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Art Institutions of the 21st Century

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REPORT

ART INSTITUTIONS OF THE 21ST CENTURY

Science and technology multiply around us. To an increasing extent they dictate the languages in which we speak and think. Either we use those languages, or we remain mute.

J.G Ballard, *Crash*, 1973

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We need to talk, the World has changed

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FOREWORD

'WE NEED TO TALK, THE WORLD HAS CHANGED'

All of our institutions are experiencing a crisis today. Of course this is particularly apparent in media organisations: the newspaper, the book, etc. But look at universities, too, for example... All these types of institutions are in a crisis, including the political ones... Which society, or which institutions, will replace them?

Michel Serres, 2014

The desire to examine the most important ideas and practices in today's art world and to initiate dialogues that help determine their future shape lies at the heart of our activities at Montabonel & Partners. We understand research to include productive dialogue with the best specialists in their relevant fields, with the aim of maintaining a primary position within current developments.

The 21st century presents us with a range of unique challenges but also opportunities, due largely to the technological revolution that began in the final decades of the last millennium, and whose impact is felt strongly in the present. As these new tools and methodologies have entered our everyday lives, we have become accustomed to their presence, though their long-lasting effects on culture at large is only gradually becoming clear. It is said that we take little time to adapt to using new tools, but take much longer to fully grasp the consequences of their incorporation. It seems evident that technology would take time to gain a lasting foothold within our institutions, since these enshrine our fundamental ways of addressing culture. Art institutions of the 21st century specialising in the contemporary are supposedly at the forefront of aesthetic and social developments, though it would seem that, whilst the impact of technology has been momentous, its lessons are only partially understood. If relegated to a technical or theoretical activity, the impact of cutting-edge research can be limited, appearing to trickle down slowly into institutional practices.

We brought together leading art figures through the international think tank *Media in the Expanded Field*, to examine the effect of technology on communication, collection and exhibition practices and on the momentous transitions that art institutions are undergoing in the present. The event was conceived as a philanthropic enterprise by Montabonel & Partners and affirms the importance of supporting research and development to benefit a wider art community. It is becoming increasingly clear that received models of practice must evolve significantly in order to thrive. What should the contemporary art institution of the future be like? What are the values and practices that should be retained and how should organisations prepare for change? How do we square the needs of the local with the demands of burgeoning globalisation and indeed the virtual? What impact does digital culture have on collecting and conservation? How can public and private sectors work better together?

Such questions go to the heart of the state and function of institutions. By exploring how current institutions institute – that is, how they think about culture and enshrine, apply and communicate those ideas – we hoped to contribute to these key discussions with a number of conclusions and recommendations as to how such concerns might progress in the near future as our century evolves.

Sébastien Montabonel

Founder, Montabonel & Partners

INTRODUCTION

Our working hypothesis is that the status of knowledge is altered as societies enter what is known as the post-industrial age and cultures enter what is known as the post-modern age. This transition has been under way since at least the end of 1950s; which for Europe marks the completion of reconstruction. The pace is faster or slower depending on the country, and within countries it varies according to the sector of activity: the general situation is one of temporal disjunction which makes sketching an overview difficult. A portion of the description would necessarily be conjectural. At any rate, we know that it is unwise to put too much faith in futurology.

Jean-François Lyotard, 1979

The debate around the shape and purpose of contemporary art institutions is brought into sharp focus in the 21st century, arising from the impact of technology, shifts in funding structures, and the effects of global art markets. The combination of these elements produces an institutional landscape not previously encountered, which presents a range of demanding challenges, but also potential opportunities. It should be understood that art institutions today can no longer be usefully defined as comprising only the traditional organisations that entrench stable, valued, and recurring patterns of thought and behaviour, but all those that institute in our mutable century. When speaking of valuable institutions, we refer to cultural agents, which are both mediators of change and recipients of transformation. We refer to public museums, private collections, commercial galleries, auction houses, artist-run spaces and foundations, art schools, arts funding bodies, and the art press to mention but the main participants that constitute art's ecosystem.

Virtual technologies and digital culture have been central factors in driving alterations in art's accessibility; the collapsing of spatial and temporal boundaries through the internet have resulted in an enhanced awareness of the programmes of museums and galleries. Simultaneously, we have seen the development of online platforms purporting to both augment and substitute the experience of gallery-going. As institutions devote time and money to improving their information technology and communication base, the enhancement of the physical visitor experience must continue apace.

In the light of an ongoing uncertain economic climate, in many countries institutions are progressively moving from an exclusively public model of funding, towards solutions that involve philanthropy, patronage and sponsorship, arguably a road that regional organisations find more arduous to travel than those located in major capitals. With the exception of the most proactive regional institutions, this transition would appear to be best managed by those already strategically placed in advantageous geographic centres. Are such advantages bestowed by location uniquely telling, or are there successful strategies that can be developed to ensure the regions can also sustain their arts institutions?

The rise in the importance and visibility of the contemporary art market has been noteworthy in recent years, and with it the enhanced role of key commercial galleries. Their support of major exhibitions in large institutions has been apparent, as has their presentation of museum-grade exhibitions in their own premises whose spatial qualities often rival those of major institutions. By taking on a certain institutional visibility, albeit without the concomitant functions, are such commercial galleries overstepping their remit, or are such developments to be accepted as par for the course?

These are some of the key discussion points and questions addressed by the participants in the think tank *Media in the expanded Field* which was held at Casa Wabi Foundation in Mexico in the summer of 2016, and which have been recorded and developed through this report by the Research Department of Montabonel & Partners. The week-long discussions brought together selected directors, curators and conservators from public and private museums, theorists from universities, and artists, to broach the impact of technology on the art and institutions of our century. The report

records the key arguments of this unique event and seeks to present a range of interpretations and partial resolutions to essential concerns and attempts to knit them into a series of conclusions and recommendations. The report also draws on significant information garnered before and after the event from other invited contributors to our extensive online platform *MEF Site (Media in the Expanded Field Site)*. Moreover, all participants have been solicited to present clarifications and further input to this report following the weeks and months that have elapsed since the lively and intensive discussions in Mexico.

Our participants are based in Europe, North and Latin America, and the Far East, and their own specialist knowledge is located within a wide cultural outlook and practice. Additionally, the members of the think tank are engaged travellers, able to insert themselves into different discursive contexts, as producers, providers, speakers, interactors, and listeners. The group is thus marked by the ability to think critically and creatively, rather than by solely representing their own professional or local expertise. A crucial part of the report is the Manifesto: a document that presents a series of thought-provoking and ambitious statements, which summarises the key aspects of the debate. It seeks to represent the fertile atmosphere of this extraordinary event, which took participants out of their usual comfort zones and fostered wide-ranging and productive debates.

Whilst this paper reports on the initial think tank, it makes no attempt at replicating the process, or indeed, at following the chronology of discussions as they took place. Rather than presenting a transcription of discussions, the report selects key aspects of the debates and assigns the salient arguments to three chapters; as is natural at such events, certain issues arise repeatedly and require rigorous editing to ensure legibility and cohesiveness. We hope the following offers useful reading to those with a vested interest in, and commitment to, contemporary art, technology and its institutions, whilst presenting an accurate record for those who contributed to the think tank.

The first section of the report outlines aspects of the impact of technology on visual art institutions; it summarises the conflicts presented by media works on established museum practices. Notwithstanding the obvious challenges, it argues that the curation and collection of such works forms part of an essential institutional strategy that stresses the immersive quality of today's displays. Such displays have an important impact on the architectural fabric of contemporary museums and require a concerted and coordinated approach by artists and curators, who need to develop flexible models of spatial design with the need to mitigate financial expenditure. The intricate technical aspects of media works require curators to adapt to an unstable, ever-changing environment; moreover, the cross-disciplinary approach patent in many of these require staff to develop expertise beyond a single discipline. Institutions need to evolve curatorial display strategies, whilst being aware of consequences for collecting practices; works in a post-medium age need to affirm their materiality through archival practices, namely by the introduction of detailed instructions or 'scenarios'.

The topic advanced in the second section regards the relationship between artistic practice, markets and institutions. Though museums and galleries show a degree of enthusiasm in exhibiting media art, the market continues to harbour reservations regarding its monetisation, and casts doubts on its collectability. Moreover, acquisition of these works can prove problematic even for public institutions due to the rapid obsolescence of technical display materials and accurate categorisation. Accordingly, one might expect a heightened professionalisation to address these difficulties, through the establishment of codes of standards and benchmarking, but though a degree of headway has been made in some areas, much remains unresolved. Professionalisation should not detract from creative endeavour and is best established through strong relationships, collaborative practice and productive networks involving museums, commercial galleries and artists.

The considerations of the future for contemporary art institutions of the 21st century are addressed in the third and final chapter. Such a future, it is argued, has already begun, its implications are manifested in the challenges presented by new technologies, and in the expansion of global markets. We look at how culture and the market are becoming progressively intertwined, ushering in changes in the way institutions might be sustained economically, share knowledge, and address audiences.

The report closes with a section of conclusions arrived at by the members of the think tank in the final sessions of the event, which were added to subsequently by participants and the editorial team. These recommendations comment upon and are designed to support the necessary transitions, which our institutions are undergoing. In this way, it is better to be a productive agent of change than simply its recipient.

The quotes that occur throughout the text are extracts from the conversations which took place during the think tank and from the texts provided by both participants in the think tank and contributors to the online platform *MEF Site*. These contributions seek to keep the dynamics of the active debate in play throughout the document.

CHAPTER I IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY ON INSTITUTIONS

The Age of Information presents contemporary art and its institutions with a series of challenges, which differ from those encountered in the Industrial Age. Society, in fact, is not structured around the role of individual agents anymore, but networks, operating within a constant flow of information distributed by technology. Networks are a defining feature of the present century and influence the relationship between politics, economy and, not least, culture. (1) This, associated with the continuous developments in electronics, computer technologies and telecommunications, has led to the rise of hitherto unfamiliar constellations in the field of art.

With this in mind, the impact of technology on contemporary art institutions is materialising on multiple levels: architectural, financial and structural, with a strong influence on aesthetic, temporal and spatial concerns. The freedom from medium-specificity and the parallel increase of cutting edge, technological tools for the making of artworks are instigating transformations, which are not only evident in collecting practices but also in education, communication and presentation to the public. Contemporary art no longer manifests itself exclusively in physical space, but also online, via the Internet, as it comes to occupy the challenging dimension of virtual reality. It remains to be seen whether the real and the virtual can function as complementary aspects, rather than replacing one another.

The Challenge of Display

The title of the think tank was inspired by Rosalind Krauss's notion of the expanded field (2), a definition we employ to advance the claims of 'media art' (3), as it stretches the boundaries of what can be considered a medium into a field of production and reception.

A constructive area of discussion tackled the issue of online versus offline displays. At first sight, and due to the nature of media art – which curator Steve Dietz identifies with the three characteristics of connectivity, computability and interactivity (4) – the online format might appear as the most suitable choice to show works with an intrinsic virtual nature. However, as participating scholar Beryl Graham and her colleague Sarah Cook discussed in *Rethinking Curating*, each of the above attributes 'can be related to different exhibition histories, ranging from installation art or performance art to video,' (5) and may happen online, offline or across both spheres.

Hence, the coexistence of virtual and institutional spaces for the presentation of art can be made possible only by resorting to the concept of the 'curated' space. In other words, the intervention of a curatorial action is crucial to determine the most favourable places for the distribution of media art. Yet, except for a few isolated examples, institutions continue to struggle to merge media art with mainstream contemporary art. According to Edward A. Shanken, the influential American art historian whose work focuses on the links of art, science and technology, 'for hundreds of years, MCA (Mainstream Contemporary Art) collectors, curators, and institutions have difficulty in recognising NMA (New Media Art) as a valid, much less valuable, contribution to the history of art.' (6) This derives from the fact that media art does not always fulfil the formal aesthetic criteria of mainstream contemporary art. Consequently, it becomes difficult to justify the presence of works made for the computer screen in the space of a gallery. (7) It follows that the debate around the best ways to showcase works originally developed for the online sphere is still ongoing. Moreover, some media art requires display on personal devices and can be easily hosted online or in non-institutional spaces; however, large-scale installations need a greater deal of infrastructure and technical support to be staged.

'There are certain new media experiences that are immersive and architectural and can only happen in a particular place and that's where we need to think of the museum as a platform to show those.' (Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, Media Artist)

Immersive media installations underline the important display function of the institution, since the latter is seemingly best equipped to handle the challenges posed by large works. However, they also pose significant challenges to its architectural fabric. The role of the wall has changed; as vertical surfaces are not the sole support anymore and 3D volumes have become increasingly prevalent in the space. In some cases, artworks occupy multiple planes, with walls holding hi-tech devices such as flat screens, which function as windows to the online dimension, enhancing the nature of the spectacle for the audience. These displays are deemed immersive as they have the potential to address numerous perspectives from a single viewpoint.

Media Art and Architecture

'I always think of an exhibition as being part of a broader context.' (Doris Krystof, Curator, K20/K21)

Curators and museum professionals have a responsibility to accurately represent and contextualise artworks in their exhibitions and collections. In order to achieve this, particularly in the case of media works, a close collaboration with architects becomes an imperative. Several contemporary art museums have outdated configurations, because of their historical buildings, or because of the lack of a thorough plan in the provision of new spaces. Contrariwise, many media works require flexible spaces, able to accommodate a diversity of situations and structures, which historical buildings are not designed to support at all times. Adaptations to the space, such as darkening large rooms, soundproofing or rebuilding entire wall structures, can furthermore be very expensive. Therefore, institutions that cannot afford the cost of constant adaptations may restrict the selection of artworks they are able to show, and the scope of their exhibition programme.

'Half of my budget is to block incredibly beautiful architectural signatures of the building because I need a dark room. So you need darkness, you need mobile soundproofing, you need the building to be networked; concrete is beautiful but I need Wi-Fi signal to go to every single one of the pieces so I can remotely check them. You need a high ceiling and emergency exit visible for people with possibility to sit, because my work is timely intense. You need to think about theatre because this is what theatre figured out 50 years ago: how to transform the space. This is what a museum that wants to work with media art needs to have; new buildings.' (Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, Media Artist)

The issue of architecture in the discourse around the 'Museum of the Future' has been an ongoing concern. For instance, in the eponymous publication released in 2014, a series of interviews with art professionals have attempted to address questions related to (future) exhibition, collection, education and, indeed, building design. When asked about the qualities of 'good museum architecture', artist John Baldessari replied: 'It's not about the architecture, it's about putting the art first. A case in point might be Zaha Hadid: she's not a bad architect, but hers is such dramatic architecture that you wonder what you're looking at. A good example is the Fundación Jumex Arte Contemporáneo in Mexico City; it's a rather simple structure, quite beautiful, but you don't think so much about the architecture. A nice space, good light: it's not so difficult I think. A friend of mine said that, with what we now call "starchitects," you could have their building, and next to them another building, a simple box where you would show the art...' (8). This opinion is shared by artist Hiroshi Sugimoto who, in the 2013 Arts & Museum Summit *Making a Museum in the 21st Century* that took place in Hong Kong, claimed that big budgets given to architects – without prior discussion on what to build – can

generate very artistically challenging designs, which do not necessarily foster the artists' practice and requirements. (9) Institutions often employ 'starchitects' with the idea of producing appealing buildings, which can themselves function as tourism-destinations, attracting more audiences. Additionally, the desirability of such buildings can spearhead productive fundraising campaigns, as part of a branding strategy. Though frequently, and mainly in the case of private institutions, architects do not receive prior instructions that clarify the project's requirements. This leads to designs that, whilst striking, may be less suitable in terms of display. Indeed, when the vision of the architect precedes or supersedes the brief, it may result in a lack of connection between the architectural container and the work. 'Architecture is basically a container of something. I hope they will enjoy not so much the teacup, but the tea.' (10) Hence, a brief that accurately elaborates the needs of the client organisation is essential in establishing the ground rules for a productive relationship between the architect, the museum and the display.

During the think tank, the concept of a malleable space, with no binding architectural identity and the semblance of a workshop or warehouse, occurred as a useful proposition for the contemporary art institution of the 21st century. While such a solution can be easily applied to the design of new buildings, already existing museums would need significant alterations to incorporate spatial flexibility.

'I also believe it is interesting to think about the space as having an identity where artists can intervene on, rather than something that is either a white cube or a black box, repeating itself over and over again...' (Benjamin Weil, Artistic Director, Centro Botín)

This argument, when applied to existing and historical buildings, raises further questions. In order to accommodate media works, many institutions have invested in extensions of their spaces, in an attempt to connect the old and the new on the level of both architecture and collection. This practice might appear as a natural step in the evolution of an institution. However, does it perhaps highlight the tendency of focusing more on physical expansion to the potential detriment of communication and content?

'All directors of major museums would probably say that the moment of expanding our buildings in the ways we have over the past twenty years is over. And the reason is not just economic but linked to the need to create different points of engagement and communication. There are some shining examples of institutions who without large buildings manage to do things differently and lead the field; operating internationally in open, nimble and experimental ways. I think the extraordinary resources afforded by our collections will be tapped in new ways, with museums exploring how one work might open up different modes of thinking and working... It's about magnifying what we have, it's less about the space and more about the impact of art on society... It's about reutilising what we have.' (Pip Laurenson, Head of Collection Care Research, Tate)

It would seem that architectural growth is perhaps not the most appropriate answer to address the technological developments in the art of this century. Should institutions not also explore alternative paths that valorise the meaning and relevance of their collections and programmes, in order to connect contemporary art with their audiences?

Institutional Practices

Institutions have very different ways of dealing with the collection and presentation of media art. Some have opted for an incorporation of media works in their system, by adding a new department, e.g. New Media, without necessarily having the appropriate infrastructure to care for and exhibit such works. Contrariwise, others especially developed for hosting media works boast the presence of dedicated spaces and specialised professionals. A series of examples of good practice in this regard have been proposed by the participants in the think tank.

At Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen in Düsseldorf, Germany, curator Doris Krystof has promoted a new *plaidoyer* (advocacy) for the museum. Through the intervention of architect Thomas Stadler, she experimented with the possibility of choreographing the space; with the aim of making the public move with the moving image. Between 2011 and 2013 Krystof curated the three-part exhibition *Big Picture* to examine the specific needs of presenting video art and film in the museum setting. The project offered a combination of works from the collection and selected loans, displayed through a customised spatial design. The outcome revealed that the movement of the viewer develops a stronger connection with the moving images, if presented in a non-conventional situation such as the open space of the gallery, instead of the traditional cinema rooms. Ultimately, this endeavour was extremely important for the institution, its audience and the artists involved, opening up new approaches to the perception of their works and enhancing the visitor's experience.

Another relevant example discussed was the Kunstmuseum Basel, Switzerland, which recently built a new extension, a highly flexible space that fosters fluid access, described by Nicholas Serota as 'tentative and experimental', a halfway house between past, present and future. The new building is linked to the original one by means of an underground passageway, thereby creating both a physical and conceptual connection between works from the collection and temporary exhibitions.

While Kunstmuseum Basel highlights spatial accessibility, the strategy promulgated by H3K (Haus der elektronischen Künste), Basel, stresses the spectator's experience of media art through multiple approaches, both physical and virtual. This interdisciplinary organisation works at the intersection of the visual arts, music, theatre, dance, performance and design, employing digital tools and art forms of the information age to make information technology accessible to a wide audience. Its mission is to actively intervene on the compelling issues of the 21st century culture, whilst making a contribution to their future progress. Hence, the organisation explicitly focuses on the promotion and evolution of media art.

Equally, ZKM (Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie) in Karlsruhe, Germany, despite its peripheral geographical location proposes another successful blueprint. It not only performs the key functions of a museum but operates as a research organisation as well, with several institutes largely focused on professional exchange. Alongside the collection, divided between traditional contemporary art and new media, ZKM counts on the support of private German collectors, who contribute to the programme on an annual basis. This hybrid model arguably owes much of its success to the work of artist, media theoretician and curator Peter Weibel, Chairman and CEO of ZKM since 1999. Thus, here, we see a strong identification between an organisation and a highly respected specialist.

Established in 2013, YCAM (Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media), Japan, is gaining an international reputation, through its emphasis on production of new works and technologies. It sponsors and invites artists to get involved, without specific links to the historical legacy of a collection.

Whilst offering different illustrations of how to deal with media art on the level of architecture, collection and

mission, the above examples cited during the discussions highlight a specific approach toward technology, which consists in specialisation; introducing the important issue of sustainability in the discussion.

Economic Sustainability

'The sustainability agenda drives a lot of thinking on how to keep costs and wastage down.' (Pip Laurenson, Head of Collection Care Research, Tate)

The expansion of information technologies has significantly increased the running costs of all contemporary art institutions. With the hi-tech demands of the 21st century, the expectations of museums have been ramped up. Key factors include innovations in the spatial fabric, specialist equipment and the expertise to operate, maintain and update it. These have a strong impact on all museum functions, ranging from collection to conservation, from exhibition to research and communication. Websites, digitised collections, interactive devices and apps nowadays represent very important features for the institution, which tries to increment its online presence in order to reach out to the public in the most user-friendly way. The consequence is that larger budgets are to be allocated toward branding, marketing and PR, with these becoming central to the core business of the institution. This is due to the pressure that institutions are subjected to, in increasing their visibility and shaping their brands competitively, in order to attract more visitors into their buildings. Undoubtedly, these developments have an impact on public organisations. Major museums are able to invest significant funds in the improvement of their identity, though the same approach would severely threaten smaller organisations. '[Small] Museums now run the risk of mistakenly attempting to transform themselves into imitations of large museums, i.e. chasing the yardstick applied by administration, patrons and sponsors – and in the process lose their distinctiveness, which differentiate them from larger institutions.' (11) The argument that is advanced suggests that the replication of strategies adopted by larger institutions could result in small scale museums to suffer a loss of unique and defining identities. In practice, however, these 'lesser' institutions can only channel their scarce resources toward the elaboration of programmes rather than brands. Whilst their predicament is largely out of their hands, the lack of a clear branding and identity strategy might undermine vital communication with audiences and potential patrons and sponsors.

Moreover, many museums have particularly energy-intensive approaches to caring for their collections, especially when the latter are populated with media works, causing wastage on both an environmental and financial level. In this regard, The Museum Association advocates a focus on the museum's core business or on shared resources and expertise: 'Economic sustainability might sometimes be best achieved by working in close partnerships with other museums, or other types of organisation.' (12)

'To gain some orientation in a global and local way every museum in the 21st century should have a sister-brother institution which is at least 2500 miles away. A constant partnership between the two institutions should be established and carefully maintained as, for instance, the global model of twin towns.' (Doris Krystof, Curator, K20/K21)

The concept of cooperation between organisations of different scales came up during the think tank as a valid alternative to foster more sustainable projects, with the participants agreeing on the possibility for smaller entities to be associated with major institutions, provided that both maintain the right degree of autonomy and authorship, and that the bigger ones do not subsume the others. Hence, smaller organisations can profit from their temporary and strategic

association with a larger, branded institution. A recent example is the partnership between Guggenheim Museum, New York, and South London Gallery, London, which took the shape of the 2016 exhibition *Under the Same Sun*, which brought works from the Latin American collection of the institution to London. (13)

Equally, the issue of financially sustainable buildings emerged as a crucial concern. In this regard, an early instance was the 1979 extension at Tate Britain, specifically designed to host a media art collection. It was supposed to provide a perfectly adaptable space; a box with connectivity and the ability to easily run cables and enhance acoustics. However, it would be interesting to verify just how successful this venture and others, such as the 2016 Tate Modern extension, have been in cutting expenses and facilitating the art's installation and reception. In fact, when applied to media art, the economic impact concerns space as well as production.

Whilst the model of the media art museum as a laboratory finds a relevant historical reference in the aforementioned example of ZKM, where experimental research is associated with an established collection, we can argue that other spaces are playing a crucial role in supporting artists' professional development. This is the case of non-profit/public organisations, but it also involves the private sector and, especially, the expansion of ambitious exhibition practices in private museums and commercial galleries.

'New media art today is funded in different ways. Some pieces at Art Basel Unlimited were also museum quality works.' (Li Zhenhua, Independent Curator, Cultural Producer and Artist)

Due to the increasingly high production costs of media works, commercial galleries are among the biggest sponsors of tech-driven, large-scale installations, which are sometimes hosted in the context of artfairs prior to being installed within museums. The latter is thus straining to keep its authoritative position as disseminator of meaning and knowledge, blurring boundaries between the public institutions and commercial interests. This phenomenon impacts major organisations as well as small scale institutions. In particular, one may question whether regional museums, struggling to keep their programmes alive, can afford the production of media works. Often, where a public institution does not have the funds to exhibit or acquire high-priced artworks, there is a private entity that does. For instance, according to Michael Plummer's 2014 report commissioned by the DIA Counsel and City Counsel, Detroit, if the DIA (Detroit Institute of Art) Collection were to be sold in entirety or part only 'few sales would be to other museums, (...) because funding constraints limit their participation in the marketplace at today's price levels for works of art.' Public Institutions, primarily art museums, purchased only 9% of property sold in 2013, while 78% was purchased by private collectors, 7% by corporations and 6% by others. (14) These figures highlight the scale of the gap between the economic means of the public and private sector.

In practice, this often translates into a necessary and burgeoning partnership between public museums and commercial galleries, to share otherwise onerous costs. A survey conducted by The Art Newspaper revealed that, between 2007 and 2013, almost one third of solo shows in US museums went to artists represented by five galleries, i.e. Pace, Gagosian, David Zwirner, Marian Goodman and Hauser & Wirth; (15) raising questions about the influence of a small number of galleries in the art market. Likewise, many innovative private museums and collections are growing in supporting artists in the production of seemingly *difficult* media works such as, for instance, the Zabłudowicz Collection, London, the Kramlich Collection, San Francisco, or the dsl Collection, Paris.

The Post-Medium Condition

The continuous discovery of new tools and devices, which are developed every day in the present century, leads to a real and perceived acceleration of time. According to Jonathan Crary – Meyer Schapiro Professor of Modern Art and Theory at Columbia University – the quickening transformations in the field of technology instigate a social crisis of attention, which he defines as a ‘new object within the modernisation of subjectivity’, linked to the dramatic expansion of a visual/auditory culture. (16) Accordingly, the predicament of attention is paralleled by a growing desire on the part of the audience for immersive experiences, leading to the gradual incorporation of media art in the institutional sector. A further effect of the condensation of temporality, allied to the emergence of global art markets, is the exponential growth of prices. Such rapid fluctuation is the result of both speculation and the mobility of the gallery system within a global marketplace.

‘But my thinking about museums is that they are probably not addressing a huge issue, which is our profoundly altered new relationship with time. Catalogue evolving time perceptions and I think you have a catalogue of the near future.’ (Douglas Coupland, Novelist and Visual Artist)

Accordingly, museums as instigators and recipients of these transformations are struggling to initiate the necessary transition from a largely object-based culture to a highly mutable and unstable landscape of display, collecting and archiving. How much are contemporary art institutions able to collect and, consequently, keep up with the hastening of time? How well equipped are they to constantly revise their systems and structures to accommodate media works and the mounting demands of technology? This applies to the physical configuration of their buildings, as well as to their visions and policies. In fact, traditional collecting practices, in museological terms defined as *retrospective collecting*, have a strong retroactive orientation, benefitting from a degree of hindsight and reflection. However, collecting contemporary art has a much closer relationship with the present; this is especially so in the case of media art, and is arguably due to the fast obsolescence of its material components as well as of technology at large. Contemporary art museums cannot afford the comfort of waiting too long before acquiring media works, since these represent important moments of culture in a present which is being continuously updated. Therefore, to omit such works would produce significant lacunae in an important contemporary collection. This presents both opportunities and challenges. *Contemporary collecting*, described by leading theorists of contemporary museology Peter van Mensch and Léontine Meijer van Mensch as ‘the collecting of present-day artefacts’, offers the prospect to make ‘deliberate choices on which aspect of the object will be preserved.’ (17) It follows that curatorial methodologies and collection policies are required to keep pace with these evolutions.

‘New media enlarge the set of tools available to an artist, but they also bring us to figure out different uses for existing tools. A special focus on a specific medium is rare in art, even if possible and interesting in itself; most artists are committed to a set of concerns and topics, but are pretty unfaithful in terms of media, and feel uncomfortable with this kind of categorisation.’ (Domenico Quaranta, Art Critic, Curator and Artistic Director, Link Center)

It is contended that medium-specificity is superseded by the coexistence of a multiplicity of mediums in the same artwork and across artistic practices at large. One of the primary consequences of this shift for contemporary art museums has been the re-evaluation of the historically medium-based nature of their departments. When strict divisions

are in place, in fact, it can be difficult for some works to enter collections. A case in point, raised in the think tank, was that of artists dealing with photography who are not limited by the medium itself. An artist such as Lewis Baltz would not find an easy accommodation within the photography department only, since his practice spans photography and installation. From here, the idea of a more flexible model emerged, where taxonomies are positioned and employed in a fluid and tactical manner, whenever needed to contextualise a particular artistic practice. Likewise, the principles of traditional conservation, which meant to render artworks static, preserving their object-like qualities over their conceptual characteristics, have been brought into question.

‘In its traditional branch and function in service of museums, conservation seeks the physical stability of things in its desire to arrest change or even return a work to a “state” from before.’ (Hanna Hölling, Art Historian and Conservation Scholar, University College London)

In particular, the debate revolved around two opposed tendencies: namely the *fetishisation* of the object and the artistic gesture. Arguably, the origin of such a segmentation can be dated back to the emergence of conceptual art. Marcel Duchamp’s oeuvre, though not specifically concerned with the medium, continues to challenge contemporary taxonomies and conservation. *Fountain* (1917) has been an extremely valuable example to discuss two possible approaches of conservation. On the one hand there is the object, a porcelain urinal with its physical characteristics, and on the other the concept, which is the act of choosing a common-use item and turning it into a work of art, by simply inverting its regular position and signing it. What would be the best way to conserve this work? In order to guarantee the appropriate continuity of an artwork, it is crucial to take into account a series of elements such as the intention of the maker toward the work, the materials employed, the meaning and the relationships with its surroundings.

Collecting Materiality

‘From a critical perspective, the term ‘material’ describes not prime matter but substances that are always subject to change, be it through handling, interaction with their surroundings, or the dynamic life of their chemical reactions. It is therefore a political decision to focus on the materials of art: it means to consider the processes of making and their associated power relations, to consider the workers – whether they are in factories, studios or public spaces, whether they are known or anonymous – and their tools and spaces of production. From this perspective, to follow the material means not to discuss aesthetic issues of quality, expressiveness or symbolic content but to investigate transpersonal societal problems and matters of concern.’ (Petra Lange-Berndt, Art Historian, Chair of Modern and Contemporary Art, Hamburg University)

To secure the permanence of media works over time, conversations between living artists and museum professionals are fundamental. They can in fact lead to the compiling of ‘scenarios’, prior to acquisition. Such scenarios would contain detailed information on how to display the works in both present and future exhibitions, whilst accurately describing the process that needs to be adopted for their preservation. In addition, they would clarify what precisely is acquired, whether it be an object, an action, a set of instructions, and so on. These directives would benefit the understanding of artworks and their place in the context of larger collections.

Museums still understand collection broadly under the headings of object, reproduction, or score/performance rights, and hence deeply influence “what is collected.” When examining the actual new media objects that museums have in their collections, it can be interesting from a curator’s point of view to see and handle the solutions that artists themselves come up with.’ (Beryl Graham, Research Professor, University of Sunderland)

American philosopher Nelson Goodman distinguished between autographic and allographic works, in order to highlight the difference between forgeable and non-forgeable pieces. Forms of art such as painting, sculpture and printmaking rely on their unique quality or editioning, while others such as poetry and music, thrive on interpretation and repetition. (18) In this context, works can be enacted according to musical scores, which function in the manner of written instructions for the performers. This practice can already be seen in the conceptual oeuvre of artists such as Sol LeWitt or Anthony McCall, among others. The former produced works through sets of instructions, which can be physically executed by anybody trained for it, while the latter’s complex installations result from exhaustive documentation, encompassing drawings and texts to detail each single piece. Artists’ notebooks, such as those by LeWitt and McCall, can be intended as user manuals of sorts, fundamental for the enactment of the work.

‘The installation is richer than its specification. If one accepts that the work is identified with its realisation and not simply its specification, this allows for a greater vulnerability to the erosion of the identity of the work through its presentation in the gallery than is the case for a conventional sculpture or painting.’ (Pip Laurenson, Head of Collection Care Research, Tate)

Undoubtedly, the realisation of media installations cannot be simply identified with a set of instructions. In fact, it can be argued that all artworks fully manifest themselves through the interaction with a particular context and audience, in a given space. However, media art often presents future owners – be they museums or private collectors – with information, which not only describes how to install the piece but that in both economic and legal terms also appear as the only physical embodiment of the work, prior to installation. In other words, media works are linked to, and dependent on a constellation of documents, which are vital for their collection, conservation, documentation and exhibition. This impacts organisations (both public or private), individual collectors and artists themselves.

Therefore, institutions/individuals intending to collect a media work might benefit from a sustained dialogue with the artist to ascertain if the work is mainly identified with its material components or with its conceptual value. In the first case, the conservation methodology and expenses should be estimated with the aim to preserve also material instances of the work. Here, the artist would be able to specify whether these materials require to be periodically updated, e.g. new versions, or preserved in their historical, object-based quality. In the second case – when the concept of the work is more significant for the intention of the piece than the physical materials used at the moment of installation – the instructions are the only element given to the institution/collector on acquisition. Therefore, the installation costs will surpass those of conservation, since preserving a set of instructions is not as expensive as preserving a work of art with physical objects attached to it. The institution or collector that acquires the work should take into account costs for the physical materials required to install the work in the future. It remains a moot point, however, whether this documentation should exist in the realm of the collection or the archive.

‘A document distinguishes itself from a work, in that it refers to it, becoming a placeholder for the thing no longer or not yet present; the document is then a mnemonic device – an aide-memoire – that recalls the object or event. It cannot replace it precisely,

but is able to witness certain of its qualities, its authorship or context. In short, it extends aspects of the work’s life, readying it for activation in the spectator’s imagination.’ (Nicola Oxley, Independent Curator and Writer)

Archives and Data

In order to re-activate media works over time, the archive is a fundamental tool of documentation, which establishes and supports a coherent and resourceful exhibition history. This can benefit the understanding of the evolution of a work and its possible changes, on the basis of different curatorial choices and conservation strategies. Archives offer a narrative of objects, whilst simultaneously telling us something of the nature and methodology of an institution.

“Paris–New York 1908–1968” held at the Centre Georges Pompidou in 1977 (...) [exhibited] three preparatory drawings and six fragments from “Hommage à New York”. (...) They were elements of what Jean Tinguely had defined as “(...) a machine that makes spectacle, (...) a sculpture”, something that “(...) makes pictures, makes sounds (...), a poet, a declaration”, in sum, “a situation”. Thus, the artwork and its first and unique appearance, once it self-destructed, were inseparable. (...) The remains of the “machine that makes spectacle” were displayed (...) side by side on a plinth as relics. They were no longer part of the ever-changing reality as Tinguely expected. Instead of being dismantled, they entered the museum and became fossilised. The result was a subversion of the artist’s original intention. The cycle was broken and those dead mechanisms take on a new meaning and a new value. The preparatory drawings functioned as elements of birth and the inanimate pieces as elements of death. Together they were a testimony of an ‘existence’. Were they able to evoke the energy, the movement, the life, in sum, the essence of that work and past event?” (Mariana Roquette Teixeira, PhD Researcher, Universidade Nova de Lisboa)

When considering the relationship between constellations of documents and media works, does archiving become synonymous with collecting? One might initially argue that the two coincide, since the archive is the first place where it is possible to experience an immaterial practice as *object* through its own records. However, archiving and collecting practices are intrinsically very different; the former does not have particular restrictions toward the gathered material, as long as it offers a documentation of a certain artwork, process or event. The latter, instead, relies on well-defined policies and rules.

‘A collection is driven by particular taste and strategies, while the archive can be everything that has remained, so it can be slightly arbitrary and accidental. However, curators frequently regard them in the same manner. The ways in which we, as curators, utilise collections and archives is comparable, but their original structure is different and this has to be taken into account. Hence, the curatorial outputs from such gatherings of material or information (collections or archives) have a different conceptual basis.’ (Nayia Yiakoumaki, Curator Archive Gallery, Whitechapel Gallery)

Moreover, archives – at least those traditionally maintained as paper-based repositories – are challenged by the relationship between art and technology, especially regarding the management of digital data. Firstly, archival apparatuses have the tendency of becoming quickly obsolete, which results in difficulty of information storage and accessibility to the public. Secondly, archival methodologies are undergoing a necessary shift towards the digital realm, due to the advent of techniques and processes of *rendering*. Whilst recording is dependent on the existence of a physical object, whose characteristics are registered, and further displayed and archived, rendering offers the opportunity to digitally project

an entity or situation, which does not necessarily – or yet – exist in the real context, generating new, complex realities. ‘Recording is the translation of an existing (physical) reality into information, or data, whereas rendering has the ability (not the requirement) to project a *possible* ‘reality’ out of an operational structure, such as an algorithm or software program, for example, a layout or draft. In the first case, the digital code, i.e. the ‘picture’, is reliant on a recorded earlier reality; in the second case, it is not.’ (19) This impacts traditional archives, which often cannot support such processes. Therefore, digital archives, with innovative interfaces and software, are crucial to gather material concerning the process-based, ephemeral and sometime interactive nature of media works.

In this context, the conceptual potential of data is rising. Data, in the form of image copyright and digital information is, in fact, carrying an increasing economic value. It represents a prospective source of income that some institutions and individuals are already exploiting as exemplified by DACS (Design and Artists Copyright Society) who collect sales data in order to distribute royalties to artists and their estates, as well as gathering fees related to copyright licensing of images. This is a highly significant right for visual artists in recent times, which provides them with an enduring stake in the value of their work.

Technology and Education

Apart from media art, the most visible appearance of technology in institutions takes the form of interactive design, which, with its constant need of update, reflects the relentless speed of the century. The ‘participation paradigm’, emphasising the notion of shared responsibility for museums toward their communities has a growing influence on the scope of public programmes. In addition, the effects of the ‘experience economy’ – a term formulated in 1999 by economists Joseph Pine and James Gilmore, to signify the transition from an economy based on service to one based on experience (20) – encourage the use of technological apparatuses to enhance and facilitate the spectator’s visit. In other words, whilst fostering interaction, technology also serves to profile audiences themselves by, for instance, monitoring their interests, locations and movements. As a consequence, the transfer of knowledge from one source to another is undergoing a change. The nature of communication – before, during and after a visit to the institution – is becoming increasingly regulated by the use of technology as a mediator.

Though we take for granted that technology is a means of transmitting information and facilitating new forms of communication, the role of contemporary art in its training and development is often overlooked. This is especially the case for art and design schools and universities that set out to provide cutting-edge research and expertise to students through their courses. These learning institutions are especially geared towards the transfer of specific bodies of knowledge between specialist professionals and scholars. This unique learning-into-practice environment differs from the educational provision offered by institutions whose first priority is their collection or the presentation of artworks to a general public. It is within the stimulating and challenging environment of the artschool that the tools, technologies and theories of media art ought to be effectively covered, since the student body represents a fertile testing ground for its development into the practices of tomorrow. Indeed, in a post-medium epoch, artschools have had a long-standing commitment to the cross-fertilisation between disciplines. In the present we are witnessing the parallel development of both tech-driven and traditional practices and skills at these institutions. The re-entrenchment of specialist courses that focus on historical or conventional skills-based activities such as painting, drawing or photography would appear, at first, counterintuitive in the 21st century. Nevertheless, today’s young painters or photographers have a much greater familiarity with the diversity of

other, contextualising, practices that include new technologies. It follows that contemporary artists emerging from such an educational experience are at once specialists in their own field and knowledgeable across a range of disciplines.

A similar experience can be witnessed in the field of curatorial practice, which equally requires specialist training alongside a broad understanding of the contemporary. Curatorial masters programmes have been long established in Europe (Royal College and Goldsmiths College in London, De Appel in Amsterdam) and the US (Bard College, New York). In recent years these have been augmented by the arrival of undergraduate curatorial courses at different institutions. This expansion and evolution bears witness to the growing importance of display in contemporary art and beyond. Young curators are becoming aware early in their career of an increasingly complex landscape of curatorial discourse that ranges from historical models of practice to contemporary virtual displays. Many young curators who have benefitted from the professionalisation of such forms of instruction often develop specialist knowledge in media art, precisely because it matches their own lived experience of technology, whilst more established exhibition makers working in museums and galleries can struggle with these new domains of knowledge. In order for curators to disseminate information and build a narrative around technology-based works, it is essential they understand the complex functioning of these pieces and have a familiarity with a particular vocabulary, and the philosophy that underpins it.

‘There is a serious media illiteracy amongst curators because there is a lot of information that is new. So the media work that is out there is either easy or, when there is the need of spending time to understand the logic of a media work, and make it accessible to the public, some curators are pulling out. This is to do with domains of knowledge. They are familiar with a group of artists and it’s perhaps a sort of laziness to actually research and understand otherwise. The critical media readers have been around for 30 years, people who have done an incredible job to understand this new vocabulary: digital copy, open source, networks, crowdsourcing and the transmission of artwork, the inexistence of randomness in computers, databases, etc. In order to solve this, we need lessons for curators.’ (Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, Media Artist)

Dedicated professional development courses and more comprehensive (up-to-date) educational programmes, are certainly an immediate, logical response to these advancements. It would therefore appear to be essential to foment a climate of research in which institutions cooperate with other organisations to pursue joint projects and develop a collective language around media art. More explicitly, the collaboration between research centres, universities and institutions would surely advance the argument for a shared understanding of technology and its potential challenges and benefits.

CHAPTER II ARTISTS, INSTITUTIONS AND MARKETS

One of the effects of technology on art of the 21st century concerns the increasingly complex nature of relationships between its key proponents, namely artists, institutions and markets. The roles of these different protagonists are being re-defined in the contemporary. The indicators of such changes include the demand for an ever-increasing professionalisation, the growth of collaboration and the enhanced development of networks. As a result, there is a greater degree of exchange – but also conflict – generated by overlapping interests, and expanded communication.

Diversities and Hierarchies

To begin with, the variety of institutions dealing with contemporary art has increased. Numerous non-collecting organisations and those specialising in new technologies, have raised their profile; promoting a vision that overlaps with that of major collecting institutions. In parallel, the number of private museums is expanding, whilst media artists are still struggling to establish their status and that of their work in the market. Despite a small number of commercial galleries focusing exclusively on media art, such as bitforms gallery, New York, or Carroll/Fletcher, London, which represent renowned figures including Constant Dullaart, Eva and Franco Mattes, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, Manfred Mohr and Evan Roth, many noted media artists do not necessarily have major gallery representation.

'Soon you will realise that what you can see in the art market is just the tip of the iceberg, and that many of the artists you love don't have gallery representation or a market at all, and that their work is mostly presented and discussed in specialised venues. You will meet them, and you will buy works directly from them. Or maybe you will realise that the work is not actually collectable in its present form, and you will start a discussion with them that will push them to find solutions to engage this new arena.' (Domenico Quaranta, *Art Critic, Curator and Artistic Director, Link Center*)

However, there are indications that the market is expanding its relationship with media artists, as can be seen in Pace Gallery's recent announcement that it now represents Leo Villareal, a prominent artist working with cutting-edge technologies. Villareal will also work closely with Future/Pace, a cultural partnership re-examining the role of public art, architecture and event planning.

The discussion does not in fact concern the nature of specialisation, but rather addresses art as a general practice; what is sought here is the mainstreaming or normalisation of a complex artform, which does not distinguish itself from contemporary art at large. In other words, media artists have little need for such labels, becoming instead simply artists. Indeed, the market can be said to support such a move, bestowing greater authority and saleability to practitioners.

In order to progress in their career, artists will get involved with a diversity of institutions ranging from small-scale and regional to globally established ones. The passage from one to another is never entirely predictable nor without obstacles, but the right starting point is often crucial in strategically establishing an artist's curriculum. In this respect, the artist-run and non-for-profit sectors play an essential part, since they often are loci of experimentation and critical engagement. These organisations are primarily beholden to public grant-giving bodies rather than driven by an engagement with the market, though this is not to suggest that economic activity does not have a role to play. Increasingly, these organisations are defined by the effectiveness of their partnerships and networks. As diverse as they are, when it comes to authority in the art world, institutions – both public and private – are placed within a tacit hierarchy, which is today

situated in a global rather than a local or national context. Contemporary artists are showing an understanding of such global developments, whilst initiating opportunities to insert their works into this expanded framework. Consequently, artists are taking advantage of productive networks with both regional and international organisations. They are enhanced by the knowledge acquired through the contact with different institutions, which offers them opportunities to evolve. In fact, museum exhibitions and collections appear to artists as desirable and productive places, able to augment the value of their work, whilst stabilising their historical legacy and, as a consequence, attract potential collectors.

'As an artist I absolutely want the authority not to be the artist, because I want that artwork to have a life of its own. I want it to be taken care of by experts who have the time and expertise to look at it afterwards, I want the legitimisation that the museum does give me and that encourage collectors to buy my works and gives me the time and money to do what I like to do the most, focusing on making my works. So for me as an author, it is really important, when I give away the material, that there is somebody who is taking care of it.' (Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, *Media Artist*)

Collaboration

In the contemporary, the term 'collaboration' indicates the presence of a shared ethos and economy. This spirit is arguably enhanced by the rapid changes in technology and globalisation; in an ever-more complex world it is essential that we share information, tasks and risks. Acquisitions of large-scale works by various institutions is becoming an increasingly common practice, whilst the introduction of editioning has led to multiple presences of the same work in different contexts. With shared or multiple ownership comes a division of labour, costs, but also responsibilities.

Within this context, we are witnessing a growing number of projects that rely on commissioning and close collaboration between artists and institutions. This especially concerns the realisation of large-scale works. However, institutions and artists do not always collaborate in a fruitful way. For instance, until twenty years ago conservators were not necessarily considering the artists' opinion in their decision-making process. Examples, mentioned by the participants, revealed some of the dynamics unfolding between artists and institutions. An interesting case was the strategy adopted by SFMOMA in the occasion of the acquisition of a work by artist Christian Marclay; the institution organised a well-structured exchange of information under the guidance of the different heads of departments, i.e. conservation, collection, education and exhibition. Tailor-made questionnaires allowed for the most appropriate contextualisation of the work, with the possibility of creating guidelines for its future care and presentation.

'Different levels of intentionality are involved in the creative process, which, in turn, inform different trajectories and identities of the resulting artwork or artefact. Acting upon the artworks, conservators and curators add their own intentionality to the picture and it, too, shapes the artwork's identity in its ongoing life, its continuous becoming. Scholarship should take into account all these agencies.' (Hanna Hölling, *Art Historian and Conservation Scholar, University College London*)

Projects as, for instance, *The Variable Media Initiative* – a non-traditional preservation strategy formulated in 1999 by the Guggenheim Museum, and later extended to a diversity of partners (21) – addressed the importance of a conversational approach between artists, conservators and curators, in order to advance the preservation of media art by identifying the work's behaviour and strategies. This methodology of exchange and shared input, between different

professional figures and artists, instigates a new type of collaborative organisational structure, itself a primary facet of media works. To give an example, the project *Promise Park* (2013) by MOON Kyungwon, held at YCAM, Yamaguchi, was realised in association with architects, landscape designers, and botanists. Furthermore, the computer programme developed to weave a vast three-dimensional carpet was sold to a commercial organisation, thus supporting the production costs.

My desire for collaboration comes as a result of questioning my role and responsibility as an artist. This is when I asked MOON to develop a project together. I have learnt a lot from our first collaborative experience, which allowed me to meet many interesting people from different fields, looking at my own practice from innovative and challenging angles.' (JEON Joobno, Installation and Video Artist)

A historical illustration of the crucial role of collaboration in the conception and realisation of technology-based works was E.A.T. (Experiments in Art and Technology) (1966-1998), a non-profit organisation comprised of artists and engineers who jointly produced experimental pieces at the intersection of art, technology and science. (22) E.A.T. stands as a pioneering example of structured cooperation, where the work of art is the result of a concerted, multi-disciplinary endeavour that enriched the experience of participants and audiences in the arts and sciences. In the same decade the Artist Placement Group (APG) emerged in London, which sought to reposition the role of the artist within a wider social and commercial context. Between 1966 and the turn of the eighties, APG negotiated placements for artists within industries (often large corporations such as British Steel and ICI) and UK government departments such as the Department of the Environment and the Scottish Office. According to *The Observer* journalist Peter Beaumont APG was 'one of the most radical social experiments of the 1960s'. (23) Tate Archive acquired the records of APG in 2004, and a retrospective exhibition of the group took place at Raven Row, London, in 2012.

These historical examples offer important early models of how artists and businesses can work together, moreover they helped to establish a field of professional collaborations between artists and specialists in different disciplines, which is a common feature of today's contemporary art.

Professionalisation

Contemporary art practice exists within an increasingly professionalised landscape. Whilst public organisations are subject to checks and balances provided by the requirements of accountability, such structures are not always in evidence in the private sector. Therefore, there is a need for private ventures to develop a professional approach toward the communication, collection and display of art. Acting within a globalised environment demands the establishment of professional relationships between diverse specialists. The initiation and maintenance of these relationships has a cost, which must be factored into the development of new organisations to ensure their sustainability and the probity of institutional principles.

Alongside, the commercial sector continues to evolve rapidly, with a number of the most powerful commercial galleries opening new strategic outlets across the globe, therefore increasing their influence from a model centred on a single venue to one encompassing many. These are both business developments and cultural enterprises at once, requiring the expansion of their own professional structure. Furthermore, in response to the growing role of global markets, banks

have progressively adjusted their business to the artworld. Their strategy has moved from the distribution of sponsorships, aiming to develop their wealth management, to the delivery of highly particularised, art-oriented, financial products to present their clients.

Media art, based on a cross-disciplinary ethos with a reliance on the support of technicians and fabricators, ought to be well-placed to take advantage of this increasingly professionalised context. Though, surprisingly, such professional standards do not always apply to the work of artists and curators. With professionalisation, in fact, comes responsibility.

'At this point of my career I need more people to collaborate with; a curatorial company would surely be beneficial. However, in China there is no system as such in place so, at first, I would have to establish professionalism. If curatorial work can be commercialised, then let it be. In order to make your practice sustainable you have to really understand what it is that you can do for money.' (Li Zhenhua, Independent Curator, Cultural Producer and Artist)

Arguably, curatorial and artistic professionalisation is driven by financial remuneration. In other words, receiving a salary or fee for services occurs with the application of professional standards. However, it is not always evident to practitioners how to charge for a service and how to define it. Some initiatives support the professional development of artists by paying annual salaries. For instance, Mexico's *Sistema Nacional de Creadores* (National System of Creators) provides mid-career artists with an income, for which they are required to demonstrate their active production of art and participation in the intellectual community. This is a model of state support instigating practices, which are otherwise difficult to spread, since they are not always easily accessible nor attractive to the market. A similar endeavour is operational in Norway, which remunerates renowned artists with an annual income equivalent to the basic state salary minus a percentage of the artists' own income. This model, contrary to the example above, rewards artists whose production is already financially and culturally assured.

In a Post-Fordist economy, artists' labour is defined by intellectual and practical service; the international expansion of residency programmes has provided a blueprint for the valorisation and remuneration of the artistic process and the instigation and support of new productions. These new contexts allow artists to engage in collaborative and professional relationships with a diversity of practitioners and communities. A major benefit of these programmes is the enhancement of artists' mobility on a global scale, often driven by portable technological tools and media practices that challenge the notion of fixed geographic location. However, it remains uncertain whether these programmes have a wide accessibility and whether proper standards of professional remuneration are always in place.

Today's successful artists are often required to turn themselves into managers of their own businesses. They become employers of their own assistants and specialists, who facilitate the delegation of production. The maintenance of sizeable studios is sustained by sales of works and commissions; the latter frequently see the artists crossing over into entirely different disciplines such as architecture, fashion, theatre, opera and so on. While such a tendency finds a reference in avant-garde practices as, for instance, the cooperation between the Ballets Russes and artists including Vasily Kandinsky, Pablo Picasso or Henri Matisse, in a media age the impact and scale of these collaborations is expanding. Artists such as Pierre Huyghe (France), Hans Op de Beeck (Belgium) and Goshka Macuga (Poland), among many others, have incorporated these new skill-sets into their practice, along with the respective professional concerns and responsibilities.

The above examples highlight a range of often rather disparate practices, that would be well-served by a comprehensive, international strategy, which is based on equitable standards and recognised benchmarks. This should aim

to guarantee an adequate economic revenue for the artists, as well as a useful information for the institutions intending to acquire their work and perpetuate it. Not least, it should favour a fruitful dialogue with the commercial sector, both galleries and potential private collectors. Whilst artists' careers can be sustained in a number of ways, such professionalisation requires the same support as given to the general workforce in later life. A global initiative in this regard is APT (Artist Pension Trust), aspiring to provide long-term financial security and international exposure to selected artists. These artists periodically donate works to the trust, which sells them over the course of 20 years, distributing the income to their members on the basis of the number of artworks they have deposited.

This scheme underlines the importance of careful management of a career and early planning for its sustainability during and beyond the artist's lifetime. A manifestation of such a practice can be found in the format of the *artist's estate*. This coincides with the conception and fulfilment of a strategic plan, which fosters the preservation and management of the artistic legacy. In other words, the establishment of an artist's estate aims to secure the continuity and stability of creative endeavour of artists by setting a legal and organisational structure, whilst creating connections with professional experts concerning all aspects of their work, including conservation, collection, due diligence, exhibition, archive, research and public relations. The initial benefit of an estate is the enhanced public perception of the artist's work and the professionalisation of his/her career, promoted by an active dialogue with museums, collectors and commercial galleries. In addition, by setting up a board of trustees, an artist effectively assembles a team of dedicated specialists, who offer advice, expertise and who are able to effectively negotiate on his/her part. Traditionally, estates were seen to chiefly ensure the survival of the legacy and the appropriate inheritance procedures, whilst today their remit is expanded by working with living artists and helping to shape their careers.

The interest in, and dedication to, the work of living artists can be seen in a major pilot project entitled Art360, developed by DACS and supported by public funding from the National Lottery through Arts Council England. It offers to foster and sustain the archive of a selection of modern and contemporary British artists and will include digitisation of selected documentation, drawings and images of their artworks as well as filmed and recorded interviews and ephemera from the artist's career.

Networks and Communities

As argued by numerous scholars, networks are the driving forces of today's globalised society, with both online and offline characteristics, operating in the digital sphere as well as in the physical dimension of reality. The definition of a network society given by one of the foremost theorists of the concept, Spanish sociologist Manuel Castells, is 'a society whose social structure is made up of networks powered by micro-electronics-based information and communications technologies.' (24) Likewise, Dutch-American sociologist Saskia Sassen, noted for her analyses of globalisation and international human migration, mentions 'mobility and liquidity of capital' (25) as increasing concerns of information technology. Hence, when applied to the domain of art, these connections define the relationships between the different players in the field. In order to regulate them, a professional approach to networking is therefore crucial. Employing specialised consultants to generate fruitful networks would foster the professionalisation of artists, curators, collectors and institutions – both public and private. The impact of strategic consultancy would be evident on the level of communication, definition of services and legacy, with an enhancement of the role that each party can perform, and the combined benefit it provides for all parties.

'The 21st century museum should be a museum that focuses on the production not only in gallery spaces but also in different types of spaces. In other words, artists and curators should gather to prompt new discourses on production. The museum has to become the heart of networks so that experts from different disciplines collaborate to make the production possible and invite the public into the process of it.' (MOON Kyungwon, *Installation and Video Artist*)

Audiences perform an important function within the operation of networks in contemporary art institutions. Due to the logic of participation and inclusion, there is a tendency for institutions, frequently associated with a desire of artists to involve audiences in the process of production of both programmes and artworks. The conception of community has expanded due to the developments in technology, since cultural products are being also offered virtually. Accessibility takes a number of different forms, which address physical activities, whilst also unfolding through the web and the use of technological instruments. Furthermore, the idea of proximity has changed. Community engagement can take place as an online presence, with a value that offers a counterpart to that of the traditional visit to the museum. With this in mind, institutions should make conscious decisions on which tools to choose to reach out to their audiences and, most importantly, how to define their targets and communities of interest.

The 2012 edition of the Busan Biennale, South Korea, curated by Roger M. Buerger and entitled *Garden of Learning*, utilised online methods, as well as face-to-face interaction to encourage local people to play an active role in the exhibition's creative process. The exhibition created a number of Learning Councils, in which members of the public were invited to act as educators and interactors who worked directly with the invited artists. This principle of delegated roles served to facilitate communication with the public whilst ensuring a continuing legacy for the project supported by strong networks. (26)

Arguably, small scale organisations, or those located in peripheral geographical areas, particularly struggle to maintain a high level of visitors or engage communities through new technologies. These challenges are offset by the potential for local understanding and absorption of the immediate surroundings. One might invoke the concept of 'thick and thin descriptions' developed by cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz. (27) The former explains not just behavioural patterns, but their context as well, such that behaviour becomes meaningful to an outsider, whilst the latter refers solely to the establishment of facts. When applied to networks in the context of art, the concept of 'thickness' may serve to describe an ecosystem in which local knowledge and requirements intersect positively with global principles. In other words, these institutions are well-positioned to meld local needs with international excellence. The recent acquisition of the Dorothee and Konrad Fischer Collection by Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen provides a salient example of how the local can exist effectively alongside the international. This collection begun by a pioneering commercial gallery based in Düsseldorf was instrumental in first bringing both national and international minimal and conceptual art to the attention of European audiences and collectors in the 1960s. It promoted and cemented these movements in art history. Through this acquisition, K20 was able to make a valuable private collection available to the public, whilst enhancing its own holdings and underlining the significance of an important aspect of local and international art history. As evidenced by this example, large institutions are able to work, and align their interests with local organisations.

Moreover, regional institutions can be highly effective in developing strategies to scout emerging artistic and curatorial talents with an international profile and the ability to establish translocal relationships. Such a practice would contribute to strengthen the identity of the institutions, and enhance their visibility at a global level, whilst keeping a strong link with the local context. According to art critic and writer Arielle Bier, today's curators 'activate ideas, draw

connections, bring attention to lesser-known artists and overlooked regions, and highlight topics that warrant deeper conversation. For many curators, their posts come with the responsibility of mediating between three active players: artists, institutions, and the public.' (28)

The effects of globalisation have resulted in a growing emphasis on the notion of branding, with art institutions being encouraged to develop a clear and recognisable identity in order to attract visibility, attendance and sponsorship. The input of philanthropy has become progressively central as public monies have decreased, whilst its remit and responsibilities have expanded. In this period of transition, the boundaries between the private and the public sectors are becoming progressively indistinct; the balance between these sectors is also shifting in recent times since over 70% of private collections opened the doors to their own institutions in the new millennium. (29) It remains to be seen to what extent these new organisations are willing and able to implement the structures that underpin those in the public realm. On the other hand, will they be able to press home their financial advantages and dynamic business-driven approaches?

Global Markets and Brands

'Periods of crisis are critical times, not because the old is dead, but because the old persists on living through a multitude of symptoms.' (Nuno Faleiro Rodrigues, Fellow Researcher, Centro de Estudos Arnaldo Araújo)

It is evident that all today's institutions are undergoing significant challenges, brought about by new technologies, the ubiquity of brands, and through a consumer culture promulgated by global markets. But are 'old' practices persisting and enduring in the face of innovation? Is change simply due to the evolution of tools and mechanics, or are we facing a more fundamental redefinition of our idea of culture?

Institutions focusing on contemporary art are clearly implicated in these questions and do not remain immune to the momentous developments, if they are to remain relevant to the public and economically viable. Museums and public galleries, private collections, commercial galleries, auction houses, art schools, art magazines, and arts funding bodies, to mention but the main participants, have a major cultural and financial investment in the changes currently taking place. It remains to be seen which organisations survive, but it would seem that to thrive in a mutable cultural and economic landscape, adaptation to and indeed adoption of market principles presents a viable step. We are seeing the expansion of productive and supportive collaborations across the broad institutional field mentioned above, and, not least, of philanthropic models being ushered in where public monies prove insufficient. Concurrently, the expansion of the market is felt on collecting practices, aided and abetted by galleries, dealers, and the auction houses; the adoption of online sales by some of the auction houses, as well as the establishment of new sales platforms such as Paddle 8, among others, continues to test the appetite for diversifying sales away from the traditional gallery sector. In 2006 Christie's introduced online bidding (through Christie's LIVE) and launched online-only sales in 2012. The company held seven online-only auctions in 2012, but this increased to 49 in 2013, including high profile sales in the Post War and Contemporary sector. Online sales in 2013 were estimated to have been in excess of €2.5 billion, or around 5% of global sales of art and antiques. It is estimated that online sales could grow at a rate of at least 25% per annum, meaning that they could exceed €10 billion by 2020. (30) However, these results are projections and do not provide a complete picture of the art market in which collaborations of convenience form an essential part of the business. Here, technological development, whilst an active and growing agent of dissemination and sales, cannot be said to be superseding what remains a highly specialist, individualised, and indeed confidential sector.

Against the spirit of cooperation, or perhaps in spite of it, the strategic positioning of organisations continues apace, in an institutional game of musical chairs being played out across all sectors. Museums, galleries, and universities

vie for primacy with their competitors as evidenced through league tables, memberships of prestigious circles, and major prizes; but this is not simply a question of cultural pride, but of financial gain, since, in a market economy, the prime placements accrue the highest remuneration, indeed, they can be said to monopolise funding. With this in mind, it is evident that branding plays a major role in today's institutions. Artfairs such as Frieze, Art Basel, Independent and Arco are expanding their franchise as a way to increase income in conjunction with the development of art tourism. The latter, in particular, is a phenomenon that is exponentially growing; art-related international programmes, artfairs and world-class collections provide a significant financial return to their city in terms of tourist expenditure. For example, 'Out-of-town visitors who toured the Metropolitan Museum of Art spent an estimated \$5.4 billion in the year that ended June 30 2013.' (31)

Thus, it is not only the private and commercial sector, steeped in an awareness of marketing, but also the public institutions for whom the visibility bestowed by branding is essential. The building of new public and private institutions, the growth of franchise museums such as the Guggenheim or Louvre, as well as the development of larger premises by commercial galleries such as Hauser & Wirth, Gagosian, Pace or White Cube, provide evidence of the growing influence of architecture in conferring visibility to contemporary art institutions. By employing major architects such as Zaha Hadid, Rem Koolhaas, Herzog & de Meuron, Jean Nouvel, or Daniel Libeskind, to name but a few, museums and galleries are laying down branding markers; such buildings provide the institution with a visual identity, distinguishing it from its competitors, whilst turning each visit into an 'event'. The excitement and cultural prestige of arriving at and participating in such a space appears to offer a special draw to contemporary audiences who are strongly linked to a participatory event culture. Branded architecture is but one of the framing devices employed by art institutions to distinguish and personalise visitor experience. As in the wider market-place, consumers, like audiences, feel comfortable around established and highly visible brands, which ensure their loyalty. Traditionally, branding and success were associated with a certification of quality and stability, whilst now they strongly depend on the ability to generate international visibility. The influence of branding is progressively spreading amongst art individuals including curators, artists, collectors, auctioneers, who are turning themselves into brands. This phenomenon arguably began with highly recognisable individuals who understood the importance of self-promotion, which saw a trickle-down effect in the art industry as a whole. By investing personal resources and finances to recruit a team of PR professionals, art directors and assistants, these individuals aim to increase their followers and operate as unique trademarks in the field.

Public and Private

Historically, public and private institutions have been fairly distinct. In a European context, the public realm generally refers to any activity supported by tax-payer's money, which provides a service to society, whilst private initiative is synonymous with the growth of capital that benefits an individual or a selected group. For instance, the museological field officially recognises a museum as 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.' (32) When applied to the scenario of contemporary art, the above does not necessarily encompass the diversity of organisations that compose it. Arguably, it does not endorse those numerous initiatives that, despite the private nature of their funding, put collections at the service of audiences and perform a function analogous to that of public museums. This is due to the fact that public collections

are traditionally recognised as commonly held heritage, whilst private ones are generally associated with the economic interest and personal prestige of an individual.

With this in mind, the think tank pinpointed a crucial shift in the way culture is presently supported and funded, reassessing the role played by the private sector in the production of knowledge in general, and contemporary art in particular. This is, more frequently, the result of an interaction between private entities, artists, communities and, not least, governments. The think tank acknowledged the diversity of approaches toward production, collection and dissemination of contemporary art in different geographical areas. Participants put forward specific institutional models connected to their experience and background; these ranged from North America and Latin America to Europe and Asia (in particular China and South Korea).

In Europe, the utopian idea of the publicly funded museum, is being questioned. Governments are not generating sufficient growth in the current global economy and, as a result, cuts in the cultural sector have increased. In this context, the museum field is divided between big museum brands – e.g. Tate, Reina Sofia, Centre Georges Pompidou, among others – and smaller scale, regional museums, which are being made vulnerable by financial shortages. The gap in wealth between metropolises and peripheries is widening and, together with this, a cultural division is taking place. The immediate outcome of the shortage of funding for institutions is the re-distribution of roles and responsibilities among their professionals, with museum directors and curators gradually forced to face the impelling necessity of fundraising, and not enough time to dedicate to the shaping of programmes. Hence, whilst major institutions can more easily attract patrons, smaller organisations struggle to survive. In parallel, private individuals aiming to show their collections publically, have begun building their own museums instead of supporting existing ones – as they might have done historically, as these may be perceived as unstable investments. This development may appear to undermine the public sector, though it also makes artworks accessible to a wider public that would not otherwise be seen. In the US, this process has older roots since the majority of museums rely on private patronage or originate from the holdings of private collectors.

'In Europe, the utopia of the publicly funded museum has existed, but not in the rest of the world. In the US, where I have worked for more than 20 years, museums are primarily based on private resources. The Guggenheim Museum's collection, for example, resulted from the support of one family, who gradually disengaged to involve further people, creating a larger and more inclusive model, which increased its economic support. Equally, this happened with the Whitney Museum, or the Arts Foundation, originated by an individual. Then you have MoMA, founded by a group of people and different types of subsidy. In Europe the situation is a bit different in most museums that are publicly funded. There was this idea that public funding meant a degree of objectivity, certain commitments to the people that were offering it – in other words, all of us as taxpayers – so it was a democratic and disinterested venture. Now, we see the end of this model. It is becoming more difficult even for public institutions to support themselves.' (Benjamin Weil, Artistic Director, Centro Botín)

Nonetheless, Europe presents examples of private collectors, linked to successful businesses, who have established art foundations, which ultimately benefit the regions they are located in. Prada Foundation, in Italy, is an example of a multi-level collaboration that has contributed to the cultural regeneration of an area internationally, by combining museum quality exhibitions with artists' commissions both inside its premises and in the public space. The collector and founder, Miuccia Prada, the Prada Company, the Foundation and the cities of Venice and Milan are all involved in the process of sharing and accessing knowledge on contemporary art. In addition, the Foundation relies on the support

of a Thought Council of selected professionals, engaged in the development of international strategy. Other similar instances are the Pinault Foundation, Venice, or Centro Botín, Santander, Spain. Although acting within different legal and operational models, they all exemplify a way of directing private funding to the benefit of contemporary art and to the advantage of communities.

In this context, the involvement of governments and politics in the constellation of private institutions is becoming progressively more common, especially when investments are devoted to the cultural regeneration of a region through art. Therefore, what does this mean for the public institution? What are the dangers? Despite their economic availability, do private individuals always have the appropriate competence to act in the framework of this transition? To what extent can a foundation based on the work or collection of a single individual manage such a large project as a museum?

Many private institutions employ individuals that are underskilled in their knowledge of art and cultural infrastructures. The 2016 Private Art Museum Report shows that in nearly 60% of the museums surveyed, one in two employees possesses a cultural or art background. 'All of the participants in the United Kingdom, along with 80% from the United States, answered that half of their staff members have an art-related background. Nonetheless, some museums in Turkey, Spain, and Italy have less than 10% of employees with an art background.' (33) Private museums are very often conceived by the owners as an extension of their collections, and indeed of their own private sphere. A private collection might not have assigned full-time conservators, or registrars, and would rather focus on working on a one-off consultancy basis. While this may appear expeditious, it is neither a sufficient nor a professional approach to the sustained running of an institution. Private individuals might be successful in understanding their venture in terms of business efficiency, but this does not always guarantee the success of the project as a whole, especially in terms of content development and programming. The move from maintaining a private collection to developing an institution requires an investment in the structure of the organisation and in the necessary specialists to ensure professional standards.

A recent initiative, aimed at sharing professional expertise by offering practical tools and guidelines for the care of media artworks, is the online platform *Matters in Media Art*, launched in 2005 as a collaborative project between the New Art Trust (NAT), the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) and Tate. Here, agreed institutional standards are made widely and freely accessible through the potential of open source, proposing valuable knowledge on acquisition, documentation, loan and digital preservation. The public sector makes decisions and institutes policies based on a shared understanding and through a multilateral approach, whilst the private sector often thrives through unilateral decisions. Moreover, this degree of consultation in the private sector may appear long-winded, but it forms an indivisible part of a long-term vision and strategy.

'The concept of the public only exists in relation to the private. We are talking about the public that is represented through squares, restaurants, train stations, and other types of public spaces. This is a concept based on space, power, and the idea of sharing responsibilities.' (Li Zhenhua, Independent Curator, Cultural Producer and Artist)

The inflection of public and private varies according to geography and history, and is further intensified by the dynamics of the online space. In Asia, where the understanding of heritage is different than in Europe or America, the notion of the museum is anchored in private funding, with a stronger focus on exhibiting than collecting. In 2016, South Korea leads the ranking of the top 10 countries of private art museums globally, counting 45 institutions in total and 13 alone in the capital Seoul. China, which also scores a very high number of private art museums, i.e. 26, is also a useful

example to recognise the distinctions between public and private. (34) Here, the 'cultural public' is a relatively recent construct, whose evolution is driven by political changes and the economy. This suggests that, in China, the term 'heritage' does not coincide with the idea of public property. Such a model arguably proposes alternatives for a re-examination of the notion of public and private, and their respective functions.

'The issue is not whether the institution is public or private, but whether it is publically-minded.' (Benjamin Weil, Artistic Director, Centro Botín)

The public quality of the museum does not have to be exclusively identified with the notion of who owns what (in this case, the heritage), but with the degree of accessibility and the level of cultural experience that is offered. The idea of a site to share a collective moment with other individuals interested in discovering similar things is perhaps one of the most important *public* assets for the contemporary art institution of the 21st century. Ultimately, whether this experience happens in an entirely physical space or by means of online tools is the subject of an ongoing debate.

'Widespread Wi-Fi access, the massive adoption of social networking sites, and the advent of smartphones made people start to think about the internet as a new public space, with no physical boundaries and infrastructure, where data can be shared and taken easily and seamlessly. The metaphor of the cloud, already used in the Nineties to describe the internet, became more and more popular in the late 2000s, when cloud computing emerged –further reinforcing the idea of an immaterial public space and eroding the difference between public and private, local and shared.' (Domenico Quaranta, Art Critic, Curator and Artistic Director, Link Center)

The *virtual public space* created by information technology has vastly modified social interactions and the notion of the public arena. The borders between collective and private ownership are blurred; the perceived idea of free choice is only illusory, since information and data are instead highly commercialised. Thus, institutions are forced to re-think themselves, in order to accommodate these changes, avoiding becoming targets of a logic that envisions art as a merely commodified product.

'There is virtually not one single event pertaining to the socioeconomic hiatus that is not cast, disseminated, circulated, coded, decoded and re-coded by the means of digital media. Two global critical phenomena have therefore emerged: the 'real' crisis, which exists in the economic and social sphere, and another one, which reverberates the former in the global world of numeric information. This not to say, however, that the former corresponds to the authentic crisis, its true essence, and the latter is its double, a mere digital appearance. These are, on the contrary, the two sides of the same critical time. The so-called self-fulfilling economic prophecies have become a reality not just because of the concrete power of financial speculation and the real financialisation of the economy in contemporary capitalism, but also because "the medium is the message", and it is everywhere.' (Nuno Falerio Rodrigues, Fellow Researcher, Centro de Estudos Arnaldo Araújo)

Power, Politics and Philanthropy

The authoritative power held by museums in the field of contemporary art has recently been challenged by the expanding role of the commercial and private sector. A number of commercial galleries, particularly in Europe and the US, have

gradually modified their structures, becoming increasingly more similar to large institutions, melding functions of the museum, academia and the market, and promoting the idea of a specific lifestyle. Their venues have augmented in number as well as in scale, with buildings encompassing a range of different art and recreational facilities. This is the case of, for instance, Hauser & Wirth (in particular the Los Angeles and Somerset venues), or Galleria Continua (in particular Les Moulins), moving the boundaries between a private venue and a collective gathering space for different audiences. Hauser & Wirth Somerset states in its mission: 'Centred around a core belief in conservation, education and sustainability, Hauser & Wirth Somerset offers a wide variety of special events including talks, seminars, workshops and screenings, as well as an extensive learning programme for local schools, young people and families. The centre also provides resources including a bookshop and dedicated learning room.' (35)

With this in mind, public museums experience the encroachment of private institutions, which are expanding their remit while attracting large numbers of visitors, and of the traditional commercial sector, which is progressively performing the same function. Arguably, it is not in the interest of commercial galleries to convert into museums, as their objective is chiefly geared towards profit and sales. This tendency may be due to a number of different factors. It is contended that audiences in the 21st century have moved on from being simply viewers to participants and interactors. This suggests that they have a greater stake in the experience of art as well as becoming consumers of the services offered around it. Thus, by turning themselves into latter-day *agoras*, these expanded galleries become recognisable as cultural brands, attracting potential clients and targeting new opportunities for business.

For publically funded institutions, a productive engagement with communities and sustained visitor numbers are essential requirements for eligibility of governmental funding and other grant giving bodies. Distributors of public funding, such as the Arts Council England (ACE), for instance, give priority to projects that combine artistic excellence with the development of new audiences and the potential of a lasting social impact. Due to the pressure on public monies, competition for funding is becoming increasingly fierce; thus peripheral, smaller scale institutions, which cannot raise additional funds and lack critical audience mass, run the risk of becoming unsustainable. The idea of achieving sustainability in terms of business structure is now an imperative for any institution aiming to ensure the endurance of its vision and programmes. This applies to different kinds of organisations, therefore stressing the influence of the private and commercial sector into the configuration of public institutions.

Furthermore, in this increasingly privatised environment, the notion of political power is determining. Politics, which might appear completely withdrawn from the discourse around the transition between public and private, has an important role to play. It should indeed aim to concretely support public organisations, not only through funding schemes, but also by negotiating deals with the private sector.

'A few private collectors contribute a lot to the artistic life of major cities—that's certainly the case in London. Internationally, private collectors with their own spaces have shown that they can act very quickly, exhibiting artists and works that we might wait a long time to see in public museums and galleries. There is definitely something to be said for their freedom to act without a great deal of bureaucracy, and some of them open their spaces for free, or have stepped in where the state has decided not to tread, which is a public service. Having said that, thinking more as a visitor and tax payer, I would generally prefer major collectors to support the museums and galleries that we already have, than rushing to build museums of their own.' (Jane Morris, Editor at Large, *The Art Newspaper*)

There is significant evidence that founders of private institutions are willing to return something to their birth place or where they have been long-term residents; among these individuals, 59% have founded a museum in their home town or region. (36) Therefore, should governments encourage a fruitful dialogue between individuals intending to invest capital in the development of cultural projects and institutions in need of support? Such a process, identifiable by the term 'philanthropy', can be activated by offering tax relief to wealthy individuals interested in supporting the arts and culture and, above all, by guiding and coordinating these exchanges. The risk deriving from the complete privatisation of culture in the 21st century is, in fact, linked to accessibility as much as institutional goals. If private collectors and patrons were to exclusively follow their own personal mores on contemporary art, what would the outcome be? Would the field become populated by a series of highly commercial and speculative ventures, where the growth of capital precedes that of knowledge? Or, contrariwise, unfettered by the strictures and timescales of public accountability and bureaucracy, would there be a proliferation of more creative and dynamic initiatives and partnerships?

I get the impression that collecting and hoarding seem to be about the loss of others, while philanthropy and deaccessioning are more about the impending loss of self. (Whoever dies with the most toys actually loses.) (Douglas Coupland, Novelist and Visual Artist)

Public institutions certainly have an important role to play in this process of transition. This can be made possible by establishing a strong cooperation with local and central governments, whilst also involving research organisations and universities. In 2015, the project *Going Public*, an international art exhibition, symposium and event programme, initiated a collaboration between private and public in the city of Sheffield, UK. Major European art collectors and philanthropists, Dominique and Sylvain Levy, Nicolas Cattelain, Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo and Egidio Marzona, lent internationally significant works from their collections and commissioned new work to be premiered in a series of exhibitions across five venues in Sheffield: Graves Gallery, Millennium Gallery, Sheffield Cathedral, Site Gallery and Sheffield Institute of Arts at Sheffield Hallam University. This project represented a successful example of how local institutions might gainfully work together whilst attracting the cooperation of important global collections. 'Going Public with its expansive use of loans could prove a model for future collaborations between art's public and private sectors', said collector Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo. (37) The international summit *How can public art institutions unlock the potential of philanthropy?* brought together leading thinkers, professionals and patrons to examine the emerging global trends in philanthropic funding. The research gathered through this important event resulted in a major report that critically assessed the symposium's findings.

The growing importance of art as a form of social research can also be seen in the Arts Council England's (ACE) significant support to initiatives such as *Not So Grim Up North*. This project unfolds as a joint research endeavour between University College London (UCL), The Whitworth, Manchester Museum and Tyne and Wear Archives & Museums to explore how museums and galleries can make a difference in terms of health and wellbeing. Such a study will identify the critical success factors for museums in health programming and evaluation, and explore how findings can feed into broader regional and national agendas. Research partnerships of this kind provide actual evidence of the everyday impact of contemporary art, allowing institutions to lobby funding agencies and governmental bodies. In fact, it is statistically demonstrated that philanthropic ideals are geared more towards education, health, and public society benefit than towards art, culture and humanities. The *Wealth-X and Arton Capital Philanthropy Report* shows that the value of gifts to art in 2014 was 8%, against 29% to higher education and 14% to health. (38) It highlights the importance of interdisciplinary partnerships in attracting funding in a more effective way. Accordingly, both academics and museum

professionals can benefit financially from programmes that combine their respective expertise in order to produce significant new contribution to knowledge.

Ultimately, the productive aligning of objectives between public and private institutions as well as the fostering of networks and collaborations between like-minded organisations and individuals will surely benefit audiences and the art ecosystem as a whole. With this in mind, the real challenge of the art institution of the 21st century is not whether to be public or private, collecting or non-collecting, online or offline, but to effectively provide evidence of art's vitality and relevance to today's audiences.

CONCLUSION

This report, together with the research that preceded it, has offered a productive opportunity to examine the impact of information technology on art institutions, by analysing the relationships between artists, curators and other practitioners, with cultural organisations such as museums – both public and private – universities, the commercial gallery sector and private collections. It has allowed us to scrutinise the structures of the art institutions of the 21st century; a subject in constant evolution due to the global changes affecting society at economic, cultural and political levels.

One of the guiding principles of the research, if not its starting point, was the acknowledgment of the passage from medium-based artistic practices to the rejection of the predominance of medium-specificity in contemporary art. With this in mind, institutions might dispense with medium-based departments, whilst nevertheless maintaining a high degree of specialist knowledge. Dedicated professional development courses for curators and museum experts may cement the understanding of media art and enhance valuable, and necessary, information around it. This gradual freedom from medium-specificity furthermore influences collection, conservation and documentation. It follows that close communication between museum professionals and living artists, in particular, is essential prior to the acquisition of a work, and evidenced by way of ‘scenarios’, or manuals, to ensure the appropriate display and conservation. The establishment of a constellation of supporting documents gives priority to contemporary collecting, over retrospective acquisitions. Moreover, the data thus collected is an important cultural benefit for an institution, whilst also representing a financial asset.

A salient aspect of the impact of media art on institutions concerns the role played by their buildings. Large-scale media works require adaptable spaces, which can be easily darkened, soundproofed, and flexibly manipulated, according to the needs of artists and artworks themselves. Buildings are closely linked to the identity and visibility of institutions and can play a key role in attracting visitors and funding. In this respect, an accurate brief is an essential tool to ensure that these conditions are met. Equally, institutions located in existing or historical buildings should carefully consider any extensions to their premises, so that new spaces fulfil the requirements of today’s works, whilst insuring that the architectural investment does not adversely impact on their collections and programmes. In this context, branding has emerged as a strong imperative. If larger budgets are progressively being allocated toward marketing and PR, the reason is a need for shaping a recognisable and solid identity, which can enhance the visibility of the institution. This demand has been instigated by economic factors, such as the possibility of gathering investment and sponsorship when the investor is presented with a well-defined venture.

In the contemporary, the idea of collaboration provides a prism through which to view the entire art ecosystem. Collaboration between organisations with often rather distinct objectives, scales and histories is essential for the sustainability of each party. Whether it be sharing premises and resources, commercial galleries working with museums, universities developing joint research programmes with public institutions, smaller regional organisations cooperating with larger, international ones, or indeed the private sector acting hand in hand with the public, such relationships expand art’s remit whilst benefitting and enlarging audiences.

In this context, it is crucial for all arts practitioners to interact with a variety of organisations, in order to foster vital professional relationships. Moreover, the global nature of art’s production, collection and reception requires the cementing of constructive networks and the input of specialists to both initiate and maintain them. Within such a knowledge industry, it remains important to effectively target audiences and constituencies, whilst tailoring products and programmes to the requirements and potentialities of expanded cultural markets. A clear branding strategy is therefore imperative for all institutions, be they public or private, large or small, regional or international. This ought not to be an

invitation for standardisation, but rather to embed an individual approach within a productive web of associations. In this instance, specialisation can be seen as an effective survival stratagem for organisations.

It is essential that we continue the discussions around the public and private nature of institutions, whilst not automatically expecting their objectives to be identical. Public organisations have a depth of historical authority and professional governance that sets benchmarks to be observed by the private sector. Philanthropic engagement plays an important part in today’s contemporary art landscape and should be encouraged at all levels, but it should also be guided by these salutary principles and structures. Meanwhile, private ventures can offer models of entrepreneurial activities and business strategies. Governmental agencies can be mediators and arbiters to ensure the appropriate and dynamic operation of these new strategic partnerships. Their role is to facilitate negotiations and provide seed funding for new developments. In particular, they should encourage private individuals to engage with the public institutions in need of support. This should be taken as an opportunity to bring together individuals and organisations whose aims are closely matched, based on bespoke affiliations that can develop over the course of a project, programme or venture. These professional networks profit from specialist knowledge of all those that contribute to the healthy functioning of the ecosystem, thus ensuring that individual needs are combined with private enterprise and public responsibility. With this in mind, the art institution of the 21st century should embrace the characteristics of a hybrid model, which merges the standards of professional practice developed by the public sector and the business-oriented approach fostered by the private sector. Such institution can in fact be public or private as well as public *and* private, as long as it is publically-minded, meaning the degree of accessibility and the level of cultural experience that is offered.

NOTES

- (1) Rosalind Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field", *October*, Vol.8 (Spring 1979), 30-44.
- (2) Manuel Castells, "The Rise of Network Society", in *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*, Vol. I. (Malden, MA; Oxford: Blackwell, 1996).
- (3) For the purpose of this report, the term 'media art' serves to describe works that encompass the use of high-tech tools and information technology as well as immersive installations and time-based media, including performance and video.
- (4) Steven Dietz, "Why Have There Been No Great Net Artists?" *Through the Looking Glass: Critical Texts*, (1999): accessed September 14, 2016. url: <http://www.voyd.com/ttlg/textual/dietzessay.htm>.
- (5) Beryl Graham and Sarah Cook, *Rethinking Curating: Art after New Media*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2010) 91.
- (6) Edward A. Shanken, "Contemporary Art and New Media: Toward a Hybrid Discourse?" Expanded from a conference paper first presented at *Transforming Culture in the Digital Age* (Tartu Estonia: 15 April, 2010); excerpt presented at *ISEA2010 RUHR* (Dortmund: 23 August, 2010) 2.
- (7) Ibid.
- (8) John Baldessari, in *Museum of the Future*, ed. Cristina Bechtler and Dora Imhof, (Zurich: JRP|Ringier, 2014) 24.
- (9) Hiroshi Sugimoto, "Museum of the Future. An Artist's Perspective" in *Making a Museum in the 21st Century*, ed. Melissa Chiu, (New York: Asia Society Museum, 2013).
- (10) Yoshio Taniguchi, in "Sensory Design: Lessons from a Tea Cup", *Sensing Architecture*, July 21, 2009: accessed October 4, 2016. url: <http://sensingarchitecture.com/1480/sensory-design-lessons-from-a-tea-cup/>.
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