MASTER THESIS

MSOCSC - MANAGEMENT OF CREATIVE BUSINESS PROCESSES

# LEGITIMISING ARTISTRIES

IN THE DANISH ART WORLD

BY MARTA MARGRETE SCHIOLDANN-NIELSEN

SUPERVISOR
SOPHIE MARIE CAPPELEN, DEPARTMENT OF ORGANISATION

NUMBER OF CHARACTERS INCL. SPACES
181.953
EQUIVALENT OF 80 STANDARD PAGES

15.05.2023

#### **Abstract**

This thesis explores the formation of legitimate artistries within the Danish art world. The study examines the various mechanisms, practices, and processes that either enable or restrict artists' long-term legitimate status. The goal is to define a legitimate artistry and examine how it is impacted by the wider social environment. The findings are based on qualitative interviews with various art world members. The findings were discussed according to theoretical perspectives of organisational legitimacy and artistic legitimation. This novel combination of literature was applied in order to analyse how legitimacy is formed in an institutionalised environment of cultural productions. Literature suggests how institutional actors rely on certain rules, myths, and norms to assure legitimacy. Additionally, suggestions of a reciprocal form of legitimacy were presented, where legitimate status must be possessed by the one who confers legitimacy in order for the effect to be significant. Such legitimate status stemmed from art world members professionalisation processes in conjunction with either cultural or economic capital. The findings reveal key barriers restricting the formation and stability of a legitimate artistry. These barriers stem from cycles of legitimacy, where the wider social environment's ideologies and trends, fads, and fashion affected the perception of what artistries may be considered legitimate at a point in time. Additionally, the findings demonstrate how art world members mobilise resources to assure legitimacy, through strategies to protect and control artists from an uncertain environment. The study thus suggest that the legitimate status of an artistry is highly sensitive and dependent on institutional forces. Additionally, findings reveal an untapped potential for increased structure and transparency among art world's members operations, which may promote the stability of legitimacy. The conclusion contends that while some artistries seemingly effortlessly attain high levels of legitimate status, this process is far from coincidental. In fact, collective processes of mobilising certain resources are crucial in the formation of legitimate artistries and cannot be reduced to the pure genius of an independent artist. The future ability for artists to attain legitimacy may be changing due to major shifts in the art world, due to rapid changes in the external environment. Their ability to navigate, control, and protect their own position may be increasingly important as the artworld continuously grows in density and complexity.

**Keywords**: art world, artistic legitimation, organisational legitimacy, institutionalism, legitimate artistry.

# Contents

Part I – Introduction and Contextualisation	4
1. Motivation	4
2. Research Goal	5
3. Research Gap	5
4. Research Question	7
4.1 Sub Questions	7
4.2 Defining Research Questions	7
5. Clarification of Concepts and Definitions	8
Part II –Literature Review and Theoretical Framework	10
1. New Institutionalism	11
2. Legitimacy Theory	11
3. Artistic Legitimisation	14
4. Summary	16
Part III – Methodology	
1. Philosophy of Science	
2. Qualitative Research Design	
3. Choice of Literature	20
4. Data Collection	21
5. Data Analysis	
6. Quality, Credibility, Reflexivity, and Ethical Considerations	26
7. Limitations	
Part IV – Findings and Analysis	29
1. Context and Case Description	29
2. Data Presentation and Analysis	30
2.1 Characteristics	31
2.2 Social Mechanisms and Synergies	
2.3 Barriers to Artistry	43

2	2.4 Strategies to Control and Endorse	49
2	2.5 Wish for Increased Structure and Insight	55
2	2.6 Concluding Remarks	56
Pa	rt V – Discussion, Reflection, & Concluding Remarks	57
1.	Discussion	57
2.	Practical Implications	63
3.	Future Research	64
4.	Conclusion	65
Re	ferences	67

## Part I – Introduction and Contextualisation

#### 1. Motivation

Art worlds are inherently mysterious to the outside world. I have been fascinated by them for some years – yet also confused. Having grown up without art on the walls and attending my first vernissage in my late teens, it is sure to say I have no prerequisite to either understand or navigate in its complexities. However, following an immersion into the world over the past years, I have been able to identify a complexity that has yet to be properly discussed from a social science perspective. In its essence, art worlds are largely driven by nontechnological imperatives and non-financial motives where myths of artists' inherent disinterestedness (Baumann, 2006) as solitary geniuses (Eastham, 2020) only adds to the mysteriousness. This is only magnified through the lack of physical characteristics as determinants to evaluate an artwork's worth (Alexander & Bowler, 2014; Peterson, 1997). In fact, a single slash of paint on a canvas may be exponentially more expensive than a diligently carried out landscape painting of the Danish west coast. Thus, a question emerges: how does this discrepancy occur? How may the wider social environment affect such incongruity? What mechanisms and processes may be at play? Delimiting the conversation to an artwork's inherent qualities thus hinders an understanding of artworks' legitimate status. Sociologist Moulin's (1967, 1992) notion of the art world as an 'ecosystem' indicated the effect of the artwork's surroundings. Art world members are thus increasingly proposed as active members in constructing legitimate accounts through inter-organisational networks (Galaskiewicz, 1985). This suggest the way in which artists gain legitimacy is far from coincidental, but highly dependent on the wider environmental forces. Therefore, shifting the focus onto resources and experiences held by an artist and its surrounding, may considerably increase the understanding of how such a seeming discrepancy occurs.

Following digital and financially motivated changes to industries all over, the Danish art world is not independent from the wider social environment in which it exists. Understanding how it responds to challenges from the wider social environment is crucial when regarding long-term worth of artistic practices. Art worlds capability to adapt, move, iterate, and produce strategic responses is accentuated due to recent changes. This rise in external pressures gives 'food for thought' for art world members as new conditions of consuming and trading art have changed more than the conditions of production (Alloway, 1972). Society wide changes have disturbed the infrastructure of art worlds and the environment in which it exists (Lee and Lee 2019; Samdanis 2016; Khaire 2015), affecting the process of stabilising a legitimate status. Recent financialisation and digitalisation of global art worlds has increasingly provided opportunity for new market players to emerge. Operating within an environment where conflicting purposes arise, challenges to the inherent myths are inevitable. Understanding how art world members manage to navigate and respond to such challenges is crucial in understanding not only how legitimate artistries are formed, but also maintained through such disturbances.

Acknowledging how a legitimate status is formed through the sum of an artists' practice and in the context of surrounding institutionalised rules, norms, and myths, thus motivates this thesis.

#### 1.1 Scope and Delimitation: Danish Art World

In order to fit the scope of this thesis, the study will focus on the Danish art world, and its national characteristics. Despite national and international art worlds not being separate entities, the research will be caried out on a national scale, however incorporating international perspectives as presented by the respondents. In recent years, the scope of national art worlds has widened due to globalisation. Art worlds are interacting across borders to a larger extent than previously. Due to Covid-19 the otherwise quite analogue Danish art world was 'forced' to adopt digital measures in order to survive. Being stripped of all opportunity to gather in physical spaces to disseminate and interpret artistic creations accelerated the adoption of these measures. An elaboration of the preconditions of the Danish art world is presented on pp. 27-28.

## 2. Research Goal

This thesis will examine the mechanisms and processes that affect the formation of a legitimate artistry. It will delineate not only how it is formed, but also how it is managed during cycles of legitimacy. This is done through defining the environment in which art world members construct legitimate accounts. This understanding will clarify which mechanisms and processes are at play in either enabling or restricting the artistic legitimation process. It will also inspect how art world members diffuse and frame legitimate ideologies in order to create artistic legitimacy. The goal of this study is therefore to highlight how art world members mobilise various mechanisms and processes in order to create artistic legitimation for artistries. Moreover, it aims to define a legitimate artistry and depict how it is constituted. This includes the identification of linkages between art world members to delineate the social structure in which they are organised.

# 3. Research Gap

Studies of artworlds is not a completely new phenomenon and a growing number of sociological research has been carried out, adopting various perspective. Studies have examined how artworlds gain legitimacy through collective processes. Sociological researchers such as Howard Becker (1982) and Pierre Bourdieu (1993) provided the initial accounts, still largely relevant to today's studying of art worlds. Aside from using different terminologies, art field (Bourdieu, 1993) and artworld (Becker, 1982), both described the importance of interorganisational networks and interactions within social environments. Dickie (1973) proposed the notion

of an institutional theory of art, where he proclaimed how 'works of art are art as a result of the position they occupy within an institutional framework or context'. (p. 47). This notion likewise implies a recognition of art as acquiring its status through effects produced in a collective process.

Additionally, in recent times, much research regarding legitimacy for cultural productions has been conducted. Many of these studies have explained how cultural products or productions gain legitimacy as an art form, primarily distinguishing between popular or high art (DiMaggio, 1982; White and White, 1965). More recently, however, research has explored how new art worlds gain legitimacy in either new, or established markets (Baumann, 2001; Kackovic & Wijnberg, 2022; Khaire & Wadhwani, 2010; Lee & Lee, 2023). However, while attention has been given to the exploration of new art worlds, less research has explored how artistries (see definition pp. 7-8) gain and maintain legitimacy through cycles of legitimacy. This research gap will function as the starting point of this examination with the goal of filling the gap and contribute with new insight.

Through the analysis of the Danish art world, I will examine the art world member's attempt to navigate through uncertainties. This is done through an inspection of the main actors, processes, practices, and mechanisms involved in the institutional environment. Through this examination, I wish to highlight which practices either enable or restrict the process of gaining and maintaining an artistic legitimacy. This study will contribute with knowledge of how the institutional environment affects the stability of art worlds and artistries, through adopting an institutional lens emphasising the collective structuration of entire worlds of organisational life (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). The study therefore seeks to understand the myths, processes, mechanisms, and rules that constitute the collective process of forming artistic legitimacy (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Too, it seeks to understand how pressures to such extant rules, and myths may affect the stability of legitimacy during times of change.

While previous studies have been primarily focused on the emergence of new artworlds this study aims to apply a different perspective and instead examine the artistry. In this regard, how a legitimate status may be subject to continuous changes in the wider social environment. The study thus seeks to investigate how legitimacy may be a rather momentary concept, rather than an end-state resource. Rather than solely being concerned with the formation of legitimacy in the emergence of new art worlds may it be that artistic legitimation is a subject of continuous change? If in fact it is, how does art world members respond to such changes to assure long-term legitimacy? I argue that these issues are certainly overlooked within the context of sociological research on art worlds, and thus demands further inquiry.

## 4. Research Question

What mechanisms and processes enable or restrict the formation of legitimate artistries in the Danish art world?

#### 4.1 Sub Questions

- What are the defining characteristics of the institutional environment?
- What defines a legitimate artistry?

#### 4.2 Defining Research Questions

Initially the research was focused on the narrower topic of legitimacy for artworks. The leading thought was 'how come some artworks evolve to become more significant and worthy than others'? When the study moved along however, I quickly realised how focusing on the *artistry* (definition on pp. 7-8) was more fitting, as this more broadly fathomed the entirety of an artworks' worth. This concept was derived from the art world members accounts as constituting the entirety of an artist's career and its accomplishments. This acknowledgement thus shaped the study to investigate what defines a legitimate artistry and how it is formed on the basis of a set of constituents.

The research question uses the word *formation* as a way of implying a processual continuity. This process is implied to be influenced by certain *mechanisms and processes* as mentioned in the start of the question. A relationship between a set of constituents and the formation of legitimacy is therefore indicated. Identifying these processes involves an examination of the activities that constitute the art world. Moreover, the words *enable* and *restrict* inquires into these constituents' effect onto the formation of legitimacy.

Since the research question does not directly state a theoretical framework, the use of the word *legitimate* indicates an inquiry into organisational legitimacy theory. Lastly, using the word *world* instead of *field*, which would otherwise be fitting in institutionally driven research, grounds this research question in its empirical roots.

The sub-questions were provided to illuminate aspects of the study that were not explicitly stated in the research question. The first sub-question will provide the reader an overall understanding of the institutional environment in which the art world operates. Next, a goal to define a *legitimate artistry* which this thesis is centred on answering.

## 5. Clarification of Concepts and Definitions

The following sections will provide a clarification of key concepts and definitions that are needed to provide the reader with the sufficient knowledge of the case. The purpose is therefore to explicate the intended meaning behind the use of terms and concepts which will position the study in a conscious way. The concepts that will be clarified are *artworld* and *artistry*.

#### 5.1 Art World

Referring to the *art world* is done according to respondents' references to the 'art world' in their accounts. Many respondents even rejected the use of the term 'industry' and 'market' as these were perceived as too commercially driven. Adopting this terminology was therefore done to be truthful to the empirical base. Art worlds have existed for many years, however the categorisation of such, is a recent phenomenon (Eastham, 2020). The structure of selling art today is therefore under no circumstance new. It was not until recent times, however, that the definition of a distinct art world was categorised, which occurred following societal and economic developments that consequently restructured art worlds as well. However, some of the traditional conventions and ways of doing things remain. Modern art worlds are largely structured by the processes of creation, production, dissemination, exhibition and reception, consumption, and participation (Knotter, 2017).

Becker (1974) defined the art world as 'the network of people whose cooperative activity, organized via their joint knowledge of conventional means of doing things, produces the kind of art works that art world is noted for'. (p. 5). Moreover, Bourdieu (1993) produced a definition of an art field as a 'particular social universe endowed with particular institutions and obeying specific laws' (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 163), which urges one to 'think relationally' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 96). However, adopting the term 'world' instead of 'field', indicates the empirical frame in which this thesis is centred, more than a stance in sociological research history. In an institutionalist view an organisational field is defined as 'those organizations that, in the aggregate, constitute a recognized area of institutional life: key suppliers, resource and product consumers, regulatory agencies, and other organizations that produce similar services' (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, p. 148). Yet, art worlds may also fit these terms when applying an institutional lens. Thus, as artworlds may be defined in various ways, a fitting definition may be a combination of the above.

Building on these definitions an art world may be defined as a particular social universe that constitute a recognised area of institutional life who cooperatively produces the kind of art that art world is noted for on the basis of shared conventions.

#### 5.2 Artistry

This concept of artistry is adopted from the empirical findings. As the interviews were held in Danish the exact word that was used was 'kunstnerskab' (see respondents' explanation, page 36-37). As *artistry* is not a commonly used term, a precise definition of the concept is missing in academic discussion. When searching for a definition, the description is as follows: 'Artistry is the creative skill of an artist, writer, actor, or musician' (Collins, 2023). While the artistry is also constituted by the inherent creative skill of an artist, it does not fathom the complexity of its use in this context. Based on my understanding of its applicability and the respondents use of the concept, *artistry* may be defined as *the aggregate of an artists' creative ability*, *experiences, and resources physically anchored in professional assessments*.

# Part II -Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

This is a study of how artistic legitimacy is formed and maintained for artistries within the Danish art world. In order to investigate this phenomenon, literature on legitimacy will be reviewed in the following chapters. This will contribute to an understanding into the social dynamics of legitimacy formation as well as maintenance of such in a cultural institutional environment. The relevant literature and theories are divided into two streams, legitimacy through the lens of institutionalists scholars and artistic legitimacy presented through a social-movement perspective. This novel combination is provided as to better fathom the phenomenon of study.

Firstly, institutional theorists inspect how organisations exist and are influenced by a wider social context permeated by a set of tacit rituals, rules, meanings, and myths (Zucker, 1987; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Suchman, 1995). On the basis of this academic contribution the art world's institutional environment is located through its inherent rules, meanings, and myths. From this, I will evaluate how art world members use certain mechanisms and processes to manage legitimacy. Ultimately this will enable a discussion of how these processes either enable or restrict the formation of legitimate artistries.

Secondly, through applying artistic legitimation theory, the theoretical framework will increase its focus onto studying art worlds. On the basis of this contribution, a definition of a legitimate artistry will be supported. Despite this study being concerned with the formation of a legitimate artistry rather than legitimating an emergent artworld, the general framework is useful to examine key mechanisms and processes involved in gaining artistic legitimacy in general. A discussion of artistic legitimacy management will provide insight as to how art world members manage the legitimacy of artistries and to identify mechanisms that either enable or restrict such formation. The theoretical frame provided from this line of thought thus increases the theoretical focus onto the investigated phenomenon.

Thus, in order to create a theoretical frame to commence this study, these two strands of legitimacy theory are combined into a unique framework. This is done in order to sufficiently fathom the complexity of this understudied phenomenon. The framework will be used to direct the findings towards a discussion of the research questions (see pp. 56-62). The following sections are structured into an overview of *new* institutionalism, legitimacy theory and artistic legitimisation.

#### 1. New Institutionalism

Legitimacy theory is related to institutional theory which highlights the social synergies within an institutional field. The term 'new institutional theory' has undergone many changes since its more rational emergence as old 'institutional theory' (Selznick, 1949). In its emergence, institutionalisms was driven by an understanding of economic behaviours and rational reasonings. Since then, large changes to its applicability to the social sciences has occurred, with a shift from a rational actor understanding to a more dynamic understanding of an institutional structure highly influenced by its social environment. Leading theorists of new institutionalism are Paul DiMaggio, Walter Powell, John Meyer (1977), Brian Rowan (1977) and Lynne Zucker (1977:1983), whose primary theoretical frameworks were published in the late 1970's. In its essence, new institutionalism fathoms a broad range of literature constituting an understanding of how organisational structure is 'not separate from the social existence of individuals, embedded in cultures and normative values that are internalised and affect both self-identity and more widely, social and organisational behaviours' (Tilly, 1984). This line of thought seeks to understand the effect of institutionalised rituals, rules, meanings, myth, conventions, and ceremonies on the generation of legitimate operations. Earlier theories primarily portrayed the institutional environment as an external force constraining organisational actions. Later, however, this notion shifted to include a more interactional relation between environment and organisation. Therefore, over time, as organisations interact with legitimate others, are structures of alliances, conformity, and awareness identified to emerge (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Suchman, 1995; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). The environment that is described is further not to be equated with a physical location, but rather relates to an organisational field. New institutional theory therefore presents a theoretical base for understanding how a 'web of values, norms, rules, beliefs and taken for granted assumptions are embedded into organisational environments'. (Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

# 2. Legitimacy Theory

Legitimacy is a vital concept within new institutionalism. Ultimately, it assures the stability, and increased performance through increased access to resources (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Deephouse, 2017; Brown & Deegan, 1998). In initial theories of legitimacy, organisations were viewed as 'rational systems' and entities were isolated from surrounding environmental impact. However, following the emergence of 'open system' theories (Scott, 1987), a rejection of technological or material imperatives gained ground. Rather, institutional theorists proposed organisations as subjects of impact from the institutional environment (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), constituting the 'cultural norms, symbols, beliefs, and rituals'. (Suchmann, 1995, p. 571). This intellectual transformation resulted in the notion of *organisational legitimacy*. Organisational legitimacy has been defined in more ways than one, however a broad and inclusive one is proposed by Suchmann (1995) as

'a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions' (p. 574). This definition is widely cited by researchers, as it is inclusive of the impact of various sources. Theory on legitimacy has therefore emerged into a field of greater depth, allowing examinations of how various sources evaluate and confer legitimacy. Common for theories on legitimacy is the notion of social construction (Baumann, 2006; Zelditch, 2001; Suchman, 1995) where wider social approval entail legitimate effects. This is done through interorganisational relationships and through impact from the social environments (Galaskiewicz, 1985; Deephouse et al., 2017).

Suchman (1995) presents how organisational legitimacy should be managed during processes of gaining, maintaining, and repairing legitimacy as well as in processes of responding to pressures to legitimacy. Legitimacy has therefore emerged into a processual concept rather than being an end-state resource. Deephouse (2017) identifies this importance of paying attention to legitimacy over time: 'organizations, sources, and criteria change over time, and organizations must retain legitimacy throughout these changes in order to benefit from it'. (p. 4). A dynamic rather than static approach to legitimacy has thus emerged as to better fathom the 'continually unfolding process' (ibid., p. 4) that constitutes legitimacy.

Moreover, as organisational fields become institutionalised, legitimacy is increasingly enabled. Institutionalisation involves the 'processes by which social processes, obligations, or actualities come to take on a rulelike status in social thought and action'. (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, s. 341). This often enables, and requires, a conformity to these rules by the participants in the institutional context. Myths as one type of institutional force is enforced through 'public opinion, by the views of important constituents, by knowledge legitimated through the educational system, by social prestige, by the laws, and by the definitions of negligence and prudence used by the courts'. (ibid, s. 344). It is further argued how these myths, act as a source of legitimacy, resources, stability, and overall likelihood of survival, for a given organisation in an institutional environment. Additionally, ignoring these myths and ceremonies that are considered 'proper, adequate, rational, and necessary' (ibid, s. 345) might result in illegitimacy. The urge to follow such myths and rules within an organisational environment is therefore increased.

## 2.1 Sources of Legitimacy

In early treatments of the concept, the nation state was perceived as the primary source of legitimacy (Meyer & Scott, 1983; Parsons, 1960). Subsequently the notion developed into recognising sources as being formal interorganisational relationship (Galaskiewicz, 1985), media as channels for society at large (Deephouse, 1996) and in more recent times; individuals, investors, social movements, and other stakeholders (Deephouse et al., 2017; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Becker, 1982; Baumann, 2006). Sources can be defined as 'the internal and external audiences who observe organizations and make legitimacy assessments.' (Deephouse & Suchman, 2008, p. 54). Legitimacy is granted through the distinct routines of various sources (Deephouse, 2017). These

routines are often tacitly stated in the field, and legitimacy is built in interorganisational relations where actors build networks with legitimate others (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; Galaskiewicz, 1985). This puts emphasis on verbal and non-verbal communication as tools to socially construct legitimacy, involving tacit knowledge, myths, and rules, that might not be diffused in an explicit manner. Mapping and managing these routines can therefore be tricky, as their nature is often taken-for-granted and concealed in field-practices (Suchman, 1995).

Deephouse & Suchman (2008) identify reputation and status as sources of legitimacy: 'reputation affects legitimacy because reputations are often taken into consideration (at least formalistically) when legitimacy sources make endorsement and affiliation decisions'. (ibid, p. 66). Thus, endorsements are a way for organisations to confer legitimacy. However, the absence of such endorsement may result in: 'less information about whether the subject organization is acceptable, desirable, or culturally supported' (ibid, p. 57). A lack of endorsing may therefore create doubt of the desirability of an organisations operation. Furthermore, success on an individual or organisational level may equally be a source of legitimacy, as success enhances reputation as it has proven its 'ability to perform' (ibid, p. 63). Legitimacy is thus a 'social evaluation made by others' (Bitektine & Haack, 2015, p. 50) increasingly affected by institutions reputational capital, which may be based on past successes. Furthermore, legitimacy judgement is not restricted to an individual basis but rather constructed on collective levels (Bitektine & Haack, 2015).

Lastly, is the notion of diffusion, where Wimmer (2021) present how cultural ideas and practices may diffuse through imitation. This type of diffusion proceeds through individuals, rather than organisations, as individuals often imitate and copy the behaviour of others. In an environment of steep hierarchy this type of diffusion is increasingly likely as imitation process top-down: 'from the more powerful and prestigious individuals, classes, and nations to the bottom of the hierarchy. This process is motivated by emotions and desires, most importantly the envy of the more well-to-do and prestigious' (p. 1409). This identifies an element of conforming to powerful institutions through imitation and thus the diffusion of legitimate practices.

#### 2.2 Pressures to Legitimacy

Certain challenges to the stability of legitimacy have been proposed. Suchman (1995) present how external shocks to the institutional environment might threaten the legitimacy of even the most established institutions. This is increasingly so if shocks occur rapidly or if they are left unaddressed over a period of time (ibid, p. 591). Moreover, it is presented how homogeneous organisations who exist in an heterogenous environment may be at risk of creating: 'niches for 'outlaw' entrepreneurs' (ibid, p. 594) as unfulfilled demands may arise. Imerman (2018) present the temporal notion of *cycles of institutional legitimacy* which presents legitimacy as a dynamic, relational, and sensitive concept that changes according to its institutional environment: 'changes in the international environment instigate institutional adaptation, bringing questions of legitimacy—or an institution's appropriate role in light of new conditions—to the fore'. (p. 80). Cycles of legitimacy thus present challenges to institutions as different points of time may be favouring certain roles. Material shifts are

presented as main causes of instability, as these may alter existing power balances in an institutional field: 'A potential decline in the ability to fund projects may cause a weakening in an institution's perceived legitimacy or the ascendance of other institutions with more economic power, possible a conjunction of the two.' (p. 81). A shift in power balance can thus cause a re-structuring of which institutions possess the power to confer legitimate accounts.

# 3. Artistic Legitimisation

Within the sociology of art, numerous studies of the legitimation of artworlds have been made. As previously touched upon, some of these have been concerned with legitimating cultural productions as high or popular art (Baumann, 2001; DiMaggio, 1982; White and White, 1965) whereas others were concerned with cultural products being legitimate in one field gaining legitimacy in a new field (Khaire & Wadhwani, 2010), and lastly already legitimate productions gaining additional legitimacy (Ferguson, 1998). Furthermore, Baumann (2001) presented the theoretical concept *artistic legitimisation* which, like Suchman (1995), acknowledges legitimacy as a social process. The concept is derived from sociological research on art world development, sociology of social movements and social psychology.

Baumann (2006) produced a general theoretical framework that examines how artistic legitimacy is gained for art worlds: 'during periods of high cultural opportunity through mobilizing material or institutional resources and through the exercise of a discourse that frames the cultural production as legitimate art according to one or more pre-existing ideologies'. (Baumann, 2006, p. 60). The framework presents a bridge between social movement success and art world success which entails the attainment of legitimacy. It is proposed how cultural fields are concerned with legitimacy in a dual form, as 'the claims about artistic status need to be justified, but the right to make claims, and the bases on which those claims are made, need to be justified as well'. (ibid, p. 51). The legitimisation process is therefore reciprocal as the actor who confers value requires legitimacy. The process of conferring legitimacy is conferred by actors, audiences, or evaluators, through their use of routines, conventions, myths, and entire social framework (Deephouse & Suchman, 2008; Becker, 1982). Whether an actor is successful in conferring legitimacy onto an artists' practice or on an artwork, thus depends on the legitimate status of the actors themselves. Several levels of managing legitimacy are present in the forming of legitimate artistries, as art world members must manage their own legitimate status in order to assure that their endorsements have the desired effect (Baumann, 2006).

Baumann (2006) proposes concepts of *opportunity structures, resource mobilisation*, and *framing processes*, to be applicable for understanding the construction of legitimacy for art worlds. These concepts are presented below. Additionally, in order to build a framework to assist in a comprehension of the findings in the discussion (pp. 56-62), theory on traditional legitimacy theory is incorporated as to bridge the perspectives.

## 3.1 Opportunity Structures

The former concept relates to exogeneous factors facilitating success. This refers mainly to the *environment* of an art world and the main take away is that 'context matters' (Baumann, 2006, p. 52). Considering each artistry as a separate art world, the following applies: 'certain exogenous factors can affect the likelihood that an art world will succeed in attaining legitimacy'. (ibid., pp. 52-53). The institutionalist scholar DiMaggio (1992) acknowledged these thoughts similarly, and presented how the recognising something as art, depends on 'the shape of the opportunity space,' (p. 44). This 'shape' equates to the wider institutional environment as previously distinguished. Moreover, Imerman's (2018) notion of *cycles of legitimacy* and Suchman's (1995) concept of pressures related to *external shocks*, are deemed fitting in this context. Accordingly, Baumann (2001) presents how a new competitor or market player in the opportunity space may have implication for an art world's possibility of gaining legitimacy.

#### 3.2 Resource Mobilisation

The second perspective relates to endogenous factors facilitating success. This refers to legitimacy being attained on the basis of 'the power drawn from accrued resources'. (Baumann, 2006, p. 54). Here, artistic status is attained through the institutionalised resources and practices (Baumann, 2001, p. 405). These resources may either tangible or intangible. They are presented to primarily stem from sources such as institutional settings and venues, knowledge, experiences, network connections, institutionalised relationships, prestige and status, informal traditions, to name a few. These resources may be equated with the aforementioned notion of potential 'sources' facilitating legitimacy. According to Bitektine & Haack (2015) legitimacy emerges due to the participation of many different collaborators which is in line with Becker's (1974) original notion of collective action. Art worlds are therefore legitimated through a mobilisation of resources by prestigious actors.

Baumann (2006) notes how mobilising resources is crucial in gaining legitimacy, and according to the type of art world, different resources are mobilised. This is equitable with how organisations conform to institutional rules and myths to assure legitimacy and hence stability (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). The internal dynamics of an art world are proposed as intangible resources which members strategically mobilise to gain additional power, success, and legitimacy. This relation was moreover identified by Deephouse & Suchman (2008) who noted the interdependency between success, legitimacy, and reputation, whereas the latter was mentioned instead of power. However, it may be assumed how reputation and power may hold similar attributes, however, the latter may indicate more coerciveness. Baumann (2006) presented how these intangible resources may not always be so evident as: 'artists must demonstrate sufficient 'disinterestedness' to maintain credibility' (p. 57), indicating taken-for-granted strategies. Baumann (2006) further emphasises the need to investigate the presence of strategies, as 'art world success depends on gaining power, and savvy art world members will recognize the necessity of strategy and tactics' (p. 57). Investigating strategies may reveal the extent to which

art worlds 'might learn from or imitate one another' (p. 57) implying conforming to certain norms and rules in order to gain legitimacy.

#### 3.3 Framing Processes

The last explanatory concept is the process of *framing*, referring to 'the ground of artistic worth in a legitimating ideology' (Baumann, 2001). This is the notion that legitimation requires an explanation: 'goals and tactics need to be 'framed', in order to be made comprehensible, valid, acceptable, and desirable'. (Baumann, 2006, p. 57). Framing processes is central for cultural institutions in dissemiating a shared goal and moreover: 'creates a narrative that represents the movement to insiders and outsiders, one that offers an attractive enough element of identity to gain support'. (Baumann, 2006, p. 61). Linked to framing is *ideology* which defines as: 'those values and ideas to which framing appeals in order to be convincing' (ibid, p. 57). Ideology thus refers to the logic that constitutes the understanding of norms and values. Having a clearly articulated ideology enables a shared benchmark of what is considered artistically legitimate (DiMaggio, 1992; Baumann, 2006). Thus, framing entails some recognisability to existing legitimated ideologies in order to gain support (ibid).

This concept further relates to diffusion practices in organisational legitimacy theory, where institutional actors engage in theorisation in order to spread a message and encourage conformity (Strang & Meyer, 1993). A lack of following such frames was identified in a discursive study by Khaire & Wadhwani (2010): 'producers and products that fail to conform to the norms defined by these categorical identities are difficult to evaluate because they lack clear comparability' (p. 1282). Thus, in order to form legitimate art worlds, adopting an accepted ideology increases the ease of evaluation and comprehension. This is according to Meyer & Rowan (1977) and their notion of 'myths', where lack of following such established and institutionalised rules and norms might lead to illegitimacy. Existing or emerging ideologies can therefore be adopted as legitimated ideologies by the artworld and disseminated through an interpretive strategy. This process of disseminating an ideology is done through the use of discourses, primarily presented to be by critics (Baumann, 2001;2006). Ideologies are therefore acknowledged as a resource that must be managed in order to be meet its potential as a powerful source of legitimacy (ibid).

# 4. Summary

The theoretical review commenced with a presentation of 'traditional' new institutional theory and organisational legitimacy, which provided an account of how organisations achieve and confer legitimate status through their interactions with the wider social environment. New institutional theory explained how the environmental context in which an organisation is embedded affects its operations (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). This provided insights as to the interconnections between institutions and individuals through the

mobilisation of constituents such as tacit rules, myths, and norms (Suchman, 1995; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Conforming to those constituents may result in legitimacy which constitutes survival, stability, and overall resources available to an institution (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Cycles of institutional legitimacy was further presented delineating legitimacy as a 'continually unfolding process' (Deephouse, 2017). Next, a general theory on artistic legitimation provided additional perspectives to the managing of legitimacy within a culturally institutionalised field. Here, concepts related to the opportunity space, resource mobilisation, and framing of ideologies were presented as crucial in attaining artistic legitimation. Further, use of strategies and tactics were accentuated to be crucial to legitimate cultural productions (Baumann, 2006). These two streams of literature on legitimacy were combined with the aim to apply a novel framework to investigate legitimate artistries.

# Part III – Methodology

This thesis investigates how processes and mechanisms influence the process of managing artistic legitimacy in the Danish art world. As the study investigates a social phenomenon certain philosophical and methodological considerations in this regard will be elaborated in the following sections. The aim of this chapter is to provide the reader with an understanding of the various methods chosen and employed throughout the research process. The following sections include a clarification of the *philosophy of science*, *research design*, *choice of literature*, *data collection*, *data analysis*, along with considerations of the *quality*, *credibility*, *reflexivity*, and *ethicality* of the research. Finally, *limitations* to the research process are laid out.

# 1. Philosophy of Science

Investigating a phenomenon that is centred on a social world, poses certain philosophical considerations concerning ontology and epistemology that permeate the methodological choices of this thesis. The epistemological paradigm that leads the study is social constructivism which originates from the thought of: 'all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context'. (Crotty, 1998, p. 42). Here, meaning is constructed rather than simply discovered (ibid), which is in opposition with traditional homogenous research conducted in the natural sciences. Ontologically speaking, this thesis is concerned with researching heterogeneous individuals within an ever-evolving social environment (Nelson, 2016). Researching such a social world is a construction of 'the interaction of inquirer and inquired into' (Guba, 1990, p. 26), where the researcher acknowledges the impact of the intervention in a constructed reality: 'Constructivists view reality as constructed through social interactions between those participating'. (Saunders & Lee, 2017, Ch. 2, p. 10). Guba (1990) adds how we cannot make perfect predictions as these are subject of continuous change and theory is therefore used as a means to make sense of a social world. For studies of a social world like an artworld this approach is fitting, as different actors, individuals, and institutions might perceive and follow different structures while engaging in the same environment. Hence, as the thesis aims to understand a social construction such as the construction of legitimacy, this philosophy is applied.

## 2. Qualitative Research Design

The following sections will describe the qualitative *research design* and the methodological choices made in this regard. Moreover, considerations related to the forming of the *research question* is presented.

#### 2.1 Conducting a Qualitative Case Study

The study employs a case study methodology as it 'investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its reallife context and addresses a situation in which the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident'. (Yin, 1993, p. 59). In relation to the epistemological stance described above, this type of research is appropriate, as it is a tool to understand a complex social world. Additionally, this research strategy is chosen, as the study is concerned with a fairly understudied area of investigation, wherein case studies are: 'tailormade for exploring new processes or behaviors or ones that are little understood'. (Meyer, 2001, p. 330). Additionally, a case study can provide 'detailed investigation of one or more organizations, or groups within organizations, with a view to providing an analysis of the context and processes involved in the phenomenon under study'. (ibid, p. 329). As the study investigated the mechanisms and processes of an institutional field, a case-study approach was fitting. Furthermore, the study was constructed as an embedded cases study where several sub-cases were applied in order to illuminate the grand case, the Danish art world. However, these subunits of analysis were not applied for comparative measures, but rather as to include broad accounts and various perspectives on the main case. Also, due to being focused on a phenomenon on an institutional level rather than individual level, comparability between the cases was not pursued. Sense-making and perceptions of the individual actor was simply less relevant compared to the more collective understanding of mechanisms and processes present in the art world. In this regard, focus group interviews might have been beneficial to investigate how art world members collectively construct meaning of their operations. However, when I became aware of the interesting purpose it would serve, the research project had progressed too far and was therefore not pursued.

Additionally, an emergent approach was applied, implying a process of constant iteration, where new observations would encourage further exploration of the phenomenon (Saunders & Lee, 2017). This is in opposition to a more linear and orthodox approach, where a study emerges from extant literature and progresses more linearly. This being said, case studies are not necessarily strictly emergent nor orthodox. As for this study, the study emerged as an emergent study, and later adopted orthodox elements, as linkages to existing literature and theory become more apparent. Lastly, the study's level of explanation is on an institutional level, as the nature of the investigation was context bound rather than a conceptualisation of an individual phenomenon (Saunders & Lee, 2017).

#### 2.2 Research Question

Following the emergent and explorative nature of the study, the process of forming the research question was quite iterative, as it was continuously refined as the research progressed (see research question, p. 7). The research question therefore emerged from inside the case study as the research process was initiated prior to the establishing of a clear research question (Saunders & Lee, 2017). This was done in order to enable a pursuance of emergent themes throughout the investigations. This was deemed important since investigating a complex phenomenon demanded an open-minded approach. Despite this, much academic literature was sourced prior, during, and after the research process as to make sense of emergent themes. However, its direct relevance in regard to the research question simply occurred later in the process. This is so, as relevant academic links and ideas became more apparent as the study progressed and I understood the phenomenon more fully.

#### 3. Choice of Literature

This section will describe the choices made related to literature as well as how the process of reviewing it was a part of acquiring insight into the research topic. Because of the emergent nature of the case study empirical studies, literature, and theories were reviewed consistently throughout the entire research process. This was done as to make sense of new data through a process of reflecting on 'what it is similar to, what it contradicts, and why'. (Meyer, 2001, p. 343). Literature was therefore reviewed before, during, and after the process of conducting interviews as to increase the focus on to emergent themes and its potential relevance or contradiction to extant literature. The literature review (pp. 9-16) defines the theoretical boundaries of this thesis (Race, 2008). However, it is important to not be ignorant of angles not covered by the theory. Having a theoretical framework to inform the study was a way to focus the study and reveal the concealed meanings inherent in data. Moreover, it enabled the positioning of the research into relevant scholarly discussions (Anfara, 2008). The theoretical standpoint was altered throughout the process due to an increased understanding of the emergent themes in data. Moreover, secondary literature such as previous research on the emergence of artworlds was reviewed as to gather information on the topic. This review of literature enabled the identification of a gap in existing literature. In order to investigate this gap theory on legitimacy was applied however from slightly different perspectives. Institutional theory was included as to understand traditional legitimacy theory. This school of thought provided the understanding of how different social mechanisms within a wider social environment affects an organisation. Leading scholars from this field are those such as DiMaggio & Powell (1983), Suchman (1995), Meyer & Rowan (1977), and Galaskiewicz (1985). Moreover, the inclusion of sociological research on artistic legitimation presented by Baumann (2001:2006) was included as to increase the focus onto institutions of cultural productions. Consequently, a unique framework was constituted to provide a frame to interpret and discuss findings from.

#### 4. Data Collection

The following sections will present methodological choices made in relation to the collection of data including the *selection and sampling* of cases and an elaboration of the *primary* and *secondary data sources*.

#### 4.1 Selection and Sampling of Cases

Being a qualitative study the selection and sampling of cases 'seeks information richness and selects the cases purposefully rather than randomly'. (Meyer, 2001). I therefore had preconceptions of the embedded-cases necessary to investigate the overall case, implying some orthodox approach to the sampling of data. The sampling strategy that was adopted was an intensity selection where informants were selected on the likelihood of them providing information-rich accounts on the given subject (Saunders & Lee, 2017). As the focus of this study was to contextualise rather than generalise (Bryman, 2012), respondents were carefully selected on behalf of their perceived contribution to the study.

Concepts such as *criticality, relevance*, and *representativeness* (Meyer, 2001) were considered when selecting and sampling cases. This was increasingly important due to time constraints in order to assure maximum return of the interviews conducted. To assure high criticality I was aware of planning interviews with expert art world members from various positions. Initially this was done in order to avoid redundancy and also to assure indepth interviews with thick descriptions to assure deep insights. To assure high relevancy into understanding the institutional level of analysis, I prioritised interviews with expert individuals where in-depth insight was expected. Identifying which actors were most relevant in obtaining key insights emerged gradually as the interviews progressed. Here, actors such as gallerists were giving crucial explanations of synergies more related to commercial connections, whereas the artists' account were rather related to the individual level. However, their contribution to the study was valuable regardless, as their experience of certain processes and mechanisms affecting their practices' legitimacy was obtained. However, in planning additional interviews actors with much experience was prioritised. Additionally, in including actors from various parts of the art world: 'provided variation in the contextual factors, thus representing polar cases' (Meyer, 2001, p. 333).

Furthermore, through receiving recommendations of who to interview – and who not to interview – I became aware of a synergy of a world largely based on reputational capital and network. I was given the impression that there were right and wrong people to talk to. If an actor did not know a certain other actor, personally, they were identified as being 'not relevant' to interview. This affected my perception of the basic structure of the art world. This moreover presented a dilemma during the selection of respondents. Because of my reflexive

approach, I attempted to be as independent in my choices of respondents as possible. However, I also wanted to follow recommendations of key individuals to interview in order to obtain key insights. Therefore, I had to be conscious when pursing recommendations of who to interview and be critical as to who would enable a diverse and thorough understanding of the art world.

#### 4.2 Primary Data – Interviews

This study was primarily based on empirical data collected through qualitative, individual, and semi-structured interviews. Being conscious in this process is crucial as the quality of data comes down to: 'the skill of the interviewer and careful selection of interview participants'. (Saunders & Lee, 2017, Primary data collection procedures section). I was therefore aware of preparing in advance of interviews, so I had some ideas of where to direct the interviews. The interviews were audio-recorded and were guided by an interview guide (see formalised interview guide in Appendix II, pp. 6-7). This guide was developed as a guide of different themes that were identified as relevant to pursue according to the actor's position. The interview guide underwent an iterative process and was continuously altered and rewritten before each interview. This was done in order to fit the given actor's position in the art world, and to increase focus onto emergent themes that had developed in previous interviews (van den Hoonaard & van den Hoonard, 2008). As the process of reviewing literature was continuous, discoveries made in this regard were also considered when re-calibrating the interview-guide, as: 'a wider acquaintance with a body of literature can invoke insights that, in the end, might prove to be helpful in the analysis of the data'. (van den Hoonaard & van den Hoonard, 2008, p. 187). Thus, being concerned with data collection, analysis, and literature reviewing concurrently was helpful in developing new ideas and themes of interest. Additionally, despite having an interview guide prepared for each interview some interviews were quite unstructured as the interview guide was almost omitted in place of more intuitive and informal conversation. This largely depended on the personality of the respondent and their level of reflection. Becoming gradually more comfortable in the topic I contributed to this development as well as I was able to better navigate in the relevance of emerging themes. Through face-to-face interviews the aim was to: 'create a situation that encourages the participant to talk about those aspects that are relevant to the research questions'. (Saunders & Lee, 2017, Primary data collection procedures). Therefore, through creating a comfortable setting, free-flowing conversation was enabled which further enabled the obtaining of valuable insights. This somewhat unstructured interview approach was therefore advantageous in an emergent and exploratory study where I was open-minded to new ideas, themes, and directions.

The collection of primary data further followed an active approach, being: 'a form of interpretive practice involving respondent and interviewer as they articulate ongoing interpretive structures, resources, and orientations' (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995, p. 17). Through this interactivity between interviewer and respondent I was aware of using language to induce comfortability through formulating questions in a way which was understandable and natural for the respondents to relate to. This was important, as posing questions

with academic words, would result in more rigid answers and a more distant connection between the interviewer and the respondent and could potentially impede the respondents' understanding of questions asked. Additionally, questions were asked in a way to encourage the respondents to explain situations to obtain testaments regarding their opinions or feelings in relation to a certain event or process. During the process of conducting interviews, I adopted some of respondents' definitions and ways of expressing certain mechanisms as a tool in later interviews. Hence, one could argue, that interviews later on in the process were more effective as experiences and insights gained through previous interviews were increasing the mutual understanding in interview settings. Moreover, this reveals the epistemological point of how my role, skills, positionality, knowledge, use of language, and way of relating to respondent's accounts, play a role in the outcome of the interviews and hence, the quality of data.

#### 4.2.1 Embedded Case Contributions

The study was based on embedded cases, which served as the basis for analysing the Danish art world as the main case. This section will briefly lay out key conditions and characteristics related to each, in order to provide the reader with the sufficient insight into the various positions. The contributions are evident in Table 1 (see Appendix I, pp. 2-5) where experience, education, and other demographic attributes are presented schematically.

Firstly, four artists were incorporated into the study. The artists were labelled *Established Artist 1, 2, and 3,* and lastly, *Unestablished Artist* and were selected to representing different types of artists. Established Artist 1 and 2 were included due to their established profiles and long-term experience in the art world. Their accounts enabled an understanding how a long-term legitimate status is managed. Established Artist 3 stood out, because of being autodidact. Besides an education as a visual arts teacher, this respondent was primarily self-taught. This one contributed greatly to the study, as this one had a strategic approach to being an artist and provided new insights into the cyclical nature of legitimate artistries. Lastly, was the Unestablished Artist who contributed with insights to the process of forming an artistry in the emergent stages. However, this one's accounts were slightly less reflected than the rest of respondents and its weight in the analysis was consequently less. This was identified as due to less experience in the art world, entailing less knowledge of its general dynamics.

Next, three gallerists were included, *Gallerist 1*, 2, and 3, representing slightly different approaches to having a gallery. The former two are both owners of leading galleries in Copenhagen. Gallerist 3 is a renowned gallerist; however, the current gallery is more focused on the development of emerging artists' career and is thus less of an established institution compared to the two former. Gallerist 1 and 2 differ in the purpose and focus of their galleries where Gallerist 1 represents a mix of established and emerging artists, and currently represents over double the number of artists compared to Gallerist 2 who exclusively represents established artists. Gallerist 1 has a larger exhibition turnover than Gallerist 2 who only has four exhibitions a year. All

gallerists had at least 20 years of experience and had each been founding members of either Chart Art Fair or Enter Art Fair. These respondents provided in-depth information regarding the synergies of the art world due to their commercial and central position in the art world.

The auction house representative was included into the study to contribute with knowledge of the contemporary secondary art market. This was a gap in my understanding of the art world and thus posed as a crucial respondent to include. Being an assessment expert in contemporary art positioned this respondent in close proximity with galleries' operations in the primary market. This is so, as the secondary market of contemporary art trades artworks by living artists who are concurrently represented in galleries in the primary market. This respondent thus contributed with much insight into the volatility of the auction market, and the secondary market in general, and how the unregulated price formation in these institutions may entail disturbances in the primary art market (for clarification of primary and secondary market, see pp. 28-29). Conflicting interests between art world members was thus explained by this respondent.

Next, Art Critic was included due to lengthy experiences in the art world rather than just the role as a critic. This respondent provided in-depth insights into changes related to financialisation and the impact of financially driven market players entering the art world. Valuable insights related to the importance of art fairs as an industry-shaping institution further emerged in this interview. This was an aspect of the art world I had not given much thought; an entire new power dynamic was introduced.

Lastly, Foundation representative was included due to representing a private institution as well as past experience in museums. This respondent was further recommended by other respondents as a key person to contact. Because of the additional respondents' somewhat negative accounts related to private institutions' role as agenda-setting in the art world, it was important to gather their perspective. A major contribution of this interview was a well-rounded view of private institutions' role in the art world.

Concludingly, all representatives paid a valuable contribution to the study. Some were able to provide insight into new areas of the art world, whereas some were able to elaborate on themes that had emerged in previous interviews. What they all had in common was their experience, which often spread across different professions and roles in the art world. Despite their labels, many of the respondents were thus representatives of other institutions of the art world concurrently. Their experiences were therefore identified to intertwine and were not delimited to their current position. Thus, this uniformity in experience enabled a rich and cohesive understanding of the art world.

#### 4.3 Primary Data: Observation

Observational methods were employed as complimentary to interviews. This was advantageous as respondents were less inclined to give biased statements in their natural setting (Silverman et al., 2004). This type of data collection enabled me to identify what the respondents really *did* rather than what they *said* they did. This

increased the credibility of the study, as respondents' statements were potentially backed – or not backed – by their actions (Davies & Hughes, 2014). Being on-site in an art gallery, at my workplace, I was able to listen in on lunch-time discussions and scribble down relevant discussion into Notes on my phone. Moreover, being an employee and colleague, little effect of my presence affected the topics of conversation. Through observations I was able to gain supplementary insights into gallerists' strategies. Being aware of confidentiality issues and other considerations regarding ethics, when observing my colleagues, were carefully clarified.

#### 4.4 Secondary Data

Secondary data was used to obtain contextual information (Saunders & Lee, 2017) and can be defined as: 'preexisting data that have been collected for a different purpose or by someone other than the researcher'. (McGinn, 2008, s. 803). For this thesis, secondary data was used to investigate and redefine the research question as well as grow my knowledge within the field of study. Using this type of data also enabled more knowledge to be accumulated in less time compared to gathering insights through primary data alone (McGinn, 2008). Secondary data were sourced prior, during, and after conducting interviews. During the process of analysing data, was secondary data used in order to make sense of the themes that emerged. This opened up to new elements of interest shaping the study and increasing the focus as I delved deeper into new ideas.

Secondary data was primarily sourced through Google, databases such as CBS's Libsearch, JSTOR, the online subscription-based platform Perlego, Art Review, Kunstkritikk, art reports, among others. Here, I used words linked to the empirical ideas emerging from interviews as well as preconceptions of theoretical streams. Combining words and concepts in different ways further extended the reach of my searches. Throughout this process I made sure to save relevant articles and book sections for later reviewing. Moreover, finding reports of the industry from Artsy also presented relevant background information regarding the current state of the global art world.

# 5. Data Analysis

In order to constitute credible results, a well-documented and thorough analysis of the collected data was important (Davies & Hughes, 2014). Paying close attention to the process of forming codes, themes, and patterns was a time-consuming process. Providing the base for the later analysis put an emphasis on the careful inspection of raw data in order to successfully identify and extract key codes, themes, and meanings. The overall quality of the study depended on the carefulness of this step, and I therefore aimed to be as thorough as possible. The first step of processing the data was transcribing the interviews into text (see Appendix III). To increase the efficiency of the transcription process the subscription platform Transskriptor was used which auto transcribed the interviews. However, depending on the quality of the recordings the quality of the transcriptions differed and thus required a close review of each text. Transcriptions were therefore

subsequently reviewed whilst listening to the recording to correct any inconsistencies. This was done in order to prepare the interviews for coding (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). However, during the process of transcribing the data a process of pre-coding already commenced, through highlighting interesting elements as I transcribed with the purpose of revisiting in later cycles (Miles et al., 2014). This process increased my focus onto emergent themes as I was now able to fully concentrate on the respondents' accounts. Through this process of producing memos (Saldaña, 2013) interesting themes and connections thus became apparent. This process increased the focus onto new codes and ideas to be explore in later interviews. This was benefactory as new data was able to fill in gaps that emerge during analysis (Miles et al., 2014).

During the first cycle of coding, I used the platform NVivo to better make sense of data. Codes may be defined as according to Saldaña (2013) as: 'a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data'. (p. 3). Assigning words or short sentences to fathom sections of data thus constituted the first cycle of coding. In the first cycle of codes the method of process coding was applied as it 'extracts participant action/interaction and consequences' (Miles et al., 2014, p. 5). This is a coding method that creates codes that used gerunds (-'ing' word). In the second cycle of codes, a broader perspective was applied to: 'develop a sense of categorical, thematic, conceptual, and/or theoretical organization from your array of First Cycle codes'. (Saldaña, 2013, p. 207). This cycle of coding enabled the forming of a coding frame where highly referenced and significant codes were merged in NVivo to make key themes more visible. Examples of such codes was *spatiality*, *collective endorsing*, *network*, and *lack of transparency*, to name a few. An overview of the first- and second order codes and their relation to the four overarching themes are illustrated in Figure 1 (p. 32).

# 6. Quality, Credibility, Reflexivity, and Ethical Considerations

This section will present reflections of the quality, credibility, and reflexivity of the research along with ethical considerations. As for the quality and credibility, the previous sections aimed to obtain just this, as quality refers to the 'transparency of the whole research process' (Silverman et al, 2004, Quality and Credibility section) whereas credibility pertains to the 'validation of findings and results' (Ibid). Hence, providing methodological transparency enables the validation of the findings and hence constitutes a credible study. Additional ways of assuring a credible study have been through reflexive considerations regarding my own role in the research. This acknowledgment of my own positionality enabled me to reflect on my choices and hence stay open towards new themes and ways of interpreting the findings. Further reflections on reflexivity are presented below in section 6.1. Through purposefully including a wide range of respondents from different positions a broad perspective on the phenomenon was enabled. This way of introducing different angles enables a more holistic picture of the researched environment. Moreover, semi-structured interviews with

open-ended questions were likewise increasing the holistic picture of the researched phenomenon, through exploring themes openly, rather than asking closed questions (Jensen, 2008)

#### 6.1 Insider-Outsider Considerations

This section will include a reflection on the implications of insider-outsider research, where my role as a researcher may affect the results of the study. This is done in order to assure the trustworthiness of the study through reflexivity which may be defined as the: 'engagement of continuous examination and explanation of how they have influenced a research project'. (Dowling, 2008, p. 747). An emphasis on such considerations as an insider researcher was expressed by Dwyer and Buckle (2009): 'questions about objectivity, reflexivity, and authenticity of a research project are raised because perhaps one knows too much or is too close to the project and may be too similar to those being studied'. (p. 57). This is related to the epistemological stance of the researchers intervention affects the overall research. However, in this case, being an insider, the effect of such intervention may be even larger.

Working in a gallery part-time and having done so during my time as a master student, I am increasingly in the position of an insider researcher. Therefore, risks of being 'too comfortable' in a research setting may impede the naivety that may influence the study of an outsider researcher. Consequences of this may be lack of criticism towards rules and norms that emerge. However, I was increasingly aware of such effects. Moreover, despite my job in the gallery I still perceived myself as somewhat of an outsider due to my short experience in the art world.

Evident advantages of being an insider, was the access to interviews it provided, as being associated with one of the leading galleries in Copenhagen opened doors to key respondents. Besides this, my role as an insider increased the efficiency of the interviews, as possessing some basic knowledge of the synergies of the art world, enabled discussions on a different level than had I been a complete outsider with no pre-requisites: 'an insider researcher enhances the depth and breadth of understanding a population that may not be accessible to a non-native scientist' (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, p. 57). Being able to relate to certain references of institutions, persons, or artists, thus increased this efficiency through an increased trust in me as an interviewer. Reaching new levels of understanding was therefore accelerated as the level of discussion was at a more profound level given the existing knowledge I possessed. Dwyer and Buckle (2009) also recognise this advantage in being an insider as it: 'This insider role status frequently allows researchers more rapid and more complete acceptance by their participants. Therefore, participants are typically more open with researchers so that there may be a greater depth to the data gathered'. (p. 58). Being perceived as an insider therefor enabled a greater depth of data, however, whether the association to my workplace caused bias in respondents' responses is unknown. Concludingly, this idea of reflexivity permeated the process of collecting and analysing data, as I was aware of being as truthful to the data as possible, and to not allow my own understanding and preconceptions to inform the data in an excessive manner.

#### 6.2 Ethical Considerations

Ethical concerns regarding consent were considered as I had decided to make the respondents anonymous. Meaning that I, the researcher, knows of their identity but used pseudonyms in the presentation of findings (Ogden, 2008). This was done, as to assure that the respondents could speak candidly about a subject, and to avoid bias on the readers behalf, as some of the respondents are known publicly. Moreover, the art world being a small world, the choice of anonymisation was deemed the best choice as to avoid bias on the readers behalf. However, some degree of recognisability might prevail where the respondents might be able to identify themselves. Ethical considerations also impeded the processing and analysis of findings as being aware of not being affected by certain relations was considered. Moreover, avoiding wrongful interpretation of data was key in assuring an ethical and credible study. In this regard, data accuracy was an ethical concern as the interviews were held in Danish and citations presented in findings were translated to English. This put an emphasis on the quality of the translation to ensure the respondents' intended meanings to come through. This was a more substantial and time-consuming process than initially expected, as many respondents used Danish slang and sayings which were not so straight forward to translate. This potential inaccuracy could have been avoided through a verification from the respondents after the translations. However, it was assumed a too tedious process and instead additional effort was directed onto assuring the correctness of the translations.

#### 7. Limitations

The most profound limitation in this thesis was the constraint of time during the process of collecting data. The primary data was collected over a single distinct period of three weeks (Saunders & Lee, 2017) as the timeline of the project did not allow a more continuous data collection process. This could otherwise been advantageous to the emergent nature of the project (Meyer, 2001), where newly emerging themes could have been pursued to a greater extent. As a result of the restricted time frame, the number of interviews were set to 10 in total. This was done, as to make sure I was able to overcome the amount of collected data with regards to the later processing and analysis. Practical reasons were therefore affecting the process of collecting data. However, the diversity in the type of respondents was assumed to produce a pluralists view of the topic and were therefore deemed sufficient for investigating the research question. Moreover, the longer duration of each interview allowed deeper insights, which accounts for the limited number of respondents. The interviews were on average one hour long whereas the shortest was 35 minutes and the longest 2 hours and 17 minutes.

Due to time constraints, one interview was cancelled. This was mostly due to the respondent's busy time schedule where the interview was continuously put off. Potentially valuable insights were therefore left out. However, the position of the respondent was similar to one of the additional respondents, whereas the role of the respondent was somewhat covered in the empirical data.

# Part IV – Findings and Analysis

The following chapter will present the findings of this thesis. To begin, a contextual background is provided as to provide the reader with sufficient knowledge of the preconditions of the Danish art world.

## 1. Context and Case Description

The local and global art worlds are not separate environments and are constantly intertwining and interacting. Separating the two is therefore impossible, however, analytically it is demanded in order to analyse the institutional environment of the Danish art world as a separate entity. The following section will review preconditions affecting the Danish art world to provide the reader with a clear overview of the local art world and the conditions that constitute the current environment. The section is supported by secondary data such as industry reports and articles, which have been sourced in order to introduce this topic on a more general level.

#### 1.1 The Danish Art World

Aside from the fact that art worlds are increasingly complex in their form and shape, a general overview into its structure is attempted. Adopting Zorloni's (2005; 2013) account of a contemporary art market structure, a generalised overview of the Danish art world is presented. This will further provide the frame to present the preconditions of the current state of the Danish art world.

Firstly, art worlds are presented to be divided into two horizontal segmentations: the primary and secondary market. The former is where artworks are presented for the first time, and the latter, is where art works are resold. The primary art market primarily constitutes artist's studios, galleries, and art fairs, whereas the secondary art market is constituted by auctions houses and private sales amongst collectors (Zorloni, 2013). This market differs considerably from the primary market as 'operators enjoy an informational advantage because they have at their disposal information on both artists and their market prices'. (Zorloni, 2013, p. 38). This is a more unregulated market, as prices may fluctuate depending on a given buyers' willingness to purchase a specific work of art. Aside from these two somewhat structured markets (aside from the large anticyclical price patterns related to auction house sales) there is also a 'sunken market' which refers to artists selling art privately and hence by-passing their galleries. Zorloni (2013) presents such acts as potentially risking an inflation of prices in the market. Moreover, art worlds may be defined following a vertical segregation, which Zorloni (2013) present as the classical contemporary, the avant-garde, the alternative, and the junk art market. The Danish art world that is inquired into in this thesis may be characterised predominantly as a 'classical contemporary art market' (pp. 38-39). It is a market that is global, and which trades artists, both living as well as historic, and whose works are already circulating on the secondary art market. In this sense, artists having emerged from 1970's up until today are included in this delimitation. This type of art world is defined by being structured by few powerful galleries with high reputational barriers to access. In the Danish art world, a selection of these galleries is identified to be those such as V1, Galleri Bo Bjerggaard, Susanne Ottesen, Christoffer Egelund, Andersen Contemporary, Nils Stærk, Martin Asbæk, who are all considered some of the leading galleries in the Danish art world. These institutions further have a clear international outlook and attend both national and international art fairs (Danske Gallerier, 2023). However, despite their leading role in the Danish art world, they are comparatively small in the sphere of global art worlds. The Danish art world thus remains fairly small compared to those in New York, London, Milan, and Paris who are identified as the leading art worlds (Zorloni, 2013; McAndrew, 2023).

Furthermore, the density of commercial actors has increased in the Danish art world in recent years. This is identified through a recent change in the commercialisation of the art world where multiple commercial actors have emerged. This has been illustrated through a mapping of the Danish art market by Bille (2021) who explicates how the total turnover in the Danish art world has grown exponentially in a time span of 20 years including many more actors. Further, the establishing of the first art fair in Copenhagen in 2023, Chart, (Chart, 2023) followed in 2019 by yet another, Enter Art Fair (Enter Art Fair, 2023) illustrates this increased commercial interest. An increase in the density of commercial channels in Copenhagen has therefore occurred in recent time. This structure of an art world is increasingly similar to that of global art worlds, where art fairs are increasingly industry-setting for the entire industry (Zorloni, 2013). Consequently, the current conditions of the Danish art world largely affected by the increase and density in commercial actors. Moreover, its remarkable similarity with global art world is identified. Lastly, their notably small contribution to the global art world, considering their size, is a defining condition in the context of this case.

# 2. Data Presentation and Analysis

The following section will present a descriptive review of the study's findings. The findings are presented with the aim of mapping the key mechanisms and processes related to the formation and maintaining of artistic legitimacy. Such a mapping is based on the accounts provided by the Danish art world members. The section will present key codes and themes which are structured by the four thematic dimensions, *characteristics*, *social mechanisms and processes*, *barriers to artistry*, and *strategies to control*, *endorse*, *and diffuse*. Lastly, an elaboration of the art world members *wish for increased structure and insight* is presented. The interrelations between the codes and the structural dimensions are illustrated in Figure 1 below (p. 30). The figure visualises the relationship between first-order and second-order codes and their relation to overarching themes. These themes further constitute the structural dimensions of the chapter.

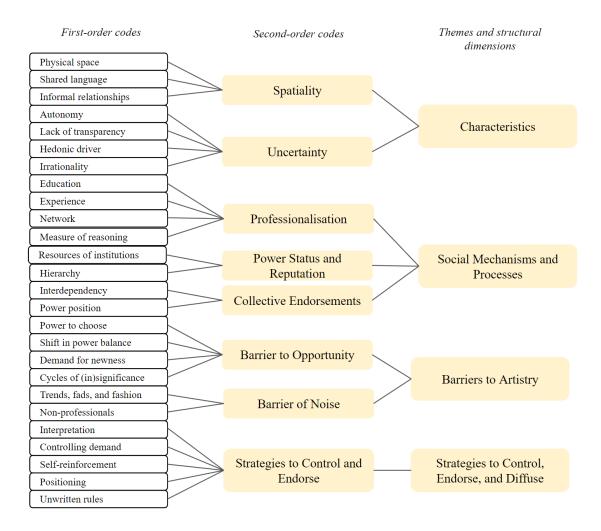


Figure 1: Relationship between codes and structural dimensions.

#### 2.1 Characteristics

This first dimension will present findings that defined the Danish art world. The second-order codes that are leading these sections are *spatiality* and *uncertainty*.

#### 2.1.1 Spatiality

The second-order code *spatiality* consisted of first-order codes related to *physical space*, *shared language*, and *relationships*. Art world members' practices were identified to be anchored in physical spaces such as galleries, museums, and educational spaces. Spatiality was described by Gallerist 1 as a way for the audience to 'interact' with artworks and each other:

'even though they are in super high demand, and they could sell a picture maybe every single day, they feel like... They are not interested in that, I mean, they made this exhibition, and they are interested in five hundred people coming here on a Friday night to see the works. Whether

they are all sold by then, doesn't matter, but the fact that they are shown, that people can come in and interact with them'. (excerpt from interview).

This described how artists depend on the physical space to exhibit, disseminate, and interact with audiences. This notion was shared with Established Artist 3 and Established Artist 2 who acknowledged the importance of 'context' as a means to 'interpret': 'art is contextual? And in any case, it cannot be interpreted without context'? (excerpt from interview), as described by Established Artist 2. Established Artist 3 further described the necessity of this spatial setting as providing a spatial 'intermediary' between artists and the recipients:

'you have a gallery, because if people approach me and then they say T'd like to buy a painting' or something, and then I say 'well it costs whatever 50,000', then they think 'that's something I've just made up, haven't I'? But if you shoot the middleman in, if you shoot the gallerist in and you have a cold light in the ceiling and you have a counter. With a slightly brusque receptionist and you have a slightly older man with a tie or blazer or something else right, who is the gallerist. (...) it's such a fairly well-known setup, isn't it. (...) In order to create authority around it. You must have the talk... it's all that, whether it's hanging on the wall (*held up a banana*) with a piece of tape on it or whether it's in a fruit basket. After all, it is the surroundings around the work that sort of do... the setting that creates the price for the things. And that's also where people think it's okay. Some authority... has to say okay for this. Now there are some others who have come up with the price, because perhaps it is their job to come up with the price. And that is why the artist cannot sell it directly. That is why there is this intermediary. And of course, also because there are some rooms or something where they can go on a slightly more neutral ground than if they show up in a studio'. (excerpt from interview).

The spatial setting was therefore additionally presented to constitute a 'neutral ground' for the trading of art works. The spatial setting was described to enable the correct setting for the artistic expression as well as provide grounds for diffusing an interpretation for the audience. Besides these characteristics the respondent mentioned having a 'talk' which illustrated the first-order code *shared language*. This was likewise described by Gallerist 3 to be a focus:

'we work with a narrative (...) also to gain an overview of one's own reality, to gain a language for how to develop. So, it was like to verbalise what kind of processes you were involved in when you are an artist, both professionally, so career-wise, but also in relation to your practice. To verbalise it." (excerpt from interview).

This connection was also described by Established Artist 1, who used the gallery as an extension to the art academy. The spatiality of the gallery was therefore described to enable the formation of narratives and a

language that artists can use in their professional and artistic practices. Unestablished Artist expressed how art academies constitutes dialogue and connections:

'It's also just the thing about being in an artistic environment and talking to others who make art, making things with others. I also just developed my language and such. I can easily sit down for an hour and talk about art or talk about my practice... I have become much more confident, and you get to practice some things and you get to expand your horizons'. (excerpt from interview).

A focus on linguistic and social competences was therefore presented to be facilitated through such a learning institution. Instead of the academy Established Artist 3 studied to become a visual arts teacher which along the same lines enabled a 'structuring' of the practice: 'I learned to structure things' (excerpt from interview) and through this acquire some of the same qualifications as through an art academy.

Moreover, Art Critic presented how the global art world is a 'small world' constituted by spatially defined 'hierarchies':

'It's such a hierarchy, a very, very rigid hierarchy.(...) The art world is really a small world, because it's the same 2000 people, right? it is the same 2000 people who travel around to all the exhibitions and fairs, so suddenly the big world narrows down to a very small world'. (excerpt from interview).

This described a tight network in the Danish art world, where interactions across art worlds are enabled, however constituted by a rigid hierarchical structure.

Lastly, as a spatial evaluation tool, art world members were mentioning to be quite reliant on the use of CV when evaluating artists potential. This reliance was mentioned by Art Critic who relied on CV's when making assessments of artists as a board member: 'I use CV a lot. Now all artists send in CVs'. (excerpt from interview). Noting how 'all artists send in their CV' presented a heavy reliance on this evaluation tool anchored in spatial competences and experiences. Related to this, it was observed how many institutions produce books and catalogues following each exhibition in order to produce clear evidence that was easily added to an artist's CV.

#### 2.1.2 Uncertainty

The second-order theme *uncertainty* emerged as permeating factor of the industry. It was identified to be constituted by *irrationality* and *autonomy*.

Firstly, this uncertainty was identified to occur due to an inherently irrational passion for art, as described by Art Critic:

'art helps to create the dimension that we may not be able to set ourselves. Therefore, art has a value that is far more significant than money, the value of art, which is created because we, as individuals, need something beyond ourselves. And that is what art can provide by going to a museum or going to a gallery or going to the theatre. And suddenly you get a dimension in yourself that you don't even realise you need'. (excerpt from interview).

Here, artworks are described to 'add an extra dimension to life' which illustrated the hedonic and hence arguably irrational nature of the product which constitutes the entire world's reason to exist. The behaviour of art consumers was presented to be driven by an irrational motivation that had 'nothing to do with basic human needs' (excerpt from interview), as described by the Established Artist 3. This account described motives for acquiring art works as quite hedonically driven. The Auction House representative moreover elaborated how consumers remove art from 'all economic consideration':

'it's a bit funny, isn't it, with all sorts of other acquisitions, where people research, should it be that model, or so and so, engaging with the market... I think people have started to do that a little more with art (...). I have often met people who come in with the notion that art cannot decrease in value. After all, it is art, ergo it will be worth more, or at least keep its value. It sounds absolutely crazy that art should be able to be pulled out of all economic consideration.' (excerpt from interview).

These hedonic motivations were described along the same lines by Gallerist 1, Gallerist 2, Established Artist 1, Established Artist 2, and Auction House representative. It was described to create uncertainty in the evaluating and pricing of artworks as different perceptions of worth may be attached to different types of artworks depending on the recipient. Established Artist 2 referred to a notion of 'diligent hands', where works that are meticulously produced, does not necessarily entail a correspondingly higher price. Gallerist 2 elaborated on this: 'It's also not the case that if you spend extra hours creating a painting and extra materials, you now think it should be more expensive.' (excerpt from interview). This presented how uncertainty stem from a lack of methods to rationally evaluate art works' worth.

Next, *autonomy* was identified to characterise the art world, as actors presented narratives of largely independent practices. This was exemplified through Gallerist 3's response to a question concerning whether consensus exists of gallery practices across the industry, of which the respondent answered: 'I do not know. It may well be. You save a lot of time doing your own things, so I don't know how the others see it'. (excerpt from interview). Gallerist 2 however presented a more explicit account of autonomy in the art world as: 'there are no rules, no systems, (...) autonomy is our highest, applicable rule, the conditions under which we exist in this world'. (excerpt from interview). This account of a world that lacked 'rules' and 'systems' added to the theme of uncertainty as everyone were seemingly setting their own agenda, independently from others. This moreover led to the formation of the code *lack of transparency*, as actors were seemingly unaware of other

ways of doing things. However, on the basis of the art world members demographic experiences, they were identified to possess similar backgrounds, which revealed a more shared understanding of practices. Despite this, actors were increasingly portraying their practices as quite independent from others.

Concludingly, spatiality and uncertainty were presented as largely characterising the Danish art world. It was presented how spatial setting of galleries and art academies, as well as other learning institutions, facilitated the creation of a shared language as a mean to make sense of the world and to interpret and disseminate artworks. Findings also presented an emphasis on art world member's reliance on CV as a spatially anchored tool to assess artists' eligibility and artistic potential.

#### 2.2 Social Mechanisms and Synergies

The following sections will present findings related to the social mechanisms *professionalisation*, *power status*, and *collective endorsements* which were identified to offer tools of navigation in an uncertain environment. Moreover, they were described as resources for art world members to enhance their own position as to effectively impact the collective endorsing process.

#### 2.2.1 Professionalisation

In navigating the uncertainty permeating the art world, a process of *professionalisation* emerged from findings as a first-order code. *Education*, *experience*, *networks*, were identified as first-order codes, constituting resources used by members to attain qualifications and knowledge in order to make competent judgements. Moreover, a *measure of reasoning* was likewise heavily referenced, which is presented in a separate section.

Firstly, a shared *educational* background was identified where six of the art world members were art historians. Gallerist 3 referred to this coherence across art world members: 'after all, we are educated at the same level and have the same experience' (excerpt from interview). However, Gallerist 3 also identified a need for additional education: 'When I closed the other gallery, I also took a top-up in organisation and management, which provided some skills that I could use to try to understand what an artistic practice actually was, seen from an organisational perspective'. (excerpt from interview). Using education as a means to attain more knowledge regarding the structural composition of an artistic practice was therefore described.

Besides relying on education did *experience* arise as a much-referenced mechanism in enhancing one's own position and to navigate uncertainty. Art Critic described this through recalling: 'The more you see, the more you win. I clearly remember when I started to study art history, someone said to me forget all the books, have you seen exhibitions, and do you travel'? (excerpt from interview). Noting how experiences rather than reading 'all the books' was crucial in navigating the art world. This was also identified by Auction House representative who put an emphasis on 'what you have seen' as way to gain 'credibility':

'After all, knowledge can arise in many ways, (...) it is mostly about what we know, and I would say in the auction industry, perhaps also to a large extent about what you have seen. So, what you know is one thing, but our competence and credibility comes largely from seeing things that may not be the most typical of an artist. So, it's very much experience-based and a job where you learn over time by simply stringing things together." (excerpt from interview).

Here, it was presented how experiences in fact constituted certifications of 'competence' for auction house members. This notion of being 'experience-based' was likewise identified by Foundation representative who mentioned the necessity of staying 'informed' in order to assess 'quality':

'regardless of whether you sit in a museum or you sit in a foundation. It's that of being informed and seeing what's going on out there, you can't do without it. Because you have to, every time you see something, it is in relation to what you have also seen, and 'this artist works with this in this way' (...)... or 'I actually don't think this is that interesting, because she worked in the same way, but in a more interesting way'. It is, after all, a way of calibrating not just one's view of art with your... yes, perhaps in one's view of art. Now I hate to use the word quality, but I mean what is interesting and what is less interesting and why something is more interesting than something else. You just need to have that wide outlook. After all, it is also a way to train your own eyes, I mean, just seeing a lot of things, right'? (excerpt from interview).

Having a wide outlook through 'seeing a lot of things' enabled members to distinguish between what is and what was not 'interesting'. This was exemplified by a commentary made by Gallerist 1 who evaluated an artwork on the basis of some accumulated knowledge of what was 'good':

'if you've been to some cafe and you've had such a mediocre latte, and then you look up and there's also a really bad painting. Then you just look at the price, 40,000 kroner, you could have bought a good little Tal drawing for that, right'? (excerpt from interview).

Here, the respondent draws on past experiences in evaluating a 'really bad painting' in comparing it to another work acknowledged as 'good'. This exemplified how members may possess tacit knowledge generated by experiences in the world which may not be readily available to the wider audience. This example was moreover noted as an example of *asymmetric information* where art world members acquire knowledge through experiences which is limited to art world members.

This notion of 'being informed' was perceived as an obligation by many of the respondents, which Art Critic described when functioning as board member:

'Then I also feel that if I have to keep being in those funds, then it's no use if I don't follow along. It is my entire eligibility to sit in foundations that I keep up. I'm not sitting there by name'. (excerpt from interview).

Moreover, Art Critic explained how accumulated experiences functioned as a deciphering tool in evaluating artist's eligibility from their CV:

'there is an interplay between of course their CV and then of course also my insight. As soon as I get some pointers from the CV or I get some recommendations where, for example, a principal from the academy has written, then I think okay, then at least it must be something'. (excerpt from interview).

This described how Art Critic combine the spatial measure CV in conjunction with professional insight accumulated through experiences. This in turn, is resourceful in providing a professional evaluation and decision of which artists are eligibile to receive funding. Additionally, a notion of network is introduced where a reliance on 'recommendations' described the reliance on connections as a tool to make professionalised evaluations.

Concludingly, these findings have come to describe how art world members draw on past experiences and networks to facilitate *insight* needed to professionally evaluate artists' potential. Moreover, experiences were presented as sources of 'competence' and 'credibility' as well as present possibilities of taken-for-granted insights related to asymmetric information. Moreover, a predomination of references to *experience* rather than *education* was made. Ultimately, the findings revealed how *professionalisation* increasingly stem from experiences and accumulated knowledge from interactions. This insight employed to navigate the uncertainty of the evaluation of artworks' worth.

## Measure of Reasoning

This section will present findings related to measures used by art world members to rationalise the pricing of artworks. It was previously mentioned by Art Critic how insights were used to decipher artists' CV. Moreover, the respondents referred to an equilibrium between the significance of an artistry and its price to be largely dependent on an artist's experiences. This was explicitly stated by Gallerist 1, Gallerist 2, Auction House representative, Art Critic, and Foundation representative. Gallerist 2 provided a thorough description of how this is used to assess an art artistry's aggregated significance and worth:

'An artistry is built by which collections one is placed in, which institutions, private and public, the private to a lesser extent than public institutions, that have exhibited the person in question. It can be both art galleries and museums and expert persons who have handled and described the work in literature or in articles or otherwise. That is, for me to see, the

professional's assessment of the work's importance, that counts. The significance of artistry is what is permanent. That's what you can come back to. It is something where you can find out the meaning, that is, whether the work is significant'. (excerpt from interview).

This notes the 'professional's assessment' as a key role in constituting significant meaning for an artistry. Moreover, the notion of being placed in certain institutions to 'secure' an artistry's 'value' related to the characteristic of being dependent on spatiality. Moreover, in mentioning what is 'permanent' it was referred to how artistry's practice must be anchored in accessible documents, literature, catalogues, and books, as means to disseminate an artists' practice. Gallerist 2 further elaborated on this through an explanation of the careful process of determining the financial worth of an artistry:

'Now there will be an exhibition next year at *Kunsten* in Aalborg, which will already automatically be a new line in his CV, which means that the significance of his artistry increases. There will be a book or a catalogue in connection with the exhibition, which will draw attention to him, and he will be treated by the professionals. Therefore, we already know that there is something that can secure the value of his work, and thus one can afford to charge more for it.' (excerpt from interview).

Gallerist 1 referred to the artistry as a way of reasoning a seemingly too high price as 'it often comes back to the fact that, well, the artist is represented in collections, there is a weight behind the artistry'. (excerpt from interview). Hence, the artists artistry is a reasoning mechanism used in order to make sense of the price of an artwork. As previously noted, uncertainty permeates the evaluation and classification of art works. The artistry is therefore presented to reasonably make sense of the relationship between an art works inherent quality and its price. However, the reasoning measure remains an *unwritten rule* in the art world since a transparent understanding of the term is not in formal writing, as presented by Gallerist 2: "but it is nowhere to be found. You cannot read about it, there is no one who has any grasp of it." (excerpt from interview).

On a concluding remark, the findings presented how the *significance of an artistry* functioned as a reasoning mechanism to enable art world members to act autonomously based on (1) information available to them in artists' CV, and (2) their insights derived through processes of professionalisation where insight is accumulated from education, experiences, and networks in order to make competent evaluations.

### 2.2.2 Power Status and Reputation

In order to assign significance to artistries, it emerged from findings how the actors conferring significance ought to possess a significant position of power in order for their claims to have impact. This section will present findings related to the second-order code *power status and reputation* which emerged from the two first-order codes *resources of institution*, and *hierarchy*.

Initially, Gallerist 1 presented a 'far from transparent system' of allocating power to individuals, through an example of the decision makers for Venice Biennale:

'why is it that five people can be so, like, agenda-setting or four people, or in some countries, it is just one person who says well it must be dadada who represents them and then that happens, right? It is because there is still such a... Being selected for the Venice Biennale is something special. But it's far from, as you've probably also come to see, it's far from a transparent system'. (excerpt from interview).

This notion exemplified an unregulated process of allocating power to certain individuals. This relates to the autonomous nature of the art world, where power was allocated to certain persons with little control of the incentives included in decision-making. Moreover, through noting 'as you've probably also come to see' the respondent illustrated this lack of regulation as being tacitly significant in the world.

Regarding the first-order code *hierarchy*, it was described how powerful institutions were able to allocate power onto other institutions. Art Critic presented international art fairs as being 'the final link in the food chain' (excerpt from interview), additionally mentioning how they 'set the standard':

'at the fairs which are really leading, Art Basel and Frieze and Arco in Madrid and, what's it called, Armory in New York and so on? (...) There it is, first of all, high quality. In other words, you simply see the best of the best (...) There is no doubt that it sets the standard'. (excerpt from interview).

Following most art fairs 'invite-only' approach, it was described how only chosen galleries of a certain standard were included. Being associated with such a powerful enterprise, induces respect for the attending galleries, which in turn confers credibility onto their operations. Gallerist 3 also described this as 'marketing' for galleries:

'it provides an extremely fast and dynamic opportunity to show 30,000 people, in one weekend, what the gallery is working with. So, it's a lightning-fast marketing effort. Which hopefully result in some sales, but to a large extent it is marketing for the gallery, to gain new networks and new customers and simply show what you stand for. What kind of things you have in the gallery, what kind of profile you come up with'. (excerpt from interviews).

Through exposure at art fairs, renowned ones at that, power may be allocated to a gallery through exposure and the building of networks. Besides art fairs being allocators of power, Art Critic distinguished the *degree* of power and hence the reputational capital of institutions: 'if you've had an exhibition at SMK or at Aros, it's better than if you've had one in Horsens. Although it is not bad to have in Horsens'. (excerpt from interview). An element of location is thus presented, where an exhibition in a museum located within a larger city, may

possess more power to confer significance than those in less populated cities. Moreover, the credibility of an institution may depend on how 'well-known' it is:

'they also look at where they have exhibited, right? And if they have had a museum exhibition, or they have exhibited at some well-known art hall, Gammel Strand, or at Charlottenborg, it all helps to simply not only give an impression of the artist's value purely, but also artistic significance'. (excerpt from interview).

The reputational components of an institution were thus presented to have a direct influence on the 'artistic significance' of an artistry. In order to assess the reputational status of an institution Art Critic used past experiences: 'and I know exactly what galleries you should exhibit at'. (excerpt from interview). Here, the respondent draws on past experiences that have emerged to become taken-for-granted knowledge. This tacit knowledge is thus used to judge the power status and reputation of an institution.

Besides having power allocated from other powerful institution such as renowned art fairs, or from having a strong reputation as a public institution, did Foundation representative present 'economy' as a resource to constitute a power status: 'in most other worlds too, economy, money, is part of having power. There are many different types of positions of power, but finances are definitely one of them'. (excerpt from interview). Power was therefore presented as a type of power that may influence operations in the art world.

From the findings presented above power status is thus described stem either from a position of financial capital, professional capital, or cultural capital. Moreover, the relative power of each institution may differ according to the reputational capital of the individual institution, which was judged by art world members insight.

### 2.2.3 Collective Endorsements

This section will present findings related to the mechanism and process of *collective endorsements*. This second-order code emerged from first-order codes *interdependency* and *power position*. This section will commence with presenting general accounts delineating how relations were identified to affect the process of creating long-term significance for an artist. Moreover, Figure 2 (p. 42) is derived from the results of this section, to visualise the effects of various endorsing mechanisms and processes on short and long-term.

Firstly, the *interdependency* between actors was described by Gallerist 2 where single individuals may not be sufficiently powerful or 'significant' to independently confer a long-term significance onto artistries:

'One person alone is not, in my opinion, significant enough it to provide any value, long-term value (...) for the short-term, it can mean that there is someone, a recommender who

recommends the artist in question to others. But in itself, it is not something that if you google him, that there is something significant about the artist in question'. (excerpt of interview).

Here, long-term effects of a conferring activity were described to require more actors 'recommending the artist to other'. However, a single 'recommender' was described to have potential short-term effects on an artists' exposure. Auction House concurred with this notion of individuals acting as 'recommenders' and added how institutions 'look to each other':

'some form of endorsement leads to further endorsement, and as you know, it has to start somewhere. So, I think the different institutions or different actors, you look to each other'. (excerpt from interview).

Here, a process of actors adopting the behaviours of powerful actors was described to initiate similar activities within the art world. Art Critic described this process as how art world members 'get inspired' by each other:

'you get inspired or you suddenly see something in an artist that you didn't have an eye for yourself. And then you see it through someone else's eyes, so if you have a lot of respect for the curator of some museum then suddenly, oh my God, maybe there is something in that artist that I should also be aware of." (excerpt from interview).

Here, the process of getting inspired again depends on the reputation of an institution. Additionally, Art Critic described it as a 'lemming effect' (excerpt from interview). This however, portrayed a less *professionalised* approach to decision-making when acquiring artworks which relies more on networks and the conforming to other's decisions.

Related to *power status* Established Artist 1 described how 'there is just something missing' when an endorsement fails to have significant effect:

'A person in Houston can sit in a small museum and think it's such a cool artist who has done some projects, but nothing happens because Washington is not New York. There is just something missing. If it had been invented in the middle of Strøget, people would say 'we'd like to look at that'. It must be a certain voice that perhaps sometimes disseminates it. It is very important who has shares in it.' (excerpt from interview).

Noting how 'a certain voice' was required to significantly endorse an artist's project independently of it being a 'cool artist'. Established Artist 3 added to this notion of how 'other mechanisms take over':

'But for a lot of art, when you've created it, when it reaches a certain level, it's like a big pool with everything else that has the same level, and then it's some other mechanisms that take

over. Then it's just the whole setup with gallerists and curators and Instagram followers'. (excerpt from interview).

A work of art that is considered of high significance was therefore not necessarily qualitatively better than a work of art of less significance. Here, the description pointed towards the 'whole setup' surrounding the artwork, ultimately conferring, and creating significance.

Related to both *interdependency* and *power status* Art Critic described how having a 'daily life' with powerful actors was 'incredibly important' in initiating additional activities of endorsement:

'that is also what is important, that they have a daily life with the museums, that they know the museum director, they know the museum inspector who is in charge of acquisitions, of this and that period. It is incredibly important'. (excerpt from interview).

Based on the findings presented in this section, the short- and long-term effect of collective endorsement activities is visualised in Figure 1 below. The figure illustrates how a 'total mass of artworks of equal level of inherent quality' may only potentially circulate in the collective process of endorsing if in fact an initiator endorses them to begin with. Hereafter, 'other mechanisms take over' as explained by Established Artist 3, where the long-term significance relies on who endorses, their reputation and power, and the further mass adoption of this behaviour. However, a single person may constitute a short-term effect, however, the long-term significance requires the engaging of several powerful actors.

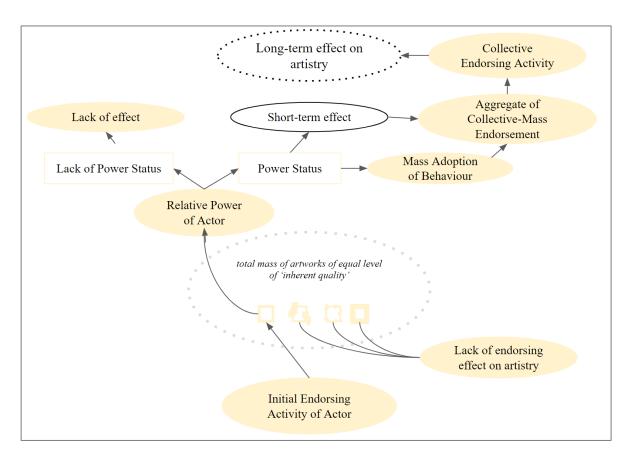


Figure 2: Visual representation of Power Status and Collective Endorsement's effect on the artistry. Source: Author's own.

### 2.3 Barriers to Artistry

The following sections will present findings related to (1) *barriers to opportunity*, affected by larger changes in society, and (2) *barrier of noise* potentially challenging the stability of artistries as a result of non-professionals making unsubstantiated claims.

### 2.3.1 Barrier to Opportunity

Barriers to opportunity emerged as a second-order code, identified by art world members as a temporal barrier constituted by first order-codes cycles of (in)significance, demand for newness, power to choose, and shifts in power balance.

Firstly, cycles of (in)significance and demand for newness was identified by Established Artist 3:

'so there's the whole challenge of the time span? Of course, you can be hot and all that when you're in your thirties or something. You have the interest of the news only because of your age and because it is a machine that must constantly be fed with new things and such. But how do you survive the next step? The even harder step. How do you keep it running? Because the artistic direction you might be presenting, representing, isn't going to be hot shit until you die.

There's like a new wave coming, every five, two, three years, how can you kind of pull it off?'. (excerpt from interview).

Staying relevant over time due to different 'artistic directions' arising was described as a challenge. Established Artist 1 further described how artists may have significant potential 'in a certain context':

'you can have it for a period of time. You can have potential in a certain type of context, and all of a sudden, it's not interesting anymore. It's not terribly easy to be an older white man right now, I should say. It doesn't bother me, but it's what I've become'. (excerpt from interview).

Additionally, Gallerist 1 presented how being temporarily out of favour is something 'you cannot control':

'I mean, if the museums do not buy you, let's say they take ten years where they don't really buy very many men. This will affect a generation of white, heterosexual painters. So, there are obviously some things you cannot control'. (excerpt of interview).

Institutions thus possess the *power to control* to include a work in a collection, depending on the current fit into societal changes which they may have adopted. This mechanism of adopting societal changes, was further explicated by Gallerist 3 of how museums exist on a 'burning platform':

'museum exhibitions should ideally be built on some form of burning platform, some form of social thought, commitment or some other question, you like to ask yourself or the audience or something like that.' (excerpt from interview).

The nature of a museums is therefore presented to be built on 'social thoughts' and their ideologies are thus expected to change according to the wider society.

Next, *shifts in power balances* was described by Gallerist 1 to be due to a change in the financial capabilities of institutions. Gallerist 1 explicated how private institutions were filling in a gap, due to the public institution's decline in purchasing power: 'I don't think there is anyone in the art world who is not extremely happy that the funds are there. Because they mean a lot for our work and for the support of museums and acquisitions of art' (excerpt from interview). Their role to 'support' museums through making acquisitions was therefore presented. However, the fact that such private institutions themselves make acquisitions in the hopes of it being included into museums' collections described a position of power to control. Consequently, this shift in power balance was identified to present barriers to an artists' opportunity, as described by Gallerist 1:

'if you are an institution that wants to acquire a work, then it is very few who can afford to buy it right now. But then you go to Ny Carlsberg Foundation or the Augustinus Foundation and then you get the money to buy that work. But the foundations are clearly a heavyweight, I mean, definitely. Let's say the current exhibition at Arken, where Marie Nipper comes and says, 'I've got this fantastic idea Esben Weile Kjær will curate our exhibition'. They must apply for funding to make this exhibition. Well, if the foundation is interested in Esben Weile Kjær, well then they will get the funding. Now let's say it was Flemming and they had said that we don't think Flemming is super exciting at the moment. You don't get the money to be able to finance an exhibition, so in that way it is, after all, it is enormous power to have, isn't it'. (excerpt from interview).

Making decisions on behalf of who is perceived to be 'super exciting at the moment' allocates power to choose depending on current ideologies held by the institution. Gallerist 1 further described how a current social movement's effect on institutions' acquisitions as being 'bad timing' for the artists who were suddenly deemed unfit:

'the timing is just really bad. Because it is not right now that the Statens Museum for Kunst will buy one of your works or that the Ny Carlsberg Fondet will give you a prize'. (excerpt from interview).

Being an artist type unfit to current social movements and ideologies thus affected the potential of being acquired by museums or receiving a prize. This position of power to support was likewise acknowledged by the Foundation representative: 'After all, we have the power in this fund to support or not support.' (excerpt from interview), and presented foundations to be aware of this power. Established Artist 1 additionally described an account of an institution's demand to an artist to be on the 'right side' in order to receive funding:

'you had to make it clear if you were to apply to the Statens Kunstfond whether things were climate-friendly. That's idiotic. It's just like if you drive a petrol car, you can't be an artist, that is, because you have to be on the 'good side'. You have to be aware of all sorts of things, the abolition of slavery, or whatever it may not be, and that's idiotic, I think. Being informed is good, but it's just the art's subject'. (excerpt from interview).

Here, it was described how artists' opportunity to receive funds to develop a significant practice had depended on their current fit of a society-held ideology or belief.

On a concluding remark, based on the aggregate of these accounts a societal barrier to the process of building a long-term significant artistry was derived. The barrier was being either a *fit* or *misfit with current societal ideologies* and was derived from respondents accounts to affect the *collective endorsing processes*. This barrier has been integrated into Figure 3 below. Here, the initial barrier of even fitting a societal ideology or movement, emerged as an initial barrier. In broad terms, in order to enable an endorsement to occur in the first

place, an artist must fit a certain type of artist or produce a certain type of art, matching current streams in the society.

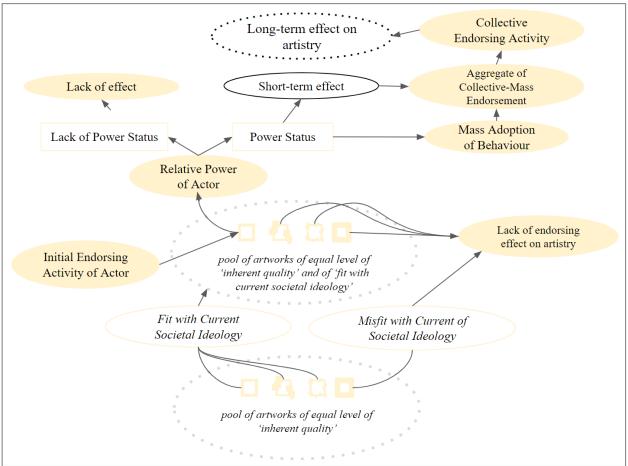


Figure 3: Visual representation of Collective Endorsement Synergies' effect on the artistry, including barrier of 'fit of current societal ideology'. Source: Author's own.

### 2.3.2 Barriers of Noise

This section presents findings related to the second-order code *barriers of noise* which emerged as a challenge to the artistries long-term significance. The theme emerged from the first-order codes *trends*, *fads*, *and fashion* and *non-professionals* and their unsubstantiated claims of random artistries.

Firstly, Established Artist 1 identified a barrier of noise to stem from individuals being 'clueless': 'When people don't have a clue about what's really going on'. (excerpt from interview). Lack of professionalism due to lack of knowledge was described to produce unsubstantiated claims of significance. Gallerist 2 presented 'fashion' as a 'market-shaping' mechanism, competing with 'the professionals':

'Which mechanisms assert themselves as market-shaping, without, for example, being rooted in the significance of an artistry? Then I say fashion, that is the thing about artists being hyped from mouth to ear in magazines without professional relevance, by collectors who think they

are God's gift to humanity and just think they have the right eye, and therefore everyone must listen to what they say. This whole barrier of noise, that's what I call fake news, the world that lies next to it and constantly competes with the professionals.' (excerpt from interview).

Here, a challenge was presented to stem from non-professionals 'hyping' artists on behalf of grounds 'without professional relevance' in the artistry, ultimately constituting a 'barrier of noise'. Non-professionals' claims were described as 'fake news' competing with the professional world. Gallerist 2 presented this to 'clog up our world... all the places where noise occurs makes it harder to act because you don't quite know what you're dealing with'. (excerpt from interview). This was exemplified through Auction House representatives notion of something that: 'doesn't really have any cultural capital can actually be expensive because there are just a lot of people who want it' (excerpt from interview). This irrational 'want' for something relates to the uncertainty of defining worth. Private institutions were moreover presented to affect this short-term demand, as Gallerist 1 described a situation of private institutions 'hyping a specific artist':

'After all, there are examples of foundations stepping in and hyping a specific artist. Where they just continue to support, I mean, the artist gets a huge advantage. Because every time there is an artist who writes I want to do this and this, the foundation says every time 'here's the money'. Then, of course, that artist is built up much faster than that artist's colleagues are'. (excerpt from interview).

This one-sidedness of 'hyping' one specific artist independent of professional competence was argued by Gallerist 2 to be a 'slippery path':

'And this is what I call fashion, for what happens, is that, if an artist is very fashionable, I mean if everyone wants him right now. There are examples at the moment Esben Weile Kjær, everyone wants Esben Weile Kjær, his beautiful glass panes cost 130.000, out of reach, totally wrong in terms of price in my opinion. It's on a slippery path. And that is because the importance of artistry is not great enough to bear that price. That is my criticism of it.' (excerpt from interview).

Established Artist 3 presented the potential negative implication of being subject to such inconsistencies as risking becoming 'worlds priciest, poorest artist':

'I mean during the financial crisis... there were many young artists who were picked up already at the academy, especially if they made paintings, then it's like you are our new star or we push you, we can sell everything. In 2007, you could sell everything. And there were some of these young people who were very young, they might have been twenty or something. Your stuff was worth an awful lot of money, wasn't it? Then they sold paintings for hundreds of

thousands... each. When the financial crisis came, people stopped overnight for 2 years, basically nothing was sold. Then you end up in the situation, you can't let prices go down. (...) But then you stand there as a young artist. You are 20 years old; your paintings are worth 100.000. You can't make them cheap. You can't cram it down to 15.000 where you would actually be able to sell it. And then you end up being the world's priciest, poorest artist, right?'. (excerpt from interview).

The consequence for artists being 'picked up' by non-professionals and having their prices 'pushed' was described to potentially result in dilution as a sudden cyclical event causes the unsubstantiated demand to vanish. Gallerist 1 further explicated the potential danger of following the demand:

'if it suddenly increases in value like crazy, well, maybe some others are sitting out there thinking 'no, now is the time, now is the time for me to sell' and then all of a sudden you find yourself in a situation where there are many who sell and then there are not enough buyers and then it falls... In other words, the market deflates, and then you are left with an artist who may have had his career ruined. Because now all trust is lost'. (excerpt of interview).

Losing 'trust' in the artistry was thus presented as a potential consequence of too high prices if the market suddenly drops.

Art Critic further described this barrier of non-professionals to stem from a new commercial dimension to the art world:

'The art world is... now somewhat I think it has become very tough. I think after those financial crises that it has become a very tough world. A commercially harsh world and there is so much corruption and speculation. They're the wrong people if you know what I mean'. (excerpt from interview).

A tough world, it was described as, where 'corruption and speculation' was identified to be more present than previously. Moreover, these new market players were marked as being the 'wrong people' as their incentives to engage with the art world is not driven by 'passion':

'it's turned into an object of speculation. In the beginning, there was like the old collectors, there were the young collectors, and they had a passion that drove them. And now it is the hedge funds, that buys a large share of it. It just changed the environment'. (excerpt from interview).

These new actors were further identified to contribute to the formation of artificial prices:

'After all, they buy, and they get the prices up enormously. One way or another, they get the prices up artificially, and they only buy it for speculation and those hedge funds have millions, millions of money. So, I think it makes a lot of noise in the market compared to what it really is. Or should be, a passion for art, right? (...) I actually have something against those hedge funds that just come in and can put up to millions and billions and then they take it home in some container and then it sits there waiting for the price to increase, right'. (excerpt from interview).

Here, the Art Critic noted a conflicting interest, where these new players do not engage with the art world as it 'really is' which was elaborated: 'It is completely irrelevant how the work fits into the artist's, shall we say, development. It's just a matter of investing'. (excerpt from interview). A conflict between how significance is defined and measured was therefore presented. Art Critic further presented how noise may arise from non-professionals in the media, as editors who lack 'insight' are controlling the dissemination of artists dependent on their degree of *news value*:

'he's in a new place in his life, right? To them it won't matter, to them it is 'you have now written 3 times about Tal R', even if he comes up with something that is completely revolutionary. Then it is ungrateful that the mediator is someone who in reality does not have the insight. So, there is an editor who has no insight, but only sits and looks at either a name where they believe there must be something out of the ordinary. So, I can't mention the same artist three times in a row if there isn't some kind of novelty'. (excerpt from interview).

On a concluding note, this section presented findings related to barriers stemming mainly from societal cycles and non-professionals interfering in the art world.

## 2.4 Strategies to Control and Endorse

Findings revealed how art world members apply – or propose – strategic measures in order to accommodate the aforementioned barriers. This section will thus present findings related to strategies employed in order to either *control*, *endorse*, or *diffuse*. Lastly, a new artist role emerged in the findings with more autonomy of their own practice, which is further elaborated on concludingly.

### 2.4.1 Strategies to Control

Several strategies to control the challenges to an artist's career emerged from the respondent's accounts. Both Gallerist 1 and 2 identified strategies to 'protect' the artists through (1) controlling the price of an artist and (2) through establishing unwritten rules of conduct with collectors. On a general note, Gallerist 2 described how to protect artists 'professionally':

'if you do it professionally, it is my belief that you must have something that gives rise to an explanation as to why the price is increasing, and the explanation cannot be that there is simply a lot of demand, because on the day that cyclical fluctuations come or for some reason the demand disappears, then there is no market.' (excerpt from interview).

Here, it was noted how an 'explanation' is demanded when increasing an artists' price in order to protect the artist from 'cyclical fluctuations'. Gallerist 1 similarly acknowledged this strategy to protect an artists' career:

'we now have a waiting list of 300, and all the works are sold before we open the exhibition, and we could perhaps have increased the prices by 50% without problems, and people would still have just taken it. But that's where I feel, well, Anton is still in the process of his education and there are a lot of people in his generation between 25 and 30, 40 who must be able to afford to go in and buy a work, so it must cost 6000 or 12,000 or a huge work for 80,000. In other words, it has to be in that price range so that you don't, like, drive a career to the wrong place too soon". (excerpt from interview).

Such a strategy was however not solely identified for gallerists. Established Artist 3 likewise described such measures and equated it to that of a 'fixed-interest loan':

'I simply had to manage it as a somewhat fixed-interest loan. I mean, a level where... then rather sell a lot more, instead of so to speak... allow yourself to be tempted by, 'now I'll just increase the prices and then I'll cash in' and things like that because... (...) they just come along with a 10-year gap. Those crises. So that's why I control the prices and set them low to protect myself'. (excerpt from interview).

A similar strategy of keeping prices low as a protective measure was thus described. None of the other artists had mentioned such a strategy, however. An additional protective strategy was described by Gallerist 2 to secure an excess demand in relation to supply:

'you have to maintain, if you want to manage something professionally, and the artist has to sleep safely at night, and the gallerist as well, then you have to have an excess demand in relation to the supply. And you'll get that excess demand with certainty if you don't squeeze the last drop in terms of price increases.' (excerpt from interview).

Moreover, Gallerist 2 presented galleries as important for the survival of an artistry when navigating in a 'noisy' world: 'Therefore, I do not believe that in this noisy country you can have a great career in the long term without having a partner who is a gallerist'. (excerpt from interview). Having a partner to manage, control, and strategically position an artists practice was therefore presented as important for long-term survival.

Next, related to the *unwritten rules of collector's conduct*, Gallerist 1 and Gallerist 2 explained activities of overseeing collectors' resale activities to control the prices:

'when we have these artists who are doing really well, then we are also relatively tougher. Saying if you want to sell within the first 5 years, then we expect it to come back to us, and what you can get for it at that time is what the gallery price is, not the auction price. As if to say, well, you are allowed to buy something here, and we know that you can go out and sell it tomorrow and then you might get double. Because it's only about access in reality. I mean, on the auction market, it is so much more expensive. We know you can earn double by buying now and selling it tomorrow. Then it becomes very much a position of trust... a question of trust and it is clear that if you have some collectors who repeatedly say 'that's fine' and then they go out and sell it, then you don't sell to them anymore'. (excerpt from interview).

Breaking codes of conduct was therefore presented to be accounted for through being restricted future purchases, due to lack of trust. Gallerist 1 likewise shared the consequences of such action: 'You can only do that once, then you will never be allowed to buy anything else'. (excerpt from interview).

Concludingly, the findings presented how galleries and artists employ strategic measures in order to control and protect artistries from barriers of noise. This was done through restricting access, and through a slow and substantiated increase in price.

### 2.4.2 Strategy of Endorsement

The following will present findings related to conscious strategies employed to assure long-term significance for artistries. Art Critic described an account of a gallerist's strategy to position an artist in the 'right' collections:

'he was placed in the right museums of modern art in Europe and preferably in the USA as well and in the right private collections. And there he simply set the requirement that he must not sell to Scandinavia until he was placed in the right places in Europe (...) because Scandinavia was simply a no-go compared to the others, so he had to be placed first, so to speak. If he was positioned in unknown collections in Scandinavia, then he would have already fallen in status in relation to an international market'. (excerpt from interview)

Here, a conscious strategy of positioning an artist into the 'right' collections and museums was identified in order to not fall in 'status'. Such a strategic thought was likewise identified through observations in the gallery. Here, a lunch-time discussion was centred on a recent exhibition of one of the gallery's artists exhibiting in Germany, where all of the works were sold even before the opening of the exhibition. The discussion was centred on who the buyers were: were they private collectors or were they institutions? Were the collectors anyone significant, would the artwork be inserted into a collection of importance for the artistry? This

discussion centred on the concern of having artworks placed in the right collections to confer significance. Moreover, having the artwork sold to institutions would increase its visibility to the wider public, and hence be of more significant status. Foundation representative moreover presented such a strategy, where they want to 'make sure it doesn't end up at a private collector, so we'll buy that. Then we make sure, that the work will be publicly available'. (excerpt from interview). Such as strategy was presented as beneficial for the wider public. Unestablished Artist's mentioned how his associated art dealer, had urged the creation of a book. This described a conscious decision of 'adding something to the artistry' in line with Gallery 2's notion of physical material contributing to the significance of an artistry – and hence potential of price increases. Unestablished artist was not sure however of these synergies: 'I didn't think at all that I was in a situation where... I'm too young and who the fuck, how, why should I write a book now you know? I actually thought it was a little bit ridiculous, but it wasn't exactly my idea. It was (art dealer) who got the idea and then I was like... when will you get such a chance again? And then I just went into it'. (excerpt from interview). This thus described the strategic decision of an art dealer making a book as a way to control the endorsing activity of a young artist. Having a share in the Unestablished Artist's significance thus show a self-reenforcing strategy on the art dealers side. Self-reenforcing strategies were moreover presented by Gallerist 1 and Gallerist 2 as means to assure artistries being placed in 'important' collections. Here, strategies to control endorsements of artistries was presented by Gallerist 2 to serve a 'double interest':

'Some galleries require that if you buy that work, you must also donate something to a museum. It is very common. But it is with the established artists today. And that's pretty smart, because then you add something to the CV. So, you buy this work, you're allowed to do so. You have to buy another work, and you have to give it to a museum, and when you give it to a museum, the other work becomes worth more. (...) You do that a lot today. (...) it serves a double interest, as you are contributing to distributing the artistry into important collections, and at the same time your value increases, of the collection you have. It is a very good model'. (excerpt from interview).

Here, Gallerist 2 presented a model serving the long-term interest of both artistries, gallerists, and collectors, through strategically placing artistries in notable collections. Controlling the placement of artistries was described to increase the significant position of all actors involved. However, this was explained to depend on the degree to which museums seize the 'opportunity' it presents to save money rather than make professional evaluations of a given artistry's relevance to the museums' collection: 'It just has the dilemma that it was chosen out of necessity, not because you think it fits perfectly'. (excerpt from interview). Thus, if public institutions may choose to accept a donation out of an 'opportunity' rather than due to professional choice, private collectors may experience an unsubstantiated increase in power which may add to *barriers of noise*. Gallerist 2 also described how private collectors may create their own private institutions, as a means to:

'Marketing their own works which in turn makes them even more powerful. It makes it easier to persuade me to sell them'. (excerpt of interview). Noting how it 'makes them even more powerful' described a self-reenforcing mechanism.

Concludingly, it was presented how art world members are increasingly strategizing to assure endorsements for artistries. More often than not, these strategies were additionally serving self-reenforcing purposes for the involved art world members.

#### 2.4.3 New Artist Role

The findings revealed how a new artist role had emerged due to digitalisation, as artists' have received opportunity of more autonomy over their practice. Established Artist 3 described how artists are increasingly in charge of their own 'marketing mechanisms' and thus may rely less on galleries:

'artists have gotten their own market, in addition to the things we are seeing now, so they have gotten their own marketing channel, right? Before, maybe it was the gallery that was responsible for sales and transport and sending out invitations and press releases blah, blah, blah. Now it is so convenient for many gallerists that if the artist has many followers on social media, then your own marketing mechanism comes along. 'Then we don't have to do it so much' right? In other words, we are almost guaranteed that it will be distributed, just by you posting that you have an exhibition (...) this means that the tasks are distributed a little differently than before'. (excerpt from interview)

A change in the 'task distribution' is thus described to have occurred due to artists having 'gotten their own market'. Additionally, the respondent mentioned how: 'The world just spins faster and faster,' (excerpt from interview) as a result of increased digitalisation. This was exemplified by Gallerist 1 who explained a situation of how an unknown artist had emerged through digital channels and by-passed the art world system:

'Had never heard of him. Selling works in something like, maybe in the 100,000 kroner range. Then I try to look at his website. There is no CV, but it was mentioned in Politiken, and we assume that Politiken has sort of researched that he sold to the whole world and in that 100,000 kroner range. Where you just have to say 'hey, how did that just happen'? (excerpt from interview).

Here, a surprise of finding an artist with such a large price tag, with no CV, who was not familiar to the respondent, was described. However, Gallerist 2 proposed how artists might be able to make a living, but also noted: 'There are quite a few artists today who don't have galleries, and who manage brilliantly without the gallery, but career-wise, their significance is less'. (excerpt of interview). It is thus presented how artists may indeed be capable of managing their own practices, however, it is mentioned how their 'significance is less'.

In this regard Unestablished Artist expressed a desire to become represented by a traditional gallery: 'I definitely need to find a more traditional gallery that... I can kind of believe in and have a longer-term relationship with on the long run, right'? (excerpt from interview). Therefore, despite being able to sell artworks through an intermediary, which may constitute the reality for more artists nowadays, a desire for a traditional gallery was presented: 'where you became part of a family in one way or another and where you could somehow find some peace and have a slightly more structured economy'. (excerpt from interview). This thus exemplified the gallery's role in structuring financial matters, which described how certain roles are more fitting for an intermediary like the traditional gallery. However, an artistic freedom was moreover presented, when not in a commercial gallery: 'It is incredibly interesting the whole installation perspective and how you can rethink things independently of being a part of perhaps a more commercial gallery. But I also think that there is something cool in the classic.' (excerpt from interview). This moreover presented an awareness of positioning, where different demands arise in a traditional gallery, as also mentioned as 'cool'. However, in gallery setting, it was further mentioned by Gallerist 3 how more demand was put on artists in galleries:

'They cannot stand alone in their studio and then think 'okay, now the gallery will take care of everything, we just stand here and do not say anything'. They will also have to be very active in relation to social media and be able to write an artist statement for us, which we can use for something or have an understanding of what their exhibition will be about. They must have a high level of awareness so that we can use it for something, so that we can work with them'. (excerpt from interview).

Here, the respondent demanded an 'active' role, where artists must have a 'high level of awareness'. Moreover, it was stressed how artists are demanded to have a broader media scope than previously. Established Artist 3 further proclaimed a strategy of conducting 'research' to identify a potential 'wave' to ride:

I thought, okay, I want to be a visual artist, want to be full-time. You might only get one chance of riding the wave and get full attention and stuff like that. So, I thought, okay, just did my own little bad research for okay what's coming now of some new trend? Whatever the hell it is called. There's like one every decade or so, right? Then there is a small group of those who are able to live from it afterwards. You have to put in a lot of effort. Then I thought, okay this flow here, it could be it, like if I just keep surfing this wave'. (excerpt from interview).

Being conscious of the barriers to becoming a significant artist was therefore identified, and a strategic measure was taken to assure a fit in some new 'flow' or 'trend'. Artists may therefore increasingly become more independent. However, it was described how the traditional gallery was still important in building long-term significance for artists.

### 2.5 Wish for Increased Structure and Insight

On a concluding note, this section will present accounts of art world members wish for change and enlightenment. A wish for increased structure and transparency in the industry was presented by Gallerist 2: 'I would like to see the art world get more structured at some point. I mean, that you sort of agree that this is the way you think'. (excerpt from interview). The respondent elaborated in relation to mechanisms of evaluating an artistry on behalf of experiences:

'I would like to have such things written down, documented, so that people can relate to reading about it and become more knowledgeable about it. They can't do that today, so you don't know if the way I talk about it is the way my colleague talks about it'. (excerpt from interview).

The respondent thus presented a wish to have things 'written down, documented' in order to increase knowledge across institutions and actors. The respondent continued with:

'I have been a big proponent of, in connection with Danske Gallerier, for example, creating a set of ethical rules that you work within. I could have been an even bigger advocate for the fact that some game rules were made, that you had to comply to in order to be a member of Danske Gallerier, so that you had the same aim in mind, so that you could not just do as you want instead '. (excerpt from interview).

Here, a wish of a shared set of 'game rules' was presented in order to decrease autonomous activities in the art world. Related to educational institutions, Art Critic described how the closure of the graduate degree Management of Creative Business Processes was a loss as this educational perspective would provide means to better understand new financial developments in the art world:

'that's why it annoys me now when I hear that they are actually closing it down at CBS because I was so happy when I heard it at the time, because I thought, the subject also belongs there. Because if you are going to use it in today's society, you will have to deal not only with the development of society, of the political and all that, the cultural development, but also the commercial one. Because it all comes together and then today, when the foundations have gained such a large position in the entire art world. After all, it is a player that you will have to deal with'. (excerpt from interview).

This perception was further described by Auction House representative who mentioned the importance of more knowledge into the commercial side of the industry:

'it is interesting that you throw yourself into something like this, because trading art it is sometimes like understanding the economics behind it. It often becomes much like this 'if I buy art, I buy with my heart'. And then I just say, 'it's completely fair, and it's wonderful (...) but you can be a little more insightful about what you're doing'. (excerpt from interview).

An urge for collectors to become more 'insightful' about their acquisitions was therefore presented. Art Critic moreover introduced a critique of the media coverage: 'now it's only journalists and then it's going to be something like 'how beautiful it all is'." (excerpt from interview). This lack of criticism was described as a 'misfortune' for the building of significant artistries as critics were presented of being capable of enabling the recipient 'to understand and gain insight and in a way help them to draw some conclusions themselves, right'? (excerpt from interview). Criticism, Art Critic proposed, may thus be a way to help increase the knowledge and 'insight' into the dynamics of the art world and enable insights into the significance-building mechanisms.

### 2.6 Concluding Remarks

This chapter presented a descriptive review of the empirical data. Key findings emerged following four thematic dimension which described how art world member's use various resources and strategies in order to engage in processes of adding significance to artistries. To illustrate the findings, Figure 3 (p. 45) was derived in order to visualise activities enabling either short-term or long-term significance for artistries. Throughout the accounts, resources were strategically used and mobilised in art world member's routines. This was done to account for the *uncertainty*, which was ubiquitous, and in order to control the development of an artist's career. Lastly, it was presented how art world members predominantly longed for more structure to account for the increased uncertainty following the emergence of new market players. This was summed up in Gallerist 2's account: 'it is nowhere to be found. You cannot read about it, there is no one who has any grasp of it'. (excerpt from interview). This described how an increased density in the actors in the art world having different motivations and incentives, may challenge tacit rules and procedures employed by art world members when assuring, protecting, and controlling the formation of legitimate artistries.

# Part V – Discussion, Reflection, & Concluding Remarks

# 1. Discussion

The aim of this thesis has been to examine the mechanisms and processes enabling or restricting the formation of legitimate artistries within the Danish art world. In order to examine this, the thesis has explored the social synergies comprising the world. The thesis has reviewed various strands of literature on institutionalism, organisational legitimacy, and aesthetic legitimation in order to illuminate the topic. While previous studies of art worlds have focused on the artistic legitimacy of new art worlds (Baumann, 2001; Khaire & Wadhwani, 2010) and emerging artists (Lee & Lee, 2023; Kackovic & Wijnberg, 2022), this study has focused on the formation of long-term legitimate artistries. Throughout the study it was identified how the Danish art world predominantly relied on characteristics such as spatiality and autonomy whereas various mechanisms and processes were employed to assure legitimate processes. Barriers of opportunity and noise were presented to challenge the formation of long-term legitimacy for artistries. To account for these barriers, art world members employed strategies to stabilise and control the art world, and the process of endorsement. The presentation of findings further led to the formation of a model (see Figure 3, p. 45) of the collective endorsement process. Lastly, many of the art world members expressed a wish for increased insight and stability in the art world.

The following chapter will discuss these main findings in relation to the theoretical frame of artistic legitimation (Baumann, 2006) with the inclusion of theoretical insights adopted from institutionalism and its view of legitimacy. This framework will thus direct the findings towards a discussion of the research questions. The application of such frame will moreover provide a tool to relevantly interpret, explain, and position the findings in relation to theory. The sections will be structured by (1) the opportunity space, (2) the mobilisation of resources, and (3) the process of framing ideologies (Baumann, 2006).

## 1.1 The Opportunity Space

Two major changes to the Danish art world's *opportunity space* were identified as (1) cyclical transformations in society, and (2) episodic and continuous changes causing financialisation and digitalisation. These changes to the opportunity space were identified to affect the formation and stability of a legitimate artistry. This is in line with Baumann's (2006) notion of 'exogeneous factors' having implications on art worlds' formation. In the context of this study, the concept of opportunity space is applied to understand how changes to the Danish art worlds' environment affects the formation of a legitimate status.

The former change was identified as the *barrier to opportunity* and was related to cyclical changes in society. According to Imerman (2018) such changes to the opportunity space present *cycles of legitimacy* where artists' relevance is continuously weighed in terms of such cycles. Firstly, this type of change was illustrated through the women's rights movement, where white males between fifty and sixty were not receiving as much support

nor exposure from institutions as previously. Instead, this presented the opportunity for female artists to become exposed, as their 'profile' as women constituted the support from private and public institutions. This was identified in line with Imerman (2018) where a given artistry's profile or type of medium might lose its legitimate status due to changes to the opportunity space. On the contrary, however, an artistry would potentially achieve or re-gain a legitimate status previously deemed illegitimate due to these cyclical changes. Such ideological streams were identified to affect not only the emergence of new artistries, but likewise on the maintaining and stability of legitimate practices. As the media's constant search for newness was identified to be posing challenges for established artists, and its enlargement of societal trends, the survival of an artistry and its future relevance rested on their ability to successfully navigate 'between pressures to reform and contesting visions of reform' (Imerman, 2018, p. 88). Artist's agency in such uncertainty was therefore identified as crucial to maintain a long-term legitimate status during cycles of legitimacy as also presented by Imerman (2018).

Next, barriers of noise were identified as changes having root in episodic and continuous changes such as sudden financialisation and digitalisation. Art Critic presented how these changes had divided the art world into two: the financially driven versus the hedonically driven. In accordance with Suchman (1995) the emergence of new institutional actors may occur when institutions become homogeneous whilst the cultural environment remain heterogeneous. This is proposed to: 'create niches for "outlaw" entrepreneurs' (p. 594). Following the similarity of art world members education, their similar experiences in the art world, and the art world's limited size, the institutional context is identified as quite homogenous. Being homogeneous thus increases the likelihood of new actors filling in market gaps. The new actors were identified to be less concerned with the social synergies of slowly building an artistry and were increasingly motivated by turning a quick profit. In relation to this stream of actors with financial incentives, private institutions were identified to emerge and increasingly take the place as supporting body rather than museums. This is contradicting Bourdieu's (1993) notion of museums as a 'cultural authority' whose decisions of which artistries to support were accepted as 'legitimate by the rest of art world members, as well as the wider public for art' (Baumann, 2006, p. 56). This implies museums being capable of creating both internal as well as external legitimacy for artistries (Baumann, 2006). While the institution is still identified to possess power due to its cultural capital, the power of museum's legitimating effects may have weakened due to a shift in power balance. This is in accordance with Imerman's (2018) notion of changes to material balances which may result in changes to the 'causal power of legitimacy' (p. 81). A change in the material balance in the form of a shift in financial power onto private institutions contra the weakening of museums funds, confers more causal power of legitimacy onto private institutions. This was increasingly present in the art world members accounts of foundations become increasingly agenda-setting through their power to support.

This, moreover, points towards the distinction between internal versus external legitimacy (Baumann, 2006), where internal legitimacy requires more consensus from the professional mass. The external legitimacy of an artistry may be predominantly disrupted by non-professionals' claims and may perceive short-term fads to be of greater significance. This, however, would still produce some form of legitimate status, however not as well-grounded as internal legitimacy conferred by professionals. The internal legitimacy is therefore perceived to be of greater depth, however, an issue in the diffusion related to taken-for-granted practices may be impeding the effect.

Concludingly, these changes to the opportunity space were detected as potential cycles of legitimacy impacting the lifespan of artistries if they did not manage to navigate and adapt to such cycles. This was in accordance with Imerman (2018), whereas Baumann (2006) did not explicate such temporal synergies. Additionally, the demand for news value was identified to hinder the stability of a legitimate artistry in the long run. Established artists were more resilient to such cycles of legitimacy as they had already attained a certain legitimate status. However legitimate artistries were also identified to potentially stagnate if they did not succeed in continuously develop according to external shocks (Suchman, 1991). Fleeting societal trends therefore increases the necessity of positioning oneself as an artist. Especially artists with no gallery to support, navigate, or control are at stake of destabilising over time. Despite theory on artistic legitimation not inquiring into this temporal aspect of cycles of legitimacy, it is identified to be of essential character in understanding the formation – and the stability – of legitimate artistries and art worlds in general.

### 1.2 Mobilisation of Resources

The findings revealed how art world members relied on several tangible and intangible resources when engaging in the process of building artistic legitimacy. Baumann (2001) presented 'endogenous factors facilitating success' (p. 54) as being means to achieve legitimate status. From data it emerged how art world members depended on resources such as spatiality, professionalisation, measures of reasoning, power status, and strategic initiatives. These five resources were identified to be mobilised interchangeably in the collective process of conferring legitimate claims. Moreover, these elements were mobilised by art world members to justify their claims indicating a two-fold legitimating process. This is in accordance with Baumann's (2006) notion of the conferring party may also possess legitimacy in order to successfully confer legitimacy. The art world's mobilisation of resources was identified as being largely tacit and routinised processes which were exclusively unwritten and mostly performed without direct agency (Suchman, 1995; Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

The tangible resource *spatiality* presented the physical context as an enabler of exposure for artistries. This was identified by Baumann (2006) who presented gallery's physical spaces as resourceful in being a 'physical space to bring together works or art'. (p. 56). This could moreover stem from success, as certain galleries have proven its 'ability to perform' as acknowledged by Deephouse & Suchman (2008) and hence have acquired a

legitimate status. Through having previously proven to be successful in choosing and supporting legitimate artistries some galleries may enhance their own legitimate status on the basis of past successes.

Next, professionalisation was identified as a resource for art world members to obtain knowledge and insights in order to make justified claims of legitimacy. 'Staying informed' enabled art world members to determine what was 'good' and hence make justified claims on this behalf. Moreover, professionalisation served the purpose of 'absorbing uncertainty', as identifed by Meyer & Rowan (1977), in an art world where aesthetic judgements are difficult to make. The mobilisation of this resource was quite explicitly mentioned by art world members indicating a cognisant and strategic process. It was tacitly acknowledged how acquiring a large amount of professional capital would translate into an enhanced reputation. As presented by Deephouse & Suchman (2008) reputational capital ultimately translates into a legitimate status. Hence, it can be deduced how art world members' professionalisation ultimately enhances their legitimate status. Acquiring such a status would thus allocate more power to art world members and enable more significance in the process of conferring legitimate accounts. Additionally, power status was identified as a means to justify one's own claims – as well as affecting the claims of others. The findings identified power as deriving from different resources, being either financial, cultural, or professional capital, whereas legitimated members would possess the latter in addition of either of the two former resources. A power status was thus identified to stem from the accumulation of some resource, which potential effect in conferring legitimacy depended on the reputation of the given institution or member, as according to Baumann (2006) and Deephouse & Suchman (2008).

Findings revealed how art world members mobilised additional resources through strategic measures. This was identified in line with Bitektine & Haack (2015) through relationships with other legitimate art world members potentially conferring legitimacy onto each other. Moreover, Baumann (2006) presented such strategies and tactics as 'non-physical resources' which constitutes art world members' conscious activities 'because they come together precisely to influence the balance of power'. In this regard, the findings presented a 'model' where collectors and gallerists strategically positioned artworks in notable collections through donating works of the same artists to museums. Here, actors strategically tap into the cultural authority held by museums. This is beneficial as museums are identified to provide 'an enormous amount of control over the value, visibility, and survival of cultural productions'. (Baumann, 2006). This strategic use of an authoritative institution was not mentioned by Baumann (2006) and further indicates how the shifts in power balance may be a more recent phenomenon. This strategy to control through 'exploiting' an institution with weakening financial capital, was a strategic tool to increase the legitimate status of a chosen artistry. This underlines galleries' strategic approach to legitimacy creation which serves as a self-reenforcing mechanism for their own legitimate position. Firstly, it positions a chosen artistry into the mechanisms of the collective legitimacy process (see Figure 2, p. 45) and secondly, it reinforces the actors own legitimate position through an increase in the legitimate status of an artistry which is owned or represented by the actor themselves. This again points to success as a source of legitimacy as presented by Deephouse & Suchman (2008), where being successful in spotting artistries adds reputational capital and hence legitimate status to the actor. Conscious strategies of placing artworks in the right collections thus reveal a not so random process of forming legitimacy for artistries.

Lastly, as a result of the barriers of noise, protective strategies were identified to control the coherence between the significance of an artistry and its price. These strategies were explained to protect emerging artists from unsubstantiated price increases stemming from either (1) non-professionals, having little knowledge of the potential effects of their actions, or (2) financially driven actors, having a profit-only approach. These types of strategies were identified as cognisant, as both gallerists and artists were accounting for the application of such measures. Firstly, the strategic measure of 'keeping the prices low' was identified as being crucial for assuring the slow building of an artistry. In this regard, galleries explained a conscious strategy to control such price formation. This was done through imposing art buyers to resell artworks to auction houses in order to make a quick profit - art buyers who did not show loyalty to this rule were blacklisted from ever buying again. The galleries therefore exhibited a controlling strategy to protect artistries from the unregulated pricing on the auction market, which was presented as being directly destructive to an artist's career - regardless of the price being too high or too low. This tactical resource was identified by both gallerists and one of four artists as a means to respond through a protective and controlling strategy. Related to Baumann (2006) artists are often legitimated through their 'disinterestedness' in market synergies. However, as identified in findings, a new artist role has emerged as more independent than previously. It was discovered how Established Artist 3 had been increasingly strategic in timing and positioning the artistry into a certain 'wave' and 'trend' of the time. Being conscious of being a 'fit' with current societal currents, shows a high level of conscientiousness on the artists behalf. However, Established Artist 1 and 2, being of an elder generation of artists, did not experience this positioning as being crucial for their practice. They had emerged in a time of little density, where the 'competition' amongst artists was less requiring less strategic positioning. However, in recent times, with an increase in the demand, has an emphasis on artists' role in positioning their practices in order to 'fit' certain societal currents been accentuated. Among other things, artists were identified as having become more professional by consistently submitting CVs with their fund applications. This, moreover, makes sense due to an increase in the density of artists. Therefore, artists increasingly professionalise as a resource to assure the attainment of opportunities.

To conclude, art world members are increasingly strategizing and enhancing their own power status through mobilising resources. These resources, unwritten however verbally stated, were identified as granting legitimacy through the interorganisational relations of legitimate members in accordance with Bitektine & Haack (2015). Moreover, protective strategies to control and assure the formation of artistries were identified, both through the controlling of art buyers' behaviours as well as through strategically positioning artworks in notable collections. This was done in order to tap into the legitimating synergies of institutions with cultural

capital. This latter strategy was not mentioned by Baumann (2006) however, it indicated the strategic efforts art world members employ. The role of the artists was identified to be more strategic than was proposed by Baumann (2006) as new demands had shaped a more consciously positioned artist. Conscious strategies of mobilising resources were thus identified as employed in order to increase the stability and likelihood of certain artistries gaining legitimacy as well as prevent the dilution of artistries.

### 1.3 Processes of Framing Ideologies

Baumann (2006) presented how art worlds emerge through the framing of a 'legitimating ideology' concerning how new art worlds are deemed legitimate through the diffusion of some criteria that enables the recipients to understand the new art forms 'worth'. As this study is not concerned with the formation of a new art worlds as such, the idea of artistries adopting legitimating ideologies through interpretive strategies on a continuous basis is relevant. As presented by DiMaggio & Powell (1983), Becker (1982), and Baumann (2006), education, professionals, and media are crucial channels of disseminating and diffusing legitimating ideologies through an 'interpretive strategy'. Following the changing opportunity space, the Danish art world was identified to increasingly adopt societal ideologies and use these as 'legitimating ideologies' to build consensus (Baumann, 2006). Thus, matching the profile of an artistry with a current societal ideology may have positive implications for the legitimisation process. This is in line with Meyer & Rowan (1977) where the adoption of an externally legitimated ideology would 'increase their resources and survival capabilities' (p. 352). Therefore, by adopting a society-held ideology, artistries would increase in external comprehensibility (Meyer & Rowan, 1977) and thus external legitimacy (Baumann, 2006). This is so, as the external audience would become predisposed to interpret the given artists' practice and understand its artistic 'worth'. Moreover, such adoption of a legitimate ideology may further increase the internal commitment (Meyer & Rowan, 1977) and thus assure internal legitimacy as well (Baumann, 2006). This commitment by the internal art world, came to show through an increased support and exposure by private and public institutions. Additionally, internal legitimacy was identified to be obtained prior to external legitimacy because of the level of insights attained by art world members. As according to Wimmer (2021), many cultural ideas and practices spread through individuals, which is increasingly identified as the case of the Danish art field. Here, legitimate ideologies of new artforms and artistries was identified to diffuse through interactions in the spatial spheres. Especially being affected by a steep hierarchy, ideas and industry-setting standards were diffused in a top-down fashion. This was identified through Art Critics' account of Art Basel and other leading art fairs who were predominantly in charge of what artistic ideologies were legitimate. Moreover, regarding the size of the Danish art world compared to larger art worlds, structural imitation was likely identified through establishing Danish art fairs in line with other leading art worlds. Here, it was identified how professionals were increasingly affecting the choices of others in the process of building legitimacy. Moreover, following the new artist role, diffusion was increasingly identified to take place through artists own media. Artists were thus increasingly diffusing interpretive strategies through their social media, sometimes having larger numbers of followers than their respective galleries.

Despite Baumann's (2006) mentioning of media and critics as important in framing an ideological message, the Danish art world increasingly diffused meaning through interorganisational links as according to Wimmer (2021). It is argued how these routines of diffusion may increasingly constitute internal legitimacy as these tacit streams of legitimacy may entail asymmetric information for the wider audience who do not engage with the art world to the same extent. However, the use of books, catalogues, and so forth, were perceived as crucial in adding physical assessments to an artist's CV to build a legitimate status, and even external legitimacy. This further relates to Strang & Meyer's (1993) account of theorisation as a way of building legitimate accounts through conformity. Concludingly, relational linkages may be more powerful in diffusing legitimate ideologies through the hierarchy of a close-knit art world, which is likewise identified to apply to the emergence of new art worlds.

### 1.4 Concluding Remarks

This discussion has positioned the findings into the framework of artistic legitimation as presented by Baumann (2006). The aim was to insert the findings into a framework that would enable an increased understanding of how artistic legitimation is constructed. These sections discussed the effect of the opportunity space, the resources mobilised by art world members, and lastly, the ideological frame that was adopted, and how it was diffused. The opportunity space surrounding the Danish art field was identified to largely influence the art world's collective processes of assigning legitimacy to artistries. Both temporal and permanent changes to the industry were identified, which had both positive as well as negative implications on artistries depending on their current fit with society's ideology. Because of identified changes to the industry and the rapid increase in speed, has the road to achieve legitimacy been slightly shifted. This came to show through the strategies employed in order to protect, assure, and control the formation of legitimate artistries, along with the routines of diffusing comprehensible accounts of legitimacy.

# 2. Practical Implications

The findings of this paper extend research on artistic legitimation for artistries by providing a model of the collective legitimacy process applicable to national as well as global art worlds. Moreover, it may have implications on other creative and innovative industries in which collective legitimisation processes have effects on the stability and long-term significance of a given cultural phenomenon.

Regarding the managerial implications, during the research process it became clear that many of the world members were very eager for research of this kind. Many of them expressed a need to increase the understanding of the structure of the art world from a more economic and market-relevant perspective. This need also became clear through the changes that have occurred to the art world. Art Critic expressed how the significantly greater role of foundations and other private actors required more knowledge explaining the

synergies of legitimacy creation. It is therefore considered a study with relevant practical and managerial implications, as it has taken the beginning steps of creating a map of the complex processes and synergies that the art world consists of. Regarding research implications, this study may have implications on topics regarding how new ideas become dominant or accepted. Moreover, it may specifically have implications for studies regarding maintaining legitimacy within a rapidly changing environment. Even though this thesis has focused on legitimate 'artistries' the overall take-aways are assumed to be applicable for understanding the maintaining of the legitimate status of independent art worlds.

# 3. Future Research

During the process of the research project several opportunities for future research emerged, as I reviewed secondary data sources and became increasingly familiar with various strands of legitimating literature as well as research on art worlds. Besides this, interesting elements related to *temporality* seemed to appear from time to time, in which would be an interesting place to conduct future research. Research into temporal elements of the legitimisation process would increase the understanding of how certain mechanisms and processes affect the stability of legitimate artistries.

Being an explorative study with a broad scope, future research could beneficially examine certain part of the legitimisation process in more detail. As the shifts in power balance had emerged, a closer look into the decision-making process of foundations and their board members would hold great insight into the formation of legitimate artistries. This would entail a deeper understanding into the individual decision-making of few persons in power. Moreover, it was increasingly interesting how large global art fairs were identified to be setting an industry standard. This ultimate power of what is deemed legitimate was intriguing and would likewise be an interesting field of study. Moreover, their role in legitimising the galleries, was likewise an interesting aspect, and more research into art fairs and their temporal nature, would be of great importance to further the understanding of forming and maintaining the legitimate status of artistries.

This study further contributes to theory regarding the emergence of new art worlds, as some of the mechanisms involved in understanding the legitimacy-creating process, is also transferrable to studies of this kind.

## 4. Conclusion

The purpose of this study has been to examine the various mechanisms, practices, and processes that either enable or restrict the Danish art world's effort towards forming legitimate artistries. I was concerned with not only how it was formed, but also how it was managed during cycles of legitimacy. Through the theoretical lens of organisational legitimacy and artistic legitimacy, I have defined the wider social environment of the Danish art world as well as the constituents of a legitimate artistry. I have provided insight and potential clarification as to how art worlds strategically construct legitimate accounts through the use of several mechanisms and processes.

Through qualitatively analysing the Danish art world through interviews with art world members, I have located the defining characteristics and rules, myths, and norms intrinsic to the institutional environment. I broadly defined these features to constitute spatiality and autonomy. Additionally, I found how art world members mobilise various mechanisms and processes such as professionalisation, measures of reasoning, and power status as resources to navigate the uncertainty of the institutional environment. Moreover, these mechanisms were mobilised by art world members when forming artistic legitimacy through a collective process of endorsement. This collective process of building legitimacy was illustrated in Figure 3 (p. 45), where multiple actors were engaging to construct a long-term legitimate status.

Moreover, it emerged how the formation as well as stability of a legitimate artistry was affected by changes to the opportunity space, and hence the wider institutional environment. These challenges were identified as barriers to opportunity and barriers of noise. These barriers illustrated how cycles of legitimacy had potentially de-stabilising effects on an artistry. However, the rediscovery of previous illegitimate artistries was likewise identified as a positive effect of such cycles of legitimacy. Unsubstantiated claims from non-professionals along with ideological changes in the society were key barriers to the stability of an artistry.

Furthermore, from the analysis I identified how art world members engaged in certain strategic processes in order to tap into legitimating mechanisms. These strategies served as responses to assure the formation and stability of legitimate artistries. Art world members thus engaged in strategic processes in order to assure, control, and protect the formation of legitimate artistries. Strategies to protect, entailed a cautiousness on gallerists and artists behalf when building an artists' career. This was done through controlling the price formation as to assure a coherence between the weight of the artistry and its economic worth. A discrepancy between the artistry and its worth was identified to be harmful to the trust and hence stability of an artistry. In this relation, the secondary market's unregulated price formation was highlighted as quite disruptive, as prices either too high or too low could de-stabilise the trust in the artist's practice. Therefore, strategies to control were mobilised through restricting the access of art collectors selling artworks directly on the secondary market. Strategies to assure, control, and protect were therefore identified as conscious mechanisms employed to enable the formation and stability of an artistry.

I previously defined an artistry as the aggregate of an artists' creative ability, experiences, and resources physically anchored in professional assessments. Building on this definition, a legitimate artistry may be defined as, the aggregate of an artists' creative ability, experiences, and resources, physically anchored in professional assessments, collectively endorsed by a group of powerful actors and institutions. Through this definition I contend the necessity of the collective endorsement process in the formation of a legitimate artistry.

I thereby conclude how legitimate artistries are constructed through a collective process of endorsing which is facilitated by powerful art world members. Facing rapid external challenges, art world members respond to such uncertainties through mobilising resources to assure, control, and protect the long-term legitimate position of artistries. Its current state is subject to continuous changes, where power dynamics and lack of professional claims may challenge this tacit and taken-for-granted process. In order to accommodate additional changes, these myths, norms, and practices, may need to become diffused to a larger extent, in order to build an increased consensus. Additionally, through being aware of ideological changes in the wider social environment, artists may be increasingly capable of managing the stability of their position on their own terms.

# References

- Alexander, V. D., & Bowler, A. E. (2014). Art at the crossroads: The arts in society and the sociology of art. *Poetics*, 1-19.
- Alloway, L. (1972, September). Network: The Art World Described as a System. *Artforum*, pp. 28-32.
- Anfara, V. A. (2008). Theoretical Frameworks. In L. M. Given, *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research* (pp. 869-873). Melbourne: Sage Publications.
- Azari, J. R., & Smith, J. K. (2012, March). Unwritten Rules: Informal Institutions in Established Democracies. *Perspectives on Politics*, pp. 37-55.
- Baetens, J. D., & Lyna, D. (2019). The Education of the Art Market: National Schools and International Trade in the "Long" Nineteenth Century. In J. D. Baetens, & D. Lyna, *Art Crossing Borders* (pp. 15-63). Leiden: Brill.
- Baumann, S. (2001, June). Intellectualization and Art World Development: Film in the United States. *American Sociological Review*, 404-426.
- Baumann, S. (2006, August 7). A general theory of artistic legitimation: How art worlds are like social movements. *Poetics*, pp. 47-65.
- Becker, H. (1982, December). Art As Collective Action. American Sociological Association, pp. 767-776.
- Bille, T. (2021). Mapping the art market in Denmark. In E. Lazzaro, N. Moureau, & A. Turpin, *Researching Art Markets* (pp. 126-138). London: Routledge.
- Bitektine, A., & Haack, P. (2015). The "Macro" and "Micro" of Legitimacy: Toward a Multilevel Theory on the Legitimacy Process. *Academy of Management Review*, 49-75.
- Blatter, J. K. (2008). Case Study. In L. M. Given, *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods* (pp. 68-71). Melbourne: Sage Publications.
- Bourdieu, P. (1993). *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Bourdieu, P., & Wacquant, L. J. (1992). *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Britannica. (2023, March 13). *art market*. Retrieved from Britannica: https://www.britannica.com/topic/art-market

- Brown, N., & Deegan, C. (1998). The Public Disclosure of Environmental Performance Information—A Dual Test of Media Agenda Setting Theory and Legitimacy Theory. *Accounting and Business Research*, 21-41.
- Bryman, A. (2012). Social Research Methods. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Collins. (2023, May 12). *artistry*. Retrieved from Collins Dictionary: https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/artistry
- Coslor, E. (2016, March 1). The Financialisation of the Art Market. *E-International Relations*, pp. 1-5.
- Danske Gallerier. (2023, May 12). *Gallerier*. Retrieved from Danske Gallerier: https://www.danskgalleri.dk/gallerier/
- Davies, M., & Hughes, N. (2014). *Doing a Successful Research Project: Using Qualitative or Quantitative Methods*. London: Red Globe Press.
- Davies, S. (2015). Defining Art and Artworlds. The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, 375-384.
- Deephouse, D. L. (2017). Organizational Legitimacy: Six Key Questions. In R. Greenwood, C. Oliver, T. Lawrence, & R. Meyer, *The SAGE Handbook of Organizational Institutionalism* (pp. 2-42). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Deephouse, D. L., & Suchman, M. (2008). Legitimacy in Organizational Institutionalism. In R. Greenwood, T. B. Lawrence, R. E. Meyer, & C. Oliver, *The SAGE Handbook of Organizational Institutionalism* (pp. 49-77). London: SAGE Publications.
- DiMaggio, P. J., & Powell, W. W. (1983). The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields. *American Sociological Review*, 147-160.
- Dowling, M. (2008). Reflexivity. In L. M. Given, *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods* (pp. 747-748). Melbourne: SAGE Publications.
- Dwyer, S. C., & Buckle, J. L. (2009). The Space Between: On Being an Insider-Outsider in Qualitative Research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 54-63.
- Eastham, B. (2020, November 30). What Is 'the Artworld'? ArtReview.
- Eisenhardt, K. M. (1989, October). Building Theories from Case Study Research. *The Academy of Management Review*, pp. 532-550.
- Galaskiewicz, J. (1985). Interorganizational Relations. Annual Review of Sociology, 281-304.

- Helmke, G., & Levitsky, S. (2004, December). Informal Institutions and Comparative Politics: A Research Agenda. *Perspectives on Politics*, pp. 725-740.
- Holstein, J., & Gubrium, J. (1995). The Active Interview. Florida: Sage Publications.
- Hutter, M., & Frey, B. S. (2010). On the Influence of Cultural Value on Economic Value. *Revue d'économie politique*, 35-46.
- Imerman, D. (2018). Contested Legitimacy and Institutional Change: Unpacking the Dynamics of Institutional Legitimacy. *International Studies Review*, 74-100.
- Iseminger, G. (2015). Aestheticized Institutionalism and Wollheim's Dilemma. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 385-390.
- Jensen, D. (2008). Credibility. In L. M. Given, *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods* (pp. 138-139). Melbourne: Sage Publications.
- Kackovic, M., & Wijnberg, N. M. (2022). Artists Finding Galleries: Entrepreneurs Gaining Legitimacy in the Art Market. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 1092-1116.
- Khaire, M., & Wadhwani, R. D. (2010, December). CHANGING LANDSCAPES: THE CONSTRUCTION OF MEANING AND VALUE IN A NEW. *The Academy of Management Journal*, pp. 1281-1304.
- Knotter, S. (2017). *Mapping the Creative Value Chains: A study on the economy of culture in the digital age.*Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- Lee, J. W., & Lee, S. H. (2023). The Legitimation of Young and Emerging Artists in Digital Platforms: The Case of Saatchi Art. *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society*, 19-41.
- McAndrew, D. C. (2023). The Art Market Report 2023. Basel and Zurich: Art Basel and UBS.
- McFee, G. (1985, April). Wollheim and the Institutional Theory of Art. *The Philosophical Quarterly*, pp. 179-185.
- McFee, G. (1985, April). Wollheim and the Institutional Theory of Art. *The Philosophical Quarterly* (1950-), 179-185.
- McGinn, M. K. (2008). Secondary Data. In L. M. Given, *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods* (pp. 803-804). Melbourne: Sage Publications.
- Merriam-Webster. (2023, April 25). *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*. Retrieved from Merriam-Webster: https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/legitimate
- Meyer, C. B. (2001, November). A Case in Case Study Methodology. Field Methods, 329-351.

- Meyer, J. W., & Rowan, B. (1977). Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony. *American Journal of Sociology*, 340-363.
- Meyer, J., & Scott, W. (1983). *Organization and Environments: Ritual and Rationality*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Miles, M., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, J. (2014). Fundamentals of Qualitative Data Analysis. In M. Miles, A. Huberman, & J. Saldaña, *Qualitative Data Analysis*. Arizona: Sage Publications.
- Ogden, R. (2008). Anonymity. In L. M. Given, *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods* (pp. 16-17). Melbourne: Sage Publications.
- Oliver, C. (1991, January). Strategic Responses to Institutional Processes. *The Academy of Management Review*, pp. 145-179.
- Paquette, J. (2021). Building Legitimacy in the Cultural Sector. *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society*, 1-2.
- Parsons, T. (1960). Structure and Process in Modern Societies. . American Journal of Sociology.
- Race, R. (2008). Literature Review. In L. M. Given, *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research* (pp. 487-489). Melbourne: Sage Publications.
- Saldaña, J. (2013). The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
- Samdanis, M. (2016). The Impact of New Technology on Art. In J. Hackforth-Jones, & I. Robertson, *Art Business Today: 20 Key Topics* (pp. 164-172). London: Lund Humphries.
- Saunders, M., & Lee, B. (2017). Conducting Case Study Research for Business and Management Students. Sage Publications.
- Selznick, P. (1996, June). Institutionalism "Old" and "New. Administrative Science Quarterly, pp. 270-277.
- Shand, W. (2015). *Exploring institutional change The contribution of co-production to shaping institutions*. London: International Institute for Environment and Development.
- Shyon, B. (2001, June). Intellectualization and Art World Development: Film in the United States. *American Sociological Review*, pp. 404-426.
- Silverman, D., Seale, C., Gobo, G., & Gubrium, J. (2004). *Qualitative Research Pratice*. London: Sage Publications.
- Strang, D., & Meyer, J. W. (1993, August). Institutional Conditions for Diffusion. *Theory and Society*, pp. 487-511.

- Suchman, M. C. (1995, July). Managing Legitimacy: Strategic and Institutional Approaches. *The Academy of Management Review*, pp. 571-610.
- Swaminathan, A., & Wade, J. B. (2020). Institutional Environment. In M. Augier, & D. J. Teece, *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Strategic Management* (pp. 1-7). London: Palgrave Macmillan London.
- Thomas, L. D., & Ritala, P. (2022). Ecosystem Legitimacy Emergence: A Collective Action View. *Journal of Management*, 515-541.
- van den Hoonaard, D. K., & van den Hoonard, W. C. (2008). Data Analysis. In L. M. Given, *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods* (pp. 186-188). Melbourne: Sage Publications.
- Wimmer, A. (2021). Domains of Diffusion: How Culture and Institutions Travel around the World and with What Consequences. *American Journal of Sociology*, 1389-1438.
- Zelditch, M. (2001, March). Processes of Legitimation: Recent Developments and New Directions. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, pp. 4-17.
- Zorloni, A. (2005). Structure of the Contemporary Art Market and the Profile of Italian Artists. *International Journal of Arts Management*, 61-71.
- Zorloni, A. (2013). The Economics of Contemporary Art: Markets, Strategies, and Stardom. Milan: Springer.
- Zucker, L. G. (1987). Institutional Theories of Organization. Annual Reviews, 443-464.