

**Subsidy as the holy grail?**  
**Private museums challenging the sustainability**  
**of non-subsidized institutions**



*Sky Mirror (for Hendrik)* (2017) of Anish Kapoor in front of Museum De Pont in Tilburg. The work was donated with the help of the municipality of Tilburg, local companies and private donors, Brabant C, Museum De Pont and Anish Kapoor himself. It was made for the 25th anniversary of the museum in 2017 (De Pont, 2018).

Photo: Ella Kuijpers

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# Preface

As I was doing the Master's program Cultural Economics and Entrepreneurship, I became more and more interested in philanthropy. I was surprised by the amount of generosity towards art by the wealthy and less wealthy. However, philanthropy in The Netherlands is less developed than for example in the United States, but new initiatives by municipalities or foundations prove that a philanthropic audience is out there (Bron, 2017; Gemeente Rotterdam, 2018; Venema, 2017a). I personally see different possibilities in which private support for the arts could be sustainable and a future holy grail for the arts. Therefore, I want to investigate what possibilities there are to privatize cultural organizations, how private organizations succeed to survive without subsidy and how single institutions can be an example for the whole cultural sector.

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## **Abstract**

This research investigates the role of private museums in the museum sector, which is mostly populated by public museums, and the possible competition between these two types of organizations. The research focuses on Dutch and Flemish private museums that exhibit visual arts. This research is explorative, as it gives an impression of the Dutch and Flemish private museum market, by illustrating the different actors operating at the private museum market and their diversified business strategies and motivations to initiate a private museum. It is inductive too, as not much literature on private museums only exists. The research answers the question whether private museums are differentiated from public museums and whether they face competition with public museums. The main findings of the multiple case study, performed by several in-depth interviews with directors of private museums, are that all museums are initiated by a wealthy person or couple and therefore show a very personalized way of running their organization. Besides, private museums are diversified organizations compared to public museums and they do compete on the level of funding and audiences.

*Keywords: private museums, public museums, motivations, competition, differentiation*

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# Definitions

These definitions are developed from this study, which only apply to the content of this specific research

- Private museum

A private museum is a museum that meets the conditions explained in chapter 'Theoretical Framework', section 'Defining private museums'.

- Public museum

A public museum differs from a private museum in the sense that a public museum receives governmental subsidies and a private museum does not. This can be a subsidy from the government, province, state, city, or municipality.

- Museum

A 'museum' can be either a museum, collection building, or an exhibition space, which is publicly accessible.

When I refer to a museum, I do not necessarily mean a museum that is officially registered as a museum by a council or association, such as the ICOM or the Museumvereniging, and therefore has to meet a code of ethics for museums.

- Financial stakeholders

Financial stakeholders are parties that support the museum financially.

# Introduction

The cultural sector has seen a growth of private museums in the last two decades (Gerstenblith, 2006; Meier & Frey, 2003). Larry's List, an art market knowledge company, investigated the private museum sector in 2015 and found that up to that date, 70% of 317 private museums were founded after 2000. In most cases, collectors choose to open an own museum in order to expose the art they collected. A motivation for opening a private museum instead of donating the collection to a public museum is that owners want to show their art to the public instead of keeping it stored in depots, which is the place where parts of donated collections often end (Larry's List, 2016; Meier et al., 2003). Why collectors now choose to open a museum instead of donating their collection to a public museum that used to be the common course of events, remains quite unclear. Some research shows that private collectors do not want their art to end up in depots and that they like to have self-control over the display of it, but why these motivations have become more present lately is quite unclear (Wakefield, 2017). Their preference to manage museums themselves over donating to public museums is relevant to investigate.

When looking at the private museum sector, its size differs between countries. For example China and the U.S. have a very large private museum sector. A reason for their impressive amounts of private museums is that the government's support for the arts is limited, which means that private collectors step in as suppliers of museums to preserving heritage (Absalyamova, 2015; Borgonovi & O'Hare, 2004; Xiangguang, 2008). For example in the U.S., the government prefers a small government, but it supports private investment in the arts through tax reductions (Alexander, 2005). There is a bigger pressure on patronage than elsewhere. Other explanatory facts are the large amount of wealthy philanthropists or substantial tax benefits for those opening a private museum (Abt, 2006).

In The Netherlands and Belgium, the private museum sector is growing. In The Netherlands, six out of nine private museums opened since 2015. In Belgium the situation is similar, as all six private museums opened after 2008 (see table 3). It is therefore interesting to investigate the private museum sector in these countries, even more so because the Dutch and Belgian government offer various subsidies for museums, of which private museums do not make use. It is therefore relevant to investigate why these private museums decide to be private (instead of public) in a country that is quite supportive to the arts.

After the financial crisis in 2008, the Dutch government decided to cut funds for the arts (Van der Hoeven, 2012), which meant that public museums had to make more effort to raise funds and find other financial stakeholders than the government. However, public museums are restricted in the extent to which they can employ commercial activities, since law forbids them to make too much profit or otherwise the subsidy will be decreased (Belastingdienst, 2018). It is interesting to investigate whether private museums perform differently from public museums and maybe even better or more efficient than public museums. Another aim of this research is to understand the effect of the entrance

of private museums on the museum market in terms of competition. Therefore, the research question of this study is:

*Are private museums differentiated organizations from public museums and do they compete with public museums?*

## **Problem statement and context**

The museum sector is changing, as private initiatives enter the field which has long been predominantly publicly managed and financed. How the entrance of private actors changes the museum sector is poorly understood. It is, however, important to understand how private museums compete with public museums, as it is necessary to see whether the entrance of the partly new type of organization is a threat or an advantage for other actors in the market.

Recent journalistic articles show the importance of better understanding the changes in the museum landscape. Several articles have unveiled the ways in which museums struggle with the quest to search for private funding or privatizing the business. For example, the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam was in the news, because its director, Beatrix Ruf, was accused of conflicts of interest and controversial ancillary positions, after the newspaper NRC investigated the museums's annual reports (Ribbens, 2018). Ruf was accused of privatizing a public museum. Ruf for example secretly paid for a donated private collection. She also invited befriended artists to exhibit in the museum, and Ruf's contacts worldwide were very helpful for her getting loans, which some saw as a threat to innovation. Some argue that these activities are debatable, as it sometimes seemed to be an act of nepotism or self-interest in a subsidized public museum (Ribbens, 2017 & 2018; Smallenburg, 2017). Other international cases of museums that acted controversially were the Tate Museum that acquired artworks from one of its trustees far below the market price and The Wallace Collection that let Damien Hirst pay for his own exhibition (Adam, 2005 & 2018; Higgins, 2006). Decreasing subsidies asks for privatization, although privatization by public museums is not always considered decent. Therefore it is relevant to investigate several examples of private museums, that manage to run their museum without being publicly subsidized.

Public museums not always know how to privatize and be more commercial. With the increasing pressure on public museums to do so, an example might be taken from private museums (Camarero, Garrido & Vicente, 2011). Following the definition of a private museum (see chapter 'Theoretical framework', section 2.2), a private museum receives no subsidy, which means that this type of organization is very much diversified from the public museum in terms of funding. Since museums show public good characteristics and therefore the museum sector is subsidized, a contribution to the economics of museums can be made by analyzing the business models of private museums that receive no subsidies (Frey & Meier, 2006a). It could give insight in possible funding strategies for a type of institution that is known for receiving subsidy. At this moment, economic theory on private museums is lacking, as the economics of museums is mostly applicable to public museums only. However, investigating private museums that need no subsidy could diversify our knowledge of economic models of museums and different business strategies.

## **Personal motivation**

Since the Dutch government cut culture and art subsidies in 2010, discussion arose about whether cultural institutions should be able to sustain themselves. Some critics said that museums were too much relying on subsidies, and staring blind on business models that are based on subsidies. Other critique is that subsidy has a crippling effect on museums (Cremers, 2018; Venema, 2017b).

The result of the subsidy cuts is that museums have to run their business with other types or streams of funding. Therefore, they have an incentive to become more commercial, although Dutch law restricts public institutions to make too much revenue (Belastingdienst, n.d.). Therefore, the state intervention in cultural organizations became problematic. This might be the reason that in the last decades, several private museums opened their doors in The Netherlands and Belgium. Bureaucratic issues and limitations of the law less restrict them.

Private museums and public museums operate on the same market and since private museums are the newcomers, these museums have to gain a market position wherein they can compete with the major public museums. Therefore, I am interested to see how private museums position themselves in the market, whether private museums differ from public museums, if private museums face competition with public museums and if so, how they compete with them. The result could be helpful to understand different business models of private museums, which can have an exemplary role for public museums.

## **Societal and scientific relevance**

The scientific relevance of this research is that it contributes to the literature about economics of museums and the business model of private museums. Most of the academic literature is based on the management and economics of public museums and literature about private museums appears to be minimal. In literature, private museums seem to be seen as a certain type of museum, which means that the same economics can be applied to it (Frey & Meier, 2006a; Johnson, 2010; Schuster, 1998). Sometimes, private museums are even considered ‘privatized’ public museums. I presume, however, that private museums are initiated out of entirely different motivations and aims than public museums and therefore I think they should be seen as different organizations (Meier et al., 2003; Schuster, 1998). Moreover, I think private museums differ in more ways from public museums than only their motivations and missions, such as their funding. An economic approach on private museums is thus needed since standard economics on museums might not be applicable to private museums. Next to that, research on private museums is necessary, since the amount of private museums is growing fast. Research can give an insight in the impact of this development on the museum market and the sustainability of both private and public museums.

The societal relevance of the research is that it might contribute to the discussion about the rising amount of private museums. It could be argued that private museums are a threat to the public museum sector, since they do not necessarily have to serve the common good and they also try to attract private funds and donations, which could be better used by public museums that are established and professional institutions. However, a counter-argument could be that private museums are good in the sense that they make private collections publicly accessible and that they are better able to pursue their goals and missions, since they are less restricted by legal regulations. By investigating the possible competition existing between private and public museums, an insight can be given in the potential threat a private museum can be to a public museum or its beneficial addition to the museum market and exemplary function for public museums.

## **Expectations**

It is useful to investigate the effects of the rise of private museums on the museum market, which is predominantly public. This development can have several possible impacts on the market and the museums operating in it. Firstly, private museums are expected to have better methods of generating own revenue. Secondly, private museums are expected to not conform to obligations set by councils or governments, in order to be less restricted and more flexible. Thirdly, an expectation is that private museums do compete with public museums in attracting donations and funds. Competition will probably not be much present, as private museums often have a luxurious position and therefore private museums are not forced to compete.

## **Aims and objectives**

The aim of this research is to show whether private museums operate on the same market as public museums and if they compete. This contributes to the discussion about the recent openings of many private museums, since the views on whether it is a good or bad addition to the field differ much. Ellis (2008), for example, thinks the private museums are a threat to public museums, since they do not have to serve the common good and therefore operate in service of a private and single-minded interest. Scutari suggests that it leads to a bigger gap between the have and have-nots, as the entrance of wealthy new art collectors will make art more expensive and therefore not available to smaller institutions (Scutari, 2017).

Public and private museums do offer a comparable service or cultural good, but they might use different resources and strategies to manage their institution. The research will investigate whether private museums draw from the same pool of funding and audiences as public museums do and whether private museums pursue the same opportunities to ensure the viability of their organization in the future. Next to that, the research is exploratory, because an attempt is being made to give an impression of the private museum market in The Netherlands and Flanders, Belgium. Because private museums differ considerably, this research will focus on the differences and similarities, to give a most nuanced image as possible (Meier et al., 2003). It is inductive too, because there is little theory available about private museums. Therefore, this research will develop theory from the findings of the interviews. By focusing on private museums, it aims to investigate what possibilities there are to privatize cultural organizations, how private organizations succeed to survive without subsidy and how single institutions can be an example for the whole cultural sector. The results might also have implications for governmental policies on museums, as it can show whether an entrepreneurial attitude of museums supports the common good and whether it can make subsidies less or more essential to museums.

# Theoretical framework

As Johnson (1998) says in this article ‘The Economics of Museums: A Research Perspective’, “there is now a very substantial literature on the economics of firm formation in the private sector, much of which may be of relevance, with adaptation, to museums”. However “museums have not been – for understandable reasons – a priority area of study for economists” (p. 76 & 81). The reason for the gap in literature about economics of museums and especially that of private museums might be that these types of museums [private museums] are a quite current phenomenon. Although Johnson (1998) wrote this in 1998 and many private museums opened since, not much research has been done about private museums ever since. They are sometimes studied in comparison to public museums and discussed as individual cases (Absalyamova et al., 2015; Frey et al., 2006a&b; Johnson, 2010; Meier & Frey, 2003; Schuster, 1998). However, it can be stated that private museums are very much diversified from public museums, as their business models differ. It is tricky to apply economics of museums that is based on public museums that receive subsidies, to private museums. As they do not receive subsidies, private museums differ essentially from public museums, although the economics on museums is often based upon the market failure of museums and therefore subsidized institutions (Meier et al., 2003). Therefore it is relevant to investigate the differences between private and public museums and possible ways in which private and public museums compete.

This literature review will investigate what the economics of museums are, what private museums are, how private and public museums differ, and how they are able to develop strategies of competition. The focus thereby lies on the legal structure of the firm, the funding mix, audiences, and demand.

# 1. Museums' legal structures

## 1.1 Legal structure

The institutional form or legal structure divides museums between public and private ones. Why museums are either public or private depends on several characteristics, such as its ownership and funding. However, museums are often neither purely public nor private. For example, almost all museums receive public funding, such as subsidies from non-governmental funds or tax exemption for donors of the museum (Frey et al., 2006a; Schuster, 1998). Next to that, many public museums transferred the ownership from the government to boards, which is a type of privatization (Laermans & Pültau, 2017).

Museums can have several legal structures, which are the result of decisions about ownership and funding. In terms of ownership, museums can be owned by the government, by foundations, or private persons (Frey et al. 2006a&b; Schuster, 1998). In the first case, the government owns the museum and the collection, and the organization is managed by people employed by the government. In the second case, a foundation employs people to manage the museum, which is often owned by the government in the case of public museums (Netzer, 2011). In the third case, private persons or organizations own museums. The biggest difference between these types of museum ownership is that the first and second types are not able to make a profit, as they are non-profit public institutions. The third type on the contrary, is able to make profits, when the museum is registered as a private business. However, as this research will show, many private museums are owned by a private person through a non-profit foundation.

Depending on the ownership and institutional form of a museum, a museum can or cannot receive governmental funding (Frey et al., 2006b; Gerstenblith, 2006; Netzer, 2011). As described in table 1, museum can receive non-income and income. A type of non-income is governmental subsidy, given by the government, provinces or municipalities. These types of funding can only be given to organizations that are non-profit public institutions. For-profits are not able to apply for these subsidies (not all privates are for-profits). In table 1, an overview of types of legal structures of museums is given:

**Table 1: Overview of types of legal structures of museums**

Legal structures of museums, in terms of ownership, legal structure, and the ability to receive governmental subsidies (Caves, 2006; Frey et al., 2006 B; Gerstenblith, 2006; Netzer, 2011; Rijksoverheid, N.D.b)

	For-profit	Non-profit	Non-profit
Ownership	Private business	Public organization	Private organization
Legal structure	Private company	Governmental institution or public foundation	Private foundation
Ability to receive governmental subsidies?	No	Yes	Yes

In the museum sector, not many for-profit organizations exist. Museums are mostly non-profits, as this makes them better able to attract other types of funding than only own income. As museums do show characteristics of public goods, demand will often not be high enough to cover all costs museum make by selling tickets. Therefore, many museums choose to be a non-profit, to be able to better attract non-income. Other possible reasons are the tax benefits non-profits can receive or the fact that reputation can be increased by being a non-profit (Lindqvist, 2012).

## 1.2 Social value

Museums have two types of demand, of which the first is demand of visitors to see art and the second is demand from people or organizations that benefit from the museum in terms of positive externalities. Museums thus not only serve the demand of visitors, but also the society (Camarero et al., 2011). A museum creates five types of social values, which are the option (people value the possibility of visiting a museum someday), existence (people value the museum for being there, although they do not plan to visit it themselves), bequest (people value the knowledge that others are able to visit the museum in the future), prestige (people do appreciate that others outside their community value the museum) and education (people value the knowledge that the museum contributes to their culture) values (Frey et al., 2006a). Next to this, museums offer direct economic value for other actors in the market, such as restaurants or tourists organizations, which benefit from the museum being there. All these social values show that museums create many positive externalities for which they are not compensated monetarily (Frey et al., 2006a).

Due to its cost structure, a museum will probably not be fully compensated for all values it creates. Museums its cost structure differs from that of other organizations, due to four reasons. Firstly, museums have high fixed costs, as the costs for exhibitions, the building and staff are high. These costs cannot be changed on a short term. Secondly, marginal costs are close to zero, as there are many costs before an exhibition can attract visitors and the cost of an additional visitor is close to zero. Thirdly, museums have dynamic costs, which means that museums have a productivity lag. They are almost not able to increase productivity, for example by implementing technology, and this leads to constant financial problems. Fourthly, museums have high opportunity costs, which are the costs of keeping a work in collection instead of selling it (Frey et al., 2006a; O'Hagan, 1988).

Due to their cost structure museums are not able to cover their costs. Therefore, the government often supports them, which can be on the level of the state, province or municipality. The government, provinces and municipalities offer subsidies to non-profit organizations that serve the common good. In that way, a museum can be compensated for a great part the social value it creates and it can produce the costly good (Camarero et al., 2011; Frey et al., 2006a). Another reason why museums are subsidized is because they are merit goods (Cwi, 1980). The government tries to increase accessibility for poorer societal groups or the less fortunate to that good (Camarero et al., 2011; Johnson, 2010). Governmental subsidy is thus a significant stream of income for museums, although the amount differs over time and between countries.

Because museums show public good characteristics and because they are almost unable to imply economies of scope and scale, museums are hardly able to operate without governmental subsidies (Johnson & Thomas, 1998). As museums are costly institutions with high variable costs for creating exhibitions that can't be covered with own income and subsidies only, they have to rely on other types of funding. Next to ticket sales and governmental subsidies and funds, they generate income from ancillaries, and non-income from private funds, sponsorships and donors (Lindqvist, 2012). An overview of all types of income can be found in table 2:

**Table 2: Overview of all types of income of museums**

Types of income divided by non-income and income (Frey et al., 2006a; Gerstenblith, 2006; Lindqvist, 2012)

	Non-income	Income
Governmental funding	Governmental subsidies Provincial subsidies Municipal subsidies	-
Non-governmental funding	Sponsorships Donations Private funds	Revenue from ticket sales Revenue from ancillaries Revenue from business events

1.3 Non- and for-profit museums

Their cost structure makes that museums are often non-profit organizations. As the demand curve of museums lies below the average cost curve, they have to rely on more streams of income than only own income (Frey et al., 2006a). These are governmental and non-governmental funding. For governmental funding, a museum must be non-profit, as it must serve the public good instead of personal interest of the owners of the museum (Netzer, 2003). Next to that, a museum might be better able to attract non-governmental funding from sponsors, donors and private funds when it is a non-profit. The non-profit status suggests a smaller risk to funders for being exploited. It also shows that museums serve the common good, which can be attractive for funders (Frey et al., 2006a&b). The condition of being non-profit is namely that the managers do not own the organization and profit cannot be appropriated by the managers, but invested in organization only (Netzer, 2003). This shows that reputation of an organization plays a role in attracting funds.

Next to the motivations of museums for being non-profit, there is also a motivation for the government to support museums being non-profit. Their public function is the reason why (mostly European) governments started supporting public museums. When a museum is a public non-profit, it has to meet several functions, such as conserving the art and educating visitors, which ensures they serve the public good (Netzer, 2003).

1.4 Public funding in The Netherlands and Flanders

The Dutch government provides public subsidies to cultural organizations in four ways. Firstly, the ministry of Education, Culture and Science provides subsidies on a long-term and short-term basis.

The policy on culture is always presented in a four-year plan, which is the so-called Culturele Basisinfrastructuur (BIS), the ‘cultural infrastructure’. The long-term subsidies consist of a guarantee of funding for four years. These subsidies are provided to organizations that belong to the BIS, which are assigned by the Raad voor Cultuur (Council for Culture), that is an advisory board for the government. The short-term subsidy is provided for projects, although it is provided only rarely. Secondly, the Dutch government provides subsidies through its own public funds. Applications for these funds are treated and granted by the funds. These governmental funds are the following: Fonds Podiumkunsten (performing arts), Fonds voor Cultuurparticipatie (participation in culture), Mondriaanfonds (visual arts), Nederlands Filmfonds (film), Stimuleringsfonds Creatieve Industrie (creative industries) and Nederlands Letterenfonds (literature) (Rijksoverheid, n.d. C). Applications for these subsidies are also treated and granted by the provinces and municipalities. Thirdly, the government provides subsidies through its provinces and municipalities. The fourth way in which the government indirectly subsidizes cultural organizations is by providing them tax benefits (Gerstenblith, 2006). An example is the cultural ANBI (*Algemeen Nut Beoogde Instellingen*), which is a status given to organizations that support the common good. Donors of the organization that is assigned as ANBI receive tax benefits. They are able to deduct their donation from their tax return (Belastingdienst, N.D.a; Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend Nederland, N.D.; Rijksoverheid, N.D.b&c).

The Dutch government only subsidizes public museums. Private museums therefore have to rely on own capital, revenues from the museum, sponsorships, donations, and private funds. The Netherlands has a lot of these private funds, which act independently of the government. Examples of these funds are VSBfonds, Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds and VandenEnde Foundation (Rijksoverheid, N.D.b).

In Belgium, subsidies for the arts are divided between the Flemish and the French community and Brussels. The Flemish community consists of Flanders and the Dutch speaking part of Brussels. They have their own policy on subsidizing the arts. The Flemish government subsidizes art and culture in many ways, and these regulations are divided among three decrees: the Participatiedecreet (social participation), the Kunstendecreet (the arts), and the Cultureel-Erfgoeddecreet (cultural heritage) (Vlaamse Overheid, N.D.a&b). The Flemish government, similarly to The Netherlands, grants project subsidies and structural subsidies for several years. It also has governmental funds, which are the Vlaams Audiovisueel Fonds, the Vlaams Fonds voor de Letteren, CultuurInvest, and the Fonds Culturele Infrastructuur. Applications for these subsidies are treated and granted by the funds themselves. On the federal level, Belgium offers a regulation that is called the ‘Tax Shelter’. It offers tax benefits for projects in audiovisual and cinematographic art (Federale Overheidsdienst Financiën, 2018). This is the only regulation for art on the federal level. Next to that, the provinces of the Flemish community offer subsidies for projects that have a link to the province. Besides the provinces, also cities and municipalities offer subsidies. These subsidies are all governmental subsidies from the Flemish community (Van der Hoeven, 2005).

## 2. What are private museums?

Academic research about museums is often focused on public museums. This is not surprising, as the development of private museums is a recent trend. Larry's List saw that 70% of all private museums was founded after 2000 (Larry's List, 2016). After World War II, governments were more concerned with presenting and conserving art, which meant an increase in public subsidies for museums and art policy (Schuster, 1998). However, since the global economic crisis of 2008, this governmental funding for the arts has seen a huge decrease. Individual patronage became more important to guarantee the state of the arts (Tobelem, 2013). Developments that show this reliance on patronage are for example the invention of crowdfunding platforms, friends-of-museum clubs and the increase of sponsorships in the art market. But privatization not only increases on the demand side of the museum, but also the supply side, as private collectors started to open museums to present their collections. This chapter explains what private museums are and what conditions in the museum sector led to the privatization of museums, especially in The Netherlands and Flanders.

### 2.1 Privatization

In the past, relationships between public museums and private collectors were of great importance. Private collectors often loan their collection for specific exhibitions or they even donated (a part of) their collection. However, the reason why private collectors open their own museums is possibly that they want a higher degree of control and the possibility to display their art themselves in their own way (Wakefield, 2017). Another possible explanation of the presence of private museums can be the changing political context of a country, which has an impact on art policy and the need for patrons (Barret, 2015).

Xiangguang (2008) also shows that the rise in the amount of private museums depends on social and political circumstances. He analyzed the development of private museums in China in the light of the political change in the last two centuries and the approach of the government to subsidizing the art. What is shown by this article is that political movements, like socialism and liberalism, determine the governmental attitude towards art and art policy (Xiangguang, 2008). The development of private museums seems to be dependent on the role of the government in stimulating the arts that changes with the economy and governmental welfare. When governmental art policy becomes less, patronage increases and private museums seem to take the role of supplier of the arts (McDonald, 2006; Meier et al., 2003; Wakefield, 2017).

A privatization development in the museum sector can be discovered in The Netherlands, where the government cut their subsidies during the economic crisis. Dutch Secretary of State of culture Halbe Zijlstra's policy on culture that he presented in 2010, was very controversial. He presented a subsidy cut of 200 million euros in a budget of 900 million. Since that cut, many cultural organizations merged or even quit, and some are still coping with the significant loss of subsidy (Van der Hoeven, 2005 & 2012). In Belgium, they looked with aversion to the Dutch situation of the culture and the arts. There, the cuts were mild in comparison to The Netherlands (Van der Hoeven, 2012).

Privatization is a process that is not only apparent in the last decades. Hatton (2012) says that modern museums that arose in the twentieth century are more focused on their output instead of their input. Therefore, the task of modern museum changed, which Hatton describes as: “Key issues for future museum leaders, in addition to maintaining or growing audience share, attracting new audiences and innovating to do so, will be balancing public funding, grants and donations with more sustainable income generation, thereby lending an even more ‘entrepreneurial’ dimension than demanded previously. [...] The profession has to develop both strategic thinking and transformational leadership to develop museums well beyond the twentieth century ‘all-purpose’ paradigm and management skills adequate to the complex tasks of routine transactional decision-making” (Hatton, 2012, p. 140). Since the task of museums changed, that asks for a more commercial approach, it is relevant to investigate whether private museums are better adapted to these requirements than public museums, because they are less restricted by legal regulations.

## 2.2 Defining private museums

Definitions of private museums differ much. However they are all focused on the ownership and the management of the museum. Next to this, funding streams play a significant role in defining whether museums are private or public (Meier et al., 2003). As Zolberg (2000) describes them, private museums encompass “the commercial, profit-making arts, which are run like other businesses, and whose logic impinges upon a nominally disinterested cultural domain” (p. 9). Another explanation comes from Larry’s List, which is a study on the private art museums worldwide, and defines private museums by five characteristics. Private museums must be owned by a private individual that is still alive, that individual must be an art collector and he must display part of the collection in the museum, the museums must have a physical space and they must be publicly accessible and at last, the collection must be focused on contemporary art (Larry’s List, 2016). Frey and Meier (2006b) describe (purely) public museums as institutions that rely on public grants only. They are not as much stimulated to be efficient and to generate extra income as private museums, because public museums are restricted by law and the functions they have to perform. Private museums are therefore more likely to take in a commercial approach or to seek for market differentiation (Camarero et al., 2011). To generate revenue, private museums are probably more willing to sell part of their collection, to implement less artistic activities in their program (such as hosting other types of events), to create exhibitions that attract a large audience (so-called Blockbusters) and they will care a lot about the amenities they offer (Barret, 2015; Camarero et al., 2011; Frey et al., 2006a; Fyfe, 2006).

Developing from these definitions of private museums, I will present a definition of private museums that is most applicable to private museums in The Netherlands and Flanders. My definition of private museums is as follows:

- Private museums rely on non-governmental funding only, such as own revenue, private funds and donations of sponsors and donors. However, a private museum can still be licensed by the government as an organization that can provide the museum its donors tax exemption

- Private museums present their own collection, which can be the collection of the private collector or the initiator of the museum
- Private museums can be either for-profit or nor-profit (which means that they can be a foundation)
- Private museums must have a physical space and be publicly accessible (including entrance by appointment)

### 3. Institutional differences between public and private museums

The main differences between private and public museums are its input, like its legal structure, funding mix and mission. This chapter will investigate how public and private museums differ in these areas.

#### 3.1 Hybrids

As definitions of private museums differ, this shows that museums can be either public or private on several levels. Some museums were initiated by a private person, and later became a governmental institution. For example the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam was a governmental museum that employed civil servants. In 1994, the foundation ‘Het Rijksmuseum’ was initiated, which made it an independent museum. However, the building and a part of the collection remained property of the state (Rijksoverheid, N.D.a). Some museums started being a private museum, but became a public one when they started applying for subsidies when costs could not be easily covered by own income only. Museum Belvédère is an example of a museum that started being private, but receives provincial subsidies since 2017. The private financial contributions were not enough to prevent the museum from bankruptcy (Leeuwarder Courant, 2016; Omrop Fryslân, 2015). Another example of a hybrid is a more current example, which is the public museum that privatizes. The Museum Boijmans van Beuningen is an example of this, as it will open a depot in 2020. This depot is financed mainly privately and it will also store artworks from private collectors and companies (<http://depot.boijmans.nl/online-tour/>).

As we have seen before, museums can have different legal structures, which are dependent on its ownership and the decision on being for- or non-profit. Motivations for choosing to be a certain type of legal structure depends on many factors, such as the reputation of a museum, the availability of private capital, restrictions and missions. The legal structure not only has an impact on the funding mix and its public function, but according to Frey and Meier (2006b), the legal structure of a museum has a high impact on the behavior of the management too (Meier et al., 2003). Purely public museums that are financed by governmental subsidies are not likely to increase own income or keep costs at a minimum. This lack of efficiency is due to the fact that if a public museum makes a profit, there will be an implicit tax of a 100 per cent (Netzer, 2003). The subsidy will be decreased by the amount of the profit that is made, as a public museum’s expenditures must equal its subsidy. Next to that, the legal structure has implications for the sale of paintings, the focus on numbers of visitors and amenities (Frey et al., 2006b). A public museum is not allowed to sell its collection, which is property of the state. Next to that, they are less focused on attracting large audiences or offering amenities, when a museum is secured of a stable income from subsidy. However, the superstar museum and growing amount of museum shops and cafés shows that a more commercial approach is present, although it might not be as much needed as a private museums need it to survive (Frey et al., 2006b; Meier et al., 2003). Private museums, which do not receive subsidies, are more likely to increase their own income

or to keep costs at minimum. Their incentives to be more commercial and efficient are bigger than those of public museums, as they are able to make profits (Meier et al., 2003). However, many private museums are foundations too, which means that profits have to be invested in the organization.

The fact that private museums are often foundations as well, shows that the boundary between public and private in the museum market is diffuse. In 1998, Mark Schuster (1998) investigated the hybridization of museums, to question the general view that American museums are either public or private. His research is of great importance for the global museum sector, as private-public governing structures are present in almost all museums. Pure private or pure public museums are rare. According to Schuster, museums have always both public and private interests, which means that hybrids are inherent to museum management. However, hybridization is not a management structure that is stable, but it is always subject to change. The hybrid management of museums often creates tensions between the private and public goals and is therefore never finalized. According to Schuster (1998) privatization processes in museums happen in the transfer of authority over collections, buildings, daily operations or the transfer of responsibility for funding. Different transfers could be between for-profit or non-profit entities, commercial or non-commercial activities or public or private legal structures.

### 3.2 Obligations and public functions

The International Council of Museums (ICOM) represents museums worldwide. In order to be a museum, each museum has to abide to the standards set by the council. These standards are included in their 'Code of Ethics'. This document states that museums have eight functions. In short, these are 1) preserving , interpreting and promoting heritage, 2) maintaining collections for the benefit of society, 3) holding evidence for establishing knowledge, 4) supporting understanding and management of heritage, 5) holding resources for other public services, 6) working on collaboration with communities from which the collection originates, 7) operating in a legal manner, and 8) operating in a professional manner (ICOM, 2017). Also in The Netherlands, the Museumvereniging has an own code of ethics and several guidelines museums can use, such as a collective labour agreement, a guideline for deaccessioning, a code of conduct for diversity and a code for cultural governance (<https://www.museumvereniging.nl/professionalisering-musea>). Both The Netherlands and Flanders have their own dependance of the ICOM, respectively the ICOM Belgium Flanders and ICOM Netherlands. Many public museums are member of the ICOM or the Museumvereniging, which means they performs several public functions. They can make use of the council its services and network and be officially registered as a museum, but is also means an obligation to meet the rules and codes of ethics of these organizations. Most Dutch and Flemish private museums are not member of the Museumvereniging or ICOM, which means they are less restricted than public museums.

The restrictions that come along with being registered by a council are problematic for museums, which was shown by Cossons (1989). He warned in the '80's that museums had to perform better in terms of visitor numbers, but that subsidies did not increase at the same rate. Next to having to be more commercial and address a larger audience, museums kept their function as educational and social institutions (McPherson, 2006). Therefore, museums had to deliver more and better services,

although their financial resources did not increase and their functions remained the same. This resulted in a trend that Cossons (1989) described as “in pushing museums towards a self-help policy they are being asked, in effect, to raise funds in the corporate sector, charge admission, derive profits from their shops, and so on, in order to fund the depreciation of their increasingly expensive capital assets. The collections are inalienable, held in public trust for today and tomorrow. So they have no cash value. Money cannot and should not be borrowed against them” (p. 193). There is thus a paradox in public museums, as they are now encouraged to be more entrepreneurial, while subsidies and codes of ethics forbid museums to sell their collection and oblige them to comply to their functions of presenting their collection to a wide audience and preserving art for future generations (Kotler & Kotler, 2001; McPherson, 2006).

## **4. Levels of competition between private and public museums**

Concluding from the last chapters, museums differ on the levels of legal structure and public function. The differences between museums have implications for both types of museums, private and public. This chapter shows how similarities and dissimilarities between private and public museums influence levels of competition. This competition happens in (1) raising funds, (2) attracting audiences, and (3) being different in terms of collection (Frey et al., 2006b; Johnson, 1998; Meier et al., 2003).

### 4.1 Funding

Public and private museums have the same streams of income, aside from the governmental subsidy that private museums do not have. Museums thus compete for the same private funds, donors, and sponsors. To have an advantage over the other in applying for funds, museums can focus on the uniqueness of their collection or work on relation management with potential donors (Frey et al., 2006a&b). Private museums are smaller and therefore possibly more approachable organizations, which can make their personal relationship with donors, sponsors, and funds better. Therefore, they can have an advantage over larger public museums. Next to that, their collection is often unique, as it is a reflection of one's personal taste and therefore it can be more interesting for donors than more general public collections. However, this can be negative too, when a collection is too personal and not following a theme.

### 4.2 Audiences and demand

Demand for museums is dependent on the admission fee, the opportunity cost of time and the price of alternative activities (Frey et al., 2006a). Pricing is thus an important strategy to attract visitors to a museum. For private museums, ticket prices might be higher as they do not receive public subsidies and therefore have to increase their revenue with ticket prices. This can mean that private museums have to charge too high prices.

Next to ticket price, demand is also dependent on the price of alternative activities. When ticket prices of private museums are higher than prices of the public museums, public museums could be a substitute for private museums. The extent to which museums are substitutes depends on how they diversify. The collection of a museum plays the biggest role in a diversification process as presenting the collection is the main activity of a museum (Frey et al., 2006a&b). However, to what extent the collection influences visitor's choice to visit a certain museum is unclear. Their decision might also be a result of marketing strategies, peer recommendations and other motivations such as the willingness to travel.

### 4.3 Collection policy

Pommerehne and Feld (1997) investigated how public and private museums' policies influence the auction prices of painting. Results from the study showed that institutional differences play a big role in the ability of museums to acquire new works of art. Public museums have to act according to the preferences of the taxpayer. Their budget constraint is harder than that of private actors. Public museums do often pay relatively high prices for art, as there are not many substitutes for museum

quality art. Therefore, their demand is quite inelastic as their choice of art is very much constrained by the collection it has to develop and opportunity costs are more or less ignored. On top of that, museums do not often purchase cheaper contemporary 'new' art, as it lacks a historical background and it could lead to public protest (Pommerehne et al., 1997).

In order to investigate the buying power of public and private museums, it is relevant to look at the collection policy. For public museums, this is characterized by three factors, which are the restriction to not deaccession, the limited budget, and the fact that public museums have no incentive to consider the paintings' prices as it might lead to criticism, since this makes the institution 'marketable'. When the value of the collection can be expressed in figures, performance can be measured and therefore the museum can be held accountable. Therefore, museums like to be vague in this matter (Frey et al., 2006a; Gerstenblith, 2006; Meier et al., 2003; O'Hagan, 1998). The collection policy of private museums on the contrary, is very different. These organizations rely on donations from firms and private persons. As stakeholders, these donors will try to imply their preferences on the acquisition policy of the museum. Therefore private museums experience budget constraints (Frey et al., 2006a; Pommerehne et al., 1997). However, since the influence of stakeholders is something museums can decide on themselves, it might not always be the case that having stakeholders means a budget constraint. Although private museums might thus be less constrained in their collection policy, this does not mean they are better collectors. Their early governance is often determined by the tastes of the collector and therefore collection policy can be more unplanned and erratic (Wakefield, 2017).

# Method and methodology

## Type of research

This qualitative study aims to fill the gap that exists around the personal motivations of collectors to open a private museum and what their experiences about competition with public museums are. As the history of the private museums, their business model and public function differ very much, a multiple case study is helpful to understand these differences and the difference between public and private museums in general (McDonald, 2006). As private museums are expected to be diversified organizations, a comparative multiple case study will be made, to find out their differences and similarities (Yin, 2013 & 2016). Case studies give an impression of the private museums market in all its forms and next to that, a more nuanced comparison with public museums can be made.

To investigate whether private museums face competition with public museums, semi-structured interviews were conducted. They were part of an exploratory and idiographic method of analysis by coding the interviews. Qualitative research is appropriate for answering the research question, as it investigates motivations and personal points of view. As the motivations behind opening a private museum are often very personal, doing interviews was the appropriate way to uncover these motivations.

The case studies were based on the private museum market in The Netherlands and Flanders. The motivation for choosing to investigate the Dutch market was my familiarity with the Dutch cultural policy and the Dutch museum market. Next to that, seven out of nine private museums in The Netherlands opened after 2015, which means that the private museum market is developing and a current trend. The reason for investigating the Flemish private museum market was partly for expanding the data set, as it remained limited when only investigating the Dutch market. Next to that, the Dutch and Flemish cultural policies on museums are quite similar (Van der Hoeven, 2005 & 2012), which makes it possible to compare Dutch and Flemish museums and to generalize results to a certain level. Besides, in Flanders, the trend of opening private museums is as current as in The Netherlands (Laermans & Pültau, 2017). Therefore, it is relevant to investigate the effects of these trends on the museum market, which is predominantly public. The reason for limiting the research to only the Flemish community of Belgium, is because of the language barrier I have in the French-speaking part of Belgium.

## Research question and expectations

The research question is:

*Are private museums differentiated organizations from public museums and do they compete with public museums?*

The sub-questions that go along with the research question are:

- What are private museums' motivations, missions and goals?
- What are private museums' business strategies?
- Do private museums compete with public museums and if so, how?

These sub-questions were developed from the theoretical framework.

## Selection of cases

The focus of this research lies on private museums for the visual arts, because most subsidized (public) museums are art museums and most private museums have visual art collections (<http://bis2017-2020.cultuur.nl/adviezen/musea>; [http://www.kunstenenerfgoed.be/sites/default/files/uploads/pdf/130927\\_overzicht\\_toegekende\\_werkingssubsidies\\_2014.pdf](http://www.kunstenenerfgoed.be/sites/default/files/uploads/pdf/130927_overzicht_toegekende_werkingssubsidies_2014.pdf)). Visual art museums are the biggest part of the museum sector and therefore most useful to investigate.

Only private museums and no public museums were interviewed, since they are the new actors on the market. They have to gain a market position and therefore it is interesting to see if and how they face competition and how they adapt their management to it. Next to that, a lot of research is done on public museums and less on private ones. The current study shows the implications of being private instead of public for managing and keeping the organization running.

The aim is to give the most representative illustration of the private museums sector as possible, and therefore an attempt was made to arrange interviews with all private museums in The Netherlands and Flanders. The population consists of 15 private museums, exhibition spaces or collection buildings, of which 9 are Dutch and 6 are Flemish. I developed this population myself, as no overview of the private museum sector existed. The population was collected by looking into media stories about private museums, as they often cite other examples of private museums. I investigated the legal structures of museums I expected to be private. Through snowballing from the articles, saturation in terms of finding all private museums was reached in all probability. An overview of all Dutch and Flemish private museums can be found in table 3.

**Table 3: Overview of Dutch and Flemish private museums**

Overview of Dutch and Flemish private museums, including name, location, and year of foundation.

Museum	Location	Year of foundation
Art Center Hugo Voeten	Herentals (Flanders)	2012
Beelden aan Zee	Scheveningen	1994
Charles Riva Collection	Brussels (Flanders)	2009
Collection Vanmoerkerke	Ostend (Flanders)	2008
De Groen	Arnhem	2016
De Pont	Tilburg	1992
Herbert Foundation	Ghent (Flanders)	2013
Beeldengalerij Het Depot	Wageningen	2004
Lisser Art Museum	Lisse	Will open in 2018
MOCO	Amsterdam	2016
Museum MORE	Gorssel and Ruurlo	2015
Museum Voorlinden	Wassenaar	2016
No Hero	Delden	2018
Vanhaerents Art Collection	Brussels (Flanders)	2007
Verbeke Foundation	Kemzeke (Flanders)	2007

## Data collection

In February, emails were sent to all 15 museums to ask for an interview. Four out of nine Dutch museums were not able to give an interview, due to a lack of time. The museums that therefore did not participate were Museum MORE, MOCO, Het Depot, and Museum Voorlinden. As those museums were not able to participate, I decided to include Flemish museums in my research as well to increase the population and therefore probably the sample. Flemish museums were a suitable addition, because The Dutch government and the Flemish have a similar art policy, which means that the Flemish and Dutch art sector are comparable (Van der Hoeven, 2005). I started emailing Flemish museums in March, and four museum denied the request. These museum were Verbeke Foundation, Vanhaerents Art Collection, Herbert Foundation, and Charles Riva Collection. As they did not all answer directly to my request, a follow-up was done by sending them reminders via email and calling them several times. In the end, two museums had a lack of time to participate in the research, which are Vanhaerents Art Collection and Herbert Foundation. Charles Riva Collection did not reply after making many attempts to ask them for an interview. Verbeke Foundation replied after making several attempts to contact them. Verbeke Foundation was willing to do an interview, but it was already too late to plan and include the interview before ending the study.

In the end, seven private museums positively responded to my request for an interview. This means that the response rate is 47%. Five out of seven respondents were Dutch museums, and two were Flemish. In the emails, I asked for an interview with the founder of the museum or someone who stands close to him/her, in order to learn about how the collection was built up, why a museum was opened and what mission or goals the museum has. In all cases, the interview was done with the director (their functions were called ‘owner’, ‘curator’, ‘coordinator’, or ‘director’), which in some cases was the collector or founder of the collection itself. As private museums are often small organizations, the directors were able to give a thorough description of the museum management, as he or she is involved in many parts of the organization.

The museums in this study were considered private because they met the definition of a private museum I set (as described in the chapter ‘Theoretical framework’). Among the museums are private museums with different legal structures, such as private companies and foundations. It also includes a museum that has not yet opened (Lisser Art Museum will open mid 2018). Although Lisser Art Museum has not yet opened, the case is still relevant as the museum is probably very much aware of their strategies and plans to gain a market position at this moment. An overview of the interviewed private museums can be found in table 4 (which is also included in Appendix 1). It also includes the name and the function of the person I interviewed.

**Table 4: Overview of the interviewed private museums**

Overview of interviewed private museums, including name, location, founder and his/her occupation\*, focus of the collection, foundation year of the museum, type of exhibition space, opening hours, and the name and function of the interviewee\*\*.

Museum	Place	Founder	(Former) occupation of founder	Foundation date	Collection name (if given)	Focus of collection	Type of exhibition space	Opening hours	Interviewee
Art Center Hugo Voeten	Herentals (Flanders)	Hugo Voeten	Entrepreneur	2012	Collectie Hugo Voeten	Belgian and international art	Museum	By appointment	Simon Delobel (Coordinator)
Beelden aan Zee	Scheveningen	Theo Scholten (and Lida Scholten-Miltenburg)	Entrepreneur	1994	-	Modern and contemporary (international) sculptures	Museum	Set opening hours	Jan Teeuwisse (Director)
Collection Vanmoerkerke	Ostend (Flanders)	Mark Vanmoerkerke	Entrepreneur	2008	Collection Vanmoerkerke	European and American contemporary art	Exhibition space	By appointment	Mark Vanmoerkerke (Founder and collector)
De Groen	Arnhem	Marjolein de Groen and Peter Jordaán	Artists	2016	Collectie De Groen	Contemporary visual arts	Collection building	By appointment and in guided tours	Marjolein de Groen (Initiator)
De Pont	Tilburg	Jan de Pont	Entrepreneur	1992	-	Contemporary art	Museum	Set opening hours	Hendrik Driessen (Director and head curator)
Lisser Art Museum	Lisse	Jan van den Broek	Entrepreneur	Will open in 2018	-	Art about food and consumption	Museum	Set opening hours	Sietske van Zanten (Curator)
No Hero	Delden	Geert Steinmeijer	Entrepreneur	2018	-	Visual arts from five continents	Museum	Set opening hours	Gemma Boon (Director)

\* The founder of Museum De Pont was not an art collector himself. Founder Jan de Pont made his inheritance available for a foundation, called ‘Mr. J.H. de Pont Stichting’, that should support the arts. The board of the foundation decided to open a museum. After the opening, director Hendrik Driessen started forming a collection.

\*\* The function names are as they are stated on the website or as how the directors and collectors call themselves

I considered interviewing experts in the field or other employees of the private museums in order to increase the sample and the amount of interviews. However, I did think that experts and other employees were no relevant addition to my research, because they would not be able to tell about the personal motivations that lie behind the opening and management strategies of the private museums, which are of great importance to my research. Therefore the sample remains quite small, but still relevant, as it can give a proper exploration of different types of organizations in the Dutch and Flemish private museum market.

To give an insight in who’s behind the start of the museum, how it came to existence and how it is organized, an introduction of the museums is given here.

#### Art Center Hugo Voeten

*Legal and financial structure: Private company, to which the heirs of Hugo Voeten donate money*

Art Center Hugo Voeten is named after the entrepreneur Hugo Voeten, who had a business in supermarkets. Next to that, he was an art collector, with a focus on Bulgarian art. He travelled to Bulgaria a lot and visited artists in their ateliers. After his collection got recognition, he decided to open a museum in Herentals, Flanders. He renovated an old corn factory, which contains 5000 square meters of exhibition space. Hugo Voeten passed away last year, and now Simon Delobel is the manager of the museum. He works with one colleague, who is the artistic coordinator. The museum also has a garden for sculptures, located in Geel. Art Center Hugo Voeten is accessible by appointment (<http://artcenter.hugovoeten.org>).

#### Collection Vanmoerkerke

*Legal and financial structure: Private company. The building of Collection Vanmoerkerke is owned by the partnership of Mark Vanmoerkerke, which rents it to the collection and partly finances it*

Collection Vanmoerkerke is the exhibition space of collector Mark Vanmoerkerke, which hosts European and American contemporary art. Vanmoerkerke was a successful business man and owner of a holiday park. In 2007, he opened the exhibition space in an old plane shed. What is striking, is that the family business has its office in the exhibition space. Their desks stand between works of Ed Ruscha, Gerhard Richter and Sherrie Levine. Collection Vanmoerkerke shows one exhibition a year, and for the current exhibition, Mark Vanmoerkerke took the role of curator. The exhibitions are accessible during office hours and by appointment (<http://www.artcollection.be/en/>).

#### De Groen

*Legal and financial structure: De Groen consists of three foundations. The café and the collection building are two of them. The third, the collection that is in loan to the museum, is privately financed*

Marjolein de Groen and Peter Jordaan are both artists, who became collectors seven years ago. They decided to open their collection building in 2016, after they experienced that their online database of the collection was not sufficient to serve its goals: to share the art with the public. Their collection contains art in several disciplines from befriended artists, artists from their network and art they made themselves.

De Groen is located in an old bank in the city center of Arnhem. The building has a café and a bar, temporary exhibitions that are free of charge and a setup of the private collection, which is only accessible by appointment and in guided tours (<http://www.collectiedegroen.nl>).

#### Lisser Art Museum

*Legal and financial structure: Part of the VandenBroek Foundation, owned by Jan van den Broek, which financially supports the museum*

Lisser Art Museum is a museum focused on the topic of food and consumption. The museum started collecting art in this theme after Jan van den Broek set up a foundation to support the consumption of art and culture by youth. Jan van den Broek has several enterprises and he wanted to create a space that could be a family office and a public space for art at the same time. That is why he decided to build the Lisser Art Museum and to start collecting art. Lisser Art Museum is not open yet, but it will open this year. Lisser Art Museum is assigned as ANBI (<http://www.lamlisse.nl>).

### Museum Beelden aan Zee

*Legal and financial structure: The foundation of the museum and the foundation of the research institute are part of the main foundation 'De Onvoltooide', which owns the building, collection and capital*

Theo Scholten and Lida Scholten-Miltenburg collected art and decided to open a museum, to work after their retirement. Their collection is focused on modern and contemporary sculptures and the museum is built in an excavated dune in Scheveningen. Jan Teeuwisse, former director of the RKD (Dutch institute for art history), became board member and later on he was assigned as director of the museum (<http://www.beeldenaanzee.nl>).

Museum Beelden aan Zee is member of the ICOM, the Museumvereniging and assigned as ANBI. The museum has to be self-sustainable in terms of financing as it does not get private funds from the initiators anymore. It has a multisided financing system, including revenue from the cafe, book shop, funds, a board of trustees, donors, and business facilities.

### Museum De Pont

*Legal and financial structure: Foundation that only operates with the budget from the foundation*

Museum De Pont is a striking case in this research, as it opened without having a single artwork in the collection. Jan de Pont, an entrepreneur, left his fortune to be invested in a foundation supporting the arts, which still had to be formed. The money was meant to support the arts and the assigned board decided that opening a museum was the best way to do this.

Last year, De Pont had its 25th anniversary, which was celebrated by the installation of the sky-mirror sculpture made by Anish Kapoor at the entrance of the museum. The contemporary art collection of De Pont contains work of Anish Kapoor, Charlotte Dumas, and Richard Serra. The collection was acquired by one single man, Hendrik Driessen, who has been the director since he became part of the staff almost 30 years ago. Next year, a new director will be chosen after Driessen's retirement (<http://www.depont.nl>).

The museum is a foundation, it has the ANBI status and is member of the ICOM and Museumvereniging. The museum is financially independent as it is financed by the foundation only.

### No Hero

*Legal and financial structure: Foundation that is financed by the private investment of Geert Steinmeijer*

Museum No Hero opened last April in a small city called Delden. It exhibits the collection of Geert Steinmeijer, who is a business man. The collection is broad and contains artworks from five continents. Steinmeijer still collects art, sometimes even with a frequency of one artwork per two weeks (<https://museumnohero.nl>). No Hero is a foundation for which Geert Steinmeijer made a budget available for three years of operation. After those three years, the organization decides whether this way of sharing the art with the public is the best way to do so. No Hero is assigned as ANBI.

## **The interview**

The interviews took place between the 3<sup>rd</sup> of April and the 1st of May 2018. In preparation of the interview, an interview guide was sent to all the interviewees. During the interview, they signed a consent form to agree with the interview being recorded and their names being published. The interview guide, which can be found in Appendix 3, was available in English and Dutch. It consisted of a consent form, definitions, and the subjects that were discussed during the interview.

To structure the interviews, I developed concepts based on the theoretical framework about ways to manage the museum and ways in which private museums could compete with public museums. However, since these factors differed between museums and because there could be factors that are still unexplored in literature, the interviews had an inductive approach. Therefore, new concepts were added during the process of doing the interviews. For example, more attention was paid to the collection formation process as the policies on acquisition and deaccessioning appeared to differ much between museums.

The interviews were all recorded and transcribed verbatim. The interviews all took around 60 minutes. Before the thesis was published, all interviewees were asked to do a rebuttal. The document was sent to them two and a half week before the deadline of the thesis and they had eight days time to give feedback. This feedback was then included in the study, if it concerned factual inaccuracies.

## Data analysis

The interview guide included seven categories, which had several concepts each. The concepts were based on literature about economics of museums, differences between private and public museums and companies and management strategies, as explored in the theoretical framework. The categories were the following: motivations for opening a museum, legal structure, mission, funding mix, audiences, innovation and differentiation, and collection formation. The interview guide can be found in Appendix 3.

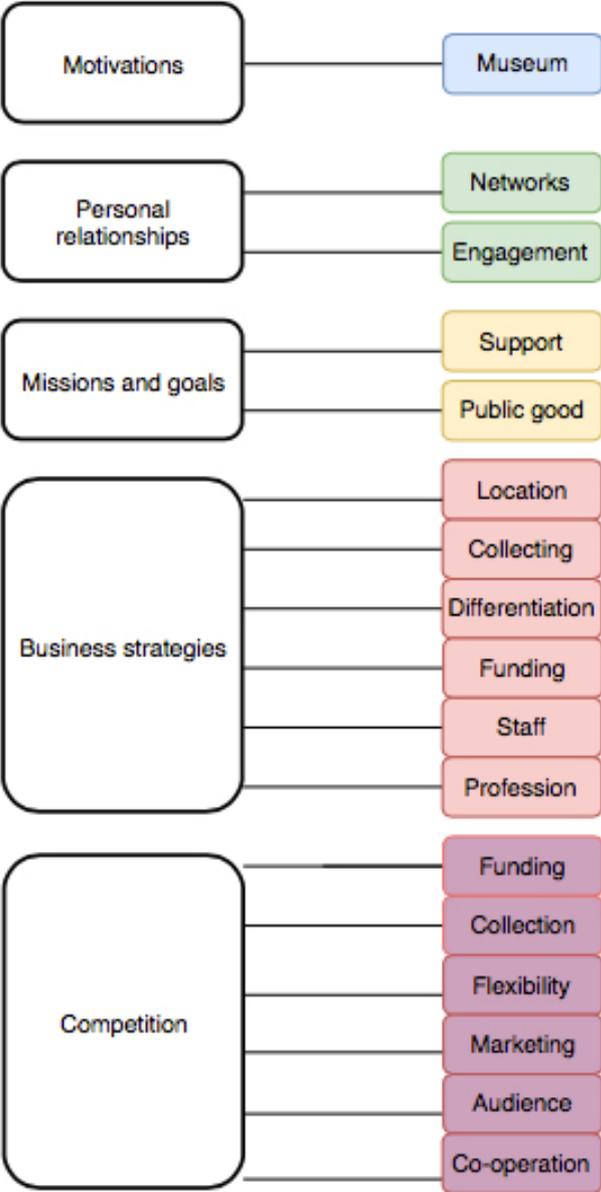
Data gathered from the semi-structured interview was axially coded on the level of the concepts emerging from the theoretical framework. The research is analytic induction, because it is inductive and deviant cases might ask for redefined expectations (Bryman, 2015). A copy of the coded interviews can be requested from Ella Kuijpers by sending an email to [ellakuijpers@gmail.com](mailto:ellakuijpers@gmail.com).

The a priori concepts following from the theoretical framework are ‘collection’ (COL), ‘motivation’ (MO), ‘business strategies’ (BS) and ‘competition’ (COM). These concepts were the first lead in the coding process, but since the coding process is open and axially, new concepts were added, which are ‘missions and goals’ (MG) and ‘personal relationships’ (PR). The concept ‘collection’ later appeared to become a category of the concept business strategies. In the coded interviews, the concepts were marked with the following symbols: <3 (PR), → (MG), \$ (BS), ✓ (MO), X (COM).

The transcripts of the interviews were read and the important phrases, words and quotes were underlined and coded. Codes that could either fit the concepts or the codes that did not fit the a priori themes were underlined. Later on, these codes were assigned to the concepts, by marking them with the symbols. Missing concepts were added, as some codes did not fit the a priori concepts. After that, a second time the interviews were read, to assign newly found codes to concepts, and to divide the codes that were already assigned to a concepts between categories. This process was repeated several times to make sure all codes were defined and assigned. The result of this coding process is listed in the data table that can be found in Appendix 4. A summarizing figure of the codes, categories and concepts is given in figure 1.

**Figure 1: Codes, categories and concepts**

This figure is developed from the data tables that can be found in Appendix 4.



## Validity

### Validity

Since the research is explorative and inductive, only some concepts were used to steer the semi-structured interview. These concepts were developed from the theoretical framework. However, during the interviews, concepts were added, as they appeared to be relevant for investigating private museums' business strategies and competition. These new concepts appeared to be returning subjects during several interviews. Previous data of interview thus learned to modify the data collection procedure during other interviews, which means adapting the concepts of the interviews. Because the research is about personal motivations and the personal experience of competition, interviews were the best method to collect these data. During the interview there was space to discuss all types of motivations and experiences in competition the interviewees had, so the results covered all the different ways in which museums compete, as the questions remained very much open. Showing differences between private museums and the different practical outcomes of personal motivations and missions was the main focus, instead of trying to give a generalized view on the private museum sector. Making generalizations seems impossible, due to the small sample size and the huge differences between the museums. However, this study manages to give an adequate image of the Dutch and Flemish private museum sector, as a great part of the population (47%) has been interviewed.

It was a purposive decision not to triangulate the method. I did not find other methods of collecting data that would give me the same appropriate and profound information about motivations of collectors and initiators as with having interviews with them or people who stand close to them. Moreover, data triangulation seemed unnecessary to me, as motivations won't probably change over time, of between different persons working in the organization. They are very much closely linked to one person, which is the director, initiator or collector. However, to retain an objective view on the personal motivations and stories, I prepared the interviews by reading many articles about the pros and cons of private museums. Therefore, I did develop an objective view on private museums and did not become too much personally involved in the sometimes convincing stories about personal missions. Limited time and capacities did not let me triangulate the investors of the coding process (Leung, 2015; Yin, 2011).

### Reliability

Since the interviews were coded axially, it can be assumed that saturation of the coding took place. Interviews were coded several times, until no codes could be found anymore. During this process, coded data were constantly compared and missing and inapplicable categories and concepts were added/removed (Yin, 2011). Therefore, it can be assumed that coding over time will be reliable, as probably the same concepts, categories and codes will be found.

# Results

## 1. What are private museums' motivations, missions and goals?

Private museums appear to be very personalized organizations. This naturally has to do with the fact that a private person stands behind the start of the museum. As will be shown in the next chapter, personal motivations have strong and very different impacts on the business model of the museums, which can vary a lot. First, the motivations behind opening a museum are discussed. Second, the goals and missions of the museums are analyzed. Therefore, an understanding can be made about why these museums exist and what their contribution to the museum market is.

### 1.1 Motivations

For many collectors, collecting art was not their main profession. Six out of seven collectors or initiators of the private museums were entrepreneurs in other businesses than art. For different reasons, they became acquainted with the world of collecting art, but for all it was a personal hobby. There are only two exceptions, of whom one is Jan de Pont, who left his inheritance to support the arts. The board that was assigned to give expression to this wish decided that collecting art and opening a museum was the best way to do so. Also Jan van den Broek, the founder of Lisser Art Museum, had some privately owned works of art, but only started professionally collecting art when he decided to open a museum to support the arts, which was the goal he had with his VandenBroek Foundation. However, the task of collecting was assigned to Sietske van Zanten, who became the director of the newly built museum.

Nonetheless, all other initiators collected themselves. Motivations to open a museum for their collection were often very personal. Some collectors liked being able to see all their artworks in one space, instead of storing them in depots. Also giving a more permanent destination for the artworks was a motivation for some. Donating the collection to a public museum however, was not an interesting option for all collectors. Some tried to donate the collection, but for example in the case of Museum Beelden aan Zee, the collection became too big to donate. A significant part of the collection would then end up being stored. For two collectors, Mark Vanmoerkerke and Jan van de Broek, opening a museum was a manner to kill two birds with one stone. They both were looking for a place to create a family office; opening a museum with a family office would give them the opportunity to exhibit their art there too. Another personal motivation to open a museum is that some collectors liked making exhibitions or being involved in the conceptual part of exhibiting. Theo Scholten from Museum Beelden aan Zee liked making exhibitions himself:

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*Then in the eighties, they thought of doing something by themselves: 'then we retire and we start running a museum'. Because that was what they always wanted to do; making exhibitions. And he was also someone who liked being a builder (Jan Teeuwisse)*

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Also Mark Vanmoerkerke appeared to be interested in curating. He learned the tricks of the trade from other curators and even curated the last exhibition himself. Geert Steinmeijer from No Hero works very closely with his director Gemma Boon and tries to find works of art that fit in the upcoming theme of the exhibition. Boon and Steinmeijer together decide on which artworks will be exposed in the next exhibition.

What goes against the general idea about private museums is that, surprisingly, all collectors were not primarily motivated to open a museum to expose their wealth. Museums do not act as a cockhorse, while some people expect this (Ellis, 2008; Foster, 2015; Meier et al., 2003). No Hero is a living example of this, as the name of the museum refers to the wish of the collector to not being seen as a hero or a patron. Only one collector, Mark Vanmoerkerke, admitted that having a museum and doing opening events is nice for his ego, but for him, it will never be the foremost reason to have a museum.

Not only practical reasons and personal motivations, but also ideals played a role in opening a museum. Some collectors saw collecting art and opening a museums as a way to support the art and artists. Jan de Pont found it a necessity that society makes space for artists. According to Hendrik Driessen, he found that:

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*Society needs people who dare to think freely* (Hendrik Driessen)

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With opening a museum the board of De Pont offered a platform for this. These ideals of creating a platform or supporting the art sector come close to the missions and goals the museums have.

### 1.2 Missions and goals

A reason to open a museum and a mission many private museums have, is to support the arts and artists. They do so by buying artworks and exhibiting them. Therefore, they give financial support and visibility to artists. This is also a reason why many museums loan their artworks to other museums. For De Pont, the primary concern when giving loans is that the loan should be advantageous for the artists of the artwork. If it is not, an artwork will not be on loan. For Museum Beelden aan Zee, the supporting role of the museum is specifically meant for young artists. By buying and exhibiting their art they want to support the career of upcoming artists. Also De Groen supports young art students from the local art academy ArtEZ, by offering them a platform to experiment and test new ideas. They have a special bar where these experiments take place. It also states that

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*We know how the art world works. It is not easy for artists to stay afloat. It is complicated and we saw that many good artists were not always appreciated like that. We wanted to play a role in that [...]*  
*Then we became collectors, artist-collectors* (Marjolein de Groen)

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Collector Hugo Voeten took his role as a supporter for artists very seriously. He did have an important role in Bulgaria, where the communist government did not give any support for the arts. Hugo Voeten became an important client for some artists. He sometimes even purchased artworks out of sympathy for poor people and booked a flight and stay for all artists in his collection to attend the opening of his art center. Only No Hero and Lisser Art Museum did not mention that they collect and exhibit in favor of the arts.

Despite their care for the arts, private museums do not all confine themselves to the typical functions of a museum. A museum is often seen as something that has several functions, which are conserving and presenting the collection, preserving heritage, doing research, educating, and collaborating (ICOM, 2017; Gerstenblith, 2006; Jackson, 1988; Johnson, 2010; O'Hagan, 1998). Only Museum De Pont and Museum Beelden aan Zee meet these requirements, as they have to, because they are a registered member of the ICOM and the Dutch Museumvereniging. Therefore, they have to meet the Code of Ethics, which prescribes them to perform the museum functions. Other museums do not want to confine themselves to these requirements, as they are not specifically motivated to secure the art for the future (No Hero), to be obliged to make a certain amount of exhibitions each year (Lisser Art Museum, Collection Vanmoerkerke), to meet certain opening hours, to be obliged to educate people (De Groen), or to restore art (No Hero).

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*I do not see ourselves as a museum. We take no responsibility for education. We do not take responsibility for conserving. We all do it, but we do not have a museum policy for it. [...] We are both artists, so we consider it an artists initiative (Marjolein de Groen)*

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By not restraining themselves to rules or functions, museums have the possibility to change and adapt to changing circumstances. For example, No Hero is now operating as the so-called 'prototype 1', as it chose to try this type of museum for three years. After these three years, the board and staff will decide whether this prototype is working well or whether a different type of organization better fits their aims. This might turn out in not having a museum anymore, but showing the art in a different way. Also De Groen wants to be able to adapt to the needs of the audience. Therefore, both organizations want to stay flexible in order to meet their goals, which are serving the needs of the audience.

The focus on the public good is a goal of many museums. All museums said they have a duty to make art accessible to the public. Mark Vanmoerkerke even said:

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*Showing the art to as many people as possible is the only responsibility of the collector (Mark Vanmoerkerke)*

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Sometimes, museums focus more on accessibility for a certain group. Lisser Art Museum particularly wants to stimulate the consumption of art by the youth. By trying to provoke a connection between the visitors, it also wants to attract audiences that are no mainstream (existing) museum visitors, but

missionary (non-existing) audiences (Hayes & Slater, 2002). No Hero and Art Center Hugo Voeten particularly wanted to make the collection accessible for the local community. Another way to serve the public is by trying to take away a feeling of fear and making people happy (No Hero), or learning people how to look at art (Lisser Art Museum).

Although the missions and goals are personal, some private museums deliberately want to become part of the museum market too and become an established institution. Collection Vanmoerkerke, De Groen, De Pont and No Hero want to do so by creating a high-quality collection or aiming at staying for a long time. Mark Vanmoerkerke and Lida and Theo Scholten for example show a professionalization in collecting that made their collection more professional:

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*Lida started following classes. [...] You can see their taste professionalizes and that at a certain moment they say, 'we also need a sculpture from Balkenhol. Or Tony Cragg.' In some cases they did that very well (Jan Teeuwisse)*

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*If you're a good contemporary art collector, you at least have Richter, or Raoul or Ruscha (Mark Vanmoerkerke)*

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However, not all museums find themselves in such a luxurious position that they can achieve what they aim for. Simon Delobel mentions that there is a gap between the aims of the museum and its capacity. Although the building has a great capacity in terms of space and the collection, the museum has several difficulties to utilize this capacity. For example, the budget is too small to create special exhibitions or to invest a lot in marketing to reach an audience. Museums also face other practical limitations, like security problems (there is no money to hire guards (Mark Vanmoerkerke), or parking problems (audience numbers cannot grow too much, because this will create a parking problem or a problem for the neighborhood (No Hero)).

## 2. What are private museums' business strategies?

When talking about private museums' business strategies, one should start with analyzing the funding mix of the specific museums. As private museums do not receive subsidies, a huge pressure lies on methods of making revenue. On top of that, private museums are often initiated by a private person, and sometimes financed by legacies and inheritances. Therefore, complex legal structures are no exceptions. How private museums deal with their type of authority and financing system appears to differ much (Meier et al., 2003). Next to that, their way of financing their museum has a great impact on their other business strategies (Frey et al., 2006a). Therefore, possible funding mixes will be explained, and the impact on the business strategy will be discussed.

### 2.1 Funding mix

As the private museums in this research do not receive governmental, provincial or municipal subsidies, their funding mix does have a big focus on private funding resources. For most museums, funds provided by the initiator or the foundation that was initiated by a private person are the main sources of revenue. Even investing the money can ensure De Pont a sufficient budget:

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*That [the budget] is the inheritance. That is a financial donation the family has done over the years. So it was invested well, with a good return on investment. We do not speculate. Not with our art and not with our own capital. So we mostly operate with the dividend (Hendrik Driessen)*

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The authority over the private money is not always the same. Sometimes, it is an inheritance, left by the initiator who passed away. In some cases, the foundation of the museum has authority over this money, while in other cases, the authority lies in the hands of the heirs. For example, Art Center Hugo Voeten was initiated by Hugo Voeten, who passed away last year. His inheritance was not specifically destined for the museum, which means that the heirs, his daughters, decide on the destination of his inheritance. Therefore, the museum does not have a stable income that comes from the private initiator. The director has to ask for a budget from the heirs, or has to make his own revenue.

In the case of De Groen, the museum is split up into three foundations. The foundation that cares about the museum and the collection (the acquisition) is privately financed. In the case of Museum Beelden aan Zee and Museum De Pont, the inheritance was given to the foundation of the museum. That budget is invested by the museums, which secures an income over time. Lissert Art Museum is also part of a foundation, of which the museum is one of several occupations. Therefore, the operating budget comes from that foundation, which is owned by the initiator. A similar construction counts for Collection Vanmoerkerke, where the exhibition space is one of several occupations of the partnership. A striking funding method is performed by museum No Hero. No Hero is a foundation that is financed by the initiator Geert Steinmeijer. He made an operation budget available, which covers the activities of the museum for the coming three years. The reason for this is that the museum does not want to be a stable form, as it wants to be able to adapt itself to the best way

of sharing the art with the public. Therefore, the museum now has a luxurious position, but the future budget is not covered yet.

For some museums, like De Groen and No Hero, the private funding means an enormous luxurious position. For some, the capital is even big enough to invest it. In some cases, the budget is dependent on the private businesses of the initiator. This is the case for Collection Vanmoerkerke, as the budget comes from the private business of Mark Vanmoerkerke and for Lisser Art Museum, which is financed by the VandenBroek Foundation, that has several activities. Vanmoerkerke even thinks that self-sustainability of a museum is unfeasible and that

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*He [the collector] is the guy who puts the money on the table (Mark Vanmoerkerke)*

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The amount of private money that is invested in the museum, influences the pressure to gain revenue from other practices, such as running a cafe, gaining income from ticket sales, renting out the building or applying for funds and seeking for donors. Museums that are in a luxurious position hardly have to think about ways of making revenue. Nonetheless, a current luxurious position does not mean that this position will remain the same in the future. For example No Hero knows that thinking about sustainable streams of income is of great importance:

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*It [thinking of other streams of income than only the private capital] is not our first pressure, which is dangerous (Gemma Boon)*

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However, almost all museums work on other financing methods, even if it is for extra activities that are not necessarily covered by the private budget. For example, Museum Beelden aan Zee has a diversified manner of making revenue. It pays a lot of attention to addressing private donors. It has a board of trustees, who pay a significant amount of money to have a chair. Another club is formed by small private donors, who become part of the so-called ‘Sculpture Club’. The museum is also more focused on attracting visitors, renting out the building, attracting private donors and funds and marketing their exhibitions. Also Art Center Hugo Voeten feels a higher pressure on generating revenue, as the operating budget is very low. However, due to the limited capacity of the staff and building, a gap exists between possibilities and capacities to increase revenue. Lisser Art Museum tries to find private donors who want to sponsor the entrance tickets. No Hero tries to work together with businesses in the neighborhood or businesses from the network of the initiator to raise extra money for their operations. However, many museums do not pay much attention to find private donors. Sometimes, there is no necessity to do so, because of the amount of private money invested in the museum. This means that a large part of the private museums is of no threat to public museums in terms of capturing the part of the market of private donors that are willing to financially support a museum.

## 2.2 Friends

Private museums are often founded by people who were very successful in doing business and because of having a passion for art, they decided to start collecting art. Since for almost all collectors in the sample collecting is an activity done for pleasure and out of interest, they invest time in finding inspiration and getting knowledge about the profession. This often results in personal relationships with artists and other collectors, which start during visiting fairs, museums and ateliers. The initiators of De Groen, Museum Beelden aan Zee, De Pont and Art Center Hugo Voeten said visiting ateliers and meeting the artists were one of their main activities during collecting, as they found a personal relationship with the artists particularly relevant.

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*The most important thing for us [...] is the connection with the artist. That is our capital. Even more than the [financial] capital (Hendrik Driessen)*

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According to them, the main reason to do so was to get more information about the artworks or to find more engagement with the artists. Although these reasons are fair enough, an advantage that comes along with it cannot be denied. The collectors who have strong personal relationships with artists find themselves in an advantageous position, as artists are more likely to donate their artworks or to give price reductions. For example, Museum Beelden aan Zee did not purchase any work of art last year, as it got several donations from artists. Strong relation management is thus something beneficial that takes time, which private collectors often have as collecting is a leisure activity.

Not only artists became friends of collectors. Because collecting is their passion, private collectors like making connections with other actors and professionals in the field. Next to doing this out of interest, collectors also get advice from colleagues, as the collectors often have not been employed in the art sector. Therefore, they have to get advised about how to make a collection, running a museum, and building a museum. Although some do know more about the art market - Marjolein de Groen and Peter Jordaan from De Groen are artists themselves and have been employed in the sector for a long time and Mark Vanmoerkerke became acquainted with collecting at a young age as his mother was a collector - all collectors appear to surround themselves with other collectors, gallerists, artists, and professionals. Therefore, investing in relation management is not only beneficial with artists, but also with other people working in the art sector. However, what should be noticed is that in some cases, the initiator of the museum has a different position in the art market than the person who is currently running the museum. In the case of No Hero, Museum Beelden aan Zee, De Pont, Lisser Art Museum and Art Center Hugo Voeten, the initiator of the museum was not acquainted with the art sector by working there, but the director is. The initiators had a passion for art and therefore started collecting next to having their business. The only case for which this doesn't count is Museum De Pont. The initiator's passion for art was present, but he wasn't a collector himself. However, he left his inheritance to a foundation to support the arts. For all other museums, when the initiator decided to

open a museum, professionals from the field were asked to give advice. In all cases, the director of the museum is someone who had much experience in the art sector before.

### 2.3 Professionalization

Most collectors asked friends or colleagues for advice about collecting and running a museum before they started running their own. In almost all cases, this meant a well prepared start of the museum. However, one museum is a striking example of a museum that still struggles with mistakes that were made by the collector more than five years ago.

Hugo Voeten left an enormous collection and a gigantic museum. However, during the renovation of the old factory that now is the museum, he did not ask for advice about climate control and the conditions in which art can be exhibited. Therefore, the building has slanted or very low walls and huge windows that shine light on the art. And since the budget of the museum partly has to come from the inheritance of the heirs, the operating budget is in no proportion to what should actually be invested in order to conserve and protect the art and the building. Although Hugo Voeten asked some private collectors for advice, Simon Delobel thinks that it was like:

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*A blind person following another blind person. I think there was not much experience of private collectors in running a museum. There was little awareness of the costs [of running a museum]*

(Simon Delobel)

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*He [Hugo Voeten] let Bulgarians decorate it [the museum], who had little knowledge about museums. Or by people who were involved in the supermarkets earlier. But the knowledge of a supermarket is different from the knowledge of a museum. There are many mistakes with lights, climate, and other things that have a great impact on your artworks* (Simon Delobel)

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Other mistakes were made, as Hugo Voeten did not have experience in the art sector. He had a miscomprehension of it, as he thought that artists not always had to get paid for their jobs.

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*I do not think he was willing to invest money in the management [of the museum]. It was also a miscomprehension. The feeling of doing an exhibition for an artists and therefore he should be content [...] His vision, his conception, was maybe not up to date* (Simon Delobel)

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Therefore, he did not left a budget for the museum, which now makes it hard for Simon Delobel to manage the huge museum with the large collection. Also knowledge about the profession of collecting lacked. Hugo Voeten bought a lot of art in Bulgaria, where he did not keep track of what he really bought. For example he did not write down the names of the artists, but described them with sentences like ‘Crazy man in the mountains’ and ‘Man with cap’. Simon Delobel now hires an art historian to travel to Bulgaria and find the missing information about the artworks.

Not only did most collectors get advice and inspiration from colleagues and friends, some went abroad to have a look at other private museums. An often cited example is that of American private museums, which makes sense, as America has a much bigger amount of private museums compared to The Netherlands or Flanders. The American private museum sector is way more mature, as a result of the limited state support for the arts (Absalyamova, 2015; Borgonovi & O'Hare, 2004; Xiangguang, 2008). For example, the collectors Theo Scholten and Lida Scholten-Middelburg from Museum Beelden aan Zee took an example of the American method of working with volunteers. Their motivation to copy this was that volunteers work voluntarily and therefore are more likely to stay motivated. Director Jan Teeuwisse later invented donation programs that are based on the American model. In the U.S., it is common sense that donors do not receive much in return for their donation, which is a practice that in The Netherlands, according to Teeuwisse, is still not understood. Another example is Marjolein de Groen, who went to Germany before opening her collection De Groen. She visited several private museums in order to get inspired by their way of exhibiting. De Groen was looking for a way that was personal and not asking too much from the staff and she ended up copying the system of Hoffman in Berlin: being accessible by appointment and in guided tours only. She decided to keep it personal and give the collection building her own name. However, it can also work the other way around: a private museum can also be an inspiration for public museums abroad. Museum De Pont appeared to inspire Nicholas Serota, former director of the Tate museums and galleries, to open the Tate Modern in an old factory that would be renovated (De Kroon & Van der Horst, N.D.).

#### 2.4 Differentiation

Before opening their own museum, the initiators looked at other institutions to determine the business model that best fit their aims and objectives. This was not always to get inspired, but also to distinguish themselves. Some initiators of the private museums started their own museum with the idea that running a museum could be done differently from what existing museums did. The directors who wanted to distinguish themselves mainly had critique on the crippling effect of subsidies. Especially Hendrik Driessen and Jan Teeuwisse from respectively De Pont and Museum Beelden aan Zee took their lessons from their work experiences in a public institution. They experienced that subsidies made people inefficient or spoiled. Jan Teeuwisse even said:

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*I worked more than ten years at the RKD [the subsidized Dutch Institute for Art History] and I experienced the other side. I know this [not relying on subsidies] is the way to keep people awake. At the RKD, we had a absenteeism of 14 per cent, and employees left before the visitors. That is killing.*

(Jan Teeuwisse)

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They therefore wanted to prevent this by not relying on subsidies. Their vision was that museums had to be financially self-supportive or that an example could be taken from the business world. However, this attitude did not only have positive sides, as both museums got critique from the field. In the time

they opened, which was around the eighties and the nineties of the last century, private museums were seen as something vulgar as it was considered to be a cockhorse of some rich person who wanted to show his wealth by opening a museum. However, some private museum do consider themselves to be an useful example for public museums. For example Gemma Boon from No Hero and Mark Vanmoerkerke from Collection Vanmoerkerke think that the entrepreneurial practices that come along when managing a private museum can be an example for museums that rely on subsidies.

### 2.5 Staff

Many initiators of the private museums learned from their experience in other sectors that the staff has to be flexible. During the interview, four out of seven interviewees pointed out that the staff was deliberately small and flexible. Therefore, high fixed costs, such as wages, are ruled out. However, this puts more pressure on the small staff, when no budget is available to hire enough employees. Another reason to keep the team small, next to avoiding high fixed costs, is that it leads to innovation. According to Sietske van Zanten from Lisser Art Museum, hiring people from other sectors or young people is a way to innovate and stay fresh. All teams (not including volunteers or members of the board) of the museum are smaller than 15 people.

### 2.6 Collecting

Although collecting might be the main occupation of a private collector, most collectors only collect art that fits their taste or preference. Also other factors play a role in deciding which art to collect, but personal interest is the main motivation for all collectors. Other factors that influence the collecting process are having art that is acknowledged in the art market, bringing in a storyline (which could be seen as collecting in depth), buying art from befriended artists or artists from the network of the collector, wanting to communicate an unambiguously image of the museum to the audience, or buying art that relates to the collector's life or past. This is for example the case for Lisser Art Museum:

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*During the start of the foundation, it was advised to work with a theme, because since that moment more art would be collected for the place in the family office. And it was advised to keep it personal. Then it was decided to collect art in the theme of food and consumption (Sietske van Zanten)*

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Not only motivations but also rules and restrictions determine the collection policy. Museums that are a member of the ICOM or the Dutch Museumvereniging, which are Museum Beelden aan Zee, and Museum De Pont, are restricted by the Code of Ethics these organizations prescribe. These codes restrict the affiliated museums to sell their collection. Another possible restriction museums face is the decision voice of a board in the collection policy (Dubin, 2006). However, Lisser Art Museums, which is the only museum that discusses acquisitions with the board, does not experience this as a restriction. She deliberately discusses acquisitions with the board, in order to come to a collection which all board members support. Museum Beelden aan Zee and Museum De Pont were also used to discuss their acquisitions in the initial phase, but now they got enough trust to operate by themselves. A third

possible restriction is that the legal structure is organized in such a way that the director is not the one who decides on acquisition and deaccessioning. This is the case for Art Center Hugo Voeten. Simon Delobel, the director of the museum, has no authority over the budget of the museum, as it has to be financed out of the inheritance Hugo Voeten left for his daughters. However, in all other cases, not regarding Art Center Hugo Voeten, the directors are very flexible in buying art, due to the legal structure of the museum. Since all museums do not receive subsidies, they do not have to justify their acquisitions to the subsidizer. Next to that, another factor that increases the flexibility is the budget some museums have. Since some museums are financed by the collector or private initiator, financial issues play no big role in acquiring art. If the budget allows it, a transaction can take place in one day.

## 2.7 Location

When building a museum, choosing the location is something that appears to be personally motivated when looking at private museums. In most cases, the museum is located in the region, city or place where the initiator was raised or where he or she spent a great time of his/her life. A motivation many initiators have for opening a museum is to give something back to the region where the initiator finds his or her personal history or where he or she made a career. The only museum where this is not the case is Museum Beelden aan Zee. The collector couple moved to Scheveningen for work. Although they planned to open a museum in Bilthoven where they came from, a friend made them aware of an empty building in the dunes of Scheveningen. Because a lawsuit against the construction of the museum in Bilthoven was going laborious and finally was decided to their disadvantage, the couple decided to give the dune in Scheveningen a chance.

Sometimes, destiny plays role in deciding on the location as well. As many collectors looked for an existing building to open their museum (only two museums out of seven were newly built, which are Lisser Art Museum and Museum Beelden aan Zee), the final location of the museum was often not something deliberately planned. For example, Marjolein de Groen and Peter Jordaan from De Groen were initially looking for a building outside the city center of Arnhem. Finally, they ended up renovating an old bank in the middle of the city center, next to the Primark and Burger King. This has a positive effect on the audience:

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*And then I realized how important it is that we are located in the city center. [...] Then we thought, this is an area to develop, the city center. So let us be next to the HEMA and Burger King. How awesome is that? You hope for shaking something up. We feel it is like that. There are people coming with fully loaded bags from Primark (Marjolein de Groen)*

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In Tilburg, a wool spinning factory surprisingly went bankrupt. Earlier, this factory was advised by Jan de Pont, the man who left his inheritance for support of the arts, and now De Pont was able to open the museum at this place, which had a historic and personal relation to the initiator.

The location of the museum can have positive and negative implications. For example for De Groen, the location turned out to have a positive effect on the accessibility. The collectors wanted to

open a building outside the city center, but now they benefit from visitors that accidentally pass by. These people sometimes are shopping and then find the museum in between the shops. According to Marjolein de Groen, these people are sometimes amazed by the oasis of peace the museum brings in the middle of all bustle in the city center. Together with Museum De Pont, De Groen is the only museum that finds itself in the middle of a city center. All other museums are quite remote, which sometimes impedes them from attracting visitors to the museum. The museums that are remote do not find themselves in a museum infrastructure, which can have positive and negative effects. For example, Mark Vanmoerkerke from Collection Vanmoerkerke appreciates that there is a threshold for people coming to his museum. Due to his resources and capacity, he for example has no guards, and therefore he does not want to attract too many visitors. Having too many visitors would mean he has to invest in guards and more security, which is something he does not want. No Hero experiences the same positive side of being remote, as the building only has a capacity for 140 people. Because they sometimes almost reach that number, it is beneficial that the museum is not located in a busier place. Another positive side of their location is that the museum is a very valuable addition to the community. Because there is no museum infrastructure and the city only has 7,400 inhabitants, the personal connection of the inhabitants of Delden to the museum is very strong. No Hero therefore finds itself in the luxurious position of attracting many volunteers. Next to that, collaborations with local enterprises are easier to set up. The community of Delden thus plays an important role for the museum. But being remote from a city or a museum infrastructure can have negative effects too. Museum Beelden aan Zee knows that their target group does not consist of the people visiting the beach in Scheveningen. For them, attracting audiences takes more effort, as those people have to come from far. For many museums their location means that a only certain type of visitor will be attracted to the museum, as they have to be intrinsically motivated to travel to the museum.

### 3. Do private museums compete with public museums?

Private museums appear to have similar goals and missions and were initiated out of similar motivations. However, the way in which the public and private museums are organized differs much. A factor that greatly impacts the business model of a private museum is the funding mix of the museum. This has an impact on its collection policy, audience reach, staff, flexibility, and sustainability. Other business strategies, such as differentiation strategies, the choice of location, and professionalization differ much, due to differences in experience in the art world of the collector or director and the amount of personal interference of the collector in the museum. The business strategies determine how professional a private museum is, the extent of wanting to be an established institution, and therefore how and on which levels they compete with public museums. In the following part, levels of competition will be discussed and examples will be given of how the amount of competition depends on the aims and objectives of the several private museums.

#### 3.1 Diversified organizations

Starting with the missions and goals of private museums, it could be stated that private museums are different types of organizations compared to public museums. Private museums' missions show a strong link to the personal motivations of the collector, director or initiator. Private museums are often initiated out of passion of the collector, and therefore they do not show similar functions or services as public museums. As private museums are not subsidized, they do not have to meet these functions. Although some do meet the Code of Ethics (Museum Beelden aan Zee, De Pont), their mission is still very personal. This mission is often defined by the initiator, who for example wanted to support artists or to show his or her art to the public. Private museums therefore are diversified organizations from public museums as they are not always limited by regulations about what they have to do and how they have to act. Lisser Art Museum even does not work with exhibitions, as Sietske van Zanten claims that competing on this level is a lost game:

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*We won't compete with other museums on the level of exhibitions. To make a good exhibition, you have to be experienced (Sietske van Zanten)*

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In the end, the difference between the legal structure of a private museum and a public museum can best explain their differences. As a private museum does not receive subsidy and therefore is not obliged to report or meet certain functions or requirements, such as the rule that a subsidized museum cannot easily deaccession artworks, it is way more flexible. Private museums can decide faster on the acquisition or deaccessioning of artworks (although very few private museums deaccession), and the structure of its staff. However, since private museums do not receive subsidies, they have to take a more commercial approach to raise funds than public museums have to. But since many private museums find themselves in a luxurious position, thanks to the private budget invested

in the museum, a commercial approach is not always necessary. Therefore, they are better able to give expression to personal goals, missions and strategies than public museums can do, since their financial welfare gives them a high degree of freedom.

### 3.2 Competition

Although private museums are different types of organizations compared to public museums, competition between these two types of organization does take place. Even though the amount of competition is minimal, some areas ask for competitive strategies from private museums.

Where some private museums find themselves in a luxurious financial position, other museums experience a higher pressure on raising funds from public funds or donors. Especially private donors are something all museums, private and public, compete for. To compete for these private donors, private museums experience a leading position when their collection is unique. For example, Museum Beelden aan Zee has a very unique collection as it focuses on sculptures only, which not many museums do. This advantage over others can also be found at Art Center Hugo Voeten, which has a collection specialized in Bulgarian art. However, uniqueness can also have a negative effect, when the audience does not like the specialization. This negative reaction of the public is experienced by Simon Delobel from Art Center Hugo Voeten.

Since private museums are more personal than public ones, relation management with donors is something private museums will probably be better at. For example Jan Teeuwisse, the director of Museum Beelden aan Zee, has a personal relationship with trustees. This personal approach will probably mean that donors are more likely to become a donor of the private museum than the more impersonal public museum. However, Jan Teeuwisse believes in the American model of donating, where donors do not receive many rewards for their donation. However, he experiences that Dutch public museums use a different method, whereby they offer several rewards. When a donor insists on getting rewards, he will probably opt for the museum that offers most rewards. Due to their capacity and resources, private museums are probably less able to compete on this level and offer more rewards, as their organizations are often smaller than those of public museums. They also have less resources than public museums. However, because some private museums have to find donors since their very start, they are more experienced in this job. Therefore they might experience an advantage over public museums. Jan Teeuwisse however mentioned that subsidies create improper competition in finding donors. Public museums sometimes are able to employ a whole development staff that is paid with the subsidy. This staff tries to find private donors and funds. Therefore, Teeuwisse says that subsidies indirectly empty the private market. We can thus say that private and public museums both have some advantages over the other in finding private donors. However, according to Lissert Art Museum, competition is not always negatively experienced:

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*Competition has a positive side too. Of course I could say, 'maybe we will manage to get a donation from Coca Cola for our museum, because they see a relationship with the work we have'. But then the donation will not go to the Stedelijk [Museum in Amsterdam]. But it could also be the case that,*

*because they do something with us, they start thinking that museums are relevant to them, which results in another big donation for the Stedelijk (Sietske van Zanten)*

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However, in finding private funds, public museums seem to have an advantage over private ones. Some directors mentioned that people think that private museums have to have a huge budget as it is a private initiative paid without subsidy, and that therefore extra funds are unnecessary. Another thought is that funds are not suitable for private museums, since private museums are one's personal hobby. Therefore, funds could think that private museums do not earn the fund, as it is more of a private enterprise than an organization that serves the public good. However, as what has been shown by analyzing the interviews, not all private museums do have a huge operating budget and all private museums have the mission to serve the public good. Many of them are even assigned as an ANBI, which means that the Dutch government recognizes them as organizations that serve the public good. Although private museums still experience some of these prejudices, they try to tackle them by giving insight in their finances (Museum De Pont and Museum Beelden aan Zee). These prejudices not only count for funds, but also private donors who do not see the urge to donate to a private museum. Simon Delobel from Art Center Hugo Voeten experiences these difficulties to find local enterprises to donate, because Hugo Voeten named his museum after himself. Therefore, donors might have the feeling of donating money for the promotion of somebody else's ego.

Private museums experience competition with public museums not only in terms of funding, but also in reaching audiences. Due to the remote location of many museums, they are not part of a museum infrastructure. This means that private museums can have a local advantage, as they do not compete with other museums for the leisure time of the local audience. However, Gemma Boon mentions that competition for audiences is always present, as museums compete for the same leisure time of the visitor:

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*Logically you compete with for example Rijksmuseum Twente, but also with all other museums in The Netherlands. Of course that is the case. However, we do not experience competition so much, as visitor numbers are not the most important thing to us. So it does not feel as a big threat or something like that. Finally, it is all about seeing our visitors leaving happier. Whether that is 30 or 200 a day*  
(Gemma Boon)

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Next to the local community, the audience that goes to the private museums is probably an existing type of audience, since they have to travel quite a distance to go to that museum, which means that they are probably highly intrinsically motivated. Therefore, reaching diverse audiences is way harder for the private museum than for public museum that is more often located in cities. The only two private museums that attract more diverse audiences are De Groen en Museum De Pont, as they are the only two museums that are located in a big city and therefore also secondary audiences come in to see the museum.

Museums that are located in the close neighborhood of another visual art museum, which are De Groen (close to Museum Arnhem) and Museum Beelden aan Zee (close to Gemeentemuseum Den Haag) both say that the proximity of another museum mostly has positive effects on the visitor number of their museum. Jan Teeuwisse and Marjolein de Groen both believe that museum audiences will combine visiting two museums in one city.

Visitor numbers and audiences are surprisingly not something private museums deliberately compete much on with public museums. Visitor numbers are often no priority, which can sometimes be explained by the fact that the urgency to cover costs with ticket sales is not so great. For that reason, private museums do not have to address a large audience as possible. That is also something that some of them deliberately do not do. For example, Collection Vanmoerkerke is not so keen on incidental audiences, like tourists, as the capacity of the museum cannot serve big groups of visitors. There are no guards, so big groups might for example cause damage to the artworks by touching it. Other museums do want to reach an audience as diverse as possible. For example, Museum Beelden aan Zee offers a diversified supply:

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*We do programs for toddlers and Alzheimer patients* (Jan Teeuwisse)

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However, their marketing is not their priority, which shows that reaching audiences is not their priority number one. For some of the private museums, paying much attention on marketing is also unnecessary at this moment, because visitors still keep coming as a result of a buzz that was created in the media during the opening of the museum. Many of them got nationwide attention in the media, since the opening of a private museum appears to be still newsworthy.

### 3.3 Collaboration

Most private museums did not experience much, or even no competition with public museums. However, almost all private museums mentioned that collaboration with public museums does exist. Only De Groen did not. The most simple way in which this collaboration happens, is by giving loans to other museums. Loans appear to be good for the visibility of the museum, the artwork and artist.

An indirect way of collaboration is mentioned by Sietske van Zanten from Lisser Art Museum who states that even competition has a positive side to it. She believes that each museum could cause a new visit to another museum. She also hopes that Lisser Art Museum can function as a museum that is the first step for new audiences to repeat visit. Lisser Art Museum will try to provide its visitors a tool to become acquainted with looking at art, which can be used elsewhere. Some museums are even actively working on collaborations with public museums, like No Hero that is working with other collectors on exhibitions and Rijksmuseum Twenthe to create arrangements, and Art Center Hugo Voeten that wants to create exhibitions with the M HKA. Simon Delobel thinks that cooperation will be advantageous, because space, collections and know-how will be shared.

## Discussion

The business model of private museums does not always accord to the assumption that private museums do have a bigger incentive to increase revenue by attracting visitors, being commercial by for example doing superstar exhibitions and offering ancillary activities or having an active policy on deaccessioning (Camarero et al., 2011; Frey et al., 2006b). Due to their luxurious financial position, many private museums do not feel the urge to be efficient, entrepreneurial or commercial to increase revenue. However, private museums that do not have the luxurious financial position, show a more entrepreneurial attitude.

The fact that reputation plays a big role for museums that are dependent on donations, stated by Frey and Meier (2006b), appears to be true for private museums. Museums face prejudices about their wealth, assuming that donations and funds are unnecessary, because the museums are expected to have enough capital or because they are assumed to be a project that only serves the initiator's pleasure. In order to take away these prejudices, private museums have to put much effort into relation management, which is something they appear to be good at.

In terms of the funding mix of private museums, a maze of possibilities seems to exist. This is opposed to the assumption that private museums always have luxurious positions. Securing the future budget is not always something that is well thought about. What can be concluded from this, is that although all museums are privately financed in some way, their sustainability is not secure for all of them. This depends on the capital and whether it is big enough to be invested. It also depends on whether the museum is a destination of the inheritance of the initiator and whether the budget is dependent on other private businesses that have to care for the budget of the foundation where the museum is part of.

Because private museums are less restricted in what they have to do or be, they are more flexible organizations compared to public museums. This aligns to a theory about the innovation capabilities of small and large organizations. Camarero et al. (2011) state that small organizations are better able to innovate, as they are small and therefore flexible. In the current study, flexibility is expressed by three facts: 1) the museum is often owned by a private foundation; 2) acquisition and deaccessioning can happen more spontaneous and flexible; and 3) private museums are not obliged to perform several functions. However, the assumption that private museums would be more active in deaccessioning does not seem to be true (Frey et al., 2006b; O'Hagan, 1998). Although they are able to sell their artworks, unless they are not following a Code of Ethics, this does not mean that they sell much. Private museums appear to follow the same motivations as public museums to not sell their collections. The collection is part of a history, and therefore deaccessioning would harm the character of the collection.

Although small organizations like private museums might be more flexible, they also face the cost disease problem (Camarero et al., 2011; Frey et al., 2006). Museums pay maintenance costs, such as conservation and restoration costs, although the revenue fails to increase at the same rate. This problem is said to have a greater impact on small organizations, as their capacity is smaller than that of

large museums. However, this study shows that private museums do not necessarily face this problem, as most of them do not meet the rules and functions stated by the museum councils. Small private museums are often not obliged to do this maintenance, as their collection is not public. Therefore, they can dodge the problems of the cost disease.

Another statement of Camarero et al. (2011) is that the professional skills and knowledge will be better advanced in large museums, since they have to perform the functions set by a council from the very start. This knowledge about collecting, presenting, and conserving the art appears to lack sometimes at the private museums in this study. The main reason is that collecting art was a hobby and opening a museum was done out of pleasure.

Competition appears to be limited between private and public museums. The most important area where competition is experienced by private museums is funding. Private museums compete with public museums on attracting private donors. Therefore, it could be argued that private museums are indeed a threat to public museums, as the same amount of private donors has to be shared by a larger amount of organizations aiming for it. However, private museums seem to have a more personal approach in attracting private donors, which is something public museums can take as a model. Therefore, competition is not only negative, as critics assume, but is also has a positive side. It might encourage public museums to be more innovative or entrepreneurial.

To what extent competition can be present, depends on whether private museums are seen as similar types of organizations as public museums. Although they both exhibit art, their functions appear to be very different. Private museums are more often indifferent to the typical museum functions. However, they all state that one of their aims is to serve the public good. Nonetheless, one could claim that their public function is less strong than the public museum's, as it is a more personalized set of missions and goals and therefore their level of social performance is lower (Camarero et al., 2011). Next to that, the funding mix of private museums and public museums differ, which means that the economics of museums, based on their cost disease and merit good characteristics, is not fully applicable to private museums. However, not being obliged to meet the functions of collecting and preserving art and educating the audiences means that private museums are no guarantee for the future. If they decide to close their doors, the day after this can be effectuated.

## Conclusion

The answer to the research question ‘Are private museums differentiated organizations from public museums and do they compete with public museums?’ is that private museums and public museums are differentiated types of organizations and that the standard economics of museums cannot be applied to private museums, and that competition with public museums is therefore minimal. Results from the interviews show that private and public museums have differentiated business models, due to their difference in legal structures, motivations to start the museums and missions, and the funding mix. Therefore, the assumption that museums have to rely on public subsidies is not true, since private museums prove that they can perform without relying on public subsidies (Frey et al., 2006). Therefore, a gap in economics of museums is observed, since not all museums appear to perform the malfunctions of the typical cost structure, which is characterized by merit good characteristics and the cost disease (Jackson, 1988; Johnson et al., 1988). Besides, the economics of museums are based upon the assumption that museums perform different functions, which makes them too costly institutions to sustain with own revenue only (Frey et al., 2006a&b; Meier et al., 2003). Private museums often do not officially confirm to these functions and therefore do not perform them in such a professional way as public museums do, which means that their public function is not completely comparable.

Private museums not only differ from public museums, but they also differ much from each other. Although they show many similarities, the legal structure of the museum and the structure in which the private funding is regulated appear to have a great impact on how museums behave, which can have very different outcomes. The Dutch and Flemish museum market is thus very much diversified. Showing their different motivations and business strategies can be exemplary for future initiators that want to open a private museum.

Private museums hardly compete with public museums. A reason for this is that private museums are much personalized organizations, which means they are not so much concerned with what other museums do in the market. Due to their luxurious position they also do not have to. Therefore, competition remains minimal. However, some competition is experienced on the level of funding and audiences. Private museums search for the same private donors as public museums do and they address the same audience that now has to choose between more options of museums. Private museums’ advantages over public museums are their personal relationships with donors and their unique collections. Nonetheless, a reputation problem sometimes works disadvantageous. However, experiencing this competition does not mean that it is something that private museums actively implement policies on. Most museums have a strong personal connection with donors, which secures them of donations. Next to that, most museums do not actively attract visitors, as reaching a large audience is not their main aim or because the capacity of the building cannot handle too many visitors. Moreover, the luxurious position many private museums are in does not force them to increase revenue from ticket sales or donations.

Since private museums show that public subsidy is not a necessity for running a museum, subsidy strikingly appears not to be the holy grail for museums. However, what should be taken into

account is that most private museums do have a luxurious position, which not every museum has and can have. Their luck is not something other museums can copy if they want to. Nonetheless, private museums still have to make revenue, as private capital is not inexhaustible. Therefore, public museums can use private museums' commercial approach and ways in which they manage to find funding resources as a model.

The fact that most private museums do not conform themselves to the rules and functions of museums councils and that they have a luxurious position, means that their social responsibility is lower than that of public museums. Not conforming to these functions means that the sustainability of private museums is problematic. Initiators do not always officially accord themselves to conserving the art for the future, which can result in private museums closing their doors when the initiator feels like it. This is an unfortunate thing, as running a museum should not be a personal game. There is much money involved in opening a private museum, and because money is scarce in the cultural sector, it should be spent consciously and efficient. Therefore, it is also painful to see that many initiators or collectors in the study did not have sufficient knowledge about the profession of collecting and building and running a museum to do it properly from the very start. Private museums sometimes become a playground for somebody who has a passion for art. The demand for or the social function of the museum is not important enough for private museums to make them the type of institution that serves the public good. Subsidy could be considered not to be the holy grail, but receiving subsidy implicitly means having a certain professionalism that private museums often appear to lack.

#### Limitations and strengths

A methodological limitation is that since the population of private museums in The Netherlands and Flanders is small, the sample was also small. However, the sample is 47% of the population, which means that a good overview of the Dutch and Flemish private museum sector can be made. Besides, the coding was only done by one researcher, which means that the interpretation was personal. However, rebuttal prevented me from misconceiving information from the interviews. What can also be questioned is whether some answers of interviewees are socially acceptable. Questions about missions, goals and personal motivations could have been answered incorrectly, since for example collectors will not easily tell when the primary motivation to open a museum is satisfying for their ego. Also the topic of the financial structure of the museum appeared to be sensitive, as some interviewees gave cryptic answers. Another limitation in this sense, is that no attention was paid to how museums realize their goals and missions. Every museum can say they want to serve the common good and serve the public, but it is also interesting to see how they do so. Claiming to perform certain missions is something different than actually realizing them. Moreover, in three cases the initiator of the museum already passed away. In those cases (Museum Beelden aan Zee, Museum De Pont, Art Center Hugo Voeten), the answers about personal motivations to open a museum and to choose for that certain type of organization were second hand.

### Future research

For future research, it will be interesting to pose the research question the other way around, by asking public museums whether they experience competition with private museums, as they now face more competitors. Next to that, an attempt can be made to develop more economic theory on private museums, as they appeared to be differentiated types of organizations to which the standard economics of museums cannot be applied.

For policymakers the results of this study are useful to investigate to what extent public museums can be compared to private museums to conclude whether they can take an example on their business model that operates without subsidies. This might improve the policy on subsidies, as it will show to what extent museums need subsidies in order to be sustainable. This can prove the indispensability of subsidies or its substitutability by other types of funding. It can also help public museums to take the strategies of private museums in terms of generating revenue as a model.

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## Appendix 1: Overview of the respondents

**Table 5: Overview of the interviewed private museums**

Overview of interviewed private museums, including name, location, founder and his/her occupation\*, focus of the collection, foundation year of the museum, type of exhibition space, opening hours, and the name and function of the interviewee\*\*.

Museum	Place	Founder	(Former) occupation of founder	Foundation date	Collection name (if given)	Focus of collection	Type of exhibition space	Opening hours	Interviewee
Art Center Hugo Voeten	Herentals (Flanders)	Hugo Voeten	Entrepreneur	2012	Collectie Hugo Voeten	Belgian and international art	Museum	By appointment	Simon Delobel (Coordinator)
Beelden aan Zee	Scheveningen	Theo Scholten (and Lida Scholten-Miltenburg)	Entrepreneur	1994	-	Modern and contemporary (international) sculptures	Museum	Set opening hours	Jan Teeuwisse (Director)
Collection Vanmoerkerke	Ostend (Flanders)	Mark Vanmoerkerke	Entrepreneur	2008	Collection Vanmoerkerke	European and American contemporary art	Exhibition space	By appointment	Mark Vanmoerkerke (Founder and collector)
De Groen	Arnhem	Marjolein de Groen and Peter Jordaen	Artists	2016	Collectie De Groen	Contemporary visual arts	Collection building	By appointment and in guided tours	Marjolein de Groen (Initiator)
De Pont	Tilburg	Jan de Pont	Entrepreneur	1992	-	Contemporary art	Museum	Set opening hours	Hendrik Driessen (Director and head curator)
Lisser Art Museum	Lisse	Jan van den Broek	Entrepreneur	Will open in 2018	-	Art about food and consumption	Museum	Set opening hours	Sietske van Zanten (Curator)
No Hero	Delden	Geert Steinmeijer	Entrepreneur	2018	-	Visual arts from five continents	Museum	Set opening hours	Gemma Boon (Director)

\* The founder of Museum De Pont was not an art collector himself. Founder Jan de Pont made his inheritance available for a foundation, named ‘Mr. J.H. de Pont Stichting’ that should support the arts. The board of the foundation decided to open a museum. After the opening, director Hendrik Driessen started forming a collection.

\*\* The functions names are as they are stated on the website or as how the directors and collectors call themselves

## Appendix 2: Consent form and Interview Guide

A shortened version of the Interview Guide is presented here. The index and definitions (which are the same as the definitions of this thesis, which can be found in the chapter ‘Definitions’) were taken out.

### **Consent form for participation in research**

#### **For question about the research, please contact:**

Ella Kuijpers  
Luzacstraat 19B  
3038VV Rotterdam  
ellakuijpers@gmail.com  
0642595040

#### **Description**

You are invited to participate in a research about private museums. The main aim of this research is to better understand what position private museums have in the museum market, and in comparison to public museums.

Your permission to participate includes the permission to give an interview. The questions of the interview will be about the legal structure of your museum/collection building/exhibition space, financing, audiences and differentiation strategies.

If you give the permission to record the interview, I will make an audio recording.

You are free to interrupt or end the interview at any time.

#### **Risks and benefits**

To my knowledge, there are no risks involved in participating in this research. Of course you are free to decide whether I should use your name or other identifying information in this research. If you prefer not to be identified, I will make sure no identifying information will be used by using a pseudonym or by only using general information.

I will only use the data and interview for academic work, like future research, academic meetings and publications.

#### **Time investment**

Your participation in this research takes approximately one hour. You are free to interrupt the interview at any time.

#### **Payment**

There will be no financial reward for your participation in this research.

#### **Rights of the participant**

If you choose to participate in this research, please be aware that your participation is voluntary and therefore you have the right to withdraw your permission or to end the participation at any time. You have the right to refuse to answer questions.

If preferred, your identity can be made knowable in all written results from this research. It is also possible to protect your privacy in all written or published results of this research.

### **Signing the consent form**

If you sign this consent form, your signature will be the only documentation of your identity. To protect your identity, you can also give oral permission. Your oral permission is sufficient.

I hereby give permission that the interview will be recorded

Name	Signature	Date
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My preference is that my identity will be made knowable in all written results of this research

Name	Signature	Date
------	-----------	------

### **Interview guide**

Belongs to the Master's thesis for the Master's program Cultural Economics and Entrepreneurship at the Erasmus University Rotterdam, written by Ella Kuijpers

#### 1. Motivation to open a museum for the private collection

Start of the museum

Making the collection publicly accessible

Exhibiting instead of donating the collection

Location of the museum

#### 2. Legal structure of the museum

Legal structure

Motivation for choosing to be a non-profit

Tax benefits of foundation

#### 3. Mission of the museum

Mission

Public good

Service to audience

#### 4. Funding mix and stakeholders

Financing methods

Most important stream of revenue

Governmental subsidies

Fluctuating sources of revenue

Restrictions by financing methods

5. Audience reach

Type of audience

Audience reach

Competition for visitors with public museums

Differentiation of good

6. Innovation and differentiation from public museums

Competition with public museums

Competition in the neighborhood

Competition with similar museums

7. Acquisition and deaccessioning of artworks

Collection policy

Restrictions in collecting

Independence by not receiving subsidies

Critique on collection policy

## **Appendix 3: Transcriptions of interviews**

The interviews were transcribed verbatim. Copies (digital) can be requested from Ella Kuijpers. Please send an email to [ellakuijpers@gmail.com](mailto:ellakuijpers@gmail.com).

## Appendix 4: Data table

Mark Vanmoerkerke = MV

Simon Delobel = SD

Jan Teeuwisse = JT

Sietske van Zanten = SZ

Gemma Boon = GB

Marjolein de Groen = MG

Hendrik Driessen = HD

### Concept 1: Personal relationships

Quote or indicator	Code	Category
“They [the collectors] liked it to visit ateliers” - (JT) Personal connection with artist - (HD) Being part of the life of the artists - (SD)	Personal connection	Engagement in the cultural sector or art market
“From visiting the ateliers, friendships developed” - (JT)	Friendships	Engagement in the cultural sector or art market
“They surrounded themselves slowly with people, like Piet Sanders [he was an art collector too]” - (JT)	Friends and advisors	Engagement in the cultural sector or art market
They asked friends from the field to become board members, like Rudi Oxenaar (Kröller-Müller) and Lambert Tegenbosch (art critic) - (JT)	Colleagues	Engagement in the cultural sector or art market
Not looking at what others (collectors, funds) do - (MG)	Indifference	Engagement in the cultural sector or art market
Artists donation artworks or giving price reductions - (JT) (HD)	Support	Engagement in the cultural sector or art market
“He [the collector, Theo Scholten] was invited to become member of boards” - (JT)	Stakeholder	Networks and additional professions
Being asked for related functions - (HD)	Expert	Networks and additional professions
Nobody wanted to work with the collector, because they did not like his collection or because they could not work in a museum that was not managed properly - (SD)	Earning respect	Networks and additional professions

## Concept 2: Missions and goals

Quote or indicator	Code	Category
“They liked it to support young artists” - (JT)	Support	Supporting the arts and artists
The museum had to be a stage for sculptures - (JT)	Platform	Supporting the arts and artists
Providing a platform for students and their events - (MG)	Platform and experiment	Supporting the arts and artists
To support the artists - (MG) (HD) (MV)	Supporting art sector	Supporting the arts and artists
Providing a platform for local artists to have a place to show their art - (SD)	Platform	Supporting the arts and artists
Taking the role as client for artists in Bulgaria, when the communist government did not do that - (SD)	Client	Supporting the arts and artists
To show respect for artists - (SD)	Respect	Supporting the arts and artists
There is not a motivation to secure the art for the future - (GB)	Conservation	Museum functions
Not having a beheer-en-behoud-functie - (GB) (MG)	Conservation	Museum functions
The museum is a shell for the collection. If this form does not work, another way of using the collection can be started. “This is prototype 1. We’re design thinkers” - (GB)	Experimental	Museum functions
The art historic story is not the primary focus - (GB)	Education	Museum functions
Adapting to the needs of the audience when discussing art - (GB) (MG)	Demand	Public good
“Showing the art to as many people as possible is the only responsibility of the collector” - (MV)	Accessibility	Public good
To make the collection publicly accessible - (GB) (MG) (SD) (SZ)	Accessibility	Public good
To share the art with the local region - (GB) (SD)	Local good	Public good
Connection, growth and utility are the main focus - (GB)	Key factors for happiness	Public good
Collecting to take care of the art - (MG) (MV)	Care	Public good
Trying to take away a feeling of fear - (GB)	Social function	Public good

Quote or indicator	Code	Category
Having to earn the right to exist - (GB) (HD)	Social approval	Public good
Stimulating the consumption of art by youth - (SZ)	Education	Public good
Learning how to look at art - (SZ)	Education	Public good
Stimulating connections between people - (SZ)	Social support	Public good
Not trying to elevate people - (GB) (MG)	Down to earth	Public good
No big names - (MG)	Superstar	Personal
“For me, collecting is the most important factor in collecting [collecting, speculating and decorating]” - (MV)	Pleasure	Personal
To create an interesting collection - (MG) (HD)	Quality	Professional
Gaining an established position in the world of collections - (MG)	Establishment	Professional
“We are here to stay” - (HD)	Sustainability	Professional
There is a gap between the aims of the museum and what is possible - (SD)	Under-exploitation of aims	Professional

### Concept 3: Business strategies

Quote or indicator	Code	Category
“The collection arose from enthusiasm in collecting” - (JT)	Passion	The profession of collecting
“That is the funny thing about a private person, he spontaneously makes good choices” - (JT)	Spontaneous	The profession of collecting
“If you’re a good contemporary art collector, you at least have Richter, or Raoul or Ruscha” - (MV)	Acknowledgement	The profession of collecting
The collectors visited fairs, museums and travelled abroad - (JT)	Market-oriented	The profession of collecting
The museum had to have an unambiguous appearance, which led to some specialization - (JT)	Specialization	The profession of collecting
Getting advice from a galleries - (MV)	Advice	The profession of collecting
No deaccessioning because it is not allowed by the Code of Ethics - (JT)	Restrictions	The profession of collecting

Quote or indicator	Code	Category
Loans are good for income and visibility - (JT)	Cooperation	The profession of collecting
Director is free in acquisition. The board does not control it - (JT)	Personal view on collection formation	The profession of collecting
The collector buys more since he opened the museum - (GB)	Increase	The profession of collecting
There is no specific focus while collecting - (GB) (MG) (SD) (SZ)	In the width	The profession of collecting
There is (almost) no deaccessioning - (GB) (MG)	Closed collection	The profession of collecting
Mainly looking in the own network - (MG)	Easily accessible	The profession of collecting
Works of art have to meet the collector's taste or definition of what is good - (MG) (GB) (MV)	Personal taste	The profession of collecting
Three main chapters, relating to his personal life - (SD) Theme relates to personal life of collector - (SZ)	Personally inspired	The profession of collecting
Not with a plan. Organic way - (SD)	Unplanned	The profession of collecting
Solving all problems, adapting errors - (SD)	Mistakes	The profession of collecting
The museum is not the heirs' priority, so collecting is neither - (SD)	No development. No policy.	The profession of collecting
Not buying on the spot, but discussing with board - (SZ)	Planned	The profession of collecting
Paying attention to what the art history says about the art - (MV)	Acknowledgement	The profession of collecting
The mother of the collector was a collector herself, so that is where he first experienced the profession - (MV)	Environment	The profession of collecting
Sometimes you have to kill your darlings - (MV)	Necessary evil	The profession of collecting
"Because he was a business economist, he knew that it [running a museum] could be done differently" - (JT)	Professionalization	Professionalization of the business/ Differentiating from the public museum business model
The museum had to be financially supportive - (JT)	Financially healthy	Professionalization of the business/ Differentiating from the public museum business model
"I know this [not relying on subsidies] is the way to keep people awake" - (JT) The subsidized museum is not efficient - (HD)	Efficiency	Professionalization of the business/ Differentiating from the public museum business model

Quote or indicator	Code	Category
The collector had experience in a public museum and was convinced that running a museum could be done differently and better - (GB) (MG)	Differentiation	Professionalization of the business/ Differentiating from the public museum business model
This flexible organization can be an example for other museums - (GB) (MV)	Exemplary function	Professionalization of the business/ Differentiating from the public museum business model
Working together with people from other sectors to innovate - (SZ)	Innovation	Professionalization of the business/ Differentiating from the public museum business model
Using business experience to stay flexible - (SZ)	Knowledge	Professionalization of the business/ Differentiating from the public museum business model
Many colleagues from the field looked down on the museum. Private museums were vulgar in that time [the eighties] - (JT) (HD)	Avant-garde	Professionalization of the business/ Differentiating from the public museum business model
The collectors moved to Scheveningen and a friend made them aware of a possible building - (JT)	Odds	The location of the museum
The people that visit Scheveningen do not make part of the museum audience - (JT) BIJ AUDIENCE?	Not a strategic location	The location of the museum
Working together with local businesses to give something back to the region - (GB)	Network	The location of the museum
Local positive externalities - (GB) (HD)	Externalities	The location of the museum
Figurehead for the region - (SD)	Figurehead	The location of the museum
In the close neighborhood of his sculpture garden - (SD)	Practical reason	The location of the museum
Not easily accessible - (SD) (MV)	Accessibility	The location of the museum
Not in a museum infrastructure - (HD) (GB) (SD)	Museum infrastructure	The location of the museum
“There is a threshold as we’re remote from everything. That is good, because I do not want to serve the people who still have two hours left in Ostend or who do not know what to do” - (MV)	Threshold	The location of the museum
In the region where the collector worked and lived - (SZ)	History	The location of the museum
“We are not against subsidies, but they are not available” - (JT)	No supportive financial climate	Funding

Quote or indicator	Code	Category
“We’re private and therefore free” - (JT) Flexibility - (GB) (SZ)	Freedom	Funding
There is a constant tension of making enough revenue - JT	Pressure	Funding
Trustees paying 10,000,000 for a chair, following the American model - (JT)	Big donors	Funding
Many volunteers, small costs for personnel - (JT)	Free labour	Funding
Relation management - (JT)	Time investment	Funding
Funds, inheritances, donors, club for small donors- (JT)	Spreading chances	Funding
Building up a buffer to be able to invest money RENDEMENT - (JT)	Sustainability	Funding
Renting out the building - (JT) (GB)	Commercial approach	Funding
The collector has many contacts from the business world, which makes it easier to find donors. Even the company of the collector is donor - (GB)	Network from business	Funding
There is a budget made available by the collector for three years - (GB)	Temporary budget	Funding
“It [thinking about other streams of funding than only the inheritance] is not our first pressure, which is dangerous’ - (GB)	Strategic planning	Funding
A shortage can immediately be funded by a donation of the collector - (GB)	No shortages	Funding
Trying to make the cafe pay the costs of the building - (MG)	Revenue	Funding
Small budget in comparison to similar public institutions - (HD)	Efficiency	Funding
Return on investment is operating budget - (HD)	Investing	Funding
Incomprehension. Old-fashioned idea that artists do not have to get paid. Therefore no budget was assigned for it - (SD)	Incomprehension	Funding
There is no destination of the inheritance. So it always has to come from the heirs and the museum is not their priority- (SD)	Destination and priorities	Funding
Forced to be efficient - (SD)	Efficiency	Funding

Quote or indicator	Code	Category
There is no vision - (SD)	Planned	Funding
I have to report everything, as the budget is controlled by the heirs - (SD)	Authority	Funding
Local companies do not want to donate, as the museum is a personal project - (SD)	Name problem	Funding
Local companies do not want to donate, as the founder is known as a rich man - (SD)	Image	Funding
There is no financial plan, so everything can close tomorrow - (SD)	No sustainability plan	Funding
The collector has enough money, so subsidies are not necessary - (SD)	Luxurious position	Funding
The collector does not want to be accountable and share information, so subsidy was not applied for - (SD)	Information sharing	Funding
Since few years, the collector sells work in order to buy new work - (MV)	Closed system	Funding
"The playing time is over". The collector now has a collection that is a closed financial system - (MV)	Closed system	Funding
"Collecting is losing money" "He's the guy who puts the money on the table" - (MV)	Not profitable	Funding
Many defects after opening - (SD)	Defects	Knowledge about the profession
"A blind person following another blind person" - (SD)	Wrong information	Knowledge about the profession
Incomprehension. Old-fashioned idea that artists do not have to get paid. Therefore no budget was assigned for it - (SD)	Incomprehension	Knowledge about the profession
No knowledge of what a museum is or has to be - (SD)	Conceptuel knowledge	Knowledge about the profession
No knowledge of how a museum should be organized - (SD)	Managerial knowledge	Knowledge about the profession
Gaining knowledge from colleague collectors - (SD)	Collecting information	Knowledge about the profession
Asking professionals during the start of the museum - (GB) (HD) (SZ)	Advice	Knowledge about the profession

Quote or indicator	Code	Category
“Zotteke in de bergen” was a description of the artists. The collector did not know he had to document information and that is was necessary - (SD)	Conceptual knowledge	Knowledge about the profession
Thinking running a museum is the same as running a supermarket group - (SD)	Miscomprehension	Knowledge about the profession
Thinking that being successful in the past will bring succes in the future - (SD)	Overconfidence	Knowledge about the profession
Using business experience to stay flexible - (SZ)	Business experiences	Knowledge about the profession
The collectors visited America and liked that there, museums work with volunteers. They were inspired to copy that - (JT)	Inspiration	Knowledge of the profession
Other museums give too much rewards. The American model is better - (JT)	Taking an example on America	Knowledge of the profession
Getting inspired abroad at other private museums before opening - (MG) (HD) (MV)	Taking an example	Knowledge of the profession
Learning from the curators - (MV)	Education	Knowledge of the profession
Working seven days a week - (JT)	Responsibility/Pressure	Staff
Board with mainly people from business - (GB)	Business experiences	Staff
Board with mainly people from the cultural sector - (HD)	Cultural experience	Staff
“We’re understaffed” - (SD)	Capacity	Staff
Having a small team and hiring freelancers - (HD) (JT) (MV) (SZ)	Flexible	Staff

#### Concept 4: Personal motivations

Quote or indicator	Code	Category
The collector liked to make exhibitions and likes supporting the building process of the museum - (JT)	Entrepreneur	Own pleasure
Having a museum for himself and being able to see the art - (SD) (MV)	Pleasure	Own pleasure
“For me, collecting is the most important factor in collecting [collecting, speculating and decorating]” - (MV)	Pleasure	Own pleasure

Quote or indicator	Code	Category
To have a more permanent place to store the collection - (GB)	Accessibility	Own pleasure
It's an artist initiative - (MG)		Own pleasure
The collector considered donating the collection, but the collection became too big to donate - (JT)	Odds	Possibilities
“He [the collector] does not like to be seen as a hero” - (GB) No glorification of somebody - (HD)	No self-glorification	Social recognition
It's nice for your ego, although it is not the main aim - (MV)	Ego	Social recognition
To support the artist - (MG) The collector sometimes bought art out of sympathy for the artist or because of financial problems they had - (SD)	Support	Public good
Storing the collected art felt disappointing - (MG) (SD)	Art has to be seen	Public good
Family decided to make the inheritance available to support the arts - (HD)	Support	Public good
“Society needs people who dare to think freely” - (HD)	Social necessity	Public good
Giving something to youth that collector himself liked to much about art - (SZ)	Giving something back	Public good
The collector got recognition and was motivated to go on with collecting and opening a museum - (SD)	Acknowledgement	Challenge
Planning on doing this for a long time - (MG)	Sustainability	Sustainable
Creating space for a family office - (SZ) (MV)	Business	Business

### Concept 5: Competition

Quote or indicator	Code	Category
Finding new donors is a competition - (JT)		Funding
Keeping the donors with you - (JT)	Relation management	Funding
“We are more dependent on it [donors], so we are better able to manage donations” - (JT)	Direct enactment	Funding
There is no continuity in funding - (SD)	Continuity	Funding

Quote or indicator	Code	Category
Improper competition with subsidized development teams in public museums. It empties the private market - (JT)	Less means	Funding
No competition for funds, but earlier there was. Funds did believe that private museums would have enough money. Therefore the director gives insight in his financing - (JT)	Prejudices	Funding
Public museums that have a public collection have way more responsibilities - (HD)	Less responsibility	Flexibility
“We are not restricted by rules of acquisition and deaccessioning” - (SD)	Restrictions	Flexibility
There is a limited capacity (building, parking, staff), so not too many people should come - (GB) (MG) (MV)	Limited capacity	Flexibility
It’s private, so they are flexible to decide on the spot - (MV)	Spontaneous	Flexibility
No restrictions of subsidies - (SZ)	Restrictions	Flexibility
“I’m not obliged to do a certain amount of exhibitions a year” - (MV)	Restrictions	Flexibility
They are working on cooperations with other museums to make exhibitions - (GB)	Cooperation with other museums	Co-operation
Private-public co-operation - (SD)	Private-public	Co-operation
Advantage of sharing the space, collection and know how - (SD)	Advantages	Co-operation
Working together, because it is a local collection - (SD)	Locality	Co-operation
Proposed to make a folder for Flemish private museums. It was denied by some of them - (SD)	Combining forces	Co-operation
Working with loans - (SZ) (JT) (MV) (HD) (MV)	Sharing	Co-operation
People combine visiting the Gemeentemuseum with visiting Museum Beelden aan Zee - (JT)	Advantageous proximity	Co-operation
The presence of other museums will be beneficial - (JT) (MG)	Local advantage	Co-operation
There are no museums in the close neighborhood - (GB)	Local advantage	Audience
The presence of other museums will be beneficial - (JT) (MG)	Local advantage	Audience

Quote or indicator	Code	Category
There is competition with museums in terms of audiences. But it is not experienced, because visitor numbers are no priority - (GB) (HD)	No importance	Audience
“Competition on the level of audiences is about how you communicate it [what you do] and the accessibility of the exhibitions” - (JT)	Concessions on the content	Audience
Targeted marketing on the target group - (JT)	Existing audience	Audience
Picasso exhibition that meant a huge increase in visitor numbers - (JT)	Blockbuster symptoms	Audience
“We do programs for toddlers and Alzheimer patients” - (JT)	Inclusivity and diversity	Audience
As diverse as possible - (GB) (HD)	Diversity	Audience
Due to the central location, the museum attracts a diverse audience, with non-existing audiences - (MG)	Non-existing audiences	Audience
Different audiences for exhibition (casual audiences) and collection tours (engaged audience) - (MG)	Diverse audiences	Audience
Not the stakeholders per se, but the artists and interested audiences are targeted on - (MG)	Target groups	Audience
Audiences should become ambassadors - (GB) (HD)	Ambassadors	Audience
Visitors can become members, to increase the loyalty of audiences - (GB)	Returning audiences	Audience
Existing audiences, due to the fact that the museum is not centrally located - (JT) (GB) (HD)	Local advantage	Audience
Serving a different audience than other museums do - (SZ)	Specialization, uniqueness	Audience
“In Flanders, we do not play with the cards open” - (MV)	Modesty	Audience
Advantage of having a unique collection - (JT) (SD) (SZ)	Specialization, uniqueness	Collection
Taste of collector can be disadvantage, when people do not like the focus - (SD)	Too personal	Collection

Quote or indicator	Code	Category
“We won’t compete with other museums on the level of exhibitions. To make a good exhibition, you have to be experienced” - (SZ)	Modesty	Collection
The opening of the museum created a buzz - (GB) (MG) (HD)	Buzz	Marketing
Having to be recognized by the art world and the economic worlds - (MV)		