection program includes projects as acquisitions of new artworks, restoration of the pieces of the collection, registration of the objects, and the administration of loans.

The exhibition program contains the curatorial works of solo-, group-, collection-based, or, thematic exhibitions.

The publication program comprises the editorial works and the full implementation of the catalogues of exhibitions and the collections, the results of the research programs (books as monographies, art history, or, art theory), but also the on-line edition and documentation of the museum's projects.

The scholars, researchers and museologists research the objects of the collection, but also run research programs, for example in certain periods of the history of art, oeuvres, styles, tendencies, or, other art related fields.

The museum is responsible for family- and community outreach, and audience development; therefore, the communication program includes gallery tours, museum education projects, which are open to the public or, in cases arranged only for VIPs. The integral communication program encompasses all the activities of public relation, marketing, and the media- and press management; but also includes the management of contacts with donors, sponsors, and the volunteers.

Of course, each museum has specific collections, and each of them is embedded in specific community, therefore each museum implements specific programs. In general, these main categories mentioned above are the projects, which are implemented by the museum in order to support the goals of its programs, which support the objectives of the mission of the institution.

The structure of a non-collection exhibition space – which focuses on contemporary art – is very similar; however, its activities are not based on collections.¹³ The mission of these exhibition centres is to present and promote individual artists in a form of solo exhibitions, and relevant tendencies and themes of contemporary art in form of group exhibitions. An institution, which produces exhibitions, also have publication-, research-, and communication programs. The structure of a private gallery is also comparable to the non-profit exhibition center's as the exhibitions as medium is the basis of its activity.¹⁴ However, even there are similarities in the structure, a commercial gallery has a slightly different mission as it operates in the for-profit, or, private sector.

- 13 In this example, the institution has an archive program: „The gallery promotes young artists and consolidates works by the older generations. Favouing individual artists over artistic trends, it ensures artistic freedom and the possibility of full personal development. With the bouyant growth of the arts market and new galleries springing up aiming for a quick profit from the sale of works which are frequently of dubious quality, Foksal feels obliged to defend high artistic standards, not necessarily reflected through market value. As often happens, some of the most interesting things are born far away from and with an ironic slant on commerciality. To be fair, Foksal Gallery is not against commerciality itself but promotes the preservation of space not embroiled in market mechanisms, where independent artistic criticism can be pursued, without the burden of pressure from the gallery owners.”
[online] [last download 30. 12. 2020] Available: <http://www.galeriafoksal.pl/en/o-galerii/>
- 14 An example: “Founded in 2003 acb Gallery’s mission is to represent contemporary art and Hungarian neo-avantgarde art, both in the Hungarian and in the international scene. The various generations of artists represented by the gallery share the characteristics of conceptual principles, regardless of the media they work in. The gallery’s principal pursuit is to link contemporary art with its audience. Our aim is to give a platform to artists for presenting their work in a professionally supported context. The background for this is created by our collaborations with collectors, with professional partners and with the wider audinece. From 2016 on in our three exhibition spaces – acb Gallery, acb Attachment and acb NA – we can present three exhibitions parallely. Besides the solo shows of gallery artists group shows also have a great importance in acb Gallery’s program. Our group shows are often organized by invited curators to embrace or represent a medium, a tendency or a current phenomenon in contemporary art. Our exhibitions are often accompanied by programs such as panel discussions and guided tours as well as printed publications on an artist or a show published by the gallery.
[online] [last download 30. 12. 2020] Available: <https://acbgaleria.hu/about>

Chapter 3

The basics of the economy of the arts



Expenditures, incomes and revenues

Artists are rarely employed; most of them do not receive weekly paycheck or monthly salary on their bank account. Most of artists work on a freelance basis, taking responsibility for accountancy, financial administration and taxation. Here I consider artist as the ones who have no other income, no family support, no other investments, and have no jobs (as teaching or, bartending in the evenings). The ones who make revenue only from transactions from the institutional frame of art.

Expenditures

Let us see first the expenditures. The money artist has to spent is not less for an emerging artist, than for an established one. That is to say, during art education, or, right after diploma these costs are knocking on the door. According to Haacke's definition, the production side must be financed somehow. Whatever an artist does; even when the artist does not make art: just visits exhibitions, consumes any form of art (poetry, music, movie, design), or, just hangs around, meets friends and family, and of course meditates, makes plans, thinks; all of these activities takes money. The bills (energy, water, food, internet, phones, petrol, tickets for public transport, medicines, health service, not to mention the costs of family members: children, spouse, etc.) should be paid. Stephen Colbert puts it this way: „What is art? A three letter word for disappointing your parents.”¹⁵

The obvious and indispensable items on the artist's list of expenditures on the production side are the followings. Art education may be free in certain countries; otherwise, students have to pay the fee for education. Nevertheless, even an art college may be free, the daily allowance (accommodation, energy, food,

BORSOS LORINC (artis duo of Lilla LORINC and Janos BOROS)
My student loan in Hungarian currency
oil, enamel, nail polish, acrylic, marker, canvas, 150x200 cm, 2008
Source: Courtesy of Esterházy Collection

¹⁵ [online] [last download 30. 12. 2020] Available: <https://blog.allmyfaves.com/fun/the-big-quote-inspiration-at-the-click-of-a-mouse/>

health services, travel, etc.) are not free. At this stage in some culture parents can afford and take responsibility for the costs of art education, but in most cases students make an effort to get income. In some cases, public institutions provide scholarships for a few art students.¹⁶

Making artworks usually needs a space for the specific activities required. A studio should be bought or rent. If the works are rather dematerialised, a home (flat, apartment, and house) should be bought or rent too. Various materials are needed. Energy and equipment: tools, devices, gadgets, instruments, furniture, hardware and software should be provided for the artistic activity. A storage and the means for transport and packing are needed for the everyday work, and are required for domestic and international insurance too.

It is also essential to obtain the means for communication. The artist should attend and visit exhibitions and other events which are relevant to the contemporary art world: vernissages, finissages, conferences, symposia, round tables, gallery tours, artists' talks, lectures, debates, press conferences (not to mention the events of the other sectors of contemporary culture: music, literature, architecture, design, dance, movie, craft, etc.). Participation in public debates, or, private talks are essential to take part in the discourse of contemporary art. Mobility is necessary: the artists must travel, buy a ticket for the events, and may have some drinks after a vernissage with the members of art community. This is essential and this is not free, in terms of financing. This is the price of taking part in the discourse. To receive the very basic information on the relevant events and news from the art world, the artist should read (that is to say, pay for) on-line and printed art papers, monographies, catalogues, volumes of art related humanities (art history, visual studies, gender studies, cultural anthropology, art sociology, etc.).

Again, art making is not a daily eight-hour-job. It is a twenty-for-hour occupation, a highly intellectual, innovative and creative activity, which cannot be described by a monolith and simple definition. The spectrum of contemporary art is really broad (As the first chapter asked: „What do a ready-made, an abstract expressionist painting, a minimalist public sculpture, a Fluxus event, a dematerialised concept art piece, a community cooking, an activist protest action, a lecture performance, or, a graffiti have in common?“), but the side of expenditures is there, and it is unavoidable. An artist has to manage somehow the other side in order to assure the financial basis of the artistic activity. The artist has to make income and revenue.

¹⁶ In our illustration and study case the artist(s) created and presented a painting which demonstrates the amount of their debt (comes from their (art)student loan) to the state. The artistic duo was lucky enough to sell the work on the very same price, and was able thus to pay back the debit.

Incomes and revenues from public institutions

What are the fundamental sources of revenue? In the member states of the European Union public grants can be obtained. Generally, the public offices of culture and art (ministries, state secretaries, etc.) of the member states frequently announce open calls to individual artists and art organizations (museums, galleries, exhibition centres, artists' associations, residence centres, etc.) who and which are eligible to apply for these grants. These applications require providing appropriate references, project description, detailed budget calculation, communication plan; and ideas for sustainability, audience development, and dissemination. The way public money is spent is subject of public scrutiny, and at the end of grant period, a final financial report should be submitted. Therefore, artist who apply and may think to get public money, should consider the very strict regulations of financial administration, and severe sanctions in case of irregular or, unpunctual administration.

These grants are multifarious. Some of them support individual art projects, some make possible to realize curatorial ideas, and some provide funding for institutional development and extensions. An artist could contribute at any of these projects supported by public grant. The call may be read in an art paper; may come from a phone call, or, mail from a curator; may be sent by a former tutor and professor... The process of sending and receiving information about the call is an example for the transactions of the institutional frame of art. Submitting an application with all the required annexes is another transaction. To receive a notice of rejection is another (sad) transaction. To get the money is a good one.

Other kind of revenue is the programme for artist-in-residence. Artist do not make cash as revenue, but earn weeks and months paid to make international contacts, do research-based activity, create new works, exhibit, or, just complete a project. The artist-in-residence programs and host institutions are not only very fashionable last decades, but also provide extremely useful experience for contemporary artists to learn about the actors and procedures of the global art world.

Prizes and awards can be funded by private individuals, private firms and organizations (Turner Prize), but can be expressed the honour of governments (Hungary's Munkácsy Prize, which pays public money). To win an award does not provide only income to the artist, but also helps to get social acceptance and acknowledgement in the media. The process to win an award is one of the most complex and complicated transactions of the institutional frame of art, because it has long-term consequences in terms of income, price of artworks, and in cases: moral issues.

The most obvious ways for an artist to get revenue are the acquisitions - especially the acquisitions of public institutions: museums, municipalities, governments, and other public institutions. Before the geopolitical changings (of 1989) in the post-soc region, public acquisition were the primal source for the artist to make a living (not to mention lawyers, gynaecologists, dentists and party functionaries who

built significant art collections). The general experience is that an artistic career cannot be established on only public acquisitions in last three decades in the post-soc region. Not only the resources are more and more unpredictable, but also the concepts of cultural policies rapidly change. In short, for an artist the revenue from public institutions is incidental, it is not calculable and cannot make a ground for a long-term artistic career.

In case of curatorial projects the financial situation is the very same. Curators initiate art projects (even large scale projects), which are the most innovative and relevant projects of the art world. However, in terms of planning the future for an individual artist, the curatorial projects are incidental, not calculable and cannot make a ground a long term artistic career either. Or, only for a very well established artist. In the post-soc region, most of the curatorial projects are funded by public money. As cultural policies frequently change, these projects (in terms of income of an artist) are incidental and not foreseen, not only for the artists, but for the curators as well.

A network of public institutions play a determinative role in the institutional frame of art. As the following chapters will demonstrate, the „anonym powerful agents“¹⁷ are powerful in terms of deciding on and distributing public resources. In every countries, the cultural policy regulates not only the amount the public money is spent for art, but the legal manoeuvres of private individuals and corporations too. The principles of cultural policy are different in every culture, country, and time. Nevertheless, an artist has to know, understand and evaluate these principles, because in the post-soc region cultural policy still rules the sector of culture.

States – based on the current concepts of cultural policies – maintain a network of public institutions: museums, collections, art schools, grants, prizes, public foundations, and in cases infrastructure (studios, residency centres, exhibition centres, sectorial associations, advocacy associations, etc.). Some of them finance projects in a form of open calls for grants. Some of them commission artists to produce and provide new works of art, which will be the property of the state. Municipalities maintain smaller case institutional frames, but in both cases, the main instrument to operate these public institutions and actions is public money.

Incomes and revenues from private institutions

There are also revenues from the private sector an artist can obtain. Supporters, maecenases, supporters always appear, especially when a wealthy individual falls in love with the works of an artist. The terms „support“ and „help“ in these cases may mean a lot, and can be various, and it is impossible define, as it depends on the needs and wants of the two parties. Some corporations rent contemporary artworks from museum, galleries and artists for weeks and months. These transactions depend on personal relationships.

¹⁷ Owens

The most obvious revenue an artist can get from the private sector is the selling by a gallery to a private collector. An individual, a family or, a corporation could own a private collection. The art market (including galleries, auctioneers, art fairs, etc.) and the community of art collectors is a minefield, but is not more dangerous and complicated than walking on the minefield of public institutions ruled by cultural policy. For artists, who are able to identify the market for their works, and who are open to learn the rules and requirements of financial administration, art market is an option to build a financial career step-by-step. As the following chapters will explain, the references provided by the art market are as significant as the references of the non-profit sector.

Value and price

There is no well-established, consensual and widely acceptable method and algorithm to measure the value of an artwork. The interpretation of an artwork is based on the cultural preformation of the one who makes this attempt.¹⁸ Of course, the position of the interpreter depends of the age, time, geographical position, and the belongings of cultures, subcultures, and the complex identity (local-, international-, language-, economic-, political-, religious, philosophical, sexual orientation-, gender based-, or, very personal and not identified or expressed identity) of the person. However, public and private collections answer this question straight when articulate an amount of money they offer for an artwork. Moreover, it seems that the price has nothing to do with the size, material, or, medium of the artwork. A ready-made of Marcel Duchamp (what was created without handwork, which has no original copy, which looks perfectly like a mere real object) may have a much higher price on the art market than a contemporary photorealist painting which looks perfectly like a coloured high resolution print (which was created with handwork, and has a unique original copy). As Pierre Bourdieu explains, the value of artworks is a symbolic value.¹⁹ „In this upside-down world where the negative sanctions can suddenly become positive, the reality of prices is of course systematically excluded. Its language is entirely euphemistic. Sociology thus has great difficulties to find the right words... An artist's capital is obviously symbolic“. As the following chapters will show, the social value and the market price depends on the references of the artist and the work itself.²⁰

¹⁸ Eco

¹⁹ Bourdieu

²⁰ Borloni, Abbing, McAndrew, and websites

[online] [last download 30. 12. 2020]

Available: <https://www.artprice.com/>; <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/>

Chapter 4

Cultural policy

Anonymous powerful agents

As Chapter 1 explained, apart from the organizations traditionally considered as institutions, there are more abstract institutions, as for example the economy and the legal system. These are influential, unavoidable and significant participants of the institutional frame of art, because these systems regulate, control and operate a huge number of relations and transactions. Owens calls these institutions „anonymous powerful agents“. They are anonymous, because these entities function as non-personal systems within the larger system of society. Powerful, because the regulations are mandatory for every citizen and organization in a country. Agents, because the government decisions, the regulations of economy, and the entire system of legislation define the mission and function of several organizations, which actively operate within the institutional frame of art. These agents are authorities: ministries, state and government offices, municipalities, and tax authorities. Art policy or, cultural policy is one of the „anonymous powerful agents“. Usually authorities implement the programmes and projects defined and prescribed by cultural policy.

Cultural policy is not one of a kind. The cultural policy of the Third Reich in Germany was very different from the one of the democratic France's in the 1940's. The doctrine of socialist realism was different from the doctrine of abstract expressionism during the Cold War of the 1950's. The current trends in cultural policies in the post-soc region are slightly different from the one of United States.



Degenerate art (German: Entartete Kunst) exhibition, Munich, Germany, 1937
Source: Deutsches Historisches Museum Berlin

Policy

Before discussing cultural policy, the meaning of the term „policy” should be looked at closely.

The definition of Merriam-Webster Dictionary is the following:²¹

- 1 a — **prudence or wisdom in the management of affairs**
b — **management or procedure based primarily on material interest**
- 2 a — **a definite course or method of action selected from among alternatives and in light of given conditions to guide and determine present and future decisions**
b — **a high-level overall plan embracing the general goals and acceptable procedures especially of a governmental body**

Therefore, making policy means 1., responding to a problem, 2., deciding on concept and principles before acting, and 3., acting in order to resolve the problem. The policy could be an everyday principle of one's behaviour and actions, or, it could be a high-level overall plan implemented by a government.



Istvan Tar:
Builders / detail
limestone, 1500x400 cm, 1949
The former headquarter of National Association of Hungarian Builders,
1947-1950, Budapest, Varosligeti fasor

21 [online] [last download 30. 12. 2020] Available:
<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/policy>

Public policy

When the authorities – the institutions of the legislature, executive, and judiciary powers: the parliament, the government and the court of justice – make policy, the decisions on concepts and principles and the way this policy is implemented has significant impact on every citizen and organizations in a country. That is why it is called public policy, since it affects every sector of public life. James E. Anderson explains very clearly the meaning of the term: public policy is “a purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem or matter of concern for the population...Public policies are those developed by governmental bodies and officials.”²² In L. Pal's definition public policy is “a course of action or inaction chosen by public authorities to address a given problem or interrelated set of problems”²³ In a little more detailed definition “policy making is an activity intended to achieve the purposes of elected politicians in government. The ‘policies’ that this activity produces can be many different things including formal expression of activities undertaken by government to achieve outcomes e.g., through strategies, announcements, legislation, but also includes current practice, doing nothing, and political activity as well as activity that may not fulfil the goals of government in a simple and direct way.” Therefore, policymaking has four steps: understanding the context, developing the options, getting to a decision, and making it happen.²⁴ To put it simple, let us consider Thomas Dye's definition: „public policy is whatever governments choose to do or not to do.”²⁵

Art-, or, cultural policy²⁶

As told above, policy responds to a problem, and therefore cultural policy does so. Some scholars, philosophers, and political decision makers argue that art and artist,

22 Anderson

23 Pal

24 Policy Profession

25 Dye

26 The definition of Wikipedia is reliable and well explained in the following case. „Cultural policy is the government actions, laws and programs that regulate, protect, encourage and financially (or otherwise) support activities related to the arts and creative sectors, such as painting, sculpture, music, dance, literature, and filmmaking, among others and culture, which may involve activities related to language, heritage and diversity. The idea of cultural policy was developed at UNESCO in the 1960s. Generally, this involves governments setting in place processes, legal classifications, regulations, legislation and institutions (e.g., galleries, museums, libraries, opera houses, etc.) which promote and facilitate cultural diversity and creative expressions in a range of art forms and creative activities. Cultural policies vary from one country to another, but generally they aim to improve the accessibility of arts and creative activities to citizens and promote the artistic, musical, ethnic, sociolinguistic, literary and other expressions of all people in a country.”

[online] [last download 30. 12. 2020]

Available: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_policy

or, the cultural institutions should be maintained and supported from public money, because the market conditions, the dynamism of demand and supply endangers the production side of art and culture. This is a statement suggesting that the state should spend public money for the operation costs and project costs.

Makers of cultural policy therefore decide on concept and principles for funding institutions and projects. The questions these policy makers have to answer are deeply theoretical, philosophical, scientific, theological and political questions. What is the difference between good and bad art? How to define value? Which sort of art and culture should be funded and promoted, which should not, or, even be blocked? Who needs, deserves, and merits public support? Who does not? Why? Governments of different historical periods and cultures answer these serious questions in many ways.

The decision on concept and principles is followed by action to resolve the problem. Governments establish and finance public institutions, which act according to their mission, and implement programmes and projects according to the concepts and principles decided by the policy makers. Acting means that art colleges educate art students; public collections of museums purchase artworks, public funds launch open calls for grants in order to finance the productions side and consequently support contemporary art projects.

Cultural policy therefore encompasses the decisions on concepts and principles on why to spend public money on art; and how: what the appropriate method of action and the suitable way of implementing the concepts and principles should be. That is why it is called cultural policy, because it affects every sector of art and culture.

The UNESCO articulated the need for policy research, policy analysis and policy making on international level in 1969: „cultural policy is taken to mean a body of operational principles, administrative and budgetary practices and procedures which provide a basis for cultural action by the State. Obviously, there cannot be one cultural policy suited to all countries; each Member State²⁷ determines its own cultural policy according to the cultural values, aims and choices it sets for itself.“²⁸

²⁷ Member states of the United Nations

²⁸ Cultural policy – A preliminary study

Public policy / cultural policy: three examples

Cultural policy is deducted from public policy of a government. The totalitarian²⁹ ideology of National Socialism in Nazi Germany's employed only one ruling party, ruled through fear, strived to regulate every aspect of public and private life wherever it was feasible, and therefore subordinated the individual citizens. Avant-garde artists and artworks were deemed degenerate, because most of them differed from the neoclassical realism of the art promoted by the Nazis. The cultural policy of the Third Reich not only did not support expressionism, surrealism, or dada, but prohibited these concepts of art. The exhibitions entitled Degenerate Art (in German: Entartete Kunst, presented for instance in Munich, Germany, 1937) demonstrated the concept and principles of the Nazi cultural policy, which refused the experiments, freedom, playfulness, critical voice, creativity and innovation represented by early avant-garde.

In the Soviet Union before and after the WW2. and in the Central-Eastern European countries after the war, the totalitarian Stalinism defined the public policy. The concepts and principles of art and culture were prescribed by the doctrine of socialist realism. The socialist realism was a neo-classical, realist art, which functioned as propaganda of the ruling one party system. According to the requirements of the communist parties, artists had to represent and promote a role model, the figure of a new kind of socialist citizen, who accept this ideology and sacrifice personal life in order to build an industrial and highly developed country. The public monuments, paintings, photographs, movies, operas, poems and novels of social realism did not represent real people, instead, showed schematic figures who act for the totalitarian state without criticism. The cultural policy of the Stalinism supported only social realism and blocked any other kind of concept for art. Therefore, public institutions supported and promoted only artists who responded to these expectations positively.

The third example is a relatively new public monument from Hungary. The work entitled The Monument of The Victims of The German Occupation from 2004 represents the official viewpoint of the current government of those years. The intention of the government was to argue that Hungarian governor and his government were innocent in Holocaust of 1944 and 1945. According to the government the deportation and genocide of Hungarian Jews, Roma, the gay, the disabled and the politically critical citizens was planned and executed

²⁹ In totalitarianism, the state recognizes no limits to its authority and strives to regulate every aspect of public and private life wherever feasible. Totalitarian regimes stay in power through all-encompassing propaganda campaigns disseminated through the state-controlled mass media, use of a single party usually defined by political repression, personality cultism, control over the economy, regulation and restriction of speech, mass surveillance, and widespread use of terror.

[online] [last download 30. 12. 2020]

Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4VtU5xounHO>

exclusively by the German forces, which occupied Hungary. Even historical facts prove the opposite, and significant wave of protest began when the idea was explained to the society, the Hungarian government commissioned, financed by public money, and erected the monument in secret during the night of 20th July 2014. Since then an extensive discussion has been happening right next to the monument. Holocaust survivors, their descendants, political activist, and contemporary artist attend every day and protest. The organization of this protest is called Living Monument. This example shows clearly that in democracies public money, the institutions making cultural policy and implement projects using public money should be and have to be subject of public scrutiny.

A comparison

In the countries of the post-soc region states take responsibility for art and culture. That is to say, a certain amount from the yearly budget is appropriated for art and culture in these countries. Most of the cultural organizations and institutions spend public money, whether operated by the state, or, by municipalities. Especially the visual art sector is heavily dependent on cultural policy developed by the governments, or, local decision makers. On one hand, it has advantages: a yearly budget is guaranteed for the institutions of art and culture. However, on the other hand government use this single channel of funding and financing as the mean of control over art and culture. The budget can be cut or raised, the leaders of the institutions could be appointed or fired, projects could be attacked or praised depending on the current ideologies, or, the narratives articulated and promoted by the ruling parties. If the illiberal public policy does not support the separation of powers (legislature, executive, and judiciary), does not bear independent media, does not tolerate investigative journalism, does not let non-government organizations to operate, then cultural policy tends to support centralization, ideology driven decision-making, corruption and nepotism. At the same time, art organizations and institutions cannot raise efficient funds, because due to the regulations of economy and taxation (two anonymous powerful agents!) sponsors, donations and volunteer activities have weak proportion in the economy of these countries. In film industry, architecture, design and performing arts the private individuals and corporations may play relevant role as investors and producers. The private collectors may dominate the contemporary art market over the state, but the scale of domestic acquisitions is still low in these countries. At the sector of fine arts, the private sector (except for the private collectors) plays an insignificant role in the economy of the arts, comparing the amount governments spend from public money. Therefore, due to the concepts and principles of the cultural policy, a one-channel funding and financial model rules the world of art in these countries.

It is worth to have a look at the model of cultural policy of the US. The economy of the US is mixed; there is private enterprise, governmental activity, and there is the key aspect for this comparison: the nonprofit economic sector. The private sector comprises the for-profit organizations, which operate for private goods: the owners of the corporations enjoy the sales revenue at the end of the year. The governmental activities are very different. The public institutions work for collective and not private goods. The main instrument of the governmental activities is public money, which comes from the taxes.

The third sector makes a huge difference comparing to the economy of post-soc region. The organizations of the non-profit economic sector work for collective goods, and not for private goals. The source of the activity of the non-profit institutions are the donations coming from the private sector. "The concept of a nonprofit organization does not mean an organization that cannot enjoy a profit. Rather, the term means that a nonprofit organization's profit may not be distributed to persons in their private capacities. A nonprofit organization is an organization such as a corporation or trust that is organized and operated for a purpose other than the economic advancement of those who provide its capital. In many cases, a nonprofit organization is a tax-exempt organization, such as a charitable or educational entity. The purpose of business is to generate profit for the owners. Nonprofit organizations can generate profits at the entirely level, but cannot pass profits along to persons as equity owners."³⁰ Therefore, non-profit art organizations (art schools, colleges and universities; museums operated by foundations, universities, theatres and operas; exhibition spaces, etc.) do not depend on political decision makers.

The non-profit organizations are rivals, they have to demonstrate expertise and professionalism, and show that they operate an effective way to achieve the mission of the institution. Because the donation - which comes from the private sector- is transferred in order to accomplish the mission of that art organization. Therefore, this cultural policy delegates the problems and issues of art to the civic society. That is to say, they are not politicians and political ideologies, which define cultural policy, but individuals and corporations, which decide on what kind of art and culture they wish to support and promote.



Peter Parkanyi - Raab
The Monument of The Victims of The German Occupation
bronze, limestone, 1500x700 cm, 2004
Liberty square, Budapest, Hungary



Museums and public collections

Mission and function of the museum

As the Chapter 2 explained “The museum acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits for the purpose of study, education and enjoyment.”³¹ Museums are significant and very influential actors of the institutional frame of art. Art museums, especially the ones with contemporary collection play a very affective role in the distribution and consumption phases: most of the artworks are produced for museum exhibitions, and this is the place audience meet art. As Daniel Buren’s critical text, *The Function of the Museum* explains, the museum is a „privileged place with triple role”: aesthetic, economic and mystical.³² „The museum is the frame and effective support upon which the work is inscribed/ composed. It is at once the centre in which the action takes place and the single (topographical and cultural) viewpoint for the work.” As the following chapters will show, museums are responsible for remarkable transactions within the institutional frame of art. Now, let us have an overview on the brief history of the museum with special attention on its relation with the public and community.

Antiquity and later

The name of the museum can be traced back to the Museion (which means the temple of the Muses) established by Ptolemy Soter in the third century BC in Alexandria, Egypt. The Museion had no exhibitions; however, it had several collections of objects and documents. It functioned as a kind of university, a philosophical community, a centre of all knowledge. (Euclides worked there as the Head of Department of Mathematics, and Archimedes stayed at Museion in order to study and research.) The Museion was not accessible for the people of that age, only for the ones who could afford to stay there and gain knowledge in a highly elite centre.

After the Antiquity and after the Middle Age the geographical discoveries and conquests conducted by the British-, French-, Spanish-, and Dutch- monarchies and governments led to the birth of world trade and globalisation. Due to the colonisation,³³ a huge number of private collections were established as

³¹ Edson and Dean

³² Buren

³³ This historical process is a subject of critical evaluation of new museology, cultural anthropology, and the discourse of the post-colonialization.

private properties of monarchs, noblesse, military officers, the popes, the clerical order and the bourgeoisie, the investors and beneficiaries of early world trade. These collections contained very different objects from the exploited territories of Africa, Asia, Australia, the North, Middle-, and South America: religious objects of tribes, music instruments, weapons, everyday objects, jewellery, and conserved parts of flora and fauna. Some of these collections were stored and prepared for display. These Cabinets of Curiosities or, Kunst- und Wunderkammern did not only presented the objects disorderly, but also tried to arrange them in a structured way, according to the scientific paradigms of the age.³⁴ The early categories were the naturalia and artificiosa (natural and artificial objects), but as the sciences and humanities started to flourish, more and more sophisticated categories were introduced.³⁵ These Kunstkammern were accessible only for the ones invited by the owners, usually representatives of the same social class of the person who collected the objects. However, the scientific research and the need for categorisation gave inputs to the development of modern sciences.

The role of Italy

In the Mediterranean, collections of antiquities were maintained by noblesse, or, the clerical order (the Capitulum Museum, Rome, was established by Sixtus the 4th in 1471). In the Renaissance age antique art became the standard of art in both art education and scientific discourse. Lorenzo Medici, The Magnificent in 15th Century, Florence, Italy had a significant private collection of antique sculptures, fragments and archaeological objects. In the court of Medici artists, musicians, architects and other humanists examined these objects in order to understand humankind and nature, applying systematic and scientific methodology.

The studiolo is another private institution of the Renaissance. It is a private room for study, research, talks, and the store of collections, for example the one in Palazzo Ducale, Mantova, owned by Isabella d'Este who kept her books, paintings, and sculptures there (1522). The libraries also played an important role in the development of the museum. During the long history of the Library of Vatican, the classification of texts and books were more and more sophisticated, as the system of categories tried to register every kind of written and printed materials. The developing system and hierarchy of definitions, categories, and sub-categories helped the establishment and design of the functional museum catalogues. The Renaissance institutions and collections were not open for the public, only for humanists, scholars, and theologians.

³⁴ For the definition of scientific paradigm see Kuhn.

³⁵ For example Neickel, Johann Caspar in his *Museographia* from 1727 propose these categories:

1. four legs and birds,
2. fish, snakes, lizards,
3. vegetabilia, mineralia, fossilia,
4. sea animals,
5. anatomia,
6. Curiosa Artificalia.

One remarkable step in the development of the physical display of collections is the Galleria (gallery) in Uffizi, Florence. Originally, this space was an open loggia, which was closed by Ferdinando de' Medici in 1587 in order to make an exhibition space where his antique portraits of Caesars and generals were on view. On one hand, this space was altered in order to host a collection of artworks, on the other, it could be considered as one of the first thematic collection and exhibition. The Galleria was not open to the public, but it was one of the first of the modern kinds of exhibitions. It served the enjoyment and social network of its owner, and supported his social reputation.

University collection

One of the very first museums, which was planned, designed and operated as a museum, was Ashmolean Museum, Oxford from 1683. The collections were private donations in the purpose to support education. The Ashmolean Museum was one of the first university collections and museums. This museum therefore had a clearly articulated mission: the students, scholars and researchers of Oxford had access to the collections in order to help their education.

Imperial and royal collections

The British Museum established in 1753 was based on private (royal) collections, similarly to Belvedere, Wien from 1780, which hosted the Emperor's collection. The artworks here were exhibited in chronological order, which demonstrates the knowledge in history of museologists working with the collection. The Louvre in Paris hosted the royal collection, which was arranged also in chronological order. After the Revolution of 1789, the museum was nationalised in 1791, it became a public allowed museum, which is open to the public. In the course of the revolution, it was named Grande Galerie (1792), Musée de la République (1793), Musée Central des Arts (1796), and Musée Napoléon (1804). However, the significance of 1791, the opening of Louvre to the public demonstrated that the republican ideology of Enlightenment promoted the idea of the democratic right to knowledge and education. That is to say, museums have the power and responsibility to provide and transfer knowledge to the members of society.

Democratic right to knowledge

In 1846 act of the Senate, Washington, US declared that a national museum should be established. An English donor, James Smithson, who offered his collections to the American people, clearly articulated the motivation of this donation. The function of museum is „... to increase the diffusion and knowledge among men.“⁵⁶ This is one of the first modern definition for the function of the museum. This act was the birth of the Smithsonian Institution, which is one of the most remarkable knowledge centres of the world by now.

Art history

By the 19th Century, a new social science was born in the field of the humanities, the art history. The object-centred work in museums encompassed the research of museum collections (artworks and resources as documents, and other archived materials), and the need to make reliable, verified and falsified scientific statements about artworks, and their historical context, function, form, style, meaning, or, historical and social significance. In these terms museum is an institution of scientific activities. However, as the brief history of the museum above demonstrated that museum can offer knowledge and experience not only for the museologists, but also for the audience, public and community.

Serving the public and the community

One of the innovations of museums in the 20th Century is the intensive communication with the public. The private collections of the Antiquity and Renaissance were followed by the public allowed collections (Louvre). Then, after the born of the concept of public reactive museums (Smithsonian), the public proactive museums were introduced (modern art museums). This process demonstrates how museum adapted a basic role as educational institution.



Ludwig Museum – Museum of Contemporary Art, Budapest, Hungary
Located in the building of Palace of The Arts
Zoboki, Demeter and Co. Architects, 2005

“A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment” as the International Council of Museums defines the mission of the museum.³⁷

For example, the Ludwig Museum – Contemporary Art Museum intends to reach and offer knowledge about contemporary art to the general audience and the community of Hungary: „The Ludwig Museum’s collection building, exhibitions and events aim at enabling a wider public to form a closer acquaintance with contemporary art, as well as the preservation of its values.”³⁸ The collection is the result of the decisions made by the curators for acquisitions. The extension of a collection of historical art depends on the financial capital of the museum. For example, a collection of impressionism is ready to acquire impressionist works, or, related documents and objects available on the art market. How about contemporary art, since there is no consensual definition for art („what do a ready made, an abstract expressionist painting, a minimalist public sculpture, a fluxus event, a dematerialised concept art piece, a community cooking, an activist protest action, a lecture performance, or, a graffiti have in common?”), and „there is no well established, consensual and widely acceptable method and algorithm to measure the value of an artwork”. As explained by Chapter 3, „the interpretation of an artwork is based on the cultural preformation of the one who makes this attempt”, how can curators of a contemporary art museum decide?

These curators on one hand have to follow very closely the productions, events and discourse of contemporary art. Obviously, there are much more excellent and valuable artworks than a museum can purchase. These curators have to decide what kind of art and which artworks represent the most relevant and up-to-date concepts in their social-, economic-, political- and cultural context. The choice demonstrates the definition of contemporary art, developed and represented by the curators. That is to say, curators choose artworks; therefore, they promote certain artistic concepts. This is the power and responsibility of the curators and the institutions. Every acquisition provides reference, fame and commercial value to the artwork, and to the artist.

The mission of the art museums is to collect, research and show what contemporary art is. As contemporary art has a wide spectrum, curators have to understand that by every single acquisitions the museum is on its way to construct the narrative of history of art. What the researchers of the future will investigate, is the public collection that is being extended and built now. However, the mission of public art collections is to serve the public, to provide as comprehensive information and experience about contemporary art as the museologists can. That is why the programmes and projects of contemporary art exhibitions are always subjects of criticism by the public, the media, the art press, and the science of art history.

³⁷ According to the International Committee Of Museum Statutes, adopted by the 22nd General Assembly in Vienna, Austria, on 24 August 2007. See also [online] [last download 30. 12. 2020] Available: <https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/museum-definition/>

³⁸ See footnote 4 of Chapter 2



Art Market Budapest – International Contemporary Art Fair
Source: Art Market Budapest, Fanni Herman, 2019

Chapter 6

The art market: galleries and fairs

Transactions

In the scheme of production, distribution, and consumption,³⁹ the institutions of art market play a significant role. On the physical and on-line marketplace artworks are sold and bought, and as the ownership of the objects (and in cases, the non-material artworks as well) changes, and many financial, legal, logistical, and other transactions happen.

The market of fine arts (in terms of objects to be sold) has several sections, or, categories:⁴⁰

- a **Post War and Contemporary, defined as artists born after 1910,**
- b **Living artists, defined as artists alive in 2017, which are analysed as a sub-set of the Post War and Contemporary sector,**
- c **Modern, defined as artists born between 1875 and 1910,**
- d **Impressionist and Post-Impressionist, which are defined as artists born between 1821 and 1874,**
- e **Old Masters, defined as artists born between 1250 and 1821,**
- f **European Old Masters, defined as Old Master artists of European origin, which are analysed separately as a sub-set of the Old Master sector.**

When this chapter applies the term market of contemporary art, it refers to the section of „Living artists, defined as artists alive in 2017, which are analysed as a sub-set of the Post War and Contemporary sector“. That is to say, that an artwork of an emerging, or, established artist produced in 2017 falls in this category in an art fair, or, in the context of an exhibition project of a contemporary commercial gallery.

³⁹ Haacke

⁴⁰ Here the chapter follows the terminology and figures of McAndrew

However, the very same artworks can be exhibited in the same year of 2017 in the context of a curatorial project in a non-profit exhibition space, or, in a museum exhibition. If the artist had received a grant earlier (e.g. in 2015—2016), it is not impossible that the production costs of the artwork – which is offered now in an art fair – was partly, or, fully financed from public money. Therefore, the very same artist and the very same artwork may appear within significantly different contexts in terms of the economy of the arts. As the following chapters will explain, the reputation of the artist, the value and the price of the artwork are the results of the transactions with the actors of the institutional frame of art. The institutions of art market (especially the galleries) work hard to make these transactions happen.

The gallery

The term gallery in this chapter refers to the old model of the commercial gallery, which is operated as a private institution. Its mission is to make profit. Therefore the gallery is a business enterprise, the goal of the owner and/or management is to take a stable position for the gallery and its artists on the market, which is to say, to sell the artworks of its artist, in order to provide frequent revenue to both the artist and the gallery.

Capitals

The owners of the gallery had a long-term business plan when launched the enterprise. However, the art market is very sensible to changes and crises in domestic and global economy, political tendencies, or, war, pandemic, and terrorism. Furthermore, the supply (the artworks available) is much higher than the demand (the available capital for investment) on the market. Therefore, the amount of capital the owner can invest in the gallery business defines the time the gallery owner has to achieve the goals of the business plan. The more capital is invested, the longer time the gallery has to establish a stable position in the market.

Other kind of capital are the artists and artworks with no previous market references, or sort of mediums, which are not common or, available on the market. The niche marketing could gain attention and needs on the market.⁴¹ In the post-soc region, the well-established political and/or business relationships function as strong capital.

⁴¹ For example, when a gallery presents video installations, or, dematerialised concept art works for selling in a market, where paintings represent the 99% of the sells. Another example when a gallery introduces new names (artists, new brands) to the market players.

Spaces

Most of the commercial galleries have exhibition rooms, which is accessible for the public. By the middle of 20th Century, the galleries adopted the conception and form of the solo- and group exhibitions and the white cube space from the modern museums. That is to say, the gallery owner does not only store the artworks in the gallery, but arranges the objects as a display for viewing. Galleries present exhibitions, which are deliberate and structured in their intent and content. Contemporary commercial galleries use forms of interpretation, a complete presentation including not only objects, but also their contexts, meanings, histories, and importance – as museum exhibitions do.⁴² The gallery exhibition is not only the physical presentation of artworks, but also an interface, a medium of argumentation, or more precisely, persuasion. Even most of the galleries can be visited for free, the main intention of making exhibitions in these institution is not serving the public, but to reach deal with the clients: private collectors, or, in some cases, the museums.

The storage is as important space of the gallery as the exhibition space is. When the exhibition is free to visit to the public, the storage is accessible only for the clients of the gallery. On one hand in this space, the gallery owner keeps the stock: other artworks of the artist whose exhibition is on view in the white cube, and the works of the other artists of the gallery. Clients (private collectors, curators of museum collections) if invited, may visit and survey this – sometimes huge – stock of artworks. On the other hand, the storage is a space where talks, discussion, persuasion, argumentations a hopefully the bargain happen. Even most of the galleries have office desk and gallery assistant in the exhibition space, this space is not always suitable for business talks, because it is a public space.

Contract and collaboration

In the scheme of production, distribution, and consumption⁴³ the gallery functions as distributor. The goal of this business enterprise is to mediate between the producer (the artist) and the consumer (the private and public collections). Selling is a legal act; therefore, the gallery has to make at least two contracts: one with the artist and one with the new owner of the artwork.

The contract between the gallery and the artist comprises all the services the gallery provides, and all the commitments of the two parties. Galleries usually try to maintain long term and sustainable cooperation with artists. Galleries manage the professional activity of the artist; they purpose is to build up and promote brands on the market. The more established the artist's brand is, the higher the price of the artworks. Therefore, the list of services of the gallery is a list of intentions and promises, a list of activities the gallery undertake in order to successfully build and promote the artist's brand.

⁴² Edson and Dean

⁴³ Haacke

Representing artists

In the international terminology, the gallery „represents“ the artist. The contract defines the meaning of this activity and describes the concrete actions.

Galleries and artists make contracts for projects, or, for limited and unlimited duration. The contract defines the duration of cooperation and the conditions of termination the contract.

The contract also defines the number and frequency of solo and group exhibitions the artist participate, the conditions to represent the work of the artist in domestic and international art fairs, the method of defining the price of the artwork, or, the conditions for the cooperation of the artist with other galleries. The contract explains in detail all the activities the gallery undertakes for the management of the artist: editing up-to-date CVs; maintaining on-line portfolio; monitoring open calls, grants and tenders; publishing catalogues and other promotion and PR-materials; arrangements of gallery tours, artists' talks, private events in the gallery and in the studio of the artist for private collectors, curators of museum collections, and art critics; etc.

From the artist's side the contract explains in the first instance the definition of loyalty to the gallery and the sanctions in cases of breach the contract. The artist should inform the gallery when potentials client approach the artist with the intention of acquisition, when the artist is invited to non-profit and museum exhibitions, when any significant event happens in the professional (or, sometimes private) life of the artist.

In these terms there are exclusive contracts (when the artist cooperates with only one gallery), and contracts which allow the artist to make contract with other galleries. Whatever the case is, the fundamental key of this cooperation is trust and mutual responsibility. In some cases the contract between a gallery and an artist is not written, but made as „gentlemen's agreement“, only verbally. It is possible only when the relationship of the two parties is based on trust.

Pricing

As chapter 3 explained, an artwork has material and symbolic (artistic, aesthetic, spiritual, etc) value; there is no well-established, consensual and widely acceptable method and algorithm to measure the value of an artwork; and the interpretation of an artwork is based on the cultural preformation of the one who makes this attempt. Therefore, the price of a contemporary artwork cannot be calculated, but must be determined. The determination on one hand depends on several factors, namely on the references of the artist and the given artwork. The references demonstrate the transactions the artist had been realized, as the following chapters will explain. On the other hand, the price depends on the existing matrix of prices of the art market, especially on the supply and demand conditions. In some cases, a relatively low price opens gates to establish relationship with new

collectors. In these cases for both the gallery and the artist, it is much worth and rational to sell a work at a low price in a remarkable contemporary art collection, than realize profit immediately. This manner can be interpreted as long-term investment.

Sharing

Last decades there were several written and unwritten customs for sharing the revenue between the gallery and the artist. Sharing is based on the contract and on the agreement of the parties. The spread and extension of the on-line art market brought new agreements, as the on-line marketing is slightly different to the traditional gallery-artist relationship and collaboration. In the traditional gallery practice, the usual sharing is 50:50. Why does the gallery receive 50% from the price? The gallery (to be more precise: the person or organization, who or which owns the gallery) invests capital, time, energy and attention into the gallery business. Usually galleries work with a dozen of artist (in cases with much more). The gallery owner has to finance all the activities of the enterprise from paying the bills, through the salary of gallery assistant, to paying all the costs of an art fair (renting the booth, travel, insurance, hotel, VIP- receptions, etc.). The gallery owner publishes catalogues, finances the catering and other expenditures of private events, visits exhibitions and art fairs at home and abroad. To make it simple, the artist pays by this 50% for these services, which support the development of the artist's career, and manage the artist-artwork brand in every respect.

Art fairs

The price at fairs are the most important references for an artist-artwork brand. At an art fair galleries rent mini-white cubes (called booth) for 3—6 days. Usually 100—200 galleries gather at Basel, London, New York Paris, London, Madrid, Cologne, or, Miami. On one hand a fair offers the possibility for collectors to visit a huge number of galleries within the time of several days, on the other hand, a gallery has a chance to meet a great number of collectors. A fair is a condensed meeting place of supply and demand. Good art fairs attract a great quantity of collectors, they offer additional programmes and VIP-events to them, and guarantee the high quality of art they could see at the booths. That is to say, not every gallery can participate: galleries have to apply and demonstrate that they intend to present high quality artistic content at the fair. A successful selling at significant art fairs usually brings further selling for the gallery and the artist. However, it takes several years when a gallery is able to sell successfully at an art fair - that is to say, there is always several years of deficit. At the same time the reputation of the gallery among collectors improves during these years, therefore, these years of investment has positive consequences. The goal is establish reputation for the gallery and to build-up trust with private collectors, because for the gallery the primal market is the private sector.⁴⁴

44 For the market figures and the powerful art fairs see McAndrew



A New Refutation of Time – Works from The Irokez Collection at The Hungarian National Gallery
Entérieur from the exhibition, 2008–2009
Source: Irokez Collection

Chapter 7

Private collections

Public Vs private

As explained earlier, the mission of the art museums is to collect, research and show – for example contemporary art. As contemporary art is a wide spectrum, curators have to understand that by every single acquisitions the museum is on its way to construct the narrative of history of art. What the researchers of the future will investigate, is the public collection that is being extended and built now. The mission of public art collections is to serve the public, to provide as comprehensive information and experience about contemporary art.

The private collectors have slightly different motivations to buy and collect modern or, contemporary artworks. One of these drives is investment: to buy on a lower and later to sell the artworks on a higher price, in order to realize profit. As the price of classic modernist pieces is constantly rising, the revenue is more or less predictable, in cases calculable. In case of contemporary art the prediction and calculation of future price is much more complicated, and at the same time, certain acquisitions could be risky or, even hazardous for the buyer.

Business considerations

As this chapter will explain, the collectors have to follow the current trends (whether local, or, global trends) of the art world. They have to collect information about the latest prices of the artists, and in general the references of the artists that demonstrate the position of the artist within the institutional frame of art (exhibitions, sells, the feedback and predictions of art critics, the collaborations with curators, and acquisitions of museums and public collections, actions of other investors, etc.).⁴⁵ In addition, collectors have to compare the offered price to other offers of the market. Therefore, in case of investment the goal of a collector is to buy an artwork on a reasonable price. *Reasonable* here means that the investor tries to be able to estimate realistically the future price of the artwork.

45 McAndrew, and The Art Basel and UBS Global Art Market Report 2019: 5 Key Insights, [online] [last download 30. 12. 2020] Available: <https://artbasel.com/stories/art-market-report-1>

However, even though the current trends of the market can be seen and the current position of the artist can be realistically evaluated, the future phases of an artistic career cannot be perfectly and safely foreseen. Making art depends on many things; it is enough to consider the working capacity of the artist, the time spent with artistic research, and, naturally, the many aspects of private life of the artist.

The motivation of business companies to collect contemporary art can be investment the same way. In cases, corporations accumulate artworks of emerging artists in order to sell them when the career of the given artists becomes successful. International investment funds spend huge amounts at auctions of classic modernist works, but also take the risk to invest in contemporary pieces.

Social responsibility

The other motivation of business companies is corporate social responsibility. Corporations support civic and non-profit organizations in order to provide benefits to the society where they operate in. Some of these firms support artists, art organizations, and in general the cultural sector by acquiring artworks, therefore strengthen and reinforce the market positions of those artists.

Passion

Individual collectors can practice social responsibility as well. In these cases, collectors do not consider primarily the chance for making profit. The philanthropist individuals support the artists by buying the works. Of course, in most of the cases support cannot be separated from the joy of fight for a piece with other collectors; from the pleasure of possessing an artwork; from the delight to be a significant promoter of an artist, or, a new tendency in art. Collecting art is a passion. One should not underestimated the emotional aspects of getting and possessing a cultural good that provides symbolic, aesthetic and spiritual enjoyment for the viewer – in our case for the new and long term owner.

Collecting art is a part of a way of life for certain social groups and classes; sometimes it is even obligatory for the wealthy. A collection of fine art pieces functions as other accessories of the so-called „high society“ that represent a luxury life: property, car, leisure, etc. In addition, the possessed artworks represent values as experimentation, playfulness and freedom, which values play a notable role in after work recreation. Collectors often like visiting studios of the artists, spending time with them, and with gallery owners, curators, or, critics. These times function not only as relaxation and recreation, but also as time of learning and gathering information about the art world.

Being a „connoisseur“

Both for profit consideration and the general orientation in the art world, collectors usually visit exhibitions and international art fairs; attend to auctions; read and collect art papers, monographies, books of art history and art related sciences; build an art library: collectors gradually become „connoisseur“, expert of art. That is to say, on one hand a collector actively shapes the art world, because by every acquisitions the collector provides references to the artists. Buying an artwork reinforces the position of the artists, establishes a certain level of price, and helps the promotion of the artistic career. On the other hand, new aspects emerge on the collectors' horizon: the aspects of museology. As earlier explained, the museum is open to the public, and acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits its collection. In quite lots of cases, private collectors develop, define and articulate a *concept* of the collection. There are collections that focus on a period in art history, on a style, on a theme, on a material, or, on a certain genre of art. Collectors tend to consult with art historians, to hire curators, to use methodologies of the object-centred museology in order to achieve the high standards of proper storage, restoration, transport and display.

Some collectors show the collection in public exhibitions. These exhibitions are usually accompanied with catalogues. These publications contain scientific texts by art historians, curatorial statements, the results of research on the collection. Some of the private collectors give a loan to museum exhibitions, or, deposit artworks in museums' collection. These actions and behaviour usually lead to establishment of private museums, as can be seen in cases of Guggenheim⁴⁶, Ludwig, or, Essl families. These museums not only display the collection of a family, but also become the most influential actors of the institutional frame of art. Competing with public museums, these private initiatives play a proactive role in the art world. They shape, affect and influence significantly the world of contemporary art.

Case studies

Have a look on the two photographs of this chapter. They show a moment of the vernissage, and an interior of an exhibition. The show presented a private contemporary art collection (the Irokez Collection) in the rooms of a prestigious institution: a national gallery. However, it is quite unusual that a national gallery hosts a contemporary private collection, setting a precedent for other private collectors to request the same. In this case, *the concept* of the collection convinced the leaders of the museum: it demonstrated that the collection is unique, irreplaceable, and has significance in art history.⁴⁷

46 [online] [last download 30. 12. 2020] Available: <https://www.guggenheim.org/>; <https://www.ludwigstiftung.de/>; <http://sammlung-essl.at/en>

47 [online] [last download 30. 12. 2020] Available: <http://irokezcollection.hu/>

„Obviously, the Irokez Collection is not the only collection in Hungary today that comprises contemporary works of art. However, to our knowledge, it is *unique* as far as the collected works and the circle of their creators are concerned. (...) Even though this collection of objects does not represent the whole picture, it is still able to demonstrate some of the *tendencies and periods characteristic of the art of the artists appearing in the nineties*. (...)”

Naturally, the Irokez Collection is not able to undertake covering each trend in Hungarian art; it rather aims at following the concept taken shape when purchasing a new work of art. This *concept* could be described with the need for discovery, demonstration and endeavour to take a stand on culture. Certainly, when selecting artworks and artists, the whole collection takes a risk since the new acquisitions of the collection are sometimes works of art, which have not been tried or reviewed by any art institutions yet. By doing so, the collection undertakes an active role in formulating new segments of value. Thus, the unique concept of Irokez Collection is *significantly different* from the majority of collecting concepts in Hungary. Being a private collection initiative, it stands closer to collecting policy of institutions like Institute of Contemporary Art in Dunaujvaros.⁴⁸”

Therefore, the cultural activity of these two private collectors crossed the path of the museums that collects, exhibits and interprets contemporary art. The case demonstrates perfectly that how apart from business considerations the aspects of museology can become relevant. The private collection has high value; it can be inherited, later sold. However, the same time it became an influential actor of the institutional frame of art.

The story of the Saatchi collection, gallery and organization is different in many respects, but in a very similar way, it became an influential actor of the global institutional frame of art. The collection contributed in the worldwide success and fame of the Young British Art. Therefore, the Saatchi Collection has been not only a profit-making instrument, but also a *trendsetter* actor.⁴⁹

It is remarkable that to what extent transactions with some actors of the institutional frame (in these cases private collections) provide reference for the artist. The next chapter will introduce these transactions and show how the position of the artist is being set, managed and established.

48 [online] [last download 30. 12. 2020] Available: <http://ica-d.hu>

49 [online] [last download 30. 12. 2020] Available: <https://www.saatchigallery.com/>; <https://www.saatchiart.com/>



A New Refutation of Time - Works from The Irokez Collection at The Hungarian National Gallery Vernissage with Lorand Bereczky - director, Gabor Pados - Zsolt Pajor collectors and Laszlo Szazados - curator, 2008
Source: Irokez Collection

Chapter 8

From emerging to established – the position of artists within the institutional frame of art

Fame and/or money

As Chapter 3 explained, right after leaving art education all the costs related to artistic activity are knocking on the door of the artist. Studio, equipment, materials, energy, mobility and transport – just to name a few of the many – have to be financed somehow. Beginner artists usually have to take a job in order to be able to afford these costs. As the professional career gradually developing, the artist can increasingly finance these costs from other sources. The actors of the institutional frame of art may provide these sources.

After leaving art education the beginner artists wish to achieve professional success and significance. That is to say, artists aim to be accepted, regarded, appreciated and acknowledged by the audience; recognized, credited, supported by the critics; canonized by public and private collections; and discussed by art related sciences. It is important to note that to get income from art institutions and to enjoy the regard and appreciation of the audience and critics is possible only after the artists become acquainted with this frame, which is a system of relations, where transactions take place.

However, it is important to note that in lots of cases fame does not go hand in hand with money. As in Chapter 3 Pierre Bourdieu explains, the value of artworks is a symbolic value, because „in this upside-down world where the negative sanctions can suddenly become positive, the reality of prices is of course systematically excluded“. As experience shows, only a few artists can maintain and sustain fame, and can act at the same time as a full time artist, whose income comes exclusively from art projects and institutions. Therefore on one hand a beginner artist has to understand how the institutions work, but on the other, some other components and factors – as talent, dedication, determination, skills of hard working, efficient management, and luck – are also needed.

Mapping and learning

Therefore, a beginner artist has to start with mapping and learning the mechanisms and processes of the institutional frame. The goal of the learning process is to understand gradually the mission, the function, the activity and the policy of the actors of the frame. This is the unavoidable and obligatory starting point.

Look at the diagram 1. It is not very difficult to understand the mission and activity of museums, exhibition rooms, and exhibition centres, but frequently visiting the exhibitions is essential in order to see the big picture of contemporary production. The opening events serve also as an excellent spots for meetings, discussions, and getting to know art professionals personally, talk with and learn from them. That is to say, it is not enough to know about the institutions, artists have to *interact* with them, in order to realize *transactions* with them.



The references and the position of the artist-artwork brand within the institutional frame of art
Source: diagram by János Szoboszlai

Shaking hands and then transactions

Vernissage is a good example to understand how relationships may result transactions. Vernissages are occasions for building professionals network with other artists and art workers and actors (curators, critics. or, collectors). As an outcome, these new personal relations may result further meetings, invitations and involvement in future projects, or, even selling. These are transactions, because the artist establishes relationships, makes work these relations, and interacts with these actors. Communication, cooperation, collaboration, acquisition, transportation, and (hopefully) transfer of money: these are examples for transactions that happen within the institutional frame of art.

Examples

As the aim is to have artworks in public collections, the artist should know what contemporary artworks in these collections are, what the concept and policy of the museums for extension and development is, and who are the curators who make the decisions.

It is not always easy to know well the private collections, because not all data is public and accessible. However, from discussing with art workers and other artists, the profile and the hierarchy of private collections can be seen: artists always know which are the less and which are the more influential collections. The beginner artist can learn from the public relations of these collections. Information can be gathered on these private institutions: who is reliable and who is trustless, who is a beginner with good will and who is an experienced connoisseur, which collection is sleeping and which one is developing and extending dynamically. Based on the knowledge the artist can learn also that which gallery sells works frequently to these collectors.

The beginner artists should understand the difference between the profiles (the concepts, artists, attitude, business models, background and position) of commercial galleries. In addition, from market information one can learn about prices, selling, auction result, and participation in fairs by these galleries. Therefore it is essential to read art papers and follow the news on-line as well (as Chapter 6 explained) in order to be able to decide on which gallery could be suitable to contract with. Based on good decision a gate may be open for fruitful collaboration with a gallery. That is to say, a good contract makes possible to enjoy the fruits of very essential transactions (as selling, acquisition, and receiving revenue) which make the artistic activity sustainable.

Cultural policy (as Chapter 4 discussed) is a key factor of the public sector of culture and the arts. As cultural policy defines the concept and method public money is spent and distributed for art institutions and projects, for the beginning artists it is necessary to be up-dated about the actual concepts and methods. It is also unavoidable to learn about grants, scholarships, public acquisitions, and yes, taxation in the arts. One of the most significant source of art making is public money, which is accessible via grant writing, application for these grants and follow the regulations of financial administration. Therefore, it is obligatory to watch

the announcements of grants, to learn the application process and to develop the skills for financial administration. The outputs and outcomes of these learning process and practices are very fundamental transactions as receiving grants, enjoying the support of a scholarship, selling artworks to public institutions. It also means that an artist has to know about the basics of the applicable law and regulations in economy, including accountancy, and yes, the rules of taxpaying.

In these terms, the institutional frame of art is a functional network, in which the artist is one party of transactions. On the other side, there are institutions the artists realize these transactions with.

Branding

In the context of production, distribution and consumption (which was discussed by Chapter 1.) and in the context of gradually increasing number of transactions, the artworks cannot be separated from the artist and the artist cannot exist as artist without artworks. In terms of planning and managing an artistic career, it looks suitable and beneficial to use a combination of words as a term in this discussion: *artis-and-artwork-as-a-brand*. This term *brand* would suggest that artist and the works are very closely related, even fundamentally merged when transactions happen. That is to say, the name of an artist contains, includes and represents a person and cultural goods at the same time. (Say Malevich, Duchamp, Picasso, Warhol, Serra, Pollock, or, say Kafka, Ginsberg, Auster, Rushdie, Rowling, etc.) The reason to use this term is to help to localize the position of the artist within the very complex net of the frame. The question is what is the position of the artist and how can one define this position? What are the components, which make, support and define that position?

Catalogue of reference

It is the *curriculum vitae* (CV) of a visual artist, which functions as a summary of *references*, and a report on the *transactions done*. Obviously, the CV of a beginner is short, but as soon as the professional career starts up step-by-step, more and more transactions can be reported in the CV.

The CV tells a story of a *brand*, it provides a list of the *most remarkable stages* of an artistic career. An updated CV demonstrates the fundamental components that support the actual *position of the brand* within the net of the institutional frame.

The chapters of this story or, the items of this list are the *references* of the artist. It is basically a catalogue of *information* that *refer* to the most significant facts, events, outputs, outcomes, results of the artist, in other words: it *refers* to *transactions* which have been *realized* by the artists.

Of course, this catalogue can be understood only for those who are insiders of the institutional frame of art. For example, the information on art education tells a lot to the ones who know very well the very wide spectrum of institutions dealing

with art education. As there is a *hierarchy* of art academies, colleges and schools, this chapter of the CV provides strong (or, weak) reference about the professional background of the brand. Similarly, the institutions where the solo- and group exhibitions were presented have this kind of hierarchy. Some institutions represent significant reference, some do not.

For independent curators, and curators of public collections the CV provides data which supports (or does not support) the argumentation for inviting the artists to collaborate in a project, or, for proposing an acquisition of a work for the collection.

Before contracting artists, a gallery owner needs to *review the references* of the brands the gallery intends to represent, promote, and manage. The references in the CV of the brand function also as the basis to *define the price* of the works of the artist. In case the artist has works in significant public, or private collections; or, the artists has been rewarded by important prizes and grants, these references explain why there is a rise in prices.

It is important to note that the references coming from transactions with the public institutions, the academic world, or, from the non-profit sector, are as strong as the ones provided by transactions from the art market. Most of the cases the brand acts and interacts within both of those sectors. The reference coming from an exhibition curated by a star curator tells a lot to the market. The same way, a high price at an auction improves and strengthens the position of the brand in general within the net of non-profit art institutions.

The CV of a beginner artist is very short. The emerging artist, who has started interacting with institutions and realizing transactions gradually, has more and more references. An established artist usually does not register every single references in the CV, only the most remarkable ones, or, only the ones from the last five years.

To summarize, the position of the brand can be read from the list of the reference. The references come from transactions realized with the institutions of art. The CV as an activity report provides fundamental information to curators, critics, gallery owners, collectors, and evaluators of grant applications. It provides evidence of acceptance, regard, appreciation, and acknowledgement by the audience; recognition, credit, and support by the critics; canonization by public and private collections; and discussion about the brand by art related sciences. However, at the same time it demonstrates talent, dedication, determination, skills of hard working, efficient management, and luck too.

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*4. 11. 1987

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Education

2017—2021

Visual Communication (PhD.)
Faculty of Art and Design University
Jan Evangelista Purkyně
in Ústí nad Labem,
→ fud.ujep.cz/en

2014—2016

Supermedia studio (MgA.)
UMPRUM Prague, Diaz & Kořínek studio
→ umprum.cz/supermedia

2009—2013

Interaktive media studio (BcA.)
Faculty of Art & Design — FUD UJEP
Kopřiva & Prošek studio
→ interaktivci.cz

Scholar internships

2015

Faculdade belas artes UPORTO,
Porto (Portugal)
2nd semester, 02—07/2015
Department of Multimedia
Cristina Mateus studio
→ fba.up.pt

2013

MOME — Budapest (Hungary)
1st semester, 09/2013—01/2014
Graphic design department
→ mome.hu/en/terulet/tervezografika

Solo shows (selected)

2021

Cool District
— Het Wilde Weten, Rotterdam (NL)
Cool story Bro!
— Deska Gallery, Ústí nad Labem (CZ)

2020

Frutti Di Mare
— NoD Gallery, Prague (CZ)

2019

AGAINST ALL LOGIC
— Stone projects, Prague (CZ)
Blackout
— Cifra Gallery, Doubice (CZ)

Group shows (selected)

2021

Ubi sunt leones?
— Meetfactory gallery, Prague (CZ)
Artsafari
— Studio Bubec, Prague (CZ)

2020

The Anarchistic Amateur's Alphabet
— Rotor Gallery, Graz (AUS)
Dancing On The Ruins
— Nova Cvernovka, Bratislava (SLO)
Between Us
— Fotograf Gallery, Prague (CZ)
8th Youth Zlín Salon,

— 14/15 BAŤA INSTITUT, Zlín (CZ)
Zlín Smart Generation
— NTK Gallery, Prague (CZ)
The Best Taylor in Town
— Hunt Kastner, Prague (CZ)
Estúfa
— Maus Habitots, Porto (POR)

2019

Cena EXIT
— Emil Filla Gallery, Ústí nad Labem (CZ)
Cliche Alte Feuerwache
— Loschwitz (GER)
The Most Beautiful Catastrophe
— CCA Kronika, Bytom (POL)
Obrazy zimy
— Galerie Klatovy, Klenová (CZ)

2018

Windows lovers
— SYBILLE NÜTT, Dresden (GER)
(Re)construction of the presence
— Boccanera gallery, Trento (ITA)
Tell me why?
— Kisterem Galéria, Budapest (HUN)
Is this only your truth?
— AM180, Prague (CZ)

Public Intervention

2021

Festival m³ — Praha 6
— Prague (CZ)

2018

Bien Urbain — Urban Festival
— Besançon (FRA)

Residencies

2021

Artist residency programme
— Meet Factory, Prague (CZ)

2016

Socially responsive communication
workshop at Nijmegen
— Memefest (NED)

Art Fairs

2019

Vienna Contemporary (AUS)
— Leto Gallery (POL)

2018

NADA Miami (USA)
— SVIT Gallery (CZ)

Awards

2016

Best of UMPRUM
AAAD — Selected in best Diploma works
Art & Design museum, Prague (CZ)

2013

The Most Beautiful Czech Books of
the Year, Category bibliophile books
and author's books — 1st place

Jan Novák is contemporary artist
working in field of intermedial arts
(as video, animation, 3D products and
instalation). His works are characterized
by a joyful and courageous exploration
of color, and yet are simultaneously
delimited by geometric boundaries.
Geometry and the utopian ideas
of Modernism are his main sources
of inspiration, but only by way of
undergoing a mangling process of
manipulation. Creating abstractions
that hold critical and progressive
threads beneath a surface layer of
aesthetic pleasure.

He is contributor for several
magazines and online portals including
Art&Antiques, Artalk.cz, Fotograf
Magazine, A2LARM.cz, etc.

Example of CV
of a visual artist

contact
(www, fb,
instagram,
twitter, etc)

art education
solo exhibitions
group exhibitions
art fairs

auctions
prices and awards
grants
scholarships

works in public collections
works in private collections
residencies
publications

catalogues
bibliography
conferences
positions

work experience
memberships
represented by
miscellaneous



Chapter 9

Art as institutional critique

Power and authority

Naturally, the institutional frame of art is not a permanent, constant, and rigid structure. As human civilisation is permanently changing, the actors, the dominant narratives, the conventions, the rules, the centres of power and authority, the anonymous powerful agents, and the canon in art are permanently changing too. The frame is a historical formation, which requires a certain historical development. It is different in the 15th century, different in the 20th century, different in the 1950's in the Soviet Block, and different in the US in the same decade. However, at every period in time and in every political context the frame is a powerful regulator (as Chapter 4 explains). It prescribes the allowable definition(s) for art, has control over the canonisation of artists, and determines its own limits.

As artists permanently provide „new propositions for the concept of art“⁵⁰, the given structure of institutions may be not flexible enough, may be not able to respond immediately the challenge. One example is the Salon des Refusés, an exhibition in Paris in 1863, which displayed artworks rejected by the jury of the official Salon. In this case, the jury and the rejected artists had different definitions for art, therefore the conflict concluded in a debate on the very central question of art. The jury had the power and authority to judge, but some artists disagreed.

„Museums have the authority to select, interpret, and present that which they decide has value or significance... Some museum professionals lose sight of the fact that exhibition is by its very nature an interpretive act.“⁵¹ This statement is very contemporary. It makes clear (as Chapter 1 discussed) that the institutions of the frame influences and defines every aspect of art production, including concepts for art, economy of art, and discourse on art. As discussed earlier, the institutions are the agents of production, distribution, and consumption.

Csaba Nemes
Let's!
stills from video
video, 7:42, 2016
Source: Csaba Nemes

50 Kosuth

51 Edson and Dean

Consciousness, analysis and understanding

As previously explained, artists have to start with mapping and learning the mechanisms and processes of the institutional frame. From the early 20th century, artists have been reflecting on the operation and the function of the frame. From the early avant-garde artists permanently presented artworks, which bring to consciousness the structures of art.

The first two decades of the century (before and after the World War I, the first wholesale technological slaughter) the authorities as state, church, education radically weakened. It is the time of the crisis and decline of traditional values of the civilisation (e.g. political, religious, sexual, and cultural values).

It is the time when Marcel Duchamp deliberately places a vulgar object into the frame of art (into the physical space of an exhibition room, but also into the discourse and institutional net of contemporary art). The ready-mades radically refuse the traditional values and requirements of art (they minimize handwork; there is no original, only replicas; the ready-made does not represent anything else). Since the everyday, mere real thing was accepted and recognized by the institutional frame as artwork, this act immediately changed the ontological status of the objects, and at the very same moment declared new requirements for art making. That is to say, Duchamp questioned the function of art, and provided a new proposition for the definition of art.⁵² It was possible because Duchamp did understand very well the mechanisms and processes of the institutional frame. The ready-made explores, analyses, describes and criticises the structure, the rules, the authority and the power of the frame.

It is the time when another significant proposition was provided, that is of Kazimir Malevich. It is notable; that he did not only presented the suprematist paintings, but also published a highly elaborated text about his new proposition for the concept of art.⁵³ Both of the artists put the emphasis on the basic act of art making: the development of the original idea. To come up with these new propositions, both of them had to understand and analyse how the frame functions, in order to bring to consciousness the structures of art. A very relevant component of these propositions is the critical approach, the criticism of the existing institutional frame and its authority.

52 Kosuth

53 Malevich

The '60s and '70s: demystification and institutional critique

The "demystification of the hidden structures of the art world"⁵⁴ was one of the most relevant process in these decades. It is the time of minimalist-, pop-, and concept art, and the Fluxus. Each of these movements analysed and reflected critically on the mechanisms and processes of the institutional frame.

„Along with the political upheaval of the late 1960s, the "demystification of the hidden structures of the art world" challenged the well-established value system. Revealing the preconditions of producing and displaying art among the institutional frames of the art field, which was previously hidden from the eye of the public, display became a focal point of critical engagement of artists and curators likewise). Consequently, exhibition display – as the once dominant model of the white cube itself – became denaturalized. Along these lines, and informed by conceptual tendencies and institutional critique of the late 1960s, artists (and curators increasingly) began to use exhibitions as their primarily medium, placing exhibition installation, interpretation or mediation into the focus of their (often critical) analysis.”⁵⁵

Nikolett Eröss explains very well, how a new genre of art became the centrum of a discourse, called the *institutional critique*: „Learning from artistic practices (as well as interiorizing criticism, and at the same time extinguishing it), art institutions have themselves initiated self-reflective projects – often in collaboration with invited artists – which were aiming to critically explore their context and position.”

The most remarkable artists of institutional critique are – just to name a few from the '70s and from the '80s – Marcel Broodthaers, Daniel Buren, Louise Lawler, Sherry Levine, Hans Haacke, Adrian Piper, Andrea Fraser, Fred Wilson.⁵⁶ As Malevich summarized the results of his analysis in a theoretical study, Buren published some of the most significant texts of institutional critique.⁵⁷ It is worth to quote the first paragraph from the *Function of The Museum*:

54 As explained by Seth Siegelaub, quoted by O'Neill

55 Eröss

56 Alberro and Stimson

57 Buren (and see also BUREN, Daniel. *The Function of an Exhibition*.

In. *Studio International*, 1973 December. p. 216.;

and BUREN, Daniel. *The Function of the Studio*. In. *October: The First Decade 1976—1986*. Cambridge: The MIT Press. pp.201—207.)

Privileged place with a triple role:

Aesthetic.

The Museum is the frame and effective support upon which the work is inscribed/composed. It is at once the centre in which the action takes place and the single (topographical and cultural) viewpoint for the work.

Economic.

The Museum gives a sales value to what it exhibits, has privileged/selected. By preserving or extracting it from the commonplace, the Museum promotes the work socially, thereby assuring its exposure and consumption.

Mystical.

The Museum/Gallery instantly promotes to "Art" status what it exhibits with conviction, i.e. habit, thus diverting in advance any attempt to question the foundations of art without taking into consideration the place from which the question is put.

The Museum (the Gallery) constitutes the mystical body of Art.



Haacke

As Buren critically describes the functions of the museum, he supports the demystification of the hidden structures of the art world. Another example for institutional critique is a work by Hans Haacke. The MoMa Poll was presented at an exhibition entitled Information, at the Museum of Modern Art in 1970. The work asked a question about Nelson Rockefeller's political activity.⁵⁸ The MoMa Poll was an interactive work, because visitors of the exhibition could answer the question by voting (the Yes, or No was dropped into transparent plexi-glass ballot boxes, just like at the polling stations when citizens vote at time of election). In the given time and political context the visitors knew very well, that Nelson Rockefeller supported President Nixon's military actions in Indochina, and he did not denounced an unlawful bombing in Cambodia which killed many civilians. New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller planned that year to run for the U.S. Presidency. Haacke expected realistically that visitors know well the political profile of Rockefeller, who also was a member of the board of trustees of MOMA. The artist juxtaposed two facts: there is a person, who is one of the most important supporters of one of the most influential art institutions, who at the same time supports unlawful mass killing. Therefore, Haacke linked the two facts, and pointed out a moral dilemma: can one separate the two facts at all? Does it matter who provides financial support for a museum, and who acts as a member of the decision-making body, the board of trustees? Should artist cooperate with such an institution? Haacke therefore explored, pointed out, put into the space of discourse some significant elements of the hidden structure of the frame.

⁵⁸ „Would the fact that Governor Rockefeller has not denounced President Nixon's Indochina policy be a reason for you not to vote for him in November?"

Csaba Nemes
Let's!
stills from video
video, 7:42, 2016
Source: Csaba Nemes

The '90s and later

The institutional critique had a strong input in the development of discursivity in art.

„Discursive practices and their trajectory in contemporary art since the second half of the 1990s can be considered, on the one hand, an expansion of various discussions around contemporary art and its social function. On the other hand, discursivity in art and curatorial practices has gained momentum when dematerialized mediums (i.e. lectures, symposia, discussions, talks, workshops, etc.) were initiated as the projects themselves. That is, discursive events that were in the 1970s and 1980s regarded as supplements to the exhibition, have taken centre stage within the exhibition space.”⁵⁹

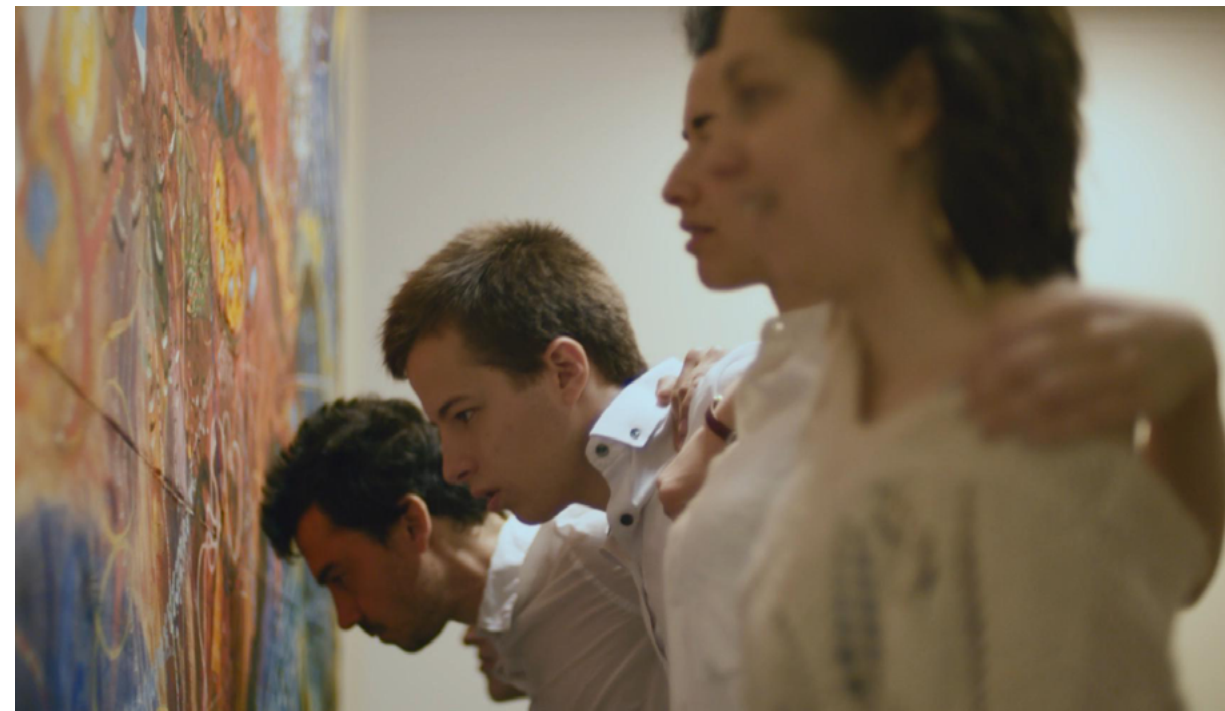
As Eszter Lázár points out, „discursive practices have also extended to the methods of “new institutionalism”, institutional critique, and the broadening practices of curating. This way, an art institution open to new working methods, becomes a multifunctional forum: besides its showroom function, it is also a site for education, research, and it even works as a community centre.” Therefore, the institutions, primarily the museums, exhibition rooms, the spaces of display initiate projects, which analyse and reflect critically on the mechanisms and processes of the institutional frame.

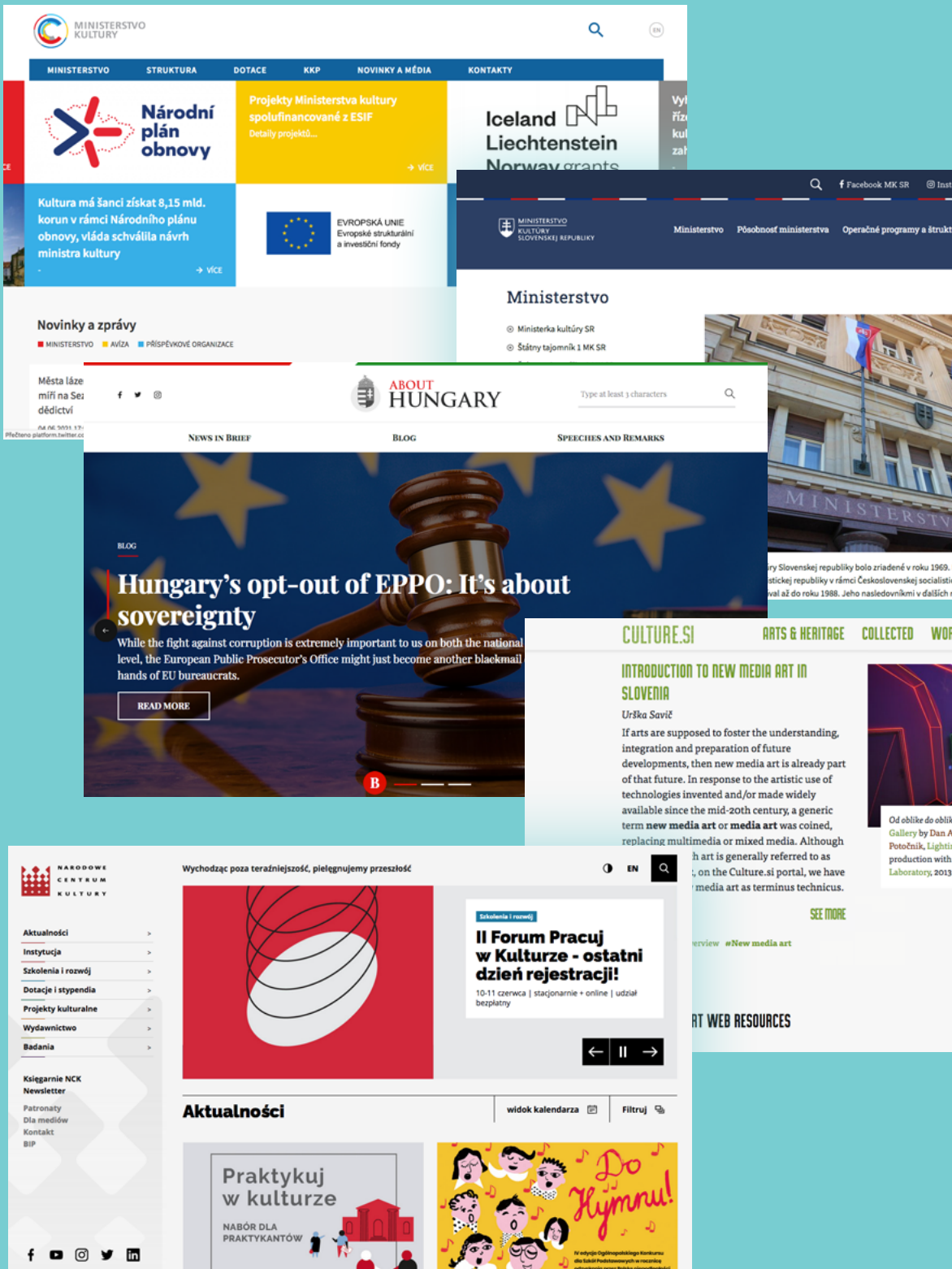
An example

In Csaba Nemes's video-piece, approximately 20—25 years old people wearing white-shirt and black trousers perform a strange, repetitive ritual in a museum. The outfit refers to the dress of traditional folk-dancers costume. The women and men make a line by embracing each other's. At the beginning of the ritual, the line stands still. After a while they start to rumble, which makes the group of women and men frightening, menacing and a little military, because they look to be ready to do something aggressive. Suddenly the line starts running directly towards the exhibited artworks. The scene looks like an attack. Just a bit earlier then the bodies would clash the artworks, the line breaks and all of a sudden stops. After a short break, in front of another artwork they repeat the ritual.

The young and energetic players show the determination of the luddites, or, the iconoclasm. Since the exhibition rooms are abandoned, there are not visitors and gallery guards, no security measures, their behaviour make the ritual realistically dangerous for the artworks. Therefore, Nemes creates a tension between the social, symbolic and material value of the artworks of a museum collection, and the seemingly uncivilised, spontaneous brute force. In the exhibition space, two cultures meet, representing two systems of values. Values, which are not accepted by the other. There is a huge gap between these cultures. In this case the artist intends to show how relative and fragile are the traditional values of art, and that these values are not accepted automatically. Even the institutional frame of art functions as a powerful authority, its values may not be taken for granted.

Csaba Nemes
Let's!
stills from video
video, 7:42, 2016
Source: Csaba Nemes





Chapter 10

Resources of current cultural policies, institutional and curatorial positions, and discourse on the history of art of the post-soc region

Navigating in the future

As argued in Chapter 8, a beginner artist has to start with mapping and learning the mechanisms and processes of the institutional frame. The goal of the learning process is to gradually understand the mission, the function, the activity and the policy of the actors in the frame. In addition, as explained earlier, the dominant narratives, the conventions, the rules, the centres of power and authority, the anonymous powerful agents, and the canon in art are constantly changing. For a beginner artist is also essential to know the basics of the current theories of art-related sciences and humanities. The current trends in cultural policy have a significant influence on artistic practice as well. Consequently, an artist should know about the ideologies, theories and historical conditions of the political-economic-cultural context of the region.

For example, since 2010, public policy in Hungary has become a centralized, neo-conservative, neo-nationalist and illiberal policy; and the cultural policy follows the principles of ethno-nationalism. The cultural policy was slightly different – liberal – before 2010 and although no one can see into the future, it may be different in the coming years.

A conference in Poznan intends to re-construct the art history narrative of the region. In the open call, the organizers invite historians and theoreticians to present "texts that offer new theoretical conceptualizations of the geographies of East-Central European art and/or a critical analysis of existing theoretical take-holds on the subject. Although we appreciate historical analysis, as the emerging research Center devoted to East-Central European art and its history, we are basically interested in the present-day condition of the reflection on East-Central Europe and its possible future developments." The conference intends to re-visit notions, terms and topics such as notions of Central, Eastern, and East-Central Europe; notions of Communist and Post-Communist Europe, Former East/West, Former Eastern Europe; the notion of the Other (both close and distant); relational and critical geographies as appearing in art historical narratives of East Central European art; the map as seen from the peripheries; location(s) and relativization of the centre; horizontal art history; global maps – binary vs rhizomatic structures; and East-Central European art historical narratives in the context of national and local politics.⁶⁰

That is to say, the current notions, terms and relevant topics related to the art of the region may be revised in the near future. This scientific inquiry may change our knowledge of the history of art, and the state of contemporary art of the region. Therefore, this study book does not describe the current situation, context and perspectives of the post-soc region from 2021; instead, it offers some resources for those interested in these topics.

These scientific texts, books, catalogues, essays, and articles focus on the historical conditions and the post-soc context of our region. Some of them also register, describe and analyse the current trends in art practice, institutional development and cultural policy.

By listing these publications this study book hopefully provides a solid ground for the beginner artist who wishes to navigate within the institutional frame of art.

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Navigare necesse est
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the Institutional Frame of Art

János Szoboszlai

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is fulfilled, pass me on!**

