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Book Review:

The Sociology of Arts and Markets: New Developments and Persistent Patterns eds. A. Glauser, P. Holder, T. Mazzurana, O. Moeschler, V. Rolle, and F. Schultheis (2020), Palgrave Macmillan.

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Summary:

Through empirical studies in various artistic, historical and spatial contexts, this volume justifies the market's fundamental role in the autonomization of art. It also establishes the impact of social inequalities, power relationships, and opportunities for agency in the production, mediation, and consumption of art.

Abstract:

The evolution of artists' status from manual to intellectual workers during the Renaissance deters artists from demonstrating overt economic interest, which establishes the myth of art and market dichotomy and engenders the relegation of the art market in art historical studies. Through empirical studies in various artistic, historical and spatial contexts, the editors of *The Sociology of Arts and Markets: New developments and persistent patterns* consolidate the emergent correctives to this neglect by discussing the complex and evolving relationship between art and its markets. They justify the market's fundamental role in the autonomisation of art, negating the grounds for the neglect of art market studies. Discernible themes in the volume include: the blurring lines between high and popular culture, exclusion, positioning, intermediation, ranking, and valuation. Re-affirming the broad relevance of

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Pierre Bourdieu's thinking in the sociological study of art markets, the book also demonstrates the impact of social inequalities, power relationships, and opportunities for agency in the production, mediation, and consumption of art. However, as a valuable addition to art markets studies, its neglect of the fundamental segment of art collection and reinforcement of postcolonial exclusion are shortcomings that need to be addressed in the future.

Key words: Renaissance; Art Market; Postcolonial Exclusion; Autonomisation of Art.

During the Renaissance, the status of artists evolved from being manual to intellectual workers, and as art began to be regarded as a calling rather than trade, artists were expected to emulate the dignity of scholars by not displaying overt interest in economic gains. This entrenched the myth of art and market dichotomy, in which the market has been projected as a pollutant of originality. Thus, the inevitable contexts of art circulation and consumption were relegated in art historical studies. Through empirical studies in various artistic, historical and spatial contexts, the editors of consolidate the emergent correctives to this neglect by discussing the complex and evolving relationship between art and its markets. The book emerged from a collection of papers presented at the 2016 Congress titled *Art and Market: Alienation or Emancipation*, jointly hosted by the Swiss Sociological Association's Sociology of Art and Culture Research Committee and the Galen Institute of Sociology. A trend in art market research that is evident in the book is the interdisciplinary approach, through which it explores both high and popular culture, synthesizing various theoretical paradigms. In their introduction, the editors justify the market's fundamental role in the autonomisation of art, negating the grounds for the neglect of art market studies in the first place. Discernible in the remaining chapters of six parts are themes such as: the blurring lines between high and popular culture, exclusion, positioning, intermediation, ranking, and valuation among others.

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Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's field theory and bracketed by the period between the German Occupation and 2014 when Patrick Modiano won the Nobel Prize in Literature, Clara Levy, in Chapter Two (page 19) explores Modiano's career trajectory in the French and international literary field. She situates Modiano's publishing success on the combination of the social capital attained through his mother and wife and the cultural capital acquired from peer validation in the literary and academic fields. This study supports Bourdieu's notion that the field of restricted production maintains its autonomy through the subjective validation of peers rather than the standardized judgment of the market. In Chapter Three (page 47), Désirée Waibel and Robert Schäfer, through the lenses of pragmatic sociology of critique and the political theory of representation, examine how popular culture works as a social critique. They analyse *Formation*, a critical music video by Beyoncé, which addresses police brutality against African Americans, incorporating the message of the Black Panther Party with tributes to Malcolm X and the activists of the Black Lives Matter Movement. The authors affirm that the video is exemplary as a social critique and that its legitimacy and effectiveness stemmed from Beyoncé's moral authority achieved through the fusion (unification) of her extra-ordinary fame (distinction) and her identification as part of the brutalized African-Americans. Modiano's economic success in publishing and the critical capacity of *Formation* reaffirm postmodernism's blurring of lines between high and popular culture.

Bourdieu sees the struggle for inclusion and exclusion as the defining dynamics in the artistic field. Thus, Orian Brook, Dave O'Brien, and Mark Taylor, in Chapter Four (page 75), explore the narratives of inequality and exclusion in the art world. Through case studies and interviews with creative workers in London across the visual arts, theatre, film, television, music, and design, the authors find an uneven distribution of access to work and the art market. One thing I find quite interesting here is that the three cases

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examined by the authors are white, Western female artists who were found to have been excluded from the labour market and aesthetic legitimation on the basis of class and gender. Focusing on the specific case of Swiss visual arts, Pierre Bataille, Johannes Hedinger and Olivier Moeschler in Chapter Five (page 97), aim at grasping the challenges faced by artists in this era of globalization and art market reconfiguration. The study also confirms that despite the higher enrolment of females in art schools, they have a weaker presence in galleries and private collections. They are also marginalized from state/institutional support and professional integration. Chapters four and five align with my argument that marginalization in the art world is not only underpinned by considerations of race and nationality as usually postulated by postcolonial theorists. It also confirms the contemporary relevance of Linda Nochlin's groundbreaking concept in 1971, that the art system privileges only white, Western male artists.

Taking the Ukiyo-e as a case study, Takemitsu Morikawa in Chapter Seven (page 159) is a historical examination of the effect of the market on art. The author confirms that with the advent of woodblock printing in 17th century Japan and the intermediation of book publishers, the market democratized art beyond the control of feudal lords. Artists' quest for continued relevance and competitiveness instigated the evolution from monochromatic to multicolored Ukiyo-e printing. It also engendered the constant emergence of new genres and an increasing interest in the secular world and individuality. Interestingly, this chapter shows that the democratisation of art occurred in Asia (Japan) before Europe, where the state and aristocrats influenced art until the Impressionists' revolution in the mid-19th century. The multicolored Ukiyo-e art even became a source of inspiration for Post-Impressionists. New connoisseurship adopts scientific technologies such as X-ray, infrared photography, and pigment analysis. It has led to a better understanding of the copying process and division of labor in art production, facilitating a more accurate and reliable attribution of artwork. Therefore, a lot of presumed

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genuine paintings have been re-attributed to studio assistants. Through a case study of Pieter Brueghel the Younger's paintings, Anne-Sophie Radermecker, in Chapter Eight (page 183) brings new empirical evidence to show that auction houses and buyers do not conform with new connoisseurship, which presumably produces a higher level of authenticity. They still attach more value to the artist's name than to work itself. Radermecker's chapter suggests she aligns with the position that attributes authenticity to the hands of the master. As I noted earlier, since the Renaissance, artists are no longer rewarded for physical labour but for their ideas. Thus, the execution of art by studio assistants does not undermine its authenticity since they are mere implementations of the master's concepts.

Also guided by Bourdieu's field, Severine Marguin, in Chapter Nine (page 213), examines the extent of the consecration of collective artists. In doing this, she analyzes global art ranking instruments such as Artprice, ArtFacts, and Kunstkompas. She also explores the databases of two leading consecration platforms, namely Art Basel and Documenta. Marguin, therefore, stresses the marginalization of collective artists from the consecrated zones of the art world. She attributed this to the canonization of individuality in contemporary art, which she describes as the "personalisation of artistic production, with traits of character derived from artist's singularity" (page 228). Marguin's findings raise some issues, the first of which is methodological limitation. Tamar Yogev and Gokhan Erthug, in an earlier study, emphasised the weakness in theorising on the global art field from Eurocentric data. Marguin rightly references Larissa Buchholz's configuration of the artistic field into the autonomous pole of the exhibition circuit (epitomized by the biennial) and the commercial pole (typified by the art fair and auctions). The works of collective artists are predominantly conceptual, performative, or site-specific, which situates it at the autonomous pole (or art for art's sake). Therefore, how relevant is the analysis of sales indexes in art fairs in determining its reception? The author even confirms that the

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marginalisation of these artists is not apparent in her analysis of Documenta. Rather than analysing sales indexes for the conceptual, site specific and usually ephemeral performance art of art collectives, Marguin's findings would have been different if the study was limited to the autonomous pole of art for art sake such as Documenta, Biennials or non-commercial exhibition arena, where it belongs. In justifying my opinion, Array Collective, a group of activist artists from Belfast, Northern Ireland was awarded the prestigious Turner Prize in 2021. Their winning work, "The Druithaib's Ball", was an immersive installation, for which the group recreated an imagined "pub without permission", featuring a canopy styled from political protest banners and a TV showing Northern Ireland Screen's Digital Film Archive. Such a work would not likely find a place at auctions, art fairs or commercial galleries.

The discovery, positioning and eventual validation of artists can hardly be achieved without gallery representation. Therefore, dedicating the fourth part of this volume to these critical intermediaries is not in any way misplaced. In Chapter Twelve (page 287), Linzi Zhang offers an in-depth analysis of the development of a primary art market in China. Through a fusion of interviews, observations, and quantitative analysis, the author affirms that the two gallery models; *price-centered* and *for-profit-exhibition spaces* successfully created an intermediate space between artists and collectors, which was non-existent before 2008 when the standard practice was direct sales from artists' studios. The chapter confirms that art market success in China relied on reputation building (cultural capital) and extensive networking (social capital). Zhang's study substantiates a central argument in my research that art market internationalization depends more on domestic socio-economic and political factors than external causes (Adeyemi, 2022).

In a market for goods with immeasurable quality such as art, rankings have emerged as valuable guides for decision making, which has been fostered by the web and boosted by the demand for information by the increasing

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numbers of collectors. While artists, artworks, and collectors have been hierarchized, the gallery sector, which occupies a central position in the art market has not been ranked. Alain Quemin in Chapter Fourteen (page 339) examines how the ranking of galleries can be constructed and elaborated. He aims to show what such an instrument could reveal about the structure of the contemporary art market. His focus on France is understandable due to his extensive research on the French art market and recently, his role as a French art critic and journalist. Through participant observation, informal interviews, gallery websites and market reports analysis, Quemin attempts to determine the prominence of galleries. The criteria used include participation in international art fairs, inclusion in professional gallery list, nomination and award of the Marcel Duchamp prize, and having spaces in Paris and abroad. Quemin elaborates his construction by evaluating the quality of art galleries through the visibility of represented artists. The chapter reveals that national territories still play a prominent role in an art world that is purportedly globalized, and that a majority of galleries receive little recognition because they have limited access to the market, manifesting an oligopolistic model with marginal competition. Over the years, Quemin has shown that ranking could function as a worthy source of sociological knowledge. He demonstrated this earlier in research through which he established Euro-American hegemony in the art market. Issues have been raised for instance by Tamar Yogev and Gokhan Erthug (2015) about the validity of Quemin's configuration of the global art market based on Eurocentric instruments. It is also doubtful that the focus on France in this research is sufficient in achieving his aim of using this ranking to show the structure of the art market in general, considering national and regional peculiarities.

Globalization has made the internationalisation of art a precondition for critical and commercial success and international art fairs have become social sites of visibility and value creation. Art fairs have become most attractive to

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collectors because of their broad showcase of art, which facilitates the efficient use of time and money. Erwin Single in Chapter Fifteen (page 365) contributes to the growing discourse on art fairs which have become an instrument of struggle against the undermining art auctions. Paradoxically, however, he also asserts that the proliferation of art fairs is threatening the existence of the gallery system, which is losing its significance for the reduction in exhibition activities and the financial pressure leading to closures. Citing *ArtFacts*, Single notes that only 26% of major art fairs take place outside Europe and America and 80% of the exhibitors are from the USA, France, Italy, and Great Britain. Hence, Single corroborates the notion of Euro-American hegemony in the art system. This chapter is more of a general study of art fairs than a multidimensional study of Art Basel as the author claims (page 367). Single's conclusion on Euro-American domination, based on the attendance of art fairs in Europe is also debatable. Alain Quemin in the previous chapter reaffirmed the regionalization/nationalization of the art market and confirmed the significance of proximity in art fair attendance. It is the same way that art fairs in China or Hong Kong attract more galleries from Asia. Thus, it may be inappropriate to configure the international art market based on such fractional considerations.

The book presents further illuminations on the relationship between art and its market. With the Japanese Ukiyo-e art, for example, the book shows that the market facilitated the democratisation of art in Asia, long before the Impressionists' revolution. In line with its title, a new development highlighted in the book is the postmodern blurring of lines between high and popular culture, while systemic marginalisation would be a persistent pattern. The book resonates with me extensively in its reaffirmation of the broad relevance of Bourdieu's thinking in the sociological study of art markets. It also demonstrates the impact of social inequalities and power relationships, as well as opportunities for resistance and agency in the production, mediation, and consumption of art. The art markets function on the tripod of expertise (of

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intermediaries or tastemakers), validating institutions (such as galleries, museums, etc.), and finance (from collectors). The chain of art distribution, which also commences from the artist's studio ends with the collectors. Through the power of their choices, collectors play a fundamental role in the art market (Vasari, 1966; Robertson, 2005; Velthuis, 2012). Therefore, the omission of the fundamental segment of art collection in this volume is a flaw. As emphasized earlier, this is an assemblage of empirical case studies spanning Europe, America, and Asia. With the neglect of Africa, another defect of the book is its reinforcement of the postcolonial exclusionary tendency in the global art system. These are redeemable in future editions.

Jonathan Adeyemi was an Associate Lecturer in Arts Management and Cultural Policy at Queen's University Belfast. Focusing on contemporary art from Africa, his research explores the dynamics of internationalizing marginalized tendencies in the global art markets. Adeyemi won the 2021 PhD Student research award of the Sociology of Arts Network, European Sociological Association.

NOTES

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