

Keywords: Romania, career development, Ion Bitzan, communism, social network analysis.

Abstract: This research will discuss the struggle of an artist's career living under communism and aiming to enter the global art market. The main research question in this thesis is: How did visual artists living under communist rule enter the global art market and develop an international career in the twentieth century? To answer this research question I am using a case study of an artist that has lived under communism in the twentieth century. The case study is Ion Bitzan, (1924-1997) a socialist-realist and experimental artist that lived in Romania. Throughout his career, Bitzan exhibited all over Western Europe with experimental art, but simultaneously had to satisfy the communist regime by producing socialist realist artworks. Mixed methods is used in this research, with a main focus in social network analysis on Ion Bitzan's career trajectory. Social network analysis is a method that is used to analyze the relationships between different cultural actors from an individual, relational and structural level within a network. The structure of the findings is based on the concepts of autonomy and political heteronomy. The political circumstances shaped his career; it created difficulties and provided opportunities. The main political events that occurred throughout his career are the refusal of the Warsaw pact in 1968, the July theses in 1971 and the revolution in 1989. The Warsaw pact resulted in a political liberalization of the country that resulted in an international breakthrough for Ion Bitzan's experimental art. During this period Bitzan was showing his socialist as well as the experimental art abroad. The contact that Bitzan had with his network of national and international cultural actors throughout his career show us how Bitzan managed an international career while living under communism. Bitzan was able to enter the global art market, because the artistic recognition that was given to him by cultural gatekeepers living under communist rule, was picked up by cultural gatekeepers from the global art world. Bitzan was able to enter the global art market and develop an international career, because he was a respected artist of socialist realist paintings. He had a good reputation on the side of the communists; as well on the side of the experimentalists he was autonomous and heteronomous at the same time. Bitzan's career as a visual artist cannot be separately seen from the political circumstances in his country.

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● Object van Bitzan, te kapitalistisch?

Moderne kunst voor Edinburgh in Roemenië opgehouden

Negotiating artistic autonomy *and* political heteronomy

Understanding the international career of Romanian artist Ion Bitzan

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Preface

Last summer I thought it was a good idea to understand the background of my boyfriend better, who is Romanian, and to spend some time with my mother-in-law. To spice up this mix I searched for an internship in the art world of Bucharest. This resulted in a summer internship at a Romanian art gallery Postmodernism in Bucharest and many misunderstood conversations with my mother-in-law. During the internship I discovered that little attention is given to the lives of Romanian artists during communism and little study has been done on the international careers of Romanian artist in the twentieth century. During this period I was also introduced to several Romanian artists that worked under communism and that were able to have international careers such as Paul Neagu (1938-2004), Jules Perahim (1914-2008) and Ilie Pavel (1927-1995) and Ion Bitzan (1924-1997). In the preparation of one of the exhibition in the gallery I interviewed the daughter Ion Bitzan (1924-1997). The daughter, Irina Bitzan, lives by accident in the Hague, so after my return to the Netherlands I met up with her. She told me the story of her father and showed me the archive that her father had created over the course of his artistic career. I immediately knew I had to do something with it. From September until January I have spent many hours in The Hague scanning letters, exhibition flyers, postcards, newspaper articles etcetera.

I want to thank Irina Bitzan for the access to the archive. I want to thank my supervisor Femke van Hest for giving me the space to create this thesis. I want to thank Thomas Teekens for helping me understand social network analysis.

Of course I want to thank my mother-in-law, for letting me crash on her couch for two months, and I want to thank my boyfriend Iulian Caldararu, for supporting me.

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1. Introduction

Since the twentieth century, the market for arts has increasingly globalized (Velthuis and Curioni, 2015). This has resulted in an art market in which travelling over the world has become easier for producers, consumers and distributors. How the career of an artist develops is defined by the construction of the art world. Elaborate research has been done on the construction of the art world. Becker (1974) has made us understand that art is a collective activity, in which different cultural agents contribute to the production, distribution and reception of art. These cultural agents collectively form a network around an artist and help him to develop his international career (Guiffre, 1999; Kartunnen, 2008; Martin, 2007). They all contribute in some way to the development of the international career of the artist. Research has been done on the shape of an artist's network when entering the art market (Guiffre, 1999). Other researchers have looked at the influence of the network on career success and which cultural actors play a crucial role in artists' network (Heinich, 2012). Other researchers have investigated how peripheral artists enter the global art market (Kartunnen, 2008).

Artists that want to start a career within the art world are part of the field of cultural production (Bourdieu, 1983). The field of cultural production, a theory developed by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, contains a struggle between the autonomous pole and the heteronomous pole (1983). The autonomous pole stands for arts that are free of any economic and political constraints, and the heteronomous pole exemplifies art that is created for political or economic gain (Bourdieu, 1983). Bourdieu explains that different art world agents are in constant struggle between the two opposing forces of autonomy and heteronomy. The general assumption in the global art world is that art should be autonomous and thus free from any political or economic constraints; it should serve "art for art's sake" (Bourdieu, 1983).

But for artists that are living under communist rule, the struggle between artistic autonomy and political heteronomy is difficult because the artistic production is controlled by the state. These artists create artworks that serve the ideology of the communist regime of that country. This means that artists are not free to create whatever they want, but they have to create whatever the state orders. Artistic production is controlled by the state through arm's length bodies such as the artist union (Mocanescu 2007; Piotrowski, 2009). The artist union and other cultural actors have a big saying in

which artists become successful and which not. Artists that live under communist rule sometimes have the opportunity to enter the global art world. They are able to show their art abroad as representatives of the state. Although the state decides what the official art is within communist country, there is also much unofficial art produced. Artists within communist countries experiment and create artistic autonomous work within the safety of their atelier. Every once in while the unofficial art is picked up by the global art world, and much interest is shown towards the artist who created it. To be able to exhibit this art outside the communist country, the international art world has to negotiate, clash or collaborate with the communist government. The artist that lives under communist rule, has to juggle between his position as state artist and experimental artist.

Little research has been done on artists that are living under communism and also have an international career. Kharchenkova et al. (2015) researched how artists that live in Russia and China deal with official art organizations and the rise of the unofficial art market. However, there appears to be no research on how artists develop an international career while living under communism. This research will discuss the struggle of an artist's career living under communism and aiming to enter the global art market. The main research question in this thesis: How did visual artists living under communist rule enter the global art market and develop an international career in the twentieth century? I will answer this research question with the sub-questions: How did the art world function within the Romanian communist and in Western capitalist systems? How did the network of the artist develop over the course of his career? How were different actors responsible for the international career of the artist? And finally how were the political circumstances reflected in the career of the artist?

To answer this research question I am using a case study of an artist that has lived under communism in the twentieth century (Meyer, 2001). The case study is Ion Bitzan, (1924-1997) a socialist-realist and experimental artist that lived in Romania. Piotrowski (2009, p.257) explains in his book that Bitzan "was the most frequently 'exported' Romanian artist of the Ceausescu era". This means that Bitzan had permission to exhibit abroad with experimental artworks while also being allowed to show his work within the communist regime. Throughout his career, Bitzan exhibited all over Western Europe with experimental art, but simultaneously had to satisfy the communist regime by producing socialist realist artworks. Ion Bitzan is a representative case study,

because he developed an international career and he started out as socialist-realist painter for the state.

The theory will first discuss the construction of the art world, which will include the definition of the concepts of the center and periphery in the art world. The concept of the art world is discussed by using the field theory of Bourdieu. Heteronomy and autonomy are two concepts that are central in the field theory. They represent opposing principles in the function, production and reception of art, and we discuss their use and meaning. We will also look into the role of cultural intermediaries within the art world with respect to autonomy and heteronomy. We will focus in this discussion on the function of cultural intermediaries for the career of an artist. After we have established the construction of the art world, we will discuss the how the art world functions within communism. The theory will elaborate on the purpose of communist art and the function of different cultural agents within the communist art world. Finally we will introduce the case study of Ion Bitzan.

This research performs a social network analysis of Ion Bitzan's career trajectory. To conduct a more robust social network analysis I have used a mix of methods with the foundation being qualitative. The social network analysis is performed in three stages. Stage one is creating a data overview through content analysis. Stage two structures the artist's networks with the social network analysis. And stage three is the analysis of individual relationships, which is conducted through the social network analysis and is supported by ethnographic content analysis.

The structure of the findings is based on the concepts of autonomy and political heteronomy. The career of Bitzan lends itself to be structured into three different phases that are characterized by political heteronomy, a mix of political heteronomy and autonomy, and autonomy. We will discuss the first phase of his career in which the political heteronomy was the strongest. This phase approximately can be seen from 1964 until 1968. The second phase which runs from 1969 until 1980 elaborates on the period in his career when autonomy and heteronomy were negotiating with each other. And the last phase, which runs more or less from 1980 until his death in 1997, shows a part of his career in which autonomy is more important than political heteronomy.

In the conclusion, this thesis will explain how Bitzan was able to start and maintain an international artistic career while coming from a politically complex environment.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 The art world

The success of an artist is dependent on the countries in which he shows his art. The center of the contemporary art world is concentrated in the United States and Western Europe (Quemin, 2006; Mitter, 2008). This means that cultural institutions from the United States and Western European countries are most influential in the art market, and that artists living in these countries also dominate the art market. The Western European countries that dominate the art world are Germany, the United Kingdom, France and Italy (Quemin, 2006). An explanation for the unequal representation of arts within Europe is that the art world is a reflection of the political and economic powers within Europe (Velthuis, 2013; Quemin, 2006).

Artists that do come from peripheral countries and which are successful in the art world often do not live anymore in their home country and have moved to the center of the art world (Quemin, 2006). Therefore, it is an exception to the rule when an artist achieves an international career and lives in a peripheral country. Although the Western European construction of the art world dominates the art market, there are also other constructions that are used to regulate the production of culture (Kharchenkova et al., 2015). The Western art world and the communist art world have functioned alongside during the 20th century, which resulted in exchanges between the two. Some artists moved from one world to another or produced art for both. For example, a contemporary Chinese artist that has shown his work at contemporary art events such as the Venice biennale is also member of the artist union in China (Kharchenkova et al., 2015, p. 92).

Art is intrinsically a collective action (Becker, 1974). Many different people collaborate in the production of an artwork, starting from the idea of the artwork until it is shown in a museum. Different individuals are necessary to complete the production, creation, distribution and evaluation of art. For example, to create a painting, an artist needs paint, which he buys from a shop employee, who bought the paint from the manufacturer and so on and so forth. In the collaborative production of art, there are the main actors, such as artists, and the support personnel, which are the helpers (Becker, 1974). Producers rely on shared conventions to make sure that the collaboration between different people produces the right result. Conventions are earlier agreements

that explain how things are created and what their meaning is within an art world (Becker, 1974, p. 770). These conventions are important, because it expedites the decision making process of cultural producers. Consumers and other cultural players within the art world understand the meaning of an artwork when they know the conventions related to that world. Conventions are part of an independent system of rules and cooperation applied to an art world.

Field of cultural production

The field of cultural production, described by Pierre Bourdieu (1983), is a dominant perspective when discussing the construction of the art world. He calls the art world the field of cultural production and sees it as a field of struggle for recognition among art world agents (Bourdieu, 1983). The art world is a constant pull and push of values that are assigned to cultural actors through their work, which is presented in the art world. Art world agents are individuals and organizations that contribute to the production of culture, such as artists, art critics, museums and collectors. These agents want recognition through the work they produce, and they achieve recognition by using the status of another cultural producer. For example, an artist wants to be represented by a good gallery, and a good gallery wants to show successful artists, and the collector wants to invest money in a good artist. Whenever a new work of art enters the market, and people within the art world are discussing its value, it has become a work of art. Then the value of a work of art is created through social agents other than the artist himself, such as critics. The value that is assigned to a work of art is defined by the two opposing values of heteronomy and autonomy, which structure the hierarchy of the art field. By introducing the autonomous and the heteronomous principle, Bourdieu places the art world within its social context, which includes the field of power (Bourdieu, 1983). The field of power represents different economic and political forces that shape society.

2.2 Autonomy versus heteronomy

The concept autonomy and heteronomy are opposing and simultaneously dependent of each other. The concepts give each other balance, but also create struggle. Bourdieu (1983) used these concepts in his field of cultural production. He argues that the artistic field is a struggle between the two opposing dominant principles; the heteronomous principle and the autonomous principle (Bourdieu, 1983). Autonomy means that the

artwork is distanced from any political or economic influence and contains an absolute value in itself. The perfect autonomy “rejects any external determinants” and is pure art for art’s sake (Bourdieu, 1983, p.15). The heteronomous principle stands for economic and political power. Economic heteronomy is whenever the purpose of artistic production is to make money (Bourdieu, 1983, p. 8). Political heteronomy is whenever the artistic production is used to gain political power. Bourgeois art was in the eyes of Bourdieu heteronomous art. It was solely created for economic gain. Bourdieu states that the most heteronomous cultural producers are those with the least cultural capital.

The divide between autonomy and heteronomy as Bourdieu discusses is too strict for this thesis, and thus we are not taking economic heteronomy into account. The autonomous pole is associated with the Western art world, but this world is also influenced by economic heteronomy. Communism is associated with the heteronomous pole, because the society was constructed around political power. To give clarity to the discussion of autonomy and heteronomy, I will divide heteronomy into political heteronomy and economic heteronomy. In this thesis political heteronomous art refers to art that is sponsored by the state, and is made in the social realist style. Under communism the art was used to transmit the ideological goals of the state. The artists had the role to create visual representations of the political ideology.

Autonomy in the art means for Bourdieu (1983) that the artist expresses his personal motivations and inspirations through his art, and his art does not have the intention to spread political messages or commercial goals. The quality of an artist is based upon the autonomous convention that is shared by the contemporary art community (Martin, 2007). Within the Western art world, the convention is that an artist is authentic and produces original artworks. I will refer to autonomy as artistic autonomy. Artistic autonomous art refers to experimental art that is created free from any political constrains.

Within both worlds, different legitimizing bodies are important in the evaluation of art. Artistic autonomy is an important value in the construction of success for an artist within the contemporary art world. Within a communist society, political heteronomy is the standard by which successful art is evaluated. The art is evaluated by legitimizing bodies, which are the experts of art (Moulin as cited in Martin, 2007).

2.3 Function of cultural actors within art world

Culture is produced not only by artists, but also together with other cultural gatekeepers. Art world agents or cultural gatekeepers are the intermediaries between the creation of cultural products and the production of the taste of consumers (Bourdieu, 1983). They mediate the message of the artwork and the artist towards the art world and its audience. The role of cultural gatekeepers for the artist and the public has become much more important (Janssen and Verboord, 2015). They strongly influence the symbolic value of art in the production of art, in the distribution and in the evaluation of culture. The quality of an artist is constructed through cultural actors (Martin, 2007). They decide if an artist is legitimate or not. Different cultural intermediaries are responsible for different tasks within the production of culture. The tasks that cultural gatekeepers as art critics, curators and gallery owners take upon them for the artists is to create opportunities to show art to the public, and also in evaluating the artist and thus giving him prestige (Janssen and Verboord, 2015). Different tasks can be divided into the production of art, the distribution of art and the evaluation of art.

Galleries

When it comes to bringing art works into the art world, the artist is dependent upon gatekeepers such as gallery owners to be interested in their art. Simultaneously the galleries are also dependent upon the work that artists produce and on the interest of the artist in the gallery. A gallery owner becomes interested in an artist after institutional recognition of the art world (Martin, 2007). This could be winning a prestigious prize, being part of an exhibition or receiving a grant. Interviews with young Finnish artists that enter the global art market elaborate on the important role of cultural gatekeepers and recognition of success at the beginning of an artist career (Kartunnen, 2008). Galleries became interested in the artist when they received attention in an important exhibition or when they were recommended to the gallery by another cultural player such as a collector or curator (Kartunnen, 2008). Then a gallery owner invites the artist to be part of a group exhibition, so the gallery owner can collaborate with the artist and see if collectors and other people are interested in the artist. Exhibiting in a gallery is important because it is an important source of income.

When an artist is part of a gallery, it shows that he is recognized as an artist and it increases the prestige of the artist.

The artist becomes part of a bigger network within the art world when it joins a gallery. An important task of the gallery owner is to create a community of critics, collectors and other cultural actors that have close ties with the gallery. Strong ties are important in creating a name for the gallery and the artist. A good name will help with selling works of art of the artist (Guiffre, 1999; Kartunnen, 2008; Velthuis, 2013). When a collector buys a piece of art, he subsequently becomes a representative of the artist and the gallery. This special bond is stimulated by keeping a close connection to collectors and other cultural agents, by inviting them to special events, such as atelier visits. The gallery itself also has a career, and it is trying to keep up with the competition between other galleries (Guiffre, 1999).

The gallery owner performs many tasks for the artists that are important in the production of art (Kartunnen, 2008; Velthuis, 2013). The gallery owner takes care of public relations, arranges new exhibitions at museums, represents the artist at biennales and attracts potential buyers of art (Velthuis, 2013). Galleries also influence the type of art that is produced by the artist (Janssen and Verboord, 2015). As co-producers, they influence the content of the artwork so that the artwork fits a certain taste (Janssen and Verboord, 2015). For example, one Finnish artist created art works that were specially requested by the gallery owner, because they would be easy to sell (Kartunnen, 2008).

Often the artists live close to their gallery, so they are able to install their own exhibitions and in order for the gallery to offer practical support. Whenever there is a big distance between an artist and a gallery owner it is important that there is a relationship of trust. This trust is enhanced by frequent phone, email or letter contact. Often the gallery owner organizes practical matters for the artists and the artists delivers the artworks and other inside information of the local art scene which is interesting for the gallery owner.

Art critics

Art critics, or cultural mediators inform the audience about the art world through articles in newspapers and magazines (Glynn and Lounsbury, 2005). Critics assess the quality of an artwork and the quality of the artists in an article. In the selection and evaluation of art, the art critics carefully choose the institution, gallery and artist they

are going to write about, depending on their prestige. Critics need to gain recognition and keep up their reputation (Janssen and Verboord, 2015). When an art critic writes about an artist, he gives a judgment on the artist, but he also claims to know the topic. Therefore critics strengthen their opinion with the opinion of institution that are recognized in society to create a solid argumentation. The reputation of an artist is created through the writings of an art critic.

Circles of recognition

The role of cultural intermediaries became important with the growing importance of autonomy in the arts. With autonomy, the artist gained more freedom and his work became more original and individual. Therefore, it became more difficult for non-professionals to understand the meaning of an artwork (Heinich, 2012). The role of the cultural intermediary is to explain the meaning and value of autonomous art to the general public. Cultural intermediaries construct the value of an artwork in the process of mediation. They valorize artworks and decide which artist gets recognition. Bowness (1989) explains this in the four circles of recognition. The circle is the hierarchy in which different cultural actors value new artworks. The first circle are peers, the second are critics and curators that are often related to cultural institutes, the third circle are gallery-owners and collectors and the fourth circle is the public (Heinich, 2012). The order of the hierarchy shows which cultural actors are first to judge and also which cultural actors follow the mediation of the previous.

2.4 The career development of an artist

The information that is exchanged between different cultural actors is extremely important in the beginning and throughout the development of the career of an artist. The network that is surrounding an artist defines his position in the art world. "Artists carry with them in their prestige package a history of past relationships" (Guiffre, 1999, p. 818). This means that the position of an artist in the art world and the type of work he shows throughout his career is related to the connections. So "present-day status is based on a position within a web of ties and also has embedded within the history of past positions" (Guiffre, 1999, p. 818). The career and the prestige of an artist is ever changing, throughout his career, and therefore it is difficult to pinpoint a specific value to an artist.

The success of an artist is heavily dependent upon the beginning of his career (Martin, 2007). At the beginning of his career, the artist is valued by the art world upon a series of tests (Martin, 2007). During these tests art world agents assess the quality of the artist, which is based upon the convention of originality. The main ways for an artist to start its career is by having an solo exhibition at an art center, participating in a residency or obtaining a grant. After these tests of legitimization, galleries become interested in artists. The relationship between a gallery and an artist is based upon an equal amount of prestige (Guiffre, 1999). When an artist is represented by a gallery with a high status, the status of the artist will rise, and he will have a positive influence on his career. Critics will notice them and work is acquired by prestigious collectors and museums. During his career, the artist can experience “upward and downward mobility”, which indicates if the artist is becoming more or less successful (Guiffre, 1999, p. 818) .

Network and success

The value of an artist is socially constructed and the network of the artist is important in creating success. Artists become successful when they build a good reputation, which happens through the recognitions of other people. Success or consecration is “the social process by which some individuals or objects are collectively identified as worthy of veneration and esteem” (Allen & Parsons as cited in Curioni, et al., 2015). Established gatekeepers control the art world and an artist that wants to enter the art world has to become known with these gatekeepers (Curioni et al, 2015). Networks are important in spreading the success of an artist and there are two different network structures that contribute in different manners to this success (Grannovetter, 1983; Lutter, 2014). These structures are based on two different types of relationships, which are strong ties and weak ties (Grannovetter, 1983). Strong ties are individuals that have a strong relationship with each other, such as friends, family or colleagues, which results in a dense network. Weak ties are relationships between people that do not know each other well, which results in weak networks.

A dense network is a structure in which all individuals are familiar with each other. People help each other more easily and support each other more. Dense networks are useful, because the clique of strong connections of one individual is likely to spread information among each other. Individuals that had a successful collaboration in the past

will easily collaborate again. A network of weak ties contains all the individuals that a person knows less well. People have more weak ties than strong ties, and weak ties are spread all over a network. The network of weak ties contributes to the success of an artist because information about the artist is spread among a bigger group of people. A loose network of many different cultural players will result in an ample flow of information (Grannovetter, 1983; Lutter, 2014).

2.5 Communism: state sponsored art world

There are major differences in the production and reception of art depending on the political and economic constraints of a country. Piotrowski (2009, p. 256) explains the division between Western European art world and communist art world:

It becomes clear that although both sectors ('experimental' and 'non-experimental') were connected through socio-political frames, they occupied separate spheres embracing different art values and operating within distinct social networks.

Many countries in Eastern Europe were under communist regime in the 20th century. The function and production of art was constructed differently in communist countries than in countries with democratic system. The model used in communist countries is also called "Official Art Organizations" (Kharchenkova et al., 2015, p. 80). In communism the function of art was to support the political ideology and production of art was controlled by the state. The model of "the single global market model" originates in Western Europe and the United States (Kharchenkova et al., 2015, p. 79). In these countries, the market for the art was, and currently is, commercially driven. Artists do not have to produce art that supports a political or commercial goal, and therefore have the space to work autonomously. These two differently constructed art worlds functioned alongside each other, and both art worlds are based on different perceptions of the function and value of an artwork.

The construction of the art world in communist countries was based upon a different model than the Western European model of autonomy. The government of the country controlled the art market through institutions such as artist unions and official art organizations (Breaz, 2011). Culture was extremely important under communism, because it was used to strengthen the ideological goals of the state (Toepler, 2000, p. 7). Cultural production was stimulated through subsidies and assignments. The control of

the cultural production in Russia and China through artist unions turned the artist union in a central organization in control of the art world. By giving assignments to artists, the government decided which artist were legitimate and which were not. In return the government secured the artists of an income and gave them the freedom of economic pressure.

In many communist countries the structure of the official art organizations is therefore extremely hierarchical (Kharchenkova et al., 2015). Markers of quality define the success of an artist. These markers start with the education he followed, the prizes he won for his art, and their rank of membership within official art organizations. These markers are highly important, because the selection procedure for artists is very strict. Therefore only the best, according to the selection, is admitted, setting an immediate standard of prestige. When the artist is ranked with a higher membership, he can increase the prices of his artworks (Kharchenkova et al., 2015). In China artists are trying to get high up in the ranking by becoming a chairman, vice chairman or director of an organization. The official position is even directly linked to the amount of money an artist can ask for his work (Kharchenkova et al., 2015). Whenever the position of an artist drops within the ranking of the official art organization, the value of the artist also drops.

Official art

The way an artistic work is made was clear-cut for an artist living under communism. Often artists had an illusionary freedom of expression, but in reality, had to comply to many rules which constrained their artistic creativity. An example is the formulation of artistic guidelines in the July thesis of Ceausescu (Breaz, 2011). The July thesis of Ceausescu, the communist leader of Romania was a reform of the cultural ideology of the state. In 1968 the formulation of the artistic freedom of an artist created by the party and by art critics was “diversity in unity” (Nemteanu as cited in Mocanescu, 2002, p. 5). The working class was the main inspiration and public for art that was created after the July thesis. Therefore the working class became the main reason for excluding certain artistic forms of expressions. Western inspired painting was not permitted, because the working class would not understand. Any form of experimentation would not be understandable for the working class and figurative art was the main artistic style.

Thus the suggested diversity that was given to artists, was not that free after all. Similar ideas were applied to China and Russia, where the style of the work of the artist is focused on the mastery of techniques and not on the use of original concepts (Kharchenkova et al., 2015).

The idea of an artwork in Romanian communist society was a product that was finished (Breaz, 2011). The idea, the form and the execution should all be completed and thus the end product should be finished. There was no room for experiment. Artists were part of the intellectuals, and thus had a high prestige within the system. Artists were expected to produce socialist nationalist art, but also tried to create own work.

It is difficult to characterize the tension between the official and the unofficial culture in terms of clear opposition, especially since some instructions associated with the alternative or 'autonomous' culture functioned within the sphere of permissions, concessions and other forms of tactical accommodation made by authorities. (Piotrowski, 2009, p. 257)

If any experimental works of art were tolerated it was also because the works of art would only have a limited impact. "In reality, well-educated Romanian intellectuals were isolated as an elite within the poorly educated Romanian society and thus their art had no broader social impact" (Piotrowski, 2009, p. 258).

Grey zones: unofficial accepted art

The amount of political heteronomy that was applied in communist society influenced the artistic autonomy of the production of art. This means that when the political regime was less strict, there was more space to create artistic autonomous art. Within this grey area, the state tolerated artist that created art which was experimental and had autonomy (Asavei, 2007). During the political liberalization in Romania, the government loosened communist regulation and carefully opened their borders to Western influences (Mocanescu, 2007). The consequences for cultural life in Romania were that cultural trends from the West could enter the country and serve as new inspiration for artists. The artist gained confidence, which changed their attitude towards the artist profession and the freedom of artistic creativity (Mocanescu, 2007). Experimental work was created and shared with the art world outside of the official art venues.

2.6 Function of state sponsored art world

The way that different cultural organizations were constructed under state is more complex than often discussed (Toepler, 2000, p. 13). There were many smaller organizations that served cultural, educational and social purposes for society. They even claimed to be at arm's length from the state, which means they had a certain amount of autonomy (Toepler, 2000). Toepler (2000, p. 14) claims that these organizations had "some degree of independent, entrepreneurial and even critical activities".

Artist union

One of the important organizations for artists under communism was the artist union. The construction of the artist union in the U.S.S.R. was highly hierarchical with the central power of the state. In every city there was a branch of the artist union with a local administration (Lazarev, 1979). In the U.S.S.R. the artist union was defined as "a trade union of men and women active in the various fields of visual art" (Lazarev, 1979, p. 107). The goal of the artist union was to "to maintain high artistic standards" (Lazarev, 1979, p. 107). To become a member of the artist union, the artist had to go through a selection procedure. At least, the artist had to prove he had studied art and he was part of a group exhibition in a gallery.

The artist earned money through selling artworks to the state, through the artist union and the ministry of culture and by getting commissions from the artist union or from the ministry of culture. Because the artist union was a central organization and a decentralized local administration, the artist could get multiple commissions or exhibitions. Although the Romanian artist union claimed to give equal opportunities to all artists, in reality certain artists were more privileged. Mocanescu (2011, p. 115) exemplifies the unequal distribution of opportunities when she discusses the critique that art critic Anca Aghir gives on the way the artist union works. Aghir criticizes the distribution of commissions from the artist union towards artists. She mentions that the commissions always end up within a close circle of friends, colleagues and family members. The artist union also had opportunities to travel abroad and exhibited in another country (Mocanescu, 2011). This was extremely important for artists, because such travel would mean that the artist could build a network abroad. Not all artists that were member of the artist union were always notified to such opportunities, because

this information was delayed or kept secret by the union. Graphic designer Mariana Petrescu expresses her anger concerning this matter:

From 1963 until 1971 I could not enjoy the appreciation and fair evaluation of the graphics section, to which I belong, and I have not travelled because I do not belong to the group of privileged ones, those who are “in power” and neither do I belong to the group of those who must be “promoted” domestically and abroad. (Petrescu as cited in Mocanescu, 2011, p. 116).

Art critic

The art critic played an important role in the construction and definition of national art (Mocanescu, 2002). The function of the art critic was to discuss socialist-realist artists and artworks to confirm the ideology of communism. “Intellectuals were those who maintained the illusion that the system was functioning, that was said at the very top was true and should be supported” (Mocanescu, 2002, p. 6). Thus, the discussion itself was constructed. The writings of Romanian art critics were rather conservative and were behind on the global artistic development (Mocanescu, 2002).

Artists

Romanian artists living under communist rule can be divided into three categories: “the conformists, the false conformists/the false non-conformists and the non-conformists” (Mocanescu, 2011, 120). The conformists were the artists that accepted to produce socialist realist art. Mocanescu (2011) coins them as a group of not so well known artists who started to produce many artworks for official art exhibitions. The second group of artists was young with ambition who became known autonomous artists during the period of more freedom in Romania from 1960 until 1971. As Mocanescu (2011) explains, these artists wanted to maintain their good position by stating to work for the artist union and produce official art. They continued to experiment with art in private and they produced official art for the public. This resulted in artists that managed to get the best of both worlds. They had a good connection with the artist union, because they delivered official art works. This art was influenced by experiment and thus more modern, but also appreciated by the artist union. They showed their experimental art through private exhibitions, and thus got prestige from being an autonomous artist. The last group, the non-conformists, was a group of artists who did not want to give up their

autonomy for the creation of socialist realist art. They tried to be politically neutral, and maintain their personal beliefs.

2.7 Case study: Ion Bitzan

Ion Bitzan was an artist that worked for the artist union in Romania and he was a professor at the Fine Arts academy in Bucharest. Stiles (1993) explains that Bitzan's "terror was so deep he remembered that he felt guilty for being human" (n.p.).

Piotrowski (2009, p. 258) calls Ion Bitzan "an exception among Romanian artists of the 1970s". The experimental works that Bitzan started to make after his encounter with Rauschenberg at the Venice biennale in 1964 did not contain the same radical statements as within Western art (Piotrowski, 2009, p. 257). They were poetic and tried to break with the communist ideologies of an artwork, such as creating a clear function within the painting. Ion Bitzan himself avoided to make political statements or other radical steps within his experimental art, because he could lose the privileges that allowed him to travel and exhibit abroad.

3. Method

3.1 Mixed methods

The global art market and the career of an artist can be researched qualitatively and quantitatively. It is necessary to present the broader context of the art world, to be able to research in depth how an artist living under communist rule develops a career. With quantitative methods the general overview of the art world can be shown, and with qualitative methods in depth information of one specific artist could be researched. Therefore the method of research is mixed method.

Mixed methods provide a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods that answers this research question optimally. Qualitative research focuses on explaining and describing social phenomena in depth. Through qualitative research we can create knowledge that helps with a better understanding of social reality. Quantitative research is used to justify social reality. The aim is to research if social phenomena that we observe in a small part in society, is generalizable to a broader society. Both research methods stem from opposite research paradigms, namely the empiricist for qualitative research and the rationalist for quantitative research. This research combines rationalist and empiricist paradigms, through the pragmatist paradigm. The pragmatist paradigm looks at “knowledge as constructed and based on our daily reality” (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 18). It does not choose between qualitative and quantitative research, but it seeks to use or combine methods whenever is necessary for the research.

When constructing a mixed method research there has to be one dominant research method, which gives direction to the research question and to the research (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). This research has a qualitative basis, and uses quantitative research to support the qualitative base. This construction fits this thesis, because the research question is open and the specific direction of the research is found through the findings. The results from the quantitative method clarify and structure the qualitative research method within this research (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

3.2 Social network analysis

A research method that has qualitative and quantitative features is social network analysis. Social network analysis is a method that is used to analyze the relationships between different cultural actors from an individual, relational and structural level within a network (Borgatti and Everett 2002; Haythornthwaite, 1996; Lazega, 1997; Scott, 2013). This method fits with the research topic, because it has “the capacity to contextualize behavior by describing relational structures by bridging the gap between the individual, relational and structural level” (Lazega, p. 5). The structural level is at a macro-level and looks at structures that are formed with the network. The relational and individual level is at a micro-level, and analyzes relationships between different actors. The multiple levels that are being used in analyzing social networks call for a dynamic perspective of analyzing data. The goal of a social network analysis is to organize relational data and investigate the structure of social actions within that data (Scott, 2013). Social network analysis collects information on relationships between different members of a social setting (Lazega, 1997). These relationships are then visualized through web of connections, which creates a context for these relationships.

3.3 Case study

To illustrate the network analysis, I am using a case study of the career of Romanian artist Ion Bitzan (Meyer, 2001). The artist and his career are relevant in this research because Bitzan is an artist that lived under communism in Romania from 1924 until 1989. During this time, he showed his artworks in Romania and abroad in countries such as the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and France. Piotrowski (2009, p. 258) calls the artist “an exception among Romanian artists of 1970”, because he created autonomous art and state sponsored art. Unlike many artists that created autonomous art, he showed his work abroad, but he never moved out of Romania. Therefore the network of people he had abroad must have played a crucial role in establishing his international career.

The archive of exhibition documents of Ion Bitzan is the data for the social network analysis. The archive was collected and saved by Ion Bitzan himself and it was passed on to his daughter, Irina Bitzan, after he died. The archive contains around 600 documents starting from the year 1962 until 1997. The types of documents are personal

letters, newspaper articles, catalogue texts, exhibition flyers and many others. No previous research is done on the archive of Ion Bitzan, which makes this research unique. The archive contains information on the individuals, organizations and countries that have played a role in the start and the development of the international career of Ion Bitzan. The archive is representative for the career of Ion Bitzan, because there are documents from almost all 35 years, except from the year 1988 and 1989. The archive is representative because it contains information on all the exhibitions he was part of (list of exhibitions in the appendix). The archival material is useful for a network analysis, because of the diversity in material, the amount of material and the long time frame.

3.4 Social network analysis of Ion Bitzan: 3 stages

The analysis of the network of Ion Bitzan is performed in three stages. These stages are closely related to each other, and they are all necessary to answer the research question. Every stage has its own research methods that are all in service of the social network analysis. In preparation of the network analysis, I have performed a quantitative content analysis. Secondly I have performed the social network analysis, and I have analyzed all networks and then I have grouped them. Thirdly I have performed an ethnographic content analysis to extract information on the relations between different actors from the archival material.

Stage 1: data overview

Before the archive can be used for the social network analysis, there are preliminary tasks that need to be performed to create the right data for the network analysis (Lazega, 1997). The data for the network analysis needs relational information and it needs boundaries. To create a proper organization of the data and retrieve all the necessary information, I have performed a quantitative content analysis. Quantitative content analysis is a research method in which the content is analyzed and structured using preset categories (Riff et al., 2014). The categories create boundaries for the archive of Ion Bitzan and it highlights the relational aspect in the documents. The data that comes out of a content analysis is used to discover patterns and to discover relationships within the content (Riff et al., 2014, p. 3).

Operationalization of content analysis

The theoretical framework serves as a framework for the concepts used in the content analysis. These concepts help us to understand how Ion Bitzan entered the art world while living under communist rule and how he maintained an international career. They look at the relationship between Bitzan and other cultural players in the field, and how they related to each other. The concepts are translated into dimensions, which are then translated into measurements. It is necessary for the content analysis to incorporate three relational levels in the dimensions: structural, relational and individual. These levels overlap in the theoretical concepts, but they are very useful for the rest of the research. Therefore I will explain these three different levels in relation to the concepts and dimensions. Information on the countries and the cultural institutes that Bitzan had contact with give us the possibility to structure the international career of Bitzan within the art world. Knowledge on the type of cultural institutes individuals worked at, their position in the institute and their relationship with Ion Bitzan gives us an insight in the relational level of the network of Ion Bitzan. Information on individuals in Bitzan's network is collected through the profession of the person, the type of contact, the name of the exhibition and a small description of the content of the contact.

Concepts:

- Global art world
 - Center/periphery:
 - Countries
 - Cultural institutes
- Field theory
 - Autonomous/ Heteronomous field:
 - Cultural institutes
 - Profession of actor
 - Type of exhibition
 - Date of contact
- Network
 - Relation between cultural actors
 - Content of contact
 - Type of contact

- Amount of contact
- Date of contact
- First, second and third contact

Codingscheme of archive:

1. number of scan
2. date of document
3. country and city of origin
4. language in which the text is written
5. type of text
6. subject of the text
7. name of the exhibition, when applicable.
8. name of the organization
9. type of organization
10. name of actor (writer)
11. function of actor (writer)
12. weight of the text -> dependent on the profession of the writer. Higher importance gives a higher weight.
13. name of first contact, receiver of letter.
14. profession of first contact
15. name of second contact
16. profession of second contact

Description of data collection process

In order to use the archive of Ion Bitzan we had to digitalize it. Each document of the archive was thus separately scanned into a digital archive. Secondly the digital archive was analyzed using content analysis. To perform this analysis I created a coding scheme as you can see above. This coding scheme contained fixed and flexible codes. These codes are organized in an excel sheet which corresponds to the digital archive. Each scan was analyzed separately and the necessary information was filled into the excel archive. Whenever the language was not English or Dutch, I have translated the text using Google translate and translation by native speakers. The excel archive functions as a search

engine for the other stages, because every document is described in the excel. It serves as a fundament for the network analysis and the in depth analysis of content.

Stage 2: structuring networks

The social network analysis is used to discover which relationships between Ion Bitzan and other cultural players were important in entering the global art world and developing his career. The network analysis is not used to rank the position of Ion Bitzan within the art world. It wants to show different aspects and processes that are relevant for an artist that lives under communist rule and has an international career.

This stage of the method stage of the research is used to create the networks and analyze the relationships that become visible in these networks.

Edges & nodes

A network structure is build from nodes and edges. Nodes are all the individuals or organizations that visible in the network. The edges are the connections between nodes. The nodes can contain much information about the individual and the edge can contain much information on the relationship between different edges. The structure of nodes and edges is necessary to create a network and to be able to analyze a network. Hence the information of previous excel archive is reorganized to fit the structure of edges and nodes (as seen in the tables below).

Edges	
Source	Node that send contact
Target	Node that received contact
Exhibition	Name of exhibition
Label	Type of contact
Weight	Weight of type of contact
Year	Year of contact
Country	Country of node that send contact

Nodes	
ID	Name of contact
Label	Name of contact
Function	Function of contact
Organization	Name of organization related to contact
Type of organization	Type of organization related to contact

Operationalization of network analysis

The operationalization of the theoretical framework into the concepts and dimensions is almost the same as in the first stage of the research. The difference is the treatment of data and the measurements that are used in a social network analysis. The structure of the social network analysis makes the treatment of the data differently. This structure has to be understood to continue with the rest of the operationalization.

Concepts and dimensions for network analysis

- Global art world-> structural
 - Center/periphery
 - Hierarchy of countries-> actors
 - Hierarchy of institutes-> actors
 - Field theory
 - Political field->actor and node?
 - Autonomous field-> type of contact
 - Changing of the field-> career networks over years
 - Art world agents->actors

- Network-> relational
 - Types of nodes
 - Change over time within network
 - Cohesion (density)
 - Prominence of actors
 - Type of ties

- Actors-> individual
 - Type of actor
 - Type of contact:
 - Strength of contact
 - Strength within network
 - Prominent function within network
 - Connection to other nodes

Network of 35 years of career

The archive of Ion Bitzan contains data of around 35 years of his career. Analyzing the complete dataset at once would result in an extremely large network in which it is difficult to detect changes in the career, or find important nodes. Therefore it is necessary to create a network with the data per year and analyze each year separately. It was useful to have all of the networks separately per year, because it made it possible to spot trends in the network and follow changes over time. Secondly it showed which individuals are important players within the network. The structure I have used to present the overall career development is to assemble years that were similar into 5 phases. These five phases are used to perform several measurements.

Gephi

Gephi is a computer program that visualizes networks and performs network analysis on data coming from these networks. This tool is necessary to use for social network analysis, because it transforms written information from the excel file into a visual network of the relationships between different individuals. In this research Gephi is used to visualize each network per year and again per phase. Secondly the program is used to compute several measurements per each annual network as seen below. These measurements are computed, but not necessarily used in the results, because they are not always relevant to the research.

Measurements of network in Gephi

1. **nodes:** amount of nodes within the network
2. **edges:** amount of edges within the network
3. **average path length (range):** The average graph-distance between all pairs of nodes. (network measure)
4. **diameter:** longest graph distance between any two nodes in the network. (network measure)
5. **(graph) density:** measures how close the network is to complete. A complete graph has all possible edges and density equal to 1. (network measure)
6. **Degree_1:** Prominence of nodes within network. Indicates which actors have “influence or power within the network” (Haythornthwaite, 1996, p. 334). (Individual measure)

7. **Degree_2:** Prominence of nodes within network. (Individual measure)

8. **Degree_3:** Prominence of nodes within network. (Individual measure)

Description of data collection process

The process of data collection for the network analysis started with the division of the previously created excel file into one excel file with the information of one year. After creating 35 separate files, I have ordered the information for nodes and edges, so it would fit the structure of social network analysis. Then each year was separately computed in Gephi, which resulted in 35 separate networks. I analyzed each network to understand the structure of the network and the relationships between Bitzan and other actors. Then I discovered that a trend could be spotted in the sequence of the networks, and I decide to divide the network chronologically into different phases. Phase 1 runs from 1964 until 1967, phase 2 from 1968 until 1972, phase 3 runs from 1973 until 1980, phase 4 from 1981 until 1988 and the last phase from 1990 until 1997. The division of five phases resulted from an analysis of Bitzan's network per year in which several trends were found.

These phases helped me to understand trends in his career and relate these to the theoretical concepts of autonomy and heteronomy. Then I connected the phases to the theory. This step gave the space to make a statement over changes that occurred within these periods. It gives the possibility to add certain characteristics to each phase, and connect phases to political events. Uniting the information of different years in Gephi also created these phases. The following step was to compute and analyze the network per phase and report on it.

Stage 3: analyzing individual relations

Stage one served as a preparation for the network analysis, stage was the network analysis and focused on the structural and the relational level of the network analysis. Stage three is necessary to research the individual level of the network. Through an ethnographic content analysis, the background of important relationships between is researched and analyzed. An ethnographic content analysis is defined as a "reflexive analysis of document"(Altheide, 1987, p. 65). Within ethnographic content analysis, objective content is searched, but also the communication of each document is searched and understood (Altheide, 1987). This stage helps us to explain the reason for a certain

development of the career of Ion Bitzan. This last stage of the research helps to dive into the reason behind the start of Bitzan's international career and it explains how it was certain international exhibitions were possible.

Description of data collection process

The network analysis has given me an insight of where and when Bitzan career started internationally and it shows important tendencies and clarifies milestones within his career. The ethnographic analysis helps me to elaborate on important phenomena. After I have discovered key people and exhibitions in the networks, I went back into the archive to search documents that could explain situations or clarify network connections. I was able to search in the archive, because of the extensive excel document that I have created in the beginning. The information in the networks corresponds to this archive, which makes it easy to find information.

4. Findings

These findings will discuss how visual artist Ion Bitzan entered the global art market and developed an international career. The findings are structured into three sections; Ion Bitzan's political heteronomy, Bitzan negotiation between political heteronomy and artistic autonomy and Ion Bitzan's artistic autonomy. The structure of these sections is based upon the main theoretical concepts of artistic autonomy and political heteronomy. The juggle between creating autonomous and heteronomous artwork, and working between communist and international art world is visible throughout the career of Bitzan. Within each section the autonomy or heteronomy is discussed in relation to the political situation, the network of Bitzan and the relationships he had towards the national and international art world. The first section discusses the political heteronomy that is visible in the first phase of the career of Ion Bitzan. I call the political heteronomy a restrained autonomy, because Bitzan explains that there was space for a controlled form of autonomy. The section discusses the political situation within Romania in relation to the art world. Then it discusses the social network Bitzan within the national and international art world and I elaborate on these relationships in depth.

Then Bitzan's negotiation between artistic autonomy and political heteronomy is discussed in relation to two main political events: the Warsaw pact in 1968 and the July theses in 1971. The first political event resulted in more creative freedom for artists in Romania and more space for Romanian artists to go international. The impact of the Warsaw pact on the Romanian art world and the consequences for Bitzan's career are discussed using important exhibitions he was part of. The introduction of the July thesis resulted in a reinforcement of communist values. Political heteronomy ruled again in Romania and artists had to create work in service of the political ideology. I will discuss how Bitzan handled this situation and how he, and other cultural actors negotiated between artistic autonomy and political heteronomy.

Finally the thesis will discuss the moment in Bitzan's career artistic autonomy ruled over political heteronomy. Proof of the autonomous concur are exhibitions in the United Kingdom and the United States during the last period of communism. After the revolution of 1989, artistic autonomy was also nationally accepted and celebrated through controversial exhibitions. These exhibitions and the general condition of the Romanian art scene are discussed.

4.1 Bitzan's restrained autonomy

Legitimate artist of Romania

Ion Bitzan (1924-1997) is a Romanian artist that worked for the state under communism and created abstract art for the Western art world. At the beginning of his artistic career, he had no access to the Western art world, and he was not familiar with autonomous values of art. The art academy Nicolae Grigorescu, where he started in 1951 in Bucharest, trained Bitzan into a socialist realist painter. Such training was concentrated in “the study of nature through still life, nudes or portraits” (Mc Crum, 1985, scan 480). The focus was in mastering techniques and understanding materials in use of expressing a message. After he finished his study, in the 1960s, he started creating art for the state. An example of an artwork created by Bitzan for the state is shown in an undated article of a Romanian newspaper. It shows a picture of Ion Bitzan working in front of another socialist realist painting of a man holding a red flag. The text that is added to photograph explains that the painting of Bitzan expresses “the heroism of a man who is dedicated to communists and to fight against fascism, and the exploitation of men” (scan, 227). Bitzan was appreciated as an artist by the artist union and the state (Stiles, 1993; Piotrowski, 2009; Mocanescu, 2011). He received assignments from the state and created a network of cultural players around him.

Romania towards an autonomous state

From the 1960s onwards the political situation of Romania was in constant change, which had an impact on the artistic autonomy of Bitzan and his possibilities of having an international network. From the 1950s until the 1960s, Romania was a communist state that was occupied by the U.S.S.R. (Georgescu and Călinescu, 1991). After the death of Russian leader Stalin in 1953, Romania appointed a prime minister: Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej (Georgescu and Călinescu, 1991). From 1960 until the death of Gheorghiu-Dej in 1965, Romania worked towards a relative autonomous government (Georgescu and Călinescu, 1991, p. 247). This consequently led to the removal of all Stalin and U.S.S.R. influence from the country in 1963. An international consequence of the restored freedom in Romania was that Romanian economic delegations visited Western countries and the import of consumer goods from the West was slightly restored. After the sudden death of Gheorghiu-Dej, Nicolae Ceausescu was appointed as

the following president of Romania by Gheorghiu-Dej. From 1965 until 1971 Ceausescu kept on working towards a more relatively autonomous state.

Culture that was appropriate within communism was again exported abroad. The artist union collaborated with other countries to show their socialist realist art during exhibitions or competitions. For visual artists, this was a great opportunity to show their work abroad within the restricted framework of communism. Also Ion Bitzan, who is called “one of the most frequently exported Romanian artists of the Ceausescu era”, went abroad to show his work (Piotrowski, 2009, p. 257). In the preparation and execution of this exhibition, Bitzan was in contact with cultural players and consequently developed an international network. During this time, his network mainly consisted of Romanian cultural players. His international connections were in Poland, Italy, Brazil, the Czech Republic and the United Kingdom. In each of these countries he was part of an exhibition. He had most contact with art critics and museum directors from Romania and other countries that are discussed above. The most important exhibition, which changed the course of his career, was the Venice biennale in 1964.

Bitzan's milestone: Venice biennale 1964

Bitzan was part of the selection of artists for the Romanian pavilion of the Venice biennale of 1964. The work of art that Bitzan showed during the biennale was a visual representation of the ideology of communism in Romania. The name of the work “a Lorie filled with wheat, a field worker, and a red flag in the corner”, literally tells what was shown on the canvas. In an interview Bitzan had with Kristin Stiles (1993), he explains that he was proud of the artwork, because it was made precisely according to the academic rules of painting.

Together with artists Boris Caragea, Ion Gheorghiu and Ion Pacea they showed socialist realist work. Mircea Deac, who worked as art critic and commissariat of the Romanian pavilion, came along with the group to write about the biennale. The selection of works that was presented at the pavilion were “portraits of Romanian workers and peasants, scenes and images of life and a variety of landscape paintings of our country”(Mircea Deac, 1969, scan 246). The booklet that was created for this exhibition contained an article written by art critic Mircea Deac. The article explains that the artists at the pavilion are a typical representation of Romanian visual arts. Deac elaborates on

the relationship between visual arts as a representation for the people of Romania, the state and the future identity of the country.

Although the number of artists and their works is not large, we hope, of course, to show something of the typical Romanian plastic temperament, which is manifested in the warm light, the splendor of the colors, in the sincerity of feelings. It is not any doubt that this specific form is part of the general development of the arts, as well as in the specific determinations of our country, a country where the art and the artists have a full appreciation and love by the state and the general public. (Deac, 1969, scan 246)

The news of the representation of Romania at the Venice biennale was communicated to the Romanian people through the newspaper. Mircea Deac was the cultural player in charge of the Romanian pavilion but also took care of the communication. She wrote a report in a Romanian newspaper on the biennale, calling it “one of the largest traditional artistic events” (scan, 833, 1969). In the article Deac (1969) stresses the international importance of the event. She addresses that more than 400 international art world actors of 3 nations will be present, such as art critics, museum directors and representatives of newspapers. The reception of the Romanian artworks by the international press is explained as “vital and strong” and “leaving a positive lasting impression” on other countries (scan 833, 1969).

For Ion Bitzan, the participation in the Venice biennale served as a milestone in his career. Other non-communist countries were introduced by the work of Ion Bitzan, but mostly Bitzan could see the artistic work made by artists coming from over the world. Bitzan was introduced by experimental and abstract art that was created with the freedom of expression. In an interview, Bitzan explained he was “confused, disturbed and embarrassed by his art” after he saw the artworks that were created by Rauschenberg and others (Stiles, 1993, para. 4). His own painting, that he was so proud of, seemed “provincial” and he felt ashamed of his own painting (Stiles, 1993, para. 4). The introduction to autonomous art served as the beginning of creating art that did not comply to the socialist ideals of the socialist republic of Romania.

After the biennale

The exhibition in Venice served as an incentive for other cultural venues to invite Bitzan for an exhibition. Bitzan got other national and international opportunities to show his work after the biennale. One of the exhibitions of socialist realist art was in Poznan, Poland in 1966. In preparation for the exhibition, he had contact from 1965 until 1967 with Maciej Zuralski, the director of the bureau of artistic exhibitions. Zuralski got in touch with Ion Bitzan through a mutual friend and artist, Ion Pacea. In the first letter, which is directed to artist and friend of Bitzan, Ion Pacea, Zuralski asks for the address of Ion Bitzan (scan 196). The second letter is an invitation directed to Bitzan in which he is invited to exhibit at the gallery of artistic expositions in Poznan. "I had the opportunity to see the catalog of the Romanian exhibition of the biennale in Venice and I admire the reproductions of your work, which made me very interested" (Zuralski, 1965, scan 198). In preparation of this exhibition, Ion Bitzan and Maciej Zuralski had an elaborate exchange of letters discussing the details of the exhibition. The exhibition is reviewed, but this time in the *Gazeta Poznanska*, a Polish newspaper (scan 252).

The Romanian communist government appreciated the art works of Ion Bitzan and gave him many opportunities nationally and internationally. An example of the foreign representation of communist art by Ion Bitzan is the exhibition 'Rumanian art of the 20th century: Brancussi and his countrymen' at the Royal College of Art Galleries in the United Kingdom in 1966. This exhibition was a diplomatic initiative to strengthen the relationship between the Romanian and the English government. "The exhibition is part of a continuing series of cultural exchanges between our two countries which is helping to cement close ties between them" (Darwin, 1966, scan 266). The well-performed socialist style of Bitzan was encouraged and appreciated by cultural institutes in Romania. The Romanian government demonstrates their interest by purchasing a work of Ion Bitzan. An example is the official letter of the museum of art of the socialist republic of Romania directed to Bitzan from 1967. In this letter director M.H. Maxy confirms the purchase of the work "Flori-garoafe", which was presented at the Venice biennale of 1964, three years earlier, for 6.000 lei (scan 236).

Mediators of state sponsored art

Mediators within the art world make sure that an art world exists. The art critic is the gatekeeper with the highest representation in the network of Ion Bitzan. Besides the

great number in appearances, the art critic influenced the art world because of his role as a gatekeeper. Whenever Bitzan had an exhibition abroad, Romanian newspapers would report about this exhibition by publishing a review from a Romanian art critic. The magnificent reflection of the Romanian state through the arts is often discussed in the reviews. The critic constructed and defined the national Romanian identity abroad and internal through the articles they wrote in the Romanian newspaper. There are many Romanian art critics that supported Ion Bitzan and occupied multiple positions in the production of Bitzan's work. For instance, Dan Haulica was part of the network of Ion Bitzan since 1967 and he worked as an art critic, as the president of the international association of art and later as Romanian ambassador for Unesco. He has always represented Romanian art, and often wrote about Bitzan's work in national and international context. Mircea Deac functioned as art critic and commissariat of the Romanian pavilion. The multiple positions that these cultural actors had within the art world resulted in a network that was bigger and more diverse. The cultural actors supported Bitzan and promoted him in these diverse networks. This resulted in new national and international career opportunities for Ion Bitzan.

4.2 Bitzan's negotiation for artistic autonomy

After the Venice biennale, Ion Bitzan developed a new experimental way of creating art that was not in line with the expectations of the artist union. This gradual change occurred in a time of political alleviation. The political and artistic changes have direct impact on the network of Bitzan, which grows internationally. The artist is simultaneously in constant negotiation with the state of Romania about his heteronomous and autonomous identity.

The consequences of the Warsaw pact

From 1968 until 1971 Romania experienced political liberalization (Piotrowski, 2009). In 1968, Romania stopped being part of the Soviet Union and became an autonomous communist nation. Romanian leader Ceausescu ended his allegiance to the Soviet Bloc by refusing the Warsaw pact. Nationally and internationally this action was seen as progress towards a more open and autonomous Romania (Mocanescu, 2002). The rules in which cultural production took place were loosened which gave artists space to create artistic autonomous art (Verdery, 1991). An example of a new rule was that the

government allowed decentralization of cultural institutions (Verdery, 1991). This resulted in state sponsored galleries, such as gallery Apollo and studio 35 in which artists showed their “experimental art” (Piotrowski, 2009, p. 285). With the rise of these galleries it was possible for Romanian artists to start a hidden experimental art scene in which they developed their autonomous style (Piotrowski, 2009, 256). Cultural players from the international art world could come to Romania to discover the local art scene and there was more space to arrange exhibitions abroad. Artists like Bitzan that were initially popular with their socialist realist paintings, also started to experiment. The production of experimental art was tolerated by the communist regime. If the artist was important for the political regime, he could combine the production of socialist realist art with the creation of experimental art.

Negotiating autonomy

Bitzan started to create art works that were outside the guidelines of the socialist realism style. In the privacy of his atelier, Bitzan created collages, experimented with hand-made paper and constructed books with a secret unreadable language (Stiles, 1993). The government tolerated the creation of his autonomous artworks, and the government promoted the experimental art of Bitzan (Mocanescu, 2007). The promotion of Romanian experimental art was to prove to other countries that Romania did not stand still, but was progressing. In the meanwhile, Ion Bitzan continued to create work for the state and received money and the privilege to travel abroad.

The political liberalization of Romania resulted for Bitzan in an enormous growth in foreign contact with cultural institutes. In comparison to the network at the beginning phase of his career, the network that Bitzan developed from 1968 until 1972 increased enormously. The increase was visible in the amount of individuals and the diversity in countries of cultural institutes. During this period, he had contact with cultural actors from The United Kingdom, The Netherlands, Italy, Poland, France, Brazil, Germany, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Spain and Croatia. The purpose of this contact was to show autonomous as well as heteronomous works.

Especially the year 1969 was the most important year in Ion Bitzan’s career. During this year he had an international network surrounding him with several small cliques of international actors. He also had a big group of Romanian art critics that constantly reported about his international exhibitions. Important networks he created

that year were for example the Dutch group of cultural actors related to the Panorama Mesdag exhibition. These cultural actors were all related to each other through Isabella Kerkhoven- Constantinescu. Andrew Stasik, the director of the Pratt Graphic center in New York, connected different cultural players to Ion Bitzan, and is also indirectly connected to a big network of actors that are related to Richard Demarco.

Milestones for autonomous art of Bitzan

The next 5 exhibitions that I will discuss formed important milestones in his international career. I will elaborate on different aspects on how the network contributed to the development of the career of Ion Bitzan. This is a selection of exhibitions that are representational for the career of Ion Bitzan, but they do not represent the complete network of Bitzan during this moment in his career.

Six Romanian artists at Galerie Lambert

In 1968 Bitzan and five other artists (Horia Bernea, Ion Gheorghiu, Gheorghe Iacob, Sultana Maitec and Mircea Milcovici) showed their work at Galerie Lambert in Paris. Romanian art critic Radu Varia came along with the artists to write an article for the catalogue text in which she speaks highly positive about the exhibition. The French press quote her opinion in reviews of the exhibition: “The paintings of Bitzan, Gheorghiu, Bernea, Iacob, Maitec and Milcovici present an exceptional look into the recent development of Romanian art. They embody the spirit of renewal and the modern spirit of art” (J.W., 1969, scan 855).

The pieces that Radu Varia wrote in the Romanian newspaper on the exhibition, helped to increase the value of the Romanian artists within Romania, and they have stressed the importance of international recognition for the Romanian artists. A few months after the opening in June 1968, Varia published an article in the Romanian newspaper *Contemporanul*. In this article she stresses the international appreciation of the 6 contemporary artists by quoting a Parisian art critic. Her article starts: “For many people this exhibition will be revelation, wrote an important Parisian newspaper columnist soon after the opening” (Varia, 1968, scan 856). Next to quoting a Parisian newspaper, she affirms in her review that the complete international press found the exhibition of outstanding quality.

A big part of the network of Bitzan existed of national and international art critics. In the context of state sponsored art, they function as cultural actors that confirm and construct the political ideology through the newspaper. The role of the art critic during an exhibition of experimental art is to assess the quality of the artist and to create value within the artwork. Romanian art critics often came along with Bitzan to his international exhibitions. They wrote articles for the catalogue, helped with the organization of the exhibition, created connections with the international institutes and wrote reviews and reports that were meant for Romanian newspapers.

Richard Demarco

Richard Demarco was the second commercial gallery to represent Ion Bitzan outside of Romania. He was important for Bitzan, because he was able to arrange the first exhibition of experimental art of Ion Bitzan in the United Kingdom. Secondly, he helped Ion Bitzan to broaden his network within the international art world. In 1968 Richard Demarco went to Romania and visited artist studios in search for talent. "Guest of the Romanian union of artist, Richard Demarco, spent a week in between artists in the capital, held talks, looked at the workshop of artists, expositions and flipped through catalogues" (Domocos, 1968, scan 157). After his return he planned an exhibition of works from Ion Bitzan, together with Paul Neagu, Peter Jacobi and Ritzi Jacobi, to Scotland. "I want to assure you that if I plan an exhibition in the near future of contemporary Romanian art in my gallery I would automatically include you in my choice" (Demarco, 1968, scan 130). Demarco managed to get an exhibition of Romanian art that was already on display at the Bauzentrum in Hamburg. The Bauzentrum was showing the experimental works of Bitzan, Neagu, Peter and Ritzi Jacobi. Demarco had to act as an intermediary between the Bauzentrum, the artists and the artist union in Romania to arrange for the exhibition to come to Edinburgh. In a letter to Bitzan he explains: "It is important that I know the cost of this return journey, and I am sending a copy of this letter to Mr. Vazdavteanu, the director of the fondului plastic, so that he can tell me" (Demarco, 1969, scan 148).

The exhibition had a big influence on the development of Bitzan's career in the United Kingdom. The result was that other British gatekeepers became interested in exhibiting the work of Ion Bitzan. Articles in newspapers in the United Kingdom such as the Scotsman and the Guardian gave recognition to the artists. "The Romanians are

essentially private visionary people, translating their inward imaginings into physical manifestations for our delight” (Oliver, 1969, scan 158). The exhibition was also noticed by the Romanian press and discussed in the newspapers. The article that is written by the Romanian press refers to the review of the Scottish International and thus confirm the international interest in the Romanian artist.

Demarco visited Romania a second time in 1970 in preparation of the Edinburgh festival of 1971. During this trip, he visited studios of artists and galleries in Bucharest and had contact with the artist union. “There are about a dozen galleries run by the Union of Romanian Artists (the hospitality I enjoyed as the guest of the Union was quite overwhelming)” (Demarco, 1970, scan 97). Throughout his collaboration with Romanian art world, Demarco always served as an intermediary between the artists and the artist union. “I was much involved with meetings with the committee of the Union of Artists and with interviews for Romanian Television and Radio” (Demarco, scan 137). Every decision that was taken in regards to the artists and the art, had to go through the artist union and other governmental committees. In preparation of the Edinburgh festival in 1971, he wanted to have the artist present at the opening.

I explained to the committee of the Union of Romanian Artists, it is essential that the artists taking part in the exhibition are present physically in Edinburgh not only to help with installation but also to be able to meet fellow visual artists at the Edinburgh Festival. (1971, scan 93).

Bitzan could show his work at other galleries in the United Kingdom because of Richard Demarco. Julian Maule, who was the owner of the Richmond Hill gallery in London, invited Bitzan. He wrote to Bitzan in December 1970 and invited him to exhibit in his gallery in August 1971. “It will cost you absolutely nothing to show with us provided you can deliver your paintings to the gallery” (Maule, 1970, scan 779). In the letter, Maule explains that he will invite “all the important critics”, and if Bitzan is not convinced about Maule he can write Richard Demarco for his opinion. “Richard Demarco will willingly give you his opinion of me and my gallery” (Maule, 1970, scan 779).

Pratt Graphics center

When the political regime was more open to receive foreign visitors other international art players, such as Richard Demarco also travelled to Romania. Andrew Stasik, director

at the Pratt Graphic Center in New York visited the studios of several Romanian artists in 1968 in preparation of the group exhibition '8 Romanian printmakers'.

I acknowledge the receipt of your kind letter dated 24th of September 1968 by which you communicate me that you have appreciated my works seen at Mr. P. Comarnescu and at the same time you inform me about the possibility of their display in one of the exhibitions organized by you. (Bitzan, 1968, scan 50).

The graphic works that Stasik showed from Bitzan in his gallery were also for sale. This way, Bitzan earned money for his art. "I am pleased to inform you that to-date we have sold folios which result in a royalty to you of 200 dollar" (Stasik, 1970, scan 37).

Through Stasik, the work of Bitzan was included in the collection of the museum of modern art in New York. "I am delighted to inform you that one of the sets is now in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art in New York" (Stasik, 71, scan 48)

Panorama Mesdag and het Stedelijk Museum

In 1969 the connection with the Netherlands started in two ways. Ion Bitzan was invited for the exhibition 'eight Romanian artists' at the Panorama Mesdag in 1969 and the artist was invited for a residency at the Stedelijk Museum in 1969. Isabella Kerkhoven-Constantinescu, chairman of the Romanian Foundation in The Hague, was friends with Romanian art critic Radu Varia. Isabella Kerkhoven-Constantinescu was connected to both the Romanian art world and the art scene in The Hague. Her name is often mentioned in newspaper articles related to the exhibition According to a columnist of the Dutch newspaper *Het Vaderland* the exhibition at the Panorama Mesdag was the initiative of Kerkhoven-Constantinescu who had a close friendship with Radu Varia (1969, scan 374). Kerkhoven-Constantinescu financed the exhibition, and selected the artists together with Radu Varia (scan 375). Varia also wrote a text in the exhibition catalogue saying that the exhibition represents "the modern trends manifested in the Romanian contemporary art" (Varia, 1969, scan 382).

A second connection was established through the director of the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, Edy de Wilde, who was introduced to the work of Ion Bitzan when he was in the jury of the international gravure exhibition in Ljubljana in 1969. In 1970 Edy De Wilde personally invited Ion Bitzan for the residency program of het Stedelijk museum at Prinseneiland in Amsterdam.

I have pleasure in inviting you to come to work in one of our ateliers, at Prinseneiland 25, during the months of August, September and October 1971.

Your wife is also welcome because the accommodation in the studio is enough for both of you. (De Wilde, 1971, scan 364)

Stasik of the Pratt Graphics center knew De Wilde and thus send a letter to Bitzan to congratulate him with the residency. "My congratulations on your visit to Amsterdam and all my best wishes for a productive summer. Although my friend E. De Wilde, director of the Stedelijk Museum is now on holiday, I hope that upon his return you will convey to him my best wishes" (Stasik, 1970, scan 41).

Mediating between Romania and the West

Different cultural players that are discussed above all took a position in the network in of Ion Bitzan. The cultural player that was central in the mediation in Bitzan's career are the art critics. The Romanian art critic negotiated the symbolic meaning of the experimental art from communist Romania to other countries, and vice versa. Art critics are very prominent in his network because they reviewed the exhibitions Bitzan had internationally and nationally in newspapers and magazines. Some Romanian art critics were also in direct contact with the directors from international and Romanian cultural institutes, because they were involved in the production of the exhibition. Radu Varia is an art critic that has taken up several functions of importance in relation to the international career of Bitzan. Next to writing reviews of exhibitions in the national newspaper, she wrote texts for the catalogues of international exhibitions on Romanian art. Her words were then again used in the international review of a Romanian exhibition. She was part of the entourage whenever an artist went abroad, and then she reported back into the *Contemporanul* about the exhibition.

The same goes for Petru Comarnescu who was chairman of the Romanian Section of the International Association of Art Critics in 1969. He wrote the exhibition texts in the catalogue for the exhibition at Richard Demarco in 1969. "Ion Bitzan's work forms somehow appear has happenings and less as figurative and representational elements. Poetical and spiritual happenings seen by human beings and offered in the infinity of space"(Comarnescu, 1969, scan 91). Back in Romania, a big report written by Comarnescu on the international exhibition in which Bitzan and other Romanian artists was published in the newspaper *Tribuna*. In this article, the exhibition in Hamburg, at

Richard Demarco and at the Pratt Graphic center are discussed. Comarnescu uses quotes from reviews from foreign newspapers such as the Glasgow Herald and the Guardian, and quotes colleague Cordelia Oliver to strengthen the story and give it importance (scan 153).

How autonomous was it really?

The autonomy of Bitzan as an artist can be questioned considering his position internationally and nationally. The origin of the artist, and thus the political background, was often central in the exhibitions that Bitzan was part of with his experimental work. The titles “8 Romanian printmakers” at the Pratt Graphic center or “6 Romanian artists” at Gallerie Lambert are explicitly concerned with the nationality of the artist. The nationality and the political situation often returns in the presentation of the exhibitions abroad and in articles that are written in newspapers. With titles as “Refreshing works from Rumania a revelation” (Gage, 1969, scan 151) or “Modern art for Edinburgh delayed in Romania” (Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad, 1971, scan 372) or “You can’t be isolated from the West” (Mc Crum, 1985, scan 480). This point of view did not undermine the artistic autonomy of the work of Bitzan, but it undermines the perception of the international art world towards the artist and his work.

The works of Ion Bitzan were for sale in almost all of the international cultural organizations he exhibited. Gallery owner Demarco asks Bitzan in a letter to promote a commercial exhibition in the artist union. “I want you to note that you are exhibiting soon at the gallery in Aberdeen. Please see to it that this is advertised among the Union” (Demarco, 1972, scan 94). Economic heteronomy that is evident in the system of selling art on the international art market did not undermine the artistic autonomy of the art of Bitzan. In the following quote, Bitzan explains the difference between the Western and Romanian art world.

The art world operates quite differently there. What in the West would be commercial galleries are owned by the Artists’ Union, a state organization. A gallery is made available to an artist through it. The Union takes care of catalogue costs and publicity. The gallery is provided free. Commission is not charged on sales. There does not seem to be limitation placed on the type of work shown. (Mc Crum, 1985, scan 480)

Ion Bitzan lived and worked Romania, and was mainly part of the Romanian art system. During the exhibitions abroad, he was always temporarily part of the international art market. As an artist he was not financially dependent upon earning his incomes from the sales of his experimental work. He was dependent upon earning an income with socialist realist work, which maintained his international career.

4.2.1 July Thesis 1971: totalitarian Ceausescu

In 1971 the political course changed when “the July theses” of Ceausescu was adopted which resulted in a “mini-cultural revolution” (Georgescu and Călinescu, 1991, p. 255). The thesis represented a shift from “political and economic nationalism” to ideological nationalism around the person Ceausescu (Mocanescu, 2002, p. 4). This thesis marks a shift for the freedom of artists and other intellectuals in Romania. The relative autonomy that was given to artists and intellectuals since the death of Stalin, was completely reversed. This meant for artists that the starting artistic autonomy was restricted and all cultural expression was limited to rules of the state party. The main goal for culture was to support the personality cult of Ceausescu. Secondly new artworks had to elevate and inspire the proletariat (Mocanescu, 2011) The news of the cultural revolution reached Ion Bitzan when he was doing his residency at the Stedelijk museum in The Netherlands. The cultural revolution happened one week before the opening of an exhibition at Richard Demarco, which almost resulted in the dismissal of the exhibition. “Maybe this will be the last time that modern Romanian art is shown outside of Romania. The question is of the exhibitions in Pulchri studio and Panorama Mesdag, can take place” (Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad, 1971, scan 372).

From 1973 onwards, the network of Ion Bitzan drastically reduced comparing to the previous phases. The network was small and the amount of exhibitions right after the Cultural Revolution was very low. The institutions he mostly had contact with during this period was with the Color Planning Center in Japan and the Kunsthalle in Dusseldorf. In 1973, 1974, 1975 and 1980 Ion Bitzan was in contact with Masaomi Unagami, the director of the Color Planning Center in Japan. In 1978 Bitzan is invited to take part in the exhibition ‘about the curious nature of money in art, science and life’ at the Kunsthalle in Dusseldorf, which is in West Germany. Anca Aghir, which is a Romanian art critic, established a connection between Bitzan and the director of the museum, Jürgen Harten. Anca Aghir is part of Bitzan’s network since 1969. That year she

wrote a full-page article on Bitzan artistic career in Romania Literara and two years later she wrote another article in Romanian contemporary art magazine 'Arta'. Anca Aghir used her connections in favor of Bitzan. She suggested to Jürgen Harten that Bitzan's work would fit into the exhibition 'about the curious nature of money in art, science and life'. "I was recently in Paris where I met Ms. Aghir. She suggested that your work would work in the theme of the exhibition"(Harten, 1978, scan 605). Ion Bitzan was invited to participate in the exhibition at the Kunsthalle in Dusseldorf because of Anca Aghir . This is an example of how Romanian art critics maintained multiple positions into Ion Bitzan's network and how they used their network to profit Ion Bitzan's career.

Bitzan: the conformist/non-conformist

It is difficult to define the position of Ion Bitzan between the international and national art world. Therefore this thesis uses the definitions that art historian Magda Carneci to describe artists that lived under communist rule. Carneci created three categories for artist that lived under communism in Romania; "the conformists, the false conformists/false non-conformists, and the non-conformists" (Carneci as cited in Mocanescu, 2007, p.156). Conformists were artists that accepted the communism and willingly created socialist realist art for the state. The non-conformists did not accept the status quo for artists within communism. They choose not to produce any art and kept themselves away from any politics. The false conformists/ false non-conformists were artist that had a good connection with the artist union and negotiated their artistic autonomy in return for art made in the official style.

Bitzan fits best with the description of a false conformist/false non-conformist. But the negative connotation in the word, false, added by Carceni, is not appropriate for the description of Bitzan, therefore I will call him a conformist/non-conformist. Throughout his career, he negotiated for his artistic autonomy in return for the creation of political heteronomous artworks. As he explains in this quote: "In Romania, contemporary life outside has to be taken into account" (Bitzan as cited in Mc Crum, 1985, scan 480). This means that he did not deny the reality of communism in Romania, but he tried to deal with it.

Abstract- which is coined in communist countries as capitalistic influenced- art is tolerated, and could be shown in the West...Bitzan was allowed to exhibit his

abstract art in the West, and cultural actors were interested. (Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad, 1971, scan 372).

The political regime accepted the creation of experimental art of Bitzan, as long as it did not interfere with the communist ideology. The experimental art of Bitzan was not explicitly against communism. Bitzan maintained his loyalty towards the Romanian state through the creation of socialist realist art and it was in favor of the state to keep Bitzan happy. Thus it was accepted that Bitzan could show his work outside of Romania.

4.3 Autonomy ruling over heteronomy

After the July theses in 1971 and until the revolution of 1989, the megalomaniac state leader Ceausescu controlled Romania. Within the country, Ceausescu acted as a dictator, but internationally Ceausescu was still seen as a good leader. Artists had to create art following the rules that were imposed by the regime. Strict guidelines of rules were created to explain how artists should make artworks for the state. But in spite of the strict control upon their artistic autonomy, artists continued to experiment in secret (Mocanescu, 2007). It was clear that the artistic and international growth that the Romanian art world had experienced in the previous years could not be reversed. A solution was found for artists to deal with the creation of traditional art with modern experimental techniques, and it was accepted by the authorities. Art critics wrote that abstract and experimental art that was created by artist, was inspired by traditional Romanian folk art. Folk art was approved inspiration because it was associated with the ancient traditional culture of Romania. Ion Bitzan also continued with the creation of abstract art. During the phase from 1980 until 1990, he maintained a small international network. He was connected to the United Kingdom, United States and Ireland. Despite of the politically difficult situation, P. S. 1, a renowned cultural institute in the United States, noticed Ion Bitzan.

Conquering the United States and the United Kingdom

In 1980 the work of Ion Bitzan was introduced to Alanna Heiss, director of P. S. 1. Institute for art and urban resources through Romanian curator Andrei Oisteanu. In a written note from Heiss to Bitzan, she invites him to exhibit at P. S. 1:

Thank you so much for sending Andrei to us with the transparencies of your work. I love your work very much and it was good to see it again. We would like to do a

show of your work, but there is no money to ship work of you over to the United States. If you have an opportunity to come to the U.S, we would be honored to show your art. (Heiss, 1980, scan 67 and 68)

In a response, Bitzan explains that he wants to participate in the exhibition, but that P. S. 1 has to send him a legal and official invitation for the artists union in which is explained why Ion has to come to the United States. The invitation to exhibit at P. S. 1, created an incentive to prepare a larger trip to the United States as is shown in this letter from Bitzan.

In order to be able to solve in due time all the problems concerning my passport and the taking out of the country of my art world and also in order to be able to organize my program of activities at the end of 1981, I kindly ask you to let me know the exactly date of the exhibition... (Bitzan, 1981, scan 79)

Bitzan visited the United States through a diplomacy-trip offered by International Communication Agency, USICA, after the opening of the exhibition at P. S. 1. This travel had the official purpose “to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries by means of educational and cultural exchange” (Usica, 1981, scan 385). It was a way to meet cultural actors in the United States and thus increase his network. During this trip, he met Martha Wilson, director of Franklin Furnace gallery, people from the Frank Marino gallery, Karen Sugimoto from the Metropolitan Museum of Modern art and “ other key figures from the New York art world” (Shirreffs, 1981, scan 396). This trip was important for Bitzan, because it gave him opportunities for new exhibitions in the United States.

This resulted in sending a proposal to Franklin Furnace to show his contemporary work, but this proposal was denied. “I regret to inform you that Franklin Furnace’s artist panel did not select your work to be part of our exhibition schedule for the 1982-83 season” (Gordh, 1982, scan 65). After Bitzan was not selected by the artist panel to show in Franklin Furnace, Martha Wilson, director of Franklin Furnace tried to get funding to show Bitzan’s work. “In case your work is not selected by the artists’ panel, I have written a grant to show your work on which I will receive notification in August” (Wilson, 1982, scan 64). Although he did not manage to exhibit at Franklin Furnace, he did manage to get another exhibition in the United States. Ion Bitzan was invited to participate in the group exhibition ‘Paper Caper’ at the Frank Marino gallery in 1982.

United Kingdom

In 1983 Brian Ferran, the director of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland in the United Kingdom, was tipped by John Fairleigh about the work of Ion Bitzan “I write to let you know how much I enjoyed seeing slides of your work which John Fairleigh showed me the other day... Are you interested in showing your work at the Arts council gallery” (Ferran, 1983, scan 466). He invited Bitzan to show his work in the Arts Council gallery; in 1985 Bitzan had a solo-show there. Kent Dur Russell, who was the manager of the Arts council gallery, organized the exhibition and had much contact with Bitzan. Russell played a central role in his network at that time. He was in contact with collectors such as Julian Watson and John Fairleigh, with art critics, and with directors from other cultural institutes, such as Alanna Heiss. She wrote to Kent Dur Russell to express her excitement on the exhibition. “I am absolutely out of my skin with joy that you are doing an extensive exhibition of Ion Bitzan’s work. I think he is one of the most important and least known abstract artists in the world” (Heiss, 1985, scan 81). The Butler gallery in Kilkenny wanted to take over the solo-exhibition of Bitzan from the Arts Council gallery in their own gallery and therefore Bitzan was shown in Ireland. “I am pleased that you are to have a show in the Butler Art gallery, Kilkenny during June this year. The director, Diarmaid De Paor, will be in touch with you soon”(Ballard, 1986, scan 472). The exhibition at the Butler gallery was well received and traveled further to the Kilkenny arts festival (scan 428). In a letter from the director of Visiting Art, Henry Meyric Hughes, to John Fairleigh, who is a collector of Ion Bitzan’s work, he explains: “I am delighted to learn that the exhibition will be re-assembled for the Kilkenny Arts Festival in June this year..... I will follow your suggestion and get in touch with Kent Dur Russell” (Hughes, 1986, scan 428).

The revolution of 1989

The revolution in 1989 marks the end of the communist regime in Romania. Artist received a new freedom to create whatever they wanted. This resulted in many new opportunities to show modern art within Romania. Bitzan maintained very active in the Romanian art world from 1991 until his death in 1997. There were many group- and solo exhibitions of modern art in which Bitzan was part of.

National autonomy

After the revolution of 1989, Romania was free from communism and started to rebuild the country. The instrumental use of art in service of the ideals of the state was abolished. Artists were free to create and gain artistic autonomy. The exhibition “Sexul Lui Mozart” (The Sex of Mozart) is a perfect example of an exhibition in which the new found autonomy is applied to the Romanian art world. The exhibition, which was sponsored by the ministry of culture, was coined to provoke the audience and to start a conversation about art (Dan, 1992). “The theme of the exhibition is there to address the seriousness of our culture” (Dan, 1992, scan 592). In an article covering a whole page in the newspaper Cotidianul, curator Calin Dan explains the exhibition.

Romanian society has been built a false horizon in the modern era. With a culture that purified any impulses coming out of petty bourgeois criterion of beauty. According to these criteria, sex, intercourse is ugly, so they must be consumed quickly and secretly as an inevitable fail of human condition. (Dan, 1992, scan 593)

By portraying sex as part of Romanian culture, this exhibition breaks with its communist past. The exhibition was shown in ARTEXPO and curated by Calin Dan.

In 1992 an important exhibition took place called ‘artisti pentru Romania/des artistes pour la Roumanie’. The flyer shows a picture of the battlefield during the revolution and explains the purpose of this new exhibition. In the text, the director of the museum of national art Theodor Enescu, thanks all the artists that donated a modern work of art to the museum. He explains that foreign national museums always have been interested in showing contemporary Romanian art, but that there was no space for contemporary art within the national museum of Romania. After the revolution, Ion Nicodim stimulated contemporary artists “to bestow their works of art into the museum of Bucharest, and fill the gaps in Romanian art collections” (Nicodim, 1992, scan 747). This resulted in this exhibition in which Romanian artists give one of their modern works of art as a present to the national museum.

In 1993 the cultural center ‘de Zonnehof’ showed the exhibition ‘Carte: object-books made by Romanian artists’. This travelling exhibition was a reaction to the destruction of the central university library during the revolution in 1989. “The exhibition became not only a commemoration of a negative fact, but a really positive fact as this book’s celebrations is” (Oisteanu & Perjovschi, 1993, scan 575). The intention

was to present the exhibition on the ruins of the library: “The works were to be shown right on the ruins of the burned library, in June 1990. The plan failed because of social convulsions that happened in that period” (Oisteanu & Perjovschi, 1993, scan 575). Therefore it was shown in several museums in Romania, such as the Engraving Museum of Bitritza and the Art Galleries of Cluj. When the exhibition travelled to Netherlands, other cultural actors from Romania were involved in the organization. Andrei Oisteanu and Dan Perjovschi were curators and made the catalogue.

Cultural mediators until the end

Art critics take up a big role of this network. Many of the critics are Romanian and they mainly work for Romanian newspapers such as Cotidianul and Romania Literara. As established earlier, Romanian art critics do not only work as critic, but they are also create exhibition texts and organize exhibitions. For example, we see that Calin Dan, art critic, organizes the exhibition ‘the sex of Mozart’ at ARTEXPO in 1991 (scan 592). This was the first group exhibition in Romania that Bitzan was part of after the revolution in 1989. His network also contained curators, but they did not play a significant role in the networks of other periods. Here it is interesting that two Romanian curators in the network, Dan Perjovschi and Andrei Oisteanu, curated an exhibition on Romanian contemporary sculpture in The Netherlands, together with a Dutch curator Gerda Brethouwer.

Since the Venice biennale in 1964, the autonomous and the heteronomous sides of Bitzan’s career have been intertwined with each other. The one was necessary to make the other happen. Bitzan was internationally interesting because he lived in a political difficult situation and created autonomous work. The international career with artistic autonomous art was possible because the political heteronomous pole accepted it. The autonomous pole of cultural players such as museum directors, gallery owners and art critics had to collaborate with state organizations, the artist union, and Romanian cultural players from the heteronomous pole. At the same time was Romania happy to have Bitzan as cultural export product. They accepted Bitzan to go abroad with experimental art, even when Romania was politically extremely restricted. Art critics could come along with the exhibitions to report on the event. The state accepted that Bitzan’s works were within a gallery context. The exhibitions he has abroad were always positively discussed in national Romanian newspapers. Through this collaboration one

can see that there is no clear line between the autonomy and heteronomy within the career of Bitzan, because they maintained and needed each other.

5. Discussion & conclusion

Discussion

Bitzan's career as a visual artist cannot be separately seen from the political circumstances in his country. The political circumstances shaped his career; it created difficulties and provided opportunities. The main political events that occurred throughout his career are the refusal of the Warsaw pact in 1968, the July theses in 1971 and the revolution in 1989. The Warsaw pact resulted in a political liberalization of the country that resulted in an international breakthrough for Ion Bitzan's experimental art. During this period Bitzan was showing his socialist as well as the experimental art abroad. The July theses made Romania again into a heavy communist state. The international network and the amount of international exhibitions decreased enormously, but it did not stop him from creating experimental art. In the 18 years between the July theses and the revolution of Romania marks as a period in which the state tolerated the experimental art that Bitzan created and showed abroad. In a way he also represented the Romanian state in a modern manner when showing his work abroad. After the revolution, Bitzan could freely create and exhibit. During this period, his network and the exhibitions he was part of were mainly in Romania. He did not have to go abroad anymore to exhibit experimental work.

Two major groups are visible in the network of Bitzan; the network of Romanian art critics and the network of directors of cultural institutes. From the beginning of his career he had a group of Romanian art critics in his network. These art critics reported on socialist-realist exhibitions in the Romanian newspapers. The articles of critics about Romanian communist culture were meant to keep up the communist spirit in society. When Ion Bitzan started to create experimental work and exhibit abroad, the art critics followed and remained in close contact with Bitzan. They formed a circle of recognition around the artists and confirmed his success. The Romanian art critics continued to stay in the close network of Ion Bitzan throughout his career through reviews. Through the recognition of the art critics, Bitzan was able to have a good reputation.

A few of the critics also had other functions within the art world and returned in different positions in the network of Ion Bitzan. This was good for Ion Bitzan's career, because the art critics promoted him within different contexts. Art critics such as Radu Varia, Dan Haulica, Petru Comarnescu changed in function and prominence, but they,

and many other art critics maintain a steady circle around him throughout his career. The effect of these art critics on his career is that there is a constant flow of information on Bitzan and his artistic work that is spread through newspapers into the art world. This benefitted him nationally and internationally; it gave him prestige and it attracted other cultural players to become interested in the art of Bitzan.

The second important groups of cultural agents are international museum directors and gallery owners, Bitzan was in contact with many different galleries and museum that were interested in showing Bitzan in their venue. These galleries and museum maintained large networks of different cultural agents. The exhibitions abroad created incentives for other cultural institutes and galleries to become acquainted with Bitzan, and perhaps collaborate with him. Directors and gallery owners also served as important individuals because they promoted Bitzan word-to-mouth. More international exhibitions was beneficial for gallery-owners and museum directors, because it would increase the prestige of the artist and his artworks. More interest and prestige in the artist was beneficial for gallery owners that represented Bitzan, because they could make money with selling works of the artist. The combination of the dense network of art critics and the network with weak ties of museum directors and gallery owners created the perfect network environment in which Bitzan could develop his international career.

There are a few explanations for why the Romanian state tolerated Bitzan's artistic autonomy Bitzan. In exchange for artistic autonomy, Bitzan delivered socialist realist paintings throughout his career to the state. He was a respected known socialist realist painter that the state wanted to please. Bitzan understood the limits of his artistic autonomy that he received from Romania and therefore Bitzan's experimental work never contained an explicit political messages. Many of the group exhibition that Bitzan was invited to, were about modern art from Romania. Bitzan's work often served as a representation of the arts scene in the country. Thus Bitzan served unconsciously as a Romanian representative in the international art world. Thus the international career of Bitzan in a way had positive influence on the image of Romania.

Ion Bitzan was interesting for international gatekeepers because he created experimental art while living under communist circumstances. The political conflict that was hidden behind the abstract art of Romanian artists such as Bitzan could have been an incentive to exhibit them. The network of institutes that exhibited and collaborated

with Bitzan were mainly Western European and American institutes, the institutes that are at the center of the art world. To exhibition a peripheral artist that lived in a communistic eastern European country was a politically relevant topic. For example, Richard Demarco was very proud to be the first gallery in the United Kingdom to show Romanian art. Later on in his career, Bitzan had solo-exhibitions in the United Kingdom and the United States. Which implies he was appreciated for his art, and not solely for his political or geographical origin.

Conclusion

This thesis researched how visual artist that lived under communist rule were able to enter the global art market and develop an international career in the twentieth century. This subject is discussed using Romanian artist Ion Bitzan as case study. Ion Bitzan was an artist that created socialist-realist art for the state and he created experimental works of art for international exhibitions. The success of an artist is a social process that is executed through the value judgement of cultural gatekeepers (Guiffre, 1999). Bitzan was able to enter the global art market, because the artistic recognition that was given to him by cultural gatekeepers living under communist rule, was picked up by cultural gatekeepers from the global art world. Bitzan was able to enter the global art market and develop an international career, because he was a respected artist of socialist realist paintings. He had a good reputation on the side of the communists; as well on the side of the experimentalists he was autonomous and heteronomous at the same time. The contact that Bitzan had with his network of national and international cultural actors throughout his career show us how Bitzan managed an international career while living under communism.

Bourdieu's (1983) struggle of the artists between the autonomous pole and heteronomous pole within the field of cultural production is in the case of Ion Bitzan a negotiation in which some political heteronomy is given in return for artistic autonomy. Struggle is not applicable, because it contains conflict, Negotiation is the form of communication that made it possible to start and develop an international career as an artist living under communism. Bitzan managed to stay in between a fine line of negotiation with the Romanian state and with the international art world. He was able to be in a negotiating position, because he was a favored artist for the Romanian state. By

juggling between the two worlds of artistic autonomy and political heteronomy, Bitzan created an international career he should be proud of.

Limitations and suggestions

One of the limitations of this research is inherent in the archive that is used for the research. The archive is a personal, thus I was not sure if information was left out. This would mean that we are not sure if Ion Bitzan was really appreciated throughout his career. The fact that there was information on all the exhibition in the archive and the size of the archive was enormous (600 documents) compensated the doubt in incompleteness. Network analysis was a great way to research the archive, although I find it limiting to only write about the method. The results of network analysis are also very good when presenting the results through a visual presentation, such as a video or powerpoint.

The method network analysis fitted perfectly with the data, because I could discover all the different people that were in contact with Bitzan. Secondly I could discover a complete network of people that were related to him and to each other. Network analysis was also a useful method, because it visualized the network. The visualization helped me to understand how different people were related to each other. Overall I got a better understanding of the development of an artist's career that lives under communism.

The next relevant step in this research is to interview national and international cultural players that are important connections in the network of Ion Bitzan. It would be interesting to know in what way the political heteronomy and artistic autonomy played any role in the selection of Ion Bitzan's work. This way we can learn on what basis the art of Ion Bitzan was valued.

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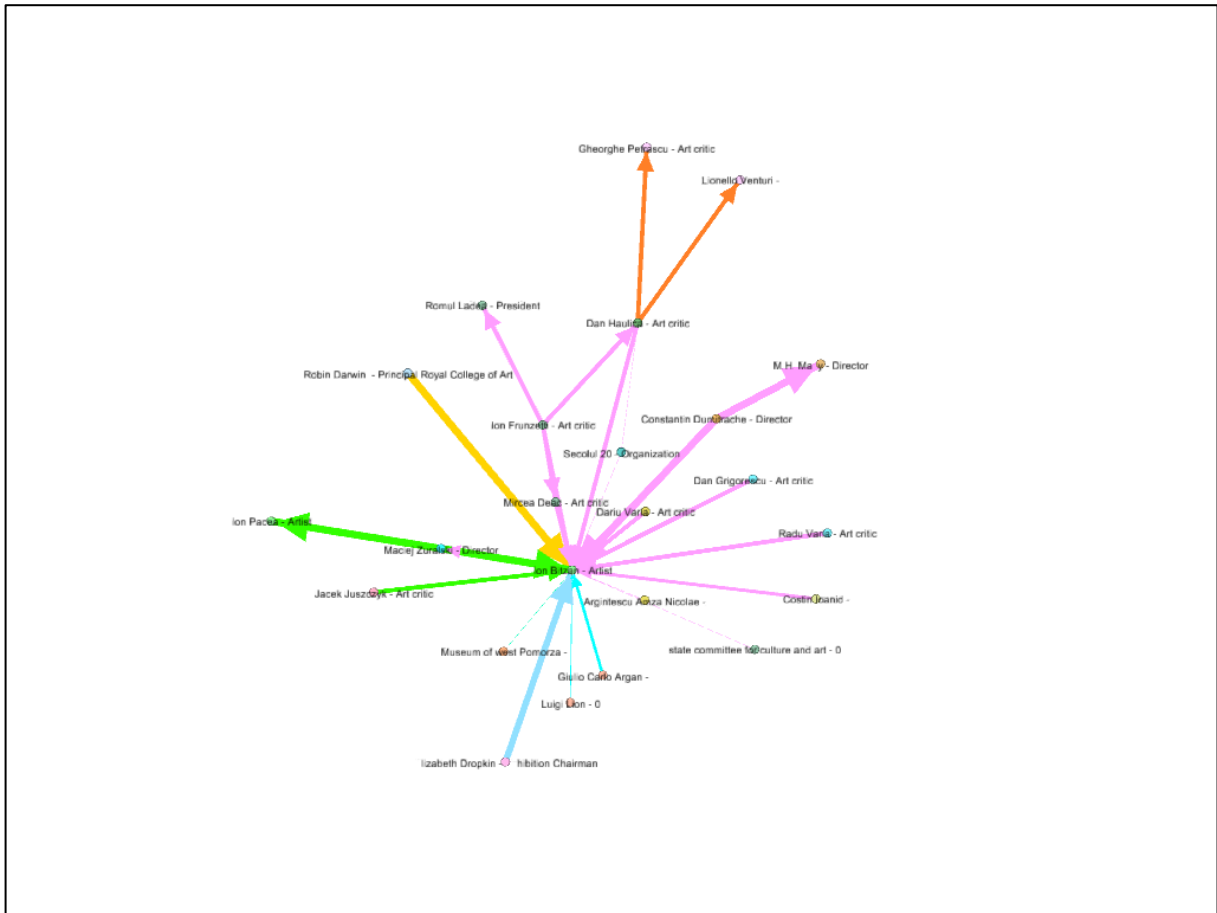
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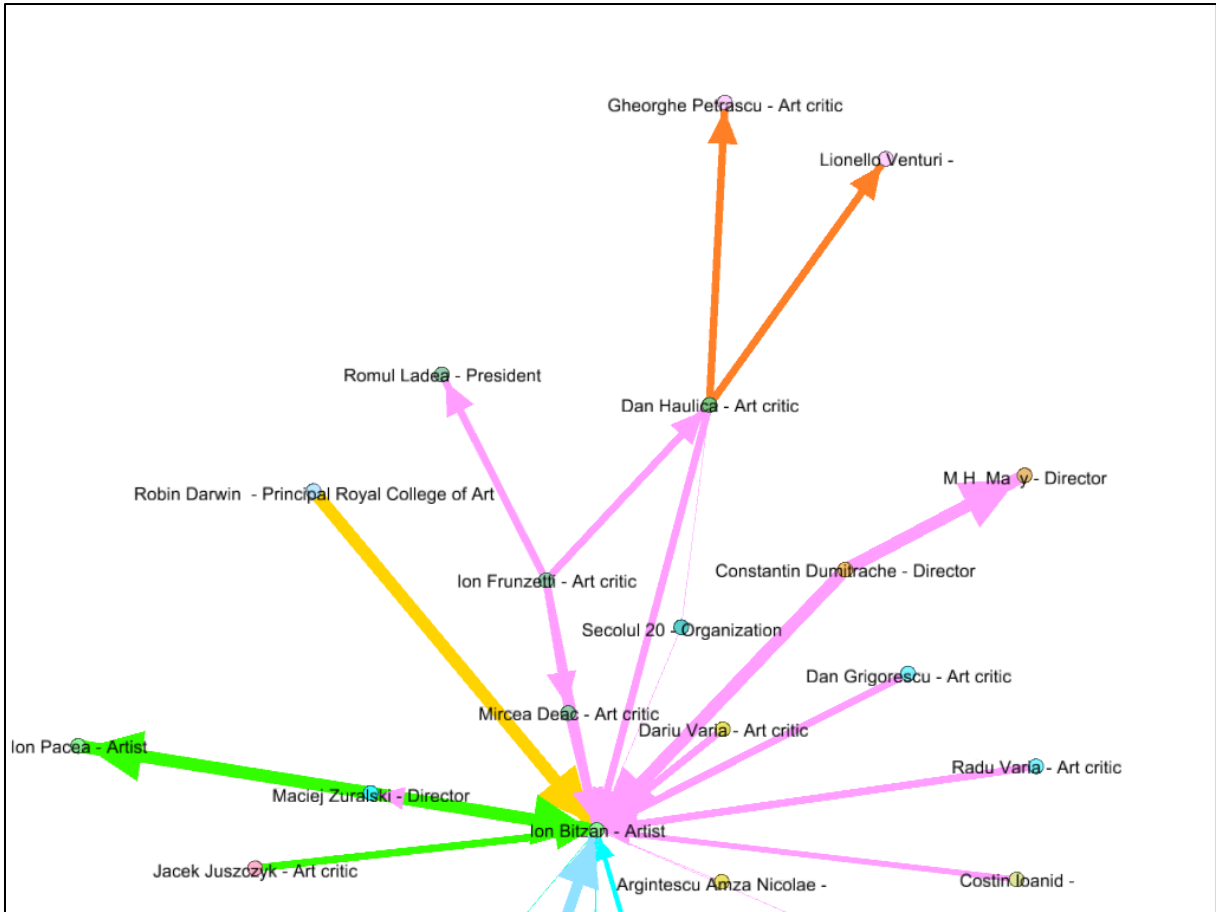
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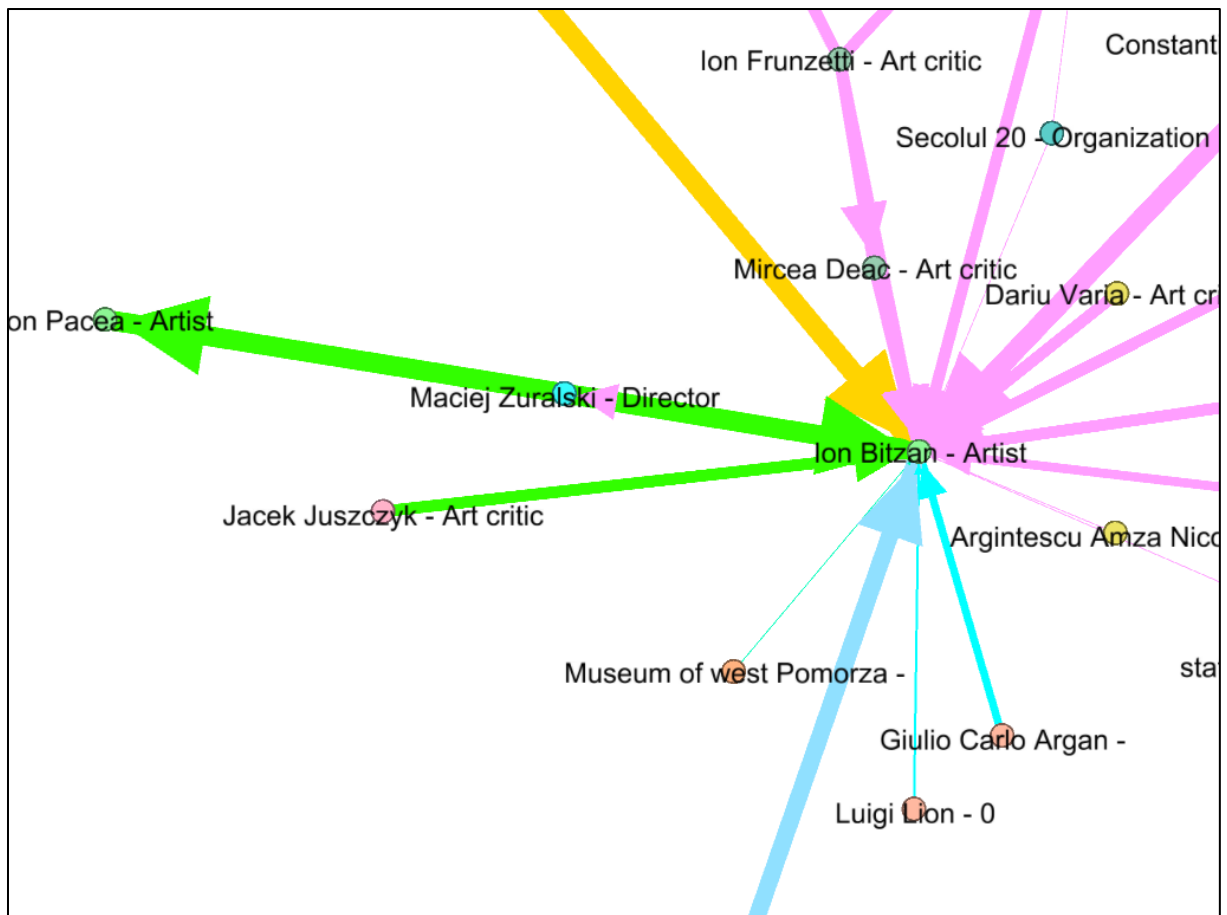
Appendix A. network analysis



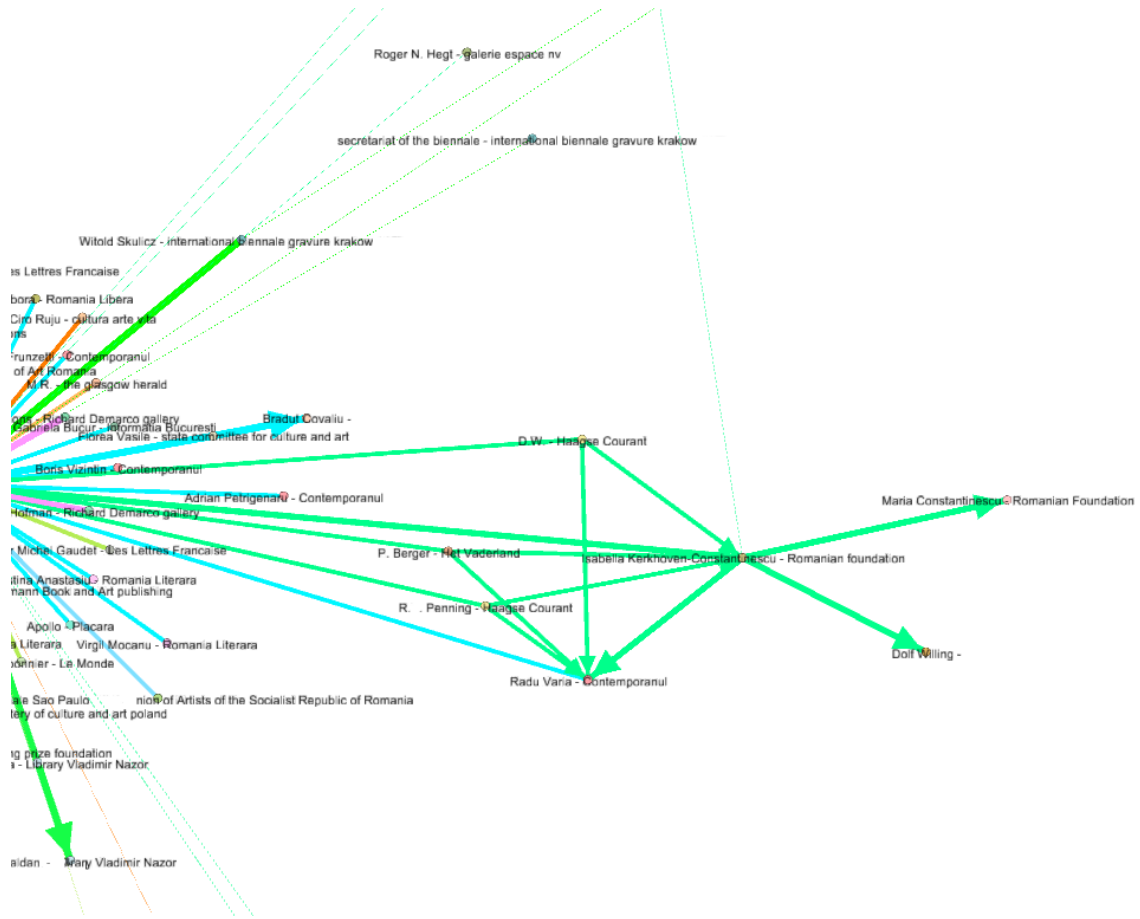
1.1. Phase 1: 1964-1967



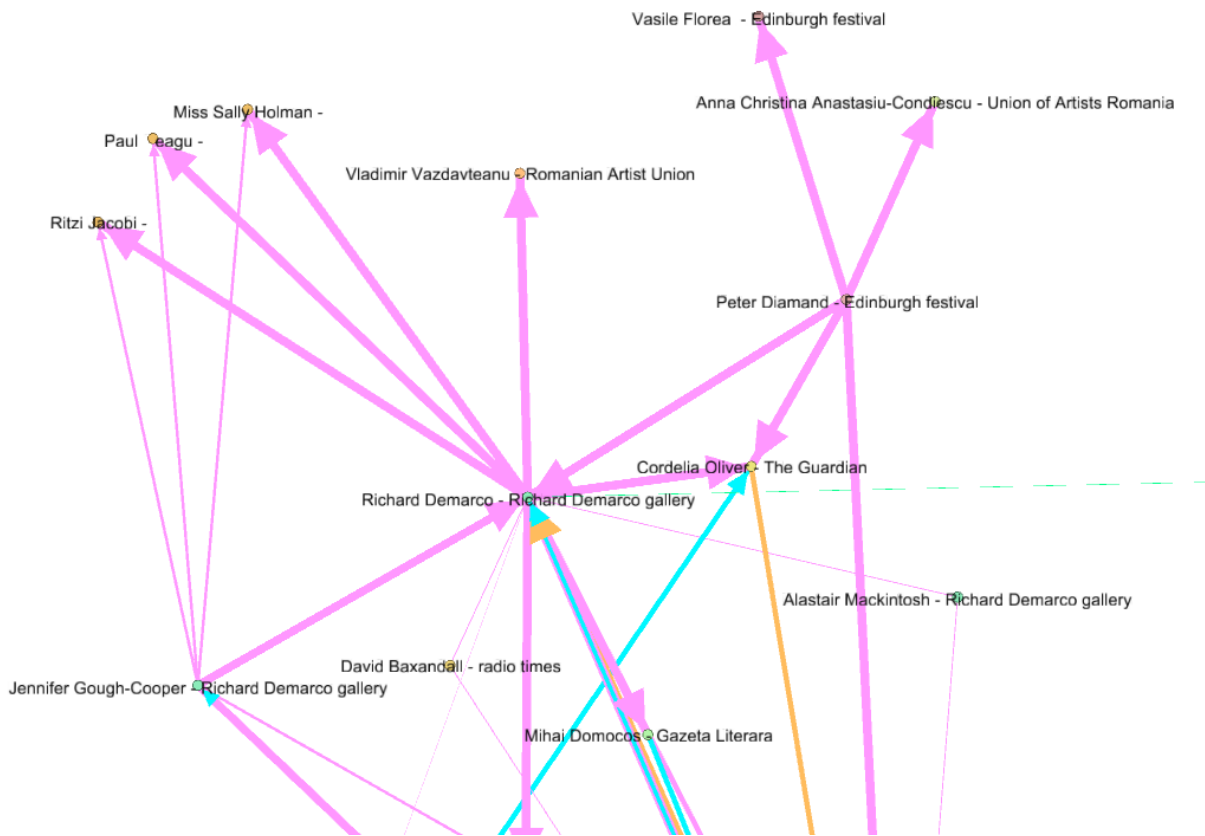
1.2. Phase 1: 1964-1967, zoom 1



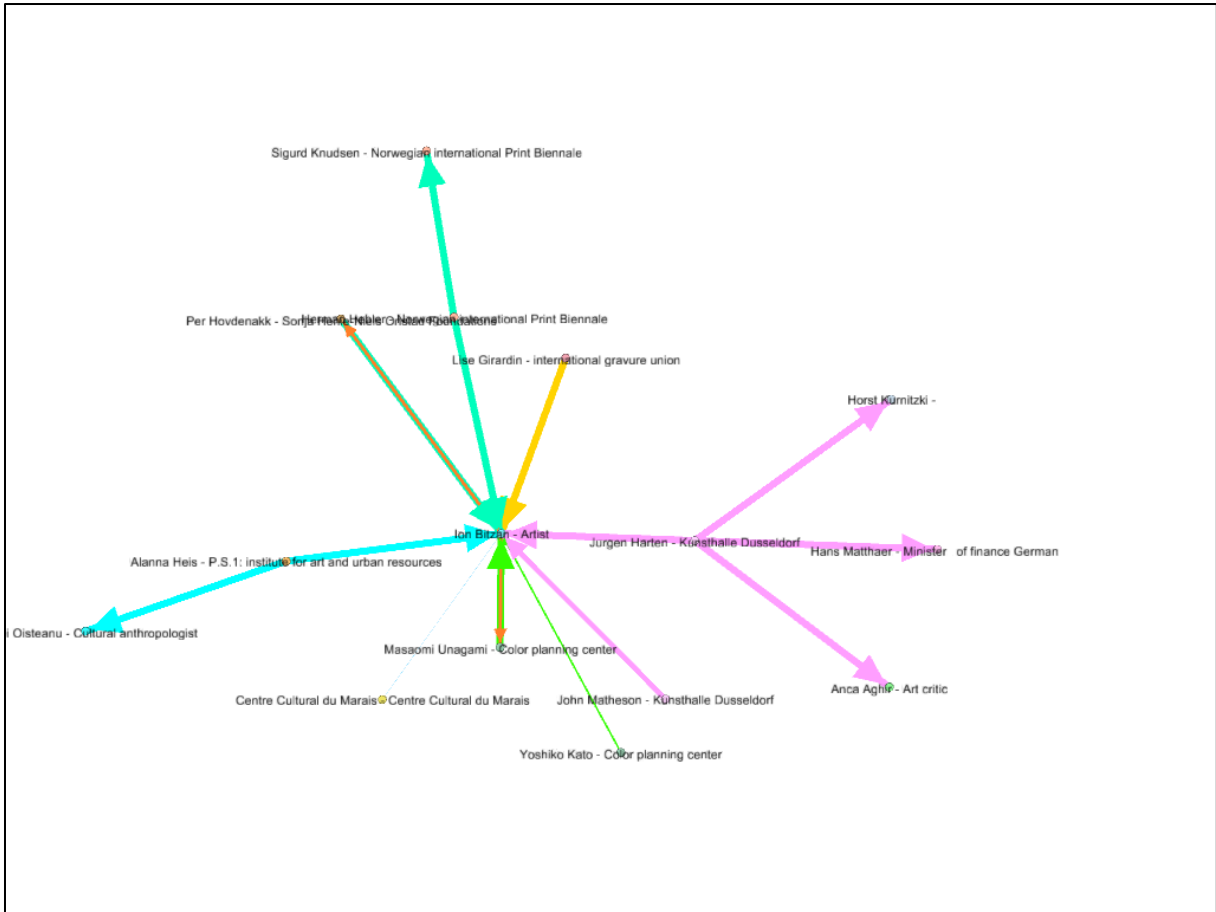
1.3. phase 1: 1964-1967. Zoom 2



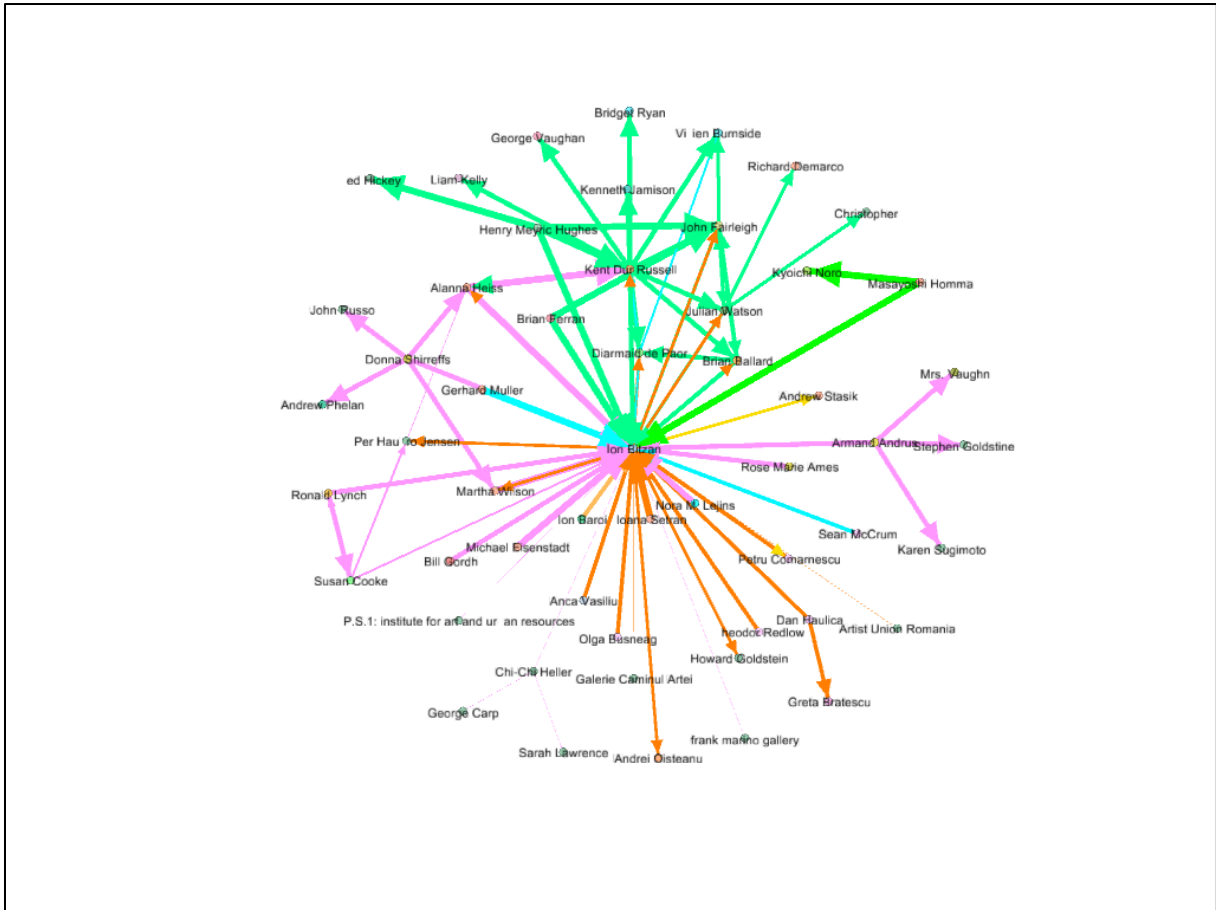
2.2. Phase 2: 1968-1972. Zoom 2



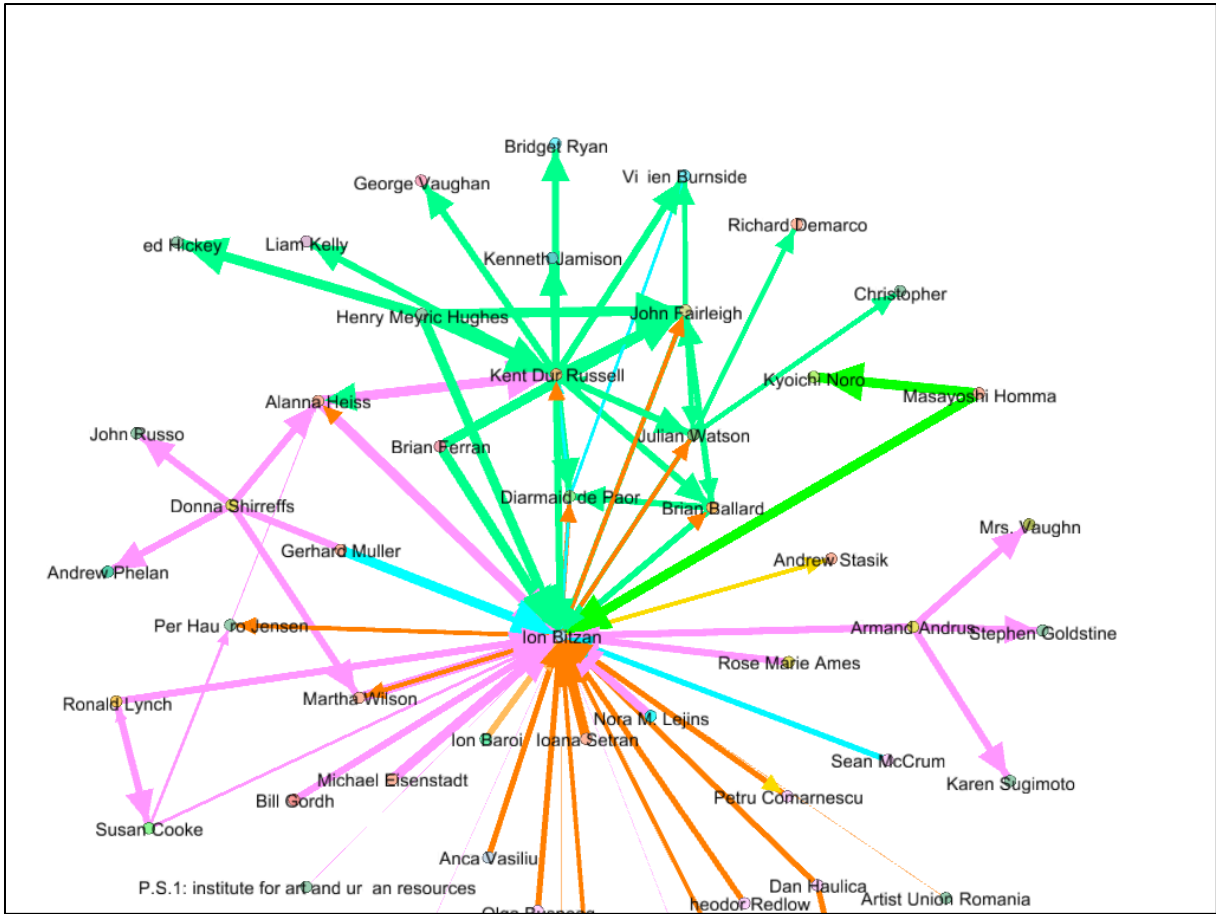
2.3. Phase 2: 1968-1972



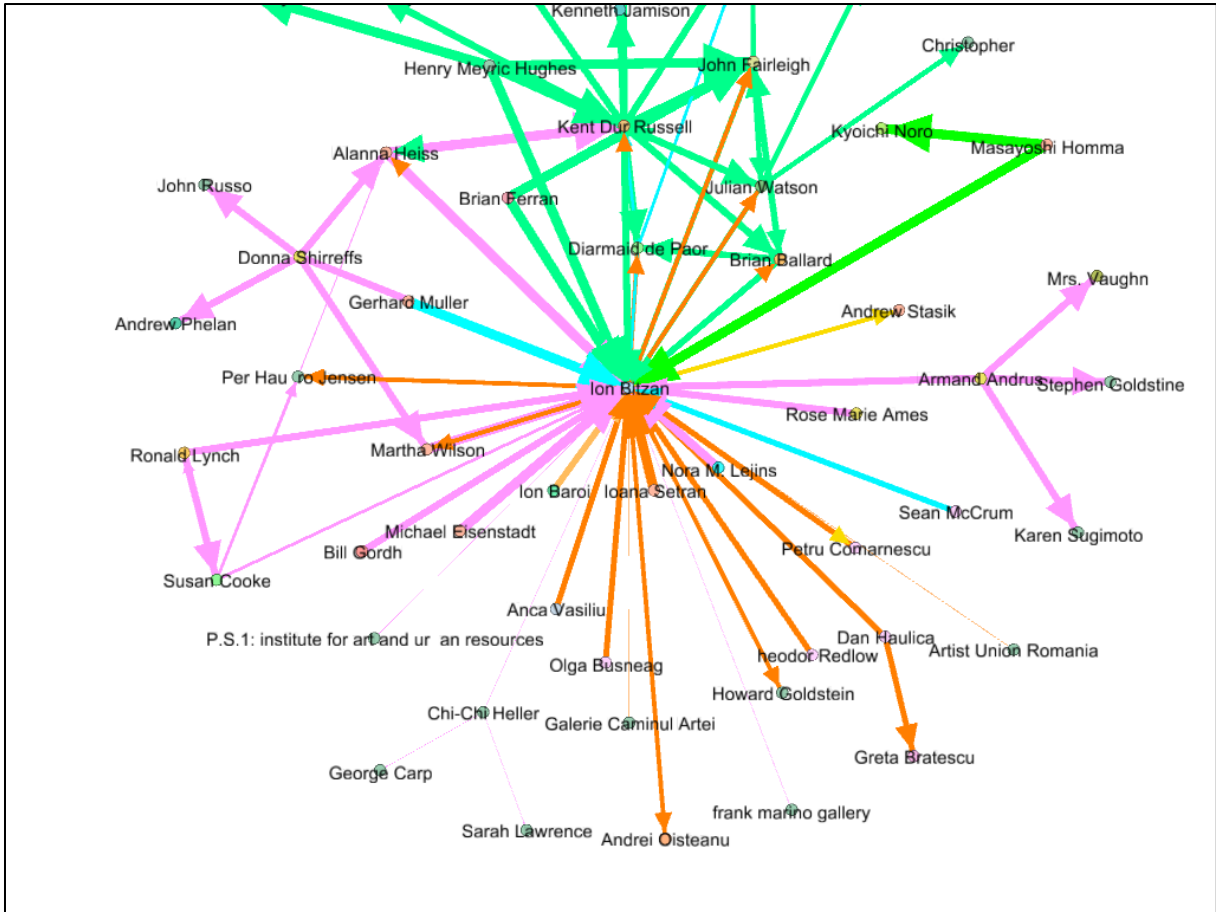
3.1. Phase 3: 1973-1980



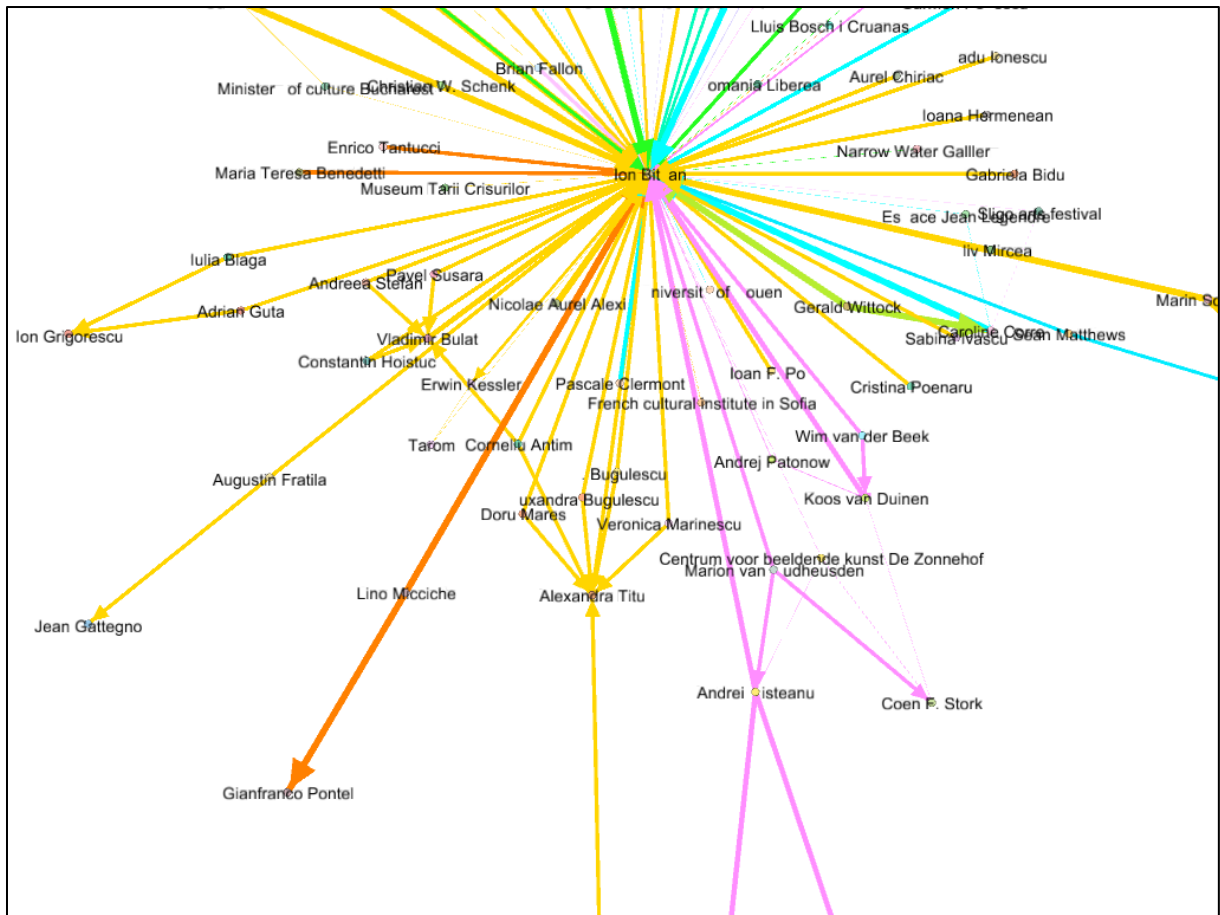
4.1. Phase 4: 1981-1988



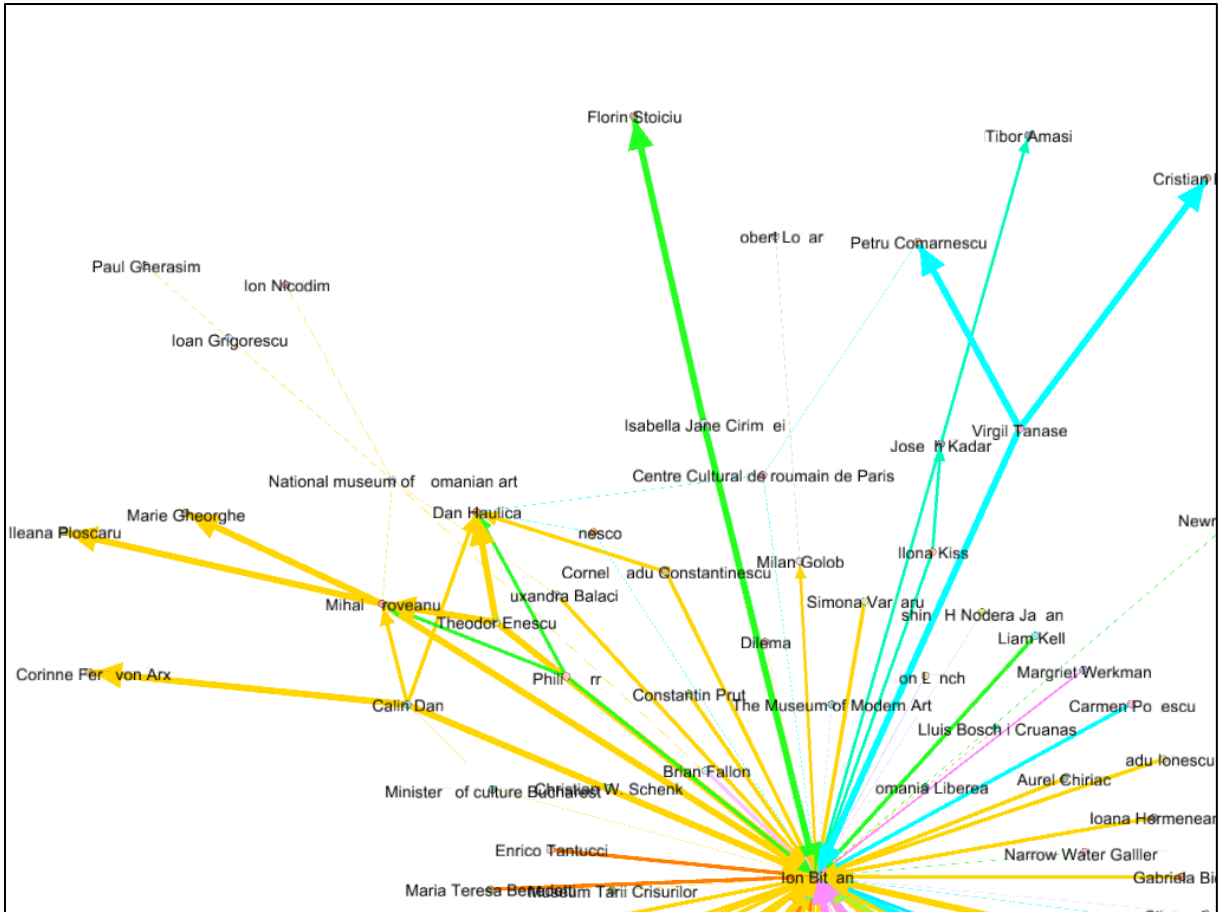
4.2. Phase 4: 1981-1988



4.3. Phase 4: 1981-1988



5.1. Phase 5: 1990-1997



5.2. Phase 5: 1990-1997

Appendix B. CV Ion Bitzan

Red text: Official art exhibition

Black text: Modern art exhibition

Ion Bitzan

23.08.1924 Limanu, Romania-15.09.1997 Bucharest, Romania

Phase 1: 1962-1967

solo

1966 *Arsenal Gallery, Sopot, Poland*

1967, '68 *Bucharest, Romania*

group

1964 *Biennale di Venezia, Romanian Pavilion, Venice, Italy*

1965 *Tenth International Exhibition of Ceramic Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C., U.S.A.*

1966 *Brancusi and his countrymen, The Royal College of Art, London, U.K.*

1967 *Bienal de São Paulo, Romanian Pavilion, Sao Paulo, Brazil*

Phase 2: 1986-1972

solo

1970 *Panorama Mesdag, The Hague, Netherlands*

1971, '72, '73 *Bucharest, Romania*

1972 *Espace Gallery, Amsterdam, Netherlands*

1972 *Richard Demarco Gallery, Edinburgh and Aberdeen, Scotland*

Group

1968 *Six jeunes peintres roumains , Galerie Lambert, Paris, France*

1968 *l'art ROUMAIN, Orly, France*

1969 *8/ROUMANIA, Eight Roumanian Printmakers, The Pratt Graphics Center, New York, U.S.A.*

1969 *Richard Demarco Gallery, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Scotland*

1969 *4 Rumänische Künstler, Bauzentrum, Hamburg, Germany*

1969 *Bienal de São Paulo, Romanian Pavilion, Sao Paulo, Brazil*

1969 *VIII Premi Internacional dibuix Joan Miró, Palau de la Virreina, Barcelona, Spain*

1969 *8 Romanian artists Panorama Mesdag, The Hague, Netherlands*

1969 *8 Romanian engravers Pratt Graphic Center, New York, U.S.A.*

1969 *Ljubljana Biennale of Graphic Arts, Ljubljana, Slovenia*

1969 *Mostra degli artisti rumeni, Torino, Italy*

1969 *Mostra di pittura e scultura romena contemporanea Academia Romena Roma, Roma, Italy*

1970 *III Biennale Internationale de la Gravure, Cracovie, Poland*

1970 *Pratt Graphics Center Benefit Exhibition & Sale, New York, U.S.A.*

1970 *Pittori rumeni contemporanei, spazio d'arte, Milano, Italy*

1970 *Mostra d'arte grafica romena contemporanea, Academia di Romania a Roma, Rome, Italy*

- 1970 Artist-in-residency, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Netherlands
 1970 *Galerie Arta*, The Hague, Netherlands
 1971 Artist-in-residency, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Netherlands
 1971 *Romanian Art Today*, 25th Edinburgh International Festival, Edinburgh, Scotland
 1971 Fourth International Miniature Exhibition , Associated American Artists Gallery, New York, U.S.A.
 1971 *Premio Internazionale Biella per l'incisione*, Biella, Italy

Phase 3: 1973-1980

Group

- 1974 *IV International Exhibition Original Drawings*, Rijeka, received the *prix d'achat de la Galerie d'Art Contemporaine a Zagreb*
 1974 *Xylon VI, Ausstellung der Internationalen Vereinigung der Holzschneider* Zürich, Kongresshaus Innsbruck, Zwitterland
 1974 *2nd NORWEGIAN INTERNATIONAL PRINT BIENNALE*, Fredrikstad, Norway
 1978 *Über die seltsame Natur des Geldes in Kunst, Wissenschaft und Leben*, Städtische Kunstahalle Düsseldorf, Germany
 1979 *Roumanie, Centre Culturel du Marais*, Paris, France
 1980 *Salon de Mai*, Paris, France

Phase 4: 1981-1988

solo

- 1981 P.S.1 New York, U.S.A.
 1983 *Bucharest, Romania*
 1985 Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Belfast, Northern Ireland
 1986 Butler Gallery, Kilkenny Castle, Ireland.

Group

- 1981 *Contemporary Painting In Eastern Europe*, National Museum of Art, Osaka, Japan
 1981 *Bienal de São Paulo*
 1981 *Paper Caper*, Frank Marino Gallery, New York, U.S.A.

Phase 5: 1990-1997

solo

- 1990 Narrow Water Gallery, Narrow Water Castle, Warrenpoint, Northern Ireland
 1992 *OBIECTE,SCRIITURI*, Galeria Artexpo, Bucharest, Romania
 1993 *OBIECTE SCRITURI*, Muzeul de grafica contemporana, Bistrita, Romania
 1993 Ion Bitzan, Galeria de Arta universala din Muzeul Tarii Crisurilor, Oradea, Romania
 1994 *The Cabinet The Song of Songs*, HotBath Gallery, Bath, England
 1994 Ion Bitzan *OBJETS, ECRITURES*, Centre Culturel Roumain, Paris, France
 1996 *OBIECT, SCRIERI, CARTI DE AUTOR*, National Museum of Art, Bucharest, Romania

Group

- 1990 Mail-Art Project *Venus or Aphrodite, shinOH!NOdera*, Japan
 1991 *The Sex of Mozart*, Artexpo Gallery, Bucharest, Romania
 1992 *Art Romanés. Obra actual damunt paper*, Barcelona, Spain
 1992 *Transparenta, Galeria Podul*, Bucharest, Romania
 1992 *Des artistes pour la Roumanie*, National Museum of Art, Bucharest, Romania
 1993 *cARTE, Hedendaagse Roemeense Kunst*, De Zonnehof, Amersfoort, Netherlands
 1993 *Le Livre dans tous ses etats Europe 93*, Galerie Caroline Corre, Paris and Galway Arts Festival, Ireland
 1994 *TEMA eseu de arta comparata*, National Museum of Art, Bucharest, Romania
 1995 *MENS-beeld eigentijdse sculptuur uit Roemenië*, Bergkerk, Deventer, Netherlands
 1995 *Moholy-Nagy-Memorial Book*, Vigadó Galéria, Budapest, Hungary
 1996 *Experiment, Centrul Soros pentru Arta Contemporana*, Galeria 3/4, Bucharest, Romania
 1996 *Livres d'Artistes*, Espace Jean Legendre en collaboration avec Caroline Corre, Rens, France
 1996 *l'experience des Livres*, Université de Rouen, Espace Axelrad, Rouen, France
 1996 *Centenaire Tristan Tzara*, Maison de l UNESCO, Paris, France
 1997 *Biennale di Venezia*, Romanian Pavilion, Venice, Italy
 1997 *ARTA '97*, Banca Nationala a Romaniei, Bucharest, Romania
 1997 *OBIECTUL*, Galeriile de Arta ale Municipiului Bucuresti, Bucuresti, Romania

Represented in individual and public art collections

Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh, Scotland
 Ulster Museum, Belfast, Northern Ireland
 Butler Gallery, Kilkenny, Ireland
 Museum of Modern Art New York, New York, U.S.A.
 Musée Ariana, Geneva, Switzerland
 Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands
 Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg, Germany
 Museum of Contemporary Art Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia
 Lidice Gallery, Czech Republic
 National Museum Poznan, Poznan, Poland
 National Museum of Contemporary Art, Bucharest, Romania
 Art Museums in Romania: Constanta, Galati, Iasi, Bacau, Bistrita, Dunarii de Jos