

Art from the Middle East: Found in London

Master Thesis

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Abstract

This thesis looks at the relationship between the commercial and non-commercial art sectors, framed in terms of the globalisation of the art world, looking specifically at the emerging contemporary Middle Eastern art world. This is approached by looking at four non-commercial art institutions in London, U.K. that have put on exhibitions of Middle Eastern contemporary art between 2012-2013 and how they have responded to the recent growth in the Middle Eastern art market. This is a qualitative research, based on interviews with key figures from The Victoria and Albert Museum, Tate Modern, Institute for Contemporary Arts and The Mosaic Rooms. The empirical research is supported by previous studies on the role of the museum as an intermediary, theories on the globalization of the art world, and an account of the emergence of the Middle Eastern art scene. This research finds that the relationship between the commercial and non-commercial sectors is extremely complex and yet the two poles of the art world depend on each other for the development of trends and the confirmation of them. The research also aims to add to an underdeveloped body of academic literature on the emergence of the Middle Eastern art world, the complexities of it, as well as the mechanisms and factors that have led to its growth.

Keywords

Art institution, art market, art world, commercial art sector, contemporary art, globalisation, London, Middle Eastern art, non-commercial, role of the intermediary, Tate Modern, Victoria and Albert

Preface

Art is a universal language. I believe that it does not matter who you are or where you come from, that an artist's duty is to communicate a message, whether it be big or small, for the masses or for a selected few. The personal history of artists, and their place of origin, understandably has an affect on the way they think and the work they produce, but since there are so many factors that can influence any given work, national origin should be considered as just one among many. Artists and their works are often labeled according to where they are from, and artists of the Middle Eastern region are no exception to this arguably easy method of classification. The spectrum of emotional, psychological and physical elements that feed artists is not bounded by their nationality or by their religion. I contend that art exists in a border-less place, where the artist and the viewer work in tandem to create experiences. The art work itself, and not its country of origin, ought to be the focus. Having said this, this research has brought a part of the world to my attention in a far different way than media outlets and journalism ever could have. I am grateful for the artwork and the artists' dedication to their practice for having brought me into their worlds. Art can provide an opening to realities beyond our narrow understanding, making the world a more interesting, intriguing and beautiful place.

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This thesis has been a journey of discovery for me and I could not have done it without the help of a special few. First and foremost I would like to thank Dr. Claartje Rasterhoff for her inspiring dedication and continual support. Coming from a completely different background, I learned a lot through this process – from the field of visual arts to art from the Middle East. More than a few times I wanted to throw the pages to the wind, but after encouraging meetings with Claartje I managed to get back on track and finish what I started. I would also like to thank the curators whom I interviewed, for their time and thoughts. Their generosity meant that I could explore their world on a deeper level. A special thanks goes to Melina Giannelia for her eye for detail, incredible patience and flair for the English language.

“More often than not it is the journey that will shed light on big questions, rather than the destination” Muller, 2007

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Understanding the research problem

All industries within the arts deal with the complex relationship between the commercial and the non-commercial sectors. The present thesis researches the relationship between these two sectors, as it exists in the visual arts, a relationship that is underdeveloped in currently available academic research. In today's world, this relationship is situated in a globalised context. The two sides, commercial and non-commercial, are not only limited to major players such as the European and American art worlds, once understood to be the entirety of the art world¹. The conversation of commercial and non-commercial is reaching beyond those borders and into new and emerging markets.

This thesis explores the relationship between the commercial and non-commercial sector of the art world. The emerging market, represented here by contemporary Middle Eastern visual art, is understood as such because of its increasingly visible appearance in the commercial sector, and heightened commercial and monetary value (Crane, 2009; Lind, 2012; Velthuis, 2012). This increasing visibility is then compared with the appearance of Middle Eastern contemporary art in non-commercial institutions in London, U.K., namely: the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Tate Modern, the Institute for Contemporary Arts and The Mosaic Rooms. Globalization is a hotly debated topic in many fields of study; studying an emerging market will be done in accordance with the globalization theories of Crane (2009); Quemin (2006) and Velthuis (2012). Along with studying the relationship of commercial and non-commercial sectors in the art world, this thesis looks at the art produced from a region that is highly relevant in political, social and religious circles of the present day.

In past studies in the fields of cultural economics and cultural sociology, globalization in the art world has been discussed in terms of the variety of nationalities taking part in international art events such as fairs and biennials

¹ In the present thesis, the term 'art world' is used to mean the world of visual arts, including both the commercial and non-commercial sectors. Commercial sectors are understood to mean art auctions, private galleries and art fairs; non-commercial sectors are understood to mean public museums and galleries, art spaces (centres that are based around temporary exhibitions as opposed to permanent collections) and biennales.

(Quemin, 2012; Van Hest, 2012) as well as the presence of international artists represented by galleries (Robertson, 2005; Velthuis, 2012). The contemporary art market has seen a substantial rise in both exposure and value in the last decade and is even understood as the ‘poster child’ for the globalization of the art world (Van Hest, 2012).

Contemporary art is the genre that has deteriorated many of the geographical and artistic borders that the art world once knew, as it is an art form that tests the limits of artistic mediums as well as the traditional divide between forms of ‘high’ and ‘low’ culture (Crane, 2009; Moulin, 1986; Van Hest, 2012). Paintings, sketches, video art, installations and digital art are but a few examples of the range of mediums found in the field of contemporary art. Moreover, the production of contemporary visual arts has spread beyond the borders of historical art hubs.

Traditionally, the centre of the art world involved exclusively American and European players. These players are now in competition with what were once thought of as the peripheral regions: Asia, Africa and Latin America. This is exemplified in the participation of these peripheral regions in international events such as biennales and fairs (Quemin, 2012, Velthuis, 2012). The main theory for the internationalization of the contemporary arts has been the ‘financialization’ of the art world which I will discuss further in Chapter 3. Now we have contemporary art and commerce that are now more wedded than ever before, and the emergence of new economic powers has helped to intensify this new phenomenon.

Emerging art markets across the globe play a key role in the global commercial sector (McAndrew, 2008; 2009; 2011). However, how an emerging market affects the non-commercial sector, understood specifically in the case of public museums and galleries, art spaces and biennales, is lacking in the academic literature and research.

The contemporary Middle Eastern art market serves as a case of an emerging art market and will be the focus of this thesis. It is used as a case study to identify how emerging art markets are presented to the public by means of intermediaries such as public museums and galleries. Questions of how the commercial art market influences the non-commercial art world, in the case of disseminating art works from an emerging market, are discussed, researched and analysed.

Public museums and art spaces in London, U.K. and their corresponding exhibitions on contemporary Middle Eastern art were selected as the research units;

their curators are the source of information. Interviews were held with curators in an effort to gain a deeper insight into the curatorial process of selecting and presenting work from the contemporary Middle Eastern art world, as well as gaining insight into the relationship between the commercial and non-commercial sectors from an insider's perspective. Thus, this research's analysis of the non-commercial sector is limited to selected museums and art spaces (discussed in detail in Chapters 3 and 4).

Public museums and galleries that have exhibited contemporary Middle Eastern art in London over the past two years were selected for analysis to determine the impact of the commercial sector including art markets on the non-commercial sector. Temporary exhibitions, rather than permanent collections, were chosen, as temporary exhibitions are more reflective of trends than permanent collections; they are representative of the curatorial practice as they are under more of a direct control from the curators; and most importantly, most people including the general public, art critics, and art historians view art through temporary exhibition (Alexander, 1996).²

Included in the zeitgeist that the museums display in the form of their exhibitions, are events that occur outside the realm of arts, which also have an impact on the art world at large. According to Robertson (2005), what constitutes the art world "is linked not only to consumer behavior, but also to world economic and political events" (p. 34). Along with individual events, the Arab Spring is one example of a series of major political events that have shaped the Middle East as a region and impacted the art scene within the region (Azimi, 2012; Batty, 2012; Weiss, 2012; Yusof, 2013). Therefore it is important to note that the present research is situated around a pivotal time in the history of the region; the ripple effects of these events are being felt throughout the world.

Additionally, in the field of cultural economics, art is distinguished from other goods because its quality cannot be determined objectively (Bonus & Ronte, 1997; Schonfeld & Reinstaller, 2007). Content will be discussed in this empirical section of the thesis, in relation to the choices made in the curatorial process. How does the content of an exhibition relate to how it is presented to the public? What kinds of art do curators choose, and why? What are they looking to present when it comes to showcasing art from the Middle East?

² In this thesis, museums are specifically art museums, unless otherwise stated.

Research question

This research provides insight into how the non-commercial art world responds to developments in the commercial art market. It is an exploration of the curatorial process of art museums and non-profit galleries in response to the globalization of the art market. In this case, it looks at how the emerging contemporary Middle Eastern art market impacts the non-commercial sector within the art world in respect to exhibitions in public museums and galleries. This is formulated in the main research question that guides the thesis:

How do public museums and galleries respond to emerging commercial art sector developments, specifically the case of contemporary Middle Eastern art exhibitions presented by public museums, galleries and art spaces in London, U.K.?

While answering this question, numerous sub-questions are also revealed. The sub-questions are introduced in the literature and then further analysed in the empirical research. They fall under the following three themes: role of the intermediary, globalisation of the art world, the emerging Middle Eastern art world.

Empirically, the relationship between the non-commercial and the commercial sectors is examined in the present research by means of interviewing curators of the art world and discussing with them the potential influence of the art market and its relevance to their work. The contemporary Middle Eastern art market is experiencing recent growth both in the region and outside of the region and this research will try to uncover if these trends in the market have impacted institutes which are a part of the non-commercial art world or vice versa. The relationship is reviewed using relevant academic literature for its theoretical background.

Relevance of the study

This research will provide a deeper insight into how the non-commercial institutions within the art world respond to current trends in a globalised art world and how this potentially affects their approach to curatorship. Although there is academic literature pertaining to the relationship between the commercial and non-commercial sectors (Chong, 2008; Lind, 2012; Moulin, 1986, 1993), studies on the globalization of the art world (Quemin, 2012; Van Hest, 2012; Velthuis, 2012), as well as some work written about emerging markets in general (Bellet, 2004, McAndrew, 2008), few have tackled the task of analyzing how these combined forces interact with one another. How non-

commercial institutions respond to trends of emerging commercial markets in the setting of a globalised art world has yet to be researched. The thesis also sheds light on the Middle East as a growing economic region with a burgeoning art scene, a region of the art world that up until now has received very limited academic attention in light of its art world. This study can serve as an example of the impact of an emerging market on the non-commercial sector and provide a case for future comparison.

Structure of the thesis

The following chapter – Chapter 2, consists of the literature review, which is divided into three sections whereby three themes are discussed. The first theme considers the role of the intermediary such as museums, their exhibitions and the curator. The second theme reviews the literature pertaining to the globalisation of the art world. The third theme provides a summary of the emerging Middle Eastern art world, citing key players and factors. The literature review is followed by Chapter 3, where the methodology and empirical research framework provides the link between theory and the empirical research. Chapter 4 presents the results of the data collection and the analyses using a cross-case thematic approach. The study is drawn to a close in Chapter 5 with general conclusions and notes to the limitations of the research as well as suggestions and recommendations for further research.

Introduction to art in the Middle East

The Middle East as a budding art world is relatively new and undiscovered in academic literature, and so a brief introduction is due. A more in-depth survey of the situation is discussed in Chapter 2, Section III (see Chapter 3 for a definition of Middle East that will be used in this research).

Recent years have been witness to a rapid growth of the Middle Eastern art scene (McAndrew, 2009). The region has boomed in all aspects of an art world; in respect to both the commercial and non-commercial sectors, as well as on a local and international level. Locally, there have been regional developments, marking the rise of both the production and distribution of artwork. Internationally, high-profile art events and institutions have entered the region, making their mark on Middle Eastern ground. The ripple effects of this emerging art world can be felt around the globe, and the exhibitions used in this thesis are one example of this.

Within the region, there have been art events such as fairs and biennales as well as museum, gallery and auction openings happening on a regular basis, over the past few years. The activities are occurring throughout the region, with strong representation in Beirut, Cairo, Doha, Dubai, Ramallah and Tehran. These cities have seen a growth of local interest in the arts, including a broad and diverse audience (Bharadwaj, 2012).

The interests from outside of the region is exemplified by the Louvre (France) and the Guggenheim (U.S.), which have both scheduled openings of sister organizations in the United Arab Emirates. Auction houses such as Christie's, Bonham's and Sotheby's, as of 2006, 2007 and 2008, respectively, have opened up branches in the Middle East. Both Christie's and Bonham's operate in Dubai, U.A.E., while Sotheby's is situated in Doha, Qatar. Moreover, the impact has spread to museums beyond the Middle East, such as the ones included in this research. The elaboration of this is discussed in Chapter 4. These recent developments of the Middle Eastern art market have brought it to an international level and made it an important trading point (McAndrew, 2009).

Chapter 2: Review of the literature

“As commerce and recent art are becoming an increasingly intimate and powerful pair, and as the criteria of economic efficiency invade art production as well as curating, it is necessary to scrutinize the mechanisms at play and what they generate” (Lind, 2012, p. 8)

Introduction

Becker (1982) and Bourdieu’s (1993) theories on the visual art world as an intertwined network of actors and agents form the basis of this thesis. Within this web that we call the *art world*, various polarities can be found. For example, classical works compared with the contemporary works; artist who make pennies from what they do versus artist who make millions; and the dichotomy between the commercial gallery with an aim to sell art and the public art museum with a goal to provide art to the people. This last point is the one of focus in this thesis. The following literature review will be rooted in this contrast between the commercial and the non-commercial art sectors that make up the greater art world as we know it.

In his seminal work *Art Worlds*, Becker (1982) reveals that art is produced and consumed through a variety of ways and influenced by a great number of factors. Within the art world, lies the distribution system, where art works are disseminated (or not) for public or private consumption through a variety of mechanisms. These mechanisms, according to Becker, range from personal distribution – the artist producing and distributing on his own, to distribution with the aides of intermediaries including both dealers and auctioneers – for the commercial sale of art works, and museums and public galleries – with an aim of public consumption. Here, Becker declares that both the commercial and the non-commercial aspects of the art world co-exist alongside one another. This is of particular importance to this study, because this theory of the co-habitation of the commercial and non-commercial, in other words private and public sectors, forms the basis of the research. How the two, often opposing constituents relate to one another, is the point from which the analysis in this research departs.

In previous academic works, the terms art world and art market have been used to explain the non-commercial sector including museums, art critics, artists and art historians; and the financially rooted elements such as commercial galleries, art

fairs and auctions, respectively (Joy & Sherry, 2003). However, the distinction between art world and art market is irrelevant in this study, because as outlined above the art market is one facet of the greater art world. Therefore, from now on the term art world will mean the greater, inclusive home of the arts including the production and consumption elements and the art market. Thus, the terms commercial and non-commercial or private and public will instead be used to distinguish the two poles within the art world from now on.

Much of the literature pertaining to the relationship between the commercial and the non-commercial art sectors (or between the art market and cultural institutions, as it is most often referred to in earlier studies) is found in sociological studies of art (Menger, 2003; Moulin, 1986, 1987; Moulin & Quemin, 1993; Quemin, 2006). In the existing literature the relationship between the two sides is researched with an emphasis on the valuation of art, whereby it is contended that the main difference between the two sectors is that aesthetic and artistic value is created in the non-commercial sector, home to museums and cultural institutions, and market value is established in the commercial sector, commonly referred to as the art market. However, the paradox is that a work of art can contain both, aesthetic and market value. The transformation of aesthetic or artistic value into monetary or market value is of key importance to these studies. The individuals who hold the positions of making these value judgments and consequential value transformations play a pivotal role in the dynamic relationship between commercial and non-commercial (Becker, 1982; Moulin, 1986). These individuals are typically referred to as gatekeepers.

A defining characteristic of the arts, especially contemporary art, is that it is a world plagued with asymmetrical information. But at the same time, this is one thing that brings the non-commercial and the commercial sides together. The both have experts who know more about the works, than the majority of the consumers. In the non-commercial side, curators, critics and art histories are the holders of information, as they are the creators of non-commercial value. Their judgments, along with those of the artists and their peers generate attention and collectively agree on whether or not they be included (and to what extent) in the canon of works (Becker, 1982). In the commercial sector, this role tends to be assumed by art dealers. This can include the primary market, home to gallery-based dealers as well as auction houses. Therefore, museums and the market and the sectors they represent, have convergent strategies which on one hand seem to be opposing (aesthetic vs monetary) but on the

other hand, they both create value to one of the most difficult things to appropriate value to, and that is art.

The following three sections use the relationship between commercial and non-commercial as a backdrop to delve into topics relevant for this study, namely the role of intermediaries, the globalization of the art world and the role of the emerging contemporary Middle Eastern art market.

Section 1: The role of the intermediary

“Museums are the product of the society that supports them” (Conaty, 2003 p. 227).

Role of the museum

Museums, as we know them today, display collected content to the public in an effort to educate, enlighten and inspire. Even though the origins of museums trace back to ancient Greek society, it was not until the Age of Discovery, roughly corresponding to the period between the early fifteenth century to the late seventeenth century, that the modern idea of the museum came about. The collecting of foreign artifacts and putting them on display was done mainly for individual interest and research purposes and it wasn't until the middle of the eighteenth century that the public was encouraged to view the collections (Conaty, 2003). This shift in the paradigm came into full effect by the middle of the twentieth century, when education became a main purpose of museums (Weil, 2002). This historical trajectory applies both to traditional forms of museums and to art museums. Art now plays a fundamental role in museums and galleries, where it is sometimes the main purpose — two examples are the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

The variety of public museums and galleries and the literature written about them is as broad as the art world itself. This section looks at very particular topics within this range. Therefore, in order to focus this section, it is important to outline its structure and the appropriate topics that will be discussed. First, the relationship museums and galleries have with the art market will be discussed. Next, the function of the exhibition will be outlined and how it plays within the globalised art world. Finally the role of the curator will be analysed along with the relationship the curator plays between the artwork, the art world and the influence of the art market. Throughout, sub-questions are posed, some of which lead directly from the literature to the empirical research that follows.

Relationship Between Museums and the Art Market

Art museums are the leading representatives of the non-commercial art sector, and are deemed to be the final repository for artworks (Becker, 1982; Chong, 2008). This is

for two reasons. First, museums rarely let go of works they have acquired, and second, “when a museum shows and purchases a work, it gives it the highest kind of institutional approval available in the contemporary visual arts world; nothing more can happen that will make that work more important” (Becker, 1982, p. 118). According to Moulin (1986), a museum’s investment in art, also known as the acquisition of works, does two things: it signifies the quality of the work and of the creator, and it affirms the market value (by the sheer act of purchasing it from the market). Thus, when museums purchase works from the art market that they deem valuable, a clear relationship between the non-commercial sector and the commercial market is established. Furthermore, museums are also able to highlight an artist or movement (Moulin, 1986).

So what happens when the market shifts or fluctuates? More specifically, *how do museums respond to market trends?*

According to Bellet (2004), museums, specifically museums and galleries specializing in contemporary art, are trend followers, and the market that they are following is set by auction houses and art fairs. This trendsetting power that the auction houses have is due to the recent financialization of the market whereby a great importance is placed on the monetary value of a work, especially when this value is publicly determined and displayed at events such as open auctions (Crane, 2009; Velthuis, 2012). This does however, put an enormous amount of pressure on museums to deal both with the trends and the price tags they come with. The Tate Modern’s recent exhibition on Damien Hirst, one of the world’s most famous contemporary artists and one of Britain’s richest living artists, is one example of a market trend entering a public, non-commercial space.

It is obvious that the financial health of a museum has a significant impact on the purchasing of art, but to what extent do the finances have an influence on what art is purchased? By and large, many museums are funded from private sources in the form of donations and gifts from wealthy supporters (Alexander, 1996; Becker, 1982). Historically, when decisions needed to be made regarding which art was to be purchased or displayed, many wealthy supporters tend to pass the decision onto art historians who have a greater knowledge of the works. However, with increased administrative bureaucracy, the power began to shift towards administrators eager to please the financial supporters. This results in decisions based on what would please the financial supporters, which, according to some, has a direct effect on the type of

art that is displayed. When decisions about what to display are left to those with direct links to the funders and supporters of museums, it can risk the neutrality the museums often boast to their public (Alexander, 1996; Becker, 1982; Catalog Committee, 1977).

The paradox posed by needing the funders' donations while making neutral curatorial decisions proves a challenging task within the art world, which leads us to ask:

To what extent does the funding situation of an art museum impact the works that are chosen?³

According to Bellet (2004), museums no longer define contemporary art as they once used to and instead follow trends set by international auction houses. Museums frequently find it difficult to keep up with these trends set by the market, however, due to lack of finances. Not only this, but the financial structure of many museums means that they “need to manage two overlapping sets of relationships: elite patron (donors) as a source for works of art and capital finding; and spectators (or recipients)” (Chong, 2008, p. 116); both donors and recipients demand that current and relevant works be presented to them. Thus, museums not only compete with one another financially, in the ability to acquire expensive museum-quality works, but they also compete intellectually with one another, in the ability to “bring light to obscure areas” (Moulin, 1986, p. 7).

So why is it that museums, according to Crane (2009) and Bellet (2004) are not able to set the trends like they once used to? From the literature, it is unclear where exactly the trouble lies. Is it that a) the museums do not have enough funds to purchase the works, or is it that b) the prices for works are getting abnormally high? The current financial climate, in which national, international, and extra-national bodies are encouraged to practice austerity, does not lend itself to exorbitant expenditure on the part of publicly funded art museums. So this leads us to assume, based on recent literature on the contemporary art market and the financial situation of many cultural organizations that it could be a combination of the two issues (Crane, 2009; Lind, 2012; Van Hest, 2012; Velthuis, 2012). Therefore, the lack of trendsetting in museums can be attributed to the financial constraints that plague the museums of today. The issue of specificities of funds, and where they come from in relation to

³ Sub-questions are found throughout the literature review and are marked in bold. They form the basis of the empirical research that follows in Chapter 4.

the works acquired and displayed by museums will be covered in the empirical section as well.

Museums are seen to crystallize what is happening in the current art market, as a high point in the art world. Financial constraints play a significant role in the investment of art that a museum is able to undertake, and this strongly influences the type of art that is shown to the public. Therefore, museums today deal with the following dichotomy: the need to practice financial restraint, whilst wanting to take risks in order to demonstrate innovation and confidence, and secure the peer respect that they depend on for their reputation.

Exhibitions

So how do art museums deal with this challenge, as the financial constraints plaguing them affect not only the permanent collections but the temporary exhibitions as well? Temporary exhibitions in public institutions opportunities for these institutions to display works acquired, or works on loan for a short period of time, in order to highlight a particular theme. So how does this format allow museums to challenge and change the canon of art history today? Furthermore,

What role do temporary exhibitions play in art museums?

Exhibitions, due to their temporal nature, prove to be the typical way to exercise risk-taking within a museum. Risk-taking in the art world is typically associated with commercial contemporary art dealers (Bourdieu, 1993; Moulin, 1986), whereby a few notable dealers, such as Larry Gagosian, Charles Saatchi and Jay Jopling exercise their entrepreneurial prowess by supporting new and upcoming artists. On the other hand, in the non-commercial sector it takes the forms of displaying risky works or taking a risk on a movement or artist. Thus, in today's rapidly paced environment, temporary exhibitions play a very important role in museums and galleries. But how much of a risk can museums take? In order to increase the chances of the success of an exhibition, temporary exhibitions are often planned according to demographic studies and market research. This is done to ensure that a broad audience is reached, but also that enough people would be interested in the exhibition to warrant it even happening. Consequently, the balance of reaching a broad audience and getting enough visitors is often achieved at the price of taking a risk (Hooper-Greenhill, 2004).

Traditionally, museums have taken on a neutral role in their communication, but, according to Karp (1991), this may not always be the case in terms of how artworks are selected and presented for exhibition. Both the selection and the presentation of art works for exhibitions play a role in the outcome of how the exhibitions are perceived by the public, and indeed, “the creation of an exhibit is a complex, multi-layered process that moves through all levels of a museum” (Ames, 2003, p. 171). Everything from articulating a theme to making the budget, and from designing the layout to choosing the pieces that will be on display, is involved in the curatorial process of presenting an exhibit. However, the conditions under which an exhibition is executed vary greatly from museum to museum as well as from exhibit to exhibit (Shelton, 2003).

This is especially true when it comes to exhibitions with themes regarding nationality; exhibitions of Middle Eastern art are an example of such. Even though art museums are vastly different from cultural history and ethnographic museums, they can be likened to such museums when it comes to exhibition themes based on nationality. The content of the exhibition (the art works) are positioned in a clear context (the exhibition), delineated by a group of peoples distinguished by their origin, namely the Middle East. An example of this would be the case of an ancient Egyptian exhibition at a history museum — the theme that ties the artifacts together is the geographical location from where they came from. When grouping artists together based on a theme, it can be difficult for individual artworks to overpower the theme itself. The theme of an exhibition plays an incredibly valuable role.

Much of the literature on presenting works in a cultural context refers to nations, peoples, and artists being represented by curators and the museums they represent (Peers & Brown, 2003; Rostkowski, 2010; Triki, 2009). A common critique of this is that often those building the exhibition play on stereotypes of the nation being represented which reinforces the “us and them” feeling of colonial times. One example mentioned by Triki (2009), is that North African plastic arts are repeatedly displayed in reference to and referencing the local political unrest or their religious ideologies, such as images of women in veils. As Darabi (2012) notes, the veil has been “exoticized and fetishized since the 19th century in the works of Romantic and Orientalist painters” (p.10), and it is a delicate balance of making art with reference to the “exotic” themes that form a part of their everyday lives, while making the effort not to “perpetuate the ever-growing ‘exoticized’ image and normative idea.” (p.11).

This brings us to the notion of source communities. Source communities are the groups from which artifacts, artworks, and histories are collected which form the basis of museum exhibitions and collections (Peers & Brown, 2003). Ancient Egyptian peoples as well as contemporary Middle Eastern communities are examples of source communities. There has been a great deal of academic discussion surrounding the issues of source communities and how to exhibit their work or their heritage respectfully, authentically and truthfully (Ames, 2003; Lynch & Alberti, 2010; Peers & Brown, 2003; Shelton, 2003). Increasingly, attention is being paid to the process of selecting foreign works (Peers & Brown, 2003).

Exhibitions regarding other communities or foreign peoples are most commonly produced nowadays with notions of inclusivity, engagement and social participation (Lynch & Alberti, 2010). The emerging market of Middle Eastern contemporary art appears to be most prominent in London, a fact that may be a result of a significant population of individuals in London who belong to the Middle Eastern diaspora (Foment of the moment, 2011; Little Arabia, 2011). This is a matter that would involve further study into how target audiences and projected audiences influence the choices made by non-commercial art institutions in the selection of their temporary exhibitions. This matter is outside of the scope of the present research.

Although museums since their inception have exhibited works from foreign countries, the globalization of the art market as noted by Bellet, Billault and Quemin (2008) could also have an effect on what is being exhibited. Once again, this topic has only been minimally researched in the academic world. The subject matter of an exhibition is very important, as it deals with what is included and what is excluded. Once the works are selected and included into an exhibition, how they are presented is the next step for curators to take; museums are increasingly aware of the value of a successful display of works (Macdonald, 2007; Skolnick, Marwit & Secor, 2009). As Clifford (1995) emphasizes, the way in which an exhibition is displayed deeply affects how the viewer takes in the information. Everything from the placement of the works, the order of them, and the inclusion or exclusion of works is important.

Macdonald (2007) lists three ways the exhibition design is influenced and how it can vary. The three ways are: *media*, *sociality*, and *space*. Media refers to the medium used within the exhibition: is it photography, paintings, sculptures, or other media forms? Sociality refers to the social aspects of an exhibition, since these are often social events, whereby people attend them together. Space refers to how the

exhibition is laid out, which directly links to how visitors pass through the space. One study categorizes visitors according to how they pass through a museum (Verón, 1983). The studies that have been conducted on the connection between exhibition design and visitors are mainly empirical studies analyzing visits from the public and so further research in this field is recommended. Although the layout of the exhibition itself is important in the actual event of viewing, what is left out of the literature is how exhibitions are presented to the public before they even enter the museum. The promotional material that supports an exhibition is used to lure visitors in and give them a taste of what they can expect. The choices made in choosing a promotional image tells a lot about what message the museums and its curators wish to send out to the public and how it can get them in to the exhibition. Within the empirical section of the research, the posters will be addressed within the context of the interviews with curator. The aim is to discern the goals of the curator and to uncover:

What are the main goals that direct the exhibition design and how do they differ among museums presenting similar themes?

Role of the curator

Curatorship is, in essence, the decision-making process that determines what is included and excluded in exhibitions for the public. Curators act as gatekeepers between the artwork and the public, and play a significant role in the art world because of their powerful taste-making role. Curators not only utilize their academic expertise and knowledge from working in the field to design an exhibition, but they are also under the influence of the agenda of the museum or gallery (Shelton, 2003). In the U.K., the Museums Association has determined specific roles and duties that are to be carried out by a museum or gallery curator, namely:

- The duty owed to the objects and the museum containing them;
- The duty owed to the public from persons in a position of influence and trust; and
- The contractual duty owed to the employing authority from the employee.

(Horle, 2009)

Furthermore, the role of the curator is of particular importance in the

contemporary art world, “because of the increased importance of mediating between institutional bureaucracy, market forces, artistic representation, and public taste. In particular, the crux of curatorial practice in contemporary art is the construction of artistic meaning through the exhibition” (Acord, 2010). Also, in the contemporary art world, the artist is often still alive and then plays a role in the decision making process of how the art should be displayed. The curator’s role is then extended to be a mediator between the artists, the institution and the public. But the process of adapting to the wishes of the others, especially those of the artist “can make a significant difference to the visual appearance of the work, the nature of the audience's experience, and how the work should be interpreted” (Irvin, 2006). This was illustrated in Irvin’s research on museums, their curators and their relationship with the artists’ wishes and will be further analysed in the empirical research of this thesis. Do the artists of the exhibitions selected for study have a say in the presentation of their works? And how does or would this affect the perception of the works?

Curators not only deal with the artists during the time of installation, but they are also partly responsible for seeking out the exhibitions and artists that they would like to exhibit. In the case of the 2013 *Saloua Raouda Choucair* exhibition at the Tate Modern, curator, Jessica Morgan sought out the artists herself and initiated the exhibit (Tate Modern, 2013). So what is it that attracts a curator to a new show, or a new idea? How much does the curator look to the art market, and how much do they trust their own intuition? How much does the institution and its structure influence the development of an exhibition?

Larger institutions can be subject to a lot of bureaucracy where there is an “overseer,” or where there are many stakeholders such as private sponsors, public funders and the like who all have common yet often conflicting interests (Horle, 2009). Smaller institutions, which are run and operated by a curator and/or founder might not be subject to the same sort of “how to please everyone” dilemmas that could face a curator of a larger museum or gallery. Therefore, the skill of the curator then lies in how effectively the curator can achieve the highest quality of an exhibition while serving the art world as well as managing the bureaucracies of the museums or gallery management.

This challenge is especially apparent when presenting international, multi-national and cross-cultural works to the public. However, the stated goal of many

institutions to present such works is juxtaposed against a “permanent discourse of the decision-makers that nationality is never a criterion when considering the acquisition of artworks” (Quemin, 2006). So what is it then? Are museums and galleries pushed to curate works from other cultures, or do the curators abandon the notion of nationality and look only at the artistic merit of the works when deciding what should be presented? The answer to this question is critical in determining who is really behind the decision-making process of presenting art to the public, and what the motives for the decisions may be. The authoritative position of curators holds them in a position of trust and so the public should be aware of what drives their decisions. Not to mention if the museums are publicly funded. So how much do museums focus on representing a specific group of peoples, and how much do they focus on presenting works of art? Are they one and the same or are they different?

Summary

Issues concerning the role of the museum today and the financial constraints that they face have been discussed above. There is a clear tension between the fact that museums play a large role in the valuation of art in the art world, even as they are at the same time subject to market trends that come at a high financial price. The financial stakeholders within a museum or gallery can thereby influence what is presented to the public. The role of temporary exhibitions was analysed alongside issues concerning presenting nationalities and grouping art works according to the cultural context. This brings reference to the global nature of the art market and the art world as we know it today. Lastly, the curator’s role within an museum or gallery was presented, along the challenges that he or she might face in dealing with the financial restrictions, artistic wishes, and bureaucratic sanctions. Juggling these issues is not a simple task and can result in curious findings, presented in the form of sub-questions throughout the literature review and the empirical research that follows.

Section 2: Globalisation of the art world

“Boundary crossing is a defining feature of avant-garde art from Dada to Dali and surrealism” (Nederveen Pieterse, 2009 p.131).

“Globalization of culture is not the same as the homogenization of culture” (Crane, 1992 p. 162)

Introduction

Cultural globalisation, as indicated by Crane (1992) “refers to the transmission or diffusion across national borders of various forms of media and the arts” (p.1). However, one could say that it is an over-used term to describe almost anything, any topic or any situation relating one entity, be it a nation a community or a people, to other parts of the world (Quemin, 2012; Velthuis, 2013). Although the topic of globalization, specifically cultural globalization has been a hot topic for the past few decades, studies on the subject have primarily focused on the globalization of pop culture and mass media (Wu, 2007). The accompanying theories have progressed, changed and adapted regularly and are in a consent state of flux (Nederveen Pieterse, 2009; Scholte, 2005). However, the idea of human exploration and the influence of cultures upon one another has been around since the dawn of the human existence. Intrigue, interest and feelings of pure curiosity have led us to many new places, new cultures and new faces of the planet. The inquisitive nature of our species defines us while at the same time it is what has led to age old distinctions between “us” and “them”. Although the world is becoming a smaller place, thanks to technological advancements that have increased travel and communication to an incredible scope, there still seems a need, both socially and academically, to put our finger on what differentiates the people around the world.

Globalization theories in regards to the fine arts are few and far between, and quite often focus on the global reach of the works rather than how works from varies regions are perceived (Wu, 2007). Furthermore, in the case of the arts, the nationality of an artist or of an artwork is rarely ignored. Practically speaking, take the sales held by notable auction houses such as Christie’s and Sotheby’s categorized by region: *Contemporary South Asian Art Sale* or *African Art Sale*; or museums with *Japanese Art* and *Native American Art* wings, to name just a few examples. In addition to this, there lies an additional skepticism of this relatively new phenomenon. The interest of

the West in emerging markets and international art scenes by some can be viewed as neocolonial “because it emphasizes and essentializes cultural differences between regions” (Velthuis, 2012 p. 26) where the differentiation of peoples and their artistic works being labeled according to geography. This is especially true when geographical differences are tainted with stereotypes and preconceptions formed by the representation of certain regions by mass media is loaded with repetitive images and stories, such is the case of many non-Western regions including the Middle East, much of South America and Africa. However outdated it may seem to categorize peoples and their artworks according to the cultures from which they stem, it is often the case.

Geography is embedded in cultural products and often serves as a reference point to distinguish products from one another. In addition to this, culture is created by groups of similar minded individuals and institutions which have often been closely linked to specific regions or locations (Becker, 1982). Moreover, the value of works coming from different regions is often directly related to the region and the market from which they come (Robertson, 2005). However, as discussed earlier, source communities are a sensitive topic when exhibiting works, whether they be historical artifacts or pieces of artistic expression. How intertwined are the notions that place of origin defines an artist, or rather their artistic statements that distinguish them from one another? How much does the background of an artist and where he or she comes from define his work? Does it only matter is the place itself is controversial? Or when does it start to matter? It is from this critical thought that this section departs from to discuss the issues of globalization in the art world and on a larger scale what has driven this thesis entirely.

Earlier studies of globalization often discuss hybridization or hegemony, however this section will steer away from these themes and instead discuss how art is consumed and produced from a global perspective and what influences these processes. The art world at large will form the back drop for the analysis of the various art markets around the globe as well as growing numbers of non-commercial art outlets that have opened up in new regions. The chapter will be organized in the following way: Firstly, the debate on the globalization of the art world and the subsequent art market will be presented. Secondly, the supply and demand side of the globalised art market will be addressed, and the ever-increasing interest in other markets outside of the formally typical London, New York and Paris hubs. Thirdly,

the complex nature of the valuation of foreign art will follow, where the emphasis lies on the global interest that has risen in recent years in works created in certain parts of the world. Finally, an analysis of the impact of this on the non-commercial sector will be analysed. In the following section, emerging art markets will be discussed with an emphasis on the Middle Eastern art market.

Theories on globalisation in the art world

The art world, and more specifically the contemporary art world has seen an increase of cross-border exchange in recent years. To academics and critics, this is no new news (Bellet, Billault & Quemin, 2008; Crane, Kawashima & Kawasaki, 2002; McAndrew, 2008; Moulin, 1986; Velthuis, 2013). What used to be a Euro-American-centric market is now witness to periphery markets gaining stature. However, how much the art market is in fact globalised and to what extent multiple periphery markets are represented is contested amongst academics including Quemin (2006, 2013) and Velthuis (2013). There have been studies that dispute the growing inclination that the art market as a part of the art world is truly representative of multiple markets worldwide. These studies include, but are not limited to the analysis of the commercial market and gallery sales (Velthuis, 2013) and the non-commercial sector represented by art events such as biennials (Van Hest, 2012) and museums (Quemin, 2006). However, even though the extent of globalization of the art world is criticized, it is without a doubt changing. There are more players and new types of players that are altering the face of the market (McAndrew, 2008).

Many academics writing on the topic of globalization within the cultural sector refer to the centre-periphery model, where there is a clear, small and prominent group of nations responsible for most of the interactions within the market and small tangent markets that rarely interact with one another and play a considerably smaller role. The U.S., the U.K. and Germany are considered to be the main hubs, and smaller markets, for example the Spanish, Canadian and Mexican which have virtually no impact on the global market. Where there is some truth to this model, the addition of new major players such as China, India and Brazil is changing and putting this model to the test. Appadurai (1990), argues that the centre-periphery model is not actually accurate as the distribution of culture in fact flows fluidly through multiple centres and peripheries as opposed to being confined to a limited number of particular entities.

The cultural affinity models, on the other hand, offers a different approach to globalisation, but faces criticisms as well. It states that culture is best understood and distributed to countries with a similar culture. For example, Dutch and Belgian cultures can be considered to be reasonably similar, which may be one (weak) explanation for the rather large presence of Belgian artists in Dutch galleries. However, this theory was contested by Velthuis (2013) because he says that although there are quite a few Belgian artists in Dutch galleries, it is not as significant as the number of local (Dutch) and American artists being represented.

These are two different models used to analyse the globalization of the art world, and from which we can view cross-cultural exchange. If these models form the backbone of theories on the globalization of the art world thus far, how do they compare with the practical side of things? How are actors in the art world dealing with the issues of globalisation. Are they even aware of it, or is it too self-evident for them to consider the consequences? And how do the commercial and the non-commercial sectors interact with one another in this globalised art world? As the theory has only led us this far, in the empirical section of the thesis, I tackle the question of:

To what extent has globalization of the art market impacted the curatorial decisions of art museums in London?

Exploring this question exposes the practical aspects of the theories just presented as well as expanding the academic studies conducted on the issue of globalization in the art world.

Global supply and demand

In economics, it is understood that the meeting of supply and demand is what defines the economy, and so it is difficult to separate one from the other. Therefore, this section will attempt to look at the two sides of the economic balance from a global perspective and instead of trying to answer the question of what came first, the supply or demand, we will look at the whole situation. To focus this, the following question is posed: ***how has growth in foreign markets impacted the global art market?***

Artworks from foreign regions have always been appreciated, however, recently there has been an emphasis on emerging markets which have for the first time in art history have been competing with the familiar euro-centric markets such as London, New York and Paris. Furthermore, art markets are greatly influenced by the

world economies and how they are functioning and that we can see the general health of the local economies reflected in the art markets (Blouin ArtInfo, 2013; McAndrew, 2008, 2012). And so it is only reasonable to believe that the general globalization of the world markets and economies is also the case in the art market and art world as a whole. However, while the extent of globalisation across the board is questionable, the worldwide changes are undeniable. Since 2003, the “biggest transformation” in the art market has been “the emergence of a number of new and thriving art markets and art centre around the world including China, India, Russia and the Middle East” (McAndrew, 2009, p. 15). This is “because of the purchasing power of their newly wealthy buyers, the rise of new collectors or new supply into the market, which has opened up previously unforeseen trading opportunities” (McAndrew, 2009, p. 15). Crane (2009) also states that the increase in the commercial valuation of the contemporary art market and its products is driving the boom. Therefore, the emerging markets are changing the face of the global art market as we know it. But through which mechanisms is this occurring?

The overall growth in the art market is reflected in the ever-increasing number of outlets for the distribution of contemporary art. Both the primary and secondary art markets have seen significant growth, with a recent increase in art fairs and contemporary art auctions worldwide (McAndrew, 2011; Van Hest, 2012; Quemin 2012; Velthuis, 2013). Over the past ten years the number of fairs and auctions has soared. These outlets were once limited to a few elite art cities such as London, Paris and New York, but are now appearing in countries across the globe. To name a few fairs which all boost an international audience of art collectors, Art Dubai, India Art Fair, Zona Maco Mexico Arte Contemporaneo, FNB Jourburg Art fair in South Africa and Art fair Tokyo have all established within the last ten years. While the world’s most notable fair, Art Basel has been in operation for forty years, these new comers are proving to be comparable. These new fairs are just a few examples of the primary art market spreading its fingers into parts of the world which, up until the last decade, were seen as periphery regions.

The secondary market has also expanded out from its home base, with Christie’s and Sotheby’s opening their doors in Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong, Brazil to name a few of the latest installments. Both the art fair explosion and the auction house expansion are demonstrative of the current global nature of the art market. These main institutions are representative of the art market and so their openings in

new parts of the world have spawned the ideas of a globalised art market. However, how global is global? Does global mean the number of different franchises across many countries? Or does it mean that there are is a greater number countries being represented in these institutions? Or does it mean that people from all over the world are participating as consumers in the art market? The criticisms of the globalization of the art market have largely come from the production side, stating that there are in fact little changes to the number of countries represented in international fair and exhibitions. However, the issue of where the buyers are coming from, is also an important element of globalization of the art market (Robertson, 2005).

Obviously, the buyers represent the demand and their buying patterns are key in determining the state of the market. The undeniable explosion of the contemporary art world is not only reflected in the number of events and institutions, but also in the prices attributed to the works. Moreover, Crane (2009) argues that the contemporary art market now dominates the art world, because so much of it relies on monetary value. It is now common knowledge that the distribution of the world's wealthy is different than it was decades ago. Consequently, the number of millionaires and billionaires from countries such as China, India, Russia, Brazil and Mexico with an incredible amount of purchasing power greatly influence the art sales of today (Velthuis, 2012). A token example of this is one of Cezanne's *The Card Players*, the record selling painting was purchased by the Qatari royal family for roughly \$250 million in 2011 (Peers, 2012). The art fairs and auctions that are now dominating the contemporary art world are powered by the consumers of the works, many of which are classified as 'super-rich' or 'mega collectors' (Crane, 2009). This is further accentuated by the 'nomadic nature' of the present day art collector who attends fairs all over the world (artprice.com). This financialisation, as Crane describes it, is the driving force in the contemporary art market more so now than ever before. This has a great impact not only in terms of what is currently happening in the global art market, but what they future holds. If the current growing economies are also becoming emerging and powerful art markets, (such as the Chinese, Russian and Brazilian markets) then will they become the future art market leaders? Are we now at a point in history where the euro-centric influence is waning and the former peripheries are waxing? Over the past few years, we have been witness to emerging markets, but they have been bouncing between being market leaders and then slumping again behind the traditional market duopoly of U.K. and the United States

(Ferro, 2013). For how long will this economic game of ping pong between the traditional and new leaders take place? The test of time is the only way to find out, however it is a current and relevant issue for the art world as a whole.

The impact of globalization on the valuation of art

The value of a good is partially determined by the place from which it originates (Crane, 2009; Bourdieu, 1993). In other words, the seeds from which the work is sewn are embedded in the works of art. Where the value of art work is concerned, the art world at large is responsible for determining it, and where the work is created is often a key factor in this analysis. For example, the contemporary art world is made up of specific players such as artists, curators and critics and they all take part in the agreement process of what is considered art and what is not. Historically this process is known to be associated with locations, as small as neighbourhoods and as large as entire nations – for example the large scale Dutch Design world or a smaller scale East Village or SoHo in New York City (Crane, 2009).

The valuation of art depending on its origin has two angles. Firstly, as described above, a geographical location that defines the works that come from it, namely the work and the area are associated with one another. A reason for this can be for marketing purposes, very much so in the case of the Dutch Design label. The second angle is that geographical location defines the artist, for example the labeling of an artist according to their place of birth and/or residence. This angle can be very misleading however, because artists, like many other people this day and age, are not bound to their place of birth and often reside outside of their native region. This is a crucial issue that has come up in research on the extent of the globalization of the art market (Van Hest, 2012). If an artist was born in Tehran but has lived in New York for the past 10 years, is she Iranian or is she American? These issues were addressed in past researches, however there is still no simple answer or easy approach.

The origin of a work is crucial to its valuation, but so is the place in which it is being valued. Bourdieu (1993) and Becker (1982) stress the importance of the cultural capital of the surrounding actors within the art world and their role in the valuation process. Cultural capital is needed to value certain works is influenced by the surroundings. This helps to explain why certain trends in the cultural sector are more appreciated in one region than another. A recent report on the prices paid for Chinese art supports this argument. In 2013, a report was drawn, that showed that

Chinese art sold outside mainland China fetched higher prices than on mainland China. The reported reasons were that outside the region more of an emphasis is placed on quality, authenticity, proxies to provenance, more so than on mainland China (Harris, 2013). The weak point in the report is that it only provides insight into a small section of the art market as a whole, whereby it focuses mostly on contemporary arts and largely ignores traditional arts. This report does however, suggest the disparity between local valuation and international valuation of artistic goods.

Once again, as economics illustrates, the balance and relationship between the demand and the supply of goods and services is what makes a market in addition to the valuation processes. This art market lives inside the art world, which is not in anyway limited to the commercial sector. The non-commercial institutions of the art world too have been looking beyond their familiar borders and reaching out to new territories.

Globalisation in the non-commercial sector of the art world

As outlined above, the globalisation of the art market is due largely to the financialisation of the arts. So how does this impact the non-commercial sector? If museums are deemed the final repository for work and works acquired by museums gain ‘museum status’ then how are they affected by this so-called financialisation of the art market and the subsequent globalisation of the art world?

The past decade has seen eminent cultural centres expanding themselves across the globe. For example, the Guggenheim Foundation is the father of museums in New York, Bilbao, Venice and a planned opening in on the island of Saadiyat in Abu Dhabi in 2017. In 2007, the Louvre announced that they will be building a second museums under the same name on the same island as the Guggenheim. Here, we see that the traditional art institutions established in the traditional art centres of the world have been reproducing themselves and in a way franchising themselves out to reach a public beyond their home-base. This falls in line with the fact that museums are often impacted by market trends (see Chapter 2, Section 1), and so if the market is going global, than so must the museums.

Moulin (1986) also notes that biennales, particularly the Venice Biennale and Documenta are manifestations of the internationalisation of the art world. This has been further researched by Van Hest (2012), who tested the extent of the international

reach of these events. The attendees to these events, regardless of how internationally representative they might be, are influential in the greater conversation that adds to the art world. The discussion of art that make up a great deal of the non-commercial art and that take place in cultural institutions and biennales are reaching far beyond their former borders. With large, established museums opening up around the world like the Louvre, we can see that there is an increase in emerging markets and the art worlds they are a part of.

But what about the reverse? How do non-commercial institutions in traditional centres such as London and New York, display artworks from emerging markets? This brings us back to earlier in this section, when Velthuis (2012) discusses the interest from the West in other cultures and how it can be deemed neo-colonial and can in fact strengthen the divide between “us and them”. These questions are best answered in the qualitative research whereby the following sub-question will focus our attention: *To what extent are cultural differences emphasized in exhibitions dedicated to foreign art?* This question is examined through the used of interviews with the curators of museums in London that exhibit works from the Middle East, as well as the analysis of the supporting materials for the exhibitions such as the promotional images and accompanying texts. Together, this empirical analysis will provide a better understanding of how one emerging market, namely the contemporary Middle Eastern market is displayed to in a non-commercial setting in a traditional art centre; London. This illustration of the globalization of the art world demonstrates that it is in fact a two way street; influences from the centre not only impact the peripheries, but vice versa as well.

Summary

Globalization in the art world, as we have seen has many different faces. It is the increased global nature of the art market, with more outlets for art sales in new regions of the world; it is new markets emerging and confronting older, more traditional centres; it is the expansion of established institutions into new regions of the world; and finally it is the exhibiting of foreign work in the traditional centres like London and New York. This proves that the globalization of the art world touches on all aspects of it: commercial and non-commercial. It is a complex issue that goes beyond the realm of the market and further into the not-for profit sector. In the academic field of cultural economics, literature pertaining to the topic of globalization

unfortunately tends to be limited to only the commercial sector, whereas issues of neocolonialism, hegemony and hybridization are touched upon in the fields of sociology and anthropology. This is why this research and especially the empirical analysis is so important and needed because if museums are influenced by the market, and the emerging markets are making a great impact, then we need to pay attention to how the relationship between the emerging markets and the non-commercial sector due to the globalised art world.

Section 3: The emerging Middle Eastern art world

Continuing from the section above, emerging art worlds, including their markets are symbols of the globalised art world. The most notable China, where in the past decade they have risen to be one of the top three leading markets next the U.S. and Europe (Velthuis, 2012). China has seen an increase in not only its production, but also in its consumption, as well as becoming a centre-point in the market for transactions amounting to the hundreds of millions. So how do emerging markets such as China come about? Why do they develop and under what circumstances do they flourish? In order to answer these questions, the case of the emerging contemporary art market in the Middle East will be analysed. Why the Middle East? According to academic analysis and current news reports, the Middle Eastern art market is in a burgeoning art market (Azimi, 2012; Bellet, 2004, McAndrew, 2008, 2011; Weiss, 2012) for many reasons that will be explained in the pages to follow. It is a region that has garnered much international attention in the past few years with exhibitions around the world highlighting works and artists from this region (Muller, 2009; Weiss, 2012). As mentioned earlier, this research aims to study an emerging market and its reception outside of its region, therefore the Middle East was an obvious choice of a market to analyse.

There is a limited number of reports conducted on the Middle Eastern art market, not to mention the more specific contemporary art market from and within the region. The TEFAF art market report conducted by McAndrew in 2009 was the first major report that included the region. From then on, other reports, such as that from ArtTactic (2013) have also been conducted; academic literature on this particular art market, however, is scant. The initial TEFAF report from 2009 provides a starting point from which to analyse the state of the market over the past few years, and to identify growth and development patterns.

This chapter will be structured in the following way: first, it will provide a glimpse of the exposure of Middle Eastern art, and of the growing market in general, on non-commercial institutions and events outside of the region. This is what forms the basis of the empirical research and so it is introduced in this section and more deeply in the analysis chapter to follow. This will then be followed by a more detailed look at the state of the market. Finally, possible reasons for its development

will be discussed and major players will be brought to light. As in the two sections above, sub-questions will be brought to our attention throughout this section in an effort to gain a deeper understanding of the main research question and to guide the empirical research.

Zoom out: Exposure around the globe

As mentioned in the Chapter 1, the Middle Eastern art world is a thriving one, and has seen many great developments in recent years. The following question inevitably arises: *how has contemporary Middle Eastern art reached beyond the borders of the Middle East?* The burgeoning Middle Eastern market, specifically in the contemporary sector, is reflected in world-wide interest in disseminating the works, be it commercially at auctions, fairs and private gallery sales, or non-commercially in museums, biennales and public art spaces.

For example, both Christie's and Sotheby's have held auctions for Middle Eastern art outside of the region in their London auction houses. In addition to this, in the past few years, Ayyam Gallery (a prestigious gallery also operating in Dubai, representing a number of top-selling Middle Eastern artists) announced the opening of a branch location on New Bond Street, the distinguished street in London, U.K., home to numerous high-end galleries as well as Bonham's and Sotheby's. Opera Gallery London (the first worldwide network of art galleries, a network know for selling works from artists such as Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, Keith Haring, Pablo Picasso and Claude Monet), also operating on New Bond Street, hosted an exhibition in early 2013 entitled *Peace, from the bottom of my art*, an exhibition of Middle Eastern contemporary and modern art. Leila Heller Gallery in New York, an esteemed representative of a gallery in North America, specializes in top-end contemporary Middle Eastern art sales and also advises local high-end collectors on the subject. During Art Dubai 2013, the Singapore Tourism Board announced that, in June 2013, a Middle Eastern contemporary art exhibition would open at the Singapore Art Museum — the first exhibition of its kind ever in South-East Asia. These are just a few examples of commercial interest in contemporary Middle Eastern art outside the region.

Of course, there is also the non-commercial sector, which has also shown an interest in art from the region by putting on exhibitions and hosting festivals. The Serpentine Gallery in London hosted an in-house, three-day festival to celebrate

contemporary Arab art and, more specifically, the presence of this art in London. A number of institutions, such as the Institute for Contemporary Art, Mosaic Rooms, The British Museum, Leighton House, Tate Modern and Edge of Arabia Testbed, have participated in the annual Shubbak Festival, a festival that started in 2011 to celebrate Arab arts culture in London. Mosaic Rooms is a non-profit gallery in London, dedicated year-round to showcasing emerging artists from the Middle Eastern region. Mosaic Rooms hosts a variety of programs surrounding each exhibition including talks, discussions, family events and more. The Tate Modern, with their exhibition on the Lebanese modern and contemporary artist *Saloua Raouda Choucair*, the British Museum's *Word Into Art: Artists of the Modern Middle East*, Victoria and Albert's *Light of the Middle East: New photography*, and the Saatchi Gallery's *Unveiled: New Art from the Middle East*, have also been exploring the world of contemporary Middle Eastern art through their exhibitions.

The emergence of the contemporary Middle Eastern art market can also be seen as a persistent trend, as institutions and important players in the art world are picking up on it and exhibiting the works. This particular trend is also greatly backed up by the theory of a globalised art world, in that a relatively new player, namely the Middle East, is playing in fields like London and New York. This emerging market in a globalised world, together with the relationship of the non-commercial versus commercial world, forms the basis of the empirical analysis.

Zoom in: The Middle Eastern art world: commercial and non-commercial

Having looked at how contemporary Middle Eastern art has reached beyond the borders of its own region, we will now take a closer look at how this all happened.

The Middle East has been experiencing growth in regards to the production and consumption of their own works as well as the consumption of foreign, often Western, art, with galleries, fairs and auction houses opening up in the region selling both local and foreign art. Because the contemporary Middle Eastern art world is growing at such a rapid rate, and because of the attention it has received thus far from the international community, it is an excellent way to study the emergence of the market within the greater picture of the art world. So the question is now, *through what mechanisms did the contemporary Middle Eastern art market get to where it is today?*

Its growth stems from a simultaneous emergence of both the commercial and non-commercial sectors. What started as a ‘grassroots’ *modus operandi* for most artists and institutions from the region has grown to be what some have called an ‘unprecedented art boom’ (Muller, 2009; Rosin, 2013). Even though the Middle Eastern art market is not one of the largest emerging markets, its rapid development is evidence of the sort of growth required for a market to be considered emerging (McAndrew, 2009). The largest emerging markets are understood to be Brazil, India and Russia. The growth of the Middle Eastern art market is interesting not because of its size, but rather because it came relatively unexpectedly, and the popularity of the region is being picked up on in traditional centres such as London and New York, which have both hosted the display of exhibitions and auction sales of works from the region (Rosin, 2013).

Traditionally, the cultural centres in the region are Beirut, Cairo and Tehran, cities which boast a relatively high number of artists, and creative institutions such as museums, galleries and exhibition spaces. However, Dubai is now one of these centres of the region in terms of art sales and market movements (McAndrew, 2009). In her report, McAndrew reported two key findings of the Middle Eastern art market, namely that: “Dubai is emerging as the most important global trading centre in the Middle East” and “the favourable trading regimes and high net worth population of this area makes it an attractive base for the art trade” (2009). The report goes into further detail, analyzing auction sales, dealer sales, art fairs, buyers, trade transactions and regulation. Although the state of the market has changed since then, it provides a good base from which to begin the analysis.

Primary market: Art fairs and commercial galleries

Art Dubai, formerly Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) Art Fair, is currently the largest art fair in the region. March of 2013 marked its seventh year, with 75 international galleries participating from over 30 countries. In these seven years or Art Dubai the attendance has more than doubled, from an estimated 9 000 to 25 000. (ArtDubai.com). To provide a point of comparison, this is just over one third of the number of attendants to FRIEZE Art Fair London, with around 60 000 visitors each year, over the past four years (Friezelondon.com). The value of the works

presented at Art Dubai 2013 was approximately \$45 million⁴ (“Art Dubai”, 2013). Art Dubai is also host to *The Global Art Forum*, a platform for commissioned works and research along with panel discussions and live talks, bringing together curators, artists, collectors, academics and musicians and the *Abraaj Group Prize*. Together the art fair, global forum and art prize make Art Dubai a prime destination for artists, art critics, collectors and dealers from around the globe. The fair is held under the patronage of HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the U.A.E., Ruler of Dubai. The fair is a part of a larger initiative, *Art Week*, which is aimed at expanding the cultural activities within Dubai and setting the stage for an international trade centre. As one of the major art fairs of today it represents the Middle East as a trading post for the arts.

In addition to Art Dubai, *Beirut Art Fair* is another international platform for the sale of contemporary art from the MENASA (Middle East, North Africa, South Asia) region. Since its inception in 2009, the fair has hosted a myriad of galleries from the region and panel discussions and round table talks.

The number of for-profit galleries in the Middle Eastern region is expanding, but some notable ones are: *Agial Gallery* (Beirut, founded by art investment advisor and curator for the Lebanon Pavilion at the 52nd Venice Biennale, Saleh Barakat), *Assar Art Gallery* (Tehran), *Ayyam Gallery* (Dubai, Damascus, Beirut, London), *Karim Francis Gallery* (Cairo), *Lawrie Shabibi* (Dubai, co-founded by Christie’s Middle Eastern art specialist, William Lawrie and former director of Art Dubai, Asmaa Al Shabibi), *Mashrabia* (Cairo) and *Third Line Gallery* (Dubai and Doha). In Dubai alone, there were only five galleries a decade ago; now there are over 85 (Chaudhary, 2012). The abundance of so many contemporary art galleries shows the dedication of artists, dealers and collectors towards the art form despite the continual political and social constraints that permeate the region.

Secondary market: Auctions

In addition to the bustling primary market in the Middle East, the secondary market is also filled with a buzz. The region is now home to some of the world’s most prestigious auction houses. Christie’s opened a sales room in Dubai in 2005 and Bonham’s in 2007. The two auction houses faced new competition in the region

⁴ Prices will be listed in Euros (EUR), dollars (USD) and pound sterling ((GBP), represented by the symbols €, \$ and £ respectively

when Sotheby's opened in Doha, Qatar in 2009. And not only are they present in the region, but they are also making record sales. In 2008, the expected revenues for Christie's and Bonham's was roughly €54 million, with the overall combined earnings of all art market sales (including private sales other than Christie's and Bonham's) and gallery sales being over €150 million. However such impressive sales are in part due to the historical global art boom that was felt worldwide during those years and has since slowed down and the Middle Eastern market's boom in 2008 was one portion of that global boom (Brewster, 2008). In comparison with the numbers from a few years earlier, in 2013 the combined spring auction sales amounted to around €12 million, nearly a quarter of the spring sales in 2008.

However, the figures from 2013 so far are double that of the entire 2012 auction sales, indicating a rebound in the auction market of the region. Another interesting development is that "whilst Modern artists dominated the market between 2006 and 2010, Contemporary art from the region now accounts for 57% of the total sales auction

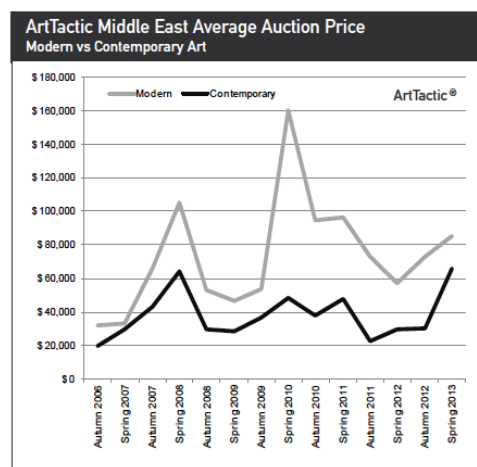


Figure 1 ArtTactic Middle East Average Auction Price **Source:** http://www.thefineartfund.com/cgi-bin/items.cgi?_rm=display_blob&_name=File

value (up from 51% in April 2012) illustrating collector's increasing appetite for contemporary art." (Art Tactic, 2013). This is

a different picture from 2008, when Modern artists were leading the "auction values with an 83% share of the total value" (McAndrew, 2009). Therefore, where the modern artists were once leading the pack, it is now the contemporary artists who are making a big name for themselves on the secondary market.

Top 10: Middle East Auction Results - April 2013 (Christie's Dubai and Sotheby's Doha)		
Artist	Hammer Price	Auction House
Chant Avedissian	\$1,300,000	Sotheby's
Farhad Moshiri	\$820,000	Christie's
Rachid Koraichi	\$550,000	Sotheby's
Mohammad Ehsai	\$360,000	Sotheby's
Chafic Abboud	\$320,000	Christie's
Ayman Baalbaki	\$310,000	Sotheby's
Manal al Dowayan	\$270,000	Sotheby's
Fateh Moudarres	\$260,000	Christie's
Hamed Nada	\$210,000	Sotheby's
Mounir Fatmi	\$190,000	Sotheby's

Figure 2 ArtTactic Top 10: Middle East Auction results **Source:** http://www.thefineartfund.com/cgi-bin/items.cgi?_rm=display_blob&_name=File;_part=0;_item=201304291106267670

And in regards to nationality, in 2008, the interest lay in mostly Iranian artist, with thirteen of fifteen of the top selling artists coming from Iran. Farhad Moshiri, an Iranian contemporary artist, was the first artist from the region who's work surpassed the \$1 million mark. In

2013, Egyptian born artist Chant Avedissian was the top selling artist in the Spring auction season with a hammer price of \$1.3 million, setting a record price for an Arab artist. Moshiri followed in second place with a hammer price of \$820 000,00. The average lot price at the Sotheby's sale in Doha in 2013 was \$137 914,00.

The most notable observation, is that the market reports did not exist prior to 2006. This is a key point, because it emphasizes the emerging quality of this particular market. The fact that it is being analysed and reported on for not even a decade indicates its freshness. Having said this, the market is based upon, as mentioned earlier, a firmly rooted cultural base that has deep ties to culture and the arts. Therefore, the reports and their relative newness is only representative of the commercial aspects of the art world, namely the art market. But as described in section 1 of this literature review, the commercial and the non-commercial worlds are tightly intertwined and so the growth of the market in the Middle East surely has an impact on the non-commercial sector as well.

Non-commercial art sector: Art centres, museums and biennales

The origins of the art scene in the Middle East stem from a humble and local focus. According to Muller (2009), the shift from local to international was in part due to the “*Home Works* Forum, Beirut’s cutting-edge contribution to contemporary art debate” (p.12). This interdisciplinary forum grew to become increasingly international since its inception in 2002 and has been followed by a series of similar art forums and opening of art centres in Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon. Such art centres include, *Ashkal Alwan* (Beirut) is the Lebanese Association for Plastic Arts, *The Townhouse Gallery* (Cairo), *Al-Ma'mal Foundation for Contemporary Art* (East Jerusalem) and *Aaran Gallery* (Tehran). Not only are they institutions that are home to exhibitions, but The Townhouse Gallery started the Nitaq Festival in 1999 to create awareness of contemporary arts and to present artists and their artworks to a growing interested public. These humble beginnings are paralleled by the bigger, more opulent developments in the United Arab Emirates.

In 2004, the U.A.E. launched an initiative to build a cultural hub on the Saadiyat Island in Abu Dhabi. This grand endeavor is underway and will be home to a second Louvre in 2015 and the newest addition of the Guggenheim in 2017. The third prominent museum on the island will be the Zayed National Museum to be opened in 2016 (saadiyat.ae). These institutions together will make up a strong force

in the Middle Eastern art world and the global art world at large. The project is spear headed by Tourism Development & Investment Company (TDIC), a company dedicated to developing the U.A.E. as a cultural hub in an effort to drive its economic progress and development. The three museums have begun collecting with assistance from international partners such as the Louvre, The British Museum and the Guggenheim Foundation.

Before the development of the internationally recognized institutions in the U.A.E., came the *Sharjah Biennale*, which was first held in 1993 and is now a destination for art collectors, critics, historians and enthusiasts alike. The last edition in March 2013 was host to over 100 international artists, architects, musicians and performers presenting works as well as panel discussions and curated workshops and conferences. Its aim of the biennale is to bridge artists' work with the public as well as with cultural organizations. It is produced by the Department of Culture and Information of the Emirate of Sharjah.

In Iran, the *Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art* is a cultural institution gaining widespread attention after its partial re-opening in 2012. "TMoCA is home to one of the largest and most impressive collections of Western modern art outside of North America and Europe and is valued at over \$2.5 billion. It has many influential works by the artists such as Pablo Picasso, Jackson Pollack, and Andy Warhol. The former royal family acquired the entire collection in 1977, two years prior to the Islamic Revolution, after which the collection was locked in the basement of the museum because of strict sanctions on Western influences including art (Giannelia, 2012; Pomeroy & Mostafavi, n.d.).

As we can see, the Middle Eastern art world, including the commercial and non-commercial sectors is a growing and developing art hub. But now, the question is who and what is responsible? Can it be reduced to a few factors?

Defining factors in the development of an emerging market

As with any developing market, it is nearly impossible and almost pointless to figure out the exact reasons for its development in an exhaustive way. Therefore, we look at key factors that have been mentioned in academic reports as well as journalistic reviews on the market. This research also led to ask the same question to the curators of the participating museums in London to gain insight from expert opinion. The

findings of the experts will be compared with what was found in the literature in the analysis of the empirical research.

The art market in China grew for many reasons, but was “predicated on metropolitan enclaves achieving ever higher living standards, muted censorship laws, a museum building boom and freer economic and cultural exchange” between important traders (Robertson, Tseng & Singh, 2008). This shift in socio-political setting can also be attributed to the case of some Middle Eastern countries. Could these then be defining factors for emerging markets around the globe? Unfortunately, more research on the comparison of emerging markets would need to be done in order to answer this question with authority. So then, that leads us to uncover what is known by answering the question: *What influential factors led to the rise of the contemporary Middle Eastern art world?* To answer this question, we will look at major players in the market including consumers and producers as well as the lucrative financial set-up in some regions of the Middle East that have laid the groundwork for a blossoming market. These factors along with the recent social reform in a greater part of the region highlighted as the Arab Spring revolutions and its aftermath have all influenced the emergence of the Middle Eastern art world and its propulsion into the global art scene and will be discussed in the pages that follow.

Consumers and their financial situation

The consumers of Middle Eastern art are from both the region itself as well as from abroad. The consumers from abroad also range from the Middle Eastern diaspora to those with no relation to the Middle East except for their interest in art from the region. The diaspora plays a huge role in terms of being dedicated patrons of the arts and interested in art from their home countries. These supporters are purchasers of art as well as attendees to international exhibitions of Middle Eastern art at institutions such as London’s British Museum, the Tate Modern, the Victoria and Albert Museum and New York’s New Museum and the Chelsea Art Museum (Khadra, 2009). Along with the diaspora, are internationally prominent art collectors that were spotted at Art Dubai 2013 and include “top American collector couple Norman and Norah Stone, Dallas Cowboys cheerleader-turned-celebrity collector Amy Pehlan, and legendary Belgian backer of Chinese art Guy Ullens, who founded Beijing's famous Ullens Center for Contemporary Art” (Yusof, 2013).

Together with the international buyers purchasing in the Middle East of

Middle Eastern decent or not, there is a vast number of local buyers raising the stakes in the market place. This is in part due to the fact that in recent years the Middle Eastern region has experienced an increase of personal wealth, which has resulted in a large number of High Net Worth Individuals (HNWI) in some of the countries. These HNWI make up many of the major players in the Middle Eastern market. They are buying Middle Eastern art as well as European and American art. The Royal Qatari family's record purchase of *Cezanne's The Card Players* is an example of personal wealth being spent on art. The many purchases that have been made by these HNWI are one of the hypothesized reasons for the development of the regional market (McAndrew, 2009). As with the wealthy players in the Russian and Chinese markets, they obviously have an impact on the market results (Harris, 2011).

Not only do the HNWI have an impact on the market, but the national policies within the region have an influence on its development as well. According to recent reports, the average tax rate in the Middle Eastern region is 23.6%, which is just over half of the overall world average. According to a list which ranks countries according to low tax rates and business friendly tax regulations, five Middle Eastern countries are among the top ten ("The Countries", 2013). Moreover, the U.A.E. boasts itself as a tax free country, while Qatar and Saudi Arabia also have considerably low tax rates. While these are just a few countries from a wider region, low tax rates and affluent individuals are generally perceived to be the norm in all parts of the region. Here, we can see how the state's low tax policies impact the consumption of the arts in a positive manner. What isn't clear however is the tax system's impact on the production of art. However, politics have an influence on the emergence of the Middle Eastern art world in a different way.

Arab Spring

The Arab spring has been mentioned by both scholars and those working in the field of Contemporary Middle Eastern art as one of the catalysts for the emergence of the market (Azimi, 2012; Batty, 2012; Weiss, 2012; Yusof, 2013). The region gained press attention for many of the obvious political issues, but also an awareness of the cultural scene began to emerge. Artists who were at the forefront of the demonstrations, or who depicted the protests in their work were suddenly recognized as national heroes. And not only artists directly involved felt the waves of the revolution, but the region in general took a more prominent place in the minds of the

art world and art market. Venetia Porter, curator of Islamic Arts at the British Museum was quoted for saying “artists whose work fetched around £5,000 before 2005 [are] now selling for £30,000-£50,000” (Batty, 2012).

Additionally, the inclusion to the Venice Biennale 2011 of Egyptian artist



Figure 2 Nermine Hammam's *The Break* from the *Upekka* series, 2011

Source:

<http://www.vam.ac.U.K./users/node/17955>

Ahmed Basiony, who was shot dead in Tahrir Square during the protests, is what some say is a sign of the recognition of the political influence on the art world and more specifically, representative of the impact of the Arab Spring (Batty, 2012). In addition to the work of Basiony, the revolution has been highlighted in the works of other artists such as Nermine Hammam (Egypt), Mohamad Abla (Egypt) and the Tunisian artists featured in *After the Revolution*, an exhibition held in New York in June 2013, which was

funded by the French Institute Alliance Française, in partnership with American Airlines. But the revolution affects not only the those artists living and creating in the region, but also artists in the diaspora communities around the world (Harris, 2011). The artists of the diaspora have the opportunity to see their home country through a different light and might be able to produce different sorts of works that might be censored or restricted in their home countries, whereas artists from within the region have been acknowledged and credited for their “insider” view.

International recognition for Middle Eastern artist

Middle Eastern artists are considered to be both those from and living in the region as well as those from the region, but living abroad. Both types of artists have been



Figure 3 Sherin Neshat's *Women of Allah*, 1993-1997

Source: <http://www.up-to-date.nu/kunstwerk/shirin-neshat-women-of-allah/>

garnering international attention for their art works both in the commercial sense of successful sales as well as in the non-commercial of being part of important museum exhibitions and biennales. Key Middle Eastern artists include Shirin Neshat, an Iranian-born artist living and creating artworks in New York which are mainly based upon her relationship with her home country. Her works are often thought of as controversial but at the same time, her works have attracted a

lot attention and high prices. Auction houses have estimated her works to sell for as much as \$80 000 in recent years. This includes her “widely noticed series of black and white photographs called *Women of Allah*, in which she superimposed Farsi calligraphy on the hands and faces of her subjects, some of whom were carrying guns” (Williams, 2002). An example of an artist living and working in the Middle East (Iran) is Farhad Moshiri and along with Neshat is arguably one of the most successful Iranian artists. His Swarovsky crystal-embedded painting which spells out the word *eshgh* (meaning love in Farsi) sold for \$1 048 000,00 at a Bonham’s auction in March, 2008 (“Bonhams Sale”, n.d.). “This was the first work by a Middle Eastern artist to surpass the \$1 million mark, which may be some reason as to why he is compared with Jeff Koons and Damien Hirst although critics are quick to differentiate between the artists” (“Every Society”, n.d.; Davis, n.d.; Giannelia, 2012).

Egyptian born Chant Avedissian, the record breaking Arab artist is also



Figure 5 Chant Avedissian's *Al Watan Al Arabi* “*The Arab Nation*”, 2008
Source: <http://www.roseissa.com/artists/Chant%20A/CHANT%20A1.html>

gaining worldwide success with his works, as he holds the top spot for highest selling art work at auction. Lebanese artist Saloua Raouda Choucair, is an artists who gained little international attention until the Tate Modern exposed her to the world in their 2013 retrospective exhibition on her work. She is an artist who has had little financial successes like the others mentioned above, but has recently attained international recognition with the aid of a major art institution. This

brings us to how Middle Eastern art is being shown around the world, through which lens and under what light. As in the region itself, there are commercial outlets and non-commercial outlets involved in the distribution of artworks.

Summary

The outlook for the future of the contemporary Middle Eastern art world looks to be a bright one. This is because they have reached far beyond their borders and have attracted an audience base around the globe. The globalization of the art world appears to have brought a mutually positive change to both the European art world, having increased access to Middle Eastern art, and to artists from the Middle East who are being recognized for their work. It is my hope that continued recognition of

these artists will foster further cross-cultural communication, leading to a more nuanced understanding of the peoples of the region we know as "the Middle East".

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction to the research design and methods used

This research is qualitative in nature and uses a case study design structure to investigate the case of an emerging market and its influence on the non-commercial sector of the art world. The research employs primarily qualitative interview analysis supported by limited qualitative analysis of official documents including the promotional materials used for each exhibition. These documents are further discussed with the interviewees, which integrates the two forms of data together. This method is used to present a holistic research covering the topics of the role of the museums and the non-commercial sector; globalization of the art world; the emergence of the contemporary Middle Eastern art market; and the way in which it is presented in a global, non-commercial setting in London. To focus these topics, the research is guided by the central research question:

How do public museums and galleries respond to emerging commercial art sector developments, specifically the case of contemporary Middle Eastern art exhibitions presented by public museums, galleries and art spaces in London, U.K.?

The question of ‘how’ can best be answered through qualitative analysis of the responses given by the curators and through researching printed support materials related to the exhibitions, such as press releases, posters and images.

This research was designed as a series of case studies (the non-commercial museums and galleries in London that were exhibiting contemporary Middle Eastern art) situated within a larger case (the Middle Eastern art market as an example of an emerging art market). This research design allowed me to analyse an emerging art market and its influence on the non-commercial sector of the art world, while looking at a particular emerging market that has such strong cultural associations: The Middle East.

The boundaries of the cases, such as the sample, time frame and location are described below.

Description of the analysis

Creswell's (2007) guideline for case study research was consulted in order to devise an analytical strategy for this research. These guidelines explain that "data collection in case study research is typically extensive, drawing on multiple sources of information, such as observations, interviews, documents, and audiovisual materials (p. 75). This led to the decision to use two types of analyses in order to combine all cases and cross-analyse them in order to come up with a congruent answer to the main research question. First, a *within-case analysis* was done, where a detailed description of each case and their embedded themes was documented. Then second, a *cross-case analysis* was done, where the cases were compared with one another. The cross-case analysis used Bryman's (2008) *thematic analysis* framework and method.

In this research, the thematic analysis uses the same three themes used in the literature review: *role of intermediaries*, *globalization of the art world* and the *emerging Middle Eastern art market* to guide the analysis. From here, the sub-questions posed in the introduction as well as throughout the literature review are addressed. The four cases are then compared to one another using the framework of the themes.

Finally, a conclusion of the findings and a summary of the themes is provided. In the indices a comprehensive compilation of data sources from each case is provided.

Data collection methods

Qualitative interview – Semi-structured

The main type of qualitative data used in this research is qualitative interviews, and more specifically, semi-structured interviews. Qualitative interviews are used because they are flexible and allow for an in depth analysis of the desired research topic (Bryman, 2008). The aim of such a research method is to uncover as much information about the given topic from the point of view of the interviewee. This is precisely why this method has been chosen for this thesis. As mentioned before, the aim of the thesis is to learn more about the curatorial process. The qualitative interviews also give room for the curators to elaborate on their own ideas and interpretation of the notion of the globalised art market and how contemporary

Middle Eastern art fits into this idea, as opposed to being limited to answers from a quantitative survey study.

As multiple cases will be studied, it is important to be able to compare the collected data depending on the responses from the respondents. This is the main reason why the semi-structured interview method was chosen. This method is based on a few set questions that help to direct the interview in such a way that the interviews can be conducted in a similar fashion every time, using the same guide, while not being required to stick to completely the same script. In contrast with an entirely unstructured approach, a semi-structured approach avoids the danger of the interview turning into more of a casual conversation, without direction and without a goal of finding out information from the interviewee. The semi-structured approach is also intended to ensure that the interview consists mainly of the interviewee's opinion and answers to the questions, which ideally results in the interview consisting of the interviewee speaking for approximately 70 to 80 percent of the time (Babbie, 2011). In his dissertation on the valuation of art, Dr. Olav Velthuis used this method when interviewing gallery owners and art dealers in order to find out more in-depth information and personal opinions and points of view (Velthuis, 2005). The research of the present thesis on contemporary Middle Eastern art calls for similar insights into the world of curators as Velthuis uncovered in his 2005 thesis and so a similarly semi-structured approach was chosen.

In order to gain as much information as possible from the interviewee an interview guide was used, to help structure the interview and encourage the interviewee to address specific questions and topics. However, if the interview went in a slightly different or unexpected direction, then this was also explored, in order to gain more insight into a particular topic. In addition to this, the interviewee was not restricted from telling personal stories if they related to the topic of the interview.

The interview guide contains a list of four target topics and five questions that ideally all interviewees will be asked (see Appendix A for complete interview guide)

The four target topics are:

- General curatorial questions
- Globalization questions
- Contemporary Middle Eastern art market questions
- Non-commercial sector versus commercial art sector questions

Types of Questions

As described by Bryman, there are nine types of questions and interview tactics used in qualitative interviews, namely: introducing questions; follow-up questions; probing questions; specifying questions; direct questions; indirect questions; structuring questions and statements; silence; and interpreting questions (2008). In the interviews, a variety of these questions were used. In addition to the types of questions that were asked, a variety of phenomena were also discussed, such as: the beliefs of the curators; their interpretation of the behaviour of the market; the formal and informal roles that the players of the art world partake in; their relationships with the art market; important places within the art world; emerging markets; and personal stories appropriate to the topics. Bryman also suggests that covering a variety of phenomena increases the quality of the interviews.

In-person interviews

All of the interviews were conducted in person, in London between June 5 and 7, 2013. All interviews were conducted on location, so in the museum or gallery. Each interview was planned to be 30 minutes in length, but in practice they ranged from 24 minutes to 54 minutes. The interviewees were all graciously thanked for their time and input towards this thesis.

Credibility and Quality of the Interviews

In order to ensure trustworthiness, rigor and quality, all interviews were recorded and transcribed for the purpose of optimal analysis. The interviews were recorded using an iPhone application *QuickVoice Recorder*. The interviews were transcribed by hand as opposed to a digital device in order to accurately document the nuances in the interview, for further analysis. These transcripts are provided in Appendix B, C, D and E.

The interview guide was employed to provide an element of standardization to the interviews, with the aim to generalize the answers. The ability to generalize the data collected is a sign of quality of interview (Golafshani, 2003).

Qualitative Analysis of Official Documents

The support materials of the exhibitions, in the form of promotional materials such as the poster and title of an exhibition was analysed and was done alongside the interviews with the curators. According to Bryman (2008), analyzing existing official

documented data in a qualitative manner is usually used to support qualitative interviews. Not only is the material used for analysis, but it also provides additional background information that will be used when interviewing curators regarding their exhibitions.

In addition to the promotion materials, the exhibition itself was reviewed in order to build the within-case analyses.

The main points that have been researched and analysed in the document analysis are:

- The name of the exhibition
- The main image of the exhibition
- The (possible) theme of the exhibition (i.e. photography, group show, a retrospective, etc.)

The three points above provides insight into the marketing strategies or main messages that the exhibition consisted of.

- Partnerships with other organizations and/or funders

The points above offers insight into the financial aspects and/or stakeholder interests in the exhibition.

Credibility and Quality

As described by Golafshani (2003), reliability and validity are terms often used in quantitative research, where as in qualitative research these terms are “conceptualized as trustworthiness, rigor and quality” (p. 604).

Not all information about exhibitions was at hand, in physical form during the time of this research. This poses a risk to the thoroughness or rigor of the research. However, if the original materials were not available (for example an exhibition poster) than it was gathered from the information provided on the organization’s website. As mentioned earlier, the official support materials are used in the analysis to gain a deeper understanding of how the exhibitions are presented to the public. A key element in presenting works to the public is the physical and digital support material, therefore the analyses of these materials proves to be a trustful and relevant source of information for the questions at hand.

The Sample and Sampling Methods

The sampling method used in this research in association with the museums and galleries is *purposive sampling*, whereby relevant units of analysis were selected

because in order to answer the research question. In order to address the research question, it was necessary to speak with curators who had experience in selecting contemporary Middle Eastern art.

The sample frame consists of a museums and non-commercial galleries in London that have presented an exhibition of contemporary Middle Eastern art, or art works from contemporary Middle Eastern artist within the past 10 years. This list was primarily collected by Internet searches, but added to and confirmed by the participants to ensure its accuracy. It includes but is not limited to: Victoria & Albert, Institute for Contemporary Arts, The Mosaic Rooms, Tate Modern, P21 Gallery, The British Museum, Leighton House, Chisenhale Gallery and Parasol Unit.

All museums and galleries from the sample frame were contacted. Not all were able to participate and so the sample for the interviews consists of: Victoria & Albert, ICA, Mosaic Rooms and Tate Modern (see Chapter 4 for case descriptions of each of the four participating institutions)

Units of Analysis

The units of analysis are both the persons who participated in the interviews and the official content; the promotion material. The goal was always to speak with the curator; however, in some cases there was no sole curator, or there was an alternate position instead of a curatorial position and so curators were not always available to be interviewed. This meant that interviews were conducted with curators, assistants or other relevant staff members. The following personnel participated in the interviews: curator (Victoria & Albert), programmer (The Mosaic Rooms), exhibition coordinator (ICA) and co-curator (Tate Modern).

Defining the contexts

The London Setting

London, U.K. is a recognized major art city, which is why it is chosen as the place of study. It is known as a hub for international art exchange and compares to New York City in terms of art market power (Van Hest, 2012). This is represented in the high volume of artists residing in London, along with the extremely high number of renowned galleries, museums and art institutions. Moreover, London is home to major auction houses Christie's and Sotheby's as well as the internationally acclaimed Frieze Art Fair.

Not only was London specifically chosen as the research location because of its global reach within the art market and international reputation, but as well for its practical reasons, as there is a great concentration of museums and non-commercial galleries in London and it is geographically close to the Netherlands, where much of the research was conducted.

Defining the Middle East

Defining the Middle East is often difficult and the selection and exclusion of nations can seem almost arbitrary. For this thesis, the list of countries is taken from Seddon's *A Political and Economic Dictionary of the Middle East*. The list includes:

“six countries and one disputed territory in North Africa (Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt and Western Sahara), eight countries in Western Asia (Jordan, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, Iraq and Iran), seven in Arabia (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain and Yemen), five newly independent states in southern Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) and Afghanistan”

(Seddon, 2004, p.v.).

The only exception to this terminology is used when referencing the projects presented by The Mosaic Rooms, as they as an institution refer to the region they represent as the Arab world. The Arab world is defined by the Arab League, consisting of 22 members including the recognition of the nation-state of Palestine.

Artists born or residing from any of these countries and their respective works that were included in contemporary art exhibitions in London defines the inclusion of the sample.

Time Frame

The time frame used for selecting the sample frame was from 2003-2013. During this ten year time frame the Middle Eastern art market has seen considerable increase in exposure and global market presence. As this research aims to identify how the non-commercial sector responds to the commercial sector, this seemed to be an appropriate time frame to focus the research, because the both the non-commercial and commercial sector within the region grew, and so I wanted to study its recent impact on the non-commercial sector in a different region.

The time frame addresses the Arab Spring uprisings, including some time before their peak, and some time after. The Arab Spring has been associated with the current increase in attention for Middle Eastern art, and so it is also important to include the time prior to and leading up to the events in the time frame.

Chapter 4: Results and analysis

In the following chapter, all of the results of all the from the empirical research will be presented and analysed. This includes a brief description of each case, after which, the cases will be cross analysed using a *thematic analysis*. The three main themes used in the literature review: *the role of the intermediary, the globalization of the art world, the emerging Middle Eastern art world* will act as the themes used for the cross analysis and the sub-questions addressed in the introduction and throughout the literature review will guide this process. At the end of the analyses, the findings are written in *italics*. After each theme is analysed a chart is provided, which references interviews and the accompanying question number from which the information was derived. Together, the literature review and the thematic analysis form a solid base from which the main research question can be tackled:

How do public museums and galleries respond to emerging commercial art sector developments, specifically the case of contemporary Middle Eastern art exhibitions presented by public museums, galleries and art spaces in London, U.K.?

As this is an exploratory research, there is no final or concrete answer, but rather an in-depth look into a case that can provide insight into the three main themes.

This chapter will conclude with a summary of observations that were made throughout the study. The following and final chapter concluded the thesis and discusses limitations of the study as well as suggestions for further research.

Case Descriptions

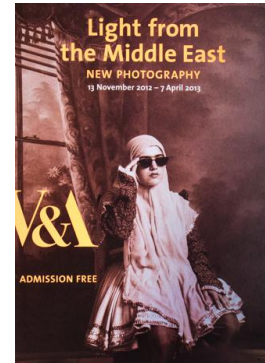
Case A:

Institution: Victoria & Albert Museum (V&A)

Exhibition: *Light From the Middle East: New Photography*

Duration of the exhibition: November 13, 2012 – April 7, 2013

Interviewee: Marta Weiss, curator



Light From the Middle East: New Photography was a result of a collaboration between the Victoria & Albert (referred to as V&A further in the text) and the British Museum, where half of the collection was acquired by the British Museum and the other half by the V&A. Both museums received a grant from the Art Fund in 2009 and 2012 to start collecting contemporary Middle Eastern photography. Therefore, the exhibition was included only photography, with the exception of one video installation. The exhibition was divided into three themes: Recording, Reframing, Resisting and displayed works from artists from the Middle East and its diaspora. The artists who participated in the exhibition ranged in terms of their artistic recognition: some, like Ahmed Mater and Shadi Ghadirian have had works sold at prestigious auction houses such as Sotheby's and Christies, while others, such as Waheeda Malullah and Nermine Hammam have not been present on the secondary market as of yet. I visited the exhibition on April 5, 2013 in the middle of the day. The exhibition was well attended on the day of my visit, with an estimate of 40-50 attendees. The exhibition was accompanied by a published catalogue. The three other interviewees all referred to the *Light From the Middle East* exhibition in different ways. This will be discussed further in the analysis.

Image 1: Poster, Shadi Ghadirian's *Untitled* (1998) **Source:** <http://bakarycafe.co.uk/2013/03/20/light-from-the-middle-east-new-photography-va-march-2013/>

Case B:

Institution: The Mosaic Rooms

Exhibition: *Dor Guez 40 Days* (the institution in general is of interest because they exhibit contemporary culture from the Arab world)

Duration of the exhibition: April 12 – June 7, 2013

Interviewee: Rachael Hornsby, Head of Programming and Operations



Image 2: Promotional Image Dor Guez' *Samira in her wedding gown* (2010)
Source: The Mosaic Rooms Catalogue

Dor Guez – 40 Days was a solo show of the Palestinian artist Dor Guez. It consisted of video, photography and mixed media works. The exhibition launched a bigger project called *Disappearing Cities*, which consisted of exhibitions, talks and screenings focus on the “destruction of Arab urban life in the post-colonial age” (The Mosaic Rooms, 2013). The Mosaic Rooms are funded by the A.M. Qattan Foundation, an organization dedicated to “serving culture and education in Palestine and the Arab World” (A.M. Qattan Foundation, 2013) The exhibition was a personal archival project where the artist collected and altered images from his family, his hometown community and their collective heritage. The artist expressed his wishes that the archival research also be used by his hometown community. I visited the exhibition on June 6, 2013 in the middle of the day. I was the only person present in the exhibition rooms. The exhibition was accompanied by a published catalogue.

Case C:

Institution: Institute Of Contemporary Arts (ICA)

Exhibition: *Points of Departure*

Duration of the exhibition: June 26 – July 21, 2013

Interviewee: Juliette Desorgues, Associate Curator,
Programme Coordinator



Image 3 Promotional Image .
Jumana Emil Abboud's *I Feel Nothing* (2012-13) **Source:**
<http://www.ica.org.uk/?lid=36432>

Points of Departure was a group exhibition presenting the works and processes of five Palestinian and two U.K. artists. The exhibition is in collaboration with the Delfina Foundation, the British Council and Art School Palestine. “The exhibition was among the highlights of the *Shubbak Festival* in London, June 22 – July 6, 2013” (ICA, 2013). The focus of the exhibition was on the artistic process of a year long residency where artists worked and resided in the Palestinian Territories and the U.K. I did not visit the exhibition as it opened after my visit to London. The interview was also conducted prior to the opening of the show. Due to limited funds, the show was not accompanied by a catalogue. The exhibition was supported by talks and discussions held by the ICA that related to the theme of the show. During the time of this project, the Delfina Foundation was undergoing renovations, and so this exhibition was a way to keep their operations going without a space, because the ICA hosted the physical event.

Case D:

Institution: The Tate Modern

Exhibition: Saloua Raouda Choucair

Duration of the exhibition: April 17 – October 20, 2013

Interviewee: Ann Coxon, Assistant Curator

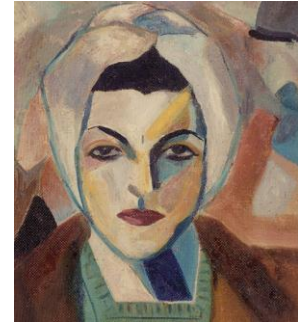


Image 4 Poster, *Self Portrait* (1943). **Source:** <http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/saloua-raouda-choucair>

Saloua Raouda Choucair, was a monographic exhibition celebrating the works of the Lebanese artist of the same name. The exhibition highlights the artists dedication to abstraction, with most works dating between 1940-1980, with some works produced in the 1990s.⁵ Included are paintings, sculptures and textiles. The show consisted of many works of loan as well as a few purchased pieces. The Middle Eastern Northern Africa Committee was involved in the acquisition of the works as were the two curators Jessica Morgan and Ann Coxon. The Tate Modern is one of the world's leading museums of modern and contemporary art. The institution is a part of a larger network of other Tate museums: Tate Britain, Tate St. Ives and Tate Liverpool. I attended the exhibition on June 7, 2013 in the middle of the day. There were approximately 20 other people viewing the works when I was there. The exhibition was accompanied by a published catalogue, as well as occasional tours with the curator.

⁵ This exhibition was included in this research as it included works that were produced within the last 30 years, including both modern and contemporary art.

Cross-case Thematic Analysis

The thematic analysis uses the three main themes to analyse the empirical data gathered from the interviews and the exhibition support materials including promotional images and accompanying texts. Within each theme, a series of sub-questions that derived from the literature review are addressed and indicated in bold. This approach demonstrates how each of the four cases compare to one another in regards to the themes and sub-questions. Under the analysis of each theme, a framework is provided, listing the question numbers from the interviews from which the data was derived. From here, the main research question is explored.

Theme 1: The role of the intermediary

All four participants agreed that the relationship between the commercial and non-commercial sectors is a complex one, but that the two sectors depend on one another within the greater context of the art world. “Influence each other”, “infiltrate into each other”, “tied into each other”, and “not as separate as we’d like to think” were all ways the participants described the relationship between the commercial and non-commercial sectors.

How do museums respond to market trends?

Even though the commercial and the non-commercial sectors are integrated into each other, all four of the respondents in one way or another disclosed that they believed that the commercial sector, specifically the market, leads. This was most explicit when Ms. Coxon (Tate) stated “undoubtedly the market often leads”. Ms. Desorgues (ICA) noted that the art world in general depends on the market to sustain the artistic practice, whereby artists can make a living and “get exposure”. When discussing the relationship between the two sectors, Ms. Hornsby (The Mosaic Rooms) says that first comes commercial viability *and then* more public and mainstream attention. Ms. Weiss (V&A) noted that the V&A “keeps an eye on the market”, but due to limited funds do “not have the luxury” to purchase the hottest trends, so instead they “take opportunities when they come”, delineating the notion that the market sets trends. However, two respondents also acknowledge the impact of the reverse. According to Ms. Weiss, when museums acquire works, it is a “huge stamp of approval” and Ms. Coxon states the curator of a massive museum is in a “privileged position to be in [...] because you get to change the course of art history”.

Therefore, even though the two sectors are closely intertwined the market tends to lead and set trends and the power of the museum solidifies these trends. This confirms the theories presented in Chapter 2, Section 1.

To what extent does the funding situation of an art museum impact the works that are chosen?

Three of the cases studied were tied to other institutions that directly impacted their funding situation (V&A, The Mosaic Rooms & ICA). The result of these collaborations affected the curatorial processes in different ways. The V&A collaborated with the British Museum and so they shared the curatorial decision as well as the subsequent collection. The Mosaic Rooms and the curatorial and programming decisions are “directly decided” by the A.M. Qattan Foundation, the funding body for the organization. The ICA worked with Delfina Foundation, The British Council, and Art School Palestine and the curatorial and selection processes were split between and impacted by these four organizations. Therefore, none of these three cases had the sole decision making power when it came to the development of their exhibitions. The Tate, on the other hand, has internal committees (one of which is dedicated to the Middle East and Northern Africa region and the others to different regions) that are responsible for agreeing to the creation of the exhibition and acquisition of works. The reason behind the committees is to geographically broaden the collection of the Tate. It can be deduced that the fact that there is a committee dedicated to collecting works from a certain part of the world impacts the exhibitions that the Tate eventually puts on. *Therefore, the collaborations and funding situations of the institutions directly impacts the exhibitions from influencing which artists are included in an exhibition to what region to focus on. Again, this confirms the theories presented in Chapter 2, Section 1 that the funding situations affects the exhibitions presented by public museums and galleries.*

What role do temporary exhibitions play in art museums?

In the case of the V&A, the ICA and Tate Modern, the exhibitions served to explore a new territory that had not been discovered by these particular institutions before. The exhibitions all presented very different views on both art and the region, but they were all aware of the geographical context that they working in. In the case of The Mosaic

Rooms, the temporary exhibitions act as one of many ongoing exhibitions presenting work from the Arab world while serving the purpose of the organization. In regards to the risks taken in the frame of the temporary exhibitions, the collaborations described above demonstrate the cases' ways of spreading the risk of an exhibition between different organizations. This is particularly evident for the V&A and the ICA. These institutions themselves do not need to take on all the risk of putting on the exhibitions as there are other stakeholders involved sharing the risk. The Mosaic Rooms also spreads the risk by adding extras to the program surrounding an exhibition such as artist talks and community outreach programs. Ms Hornsby also notes that public institutions cannot be too risky because of their dependence on the income of ticket sales, so the need to be aware of what will attract an audience. This notion was however tested by the Tate (a public institution). Ms. Coxon said that the *Saloua Raouda Choucair* show was an "experiment" and "risky" and that they didn't know how many people it would attract because it was showcasing a "very unrecognized" artist. However, Ms. Coxon also said that she believes this was possible because of the reputation the Tate has as being an institution that people trust and that their decisions are supported by critics and other members of the global art world. *Therefore, the public museums studied here use the temporary exhibition as a way tot explore new themes including the exploration of the Middle East. Additionally, museums such as the Tate can afford to take risks on exhibitions because their institutional reputation supports them, where as other organizations chose to spread the risk by including other stakeholders. Furthermore, the smaller institutions also need to look towards what will attract a public in order to sustain themselves.*

What are the main goals that direct the exhibition and how do they differ among museums presenting similar themes?

The main goals of the four cases varied slightly in the specific messages that they wished the exhibition would convey, but all interviewees mentioned that the general goal was to "broaden their audience" or "diversify their collection" in an effort to "open the eyes" of the public or "make them question cultural differences". Specifically, the V&A wanted to build on their collection of Middle Eastern photography and used the exhibition to highlight both photographs as objects as well as exploring the Middle East as a region. The Mosaic Rooms in general aim to

provide a specifically non-commercial platform for emerging artists to show their work to a London audience. The ICA strived to build on their reputation as an institution that pushes the boundaries of the avant-garde and explore new territories to broaden their audience base. The Tate’s mission for their exhibition specifically was to present a “non-Western, female artist who you may not have heard of before and who [they] are prepared to take a risk on and support”. *These goals of broadening and diversifying are not new to the world of art museums. So then comes the question of what are they diversifying from, how they do this and what can sustain these efforts? They all mentioned that they wanted to broaden their audience, therefore they are looking to invest in art works that appeal to a larger, or different crowd than that which normally attends. In order to sustain this broadening and diversification, they must look to what the public would go to, and thus look at the trends set by the market. This further strengthens the theory that the commercial and non-commercial sectors are related and that the market sets the trends that the non-commercial sector closely follows.*

Thematic Analysis 1: Role of the intermediary

	Response to art market trends	Impact of funding situation	Exhibition as risk-taking	Main goals
Case A: V&A	Q5 & Q6	Q1	Q1	Q12
Case B: Mosaic Rooms	Q10	Q1 & Q2	Q5 & Q13	Q14
Case C: ICA	Q5 & Q6	Q1, Q2 & Q4	Q1 & Q4	Q4
Case D: Tate Modern	Q3	Q1	Q8	Q1 & Q16

Theme 2: Globalisation of the art world

To what extent has globalization of the art market impacted the curatorial decisions of art museums in London?

Most importantly, all the participants confirmed the theory that the art world is more globalised now than ever before, however the extent to which it is globalised was not clear to any of them. The biggest impact that globalization has had on the curatorial process of museums in London has been that the pot has been made bigger – there is just more art to choose from, from more regions that were once underrepresented. However, Ms. Hornsby is quick to note that it is because the foreign art worlds are emerging in the eyes of the traditional, Euro and American-centric model, not that

they have suddenly emerged from nothing. She defends this by stating that there has “always been interesting work coming from the region and there will always be interesting work coming from the region”, so it is simply the foreign exposure that opens it up to the rest of the world. Additionally, she states that even though the pot might have gotten bigger in recent years, she is unsure of how representative it actually is of the diversity that exists in the global art world.

A challenge in dealing with art worlds that have recently emerged, such as the Middle Eastern art world, is how to represent them as artists and their artworks are difficult to categorize. All participants agreed that presenting work from a specific region is a delicate matter and that the curatorial efforts can be misconstrued as being “patronizing” or “neo-colonial”. All cases approached this challenge from a different angle and their target audiences are also telling of their approach to incorporate a globalised context to their exhibitions.

Ms. Weiss decided to place an emphasis on the works as not only coming from a certain region and containing images of a certain context, but also highlighting the nature of photography and the photograph as an object. The context *and* the medium together formed the red-thread through the exhibition. Through this approach, the target audience was then a group of overlapping demographical categories, including those interested in contemporary art; those interested in photography; and those with an interest in the Middle East and/or with a Middle Eastern background. They were also generally targeting a younger public with the use of contemporary works. Therefore, the goal of broadening an audience base were met by the wide range of target groups.

The Mosaic Rooms, as an institution, promotes itself as a platform for art from a specific region of the world, however their aim is to connect peoples and cultures from afar— specifically a London audience with art and culture from the Arab world. Through the arts, they believe they can promote dialogue and understanding. Their target group includes a Londoners would not normally have access and engage with Arab arts and culture, and to provide them with this. Their target group and focus then aims to bring worlds closer together.

The ICA’s collaboration with artists and institutions abroad was to diversify their program as well as their audience base. With their exhibition *Points of Departure*, they aimed not to highlight the ‘foreign region’, but rather use a foreign region, namely the Palestinian Territories, as a place to produce a collaborative inter-

nation project. With this method of working, ICA aimed to target a “broader London audience”, including those who already had an interest in the ICA and its history.

The goal of the Tate (according to Ms. Coxon), is to present artworks together as one collection and so to differentiate based on geographic region would eliminate the possibility to make connections between artists and the different time periods that they worked in. They believe that the art world is one filled connections, exemplified by artistic movements and artistic influences, and so to dissociate them from one another would not be congruent with their larger goals. Furthermore, the Tate Modern, as described by Ms. Coxon, is trying to adapt to the “global age” that we are currently living in by opening up to “the modernisms that have happened in different parts of the world and to be more inclusive”. She further states “it makes no sense at all to be ‘NATO specific’, in crude terms”. Therefore, she sees the Tate’s internationally focused curatorial decisions influenced by globalization in general. This is reflected in their broad target group which included those interested in modernism, those interested in design, and those with an interest in the region or a Middle Eastern background. The target audience also included both Londoners as well as tourists visiting London.

Therefore, the globalisation of the art world has an impact on the curatorial decisions of non-commercial institutions, specifically the ones in London that were used for this research. The way in which different institutions approach the challenge of integrating cross-cultural exchange into their exhibition programs varies, depending on the organization. Challenges include how to represent various cultures in a respectful and gracious way, how to make connections other than those based strictly on geographical ties and appealing to a society that is accustomed to a global frame of mind. The target groups are also reflective of the sense of adapting to the globalised, multi-cultural world we live in today.

To what extent are cultural differences emphasized in exhibitions dedicated to foreign art?

Now comes the question of if and how institutions base their exhibitions on cultural integration or cultural differences. This is best approached by analyzing both what the interviewees had to say on the matter as well as analyzing the promotional materials used. This is because the promotional materials provide insight into how the institution attempt to entice the public and attract them to the exhibition. The

interviewees were also asked about the promotional choices, and so the content analysis is wedded together with the interview analysis in addressing this topic (the promotional images are provided in the case descriptions above).

Cultural differences were approached in different ways in all four cases. All of the interviewees mentioned that emphasizing cultural differences was not their aim but rather cross-cultural exchange was the goal. This is an especially difficult topic as the mere fact of listing an artist's country of origin (which is common in the arts) sends a message. So to say that art is from a certain place also sends a message, especially if it is not from where it is being shown.⁶

In the case of The Mosaic Rooms, as mentioned above, they clearly state in their mission that they are there to promote arts and culture that is not U.K.- or Euro-centric. So, if visitors were visiting The Mosaic Rooms, then it would become quite clear to them that they are experiencing art from outside the U.K. region. This in itself sends a message of cultural difference, by the mere fact that they are explicit of what they do show, delineated what they don't. And it is clear that it is not from London. However, the exhibition itself is less explicit in its stress on geographical and national emphasis. This is illustrated in the promotional material supporting the *Dor Guez – 40 Days* exhibition. There were very few clues that indicated a specific region. The image, depicting a wedding, was chosen mainly for marketing purposes because the black and white image “was striking” and it aimed to demonstrate the archival nature of the works, which was the theme of the exhibition. It was also one of the few stills that was available at the time of setting the promotional materials, and to the choices were limited as to which image to use. In addition to this, the title of the show: *Dor Guez – 40 Days* is also not one that is obviously announcing a Middle Eastern or Arab world theme. The depiction of a Christian, specifically a Greek Orthodox, wedding and reference to the 40 day mourning period between death and memorial that is tradition in the Greek Orthodox Church in the promotional materials does not typically fit a Western view of the Middle Eastern region like some of the other promotional images in this research. And unless you are familiar with the Greek Orthodox culture, these references might not be apparent as well. Therefore

⁶ In this section, I refer to “typical Western ideas of the Middle East”. The typical Western ideas of the Middle East are analysed in the work of literary theorist Edward W. Said titled *Orientalism* (1978). Said defines the term ‘Orientalism’ as the Western study of the East, which is based upon ancient, false and misconstrued romanticized images of the East derived from centuries of cultural imperialism.

the cultural differences are not immediately apparent in the promotional images used for the exhibition, but they are emphasized in the institution itself.

The V&A on the other hand, is an institution that is not by definition limited to particular geographical or national boundaries. The title of the exhibition: *Light From the Middle East: New Photography* clearly indicates the region that is highlighted in the show. The promotional image also fits the typical Western idea of a Middle Eastern image. However, this was interestingly not the reason for the choice of the image. Ms. Weiss said that there were many reasons, mostly practical for using the image that they did. She said that the spatial make-up of the image lent itself to be an ideal choice for a poster, as there was room at the top and side for a title. Also, the fact that it was a vertical image made it prime choice for a poster and cover page of a catalogue, as these two mediums typically require vertical alignment. In addition to these practical decision making elements, Ms. Weiss also noted that she liked the fact that the title of the show was *Light From the Middle East* (in reference to the photographic-ness of the show) and that the image depicted a woman wearing sunglasses. At first it seemed like a decision to market the show by emphasizing cultural differences by using the image and title that they did, but the promotional material was actually was the result of resolving practical issues and graphic restraints.

The Tate Modern, similarly, chose the image that they did (a self-portrait of Choucair) based purely on marketing reasons. Ms. Coxon told me that the portrait was chosen because the marketing team wanted to use an image that would tell the public more about a relatively unknown artist. This went along with the goals that were outlined in above of showcasing a female, non-Western artist, that not very many people knew about. The portrait then reduced the search costs, if you will, of the public, as it is clear that she is a woman, and that she is not ‘typically Western’ and the use of her face familiarizes the viewer with the artist. The curators however, were against the use of that particular image because “[Choucair] was so wedded to abstraction, and that’s where she came from, and we all go through art school where we do whatever, self portraits, but that wasn’t what she was about. It’s not the strength of her practice”. The catalogue and the exhibition flyer both features alternate images, ones depicting her sculptural work, and so the way Ms. Coxon described it, was “because [it was] not drawing you in to the exhibition”, but rather once the attendee was in the exhibition they could get a fuller picture of the artist’s

practice. Therefore, the use of a promotional image that emphasizes the cultural differences was used primarily for marketing purposes on the poster only and did not reflect the curatorial choices, they actually went against them.

The ICA was an institution that steered the furthest from emphasizing cultural differences in the exhibition. Ms. Desorgues clearly stated that they did not want to profile the artists according to geography in any way. She noted that the design of the project leading up to the exhibition and the residencies involved allowed the artists to “feel completely free of doing anything without the pressures of doing work [related to their nationality]”. This was also apparent in the choice of the promotional image. When asked about the reason for the choice, Ms. Desorgues said it was purposefully chosen because it did not emphasize the cultural differences. She said she “didn’t want to just have a piece to have to kind of a political or Palestinian image that would just scream “this is about the Israeli/Palestinian [conflict]”. Along with this clear choice, it was also chosen for marketing reasons, as it is an “arresting image” that invited the public to their show. Ms. Desorgues acknowledged the fact that the promotional images are used to “sell” a show.

Therefore, the emphasis on cultural differences varies greatly from one institution to another. The posters, catalogues and other promotional images we charged with geographical and cultural references in some cases, but explicitly left out in others. All cases cited marketing strategies as influential factors in the decisions for the main image. It depends not only on this, but also on what images you have available to work with. As demonstrated in the case of the V&A, it was a convenient coincidence that the poster image referred to the name of the exhibition and also had room in it for the title and that it was a part of the acquired collection. Had it not been a part of the collection, a totally different image could have been chosen.

Thematic Analysis 2: Globalisation of the art world

	Globalisation & curatorial decisions	Emphasis on cultural differences
Case A: V&A	Q8, Q9 & Q11	Q11
Case B: Mosaic Rooms	Q1, Q2, Q6, Q8 & Q12	<i>throughout</i>
Case C: ICA	Q10, Q14 & Q15	Q6
Case D: Tate Modern	Q2, Q6 & Q11	Q5 & Q12

Theme 3: The emerging Middle Eastern art world

What impact does contemporary Middle Eastern art have on the art world beyond the borders of the region?

As it was outlined in the literature review, the emergence of the Middle Eastern art world has been felt beyond the borders of its region in both the commercial and non-commercial sectors. In relation to this research, this is best illustrated by the fact that in the past year it was the first time that three out of four of these institutions were involved in the exhibiting of contemporary (and modern) Middle Eastern art. The fourth, The Mosaic Rooms, which of course is displaying works from the region on an ongoing basis, was also established recently (within the past five years). The participants were asked to further explain their perspective of the influence of the emerging Middle Eastern art world on other regions.

Ms. Weiss confirmed this, when she revealed that the growing awareness of the Middle Eastern art world and its artistic output made it possible to hold exhibitions such as *Light From the Middle East*, which in turn has led to even more awareness of this emerging art world but from a London-based perspective. When asked about why the V&A chose to do an exhibition with a Middle Eastern theme, Ms. Weiss mentioned the fact that it was a collaborative effort between the British Museum and the V&A so understandably both museums had their own agendas and they conveniently synced up with one another. The V&A wanted to expand their Middle Eastern photography collection and according to Ms. Weiss “[they] were aware of the kind of exciting developments in the region that have happened in the last decade or so and wanted to try and reflect that in the collection”.

Ms. Hornsby also commented on the awareness of the region that has given room for more international projects to occur that are based on contemporary Middle Eastern art. This increase of awareness of the Middle Eastern art world outside of the region has in turn led to the development of its reputation and accessibility. The public from outside the Middle East, according to Hornsby is now more able to engage with art and culture from the region, which then not only promotes cultural understanding, but the formation of their taste when it comes to the arts. This shows us that the museums, even though they may follow the trends of the market, they are the ones who bring these trends to the public and are aiding in the formation of their taste and the further development of art history.

When discussing how the funding issues that arose while producing the *Points of Departure* exhibition at the ICA, Ms. Desorgues said that the growing interest in the Middle Eastern region is not only reflected in an increasing number of art institutions exhibiting work from the region, but also in other fields such as in the education industry. She has noticed that there are more university courses offered now on subjects related to the Middle East and its cultural production and she attributes this to the general growing awareness in the subject.

Ms. Coxon from the Tate, could unfortunately speak little about the impact of the emergence of the Middle Eastern art world on other regions as she said it was not her area of expertise, but rather that of the other curator who worked on the show.

The three the institutions, the V&A, The Mosaic Rooms and the ICA all noted different levels of impact when it came to the influence the emerging Middle Eastern art world has on other regions around the world. The V&A mentioned the influence on the museums themselves, and how they could expand their collection and broaden their reach. The Mosaic Rooms indentified an impact of society and how they now have access to a seeing a part of the world that they normally see in a context of news and media reports, in a different light. The ICA noticed an influence in what schools were teaching as a result of the growing awareness of the cultural aspects of the region along with the and the socio-political issues that come with it. society, other industries. *Therefore, the emerging Middle Eastern art world, has had an influence on other regions on various levels and the examples given above are a simply a few examples. Of course, other emerging art world have an impact on other regions as well, but these are examples of one case.*

What influential factors led to the rise of the contemporary Middle Eastern art world?

There are a great many influential factors that led to the growth of the Middle Eastern art world, and it is impossible to study exactly why or how an art world develops. This is why the participants were asked what they believed to be the main factors. The two main reasons were the media attention that the region has garnered in the past few years surrounding the Arab Spring uprisings as well as the commercial developments within the region such as art fairs, specifically Art Dubai. Another factor that was mention was the biennales in Sharjah which has been around for over twenty years, but has helped to secure the Middle East as a place as a reputable and distinguished

art hub. The Arab Spring, the growing commercialization of the art world in the Middle East, the established biennales all attract attention to the region, and this is the key to understanding factors which aid in the development of any art world, not only the Middle Eastern one. The more attention, specifically international attention help to bring the region to the forefront of people’s minds, and so it is only natural for these regions to come to the forefront of the minds of those in the art world, and those in powerful, taste-making positions such as museums and other art institutions in art hubs like London. *Commercial, non-commercial events and institutions as well as socio-political events such as the Arab Spring have all been contributing factors to the rise in the Middle Eastern art world. Having said this, an art world could be growing and developing, but if there is no external attention attributed to the region, then its development could be sidelined by other emerging art worlds. The general media attention that is attributed to the region aides in keeping the Middle East at the forefront of the public’s mind. Additionally, high-profile art events such as Art Dubai and successful action sales also attribute attention to the region. This came as somewhat of a surprising conclusion, that the factors are almost irrelevant, as long as they attract attention.*

Thematic Analysis 3: Emerging Middle Eastern art world

	Influence of the Middle Eastern art world	Influential factors
Case A: V&A	Q4	Q4
Case B: Mosaic Rooms	Q9	Q11
Case C: ICA	Q3	Q5:
Case D: Tate Modern	-	-

Summary

Now that all sub questions have been addressed, the main research question is readdressed:

How do public museums and galleries respond to emerging commercial art sector developments, specifically the case of contemporary Middle Eastern art exhibitions presented by public museums, galleries and art spaces in London, U.K.?

The Middle Eastern art world and its commercial developments have spurred many non-commercial institutions, such as the ones studied here in this research, to engage in its maturation by hosting exhibitions highlighting the region. The role of museum and their curators acting as intermediaries between the commercial art world, the public, and the artworks; how the globalisation of the art world affects these relationships and how the Middle Eastern art world in particular has influenced the London art scene all converge to explore the question above. As this is an exploratory question, there is no simple and concrete answer, but rather a host of further questions that have been addressed and analysed in the pages above. What we can tell from these analyses is that the Middle Eastern art world has not only an impact on the commercial art market with its growing number of sales and market value, but also on the institutions in other places in the world, specifically London, and this was explored here in this thesis.

There are as many differences in the range of the content and of the approach that different museums take in their response to commercial developments as there are museums. The sub-questions above exposed these variations. The V&A for example, hosted a group exhibition highlighting a specific medium, whereas the Tate held a monographic exhibit displaying the works of a relatively unknown Middle Eastern artist. The ICA engaged in a year-long process-oriented and collaborative project that culminated in a group exhibition, whereby the process was the main objective. The Mosaic Rooms continually programs a host of events and activities as well as exhibitions surrounding the topic of the Middle East, more specifically the Arab world. The heterogeneous group of non-commercial art institutions that were the subject of the empirical analysis all operate on different terms and the results of their exhibitions are reflected in this. The binding commonality then, is the geographical region they are exploring. Therefore, how they approach the selection and dissemination of work highlighting the Middle East is of relevance. The curators of the four institutions that have recently held exhibitions on emerging art from the region have all revealed that presenting work from a foreign region, such as the Middle East is done to both satisfy the goals of the institutions, namely to broaden their audience and diversify their programming, but also to respond to the developments in the commercial world.

Fifteen years ago, these organizations were putting on different shows, displaying different themes and ideas. It is only within the past decade that the Middle East has developed to be a region with an art world that the rest of the world has noticed to the extent that they have. Therefore, the timing and the zeitgeist are crucial factors in discussing the trends of the market and how the non-commercial sector responds to them. This thesis and the subject matter has then not only been an exploration of the relationship between the commercial and non-commercial worlds, and not only a study of an emerging art world and how non-commercial institutions react to the developing trends, but also a peek into what is happening in the art world today, in 2013, in London and in the Middle East.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

General conclusions

In this thesis, the globalized art world has been the framework through which the relationship between the commercial and non-commercial sectors of the art world has been analyzed. The relationship was specifically addressed using the emerging Middle Eastern art world as a base and to identify how its developments, including market developments have impacted the non-commercial sector in London.

To analyse this, the temporary exhibitions of four public art institutions were investigated by means of interviews with key staff members including curators. The findings confirmed theories that the two sectors are dependent on each other to create the art world as a whole. Additionally, theories were confirmed that the commercial sector, specifically the market, leads the non-commercial sector, and that the funding situations of public museums affects curatorial decisions and abilities of curators to take on risks. The global nature of the art world was confirmed as was the extension of regional art into international scenes, such as Middle Eastern art entering the London art hub. The influential factors that led to the emergence of the Middle Eastern art world and subsequent market power included elements from both sectors of the art world, commercial and non-commercial. The international attention that the factors received is what led to the growth of the region's art world.

It has been revealed that public attention is the leading factor to the development of an emerging market and its eventual entry into more established market via non-commercial pathways such as the exhibitions presented here. Therefore, this thesis has shown that the non-commercial sector responded to emerging commercial developments of the Middle Eastern art world by presenting artworks from the region in the form of temporary exhibitions. In some cases the region was emphasized more than in others. In all cases the aim of the exhibitions was to broaden the audience base and diversify the existing collection or history of past events.

This was mirrored by the awareness that there was an already existing potential audience base in London, consisting of individuals interested in the region or with an ethnic background from the Middle East. This encapsulates the phenomenon of globalisation as it

demonstrates that regions that used to be far away from each other are brought closer together through art and culture.

Limitations and suggestions for future research

The sample size of this research is relatively small. Coupled with the fact that all institutions operate differently, the generalizations presented here can only be made up to a certain point.

The empirical research was limited to the availability of the sources; it was not possible to meet and interview all the possible people who would have been able to contribute to the research. Venetia Porter, a curator for the British Museum and an expert scholar on the topic on Middle Eastern art is one person with whom I would have loved to speak with, however this was not possible due to time and resource limitations. Another limitation was my geographical distance, as a researcher, from London. It would have been ideal to have been situated in the city while conducting all of the research, in order to fully understand and be immersed in the surroundings that I discuss.

This research just skims the surface of far greater research problems. Therefore, I suggest that further research be made in other cities, such as New York, and using other emerging markets in addition to the Middle East; one example may be the Brazilian market. Maybe there are similarities between the mature art hubs such as New York and London and it would be interesting to compare how they host various emerging markets. How much does the city impact the emerging market that is being represented? How much do the local cultures affect this as well? I also highly recommend that more research is conducted on various emerging markets while they are still in the emerging or embryonic phase, and we can learn from them before they develop, in order to discern patterns in the emerging markets in general.

In the face of continual globalization these questions will only become more complex, and more interesting and relevant for future studies. This study offers a first look at the structures of emerging markets within the contexts of the commercial and non-commercial sectors of the art world.

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Appendix A

Name of institution:

Date of interview:

Length:

Name of interviewee:

Position in the organization:

Number of years employed:

Place:

Target Topics:

- General curatorial questions
- Globalization questions
- Contemporary Middle Eastern art market questions
- Art world vs Art market questions

Target questions:

- Can you please describe your role in the curatorial process for this exhibition?
- How did you decide on this theme for the exhibition?
- Who was involved in this decision?
- Extra question if the previous one doesn't answer it: who were/are the stakeholders involved in this exhibition?
- Why was chosen as the main image associated with the exhibit?
- What were the main goals or messages of this exhibition?
- Were the artists involved in the installation or design? To what extent?
- Can you describe the target group?
- Can you describe the majority of attendees?
- What role do you think the Middle Eastern market plays in the global art market?
- Do you see this exhibit as a reflection of the current state of the Middle Eastern art market?
- There have been discussions about whether or not the art world is truly globalised, and being in the position that you are in, I would love to hear what are your ideas of globalization in the art world?
- Do you think there is relationship between art sales, be it at auction or in galleries and art presented in museums or galleries, lets say a relationship between the market and the
- What do you perceive to be the main message that the public gains from this exhibition?

Date of transcription:

Appendix B

Case A: Victoria and Albert Museum.

Interviewee: Marta Weiss, Curator.

Interview Date: June 5, 2013 16:00 at the V&A.

Date of Transcription: June 10, 2013.

CHRISTINA

Q1: I actually wanted to start with your role as a curator in the exhibition, so what you did

MARTA So I guess I should just start from the very beginning. I mean I'm sure you know all of this but the way the exhibition came about was through a collaborative venture between the V&A and the British Museum in 2009. The two museums together received a grant from the Art Fund to form a new collection of contemporary Middle Eastern photography, so half of the works were acquired by the British museums and half the works were acquired by the V&A and that happened initially in two sort of launched in 2009 and 2010 and then 2010 I began working on it as an exhibition. So, there were more curators involved because you know Venetia Porter from the British Museums, clearly she was very involved, and here at the V&A I was involved in the project, but so was Martin Barns, who is the senior curator of photographs and the V&A. So, yeah there, that was sort of the initial part. And when it came time to do an exhibition, I was the sole curator of the exhibition.

CHRISTINA Ok

MARTA And as far as putting together an exhibition went it was somewhat of an unusual way for - me at least - to go about trying to make an exhibition. Because in a way I already had a checklist. I mean I didn't have to include every last thing that we collected, in fact I didn't include every last thing in the joint collection. But um, it was kind of understood by everybody that that was the nature of it. That this was an opportunity to show off the collection, so it was more than just a starting point for the exhibition it was, you know, provided the bulk of the exhibition so in some ways that was harder than it would have been if I had sort of start from scratch and thought "ok which - what ideas do I want to get across

CHRISTINA Right

MARTA and then which works can I find that support those ideas. I mean it wouldn't - I mean - I sort of always, for me at least would always be a process that was a bit back and forth between the works that dictate the ideas and the ideas that you would look for the works to kind of illustrate.

CHRISTINA Right

MARTA But um, so it is challenging because I kind of had to find something to say about a group of works that I already had, Um. On the other hand, that helps in a way because you know, that just narrows it down.

CHRISTINA Of course

MARTA Um, and then so yea, I basically spent a lot of time just look at what we had collected and thinking about it and coming up with different ways to organize it and talking to a lot of people along the way.

CHRISTINA Right

MARTA So, I consulted with Venetia, I talked to people like Rose (Issa), and various other people who were really involved in the field to get their feedback on the ideas that I had and eventually I came up with the idea of organizing as I did in the three sections of Recording, Reframing and um, Resisting. And I came to that because, for a number of different reasons. Um, the main one really was that I felt like, You know, I was just, I thought a lot about. how do I? You know, it's a V&A exhibition - And also, in terms of what would make sense for an exhibition at the V&A in terms of what the V&A does, what would make sense in terms of what I as a curator can bring to this work. You know, maybe, other curators can't or don't or haven't before and so I really did want to emphasize that we are looking at photographs, and that we are looking at photographs as art and because that is very much in keeping with how we think about photography here at the V&A. We are a museum of art and design, we have the national collection of art and photography and so I just really wanted to draw attention to the photographic-ness of these works. And, I think that in - of the works that were included in the exhibition, many of them have been seen in context that are more about contemporary Middle Eastern art in general. And so I felt this was a way to sort of draw out the

photographic qualities, and think about what photography is and what photography means so that was one reason. And I mean, it also came of course from that initial exercise that I was just describing of just like, sitting with the works and thinking about them and trying to think about different connections I could make between them and you know it was difficult because it's such a - I was wary – constantly wary of, you know, making generalizations about art from this vast region, vast and diverse region

CHRISTINA Of course

MARTA But if there was a kind of recurring thread that I detected in the work itself it was a kind of self awareness about photography and about ideas about how photographs are *used* in both in within the region, for example propaganda purposes or are subject to censorship, but also a real awareness of kind of artists wanting to. An awareness of how the Middle East is depicted in photographs around the world. In you trying to kind of counter that story or an awareness of that at least. Or an awareness of history of that kind of how the Middle East has been depicted graphically. We see that in a lot of different ... Shadi Ghadirian and Youssef Nabil in a funny way or in a different sort a way – Oh I've forgotten their names already! The other Palestinian artist Taysir Batniji, The watch towers well that's an example where he's sort of doing something that is so incongruence, applying photography to a context where we don't see photographs like that of those types of places. So anyways, there just seems to be a lot of self awareness about the medium, in the works themselves, so that was another reason for putting it together that way. That was a really long answer

CHRISTINA no, no, that's great.

Q2: And was it when the Art Fund presented the grant was it always in the plan to have an exhibition to show the collected works, or...?

MARTA Well it was definitely, it was part of, well I mean we applied to the art fund you know, there were conversations between the Art Fund, and really it was Venetia who was who kind of sparked the whole thing I think, but um, so yes, in putting our application to the art fund, any funding body who is going to give money to a public collection to buy art is you know the whole purpose of that is to make it available to the public, so yeah we did say in our grant, we would, I think pretty early on we suggested that the V&A would be a good, would be willing to do such an exhibition.

CHRISTINA right ok, and

Q3: Where did the idea of the Middle East come into play? Was it Venetia's??

MARTA No, well that's an earlier... Like why the Middle East you mean?

CHRISTINA yeah

MARTA Well I suppose it's a combination of factors. I mean again, The British museum its different reasons than the V&A because here at the V&A, the photography department doing the collecting, so for us it's the question Why Middle East, whereas for them its like why photography, because you now they are doing Middle East. And you know from our side, the Middle East is, was an, I mean I think I say this in the essay here, its just if you look into our collection, it is really represented in the 19th century especially in the near east, Palestine, Holy Land, Egypt and then it kind of stops, so this is a way of trying to address that, and we were aware of the kind of exciting developments in the region that have happened in the last decade or so and wanted to try and reflect that in the collection

CHRISTINA

Q4: Actually that leads me to the next question about whether or not the Middle Eastern market is an emerging market, do you feel.

MARTA Is it emerging as opposed to what? Is it established?

CHRISTINA Yeah, either end, as opposed to established or as opposed... Or it has always been the way it is now, or

MARTA No I don't think it's always been the way it is now. I mean I think that the art fairs like Art Dubai and the biennials in Sharjah and the fact that auction houses have opened up in the gulf region, I think all of those things have been a huge, Have I mean I don't know if I would go so far as to say that they created the market, but at least certainly helped.

CHRISTINA More attention?

MARTA Yeah or encouraged it, developed it. So and as far as I can tell that is continuing to develop I mean I am not, as it is becoming clearer and clear to you as I talk about the other projects I am working on, I'm not a Middle East expert, like someone like Rose, and many other people who could speak in a more informed way about the Middle Eastern art market more

generally. Because I really come at it from the photographic angle, but it seems to me though that it has really relatively recent and growing

CHRISTINA

Q5: Right, and do you think that, so the emergence of like you said the auction houses and art fairs that those have an impact or influence the art world, where it is not commercial aspects. So like the V&A for example, how does the emergence of this art market, where there is buys and selling of art, how does that influence the museums and galleries?

MARTA I think it just makes it more visible

CHRISTINA ok

MARTA It makes it more visible and I suppose very practically speaking, we have very limited funds, so we do try and have some awareness of where the markets are going, you know if something is going up we know that if we buy it now, we might not be able to afford something a few years down the line if we don't do it know. I don't think we... because our funds are so limited, we don't tend to think that much about the market, because we just don't have that luxury, we just take opportunities when they come to us, and things like that.

CHRISTINA

Q6: So do you think then that the market would set the trends and/or is it the museums that set the trends, or are there trends?

MARTA Well I think it's both, obviously its enormously, I think it is an enormous stamp of approval and authority for an artists work to be exhibited in a museum or to be collected by a museum so I imagine (I haven't checked, but I imagine) that the prices of the artists who were included in this exhibition have probably gone up. And that is something that. I suppose I haven't thought so much about it in terms of prices, I have thought about it in terms of you know, reputations and I do feel that it is a responsibility that curators have sort of like it or not that museums are quite powerful institutions, and it is an important, or it can be quite an important thing for an artists career to be represented by a museums. I don't know what I am saying. But like I said before, I was aware of making generalizations of the region, it is just something I try and guess. It is a kind of power I guess that I am wielding to pull away. And sensitive way. And I suppose by that I mean doing my best to do my research to try to feel like the selections I made are

deserving or we are getting into territory that's hard to define, like what's good art.

CHRISTINA

Q7: Right, in respect to the artist, when you said you keep their reputation in mind, did you... were they involved in the design of the exhibition?

MARTA The design of it? No. I mean there weren't involved in any of it.

CHRISTINA The works were collected and then...

MARTA Yeah, well the only artists who had any. I'll revise that. The artists who had the most say in anything was the video artist, Jananne Al-Ani, because her work her video was actually the only thing in the exhibition that was not a part of one collection or the other. And actually to kind of finish that narrative that I kind of started before again that is in the book. So basically we collected the works in 2009 and 2010, but then we also were on the existing collections of the two museums. So there were a few (two?) works that I added that were, happened to be in one collection or the other that I felt just worked well. And also I went back to the Art Fund for some extra funding and made a final round of acquisitions after I knew what the organization of the exhibition was going to look like.

CHRISTINA Right and that happened in 2012? (The final acquisitions)

MARTA Yes, that's right. So Jananne Al-Ani, the V&A acquired some stills from that video because we don't actually collect video, and I don't think the British museums does either, that was the only work that didn't actually belong to one work or the other. That was very much an installation and she has very specific ideas about how it needs to be. We built it to her specifications, and to some extent designed the whole exhibition around it, because there was really only one good place to put it, and then all. Because her video needed to have a little ceiling on it, that created the idea to have the dropped ceiling in some areas and the high ceilings in other areas

CHRISTINA yeah the big panels

MARTA Which I like also and one of things I thought was going to be a challenge was that we had works that were many different scales I wanted to make sure that you had a more

intimate viewing experience for some of the smaller works and that didn't matter as much for some of the larger works, and I think that worked out pretty well. And there are small things like, some artists are very specific about how they want their work to be framed or hung, you know Youssef's grid in the order that he wanted them to be and they were spaced in the way that he wanted them to be. But beyond that the artist didn't really have a say.

CHRISTINA

Q8: And how did you choose the image on the front of the book? How was that chosen and why?

MARTA It was used both for the book and for the poster. That doesn't always happen necessarily it did in this case. It was one that I suggested but it wasn't up to me, I didn't get the final say in it. In terms of book cover it happened in conversations between me and conversations with the designers from Steigl and in terms of the poster it happened in conversation between me and our marketing people. But it. One of the reasons I liked it was just visually, I liked it being quite a neutral, image in terms of tonality with sort of a zingy title and on the posters it's actually fluorescent orange, and I you know, in the sort of dorky, pun-ny way I liked that she was wearing sunglasses, because you know the title was *light* from the Middle East and of course that is referring to light as being an essential component of photography. And there are practical concern. You its like, how do you choose a picture, add text to it, what's going to look good? And also if we wanted it to be full bleed we wanted it to be a portrait rather than square or a landscape image. So that didn't leave that many choices.

CHRISTINA ok

MARTA So some of it just had to do with.... And if you look at it (the picture) compared with some of the others, there is nothing going on there (in the corner with the title text). So it leaves a lot of space for text. And in general, we like to be able to At the V&A when we reproduce images we try to not crop them you know we want to show the whole image because that is the image that the artist made

CHRISTINA Understandable

MARTA She didn't make it with text over it, so we are sort of messing it.

CHRISTINA Ok, so that's how it came about, and it is interesting to hear the practical side

MARTA Sure, I have to say overall in terms of what was published about the exhibition and about the book was overwhelmingly positive, a few of the criticisms came from people who were the most embedded in the contemporary Middle Eastern art scene. So for instance, Canvas Magazine there was a review which said something like "Why are they calling this new photography, these are already household names in the Middle East" or something. Which if... they are household names if you read Canvas, but for 99% of the people who came to see the exhibition, this was new. In particular. There were a couple of people who commented on Shadi Ghadirian (Cover photo artist) And in particular somebody who has had a lot of exposure. So, I think that that was something that one or two people might have picked up on, that that image was used for the cover and were like "that's not really new". That wasn't really a concern that I had. And it was originally called contemporary photography, and in a way that was kind of a marketing decision to make it a shorter, less technical sounding work=d. I think that people who are very immersed in the contemporary Middle Eastern art scene which has changed so fast and is very interested in the next new things. Something that is from 2006 seems old. But at a museum, where we collect things with a scope of thousands of years, it seems quite new. Not to mention the fact that a mixture of practical things of ...it just takes a while to get anything done at a museum.

CHRISTINA Like the grants

MARTA, Exactly and all the kind of machinery behind our exhibition schedule, the production and all that sort of stuff. There are some museums I suppose who manage to. And you know, we do that in some contexts, have things that have just been made and then are exhibited, but for the most part we are just not in the position to do that.

CHRISTINA

Q9: And when you said that 99% of the people would not necessarily know those artists, did you have a specific target group that you wanted to reach out to

MARTA I suppose there are a number of different groups that we wanted to hook into, to reach. Well quite broadly, anybody interested in contemporary art, anybody interested in photo, We are always interested in expanding our audiences, so clearly we were hoping to attract people with an interest in the Middle East

and perhaps a background from the Middle East themselves. With the contemporary, I think we also gained a younger audience – we expect a younger audience.

CHRISTINA

Q10: Could you see after the exhibition if those people actually came?

MARTA Yeah, actually I have to look at it more carefully but there is a visitor survey that was done and I think a lot of people who had connections with the region seemed to come. I'm not so sure how that differs from the overall V&A audience, but it certainly did attract people who were either Middle Eastern or connections or people who had spent some time there or lived there.

CHRISTINA That is interesting. It seems to be that there is a community, especially in London

MARTA Yes.

CHRISTINA I actually have just one more question, so we are right on time

MARTA Ok

CHRISTINA

Q11: About the globalization within the art world, and I know you said you specialization is in photography, but I am sure it is also included in photography. Because of course I have been research and there are debates on whether the art world is actually globalised or whether it blown up to seem globalised and it is not actually. And being in the position that you're in you get to see all kinds of art and photography from all across the world, what is your opinion or what are your thoughts on a globalised art world or art market?

MARTA Well I'm not sure exactly. But one thing that I certainly have mixed feels about, and working on this exhibition has really brought up a lot for me was the extent to which we expect people from certain parts of the world to make art that's somehow about their part of the world. And part of me believes that in lots of instances there is a difference, and part of me believes that it kind of seems outdated of me to expect that people from Saudi Arabia to make art that is Saudi Arabian in some sort or identifiable way when I think They have access to the internet, they travel internationally, they see thing, they have the same, not necessarily the same, but they have access to the

same set of art historical references and so on, that an artist in London Paris or NY has, not to mention the fact that actually one of the things that I got asked about or was discussed about this exhibition was you know I would have to count it up, but I think about half of the artists don't live in their country of origins. And that was something I found curious, a number of French journalists were concerned about that and seemed to suggest that that wasn't are aren't authentically from their country of origin because they have gone to school in or lived in, well especially those capitals I just mentioned. To me that is kind of like that is the reality of today It seems almost backwards, or almost neo colonist. Or patronizing to expect to find some sort of authentic art from some specific some part of the world. And here I am having just done an exhibition that's about art from a specific part of the world. And trying to kind of show how it is interesting in some sort of way. I know that sounds ambivalent, but kind of honest.

You have to start somewhere, so it has it's place but I am wary of it being taken to far, because I also think that hopefully artists make the art that they need to make or want to make, but if an artist was going to be cynical about what was going to be appreciated in the international or western market there's not a lot in this exhibition that could have been made from an artist not from the Middle East. The subject matter is all Middle East in some way or another. It would be hard (I don't know if you've talked with Rose about this, because I know she has some ideas about this) to compete internationally if you are doing something that doesn't somehow hook into your national identity in some way. Because that is what can help make you stand out.

CHRISTINA Like a tag line

MARTA There is an article that I cite in here that I thought was really interesting, Wu, 2007 about the idea of globalization and art. Interesting article in that subject.

CHRISTINA. I know that those are issue that I am dealing with in my research, about what constitutes art form the Middle East, does it have to be from ...?

MARTA Yeah we chose a broad definition which in a way corresponds to how the Middle East is defined in terms of its own collections. And more or less to corresponds to historically where Islamic art comes from, except for Islamic Spain, which I think that we can all agree on is not the Middle East. That is where that broad geographic definition comes from. And we

were also broad about thinking about people living in the region and living elsewhere. I am sure there are a lot of other ways to define those categories, but that's how we chose to do it.

CHRISTINA

Q12: Actually I just remembered one more question. What you as a curator, wished to be a main message

MARTA For this exhibition?

CHRISTINA For this Exhibition

MARTA I suppose it depends a little bit on the audience. Most broadly I wanted it to... I wanted people to come away/aware of the range of creative activity in the ME because although it is a place in people's conscious-ness. We see it on TV everyday and all that kind of thing I think the images in the exhibition show a different side than the news imagery and the subject matter of the conflicts and you know other clichés. At the most basic level, I hoped that people would come away with having their eyes opened a little bit. And I also think that a lot of the ideas about photography in it aren't are not unique concerns to Middle East artists but they are relevant to photography in general, and I hope that people would come away from the exhibition with a heightened awareness of what a photograph is or can be. And a heightened awareness as a photograph as an object, not just an image. But as an actual thing, and something that artists make choices about. What kind of photographs. That was a really long answer.

CHRISTINA No, no. And I can also see it from the exhibition itself, and so many different versions of photographs and what the artists did with them, like burn them.

MARTA Yeah, and there were so many pictures of pictures. In that first wall on the left, all of those contained pictures of pictures. I think its so easy, and especially when you are thinking about just news photographs about the content of a photograph and the photograph as just an image but my job is very much, and in my job I am very much immersed and dedicated to thinking about photographs as object and things that can be handled, that have a history that acquire different kind of conditions. I mean that in the mundane practical way and also in the way of understanding them as artifacts or art objects.

CHRISTINA I can imagine then, the challenge, especially when you said how people normally see images from the Middle East in the news as very content loaded.

MARTA Yes.

CHRISTINA Well I mean they have content.

MARTA Yeah the content is there

CHRISTINA But it wasn't the main....

MARTA Getting back to why I presented the way I did, An earlier version of how I thought I might organize it was more about the content and I had themes that were more like "content, the body and the identity" and sort of "tradition vs modernity". But the I though firstly, those are kind of things that come up a lot in works about contemporary Middle Eastern art. And all those things are still there, the content didn't go anywhere, but I was trying to draw out something else.

CHRISTINA Well I enjoyed it very much

MARTA Good, I'm glad you did! Somebody who is writing about the Middle East photography market, another who is writing about cultural diplomacy. It means it wasn't an exhibition that was up and went away, but that it has given people something to think about. And I'm so glad that there is a book. Like Rose has done a few book on photographs but there isn't much out there, so the book is good.

CHRISTINA Well thank you very much for your time, I really appreciate it.

MARTA Oh your welcome, and if you want to send our work over when it's done we'd love to put it here in our library.

CHRISTINA Oh wow, thank you. I will definitely keep in touch.

Appendix C

Case B: Mosaic Rooms.

Interviewee: Rachael Hornsby, Head of Programming and Operations.

Interview Date: June 6, 2013 12:00 at Mosaic Rooms.

Date of Transcription: June 26, 2013.

CHRISTINA

Q1: I will actually start with your role in the exhibitions in both the current exhibition and also in other exhibition, what your role is.

RACHAEL So for the Mosaic Rooms I am head of programming and operations, is the official job title. I work with Omar Al Qattan, who is the secretary for the trustees of the A.M. Qattan Foundation the Mosaic Rooms is the project space for the A.M. Qattan Foundation and so we work closely to select and basically program the exhibitions and so once they are selected you know my role is essentially making the exhibitions happen and kind of creating the whole thing.

CHRISTINA

Q2: Right, and how are the artists selected

Either we selected them with our own knowledge or research sometime they are proposed to us from other people, sometimes it is from the A.M. Qattan Foundations cultural strand from Ramallah, so sometimes they advise us. So, say the upcoming show, the Young Artist of the Year Award. That's run out of Ramallah, but the Foundation hosts it and we take it here.

CHRISTINA Ok

RACHAEL So its kind of a mixture, of all different ... actually

CHRISTINA

Q3: Ok, and are the artists involved in the making of the exhibition?

RACHAEL Yeah we work really closely with all the artists, there is a lot of dialogue that's most of it is obviously organized remotely, so its ... but yeah we work really closely with them, what works, they want to kind of present, how to best present it, any accompanying program or exhibition text and so on so with Dor, he was very specific about wanting to create this

catalogue, and who we should possibly propose to get to write on it. So you know, its kind of... Some artists have very distinct ideas, some are more open, but we always try to kind of work with them. Because we are really here to – we're a public space we're not commercial, so we're here to kind of promote the artists in London, so we want to make sure that they have the most positive experience that they can have from it.

CHRISTINA

Q4: Right, and the artists, are they always living or from the Arab world?

RACHAEL Yeah, I means sometimes. We've had previous. We've had one previous show were it was a German photographer who happened to be doing work on the region, specifically Gaza Strip, he took some photographs. It doesn't necessarily always [have to be an artist from the [Arab world], but I mean predominantly the artists or upcoming artists are artists who are either living in the Arab world or in the region

CHRISTINA

Q5: Ok, and in selecting them, is it based on previous works, or their reputation?

RACHAEL I mean, we tend. I mean were not here for the. We tend to focus on the emerging side, because it's very difficult for emerging artist, especially in London and the commercial scene to have the opportunity to have a show, so our main focus is more of that, were not really going after the really big names, we're kind of going for emerging to mid established. And we tend to program the artist either, it's based on the white bill, so sometimes its based on thematics. At the moment we have kind of an annual strand that's running from the start of Dor's show to next spring, which is the start of Disappearing Cities in the Arab world, which is kind of about archives, cities, culture, civic space and public space. Sometimes, like Dor's show, kind of fits into that, and sometimes some of the other shows will be about that as well but then some of then will be just opportunities to show interesting artists. Because we're a cultural space, its not just about the art. You know there will be the exhibitions, but there's the whole program that goes with it, the talks, the events, the literary programs, its how we can tie everything in to make a really complete package for a London audience as well.

CHRISTINA

Q6: Ok, well speaking about the London audience, do you have a specific target group that you're looking for? Aiming for?

RACHAEL Well we're aiming for.... Well it's difficult because our program is so varied, so we have a really, really varied audience. Our audience is supposed to be Londoners, we're not.... We are here to engage obviously with the local Arab community as well, but essentially it's supposed to be a place that's promoting cultural understanding and dialogue, and so it's giving people access to Arab culture who many not have access otherwise, or who may not understand, or for people who may have stereotypes, and it's about breaking those down, so we're pleased that actually most of our audience is not Arab, or from an Arab origin, which is great.

CHRISTINA Ok!

RACHAEL So it means it's working then. Um, but we have a really mixed audience. Obviously its difficult for us. We're kind of at the moment, we're trying to focus on university student and upwards, because they will grow with us, so that's nice

CHRISTINA Right

RACHAEL But it's very varied

CHRISTINA Ok, and do notice changes in the difference exhibitions, so I mean Dor's exhibition, did you notice....

RACHAEL Yes, so I mean obviously different people come for different shows so for Dor's because its about the Palestinian Christians in Israel, obviously we had a lot of people from say the PSC, which is the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, you know, that kind of... Lots of regions have lots of different active groups, so especially with Palestine, there will be lots of active groups or societies that will be supporting the cause, and they'll come to these kind of shows. So that kind of changes the demographic, whereas if, say last year for the Iraq show, because we had a UK duo as a part of the collaboration and then it was a completely different audience as well, lots of young people, lots of political activists, and lots of people who follow there work as well, so it does change with the show and the region that's being kind of represented

CHRISTINA

Q7: And do you feel that the work itself is political, or is it chosen for its...

RACHAEL It's not, it's not, well I think anything from the region ends up being interpreted as being political, because

there's so much going on there at the moment. It's not supposed to be overtly political. It's just supposed to be... We choose exhibitions or shows that have layers and depth and ask questions or give audience the chance to think or question things themselves, that's kind of the whole purpose of it. And so that can be construed as political, but it's not actually, and they're not chosen for political reasons. We're not political, we don't have a particular stance, we not here to promote anything in a particular way we're literally just presenting interesting artists who raise dialogues about what's happening in the region at the moment.

CHRISTINA Yeah, I was looking through the Foundations' pamphlet, and it also becomes quite clear from that that it's an open...

RACHAEL Completely open, definitely no position no alignment, anything.

CHRISTINA Yeah, and actually a question about...

Q8: I was looking through the site, and maybe you can correct me if I'm wrong, was there a specific image that was used for Dor's show, like a promotional image?

RACHAEL Yeah there was one, it was the photograph that is downstairs it the... in her wedding gown and that was the one for this show that was used and the main kind of... in terms of pre advertising it's definitely was the kind of image..... because we didn't know the installation shots. It's hard with video work because of a still that' like, "this is the type of shot" so that was kind of the most appropriate image to use at the beginning.

CHRISTINA Ok, and why was that the most appropriate?

RACHAEL Because it showed his archive work, which is kind of the m.... of all his practice. And its quite a startling kind of black and white image and its... in terms of advertising, if it's literally for marketing it was reproducible, it was easy, you know? Its kind of immediately impacting and you can kind of get a bit more about his practice, where as unless you kind of have a background info.... I think it's just lots of these artists' works, there are a lot of layers lots of history, lots of understanding lots of things that are obviously very powerful in themselves, but in terms of you know, in terms of advertising, and the material and quality of the work, you need to choose an image that's just powerful

CHRISTINA Makes sense

RACHAEL Exactly!

CHRISTINA I have a few questions about the contemporary Middle Eastern art market in general and through reading a researching it seems as though that in the past few years it is on a bit of an upswing and

Q9: What are your ideas on that seeing that you work at this institution and that you get an idea of working with artists from the region what are your ideas on this emerging market and why that might be, if t...

RACHAEL I mean obviously we don't work commercially, so it's a bit hard to say... But in terms of interest, I would say... You know, we've been here in London for five years and say there's more... The audience... I mean our audience has grown, but I mean that's... I don't know if that just because of the way our work is developing or because there's more of an interest, but I'd say that there's more openness to kind of engaging with contemporary Middle Eastern art and culture from the art audiences and general audiences. And whether that is because of a kind of... I mean it obviously more in the news and in the media, ... because there are places like ourselves and other places have been around for a while now and its starting to infiltrate its more awareness of art, but you know there's just kind of generally more awareness. Everything that started a few years ago has now been going for a good number of time. So all the art fairs have been around for a while now and developed reputation, you know, its more accessible

CHRISTINA Because it's there

RACHAEL Yeah, cause it's there. And it's been there and its showing commitment and a kind of endurance so, um, but you know there's always swings with markets anyways. You know, there was Chinese contemporary, that was kind of the thing, with Indian contemporary before that. You see its kind of going from region to region.

CHRISTINA Do you see, even though you are not a commercial organization,

Q10: Do you see that there is a clear relationship between the non-commercial and the commercial side? Because like you said, there is more "know" in the commercial world, do you see that as a clear relationship?

RACHAEL Yeah probably, I guess there are more commercial galleries as well that deal with contemporary Middle Eastern.

And then those buyers obviously become more aware, and the general public will go and see those shows.... You know, it all kind of infiltrates into each other, so there is a definite kind of connection between it being more commercially viable and then more public and mainstream

CHRISTINA And do you see one coming before the other? Or the commercial side or the non commercial side, or the non-commercial side influences the other.

RACHAEL I mean obviously I want to say that it is the non commercial side! Because you know, you would want to think that we are committed to public engagement and that's what kind of spreads it outwards through sustained dialogues rather than you know kind of flips here and flips there and you know a general kind of peak, and then a nothing. Where we're all about the long term, so we would hope that it's that kind of like, you know the commitment to profiling it that helps sustain those kind of. But yeah, I don't really know if one kind of started before the other.

CHRISTINA Yeah, it's hard to say.

Q11: And do you have ideas as to why there is this upswing in the market?

RACHAEL I mean there's obviously always been interesting work coming out of the region and there is always going to be interesting work coming out of the region whether its just become. I mean there's lots more art fairs, lots more things happening that help bring international audiences in and you know with all of the Arab Spring, and all of the uprisings that proliferation in the media about these kind of stories, and young people, and voices, you know... and it might all help in just bring a different understanding to the region and more of an interest, but um, it's hard to say why something suddenly start to pick up or not. It was literally India., then it was China, now it's the Middle East, you know... and then they go off the radar and then come back again, so its difficult with markets.

CHRISTINA And going on exactly that, first its Indian and then its China, or the other way around... And I know this institution is focused on art from the Arab world, what are, or have you noticed,

Q12: What are your ideas on the globalization of the art world, so not necessarily the market. Because there has been debate academically and in the news, there is discussion back and for as to whether or not the art world is really globalised or if people from around the world are really being represented or is it just

an idea, or is it not really the case? What have you noticed, being in the position that you're in?

RACHAEL Its difficult, I don't know how it is. England is an interesting one, because with all the funding and the difficulties, I'm not sure about the kind of National museums are taking that much of a... I don't know how much brave choices you see anymore, it feels a lot more safe and predictable and I don't know much is being and how much you can really truly say is being represented in the kind of large galleries, and the international practices that are going on. I mean obviously it is a difficult time to be in the art world – there isn't much funding around, there's not a lot of private money around, and if you're a public space I think it's difficult to ensure that interesting or emerging artist that are being showcased and not just the kind of known names that would definitely bring in audiences. So it's kind of tricky to say. Obviously more is probably being showcased than before in terms of artists from here, or artists from there.... There is a definite kind of [increase] presentation of artists who aren't just Western but I don't know if its truly globalised. I don't know how representative it is of everything that's exciting and going or if whatever IS being presented is pure commercial driven as well rather than....

CHRISTINA

Q13: So do you see a strong connection between the finances and what is being able to be exhibited?

RACHAEL Yeah definitely commercial galleries show things that are interesting as well as things that are just going to sell obviously but yeah I think it's difficult for public spaces to run without much public funding so then to choose a show that they can't guarantee audiences for it is risky for them so I think there is definitely a link between what is supported and what you're then able to do and then the artistic decisions you are able to make. It has to be some kind of ... link to what kind of resources you have available to you and what your targets are and what your set... I mean I'm talking more in the kind of big national way, rather than smaller places like us, but yeah I think it must have some sort of impact on the kind of programming that you can do.

CHRISTINA I can image – so often it comes down to the resources that you have... One last question, and I think you already touched on it before, but if you

Q14: Could tell me the main goal of this particular exhibit and then the organization in general, what is the main message?

RACHAEL Well Dor Guez is hard to have one main message, um,

CHRISTINA Or a few, or a goal that you had with presenting this.

RACHAEL The goal we had with Dor Guez's show was to present a different, the voices of the community that he is presenting are often marginalized by the predominant narratives of the Israeli/Palestinian or the Israeli/Arab conflict, and Guez's work is all a very specific community within that, and how a community can survive or preserve its sense of identity, whilst also moving with the predominant cultural that's there, whilst also existing in a political boundaries, so it's all about being between spaces that kind of mixed identity and the fluidity of it and the archive as well of... I mean his work is all about this really personal archive of his family and their experiences and the time before to the time now so it's also giving you a vision of what it was like before and how it's changed. So its really a show that was supposed to give audiences a chance to reflect on how things have changed and how things might change and how identities mix and mixed identities can exist in these quite confined and constricted places, and basically make people think and raise questions. There were no answers with it, he has no answers with it, we have no answers, but it was just thinking about how mixed communities can exist together and a space and a city that has ownership from each different person over different times and one persona has a claim over this bit over this bit and over this bit so that was the layers of history and space city and how you can, not even how you can move forward, it's just a reflection. So that was the kind of main point of that show and to launch the Disappearing Cities program which is written in there. And the point of this space is to offer a space in London to promote contemporary Arab culture, to offer emerging artists a space that is public and non-commercial to showcase interesting work and basically open dialogues that you know basically the Foundation and the space believe that through cultural dialogue you can promote understanding and that's the most important thing for everyone so that's the kind of whole reason. And London is a good place for us to be from that point of view. There are a lot of different artists working here and artists working in Europe come here, it just feels like the right place to be.

CHRISTINA Yeah, I am focusing on the non commercial side, and when I was looking into different institutions, it was difficult to find non-commercial spaces

RACHAEL Yeah when we were starting we were the only ones, so it is difficult to find. But there are other institutions now, like the V&A had that great show, they had that show, and the Tate's got their show on now, the Choucair, but other than that, there aren't that many places where people can come in and see a show that was accessible to them. So that is literally why we're here because you need to have public spaces that are open everybody. It's daunting to come to a commercial space if you don't know anything about it. That is for a very select art crew you see. Whereas a public space, you might come for a film screening and then see the exhibition and then you can engage with the artist you know, that's why we do all the other programs, because people who may not be versed in contemporary art, or may not be a boundary for them in understanding it or engaging in it. They come to a film screening, they are in a room with all the art and they come back and see the exhibition. It's making sure people have ways to engage.

CHRISTINA Yeah, there is so much going on with this exhibition alone.

RACHAEL Yeah, there's loads!

Yeah we try to do education and outreach, especially with Dor's archives, and photos and it he was great to work with in that respect.

CHRISTINA Well that was it, so thank you very much!

RACHAEL Great!

Appendix D

Case C: Institute Of Contemporary Arts (ICA).

Interviewee: Juliette Desorgues, Associate Curator, Programme Coordinator.

Interview Date: June 7, 2013 09:00 at ICA.

Date of Transcription: June 27, 2013.

CHRISTINA So I have a few questions about the show and about your role in the process, so

Q1: can you tell me a little bit about your role in this show: Points of Departure?

JULIETTE I am the associate curator here, so my role, so basically the show was kind of devised (coffee break) The show came about over a year ago, and it originated from Delfina Foundation who are a contemporary arts organization based in London, they very much focus on the Middle East, particularly artists from the Arab world and they are very much, they do a lot of residencies, with artists coming from Palestine, all kind of places, and currently they are actually going through a big refurbishment, so they don't actually have a venue, an exhibition space. So they were looking for partners to do this project with. And also I think the basis of this project is very much an exchange as well, so it made sense for other artists to be involved in it, so the ICA was involved in the selection process of these artists and as well as the British Council and Art School Palestine and Delfina, so those are the kind of key partners involved who selected the artists and have been working together from day one to the show opening now at the ICA. So my role within that is the show... the basis of the project is these 6 residencies of artists. It started in Palestine, with a show in Ramallah. So three British artists and three Palestinian artists they all spent some time in Palestine, and the culmination of that was this big show in Ramallah, in this gallery Al Mahatta Gallery and then the carrying on from that they have been doing residencies here since January which is where they have been developing those works and doing, which is obviously leading up the, the show here in a few weeks time. So my role I guess has been, I am guiding, so there are two guest curators, one Palestinian Mirna Bamieh and one English, Rebecca Heald and both have been working with the artists from the start, Mirna particularly during the Palestinian phase in Palestine and Rebecca increasingly here in London so I've been working with Rebecca and Delfina. Our role and Delfina's role have been more advisory roles including myself and ... director of the

Delfina Foundation have been guiding Rebecca and the artists and facilitating the project as well.

CHRISTINA Ok

JULIETTE So essentially guiding, and also kind of curatorial

CHRISTINA So working with the artists, through Rebecca

JULIETTE Exactly with, she's [Rebecca] has been the main contact because the whole point of the show is the residency, the curators roles were also residencies so the whole thing is kind of seen as a residency project so her role as a curator is seen as a residency in itself, so gaining skills and knowledge by working with other big institutions. So its been I suppose an advisory and I guess kind of facilitating it here, making it happen

CHRISTINA

Q2: So were you involved in organizing space or like practical issues as well?

JULIETTE, Yeah we have a technical team that deal with all of that

CHRISTINA ok

JULIETTE I suppose my role as been... I discovered the complexity of working with so many partners and trying to reign it in to being something is at the ICA and navigating it in that complex territory of ownership, but also you know different agendas, you know you also have to keep everybody happy. So making it feel ICA, but then we're not the sole partner. We have partner, and obviously there is a complex background, so a political background with some of the partners but also some of the funders that have been involved in the project and the politics behind of that. So things like you know, having a logo on a card become a huge deal if one party wants it and the other party doesn't. everything becomes very political. So there were pitfalls of this idea of lets all work together and do this great project and exchange – exchange ideas, but also physically and quite literally exchange. But its interesting because we had a meeting yesterday and we had an evaluation on the project and it transpired that it is a lot more complex than what people's expectations were.

CHRISTINA And that was due to working with the different partners?

JULIETTE I think so, also just that also some of the Palestinian just didn't focus so much on the ICA project things just slipped off a bit,

CHRISTINA

Q3: Would you say that some of the obstacles were they coming from the artistic side or the financial funders or a mixture of both?

JULIETTE Well funding is also a big issue because the ICA, our funds are incredibly tight, so Delfina was involved in a lot of the funding and it's been quite challenging to find funding. I don't think its necessarily political, I think its just a difficult time for funding in general, but I do think there is an increasing interest in Middle Eastern art in Europe in Britain especially. If you look at all the courses, you know MA in Art History all of them have courses that focus on politics and wars and that dual political element that you see. And also increasing amounts of galleries and art spaces that are focusing more and more on the Middle East and particularly on those regions, which I think is very interesting, but I don't think it was to do with that, but it was more it's just a very difficult time to get funding and essentially unfortunately we've had to abandon a few ideas like a catalogue, that we wanted to do, but there was just not the funds to do it so we are looking at other ways of achieving that.

CHRISTINA Right, and going on exactly that, when you said that there is this increased interest in Middle Eastern art now

Q4: Was that a reason for the ICA to do a partnership, did that have an influence on this particular partnership?

JULIETTE, Yeah, I mean I think for the ICA it was about certainly trying to broaden – You know the ICA has a very particular audience one that's not particularly... yeah I think it's a very particular audience and I think we wanted to broaden you know have a more divers range and have people come to the ICA who wouldn't normally necessarily come, so people from a British Council audience, or a Delfina Foundation audience trying to get them to come to the ICA and try to diversify our program as well and extend. Because typically the ICA is focused a lot on cutting edge, contemporary, very much Western particularly UK, almost London, very London-centric historically. And so while keeping that in mind keeping that part of the ICA agenda, because that is what the ICA is famous for, because it's been at the forefront of the contemporary art scene, the British art scene and discovered many very big artists historically, and a lot of very significant UK shows took place here, but I think it's about trying to broaden

CHRISTINA Right, and the show hasn't started yet, but

Q5: have you already seen that there has been interest from different people?

JULIETTE Oh yeah, definitely. The show is also part of a big festival called Shubbak, which is an Arab festival, yeah, so the show is a part of that and we're doing a series of events as a part of that, and we've kind of in the lead up been doing a few things that have been related to. We did a talk recently about Iraq in commemoration of the invasion of Iraq and it was very popular, lots of people came. In the lead up to the show we have been doing a lot of things and certainly a lot of young people have been interested in the show, actually the FT did a piece about the show. And there is definitely an interest. And it is interesting isn't it, how things come into fashion, I hate that word, but also in arts, certainly in the Middle East, and I guess because of the Arab Spring and all the kind of media attention and the socio political issues that are going on in those countries and all the big changes that are occurring as well. A lot of focus in the media and also in people's minds on those regions. You know there's always been upswings in markets in the west and suddenly it becomes interesting because it's on the front page of the newspaper.

CHRISTINA Actually on that same topic, there has been an expansion in the Middle Eastern art market, say the art fairs, and how its becoming more public, and there is more exposure.

Q6: Do you think that there is a relationship between the market side of it and a space like this that is non-commercial gallery space, or is there no relationship?

JULIETTE I think the art market ultimately does and vice versa both sectors are totally tied into each other to a certain extent. You need the art market. You know artists need the art market to living, to sell their work, to get exposure and I think the increase in interest, commercial interest maybe is yeah, I mean the artists that we have in the show, having said that, were very much separate. They were not creating work to sell and it wasn't a commercial endeavor in any way its very much about their own personal experiences and their residencies and the process. Increasingly its about the idea of residency. And not about the idea of Palestine, and I think a lot of the artists, especially the Palestinian artists moved away from this idea of "I'm a Palestinian artists, therefore I'm going to make work about war, ... borders and " and also the British artists, like --- was interested in the local history and but also Jeremy Hutchison was more interested in the local history. And the

Palestinian artists, since their residency here in London they have been interested in other themes that are completely unrelated to what's going on in Palestine, like socio political issues.

CHRISTINA

Q7: So the artwork itself, do you feel that it is political?

JULIETTE I mean it always is political, everything is political in my opinion, or has a has a political meaning or agenda but what you call political I suppose?? Some of them touch on the political issues, like the Israeli Palestinian conflicts but a lot of them don't.

CHRISTINA And do you think that the people that will come will expect something specific from the works?

JULIETTE Well this is a big theme in the show. It is about expectations, and this idea of identity and nationalisms and what it is to be a Palestinian artist, not to mention the type of work.

- phone call interruption -

There are definitely expectations about what is a Palestinian artist and what sort of work will he create and people do have expectations of it being deeply political, documentary like, photographic. Similar to an English artist going to Palestine, that relationship also but I think in a way there has been a sense of through the residency, to create a platform where the artist can feel completely free of doing anything, without the pressures of doing work "because you're a Palestinian artist you have to create this type of work" but they were all very much aware of that and expectations in London and U.K.. And it is interesting that not a lot of them went down that road, one of them did a bit more than others, but did a work that was much more poetic touching on the ideas of narratives and histories and myth, but not about. So I think the show is also about questioning those types of stereotypes. And its very much attached to the art market, if something is very fashionable commercially like Chinese art, well what does that mean for a collector or an art dealer. Does it need to have to have that kind of stamp of Chinese art, that post communist China. So it's interesting.

CHRISTINA It seems like its an exhibition of a process, so not choosing works that were already created and putting them together.

JULIETTE It is very much about a process, at the start of the residency we had six artists, one of which Nayson is now no

longer in the exhibition, but we brought in two other artists, Bazlin and Muran who are doing a duo and they were brought in because throughout the project Rebecca did a lot of research and felt that their work would really work with the show and would work great in tandem with the others so they are now included in the residency itself, but we thought , Rebecca's role was a residency in itself, so her research was very much a part of the process, so it's absolutely about this process. How a residency can work

CHRISTINA

Q8: And how were the artists chosen? Were you involved in the choosing?

JULIETTE, No I wasn't. this is before my time, but our director Gregory O was, Rebecca was Mirna was, Delfina was British Council, Art School Palestine

CHRISTINA And were the artists chosen..?

JULIETTE It was an open call in London and Palestine and from there the work was selected. They submitted portfolios

CHRISTINA Based on their work

JULIETTE Their previous work, yep.

CHRISTINA

Q9: And what did it have to do with fitting into the theme of the show?

JULIETTE No I think it was more about the quality of the work essentially, because at that point, like I said the whole point of the project had to do with residencies so the work was not... it was very much about the artists immersing themselves in Palestine and London and reflecting on that and creating work from that. As opposed to doing it before hand. This whole "process" was very much key to it all.

CHRISTINA Speaking of process, I'm not sure if there was a promotional image that was used, but looking on the website I found this image.

Q10a: Was this the promotional image that was used?

JULIETTE Yeah

CHRISTINA

Q10b: How was this chosen and why?

JULIETTE Well you tell me, do you think it's a strange choice?

CHRISTINA No. not at all, I am just curious to see how different institutions choose different images

JULIETTE Well you know, its just kind of purely on a factual... You know, press images/lead images just have to work visually

CHRISTINA Right

JULIETTE You might have a beautiful image, but because it's darker than others, or it's too busy its about trying to find images that are very clear, colourful. It's terrible to say but it's a marketing tool as well,

CHRISTINA Right

JULIETTE Promoting it's like selling an exhibition, although our shows are for free, so it's inviting people's attention. So we felt that this work, you know, cause it's also tricky because, the work is also quite conceptual, so finding an image that would work was tricky. And I guess we didn't want to just have a piece to have to kind of a political or Palestinian image that would just scream "this is about the Israeli/Palestinian...., which it isn't. There are theme within the show, and it totally, absolutely underpins it but it, it definitely isn't solely about that – it's far more complex than that. So we felt this image is quite an arresting image and I think.... that her work is quite a lot about myths, and it says a lot about her work we felt its quite interesting that...

CHRISTINA I also thought it was interesting that it wasn't like you said a, like you said, a political image.

JULIETTE Cause I think it's about, you know, I mean there was an interesting show called Light From the Middle East

CHRISTINA Yeah

JULIETTE At the V&A which is all about "this is Middle Eastern photography"

CHRISTINA Right

JULIETTE So the show in a way was trying to, there was a bit of that, kind of stereotyping of artists from those regions and glossing over the kind of complex, a) regional complexities but

also personal, you know the artists, a Palestinian artist, or a Syrian artist won't want to necessarily do their work about, you know, what's going on politically. I mean, obviously it's a part of their everyday life but we're trying to not fall into that trap I mean it's a very complex territory, definitely You know the show (Light from the Middle East) tried not to do that, but it somehow did. I don't know if you saw the show

CHRISTINA I did see it last month

JULIETTE "This is the Middle East" and you know it's all about war and documentary. I mean not always, I think some works moved away from that, which I think is good, yeah

CHRISTINA Yeah, interesting to see how different institutions approach

JULIETTE I guess this is the sort of problem with having a sort of heavy handed, curatorial approach in a way. Particularly if you're a Western, white curator, how do you navigate that? How do you show about an area that is not yours, and you don't have an experience yourself, and you don't have, you know you don't necessarily understand first hand. That was definitely the challenge of that show, and I do think that they succeeded in some ways ,... her work kind of moved away from that. So that was kind of interesting. What's her name? It was the kind of slide show, birds eye view of the desert, that kind of zoomed in and out it sort reference this Man Ray photograph, Duchamp piece, this dust piece.

CHRISTINA It was the only video installation

JULIETTE Yes exactly, So I think that's an interesting addition to that, because I think it's very surreal and there was something very interesting about it. It definitely wasn't about you know, war zones.

CHRISTINA

Q11: Did you notice or did you have to deal with this like you said "heavy handed" curatorial.

JULIETTE Well yeah, because ultimately the curatorial process starts with research and finding works that fit in a theme, but obviously there's the question of how do you fit it all into a space. So we've chosen the theatre, which is a challenging space, it's usually used for events and concerts, but we sometimes also use it for exhibitions but it's a completely dark space, the walls are black, there are no existing walls apart from

the external walls, so it's quite a challenge given the budget also to

CHRISTINA

Q12: So you're involved with the placing of the works?

JULIETTE Yes, So myself and Rebecca do that.

CHRISTINA

Q13: And the artists? Do they have a??

JULIETTE Well, it's a bit complicated. It's been difficult. Because normally you have a work and then you fit it into a space, you position it, that's how it normally happens. But when you're working in this fashion, where there are residencies, the artists are still doing their work, cause you know there are deadlines, you have to go to contractors, get quotes, you have to build walls if you need to you have to do all of these things. And all of these things obviously have to happen in advance, so if the artist is still not sure what they're doing, "I might need a table, I might do a film" So and actually some of the artists are actually still working on their proposals, so it's difficult so it's been about trying to simplify as much as possible in that respect to allow for. But there has been a bit of "I want this space" or "I want this area" or "Why is my work not at the front, why is my work at the back" Which is, you know, I guess a challenge of doing a show like that.

CHRISTINA When they are all dealing with the same timeline

JULIETTE Exactly, so we are working concurrently, in a way

CHRISTINA I have one last question, the ICA, like you said is at the forefront of the contemporary art scene, especially in London, which is a world centre for the arts, and there are discussions about how globalised the art world is these days, and like you said, there are trends coming up like Chinese art, and Middle Eastern art. Working here,

Q14: How globalised do you think the art world really is, or do you think it's just a myth, or are you seeing over time changes?

JULIETTE I definitely do think it is globalised, I mean there was Venice last week and everyone is in Venice, "See you in Venice" kind of thing, "See you in Basel" which is next, there is definitely a globalised trend. But it's been fueled by.... there are many factors. But when I think of globalised, I mean by the use of internet, email, and Blackberry s, we're just constantly in communication, and you have a network of people 24/7 that you

can be in touch with, so purely in that sense I think it is becoming globalised. You can be in touch with someone in China. Just in a purely practical sense. But also that facilitates creating those networks that have become very much global where it was back in the day, say in the 80's and 90s those were created in more of the site specific sense, like the ICA and its history, when it started in the 50s at Dover Street market on Dover Street, the ICA became a centre for a lot of artists, British artist Richard Hamilton and the so called Independent Group and the all would meet and that whole , that network and that group of artist, their only way of communicating and creating networks was, through a physical one, was to be able to meet in person and realize space, which nowadays I suppose there are very different platforms that enable you to be in touch with people world wide. And also these biannuals these trends now, all of these biannuals that are happening all over the world, that have artists, collectors, curators feel like they have to go... it's like this marathon, art marathon that we engage in. You know one week you're in Documenta, and the next week you're in Venice, well not Venice, but you know openings like this, I think there is definitely an element of that (globalisation) The fact that we can travel, the fact that its become so mundane now

CHRISTINA

Q15: And do you see collaborations like with the Delfina Foundation bringing artists from other countries, do you see that happening more?

JULIETTE Yeah, yeah, we're definitely trying to open up to having more collaborations of that type, but non UK, non British artists, but more of a London audience.

CHRISTINA Interesting. Well that is all the questions that I have, but I also have a little thank you

Appendix E

Case D: Tate Modern (Tate).

Interviewee: Ann Coxon, Assistant Curator

Interview Date: June 7, 2013 12:00 at the Tate.

Date of Transcription: June 30, 2013.

CHRISTINA Well for my research I am really interested in your role as a curator especially in the Choucair exhibition, so

Q1: If you could tell me a little bit about how it came to be and what your involvement was.

ANN Well I am officially an assistant curator, although I did co-curate this show cause I have been at Tate for quite a lone time, so it's not unusual for me to be co-curating even though I am called an assistant in my job title. But actually my colleague Jessica, who unfortunately isn't here at the moment, she would have been the ideal person for you to talk to, but I'll relay information instead. Because she runs a committee of individuals who support the acquisition of art to the collection of art from the Middle East region, Middle East, North Africa region and they have been doing that since about 2010 so it's been running for a few years now, maybe a little bit earlier, maybe 2009/2010 something like that. And so that is made up of individuals who have an interest in art from the region, but also fairly wealthy, it tends to be glamorous ladies, who have wealthy husbands and an interest in art that's a cliché, but it's true. Not all of them but that's the kind of stereotype. I don't know how many committee members there are now, it's something like say 10 people upwards, and they contribute a certain amount of money per year and that money is put towards acquiring art from the region, so I think the role of the curator is to research the art works and make a selection, present those to the committee and the committee decides what they want to spend the money on. So the curator will kind of guide the process and so Jessica was doing a research trip to Beirut and was being shown works by upcoming contemporary artist there by one of the gallerists named Saleh Barakat, who works, he runs the Agjal Gallery, I don't know how you pronounce that properly, but A-G-I-A-L in Beirut and Jessica I think he wasn't really talking to her about Choucair's work, but I think she spotted this work, maybe it was in a show at the gallery and she was like "oh, what's this?" And none of us knew anything about Choucair prior to that so Saleh Barakat really told her, "she's a senior figure, she quite well respected in Beirut but it's taken a long time for her to get that status and internationally she's very

little known, she's hardly exhibited outside of Lebanon" and Jessica discovered this amazing body of work, that this woman had been working on for over 50 years she was born in 1916 and she went to Paris in the 40's, late 1940's -1948 I think it was, and she was in Leger's studio she was kind of in a circle of artists who were interested in abstraction and were committed to abstraction, and she was really inspired by this but she's also previously had an interest in I think that actually she was moving towards abstraction before going to Paris and she was very interested in the principles of Islamic design, architecture and the curve and the straight line and the basic elements of Islamic design. And so the amazing thing about her is that she brings these two things together, so Western modernist principles with Islamic art that she was inspired by. She wasn't Muslim herself, she was a Drew, she was from the Drew's religion, but she wasn't particularly religious. I mean, she was a modernist really, she was interested in architecture, design, craft, and applying those, art to everyday life and so Jessica was like "how do I get to meet this woman" and she, in Beirut she saw it live. She's in her late 90's, 96 or 97 at the moment and unfortunately she's had advanced Alzheimer's disease for quite a long time and so she's not really mentally present anymore. But she has an apartment in Beirut and she's living there at the moment. And Jessica was introduced by the gallerist to her daughter Hallah who we worked with very closely in planning the exhibition, and Hallah is actually an artist herself, she is based in New York, but she divides her time between New York and Beirut and making sure her mother's ok. And Choucair has full time care and she's well looked after, and she's actually in this very beautiful room in her apartment and the amazing thing was that almost all of her was still there with her just the apartment full of this incredible sculpture, painting everything's right there. So it's almost a unique situation for us as curators. So we acquired some of the works for the collection in 2011 I think through the Middle Eastern acquisitions committee and I think five pieces they agreed to be collected, and so they've been on display, you know our collection display and then Jessica made a proposal to make an exhibition of her work and said "This is, we really should introduce her to the world, it's long overdue and the sad thing about this is that she's no longer able to appreciate, I think for years and years she was struggling against lack of recognition as many female artists are and I think that it's kind of the sad thing is that it came a bit too late for her to appreciate but her daughter has been amazing and has been trying to piece together what her mother was trying to do, and she's putting together a foundation and an archive of her work and so that was it, and I was brought on board to work with Jessica to make the show a reality, and my thing is that I have a

lot of experience in organizing exhibitions and making them look beautiful, and so that's kind of, yeah. So That's where I came in and there's the catalogue, and I got really interested in what she's doing and what Choucair is about but I don't personally have much knowledge about Middle Eastern art prior to working on this show. Jessica is gaining that knowledge from working on acquiring work from the region. And it's part of a bigger picture that Tate Modern has had the ambition since, I suppose for the past 10 years, we've made a clear strategy to become more broadly more international. Our collection is very much Western-centric, very British, French, German artist bigger higher but we have few works that are more geographically, ethnically, culturally diverse and so there's been a clear push on the part of the head of international acquisitions to broaden our geographic reach and so we've set up these committees for different regions of the world, so there's a committee that... The oldest standing one was looking at Latin American art that's been going the longest, we've also got committees working on South East Asia and I think Russian and Eastern Europe and Africa.

CHRISTINA right

Q2: And why did this shift happen? This decision to go more global or to focus on other regions

ANN I think it's a combination of factors, I think the art world in general is starting to have caught on to the modernisms that have happened in different parts of the world and to be more inclusive in that way. You see that coming through at the biennales, and Documenta and but also this is the 21st century it makes not sense at all to be NATO specific it's kind of crude terms. We're living in a global age and it's really trying to bring this slow moving institutional mechanism into the 21st century

CHRISTINA two topics that I am dealing with in my research are globalisation, whether or not it actually exist, some people are saying that it is becoming more global and others are saying that it is more of a myth than a reality, and also the two worlds, the art world so for example the Tate and the non-commercial side and the commercial side and whether or not one leads the other and the relationship between the two of them and

Q3: do you see that in the globalization of the art world - do you see it being pushed or pulled by one or the other? The art world or the art...

ANN Well undoubtedly the art market often leads I would say, controversially for someone who is in a museum but a specific example is being White Cube Gallery has just expanded into

Hong Kong and they have this Asia, they obviously have a pool of collectors and that they are bring their folder artists to those collectors, it can be Western artist, but there's also a two way process whereby Chinese artists are ... that the knowledge of works from those regions is coming back this way as well.

I guess what we're trying to do is keep pace. It is very interesting thinking about the relationship of these two worlds, the commercial world and... And it is not clear cut, it's extremely complex a fraught with.. it's because although it is a global activity, it is also quite a small world. Take Gregor Muir who is now the director of the ICA and previous to that he was director to Hauser & Wirth Gallery and previous to that he was at Tate, and so that, just thinking about him as an individual.

CHRISTINA Yeah, seeing him moving from one world to the other

ANN Yes and I think that's something that's actually, at one time it would have been unheard of, that a museum curator would be able to go into the commercial world and then move pack into the public sector with such ease and I think, it is kind of interesting time because it is becoming more complex and people are able to move around between different worlds with out rigidity and

CHRISTINA

Q4: Why do you think that might be, now more so than before?

ANN It is interesting, I don't know, I think there is probably more of an acknowledgement that we are not as separate as we'd like to think

CHRISTINA that there is a connection between the two

ANN Yeah but we still have quite clear guideline within Tate as a collecting institution that holds the national collection of British and international modern and contemporary art. We have quite a clear... There are documents setting out what you are and what you're not allowed to do as a Tate curator. So if I wanted to write for a catalogue for a commercial gallery show I would have to seek permissions and there are some things that I am allowed to do and some things that I am not allowed to do. Because we have to be quite careful that we are not. Because we have a collection we don't want to be promoting artists' careers and adding value and that. That's the funny thing about Tate, is that we are still a part of this, the history of Tate links us with the civil service, and we have moved away from that

structure quite a bit, but we are still this semi government body. That's another thing that gets thrown into the mix

CHRISTINA You have to be careful as to what cards you play

ANN Yeah

CHRISTINA These committees are really interesting, for example how the contemporary Middle Eastern art market in recent years has been on a recent upswing, and

Q5: do you feel that these committees respond to those trends? How would they respond to these trends or are their decisions completely separate from what's going on, for example the Chinese market, like you said.

ANN I think it's important that we... Our criteria for acquiring works into the collection is based on things like whether an artist has importance, the interesting thing about acquiring non-Western art is that one of the things we do when think about bringing a work into the collection is thinking about how that work will have a dialogue with other works that are already in the collection so we will show them and how it makes sense to show them how it might add to the holdings of certain movement or a certain point in the history of art for example, So the thing that complicates it when you're acquiring non-Western art is how there might still be a dialogue or not with that artists' practice and works that are classic Western iconical pieces in our collection. And this is something that's great about Choucair, that she had that time in Paris, and it makes it quite easy to see within her work how it both makes sense in term of basic modernist western practice but how it also differentiates that. And complicates that and makes it also relevant to her own context and her own cultural tradition, or the Arabic cultural tradition. And that's the interesting thing. I think we tend to be attracted to works that complicate that relationship.

CHRISTINA About her work and how the images you chose to present the exhibition, because the poster is different from the exhibition pamphlet, which is also different from the cover of the catalogue

Q6: how did those images get chosen?

ANN The poster was very much chosen by our marketing team we have a team of marketing people who have very strong views about what will sell an exhibition. That's what their focus is and I argued against that image quite strongly, because it doesn't represent her practice particularly well. It's a very early painting

that's well, you know it doesn't give you a sense of where she goes in her practice and I also have this. I am a feminist, and I have a slightly cringing response to women artist being represented by their own image when we don't tend to do the same thing for men. The reasons for using that image were based on the fact that marketing said that people, it's not a name that they are going to know or recognize, like they won't recognize it like the name Lichtenstein and they think that they will read Saloua Raouda Choucair and not know if its male or female and where she's coming from, so showing this image, a very striking image of her face of her portrait tells you a) that this is a woman and b) that this is a non-Western woman. And it is a strong image, so that was their reasoning and I got shafted down!

CHRISTINA

Q7: Were you backed up by other people from your side?

ANN Jessica the curator, was much more she didn't feel as strongly about it as I did, It was mainly me who was really opposed to using that image. But interestingly, when we showed the designs to Hallah, Choucair's daughter who we were working with, she also said that "mother would have hated this, she would have hated seeing that image, she wouldn't have wanted to be represented by that image" And that was my feeling about it as well. She was so wedded to abstraction, and that's where she came from, and we all go through art school where we do whatever, self portraits, but that wasn't what she was about. It's not the strength of her practice.

CHRISTINA

Q8: Is that where the other images...

ANN So that when we decided for this (the flyer) that we definitely weren't going to use [the main image] because this is not drawing you in to the exhibition. This is when you've already gotten in to the exhibition and you've decided you're going to pay and you're going to go in. I was like "we don't need it on the cover over this as well. So it ended up in the back or the inside or whatever. The image on the cover of the catalogue. That decision was made between the catalogue editor, Jessica and I, the two curators and the catalogue designer and we decided that we wanted to show a work that could be configured in a different way, so that's one of the pieces that can be part of a certain series of sculptures, and something that we couldn't really do in the exhibition as well. That she wanted them to be shown in different configurations, so you could stack them in different ways at different times it's very hard to give a

sense of that where they are loans in, we have to protect them we have a lot of visitors, we have a lot of barriers around them handling things is not really something we can allow people to do unfortunately and it often causes issues where the artist's intention is that you might be able to play with things, but we just can't let people do that. So it was to give a sense of that in a way that in the exhibition we can't but in the catalogue we can show. So we had a photographer go in and photograph this piece and play with it and make different configurations and then we looked at the images and then thought "ok I think that would work for a front and back cover".

CHRISTINA Right, Ok. So it plays with the works

ANN And you'll see in the catalogue, there's quite a few shots of her sculptures either from a different angle or again shown in different configurations, so you'll get one on one page and one on the other showing it in a playful way so you can see what the potential of the sculpture is.

CHRISTINA

Q8: And do you think that the people who have come to the exhibition so far have come with expectations from the poster or, how do you feel that that relates to the people who have been coming.

ANN I don't really know. It's an interesting thing that we initially had a debate about if this was going to be a paying exhibition or not, because it's quite a small show and the ticket price is not as expensive as Lichtenstein, it's not a massive blockbuster, its 4 rooms instead of 12 or whatever those big shows are. And because it's quite a new kind of exhibition for us. We don't usually tend to do show on that kind of scale, we have done many in the past like that and sometimes when we have done them we have included quite a few works from the collection and therefore have made it free. Because part of the Tate's ethos is that the collection should be free to the public because it is public property it's a national collection. So because it was mostly loans in, it was justification for having a ticket price but we weren't sure how to predict visitor numbers, we weren't really sure... It's kind of an experiment for the institution. A very unrecognized, non-western artist we weren't sure how many people it was going to attract. It's actually doing very well, something like 300% over target, so we obviously targeted pessimistically and it has been attracting a lot of people and I think that it is a combination of that we have quite good visual representation of her outside the building, we've got the big banner, we've got the thing across the front of the building

saying Choucair, in that sense I think it's getting the same attention as Lichtenstein. And Hallah, the daughter was absolutely thrilled to see that she couldn't believe it, She was beside herself seeing her mother's name in thing, on this big banner level with Lichtenstein, kind of level pegging. I think that really helped, Cause I was worried about whether it would be weird for her to see that and actually it's quite a small show, that it would be disappointing, you know. And I think Jessica and I would have like to have given it a bit more space and would have liked for it to have been more... For example she makes tapestries and designs and if we had more space we would have added them

CHRISTINA

Q9: So it was a matter of space?

ANN Yeah kind of decision that were out of our call. It is interesting ideologically, and I think that the press campaign. Because we decided institutionally to make it a paying show that then means that we can give a certain amount of budget to our press and marketing team to do a campaign, whereas if it was a non-paying show we probably wouldn't have gotten as much of their time and attention. So the press office did their usual job and all the key players came in, like Adrian Searle from The Guardian we got quite a lot of good reviews and the preview days, they usually come in the way when you're trying to finish installing a show. And that's the thing that usually helps a lot with the good press. Almost more than marketing poster. Press is more important than marketing in terms of attendance figures. So that's all good. So it's an ongoing experiments and we will do more exhibitions of this type by more artists of other parts of the world with unpronounceable names, that's what we're going to do, so you'll see a lot more of it, because it's been successful.

CHRISTINA Exactly, and

Q10: do you know what types of people are coming to the exhibition and where their interests lie?

ANN We have some enormous amount of member, I can't remember how many Tate members and they get free entry, so actually the proportion of people who are actually coming to the show are non-paying, but you also get a number of visitors who are paying, but we always factor that in when we are targeting and budgeting, and that's the case for all shows and the take up from member is quite good. And we also do a combined ticket offer, with the Ellen Gallagher show and so other than that, I don't really know, I think I will get more feedback at a later date about the demographic of the people who are coming in, other

than what I have observed. When I am giving tours, I'm looking around thinking. But we've had quite a few people in, and some ladies overheard me and they said "oh this is really interesting, we're from Beirut and we didn't expect to see a woman here from Beirut and it's really amazing to see this" So that's quite interesting. And we have a massively international audience at Tate Modern. That is something that I probably should have said in answer to your question a while ago, that part of the drive to show more international work is that we have a very diverse international audience. We attracts a lot of tourists, a lot of people who may not have been in an art museums before it's part of the tourist train of coming to London, you go to the MOMA when in NYC and you go to the Tate when you're in London, and we also have a lot of young people. If you go into our collection displays and hang about you'll see that the average age is really low. Which is quite nice.

CHRISTINA Because they can stay with you

ANN Yeah that's one thing that we've got teams of people that work on learning programs and think a lot about how to inspire and retain young people's interests, but we do have quite a young audience, compared particularly with Tate Britain, where we show a historical part of the collection and there is a different kind of average age, and you can feel it when you are around there

CHRISTINA For this particular target group that you wanted to reach out to, because it was such a new thing for you, like you said it's a new artist, at least for this community,

Q11: did you have a particular group?

ANN Our marketing people will always get straight on to all their contacts any thing remotely related to Middle Eastern communities in London and try to they'll place ads in specific areas and publications and I think they share knowledge with colleagues at the British Museum or at the V&A where they did a Middle Eastern photography exhibition and they help each other out so they try to target people with an interest in the region or who are from the region or communities in London. I suppose more generally you would hope that you attract repeat visitors who have an interest in early or mid-century modernist art who may not have heard of Choucair but who may have visited other shows who might come back and you know wonder what this is all about and check it out and I think from my own mini network I have had interest from people who have an interest in modernism in general or design. Some of the magazines, like ELLE Decoration there's been a bit of interest

from them. I think because her work is also very visually beautiful, and she had an interest in design and that comes through in her practice.

CHRISTINA It seems like an interesting challenge to work with the committee which is design to collect work from a specific region but then present it without the label, like you said the poster was chosen because you can see that she's not from here.

Q12: But how do you build an exhibition that might not necessarily speak the region itself but more from the art perspective.

ANN I think it's a lot easier doing a monographic show and looking at one artist's work and going celebrating one artist. We tend to. We wouldn't be likely to do a Middle Eastern photography show like the V&A. Because what we are trying to do with the collection, what we are trying to do is really integrate them into our displays and our collection displays that's what we have been doing all along since Tate Modern opened is really integrate different periods, differ media and different geographic regions and showing them all alongside each other and it can be confusing and it's challenging sometimes to do that but that's part of our ongoing ambition and it's actually more interesting. Because if you separate photography into galleries over there and film into black box spaces over here you end up with something that doesn't particularly represent the connections that artists have between each other and that works inspire them and media don't exist in isolations like that, and you get to make really fruitful connections by mixing things up, and I think that's the same with the geographies, and that's what we're aiming to do so if we were to do a show of contemporary Middle Eastern art, I think it would give out the wrong message, because I think it would be saying we are going to show Middle Eastern artists with other Middle Eastern artists and treat them like some kind of novelty from the region you know what I mean? And that's not what we want to do, we want to integrate and we want to show that multiple histories of modernism are complicated and things happen in different parts of the world and there's rich connections and reasons why things pop up here and there A kind of key example of that was how constructivism and concrete art was shown in Brazil in the 1950s and then you get ... people being inspired by that and making neo-concrete practice and it's the what I think history works is that it's a fluid complex network and that is what we want to try and reflect we don't want to say this is something sacred that should be... It's going against what we are trying to do. Integrating is what we are trying to do, we are not trying to separate.

CHRISTINA Interesting to see what directions different institutions take on.

ANN Yeah and you can see lots of examples of shows that, like the Saatchi collection in London, he's acquired works by Chinese artists and had a big show with contemporary Chinese art and he's done the same with Russian and you know, it's kind of like definitely a clear agenda to go and acquire works from that region and make a lot of money out of them and talk them up, you know he did it with the British artists as well sensation Young British Artists in the 90s and market them they way he can do but we are about something very different, different ethics.

CHRISTINA ok, and what do you think then,

Q13: Why would the collection and the exhibition that was taken on by the Middle Eastern committee, is it just a matter of timing that this is why this exhibition is happening now, and then next year another committee is going to presenting an exhibition.

ANN I don't really know. I think things re-started. It's like a process that gathers momentum, the curator will start to make connection, bring people onto the committee or they sign up and they might have friends and they bring in more people and they gather momentum and the curator will do more research and become more knowledgeable. She is gaining more knowledge on the region and understanding that the aims and ambitions of artists and the complexities and the in-fighting that goes on there, and I think that things kind of happen. I mean they acquired these works by Choucair quite quickly and I think things build on that. So we would hope that having done this exhibition that now we can build on that institutionally, and that will enable us to do other similar types of shows by artists from other areas of the world and then I also want to, when this closes I really want to make sure that we've got Choucair on display in the collection gallery and that she's not just "go back in the storage and forget about it now". And I want to keep her present within the gallery at least by showing her in a more prominent position in the gallery with more than one work. We're quite aware that we don't want this to be a novelty moment and then she gets forgotten about. We are showing a commitment to the artist and to the practice. I believe that in a way it's a privileged position to be in to be a massive museums of modern art and in the spotlight because you get to change the course of art history, you get to make an artist iconicle when they may not previously

have been so and that's one of the things that I love about my job!

CHRISTINA It's a powerful position to be in, this is case in point. Just two questions about the exhibition itself and the design of it.

Q14: Were you responsible for the design of it?

ANN Yeah that was me, in collaboration with Jessica a lot of it is just pragmatic, because we had a small space and we wanted to show a certain amount of work so it's quite a lot of object in a small space. And that was so inspiring about going to her place and seeing her work. It's like a treasure trove of this stuff and we wanted to give a sense of that. Wanting it to look elegant, and give it justice and make it beautiful and give a sense of the amount of stuff she had and produced over the years. And making a selection of the works and thinking well it's roughly chronological. We both said in Beirut that we both wanted to make a small cabinet of the Maquettes and models to give you a sense of her creative energy and her thought processes, thinking through materials. I had made a larger version of something like that in the Louise Bourgeois show and we did two massive cabinet which we reused, so it's me being really practical and recycling things and then we wanted to make relationships between the drawings and sculptures, so sometime things are grouped in a loose way. So it's not too strict. Having that long shelf of the table top structures. I wanted to do that, but Jessica wanted them to be shown in a way so that you could walk around them, and I totally understand that, and it was really frustrating. We tried lots of things on paper and models, but we just had too many works in too small a space to be able to do that elegantly. And so the solution was to have that long table which I think looks great, but it has been noted by some people that you can't walk around them. There is never an ideal solution and I do think it looks beautiful.

CHRISTINA

Q15: Was her daughter involved?

ANN Yeah, but it was mostly me who made those decisions. She came in when we were almost finished installing and she advised us about how to show some of the pieces. But in terms of the general layout, it would have all been pre planned by me.

CHRISTINA a question about

Q16: what the goal was for this exhibition, or a main message or two.

ANN I suppose non-Western female artist who you may not have heard of before and who we are prepared to take a risk on and support which was in a nutshell the message that we're trying to communicate.

CHRISTINA And it seem like it has been working!

ANN It's very positive to know that the Tate modern has come to a point after 13 years and I think we can know that people trust our judgment and that if we are backing an artist, then that artists is going to be taken seriously, now nobody is really going to question that. And I think we have gained a certain amount of trust and respect from our audiences and that is quite encouraging.

CHRISTINA And when you said the main message is a non-Western female artist who you may not have heard of before, is it a coincidence that she comes from the Middle Eastern region? Or could it just have easily been an African artist?

ANN It could just as easily have been an African artist. And we are about to do an African artist on a big scale

CHRISTINA So it's coincidence?

ANN Yeah it's lucky timing on the Middle East art and we are going to profile two major African artists who will have a big physical presence in the building

CHRISTINA Well I really enjoyed the exhibition I was watching the video!

ANN Yes the video was made by our video department who do really great work.

Notes:

The work that was destroyed by bombs "is not really a work anymore", so it was displayed with the historic documents. And it was outside the apartment on the balcony and Hallah at first didn't care to show the curators it, but they were like "hang on a minute" Choucair tried to repair it and so you can see it as a historic element.

You get almost absolutely no sense of what was going on around her as an artist as she was so wedded to abstraction that you don't know what was going on in the crazy situation in Lebanon in the 70s!