

Valuation beyond the Market: On Symbolic and Economic Value in Contemporary Art

Ulf Wuggenig und Steffen Rudolph

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Art Production beyond the Art Market?

Karen van den Berg and Ursula Pasero (eds.)

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Valuation beyond the Market: On Symbolic and Economic Value in Contemporary Art

Ulf Wuggenig and Steffen Rudolph

Models of the segmentation of the art field

The visual art field presents itself as a highly differentiated sphere internally—a characteristic that it shares with other fields of cultural production. Social scientists typically differentiate between four sub-segments of a cultural field, each with its own relative autonomous logic. These are sometimes grouped into dichotomies, and sometimes further internally differentiated according to the principle of Chinese boxes.¹

a) The denial of the economy in the field theory model

The field theory approach in the tradition of Pierre Bourdieu utilizes two main axes to trace sub-fields with their specific rules, interests, beliefs, and criteria for success—but also their relevant “agents,” whether

¹ This kind of analytical division within fields of cultural production is due to the construction of typologies on the basis of the Cartesian coordinate system that implies the creation of four (ideal) types, as well as the forms of taxonomy in the tradition of Paul F. Lazarsfeld. They encompass reducing the attribute space by crossing dichotomized dimensions. See, for example, Allen Barton and Paul F. Lazarsfeld, “Qualitative Measurement in the Social Sciences: Classification, Typologies, and Indices,” in *The Policy Sciences*, eds. Daniel Lerner and Harold D. Lasswell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1951), 155–92. See also Susann Kluge, “Empirically Grounded Construction of Types and Typologies in Qualitative Social Research,” *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 1, no. 1 (2000), <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs0001145>.



Place of production: Ulf Wuggenig
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individuals or institutions. A dimension with poles staked in the opposition between autonomy and heteronomy in artistic production is assigned the role of a main axis of differentiation. This axis differentiates the extent to which artistic production is oriented toward or judged by external criteria (for instance, economic, political, or religious). The autonomous pole is essentially characterized by a system of evaluation in which peers, other artists, or also experts (who are aware of aesthetic discourses or actually generate them²) occupy decisive positions. This horizontal axis meets orthogonally with a second axis, defined by the volume of consecration as well as type of audience reached. As Bourdieu elucidates:

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The structure of the field of cultural production is based on two fundamental and quite different oppositions: first, the opposition between the sub-field of restricted production and the sub-field of large-scale production, i.e., between two economies, two time scales, two audiences . . . and secondly, the opposition, within the sub-field of restricted production, between the consecrated avant-garde and the avant-garde, the established figures and the newcomers, i.e. between artistic generations, often only a few years apart, between the 'young' and the 'old', the 'neo' and the 'paleo', the 'new' and the 'out-moded', etc.; in short, between cultural orthodoxy and heresy.³

- 2 In social science literature on art, experts are often accorded the exclusive ability of recognizing and defining the value of artistic innovations. This is less so in the case of peers of artists, who are seen as being partial and interested, and not at all the case regarding the price-based evaluations of the market. See the following differentiation of peers, experts, and the market in Wijnberg and Gemser, as well as the thesis on the interplay between artists and experts: "There is, therefore, a symbiotic relationship between artists who systematically pursue innovation and experts who can help to establish the value of this innovation." Nachoem M. Wijnberg and Gerda Gemser, "Adding Value to Innovation: Impressionism and the Transformation of the Selection System in Visual Arts," *Organization Science* 11, no. 3 (May/June 2000): 324.
- 3 Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 53. The perhaps most illuminating visual representation of Bourdieu's model of the art field can be found on page 49 of this publication. It refers to the literary field of nineteenth-century France. Visual artists as different as Andrea Fraser, John Miller, and Jeff Koons had no difficulty in applying it to the field of contemporary art, as was demonstrated in the context of the artistic symposium *The Aesthetic Field* in 1993 at the University of Applied Art in Vienna, where Bourdieu's figure was used in a poster announcing this event.

Whereas the sub-field of restricted production is a domain of autonomous as well as "social art" of an avant-garde type in the sense of Bourdieu,⁴ the sub-field of large-scale production encompasses the domain of bourgeois art as well as that of "industrial art" or "middle-brow art," dominated by the quest for investment profitability and the widest possible audience.⁵

This analytical structuring of the art field is simplified in the form of a four-fold scheme by Ève Chiapello in order to formulate assumptions about the structural location of anti-economical attitudes toward anything that can be subsumed under the term "management" in the art field.⁶ The denial of economic values and the opposition toward economic rationality—so, the prediction on the basis of this variant of a field-theoretical model—is least likely to be found in the part of the sub-field of large-scale production that is not aiming at a bourgeois but rather a middle- or working-class audience. An example for this "*culture commerciale*," in the French of Chiapello, is the realm of arts and crafts. On the other hand, the broadest presence of market-averse dispositions, later also termed "market phobic" attitudes by the critic Isabelle Graw,⁷ is found in the part of the sub-field of restricted production in which young producers and their

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- 4 Bourdieu is using the term "avant-garde" in the following "modernist" sense: "Making one's mark,' a new epoch, means winning recognition, in both senses, of difference from other producers, especially the most consecrated of them; it means, by the same token, creating a new position, ahead of positions already occupied, in the vanguard. (Hence the importance, in this struggle for survival, of all distinctive marks, such as the names of schools or groups—words which make things, distinctive signs which produce existence" (Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, 60). For texts decrying the end of the avant-garde or using this notion in a different way, see Rosalind Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985); Benjamin Buchloh, *Neo-avantgarde and Culture Industry: Essays on European and American Art from 1955 to 1975* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001); Hal Foster, "What's Neo about the Neo-Avant-Garde?," *October* 19, no. 70 (Fall 1994): 5–32; and Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984). For a discussion of the notions of avant-garde in Bourdieu and Bürger, see Christine Magerski, *Theorien der Avantgarde. Geben—Bürger—Bourdieu—Lubmann* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag, 2011).
- 5 See Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, 126.
- 6 Her early work in organizational theory of art is based on Bourdieu, as well as on Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot, *On Justification: Economies of Worth* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006 [1991]). See Ève Chiapello, *L'influence des facteurs idéologiques sur la gestion des organisations culturelles: Une comparaison France-Angleterre à la lumière des années Thatcher* (Jouy-en-Josas: HEC, 1993), 10ff.
- 7 See Isabelle Graw, *High Price: Art between the Market and Celebrity Culture* (Berlin: Sternberg, 2010), 90.

networks, who lack fame as well as recognition, abound in a change of generations. In the case of the two remaining segments, we are dealing on the one hand with the charismatically based and thus equally market-distant sub-field of the “*avant-garde consacrée*,” and on the other with the domain of the “*classiques*,” or Bourdieu’s “bourgeois art.” In the visual arts field, the following rule applies: the material ownership of artworks of renowned artists is an upper-class privilege, while symbolic appropriation is open and reaches more broadly to the middle classes and the general system of education. Even as a “high culture” segment, it demonstrates traits of the “culture industry” abominated by Adorno and other representatives of critical and mass culture theory.⁸ The culture industry production was not just derided as “kitsch for the masses” by intellectuals who were adherents of modernism, but also as “kitsch for the elites,” as exemplified by the case of “academic art.”⁹

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b) Mary Douglas's model of four cultures

Another four-field model, based on a different theoretical paradigm, can be found in Cultural Theory. It builds on the grid-group typology that Mary Douglas used in drawing upon Émile Durkheim’s key concepts of anomie, fatalism, egoism, and altruism. This model crosses the degree of normative regulation to which actors are subjected in social systems (anomie vs. excessive regulation) with the strength of the connections linking them—egoism vs. altruism, or the weak and strong ties of network analysis.¹⁰ On this basis, the vicinity and distance to market structures can be determined along four cultures in a cultural map.

⁸ See Theodor W. Adorno, *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture* (London: Routledge, 2001).

⁹ See Clement Greenberg, “Avant-Garde and Kitsch,” *Partisan Review* 6, no. 5 (1939): 34–49, and Dwight Macdonald, “A Theory of Mass Culture,” *Diogenes* 1, no. 3 (1953): 1–17.

¹⁰ See Mary Douglas, *Risk and Blame: Essays in Cultural Theory* (London: Routledge, 1992), 224, and Mary Douglas, *Thought Styles* (London: Sage, 1996), 42–44.

MATRIX I:

The four-fold cultural map of Mary Douglas (1999)¹¹

<p>B= isolates, by choice or compulsion literally alone or isolated in complex structures</p>	<p>C= hierarchies strongly incorporated groups with complex structure</p>
<p>A= competitive individualism weak structure, weak incorporation</p>	<p>D= egalitarian enclaves or sects strongly incorporated groups with weak structure</p>

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In quadrant A—which refers to a structure low on grid as well as group that is weakly regulated and primarily linked via weak ties—a culture of “active individualism”¹² characterized by entrepreneurial values, strategies, and lifestyles is to be expected. It stands in opposition to quadrant C, high on group as well as on grid, which is characterized by a culture of “conservative hierarchy.” In view of the visual arts, this section corresponds with the culture of what Bourdieu termed the “charismatic sub-field” as well as segments controlled by bureaucracy or the state. However, in empirical terms, the “market” (A) and “hierarchy” (C) segments certainly can build coalitions or associations, given that, from Douglas’s observation, the “establishment” in social systems is usually based on coalitions that involve representatives of these two structures.

Typically, opposition forms against the establishment dominated by representatives of the entrepreneurial and hierarchical cultures in groups also labeled by Douglas as “dissident enclaves” (D). In the case of visual art, for example, one could think of associations or networks of young, heretical artists. In the context of Douglas’s model, they position themselves against the art market, commercial art, and artists of

¹¹ Mary Douglas, “Four Cultures: The Evolution of a Parsimonious Model,” *Geo-Journal* 47, no. 3 (1999), 411–414, here 412.

¹² Rather different labels for the four cultures are used in different works of Douglas and her school. Here we also apply those of Douglas from Mary Douglas, *Thought Styles: Critical Essays on Good Taste* (London: Sage, 1996), 43: “active individualism,” “conservative hierarchy,” “dissident enclave,” and “backwater isolation.”

the entrepreneurial type, as well as against state art, bourgeois art, or consecrated avant-garde art. Finally, the model also identifies “isolates” and their culture of “backwater isolation” (B)—actors with a tendency toward fatalism who remove themselves from the games of power and recognition, but also commercial success, to which the players of the segments of market and hierarchy are tied; this usually takes place at the price of marginalization. Their withdrawal is functional for the hegemony of players in A and C.

106 Vincent Descombes, a philosopher who applies the Douglas model, suggests that one speak of four “worlds” instead of four cultures. From a theoretical point of view, his idea of connecting two of these worlds with two forms of critique as developed by Albert O. Hirschman¹³ seems to be more relevant: the “world of isolation” with Hirschman’s “exit” option, and the “world of dissent” with the “voice” reaction, when, for example, the “world of enterprise culture” or the “world of status” is openly rejected.¹⁴

c) The economics of conventions model

In the context of a study partly informed by Howard S. Becker’s social-constructivist “art world” concept,¹⁵ a research group led by French economists of convention Nathalie Moureau and Dominique Sagot-Duvaurox developed a model that shows some familiarity with the one proposed by grid-group Cultural Theory in its application. It is built upon a contrast between a “world of the market” and an “institutional world” supported by the state or public institutions.¹⁶ This theory of segmentation also involves a four-field scheme. While considering the existing “conventions” and forms of practice in the examined regional art worlds

(in Nantes, Le Havre, and Lyon, among others), the model crosses two oppositions: “innovative” vs. “traditional” as well as “work-oriented” vs. “project-oriented,” which refers to the degree of autonomy in the realization of the work of art.¹⁷ In the typology that is supported empirically by factor analysis, the “art fair artist” type—painters, installation, and video artists who primarily produce in the world of the market—and painters and sculptors termed “salon artists” for whom the same applies, are contrasted on the one hand with the “craftsman and entrepreneur artist,” and on the other hand with the “360° artist,” who typically works in collectives and associations. Commissioned work is characteristic for both. In France, it is supported by the institutional world. 107

There is a difference between the artist associations found in the French provinces—which are heavily supported by the state and in this sense located outside of the market—and the type of artist collectives or “project spaces” that insist on their autonomy and position themselves directly against the art market. Following the first blossoming of alternative artist collectives and artist spaces in 1970s New York, such initiatives increased more recently in Berlin, the new European artistic center;¹⁸ this is called a golden era by some. The background for these dynamics lies in the heavy immigration of international artists, who, in the face of increased precariousness, were attracted by Berlin’s low rents and cost of living as well as the city’s sub- and countercultural traditions in connection with a higher degree of tolerance toward deviance than in other cities.¹⁹

13 See Albert O. Hirschman, *Exit, Voice and Loyalty* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970).

14 See Vincent Descombes, “The Collective Identity of a Teaching Body,” *Books & Ideas* 7, March 4 (2011), http://www.booksandideas.net/IMG/pdf/20110302_descombes.pdf.

15 See Howard S. Becker, *Art Worlds* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

16 See Muriel de Vrièse, Bénédicte Martin, Corinne Melin, Nathalie Moureau, and Dominique Sagot-Duvaurox, “Diffusion et valorisation de l’art actuel en région: Une étude des agglomérations du Havre, de Lyon, de Montpellier, Nantes et Rouen,” *Culture études* 5, no.1 (2011): 14. In France, the differentiation between the market world and the institutional world is closely associated with the approach found in Raymonde Moulin, *L’Artiste, l’institution et le marché* (Paris: Flammarion, 1992).

17 “Quatre profils d’artistes se dégagent en fonction de deux critères principaux: d’un côté, l’inscription de l’oeuvre dans la tradition ou dans l’innovation, de l’autre, le degré d’autonomie dans la réalisation de l’oeuvre (commande ou non)” (Muriel de Vrièse et al., “Diffusion et valorisation,” 14). A representation of the model in English can be found in Nathalie Moureau and Dominique Sagot-Duvaurox, “Four Business Models in Contemporary Art,” *International Journal of Arts Management* 4, no. 3 (Spring 2012): 44–56.

18 In the Global Arts Cities (GAC) ranking, Berlin, according to the number of “international visual arts events” in 2011, was even positioned ahead of New York with Vienna, Düsseldorf, London, and Munich following. In regards to “local visual art events,” Berlin’s rank was third, after Tokyo and New York. See Monika J. Skórska and Robert C. Kloosterman, “Performing on the Global Stage: Exploring the Relationship between Finance and Arts in Global Cities,” October 1, 2012, <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/gawc/rb/rb412.html>.

19 For these traditions and the ongoing changes in this respect in Berlin, see Francesco Masci, *L’Ordre règne à Berlin* (Paris: Allia, 2013).

The non-linear growth of this type of initiative in Berlin²⁰ is also owed to what one must see as “voluntary” commitment, or, on the other side of the coin, self-exploitation. On the other hand, alternative spaces and collectives support themselves on the art-field typical gift economy that extends from direct and indirect state funding to support from friends, partners, relatives, admirers, and benefactors.²¹

d) The art market model according to the Arts Council England

A systematic differentiation of artistic production can also be found in the “contemporary art marketplace model.”²² Developed by Morris Hargreaves McIntyre in cooperation with several professional actors involved in England’s contemporary art field, the study commissioned by Arts Council England (ACE) was motivated by the aim of a “cultivation of the art market.” Not dissimilar to the aforementioned French study, an axis of differentiation is defined by the opposition between “innovative” and “traditional.” A sub-dimension of this axis results from the consideration of a discursive indicator, namely the level of critical debate that accompanies artistic production. From this perspective, innovative art, in contrast to traditional art, requires discursive backup. The second axis—in this case the horizontal one—partly follows a geographic logic. It reflects the opposition of “local” vs. “international” visibility of production with intermediate steps for art that has managed to garner regional or national attention. The crossing of

the two dimensions results in four sub-fields termed “emergent art,” “avant-garde,” “recognized art,” and “most art.”²³ From this perspective, the vast majority of artistic production—“most art”—lacks both recognition from the art market as well as from the group of insiders and experts who control or mostly determine the selection, valorization, canonization, and transmission of production to future generations in “high-culture” fields.²⁴

In a second, process-oriented model, termed “art eco-system,” the characteristic interaction between private, public, and civil society agents in the valorization of contemporary art is captured. The model concentrates on relations and interactions between actors and institutions in those sub-fields of art in which a small number of protagonists compete for a position in the history of art. It implies the existence of three phases: At the start of an artist’s career, the market—commercial galleries, private collectors, auction houses—has no or only minimal relevance. The path is primarily laid out by parents, relatives, teachers, friends, and especially artists who are friends or acquaintances, the media, and art schools.²⁵ In phase two, the market gains much influence through the role of the galleries (and their gatekeeper function) in combination with collectors. However, the role of more or less “embedded” art critics, curators, and public institutions, like exhibition centers (*Kunstvereine* in Germany)

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²⁰ See Séverine Marguin, “Zur Entwicklung und aktuellen Situation der Projekträume im Berliner Kunstfeld,” *Kulturrisse. Zeitschrift für radikaldemokratische Kulturpolitik* 12, no. 4 (2012): 72–76, and the interactive map that depicts the dynamics of Berlin’s project spaces from 1970 to 2013 based on Marguin’s data: Séverine Marguin and Erik Streb del Toro, “Projektraumkarte,” Netzwerk freier Berliner Projekträume und –initiativen, July 2013, <http://www.projektraeume-berlin.net/interaktivekarte/>.

²¹ Arjo Klamer defines the gift as the intangible nature of an exchange equivalent: “A gift is the transfer of a good without an explicit specification of a quid pro quo. The good can be a tangible thing or money, but it also can be intangible, as in the form of time, attention, information or knowledge. . . . A generous interpretation of the gift considers a gift any ‘good’, including money, that is transferred, conveyed or transmitted from one party to another when the nature, the value and the timing of the return of an equivalent is left undetermined” Arjo Klamer, “Gift Economy,” in *A Handbook of Cultural Economics*, ed. Ruth Towse (Cheltenham: Elgar, 2003), 243. For the role of the gift economy in artistic fields see also Hans Abbing, *Why Artists Are Poor* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2002), 34–36.

²² Morris Hargreaves McIntyre, *Taste Buds: How to Cultivate the Art Market*, ed. Arts Council England, (London: Arts Council England, 2004), 7.

²³ In the ACE study under “most art,” which has a focus on local and regional visibility, the following types of art production are subsumed: a) ex-avant-garde art, b) ex-emerging art, which did not make it into avant-garde art, and c) new entrants working in established genres, not receiving critical attention. Then there are three types of “aesthetic adornment”: d) public art, e) corporate art, and f) domestic art. And finally, two types of work are discerned that are “mainly produced with a market in mind, generally as souvenirs”: g) reproductions of museum pieces, posters, and long editions from public collections and h) souvenirs, paintings, and objects related to locations. *Ibid.*, 20.

²⁴ On the role of experts in the art field, see also Payal Arora and Filip Vermeulen, “The End of the Art Connoisseur? Experts and Knowledge Production in the Visual Arts in the Digital Age,” *Information, Communication & Society* 16, no. 2 (2013): 194–214, and Raymonde Moulin and Alain Quemin, “La certification de la valeur de l’art: Experts et expertises,” *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 48, no. 6 (1993): 1421–45.

²⁵ On the importance of artists being integrated in one’s social network, see Ulf Wuggenig, “Objektaffekte: Die Rolle der Künstler/innen im sozialen Netzwerk,” in *Das Kunstfeld. Eine Studie über Akteure und Institutionen der zeitgenössischen Kunst*, eds. Heike Munder and Ulf Wuggenig (Zürich: JRP Ringier, 2012), 231–50. The empirical data demonstrate that artists are accorded a greater importance than parents, teachers or the media in questions posed in surveys in Zurich, Vienna, Hamburg, and Paris dealing with developing an interest in art among the contemporary art audience.

or art schools connected with the gallery system should not be ignored in the process of producing visibility and attention. Iain Robertson speaks of a “public sector validation” in this context that is necessary for access into art history. This kind of validation is only available to the protagonists involved in the networks of “alpha dealers” of “international cutting edge art.”²⁶

The market, the gallery, and the auction house lose their position as decisive gatekeepers in the third and last phase of artistic consecration, which is decisive for placement in art history.²⁷ Public museums and collections, as well as universities and protagonists who work in these institutional settings, function as central gatekeepers for artistic survival after the artist dies, positioning artistic works in cultural memory.²⁸ However, the feedback loop from public institutions of consecration to agents of the market has to be kept in mind: “A work donated to a museum ‘exits’ the art market; at the same time, it enhances the pedigree and future of the artist and the primary dealer.”²⁹

e) Stuart Plattner’s art market model

In the model by Stuart Plattner, an economic anthropologist, other dimensions are highlighted. A central point of reference for his model is the “lemon market” metaphor. George A. Akerlof used it to sensitize to the importance of asymmetries of information and a related “market

failure.”³⁰ The two axes in Plattner’s model are the producers’ and sellers’ motives (money vs. identity) and the transparency that the art field offers consumers. Given this foundation, the segment of “local art markets” is thus characterized as follows:

In local art markets, the rules governing economic value are obscure and the motives of producers are not predominantly economic. The identity and self-respect of these producers are defined by their work. . . . They work because they cannot exist without the activity: they are addicted to their work. . . . This conjunction of identity producers and confused consumers defines the local art markets.³¹

Consumers can rely neither on an understandable popular theory of value accumulation nor on a transparent price system or the trans-local “resale value” of purchased art.

The description of exchange processes in local and regional art fields by Raymonde Moulin contributes some aspects from a sociological point of view. In contrast to the art market in metropolitan centers, mediation by galleries is of low importance. If galleries are involved at all, they typically offer a mixture of art, antiquities, and furniture. Buying in the ateliers of artists with whom one has a personal relationship is also a typical feature of these markets: “The provincial market is sustained by local

²⁶ “The international art market for cutting edge art confers added value onto its art by ensuring that it is validated by the public sector. . . . but only the cutting-edge Alpha dealers have access to public sector validation which results in a significant price premium for the living artist and his/her dealer and secure the future of the work after the artist’s death.” Iain Robertson, “The International Art Market,” in *Understanding International Art Markets and Management*, ed. Iain Robertson (London: Taylor & Francis, 2005), 17.

²⁷ See the critique of Harrison C. White’s theory of artistic consecration, stressing the role of the commercial gallery and ignoring the central function of the museum in the last phase of the process in Ulf Wuggenig, “Creativity and Innovation’ in the Nineteenth Century: Harrison C. White and the Impressionist Revolution Reconsidered,” in *Critique of Creativity*, eds. Gerald Raunig, Gene Ray, and Ulf Wuggenig (London: MayflyBooks, 2011), 57–75.

²⁸ On the process of placing artists in collective and cultural memory, see Gladys Engel Lang and Kurt Lang, “Recognition and Renown: The Survival of Artistic Reputation,” *American Journal of Sociology* 94, no. 1 (July 1988): 79–109.

²⁹ Derrick Chong, “Marketing in Art Business,” in *The Art Business*, eds. Ian Robertson and Derrick Chong (Oxford: Routledge, 2008), 117.

³⁰ Akerlof chose the market for used cars as an example of information asymmetry. Dealers know about the value of the cars on sale because of their experience with use and repairs; buyers don’t. As far as their judgment is rational, they are thus only willing to pay low prices, such as those for so-called lemons. In the case of cars with de facto high quality, this is not acceptable for the dealer. Since the seller and buyer don’t reach an agreement, the market fails due to information asymmetry. See the essay, which gained Akerlof and his associates the Nobel Prize: George A. Akerlof, “The Market for ‘Lemons’: Quality Uncertainty and the Market Mechanism,” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 84, no. 3 (1970): 488–500. Plattner ascribes a comparable information asymmetry to the art market and compares it to wine and livestock markets, among others. He sees solutions for buyers or collectors in the appropriation of specific cultural capital or in the creation of trustworthy personal relationships to artists, gallery owners, and other insiders in order to gain access to the necessary information. Since both strategies are bound to major investments and costs, the number of protagonists in privileged classes who can purchase material art is far lower than one would expect in light of disposable income.

³¹ Stuart Plattner, “Profit Markets and Art Markets,” in *Commodities and Globalization: Anthropological Perspectives*, eds. Angelique Haugerud, M. Priscilla Stone, and Peter D. Little (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), 118.

painters. . . . Sales are made by artists in their studios or through shows organized by a town or a local art school.”³²

The production of art of this type can thus be understood to be situated in an economic region that lies beyond what is usually termed the “art market” in art magazines—that is, the international art market in centers that are made up of a rather small number of transnationally active galleries and auction houses as well as an economically privileged class of collectors.³³

Matrix II, found below, reduces Plattner’s model to its essential components. Quadrant D refers to the segment of local and regional markets, while the international art market corresponds to quadrant C.

MATRIX II

Four segments of the art field—Stuart Plattner’s model³⁴

Rules of value for consumers are	Producer’s main motives are	
	monetary	non-monetary
clear	B	C
obscure	A	D

³² Raymonde Moulin, *The French Art Market: A Sociological View* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1987), 32.

³³ Clare McAndrew notes that number and share of super-rich art collectors increased in the last decade in this segment: “A factor that has influenced the growth of the art market has been the rapid increase in the number of super-wealthy collectors. . . . In the 1980s and early 1990s, many viewed art as a middle class commodity, but they considered that the art world has followed the wider economy over the last 20 years, with the divide between the super-rich and the middle class increasing. Dealers and collectors noted that now, even formerly routine objects had become overprices, and it had become a ‘rich person’s art market’” (Clare McAndrew, *The International Art Market in 2011: Observations on the Art Trade over 25 Years* [Helvoirt: The European Fine Art Foundation, 2012], 118). For critical discussions of these developments on an empirical basis, cf. Andrea Fraser, “L’1%, c’est moi,” *Texte zur Kunst* 21, no. 83 (September 2011): 114–28, and Ulf Wuggenig, “Attached by an Umbilical Cord of Gold,” *Texte zur Kunst* 21, no. 83 (September 2011): 56–75.

³⁴ The model reconstructed here in a simplified form was explicated for the first time in Stuart Plattner, “A Most Ingenious Paradox: The Market for Contemporary Fine Art,” *American Anthropologist* 100, no. 2 (1998): 482–93.

Sub-field B corresponds to the economic market as an ideal, the way Plattner understands it: a system of exchange in which producers and suppliers are primarily concerned about monetary value. On the consumer side, clarity reigns on why artwork *x* attains a higher price than artwork *y*. The exchange between suppliers and buyers of decorative or handicraft art without a high aesthetic value can be named as an example of this.³⁵ From this perspective, the transparency of the rules of value accumulation thus differentiates local and regional art fields from sub-field C (termed “elite markets” by Plattner), the actors of which produce works that are sold at leading auction houses. They are categorized as producers of identity and are also intrinsically motivated actors. Consumers have basic clarity about what the differences in price are based upon:

Consumers of the work of investment-quality contemporary artists, whose work is commonly sold at public auction in elite auction houses like Sotheby’s or Christie’s, have full information about price trends and prior sales. Certainly each piece of art is unique and people commonly lose money buying ‘blue-chip’ art, but that is because they misjudge the market in the same way that they could misjudge the market for pork belly futures, not because the rules of value are opaque.³⁶

Stuart Plattner, who started as an artist after graduating from Cooper Union in New York, does not propagate an economic position, despite his inclination to synthesize anthropological and economic theories. With regard to segment C art, he writes: “But art is a strange commodity; aesthetic excellence does not necessarily make for marketability. Art that experts agree is of high quality and significantly avant-garde does not always command high prices and often is not saleable at all. This paradox underlies behavior in the art market.”³⁷ Thus, as he states, high market price is not a useful indicator of quality since only the test of time yields a valid judgment: “Good artists

³⁵ “In the art world, the market for crafts and pure decorative art (work with no pretense of high aesthetic quality) fits the classical standard economic market with adequate information. . . . Price difference reflects materials, size, and form, with no premium for the artist’s position in art history.” Plattner, “Profit Markets and Art Markets,” 118.

³⁶ Plattner, “A Most Ingenious Paradox,” 485.

³⁷ Plattner, “Profit Markets and Art Markets,” 114.

don't necessarily sell paintings, and all of the paintings that sell—even for high prices—are not necessarily good. Only the long run of history can affirm aesthetic significance.”³⁸

Several articles appeared, especially around the peak of the art market boom in 2007, in which the heteronomy of the visual arts field is invoked. Since this time, several sociologists have noted that the prices attained on the market are now determining artists' reputations or the symbolic value of artistic works.³⁹ Proponents of such theses are de facto looking at segment C of the art field only. For segment D of the Plattner matrix, one could falsify such assertions with ease; however, especially for segment B, they appear to be highly plausible. Segments A and B, characterized by decorative or applied arts, are usually disregarded in art literature that either has an affinity or a critical stance to the market—it is termed “non art,” “alternative art,” “junk art,”⁴⁰ or “chromos.”⁴¹ The regional art of segment D also appears to be ignored in

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³⁸ Plattner, “A Most Ingenious Paradox,” 490.

³⁹ See, for example, Sighard Neckel, “Kunst für Hedgefonds,” *Le Monde diplomatique*, August 2008, <http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2008-08-12-neckel-de.html> and Diana Crane, “Reflections on the Global Art Market: Implications for the Sociology of Culture,” *Sociedade e Estado* 24, no. 2 (2009): 331–62.

⁴⁰ “A contemporary work of art is classified as either ‘junk’ (low unit and negative investment value), ‘cutting edge’ or ‘alternative’. . . . Junk art remains outside the art market structure and valueless, but amongst the junk, mavericks hold out hope of inclusion in both” (Robertson, “The International Art Market,” 17). See also Alessia Zorloni, *The Economics of Contemporary Art: Markets, Strategies and Stardom* (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 2013), 36ff. In her vertical segmentation model of the art market, Zorloni differentiates between “Junk market,” “Avant-Garde market,” “Classic contemporary market,” and “Alternative market.”

⁴¹ Moulin characterizes this “market of infra-artistic paintings” in her trichotomous art market segmentation model: “The ‘chromos’ market . . . [is] the market of repetitive and interchangeable paintings which are products of conventional craftsmanship. From the standpoint of scholarly culture, these are illegitimate paintings or—to express it in other words—paintings to which all specialists deny the dignity of art. These paintings are nonetheless able to fulfill the desire for art of potential buyers. This market of infra-artistic paintings patterns itself on the art market by mimicry” (Raymonde Moulin, “The Construction of Art Values,” *International Sociology* 9, no. 1 (1994): 5). The two other segments being “art classé,” the market for ancient art and classical modern art, and “the contemporary art market,” described as follows with a hint to a supposed structural change: “The cornerstone of the system today as yesterday are entrepreneur-dealers in the Schumpeterian sense of the word; that is to say, risk-takers and innovators. In so far as they are the only intermediaries between creators and their potential customers, they are temporarily monopolistic. . . . the leading French dealers at the end of the nineteenth century—Paul Durand-Ruel, Ambroise Vollard, and O.-H. Kahnweiler—opted for the long-term strategy and postponed success. Vollard said something like ‘I got rich in my sleep’ (*j’ai fait ma fortune en dormant*). The new entrepreneurs no longer expect getting rich in their sleep. They do not work, as O.-H. Kahnweiler did, for the ‘happy few,’ totally refusing a partnership with banks and publicity. They do not find themselves in opposition to cultural institutions, which have been adapting to the aesthetics of priority and they are dealing with a new public which submits to the judgment of specialists” (Ibid., 8).

most art historical academic publications as well as in art criticism published in magazines. The empirical analysis that we present later has the objective of testing the plausibility of popular theses that often are formulated in a highly generalized form, referring to the whole field of art while ignoring its internal segmentation. De facto, however, these authors postulate that the end of a sphere being independent of the market can be attributed to sub-field C, the international segment. It is this part of the art field that receives the greatest amount of attention in journalistic as well as academic publications according to the laws of the “economy of attention.”⁴² These theses will be confronted with a sophisticated variant of the “relative autonomy” model, formulated by Larissa Buchholz against mainstream economic thinking and modeling,⁴³ in addition to new data referring to segment C.

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The historic development of the art market and the relative autonomy of symbolic value from economic value

Pierre Bourdieu analytically deploys the concept of “relative autonomy” not only to the macro-level of society—i.e., to the relationship between, for example, the fields of cultural production and the economic and political fields of power, but to the relation between cultural and monetary value of symbolic goods on the micro-level of exchanges and valuations as well. For him, the specificity of symbolic goods lies in their dual nature; in other words, “symbolic goods are a two-faced reality, a commodity and a symbolic object.”⁴⁴ Market success having an effect on symbolic value is thus not excluded from consideration. Bourdieu’s theory is, however, quite far removed from economic determinism, since also for works of art he states: “Their specifically cultural value and their commercial value remain relatively independent, although the economic sanction may come to reinforce their cultural consecration.”⁴⁵

⁴² Georg Franck, “The Economy of Attention,” *Telepolis*, July 12, 1999, <http://www.heise.de/tp/artikel/5/5567/1.html>.

⁴³ Larissa Buchholz, *The Global Rules of Art* (PhD dissertation, Columbia University, Department of Sociology, 2013).

⁴⁴ Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, 113.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

Given the background of art market dynamics in the first decade of the twenty-first century, which in view of prices for historical as well as contemporary works of art often has been interpreted to be without previous example,⁴⁶ the assumption that there is “a deep chasm between symbolic value and market value” in the field of visual arts has been doubted in recent years.⁴⁷

In economic terms, three sub-markets have to be distinguished according to horizontal segmentation models when referring to valorization and transparency of the prices of artworks: a) the “primary market,” in which consumers (dealers, buyers, collectors) purchase works directly from artists; b) the “secondary market,” in which artists are not active but which is determined by dealers and individual or corporate buyers and collectors (because auction houses are not included, it is sometimes called a “dealer market”); and c) the “tertiary market,” in which artworks are recycled by auction houses, labeled as the “auction market.”⁴⁸ While pricing is inscrutable in the primary and secondary markets, the tertiary market offers transparency for prices and artists’ and works’ commercial success as a result of the publication requirements for auction houses.⁴⁹

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⁴⁶ See the listing of record prices for artworks, most of them realized since 2002, in “List of the Most Expensive Paintings,” *Wikipedia*, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_most_expensive_paintings and commentaries like that of Agustino Fontevicchia, “New Era’ for Art Markets as Collectors Drop Half a Billion at Christie’s Contemporary Sale,” *Forbes*, May 20, 2013, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/afontevicchia/2013/05/20/new-era-for-art-markets-as-collectors-drop-half-a-billion-at-christies-contemporary-sale/>.

⁴⁷ See for instance Neckel, “Kunst für Hedgefonds”; Crane, “Reflections on the Global Art Market”; and Graw, *High Price*. For similar doubts expressed by members of the art field in view of the “superstar period” of the 1980s, see Olav Velthuis, “The Art Market in the 1990s: Reconciling Art and Commerce,” in *Right About Now: Art and Theory since the 1990s*, eds. Margriet Schavemaker and Micha Rakier (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2007), 120–29.

⁴⁸ A dichotomous differentiation between primary and secondary market is perhaps more widespread in the literature, a handbook example being the one by Velthuis: “the primary market, where artists sell their work for the first time, and the secondary or resale market” (Olav Velthuis, “Art Markets,” in *The Handbook of Cultural Economics*, 2nd ed., ed. Ruth Towse (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2011), 470). See also Zorloni, *The Economics of Contemporary Art*, 38. We follow the more differentiated three-part division, in accordance with, for example, Leslie Singer and Gary Lynch, “Public Choice in the Tertiary Art Market,” *Journal of Cultural Economics* 18, no. 3 (1994): 199–216, here 219: “The market for contemporary art may be classified into three interrelated submarkets; namely, the primary market where artists sell their art to collectors and to dealers; the secondary market in which dealers sell art to collectors; and the tertiary market in which collectors and dealers recycle, through the auction houses, art which had previously entered the secondary market for art.”

⁴⁹ On differences in the transparency of the primary, secondary, and tertiary market, see Merijn Rengers and Olav Velthuis, “Determinants of Prices for Contemporary Art in Dutch Galleries, 1992–1998,” *Journal of Cultural Economics* 26, no. 2 (2002): 1–28, and Michael Hutter, Christian Knebel, Gunnar

It is possible to illustrate the elite market’s recent history in consideration of data from the tertiary market using the example of London as a marketplace. London in this respect has an importance that goes far beyond national boundaries.⁵⁰



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Figure 1 Price development (GBP) in the international art market from 1765–2007 using the example of London as the auction location. Index value 1765 = 1.

Source: William N. Goetzmann, Luc Renneboog, and Christophe Spaenjers, “Art and Money,” *American Economic Review* 101, no. 3 (2011): 222–226.⁵¹

Pietzner, and Maren Schäfer, “Two Games in Town: A Comparison of Dealer and Auction Prices in Contemporary Visual Arts Markets,” *Journal of Cultural Economics* 31, no. 4 (2007): 247–61.

⁵⁰ On the status of London in the art market, see Thomas M. Bayer and John R. Page, *The Development of the Art Market in England: Money as Muse, 1730–1900* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011) and Pamela Fletcher and Anne Helmreich, eds., *The Rise of the Modern Art Market in London, 1850–1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011). Only recently has London’s importance decreased slightly; this is a result of Beijing’s and Hong Kong’s—and generally Asia’s—rise in the global art field: “In our previous publication of Art Market Trends (2009/2010), the figures gave Hong Kong as the capital of the Asian art market and the fourth city in the world for Contemporary art sales behind New York, London and Paris. This year, the ranking has changed again. For the first time in history, London is in fourth position, behind New York, Beijing and Hong Kong, and Paris has dropped to sixth position after Shanghai.” “Contemporary Art Market 2010/2011: The Artprice Annual Report,” Artprice, 2011, <http://imgpublic.artprice.com/pdf/fiac11en.pdf>, 21 (PDF).

⁵¹ The authors draw on auction sales data of the same artworks from Gerald Reitlinger, *The Economics of Taste* (London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1961), which they added to with the help of the Blouin Art Sales Index data up until the year 2007. The index calculation resulted in the “repeat sales” regression. They make reference to a visible connection between the real

The time series curve first published in Spaenjers's dissertation⁵² (fig. 1)—which is based on a newly developed, Bayesian standardized price index for art—spans more than two and a half centuries. It reaches from 1765 to 2007, the year of the peak of an art market bubble that burst with the recent US financial crisis, beginning in 2008. Despite the volume of the credit and bank crisis in the US and Europe, the downward price trend was generally less than expected due to advancing art market globalization,⁵³ and especially due to the consumption patterns of bourgeois class factions equipped with new wealth in the semi-periphery on the rise—otherwise known as the “BRIC” countries, in investment bank terminology.⁵⁴

Looking at long-term historic development since the mid eighteenth century, one can observe the first strong art market boom beginning in the middle of the nineteenth century. In order to interpret the increase in prices, the logarithmic character of the *y*-axis scale, with its increasing spaces, must be paid attention. In the West, and in Great Britain in particular, the nineteenth century was a period of forced industrialization

economy and art market prices. Major price drops occurred during the twentieth century, for example, after the First World War broke out, the world economic crisis in 1929, the oil crisis in 1973, and the Japanese bank crisis in the early 1990s.

- 52** See Christophe Spaenjers, *Essays in Alternative Investments* (PhD dissertation, University Tilburg, 2011), 103, including some additional information on several significant economic and political events.
- 53** The globalization of visual art is documented and discussed in English in, among other texts, Buchholz, *The Global Rules of Art*; Hans Belting, Andrea Buddensieg, and Peter Weibel, eds., *The Global Contemporary and the Rise of New Art Worlds* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013); Olav Velthuis, “Globalization of Western Markets for Contemporary Art: Who Dominates the Cultural Capitals of Amsterdam and Berlin?,” *European Societies* 15, no. 2 (2012): 290–308; Jonathan Harris, ed., *Globalization and Contemporary Art* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011); Chin-tao Wu, “Biennials Without Borders?,” *New Left Review* 57, no. 3 (2009): 107–15; Alain Quemin, “Globalization and Mixing in the Visual Arts: An Empirical Survey of ‘High Culture’ and Globalization,” *International Sociology* 21, no. 4 (2006): 522–50; Larissa Buchholz and Ulf Wuggenig, “Cultural Globalisation between Myth and Reality: The Case of the Contemporary Visual Arts,” *ART-e-FACT*, issue 4 (2005), http://artefact.mi2.hr/_a04/lang_en/theory_buchholz_en.htm; Charlotte Bydler, *The Global Art World, Inc.: On the Globalization of Contemporary Art* (Uppsala: Uppsala University Press, 2004); and Ulf Wuggenig, “The Empire, the Northwest and the Rest of the World: ‘International Contemporary Art’ in the Age of Globalization,” European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies, September 2002, <http://eipcp.net/transversal/0303/wuggenig/en>.
- 54** See the data for the years 2007–12 in “Contemporary Art Market 2011/2012: The Annual Artprice Report,” ArtPrice, 2012, <http://imgpublic.artprice.com/pdf/artprice-contemporary-2011-2012-en.pdf>, 11 (PDF); McAndrew, *The International Art Market in 2011*, 64ff; and Buchholz, *The Global Rules of Art*, chapters 2 and 4.

and urbanization—for instance, the population of Greater London expanded from approximately one million in 1800 to almost seven million in 1900. This was tied to the rise of bourgeois classes who had increased their wealth. In this heroic period of the bourgeoisie, strong trends toward indulging in conspicuous consumption and imitating the lifestyle of the aristocratic elites, who had been pushed from central positions in the field of power, became visible. Acquiring art seemed to be especially suitable for demonstrating and securing a new social status.⁵⁵

Stagnation in the art market began in 1873; this is the start of the phase that economists term the “long depression.” For almost eighty years—the welfare state period in the West—development had a relatively stationary trend, though characterized by phases of high volatility. Rapid declines can be seen at the advent of the First World War as well as in the context of the world economic crisis of 1929 and the Second World War. Then a new marked increasing trend began that was comparable to development in the nineteenth century, regularly interrupted by temporary drops at the end of bubbles. The lowest point in the twentieth century was reached during the Second World War. Since then, one can observe an increase in art’s economic value as a curvilinear movement that is directed upwards until the present day with a factor greater than ten.

Without a doubt, the latest developments in prices are at a historic plateau. The dynamics are those of fields in which the distribution of rewards doesn’t correspond to bell-shaped curves, but rather to the power laws of what Nassim N. Taleb’s study of the “black swans” and “winner-take-all markets” would denote as “Extremistan.”⁵⁶ In the academic field, the extreme forms of unequal distribution of symbolic capital (based e.g. on citation rates) can be depicted, as per Robert Merton, as the “Matthew effect” of accumulated advantage (“For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance”). In economic thinking, income distributions of the power-law type are well known as the “Pareto principle,”

55 See here the classical analyses of conspicuous consumption within rising bourgeois classes by Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Macmillan, 1899) and Pierre Bourdieu, *La Distinction: Critique sociale du jugement* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1979).

56 See Nassim N. Taleb, *The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable* (New York: Random House, 2010), 52–54, and Robert Frank and Philip J. Cook, “Winner-Take-All Markets,” *Journal of Microeconomics* 1, no. 1 (2012): 151–84.

or the “80–20 rule,” popularized as “the rich get richer.”⁵⁷ “Typical cases,” or broad middle classes of agents, are foreign to social systems with such distributions; instead, a division into (many) “dwarves” and (a few) “giants” is typical. Even more extreme forms of power-law distributions in the art field are to be expected in the future, since “the price of an art object is limited only by the amount that collectors are willing and able to pay for it,” as noted by the economists William N. Goetzmann, Luc Renneboog and Christophe Spaenjers.⁵⁸ Prices of works of art in the elite segment of the market, as the economists have shown with the help of comovement regressions of their diachronic data for the London art market, are correlated with the income of the super-rich—not with that of the 1%, but with that of the 0.1%, an elite usually not included in the middle-class biased general population survey samples.⁵⁹ Since it seems probable that rich, high-net-worth individuals are still getting richer as well as more numerous on a global level,⁶⁰ a downward trend in prices on the art market is not to be expected in the Plattner C segment of the art field (quite the contrary), and neither is a weakening of the division between a majority of precarious producers and a minority of overly privileged superstars—at least under *ceteris paribus* conditions.

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⁵⁷ See Robert K. Merton, “The Matthew Effect in Science,” *Science* 159, no. 3810 (january 1968):56–63. On the difference between scaled and scale-free distributions, see Albert-Laszlo Barabási and Eric Bonabeau, “Scale-Free Networks,” *Scientific American* 288, no.5 (May 2003): 50–59.

⁵⁸ William N. Goetzmann, Luc Renneboog, and Christophe Spaenjers, “Art and Money,” *American Economic Review* 101, no. 3 (2011): 222. Available online at <http://www.aeaweb.org/articles.php?doi=10.1257/aer.101.3.222>.

⁵⁹ This is why the conclusions regarding elite behavior in England by sociologists Tak Wing Chan and John H. Goldthorpe, which are based not on data of social and economic elites but on a relatively small sample of the population of England, seem to be rather naive in view of the analyses of the economists Goetzmann et al. regarding the high aggregate correlations between top income and art prizes in London for the last decades. The survey-based analyses would “produce,” the sociologists write, “no evidence of a ‘dominant class’ or social elite whose members typically consume high culture while at the same time displaying ‘aesthetic distance’ from mass, or popular, culture” (Tak Wing Chan and John H. Goldthorpe, “Social Stratification and Cultural Consumption: The Visual Arts in England,” *Poetics* 35, no. 2 (2007): 168–90. For a critique, see Ulf Wuggenig, “Comments on Chan and Goldthorpe: Pitfalls in Testing Bourdieu’s Homology Assumptions Using Mainstream Social Science Methodology—Social stratification and cultural consumption—The visual arts in England,” *Poetics* 35, nos. 4–5 (2007): 306–16.

⁶⁰ See the forecasts in Capgemini and RBC Wealth Management, eds., *World Wealth Report 2013*. Available for download at <http://www.worldwealthreport.com/>.

Given the lack of jumps in the curve in figure 1, completely new conditions for the recent history of the art field under conditions of “cognitive capitalism” (as coined by Yann Moulier Boutang⁶¹)—which is, according to Luc Boltanski and Ève Chiapello, on the cultural level characterized by a “new spirit”⁶²—can’t be assumed. Instead, the dynamics of the last decade must be interpreted as a continuation of trends that already characterize the second half of the twentieth century, as well as that of the nineteenth—a period in which the “first spirit of capitalism” still prevailed.

Relative autonomy of aesthetic value from economic value and competing models

With the latest twenty-first-century boom ushering in a “decade of greed”⁶³ that contrasted sharply to the crisis of the art market in the early 1990s,⁶⁴ the relative autonomy of the field of contemporary art became more and more doubted—and with it, multidimensional theoretical approaches to the field of art in general.

Larissa Buchholz distinguishes two alternative models to what she calls the “relative autonomy model,” which have come to increasingly dominate the discussion on the relationship of symbolic and economic value in the visual arts. The first is the “relative heteronomy model,” which can be found in the texts of several sociologists of art and culture and prominent art theorists in the last decade, and the second is the “economic model,” most radically represented by the neoclassic economist William Grampp.⁶⁵ We draw on Buchholz’s tripartite differentiation, and in a later section we test

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⁶¹ Yann Moulier Boutang, *Cognitive Capitalism* (London: Polity, 2011).

⁶² Luc Boltanski and Ève Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (London: Verso, 2005).

⁶³ This notion of the 1980s was adapted to the field of art for the first decade of the twenty-first century by German writer and collector Harald Falckenberg. See his diagnosis of a “re-feudalization of the art market” in Harald Falckenberg, “Die Refeudalisierung des Kunstmarktes,” *Kunstforum International* 38, no. 209 (2011): 162–73.

⁶⁴ This crisis was, to a considerable part, due to the Japanese bank crisis of the time. See Takato Hiraki, Akitoshi Ito, Darius A. Spieth, and Naoya Takezawa, “How Did Japanese Investments Influence International Art Prices?,” *Journal of Financial and Quantitative Analysis* 44, no. 6 (2009): 1489–514.

⁶⁵ See Buchholz, *The Global Rules of Art*, chapter 3.2, “The Relationship of Culture and the Economy for the Construction of Artistic Value: Three Theoretical Models,” 121–95.

one of the arguments she established at the global-art-field level that support and modify the “relative autonomy model” contra the predominance of alternative views of the visual arts in a period of accelerated economization and globalization; that is, her assertion of the existence of a sphere of valuation that is beyond the market zone and partly even opposed to it.

A well-known representative of the “relative heteronomy” thesis directly opposed to the relative autonomy assumption is Isabelle Graw, the publisher of *Texte zur Kunst* magazine and a leading critic and art theorist who partly draws on sociological thought, including field theory, French pragmatic sociology, and rational choice arguments. In recent years, she hasn’t tired of stating that the relative autonomy of the artistic field that was not just postulated but also assumed to be a reality in the West by Bourdieu since the nineteenth century has been replaced by relative heteronomy.⁶⁶ Several social scientists have formulated a similar position.⁶⁷ In a text published in *Le Monde diplomatique* in 2008, Frankfurt School sociologist Sighard Neckel deals with tendencies of economization and financialization—i.e., the importation of models known from financial markets⁶⁸—in the field of art and posited that aesthetic value and economic value can hardly be separated anymore, with the latter having ascended to an arbiter of artistic value.⁶⁹ The US sociologist Diana Crane,

arguing in an analogical way in 2008, asserts rather concisely: “Prices now determine reputations.” As Buchholz notes, she took this statement from a well-known art critic, as the following quote in Crane makes clear: “To summarize, according to an American art critic, prices now determine reputations’ (Tomkins, 2007b, p. 71). Prices are set through sales at auction houses. . . . Traditional art gatekeepers, such as critics and museum curators, now perform less important roles in the reception of new art styles. . . . At the present time, auction prices are the major factor.”⁷⁰

However, Calvin Tomkins’s statement, which he formulated in 2007 at the peak of the art market boom in the first decade of the twenty-first century, did not refer to the entire field of art as Crane’s quotation might suggest. Rather, it was meant to characterize only one pole of one of its segments: “At the other end of the scale, where hedge-fund collectors compete for the same ten or twelve celebrity artists (the artists as well as their work—‘You feel pulled apart,’ one artist told me, after turning down dinner invitations from three collectors for the same night), prices now determine reputations.”⁷¹ Lately, more and more super-rich, who get quick access to money in the “scalable professions” of financial markets,⁷² invest in art that has investment quality. Tomkins contrasts this new type of art that is preferred in some circles of the economically privileged (exemplified by, for example, Lisa Yuskavage, Jeff Koons and Damien Hirst⁷³) with a variety of art that is located far away from the auction market at “the other end of the scale”: the Art Parade in New York’s Soho,⁷⁴ or artists such as the Dazzle Dancers, Kembra Pfahler, the Girls of Karen Black, and the Malcolm X Shabazz High School Band. This type of art falls into the sub-field of “restricted production” in Bourdieu’s sense, or the “dissident enclave” of the grid-group cultural map suggested by Mary Douglas.

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⁶⁶ See, for instance, Graw, *High Price*, 142ff. For a critical position referring to data made available by Buchholz and later published in her dissertation, *The Global Rules of Art*, see Ulf Wuggenig, “Relative Autonomie und relative Heteronomie,” in *Kunst Sichtbarkeit Ökonomie*, ed. Stiftung für Bildende Kunst (Nürnberg: Verlag für Moderne Kunst, 2009), 49. For a slightly revised version of the heteronomy thesis, see Isabelle Graw, “In the Grip of the Market? On the Relative Heteronomy of Art, the Art World, and Art Criticism,” in *Contemporary Art and Its Commercial Markets: A Report on Current Conditions and Future Scenarios*, eds. Maria Lind and Olav Velthuis (Berlin: Sternberg, 2012), 183–208.

⁶⁷ See Buchholz, *The Global Rules of Art*, 135ff, where she mentions, besides Isabelle Graw, the sociologists Raymond Moulin, Alain Quemin, Diana Crane, Annette van den Bosch, and Nina Tessa Zahner.

⁶⁸ See Olav Velthuis and Elisabeth Coslor, “The Financialization of Art,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Sociology of Finance*, eds. Karin Knorr Cetina and Alex Preda (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 471–87 and Mark Taylor, “Financialization of Art,” *Capitalism and Society* 6, no. 2 (2011): 1–19.

⁶⁹ “Today, it seems as though a differentiating between art and economy has become less possible. Economic and artistic logics are so interwoven in current art markets that they have become indistinguishable. When constantly new record bids are given at art auctions, then aesthetic value and the financial gains of artworks can hardly be kept apart—in fact, the market value of a work of art has the meaning of being the essential judgment of the artistic work.” Neckel, “Kunst für Hedge Fonds.”

⁷⁰ Crane, “Reflections on the Global Art Market,” 335.

⁷¹ Calvin Tomkins, “A Fool for Art: Jeffrey Deitch and the Exuberance of the Art Market,” *New Yorker*, November 12, 2007, 71.

⁷² See Taleb, *The Black Swan*, 52–54.

⁷³ See Wuggenig, “Attached by an Umbilical Cord of Gold.”

⁷⁴ Holland Cotter, “The Creative Spirit, Strolling Through SoHo With Its Fringe Flying,” *New York Times*, September 10, 2007, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/10/arts/design/10para.html>.

In comparison to the relative heteronomy model, the economic model in its radical variant goes so far as to assume an identity of economic and aesthetic value. The main example is a work published during the 1980s art market boom: William Grampp's study *Pricing the Priceless* (1989). As Grampp poignantly puts it: "To say that economic value is 'consistent' with aesthetic value is to say no more than that the particular comes with the general, or that aesthetic value is a form of economic value just as any other form of value is."⁷⁵ A "consistency" of economic and aesthetic value—the former measured as estimated or real prices on the market for works of art, the latter in the form of reputation, prestige, or symbolic capital of art producers—basically means that in this context aesthetic value is "nothing but" economic value.⁷⁶ In economic literature, the assumption of the consistency of aesthetic and economic value in its general form is simply known as "Grampp's thesis." The following passage in Hans Abbing's study includes Grampp's decisive proposition as a quote: "The economist, William Grampp, defends this position most fervently. 'In saying that economic and aesthetic values are consistent, I mean that if outside the market painting A is said to be superior to painting B then on the market the price of A will be higher than B.'"⁷⁷ Abbing continues with the elucidation of the proposition's empirical implications:

Formulated in a different manner it begins to sound less pleasant: If the price of A is higher than that of B, then A is superior. I shall refer to this assumed (ordinal) correspondence as the thesis of correspondence between aesthetic and economic value or simply, Grampp's thesis. . . . Grampp does not say so, but a clear implication of his thesis is that, if one artist earns more than another, the first is the better artist. For instance, if Lucian Freud earns more than Jeff Koons, his work must be artistically superior.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ William Grampp, *Pricing the Priceless* (New York: Basic Books, 1989), 20f.

⁷⁶ The "nothing but" formulation was introduced in Oliver Velthuis, "Symbolic Meanings of Prices: Constructing the Value of Contemporary Art in Amsterdam and New York Galleries," *Theory and Society* 32, no. 2 (2003): 183.

⁷⁷ Abbing, *Why Are Artists Poor?*, 57.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

Thus the consistency argument of the economic model evidently implies the negation of two kinds of sociological theory traditions and their assumptions. First, those theories that contrast art and money or the market, or more generally, the sacred and the profane; this is a tradition ranging from Durkheim to Bourdieu, who synthesized Durkheim's approach with that of Max Weber, who sharply opposed the ideal types of charismatic authority on the one hand and the logic of bureaucratic authority and the market on the other. Its adversaries—following Viviana Zelizer⁷⁹—label such ideas "hostile world" models.⁸⁰ Second, the paradigm that represents the partly related multidimensional rank or status "inconsistency" approach in the traditions of Max Weber and Pitirim Sorokin, emphasizing differences, discrepancies, or disequilibria between status and class position, economic and cultural capital, or ranks in other dimensions of inequality.⁸¹

From an empirical point of view, support for the heteronomy model is mostly based on theoretical arguments and idiographic, ethnographic, or anecdotal evidence—e.g., examples of artists seemingly illustrating the

⁷⁹ See Viviana Zelizer, "The Purchase of Intimacy," *Law and Social Inquiry* 25, no. 3 (March 2000): 817–848; and, based upon it, Velthuis, "Symbolic Meanings of Prices" and Erica Coslor, "Hostile Worlds and Questionable Speculation: Recognizing the Plurality of Views About Art and the Market," in *Economic Action in Theory and Practice: Anthropological Investigations*, ed. Donald Wood (Bingley: Emerald, 2010), 209–24.

⁸⁰ Bourdieu's theory is partly classified among the "nothing but" model; for instance, by Olav Velthuis, *Talking Prices: Symbolic Meanings of Prices on the Market for Contemporary Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 27. This classification belongs to the utilitarian interpretations of Bourdieu's theory, to be found from Peter Bürger to Alain Caillé from the French MAUSS circle. It does not take into account that Bourdieu postulates the search for universal values in the field of art in his later work, as well as a "libido artistica" that he considers to be a drive that is stronger than the urge to attain symbolic capital: "Mais c'est aussi dans la relation entre l'habitus voué et dévoué au champ que s'engendre cette sorte de passion pour le jeu (fondement de l'intérêt pour les enjeux) que j'appelle illusio, la croyance fondamentale que le jeu en vaut la chandelle, vaut la peine d'être joué, et qui est bien plus forte que le désir de gloire: qu'évoquait une de vos questions." Pierre Bourdieu, "Questions sur l'art pour et avec les élèves d'une école d'art mise en question," in *Penser l'art à l'école*, ed. Nadine Descendre (Arles: Actes Sud, 2001), 51.

⁸¹ See Max Weber, "The Distribution of Power within the Political Community: Class, Status, Party," in *Classical Sociological Theory*, eds. Craig J. Calhoun, Joseph Gerteis, James Moody, Steven Pfaff and Indermohan Virk (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002), 310–24, and Pitirim Sorokin, *Society, Culture, and Personality* (New York: Harper, 1947), 289–94. The multi-dimensional tradition following Sorokin is best represented by Johan Galtung, "Rank and Social Integration: A Multi-dimensional Approach," in *Sociological Theories in Progress I*, eds. John Berger, Morris Zelditch Jr., and Bo Anderson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin), 145–198. Galtung developed a broad range of statistical measures for inconsistency, discordance and incongruity between ranks on the level of individuals, collective actors, and dyads.

thesis—as well as hints to the high prices increasingly realized by living artists in the tertiary market. In Crane’s case, one can’t find any real empirical support for her assumption that would be accepted by sociologists of the quantitative paradigm. She represents it as a specific historic diagnosis, whereby aesthetic value has become mainly a function of commercial success in the first decade of the twenty-first century. The statement regarding the effects of prices on reputations lacks any data on the reputational capital of artists. It is only based on auction results data and doesn’t allow an application of mainstream measures for checking the existence or strength of associations like correlation or regression coefficients.⁸² Neckel’s diagnosis even lacks this kind of empirical information. It is basically a normative position that he takes against corrupting economic forces.

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William Grampp in 1989 empirically tried to support the monist economic model on a more systematic basis with results from a bivariate linear regression for economic and aesthetic value (determined indirectly by artists’ reputations), based on data from the so-called “list of world rankings”⁸³ of artists: the “Kunstkompass,” which was published from 1970 to 2007 in the German business magazine *Capital*. The reputation points of the top one hundred artists in this “art compass” entered into one side of the regression equation.⁸⁴ On the other

82 A table in Crane, “Reflections on the Global Art Market,” 360f., lists the sixteen most successful artists in the auction market, plus a second that lists all the artists that achieved a price of more than one million dollars on the auction market for a single work. A listing of these artists’ reputations or some other indicator for aesthetic or symbolic value or capital is missing, not to mention a bivariate matrix or a correlation coefficient.

83 See Willi Bongard, “Zu Fragen des Geschmacks in der Rezeption bildender Kunst der Gegenwart,” in *Künstler und Gesellschaft*, Sonderheft 17 der *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*, eds. Alphons Silbermann and René König (Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1974): 250–64, and Linde Rohr-Bongard, *Kunst = Kapital*. Der *Capital Kunstkompass* von 1970 bis heute (Cologne: Salon Verlag, 2001). Since 2008 the top one hundred of the *Kunstkompass* have been published in the German “manager magazine.”

84 To assess artists’ “fame,” three kinds of criteria were used with reference to the art world’s general practice of direct and indirect valuation of artists: a) the purchase of works by museums; b) presence in exhibitions, respectively weighted according to these institutions’ reputations; and c) presence and acknowledgement in the pertinent literature, above all in approximately thirty books or catalogs. See Bongard, “Zu Fragen des Geschmacks,” 252. The first secondary uses of these data for scientific purposes are to be found in economics in Friederich Schneider and Werner Pommerehne, “Analyzing the Market of Works of Contemporary Fine Arts: An Exploratory Study,” *Journal of Cultural Economics* 7, no. 2 (December 1983): 41–68, and in

side, estimated prices for “representative” works⁸⁵ by these artists were considered:

The two numbers invite a statistical analysis because the point value of each artist is an indication of the aesthetic value of his work, and the price of a representative work is of course its economic value. With the help of a colleague, I did a regression analysis. . . . The correlation was far from perfect; but the results did show that as the number of points increased 10 percent, the price of the representative work increased 8 percent.

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This implies a reported variance explained of $R^2 = 25\%$.⁸⁶ Unfortunately, Grampp did not give any information as to the year(s) to which these results pertain.

Some years later, Ulrike Klein, also a representative of the economic model, worked with the same kind of data in a dissertation published in 1993 amidst the art market crisis of the 1990s. The *Kunstkompass* results she used, however, were from 1979. Instead of giving regression analysis results, the *Kunstkompass* data for “aesthetic value” as well as for (estimated) economic value (the prices for “representative works”) were reproduced in a descriptive matrix for the top ten living artists and interpreted on this basis. The ranking list starts with Joseph Beuys, the German Fluxus, sculpture, installation, and performance artist, who was also the main artist supporter of Bongard’s *Kunstkompass* ranking initiative. It ends with American pop artist Jim Dine in tenth. Additionally, auction price results for these artists are reported for 1989. Klein’s conclusion, supporting Grampp’s approach, reads:

sociology in Annie Verger, “L’art d’estimer l’art: Comment classer l’incomparable?,” *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 13, nos. 66–67, (1987): 105–21. For later uses of *Kunstkompass* data for secondary analyses on a broader basis, see, among others, Alain Quemin, *L’art contemporain international: Entre les institutions et le marché* (Nîmes: Jacqueline Chambon/Artprice, 2002); Ulf Wuggenig, “The Empire, the Northwest and the Rest of the World”; Buchholz and Wuggenig, “Cultural Globalisation between Myth and Reality.”

85 In the *Kunstkompass* tables, prices were at first not published; in later years, a range of prices was communicated, as well as prices for “representative works,” but not (average) sums of auction results.

86 Grampp, *Pricing the Priceless*, 33.

Although *Kunstkompass* is quite controversial since it uses fictional mid-size picture formats and fictional average prices, it still serves our purpose here because the ranking was done on the basis of reputation and not price. Thus it makes the correlation of the two variables clear. The table above shows that important artists in art history also have remarkable financial success.⁸⁷

128 Although the term “correlation” was used in her conclusion, neither a correlation nor a regression coefficient or an R^2 was calculated. Since one of the advantages of measurement lies in precise descriptions including the possibility of comparisons across different sets of data, we carried out statistical analyses to find out what Klein’s observation of “overwhelming success” might exactly mean in terms of correlation and regression. Our secondary analyses refer not only to the top ten artists Klein uses but to the full list of top one hundred artists of the *Kunstkompass* of 1979.⁸⁸ In the interest of comparison we also followed the procedure Grampp used. Thus, we drew upon variance of aesthetic value explained by bivariate linear regression. We further computed the rank correlations between the reputation ranks of artists (as a measure for the aesthetic value of their work according to a broad consensus among economists⁸⁹) and the market values of their work, because an ordinal scale is perhaps more appropriate regarding the dimension of artists’ reputations; that is, “Aesthetic value is what experts call aesthetic value. The experts include artists, critics, mediators, and consumers with authority in the art world. . . . But unlike market values, aesthetic values differ only in an ordinal sense.”⁹⁰

Our results are the following: the rank correlation coefficient Kendall’s tau b for the top ten artists of 1979 amounts to 0.30 for (estimated) economic

value in 1979 and to 0.24 for auction prices in 1989. For the top one hundred artists of 1979, ranging from Joseph Beuys to the Argentinian Op artist Julio le Parc, the value of the tau b coefficient, with 0.31, is very similar to that for the top ten. The better the rank according to prices of works of art, the better the rank according to reputation points of the artist (and vice versa). With values ranging from 0.24 to 0.31, the associations that we found are surprisingly weak, and thus certainly not at all “overwhelming” as Klein suggested.

If one deploys the linear regression approach pursued by Grampp for Klein’s data, the amounts of variance explained for the top ten artists of 1979 show a range of R^2 from 17.1% (regression of reputation estimated prices and reputation points) to 21.8% (regression of auction prices). In the top one hundred sample, the variance explained for the regression of estimated prices and reputation points amounts to $R^2 = 26.7\%$, a value quite similar to the one reported by Grampp. Thus, a rather large amount of variance remains unexplained, namely 75% in the case of the analysis commissioned by Grampp and 73% to 83% in our secondary analyses of Klein’s reference data.

The high percentage, which must be attributed to chance, measurement errors, and explanatory factors that were not included in the equation,⁹¹ did not keep Klein from conveying the impression of a strong correlation—and it did not prevent Grampp from continuing to articulate the relationship between commercial and symbolic value in vocabulary that betrays economic determinism: “economic value, strictly speaking, is the general form of all value, including that which is aesthetic.”⁹² This is a clear case of interpretative or rhetorical reductionism, which

⁸⁷ Ulrike Klein, *Der Kunstmarkt* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1993), 110. Authors’ translation.

⁸⁸ See Rohr-Bongard, *Kunst = Kapital*, 61f.

⁸⁹ Apart from Grampp and Klein, see also, for instance, Bruno S. Frey and Werner W. Pommerehne, “Why Is a Rauschenberg So Expensive,” in *Muses and Markets*, eds. Werner W. Pommerehne and Bruno S. Frey (Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 81–100, and Nathalie Moureau and Dominique Sagot-Duvaouroux, *Le marché de l’art contemporain* (Paris: La Découverte, 2010), 19.

⁹⁰ Abbing, *Why Are Artists Poor?*, 55.

⁹¹ Factors that are considered in multivariate, hedonic models, not developed to test the (in) consistency assumption of aesthetic and economic value but to explain the variance of prices for artworks, are the size of works, the artistic medium and/or genre, technique, subject, sale venue, and provenance. See, for instance, Victor Ginsburgh, Jianping Mei, and Michael Moses, “On the Computation of Price Indices,” in *Handbook of the Economics of Art and Culture*, vol. 1, eds. Victor Ginsburgh and David Throsby (Amsterdam: North Holland, 2006), 948–79. An early application of a multivariate econometric model using *Kunstkompass* and other process-produced data (e.g., the ascriptive variable of the country of which an artist is a citizen) for this purpose is Schneider and Pommerehne, “Analyzing the Market of Works of Contemporary Fine Art.”

⁹² Grampp, *Pricing the Priceless*, 34.

allows a monistic hypothesis to be saved. This kind of monism is dear to economists who are looking for a general measure for all value in the form of utility operationalized on a ratio-scale level—money.⁹³

130 Except for the partly affirmative, partly critical market determinists, there are of course authors who lack belief in the symbolic power or sweeping signal effects of market prices in the field of art for quite different reasons. For example, Nathalie Heinich does not see prices as a valid indicator for the symbolic value of artistic works for two reasons. The dizzying heights that prices sometimes reach can be understood as simply expressing fictive differences among artworks. In addition, prices are subject to strong fluctuations as a result of the regular up and down phases of the art market.⁹⁴ Whereas Heinich, similar to Crane, makes assessments without any systematic empirical proof, Larissa Buchholz established an alternative argument—or, rather, a counterintuitive one—to the dominant economic and heteronomous models with regard to a global elite of artists. She tested the assumption of a historical persistence of a structure polarized along the autonomy axis for contemporary art against the background of a sophisticated theoretical discussion,⁹⁵ taking recourse to Weber and a revised version of Bourdieu's field theory. Correspondingly, in this research study, the exhibition circuit—a discursive pole of the artistic field—is interpreted as a domain of status groups in Weber's sense. It stands—one can summarize—in an inverse relationship to the commercial pole, in a similar relation as “status position” to “market position” in the sense of Weber's opposition of a charismatic order and the market-based sphere. With the help of cluster analyses of the global elite of artists' transnational careers, this field-theoretical study revealed that there is a considerable gap between these two spheres of value—characterized on the one hand by status, charisma, and insider or expert judgments, and on the other by market and consumer decisions. Furthermore, as Buchholz shows, in an era of globalization, significant

differences between these two spheres are reflected in different kinds and degrees of closure for non-Western artists; i.e., the market pole is far less subject to “status-based” closure according to territorial and ethnic criteria.

Buchholz's quantitative analyses draw upon extensive auction and reputation data from 1998 to 2007, the year of the first twenty-first-century art market boom's plateau. Since the careers of artists bestowed with a high level of reputation are situated in other clusters than many of the most successful artists in the global market, she establishes the argument that the relative independence of symbolic value to commercial value has not only survived the most recent boost in economization and globalization in contemporary art, but that it is also produced and reproduced under historically new global conditions.⁹⁶ Our following analyses are carried out as tests of the consistency proposition of the economic model as well as the economic assumptions regarding artistic reputations of the relative heteronomy model. They are to be interpreted as independent examinations of Buchholz's data-based conclusions, supporting her renewed relative autonomy model with more recent data collected in the art field of Zurich in 2009 and 2010 and applying a different methodology. A subjectivist measure of valuation of the artist as an indicator for aesthetic value of the artwork is used and, instead of carrying out a multivariate analysis, we use simple bivariate rank correlation analysis supported by graphical visualization, which allows inspection and discussion of individual cases in view of a whole structure—an idea indebted to structuralist field-theoretical thinking as well as the Franco Moretti school of digital humanities.⁹⁷

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Considerations of method and methodology

The following analyses of the relations—consistency and inconsistency—of economic or market value on the one hand, and aesthetic or symbolic value on the other, are based on three kinds of data: a) surveys of random

⁹³ Randall Collins points to a technical reason for monistic thinking in economics: “Choices cannot be compared with each other unless there is a common standard of comparison, which for economists is utility, conventionally measured by money.” Randall Collins, “The Four M's of Religion: Magic, Membership, Morality, and Mysticism,” *Review of Religious Research* 50, no. 1 (September 2008): 7.

⁹⁴ See Nathalie Heinich, *Sociologie de l'art* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 2004), 65.

⁹⁵ Buchholz, *The Global Rules of Art*, 118ff.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 159ff.

⁹⁷ See the use of regression analyses for analyzing novels and the proposal of combining distant and close reading of literary production in Ryan Heuser and Long Le-Khac, “A Quantitative Literary History of 2,958 Nineteenth-Century British Novels: The Semantic Cohort Method,” *Literary Lab Pamphlet*, Stanford University, May 2012, <http://litlab.stanford.edu/LiteraryLabPamphlet4.pdf>.

samples of eight hundred ten visitors to five exhibitions at the Migros Museum of Contemporary Art in Zurich in 2009 and 2010, from which a sub-sample of one hundred forty experts and insiders, who are partly artistic peers, was taken for the evaluation of a list of eighty-three artists (in view of the transnational public of the Zurich art field, the questionnaires were formulated in English, German, and French);⁹⁸ b) auction prices that were attained by these artists' works in the tertiary art market in 2010;⁹⁹ and c) reputation ranks of these artists as indirect indicators of aesthetic value in 2010, based on the objectivist measure reflecting behavioral decisions—weighted “revealed preferences”¹⁰⁰—of curators, museum directors, and gallerists that is used in ArtFacts.net database's rankings. These rankings have been available for over ten years as an alternative to the top one hundred Kunstkompass rankings, on which the Grampp consistency thesis is empirically based.¹⁰¹

Evaluations that give insight into aesthetic value were gathered in our survey study through the means of attitude measurement. The theoretical basis for the subjectivist approach to measuring aesthetic value using the indicator of evaluation of artists was proposed by Fritz Heider's “naive psychology” as well as by Bourdieu's reflections on artistic classification systems.

Heider, a Gestalt psychologist who is linked to Kurt Lewin as well as to Baruch Spinoza on the theoretical level, differentiated between two types of attitudes toward things as well as people, ideas, or events: “unit relations” (U) and “liking relations” (L), both referring to sentiments.¹⁰² He

⁹⁸ See Christian Tarnai and Ulf Wuggenig, “Design und Methode der Studie,” in *Das Kunstfeld*, 427–33. The response rate for the printed questionnaires sent at home was 38 percent.

⁹⁹ The data on auction results for the artists are based on Artprice.com. Artists who did not sell in the auction market were included with the value of 0.

¹⁰⁰ See Paul Samuelson, “A Note on the Pure Theory of Consumers' Behaviour,” *Economica* 5, no. 17 (1938): 61–71. In the ArtFacts.net procedure these decisions are weighted according to the reputation of the institutions involved, defined by the reputation of the artists exhibited.

¹⁰¹ On the use and discussion of the more inclusive ArtFacts.net rankings, see Buchholz, *The Global Rules of Art*, 143ff.; Malcolm Bull, “The Two Economies of World Art,” in *Globalization and Contemporary Art*, ed. Jonathan Harris (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 179–90; and Ulf Wuggenig, “The Tattoos of Cities: Notes on the Artistic Field and Popular Art in the City,” in *Parcitypate: Art and Urban Space*, eds. Timon Beyes, Sophie-Thérèse Krempf, Amelie Deufelhard (Zurich: Niggli Verlag, 2009), 123–61 (see overview table).

¹⁰² See Fritz Heider, “Attitudes and Cognitive Organization,” *Journal of Psychology* 21, no. 1 (1946): 107–12, where he introduces the U and L relations of naive psychology.

furthermore classified the latter along the axis of “cold and warm,” distinguishing between personal liking and the more impersonal sentiment of admiration. Heider explicates: “The statement ‘*p admires o*’ means that *p* believes that *o*'s being, *o*'s acts and wishes, are valuable and in agreement with the objective order. An admired person is thought of as being objectively positive; he ought to be appreciated. Admiring is the more indirect, rational, and impersonal evaluation, and liking is the more personal reaction. In naive psychology, admiring belongs to the head, liking to the heart.”¹⁰³

The first two survey questions designed to explore the knowledge and subjective valuations of approximately forty postwar artists were: “The art of the second half of the twentieth century has gone in many different directions. This is one of the reasons why only a few artists are generally well known. We have put together a list of names and would like to know, a) if some of these names are known to you, and b) if you appreciate the artists that you know.” A second list of forty artists was devoted to contemporary art and more recent generations of artists, with the question: “How intensively do you occupy yourself with more recent contemporary art? a) Which of the following artists do you know? b) Which do you appreciate, and which not?” In the Heiderian frame, b) relates to liking relations and a)—the knowledge of artists—to unit relations, defined in the following general way: “U denotes the cognitive unit between two entities, and not U the fact that the two entities are segregated.”¹⁰⁴ Unit and liking relations represent independent theoretical and empirical constructs grounded in cognitions and affects.

The valuation, which, via the choice of the word “appreciate,” is more directed toward admiration than toward liking or love—a term still popular in the field of art¹⁰⁵—was structured along a dichotomous, bipolar rating scale. It allowed the possibility of articulating rejection. In this way it is

¹⁰³ Fritz Heider, *The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations* (New York: Wiley, 1958), 236. For the adaption of Heider's theory in sociology, see James A. Davis, “Structural Balance, Mechanical Solidarity, and Interpersonal Relations,” *American Journal of Sociology* 68, no. 4 (January 1963): 444–62.

¹⁰⁴ Heider, *The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations*, 201.

¹⁰⁵ The “love of art” was the reason most often given by collectors in the sample of the Zurich study for the material appropriation of works of art. This had already been the case in the surveys in the Vienna, Hamburg, and Paris art fields in the 1990s. See Wuggenig, “Attached by an Umbilical Cord of Gold.”

possible to include ambivalent valuations of artists at the aggregate level—liked by some, disliked by others—as well as to gain indicators of a positive or a negative consensus about them. Recognition was recorded as odds between positive and negative valuations. In the case of most controversial valuations—i.e., artists whose positive valuations are equal with their negative valuations—the value is 1; otherwise it lies numerically above or below 1. Although all visitors of the exhibitions were asked these kinds of valuations, only those of the sub-sample of one hundred forty experts and insiders in the Zurich art field sample were deployed for this purpose.¹⁰⁶

134 Our subjective approach to aesthetic valuation is also based on the Durkheim-Bourdieu tradition of analyzing classifications systems. In his early empirical work with Alain Darbel and Dominique Schnapper, published in English as *The Love of Art* (1991), Bourdieu introduces the notions of “artistic competence” as well as “aesthetic competence.” He also differentiates between degrees of complexity of the specific classification systems in the symbolic appropriation of art. The familiarity with names of artists was considered a first step in aesthetic competence: “An individual’s degree of artistic competence depends not only on the degree to which the available classification system has been mastered, but also on the degree of complexity or refinement of this classification system. . . . The first stage of truly aesthetic competence is defined by mastery of a stock of words which permit differences to be named and to be constituted by naming: there are the names of famous painters, da Vinci, Picasso, Van Gogh.”¹⁰⁷ The empirical results of his survey research in the European art public of the early 1960s showed a high association between the familiarity with contemporary artists and cultural capital of the visitors: “The more cultivated visitors often give themselves the feeling of participating in a free culture by choosing the revolutionary

106 The “center” of the Zurich art field—that is, the group of experts and insiders—was empirically determined with means of factor analysis by using indicators of specific cultural capital as well as of the frequency of visits to exhibition institutions and events like biennials and art fairs. See Cornelia Kastelan, Christian Tarnai, and Ulf Wuggenig, “Das Kunstfeld: Akteure, Institutionen und Zentrum-Peripherie Struktur,” in *Das Kunstfeld*, eds. Munder and Wuggenig, 104f.

107 Pierre Bourdieu, Alain Darbel, and Dominique Schnapper, *The Love of Art: European Museums and Their Publics* (Cambridge: Polity, 1991), 41 and 55.

painters of preceding generations rather than older painters devalued through habituation and false familiarity, or by choosing the more innovative of contemporary artists.”¹⁰⁸

We applied Bourdieu’s idea of measuring aesthetic competence, originally developed for a sample of visitors of historical art museums, to our surveys of visitors of contemporary art exhibitions, including insiders and experts. However, instead of the question “Who are your favourite painters?” which was posed in the survey research for *The Love of Art* with an open response format that only allowed a positive choice, we worked with a list of artists to be judged on bipolar rating scales.¹⁰⁹

The artist sample to be evaluated by the Zurich art public was based on a “reflected selection” inspired by the logic of quota samples. Its aim was to secure diversity among a sample of artists belonging to the B segment of the Plattner art field matrix, in which international visibility goes together with competition for a position in art history.¹¹⁰ Thus artists were selected across several differences, including artistic genres and media, gender and age, and strong and weak connection with Switzerland, the country of the art center studied in 2009 and 2010.¹¹¹ In addition, the Western vs. non-Western line was considered. In this context artists were partly chosen in the interest of comparison of the results with those of the Buchholz study, which in its ethnographic part concentrates on two exemplary cases: Mexican artist Gabriel Orozco and Chinese artist Yue Minjun.¹¹² A further criterion was partial

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108 Ibid., 58.

109 Ibid., 121 and table A 6.10, 160.

110 All of the artists selected were classified in the more inclusive ArtFacts.net ranking, which only considers artists with international visibility.

111 The series of art field surveys directed by Ulf Wuggenig referred to four art centers: Vienna, Hamburg, and Paris in the 1990s, and Zurich in 2009 and 2010. In all of these surveys, artists from the respective countries—Austria, Germany, France, and Switzerland—were intentionally overrepresented in the lists presented to the contemporary art field population samples, which were recruited mainly from these countries, but from other European and non-European countries as well. One of the main reasons was to be able to analyze the effects of national bias on aesthetic valuation. National preference is a factor already considered in Bourdieu, Darbel and Schnapper, *The Love of Art* (see page 58). The names of the following artists who originated from Switzerland and lived here for an extended period are: Max Bill, Hans Erni, Franz Gertsch, H. R. Giger, Verena Loewensberg, Bernhard Luginbühl, Meret Oppenheim, Pipilotti Rist, Dieter Roth, Daniel Spoerri, Jean Tinguely, John Armleder, Christoph Büchel, Urs Fischer, David Fischli and Peter Weiss, Sylvie Fleury, Thomas Hirschhorn, Christian Philipp Müller, Shirana Shahbazi, and Andro Wekua.

112 See Buchholz, *The Global Rules of Art*, chapters 3 and 4, 194–350.

comparability with the artist lists of our art field survey studies of the 1990s in Vienna, Hamburg, and Paris.

The list of eighty-three artists that we drew up with the support of experts (curators) for the Zurich surveys of 2009 and 2010 is neither a selection of top one hundred *Kunstkompass* or *ArtFacts.net* artists, and nor is it an idiosyncratic one. For instance, it covers about half of the artists who appeared in the 2011 edition of the book *50 Contemporary Artists You Should Know*, which was published two years after the start of the surveys in Zurich.¹¹³

136 Our analytical interest, however, is less directed toward individual artists. In contrast to much empirical sociology of art, a field-theoretical approach is indeed interested in individual artists as well. One of the main reasons for justifying the consideration of individual artists in a sociological approach is that some individual agents—for instance Andy Warhol or Joseph Beuys—behave or are treated by others according to the logic of the “black swan” metaphor. Based on their networks and constituencies, they are able to exert strong field effects. They define the problems for rivals as well as successors in a field that is characterized by the glorification of singularity.¹¹⁴ The main interest in this context, however, is in comparing types of artists in a two-dimensional plane constructed in the Weber and Sorokin tradition of multidimensional status or rank theory¹¹⁵ and in the

113 See Brad Finger and Christiane Weidemann, *50 Contemporary Artists You Should Know* (Munich: Prestel, 2011). The following twenty-four names on the list presented to the visitors of contemporary art exhibitions in Zurich are among the fifty contemporary artists represented in this book: Matthew Barney, Maurizio Cattelan, Olafur Eliasson, Damien Hirst, Jenny Holzer, Anish Kapoor, Mike Kelley, William Kentridge, Jeff Koons, Paul McCarthy, Jonathan Meese, Bruce Nauman, Raymond Pettibon, Elizabeth Peyton, Richard Prince, Neo Rauch, Gabriel Orozco, Gerhard Richter, Pipilotti Rist, Cindy Sherman, Cy Twombly, Wolfgang Tillmans, and Rachel Whiteread. The other Western and non-Western artists of the sample, not mentioned in Finger and Weidemann's book, are: Francis Bacon, Banksy, Joseph Beuys, Christian Boltanski, Monica Bonvicini, Louise Bourgeois, Marcel Broodthaers, Daniel Buren, Valentin Carron, John Currin, Andrea Fraser, Isa Genzken, Liam Gillick, Nan Goldin, Dan Graham, Hans Haacke, Rachel Harrison, Eva Hesse, Friedensreich Hundertwasser, Donald Judd, Ilya Kabakov, Martin Kippenberger, Sherrie Levine, Yue Minjun, Aernout Mik, Hermann Nitsch, Roman Ondák, Yoko Ono, Nam June Paik, Jackson Pollock, Robert Rauschenberg, Chéri Samba, Markus Schinwald, Christoph Schlingensiefel, Julian Schnabel, Hiroshi Sugimoto, Rirkrit Tiravanija, Rosemarie Trockel, Andy Warhol, and Franz West.

114 Cf. Nathalie Heinich, *L'Élite artiste: Excellence et singularité en régime démocratique* (Paris: Gallimard, 2005).

115 For different conceptions of (in)consistency in this tradition, see Ulf Wuggenig, “A Dying Theory? A Critical Assessment of Some Aspects of Status Inconsistency Research, 1950–1983,” in *Status Inconsistency in Modern Societies*, proceedings from a Conference of the Research

exploration of boundaries, especially those that indicate where the logic of the market and its effects do find an end.

The empirical results are given on an abstract level as correlation coefficients as well as on a more vivid level in two-dimensional scatter plots, thus also visualizing the results for individual cases. The *y*-axis shows the ranks according to the judgments of experts and insiders or the ranks according to *ArtFacts.net* points, drawing on visibility of artists in exhibitions. The *x*-axis ranks are based on the auction revenue for eighty-three artists in 2010 as published by art market information service *Artprice*. If there were no reported annual revenues in the *Artprice* listings¹¹⁶ for an artist, then the sum of the hammer prices for the year was calculated.¹¹⁷ In contrast to most works in the fields of literature and music, for example, for which market price of books, CDs, or seats cannot directly be used as an indicator for economic value, prices can be seen as valid indicators of market value in the case of the “unique artworks” in the field of fine art.¹¹⁸

The representation of data in the form of a scatter plot allows for the interpretation of numerical results at the level of individual artists as well as types of artists, constructed according to the rank (or status) inconsistency theory tradition. In the case of two dimensions and ordinal scales (e.g., r_1 = rank for aesthetic value, r_2 = rank for economic value), consistency might exist on different levels of high, middle, and low total rank, defined as the sum of both ranks. At least two types of inconsistency have to be distinguished:

Committee on Social Stratification of the International Sociological Association, eds. Hermann Strasser and Robert W. Hodge (Duisburg: Verlag Sozialwissenschaftlicher Kooperative, 1986), 24–37. The idea of crossing two rank dimensions with giving special attention to inconsistencies and non-linearities between ranks in contrast to the type of bivariate crosstabs or linear regression approaches favored by Ulrike Klein and William Grampp, who ignore rank inconsistencies, is pursued for art field analyses in Buchholz, *The Global Rules Rules of Art*, as well as in Ulf Wuggenig, “The Tattoos of Cities” and Bull, “The Two Economies of World Art.”

116 The list we used encompasses the top five hundred artists by auction revenue in 2010. See “Art Market Trends 2010,” *Artprice*, 32–41.

117 Of course there were also some artists—ten of eighty-three—who did not succeed in the auction market. As examples for inconsistency between aesthetic and economic rank, they were not excluded from the analysis as is usual in regression analyses of economists referring to reputations (aesthetic value) of artists or prices of works of art.

118 Abbing differentiates between the production of “originals” in the visual arts field from those in other fields as follows: “Although price is often thought to represent market value, this correlation is only appropriate in the case of unique works of art. In all other cases, like the sale of books, CDs, and seats at a performance, only revenues from sales can represent market value.” Abbing, *Why Are Artists Poor?*, 56.

rank 1 > rank 2 and rank 1 < rank 2. They might be based on more or less high positive or high negative rank differences. If rank 1 > rank 2, we speak of a rank difference with a positive sign; in the reverse case, a negative sign. Following Abbing's interpretation of the ordinal-scale character of expert-based subjective aesthetic value,¹¹⁹ a correlation coefficient for ordinal scales was calculated but not one for metric scales (as, for example, the product-moment correlation coefficient r introduced by Karl Pearson).

138 Kendall's tau b^{120} was used as the coefficient for the correlation between the ranks. The coefficient tau b makes no assumptions about the probability distribution of the two variables; it is thus a "parameter-free" measure. However, it expresses a probability: the difference between the probability that the observed data exist for both variables in the same ranking order and that the data for both variables have different ranking orders. While the more common ranking coefficient, Spearman's rho, assumes an equidistance of ranks, tau b is based exclusively on the use of ordinal information; this appears to be more appropriate given the type of available data. Only the difference in ranks is thus relevant for the calculation, not the distance of the ranks. Kendall's measure tau b was also chosen because it is deemed appropriate when "ties" appear (i.e., the same ranks for different units). The strongest degree of correspondence of ranks in both dimensions leads to a coefficient of 1. By contrast, a perfect negative correlation would amount to the value of -1 . If both dimensions are independent of one another, then the value is 0, or close to it.

Survey-based findings on the (in)consistency of economic and aesthetic value

The results of the empirical tests of the hypotheses that can be deduced from recently growing discourses that were concentrated in Buchholz's three models (relative autonomy, relative heteronomy, and the economic model) can be found in the scatter plots of figures 2 and 3.

¹¹⁹ See *Ibid.*, 55.

¹²⁰ See Maurice Kendall, *Rank Correlation Methods* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1948) and Hervé Abdi, "The Kendall Rank Correlation," in *Encyclopedia of Measurement and Statistics*, ed. Neil Salkind (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2007), 509–11.

Figure 2 represents the relationship of peer, expert, and insider valuation of artists and market success. The ranks of subjective judgments are reported on the y -axis—ranging from positive to ambivalent and negative valuations on the higher levels of y —and sum of auction results in 2010 on the x -axis.

A first main result is that the value for the correlation of ranks in the aesthetic and economic dimension amounts to Kendall's tau $b = 0.19$. There is thus a positive rank correlation of market value and aesthetic value. The degree of correlation, however, is rather weak. This is indicated by the broad spread of the 83 points representing the artists in the two-dimensional scatter plot in figure 2.

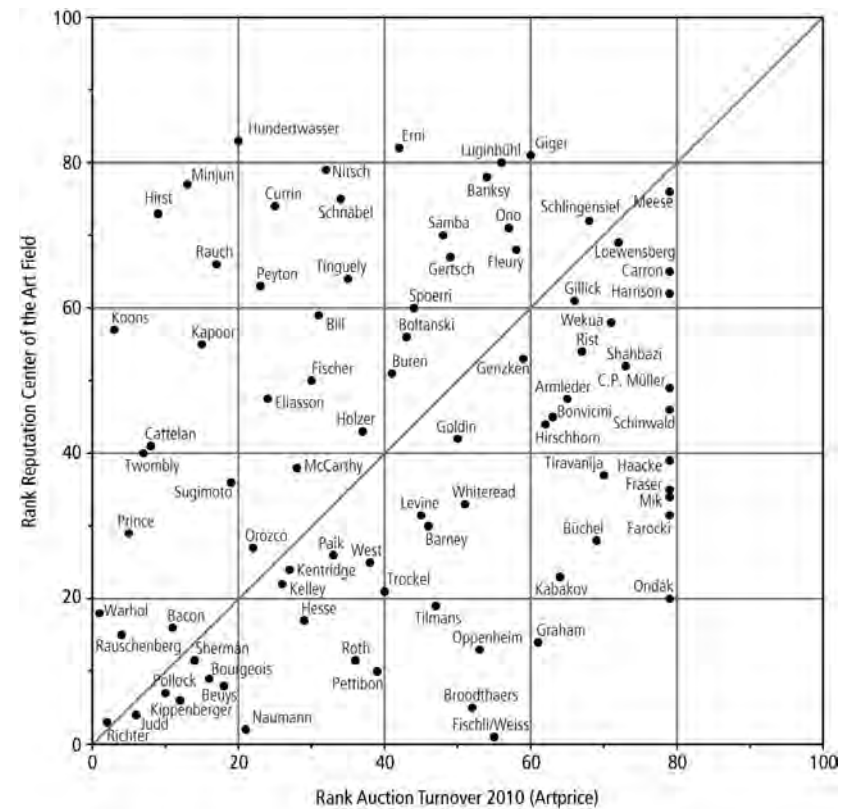


Figure 2 Economic value according to total auction revenues for 2010 listed in Artprice and aesthetic value for eighty-three artists according to the valuations of insiders and experts in the Zurich art field 2009/2010 ($n = 140$, Kendall's tau $b = 0.19$).

The artists located close to the diagonal stand for the consistency of market value and aesthetic value in Grampp's sense. At the top sit Gerhard Richter and Donald Judd; at the mid-level, Jenny Holzer and Isa Genzken; and in the area that is characterized by weak or no auction results in combination with ambivalent or negative valuations prevailing over positive ones, Jonathan Meese and Christoph Schlingensief. For these types of cases along the diagonal, failure or success on the market could have determined reputations; assuming that the direction of causality could be identified and demonstrated that it isn't reputations that determine prices, but rather "prices determine reputations" as Calvin Thompson and Diane Crane posited, these types of artists would support the consistency hypothesis as well as the historically specified economic assumptions of some of the sociologists representing the relative heteronomy model, such as Crane or Neckel.

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On the other hand, figure 2 includes many artists who exhibit a high rank difference with positive sign. That is, they are far better placed in view of the valuations by peers, experts, and insiders than their auction success would indicate. They are located in the triangle that can be formed in the bottom right corner of figure 2. Examples for which such an inconsistency is especially high are Peter Fischli and David Weiss, Marcel Broodthaers, Dan Graham, and Roman Ondák. In the terminology of a certain branch of status inconsistency theory, actors with such a profile would be termed the "underprivileged" in contrast to the "overprivileged" and the ones with consistent profiles. In the case of the "underprivileged," economic benefits do not correspond to the high valuations received by others on the basis of their own achievements. However, this terminology is based on the assumption that economic benefits are highly valuable.¹²¹ According to hostile world models for the relation of art and money in a field that is founded on its glorification of values of disinterestedness and its rejecting or reversing the law

¹²¹ It is not by chance that this terminology goes back to the relative deprivation branch of behaviorist status incongruence theory, for which economic gratifications are of special importance. See, for example, George C. Homans, *Social Behaviour: Its Elementary Forms* (London: Taylor & Francis, 1973). It was a precursor of the even more economic rational choice model, imported into sociology in the era of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan—the "decade of greed" of the 1980s.

of material profit, financial success might even bring a bad reputation.¹²² Thus, we avoid this terminology in this context.

Artists that represent the inverse constellation of higher market success than cultural recognition are Damien Hirst, Yue Minjun, and Friedensreich Hundertwasser. They are situated in the imaginary triangle in the top left corner of figure 2. In the terminology of inconsistency theory, which we avoid, they would be labeled the "overprivileged," for whom economic benefits exceed prestige and reputation accorded by experts and peers. None of these artists with a high negative rank difference belong to the type of "young" or "emergent artists" for which such a negative rank difference would be less surprising. If still alive, these artists have reached an age that indicates that a conversion of economic into aesthetic value and reputation on the respective level has not occurred. The youngest among them, Damien Hirst and Yue Minjun, were born in 1965 and 1962, respectively—at the time of the survey in Zurich, they were thus between forty-three and forty-eight years old.

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Following a procedure suggested by Buchholz,¹²³ a second, more objectivist cultural ranking of the artists in the Zurich study was chosen. It is based on data from ArtFacts.net, which is sometimes called the "rating agency" of the art scene.¹²⁴ As she argues, in contrast to the more commonly used Kunstkompass artist rankings, this data source has decisive advantages in regard to the much wider scope of the data with which it operates, as well as the elimination of the German bias in its data.¹²⁵ The inclusive na-

¹²² Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 97f.

¹²³ Larissa Buchholz, "The Relationship of Symbolic and Economic Value in the Global Art Field: Challenging the Convergence Assumption," paper presented at the conference *Passion Investment in Art Markets*, Leuphana University of Lüneburg, Germany, November 25, 2011. See also Buchholz, *The Global Rules of Art*, 143ff.

¹²⁴ The art scene's rating agency, ArtFacts.net, measures artists' trendiness on the basis of an objective points system. And the trendiness of cities along the way." Markus Brügge, "Malen nach Zahlen," supplement to *Capital*, October 5, 2010.

¹²⁵ The German bias of the Kunstkompass data is discussed in Annie Verger, "The Art of Evaluating Art: How to Assess the Incomparable," in "The Political Economy of Art," special issue, *International Journal of Political Economy* 25, no. 2 (Summer, 1995): 85ff.; Alain Quemin, "Globalization and Mixing in the Visual Arts: An Empirical Survey of 'High Culture' and Globalization," *International Sociology* 21, no. 4 (April 2006): 531; and Christian Knebel, *Anomalies in Fine Art Markets—Three Examples of an Imperfect Market for Perfect Goods* (thesis, University of Paderborn, 2007), <http://digital.ub.uni-paderborn.de/hs/content/titleinfo/4965>, 97 (PDF).

ture of the ArtFacts.net¹²⁶ ranking in contrast to the Kunstkompass data makes it possible to accord all of the eighty-three non-fictional artists¹²⁷ from the Zurich survey a rank on the basis of the ArtFacts.net points at the November 2010 cutoff date.

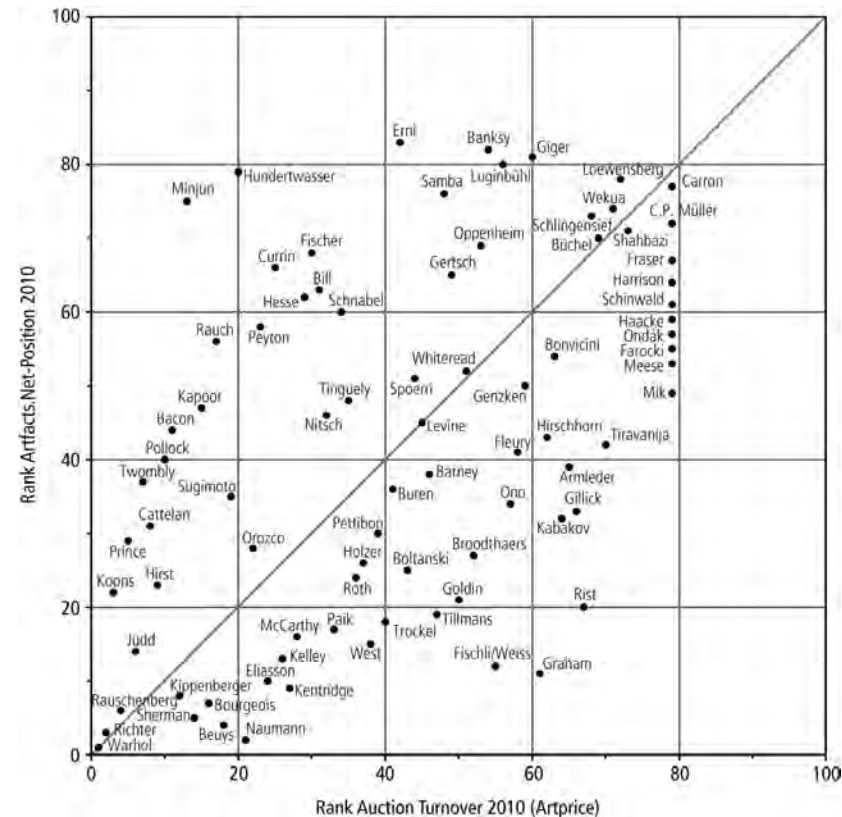
Since the ArtFacts.net ranking is based on the visibility of artists in exhibitions—i.e., the decisions of curators, museum directors, and gallery owners—and the Zurich survey study used verbal valuations of artists, the correlation of these two types of measures was also of interest. Kendall's tau b for the correlation of the ranks according to the more objectivist ArtFacts.net and the subjectivist attitude measure of the Zurich data amounts to a value of 0.56. This is a middle-sized degree of association, showing a partial difference between these two types of operationalization of aesthetic value.

The correlation between economic value and aesthetic value amounts to Kendall's tau b = 0.36 when the ArtFacts.net ranks are used as indicators for aesthetic value. It is a bit higher than the one that used the expert ranks based on survey data. The results of this second test are depicted in figure 3.

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¹²⁶ "Artist Ranking," ArtFacts.net, <http://www.ArtFacts.net/index.php/pageType/ranking>. Sarah Boxer explicates the criteria as follows: "the only artists eligible for the list are 'international artists,' those with long-term ties (that is, representation by galleries or having a presence in permanent collections) in at least three countries. To rank these international artists, the staff of ArtFacts.net starts by looking at exhibition announcements, newsletters and Web sites. Then the point totting begins. Solo shows are worth more than group shows or art fairs. Documenta, in Kassel, Germany, is worth more than the Venice Biennale. Public museums count more than galleries. And different museums have different weights. Those in cities like Paris or New York count for more. . . . Exhibitions held in a museum with a great collection of famous artists, like the Centre Pompidou, will receive more points than a relatively unknown private gallery, the Web site says. And how is a famous gallery or museum defined? Circularly. An institution with famous artists is famous, and a famous artist is one who shows in a famous institution." Sarah Boxer, "Picasso and Warhol . . . Neck and Neck," *New York Times*, January 22, 2005, <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/01/22/arts/design/22rank.html>.

¹²⁷ One semi-fictional artist was intentionally included in the sample, Marcel Rutschke. The name of this artist was used in an exhibition in Vienna's Museum of Applied Art by artist and theoretician Peter Weibel in 1989. Since no auction results could be expected for this artist, we excluded him from this analysis, though some experts and insiders of the Zurich sample claimed to be familiar with his name. This might be the case because they saw the exhibition in Vienna or are familiar with its catalog. In other cases, it is simply an illusion. For the work with fictive names of artists in research see Ulf Wuggenig, "Voix de Marcel Duchamp et Martin Heidegger, sons de John Cage et Vivaldi. Résultats d'un sondage du public de '1 - 1 = 2' de Fabrice Hybert au Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris," in *Oumeurt 3*, eds. Diethelm Stoller, Klaus Werner and Jan Winkelmann (Leipzig: Galerie für zeitgenössische Kunst, 1997), 138–52.



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Figure 3 Economic value according to auction revenues in 2010 and aesthetic value of eighty-three artists in accordance with ArtFacts.net positions in November 2010 (Kendall's tau b = 0.36).

Examples of artists with a rather consistent ranking at the top level are Andy Warhol, Gerhard Richter, and Robert Rauschenberg; on the mid-level, Rachel Whiteread and Sherrie Levine; and on the lower level, Christoph Büchel, Shirana Shahbazi, and Valentin Carron. Among artists that display a very high negative rank difference—and who thus most contradict the thesis of the market determinism of reputations—are Yue Minjun and Friedensreich Hundertwasser. Their eminent success on the auction market neither earned them high ranks in the experts' valuations nor high positions in the ArtFacts.net ranking list. Also Banksy, the superstar of the street art scene, who is especially well

represented in the media and on the Internet, provides an example of an artist with an inconsistent profile.¹²⁸ However, the rank difference in this case is less extreme. His rank in aesthetic value is very low according to the subjectivist as well as the objectivist measure, and in his auction-based economic success he ranks in the category of the (lower-) middle-class ranks.

144 Conversely, artists with rather extreme rank differences with a positive sign are conceptual artist Dan Graham and Swiss artists Fischli and Weiss as well as Pipilotti Rist. These artists' weak success on the auction market didn't hurt their reputations. Instead, they belong to the producers who are especially valued by curators and thus have high visibility in international exhibitions. The example of the three Swiss artists also hints at an interesting cultural source of valorization besides market forces. According to the—mostly Swiss—experts, David Fischli and Peter Weiss are ranked number one in figure 2. In figure 3 in the reputational dimension they are at rank 12 according to their ArtFacts.net points. Evidently, the visible difference in the comparison of their positions in the two planes is based on a positive “national bias.” They are the artists known as representing “Swissness” also outside of their country.¹²⁹ However, the example of Pipilotti Rist, an artist working in video, film, and installation, demonstrates that national bias does not necessarily work in one direction only. Her rank according to expert valuation is much lower than her ArtFacts.net rank. Thus, beyond market value and the criteria that art critics use in their judgments, collective representations and sentiments also seem to be of great importance in the valuation of art and artists.

¹²⁸ For the case of Banksy and the high discrepancy between his standing in the art field and his rank position in the media based economy of attention, see the data in Wuggenig, “The Tattoos of Cities,” discussed in a three-dimensional, status-inconsistency frame of reference.

¹²⁹ See Reto Inaebnit, “Superschweizer? Zur kulturellen Identität im Werk von Fischli/Weiss,” *Artefakt—Zeitschrift für junge Kunstgeschichte und Kunst* 3, September 8 (2009), <http://www.artefakt-sz.net/wissenschaftliche-aufsaeetze/superschweizer-zur-kulturellen-identitaet-im-werk-von-fischliweiss>.

Conclusion: The relative autonomy of symbolic value from market value in the “decade of greed”

In view of competing models that deal with and attempt to explain the relationship between art and the market as well as aesthetic and economic value (the relative autonomy model, the relative heteronomy model, and the economic model postulating a consistency of aesthetic and economic value), we carried out an empirical analysis based on survey data. They were collected in 2009 and 2010 in the contemporary art field of Zurich, one of the European art and art market centers. The main question raised in this contribution was: Is there still a sphere independent of the market, or is success in the market determining aesthetic value and artists' reputations? Hypotheses arguing that an end of the relative autonomy of the art field has come proliferated during the last art market boom—indicating a new “decade of greed.” They won popularity in the art field as well as among sociologists of art. Neoclassical economists traditionally tend to propagate an ontologically reductionist position, assuming a consistency of aesthetic value and market value.

Our empirical results, however, show a low correlation of aesthetic and economic value only. Most international artists judged in the sample do not show a profile of consistency as posited in the economic model. (In)consistency on a formal level was measured as degree of correlation of ranks in these two dimensions. For the visual inspections of the data, two types of inconsistent profiles were distinguished—*aesthetic rank higher than economic rank*, and *vice versa*. Extreme forms of positive as well as negative rank difference can be observed in the heterogeneous sample of eighty-three artists belonging to the sub-field of international contemporary art; thus our results do not support monistic theories of the economic model positing a general consistency of aesthetic and economic value without specifications of time and space. The consistency axiom seems to be a trap posed by methodological considerations. Like the *homo oeconomicus* model, it has no empirical foundation. It is based on a fiction and seems to be useful as an “as if” axiom at best. From an instrumentalist point of view, it has to show to be of any predictive validity at all.

The data also do not support historicist assumptions of the relative heteronomy model. They postulate that market prices mainly determine

the reputations of artists under current conditions of economization, financialization, and globalization. The data even clearly falsify such deterministic and economic assumptions. As long as one doesn't concentrate on some individual artists in the tradition of idiographically oriented approaches, but rather embeds such analyses in empirical evidence on a broader structural basis,¹³⁰ one cannot deny that the valuation of art and artists has remained under rather weak market control even in the last decade.

146 In the realm of literary theory, reservations are increasing toward a purely idiographic methodology, as is the basis of the "close reading" tradition, especially given the access to "big data" and the possibilities of "digital humanities."¹³¹ Equivalent objections can be transferred to art theory and the sciences of art. Illustrative evidence based on single cases can be found for any type of theory about the relationship between symbolic and commercial value in our scatter plots: Gerhard Richter as an example of the convergence of symbolic and commercial value; David Fischli and Peter Weiss or Dan Graham for the large discrepancy between symbolic recognition and market success; Yue Minjun, as a representative for many Chinese artists of his generation who would be positioned in a similar way, or a painter like John Currin for a lack of reputation despite exorbitant prices and market success. Arguments based on single cases have to be embedded in considering the frame of the whole structure.

In other words, the cultural recognition of artists continues to take place relatively independently of the "signals" that the prices in the auction market send.¹³² Consequently, no empirical support can be found for monist theories of value by economists who are trapped in a monodimensional perspective for technical reasons (e.g., obsession with measurement of utility via metric monetary scales), among others. The same is true for

130 For an example from the literary field, see the regression analyses and the proposal of synthesizing distant and close reading in Heuser and Le-Khac, "A Quantitative Literary History of 2,958 Nineteenth-Century British Novels."

131 See Franco Moretti, "Conjectures on World Literature," *New Left Review* 48, no. 1 (2000): 54–68.

132 See the famous communication model of Stuart Hall that states: "decodings do not follow inevitably from encodings" Stuart Hall, "Encoding/Decoding," in *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972–79*, eds. Stuart Hall, Dorothy Hobson, Andrew Lowe, and Paul Willis (London: Hutchinson, 1980), 136. For an alternative to simple signal theories of prices see the one applied to the field of art in Velthuis, *Talking Prices*.

the relative heteronomy model, which sociological theoreticians or art critics have suggested in view of recent economization and financialization tendencies in the field of art.

On the other hand, the empirical results, visually documented in two scatter plot figures, confirm findings and arguments of Larissa Buchholz's recent exhaustive study on the global elite of artists, which draws on a larger sample of artists and more complex statistical procedures.¹³³ Even given the background of a forced economization, the segment of the art field in which the struggle for recognition in global art history is concentrated—the elite market, in the terms of Stuart Plattner—has been able to preserve a perhaps surprising extent of relative autonomy. That makes it possible to argue that a sphere of genuinely artistic valuation remains that is situated to a considerable degree beyond the market. It extends much further than is assumed in much recent literature on the field of art, with either an affinity for or aversion to the forces of the market.

One of the reasons for the relative autonomy of aesthetic value might be the one Pierre Bourdieu has formulated. He underlines the autonomy potential of the art field even under conditions of dependency of artistic reproduction on an economically highly privileged class of buyers and collectors:

Trying to establish a direct correlation between producers and the social group from which they draw their economic support (collectors, spectators, patrons, etc.) is to forget that the logic of the field means that one can make use of the resources offered by a group or an institution to produce products which are more or less independent of the interests and values of this group or that institution.¹³⁴

133 See Buchholz, *The Global Rules of Art*, and Buchholz, "The Relationship of Symbolic and Economic Value." Also the results presented by Bull, "The Two Economies of World Art," imply a weak dependence of aesthetic value on economic value. As an art historian, Bull did not draw on a correlation or regression analysis but argued on the basis of an cross-classification of ArtFacts.net and Artprice data ranks, visualized as a pyramid. Thus, results of this study can not immediately be compared with ours on the level of coefficients.

134 See Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, 257f.

Such an “dependent independency”¹³⁵ seems to have survived even under the conditions of forced economization and financialization of the last decade. Another reason is given by the sophisticated dualistic model and the empirical results of Buchholz, which clearly show that the market to a high degree is valuing another type of artist than those of the status-based exhibition circle, which dominates the sub-field on which the ArtFacts.net rankings as well as those of the experts, peers, and insiders of the Zurich art field are based.¹³⁶ For complex reasons—which, according to this study, are to be attributed to the special way the globalization of the field of art is unfolding via the rise of the “semi-periphery” of the world system and its artists, especially at the market pole—there even seems to be a lower connection between the dual spheres in the “decade of greed” of the first part of the twenty-first century than in former decades.

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Also, the survey results for the sub-field of contemporary art allow the identification of the persistence of a sphere beyond the market in the sub-field where the struggle for recognition of artists is especially strong and reaches far beyond a regional or national level. It is up to future research in other art fields and with different sets of data to investigate whether and to what extent a relative autonomous sphere beyond the market not only still exists, but can also be saved under strong pressure by heteronomous forces. As Bourdieu noted in the plea for a “*Realpolitik* of reason” in his postscript to *The Rules of Art*, there are two aims for artists, intellectuals, and scientists to be pursued today:

On the one hand, the aim is to reinforce autonomy, notably by reinforcing the separation from heteronomous producers and by fighting to guarantee cultural producers the economic and social conditions of autonomy in relation to all forms of power. . . . On the other hand, it must tear cultural producers away from the temptation to remain in their ivory tower, and encourage them to fight, if only to guarantee

¹³⁵ See the use of this notion in James F. English, “Winning the Culture Game: Prizes, Awards, and the Rules of Art,” *New Literary History* 33, no. 1 (2002): 111. It can’t be found in Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* or Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, but it fits well with his theory.

¹³⁶ For the results of the hierarchical cluster analyses, see Buchholz, *The Global Rules of Art*, 163ff.

themselves the power over the instruments of production and consecration and, by involving themselves in their own times, to assert the values associated with their autonomy.¹³⁷

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Translated from German by Christopher Langer.

¹³⁷ Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, 347f.