THE COMMERCIAL ART GALLERY

IN THE INSTAGRAM ERA

The Commercial Art Gallery in the Instagram Era

How do commercial art galleries in Amsterdam embed Instagram as a digital tool in their daily business practice?

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ABSTRACT

The contemporary era is characterized by a continuous flux of changes brought by the digital revolution that is deeply affecting our lives. These radical changes in society have not left the art market unchanged, as it is a direct product of this world we are living in. In particular the primary art market, whose protagonists are the art galleries, has renewed its traditional approach by introducing in their practice the use of social media. Among all the social media, Instagram stands out being particularly suitable for the art because of its being solely iconic and visual. Hence, it permits retailer's businesses to display their products in an aesthetically appealing frame. Despite the increasing attention that Instagram is obtaining from the art world, there still is a consistent lack in the researches on the way in which the social media is actually employed by art galleries for businesses purposes. That is why, this research focuses on investigating how commercial art galleries in Amsterdam are including Instagram as a digital tool in their daily business practice. The Amsterdam art market is peculiar for its being the center of the entire Dutch art market as well as for its art dealers' highly traditional way of managing their businesses. In this sense, it is expected that Instagram's potentialities as a social networking site could challenge the traditional way of operating of the Amsterdam art galleries. Moreover, it will be looked at how and for which purposes these galleries are including Instagram in their everyday activities. As results it has been underscored that the main reason why Instagram has been capitalized by these art galleries is for promotional purposes while it is not being described as a convenient platform for doing direct sales. Furthermore, the inclusion of Instagram within the art galleries daily practice has opened new communicational and relational opportunities worldwide that have challenged the traditional Amsterdam art galleries reality. In conclusion it was possible to state that since the advent of Instagram within the Amsterdam art galleries practice some pillars of their institutional practicalities have undergone changes while some others have remained the same.

KEYWORDS: *I*nstagram, social media, digitalization, commercial art gallery, Amsterdam art market

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1. INTRODUCTION

"For those who say the online art market has had its day- it hasn't even had its morning yet, it's still waking up" Robert Read (Hiscox, 2017).

Living in a digitalized world means that we must be prepared to a continuous flux of changes. Internet and the digital realm have, in fact, massively revolutionized the (post) modern era, which is characterized by the global distribution and, therefore, accessibility of information within the modes of communication (Enhuber, 2015). The spread of the Internet revolutionary power within the everyday life indicates that none of the aspects of the social and economic realm will remain unchanged. In fact, the latest developments in the image and video resolution of mobile devices and computer desktops, altogether with the expansion of broadband and Wi-Fi instruments, are drawing a world where public became more used to engage with the portable screens (Horowitz, 2012; Robertson, 2015). Moreover, since the emergence of commercially used website and platforms, digitalization has thus become a spreading phenomenon affecting a wide range of economic sectors. Despite its rocky beginning, also the art world started to embrace the digital revolution because when the circumstances and reality change so does the art market, which is a direct product of this world (Robertson, 2015). Within the advent of the digitalization, art intermediaries such as galleries, museums and auction houses have been challenged to be more accessible to consumers and enhance their recognition through new online channels of promotion and communication (Arora, Vermeylen, 2013b). That is why, the digitalization of the art market has been in the focus of a variety of academic studies that seek to analyze the way in which the art world has undergone changes since the inclusion of digital tools in the primary art market's practice. Amongst these, Khaire (2015) investigated how the spread of the internet has become a tool for overcoming physical and geographical constraints within the process of selling and buying goods. On the other hand, the transposition of art from a physical to a virtual space paved the way for a new, democratic way to experience and have access to art (Enhuber, 2015, McAndrew, 2016). Hitherto the art world defined itself as a highly elitist universe, yet in the last decades its stiff traditional composition fell under the pressure to share and communicate more actively with the art public (Arora, Vermeylen, 2013b). Moreover, the technological development within the art market has allowed primary art actors to easily expand their promotional strategies to the virtual terrain, by englobing in their daily activities online databases and websites where to globally showcase their product (Arora, Vermeylen, 2013b).

In this fashion, despite the emphasis given to the art market capitalization of the web 1.0, the real revolutionary promise arrived simultaneously with the advent of the social media realm, namely

the Web 2.0 marked by its participatory culture (Jenkins, 2006; Van Dijck, 2013). In fact, where the internet starts the dissemination of art content online throughout the years, the user-driven composition of the web 2.0 truly paved the new way for creating and accessing the information (O'Reilly, 2007). These new participatory and democratic digital platforms have not only altered the nature of human connections, but also the way in which retailer's businesses virtually expose their products for marketing purposes (Van Dijck, 2013, Mangold, Faulds, 2009).

Amongst all the social media that start appearing on the web 2.0, Instagram, came out as the one of choice for the more upgraded retailer's business who aimed to enlarge their consumer's base worldwide (Latiff, Ayuni Safiee, 2015). The effect that is has on human lives is undeniable, especially amongst the younger generations that are born with it as the every-day gadget utilized for their day-to-day activities. In fact, Instagram as a social media is not only able to promote interpersonal contact with singular individual, but it also boosts professional connections (Puha, Jin, Kim, 2017a; Van Dijck, 2013). So, it is not surprising that small businesses and brands have identify Instagram as the new preferred venue where to expand their marketing campaign, conducting their daily activities and manage their network of relations (Fisher, 2016; Paquette, 2013). Furthermore, the highly iconic and visual frame in which content are exposed on Instagram, make it the perfect place where to also expand art products. However, regardless the prolificacy of studies conducted on the promotional and relational power of the Social Networking Sites (Van Dijck, 2013; Paquette, 2013; Mangold, Faulds, 2009; Stelzner, 2015), there is a notable lack of research on the ways in which these Instagram potentialities have been concretely exploited by the art market's protagonists. Only few markets reports have so far underscored the increasing attention that Instagram is getting from the art world. Among them, Artsy (2015) investigated the way in which collectors are using the social media app for discovering new artists and purchasing art, while Fisher (2016) has analyzed Instagram capability to extend curatorial modalities as a venue that intensify aesthetic awareness. Although these studies have started to analyze the inclusion of Instagram within the art world, they did not in depth explored the possible effects that its usage could have on the art galleries' practice within primary art market. Moreover, most of the research previously conducted on the topic were merely market reports that just looked at the percentages of art actors and art institutions approaching Instagram (Hiscox, 2018). Precisely, Hiscox's (2018) analysis reported that Instagram has become the social media of choice for 62% of the art galleries surveyed out of the 92% of the businesses who are active on social media. However, these studies altogether did not concretely look at how art galleries use Instagram and they did not explain which novelties or improvements its usage could add to the sector. Following this blanks in the literature, this thesis aims to explore the way in which art galleries are using Instagram as a digital tool in their daily business practice. Specifically, the term 'digital tool' refers to Instagram

being part of the latest development of the Web 2.0, thus, a product of the digital revolution that has affected our lives since its advent.

More specifically, this research draws its exploratory intent around a particular location only, namely Amsterdam. In fact, the Amsterdam art market represents the center of the Dutch one (Renger, Velthuis, 2002). Furthermore, while researching the art market of the Dutch capital, Velthuis (2013) has discovered that it is still characterized by a solid traditional structure which is primarily based on mutual supportive and face-to-face type of connections. These connections, usually emerge out in a local environment (Velthuis, 2013). That is why, the choice of Amsterdam as the city of interest for this thesis becomes handy: it allows to question whether, Amsterdam art dealers traditional approach has to some extent undergoes transformations since the inclusion of Instagram within the galleries daily practice. Therefore, the scope of this thesis is to understand *how do Amsterdam commercial art galleries embed Instagram as a digital tool in their daily business practice?* In order to answer to this research question, ten in depth semi-structured interviews with Amsterdam galleries' owners who use Instagram were conducted in spring 2018. Interviewing as a qualitative method has been chosen because it represents the most efficient way to directly extrapolate information regarding Amsterdam art dealers' behaviors and direct experiences with Instagram.

This thesis aims to fill the gap in the scholarly literature on the digitalization of the art market. Moreover, it wants to also clarify the usage of Instagram for art related purposes, precisely framed within the primary art market context. In fact, the intentions of this project are to provide new insights on the art Amsterdam art galleries practice within the new digital contemporary era. Whereas several changes within the primary art market practice has been already described with the Web 1.0, still in-depth investigations about the development of the gallery business with the Web 2.0 are lacking. Will be there any changes in the traditional approach of the Amsterdam dealers to the art gallery business? If yes, what these changes will be like in according to the potentialities of Instagram?

Furthermore, this thesis aims to provide practical information about the Instagram usage for several protagonists of the art market. Firstly, this project will possibly suggest to galleries owners how to capitalize and exploit Instagram as a useful tool for improving their business. Considering the fact that the potential of Instagram for the art gallery's business will be displayed, galleries' managers and assistants might take advantages from both the communicational, promotional and relational novelties that the digital platforms deploys. In other words, it could be beneficial for them to know how to contact and work with collectors on social media and at the same time how to display their product on a digital space to engage with the costumer and enlarge their visibility worldwide. While on the same time it may contribute to the expand the knowledge of other art actors such as artists and

collectors, on how to both deal with and approach galleries institutions within the new Instagram realm.

Before providing the outcomes that will help art market stakeholders to fully understand Instagram potential for their businesses it is important to start with theoretically discussing the broader context in which this thesis stands. This frame is comprehensive of all the elements which serves as bedrocks to build this thesis expectations. Subsequently, the research question and all the sub-questions related to it that naturally arises from the literature will be presented together with the general expectations. In order to go from the expectations to the concrete empirical findings, the methodological process used to concrete probe the theoretical concept will be described in the research design chapter. In the end, findings and discussion will be presented in order to coherently answer to this project queries.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to answer the research question, namely how do contemporary art galleries in Amsterdam embed Instagram as a digital tool in their daily business practice, a framework of previous researches and theoretical bedrocks connected to the topics of interest will be examined. First, characteristics, dynamics and protagonists of the art market will be described in order to specify the broader sector in which art galleries are embed in. Subsequently, within the same field of the art market, a restriction around the Dutch capital one will be performed. In order to have insights on the particularities of the Amsterdam art market, studies conducted on its specificities will be taken into account (e.g. Renger, Velthuis, 2002; Velthuis, 2005). Moreover, particular attentions will be given to the description of the organizational practices and dealers' role model of the Amsterdam art market presented by Velthuis (2013) under the form of distinct barriers which limited its global expansion. Linked to the idea that Internet could have the power to change the primary art market business, the digital revolution will be firstly analyzed in a broader context by defining its characteristics. While, secondly a variety of studies will be taken into account for analyzing the mutations that digitalization activates within the art market structure and which possibility it has opened for the business (Khaire, 2015; Enhuber, 2015; Arora, Vermeylen, 2013a; Arora, Vermeylen 2013b; Horowitz, 2012; Quesenberry, Sykes, 2008).

Furthermore, the attention will be moved around the advent of the Web 2.0, whereby the universe of social media will be analyzed and described. The theoretical framework around the new media universe is mandatory in order to highlight which possibilities the social networking sites have opened for commercial business. Thus, on this wise, social media will be particularly analyzed for their promotional potential and for their communicative and relational paradigm. In according to this last point in fact, a brief digression around the discussion of the acquisition of the online social capital it will be opened. This small chapter is going to serve as a bedrock for the further formulation of this project's empirical expectations. Whereas the inner structure of the art market has been modified by the advent of the digitalization, social media might also challenge the way in which business, that merely relies on network of people, can maintain or create new ties. Finally, among all the social networking site, Instagram will be analyzed as the site of choice for small business and the creative industries regardless the lack of researches to also emphasize the scope of the research as a fill the gap in the literature.

2.1 THE ART MARKET: CHARACTERISTICS, PROTAGONISTS AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF ART

Starting from the post-war period until the contemporary era, the art market has been in the focus of a variety of different academic studies and approached from various perspective depending on the historical periods, geographical focus, disciplines or methodology (Moulin, 1967; Moulin 1987; Watson 1992; Velthuis 2005; Horowitz, 2012; Velthuis 2013; Velthuis 2012). The term "art market" found its origin in the France of the 19th century within a period of intensive changes in both society and in the art field as the "new capitalists structure redefined professional and social relationship" (White, White 1965; Jensen 1994; Clark 1996 p.260). In this fashion, the art market is a construct in which are included the entire economic infrastructures, financial transactions and social relations "though which various actors engage in exchange of goods and services related to art" (Gnyp, 2015 p.3). The value of works of art are uniquely symbolic, generally socially constructed and institutionally consecrated (Bourdieu, 1983). Therefore, the existence of the art market is related with either the art world (Becker, 1982) or the field wherein artists, artworks and institutions that define the value of art are embedded in. In other words, it can be defined as the conjunction of the structures that define the value of art and the commerce of cultural objects such as sculpture, antiques and paintings (Velthuis, 2012). Precisely, the protagonists involved in the commerce of the artworks are the producer-galleries, the dealers and the auction houses. While, intermediaries such as museums, critics and curators define artwork's value within the market (Velthuis, 2012).

The art market can be fragmented in two parts respectively defined as the primary and the secondary art market based on the typology of transactions (Renger, Velthuis. 2002). The latter focuses on resale and it is represented by the auction houses system that mostly manages unique pieces of artists that are no longer alive (Velthuis, 2011). While the primary art market represents the most innovative part of the distribution considering aesthetic values and art trends (Zorloni, 2005). This precise part of the process includes sales that comes directly from artists' studios, art fairs and the commercial art galleries in which original artworks are sold for the first time (Velthuis, 2011; Zorloni, 2005). The primary art market is characterized by a high level of risk for producers and consumers due to the lack of information transparency of the artworks presents within the market (Zorloni, 2005; Heilbrun, Gray, 1993; Velthuis, 2011). As such, the sector is recognized as being particularly difficult to approach.

Another final, but necessary, segmentation that the art market experience is constructed on its geographical scope. Thus, some markets are by and large internationally oriented, which usually coincide with the most important art capitals such as New York or London. While on the other side,

markets are also locally defined by artists catering the demand of local dealers, collectors and vice versa (Velthuis, 2011).

Moulin (1987) has depicted the protagonists of the primary art market, namely the art galleries and dealers, as family business where the owner has the role to create, and therefore maintain, the liaison between the figure of the collectors and the artists. In this sense, it can be argued that the contemporary visual art market is characterized by its strong networked structure. Thus, it is composed starting by nets around a singular gallery then going extended into large, weaker, international networks (Jyrama, Ayvari, 2010). The main scope of the gallery managers (or owners) is both to connect buyers with artists and legitimize the artists they promote through the creations of solid relationships with other art institutions (Jyrama, Ayvari, 2010). Because the quality within the art market is a matter of socially constructed judgments, the web of social events which pose the fundamental for the building-up of solid relationships, become pivotal for the creation and the change of norms, conventions and set of beliefs and values that surround the art practice (Jyrama, Ayvari, 2010). Identity of the gallery and identity of the gallerists are two concepts that are indissolubly intertwined with each other (Jyrama, Ayvari, 2010). Certain gallery owners benefit from the burly work of promotion in order to boost the reputation of their gallery and therefore capitalize their name. The appearance on the art market of "star" gallery owners and, more often, artists, is however changing the way to perceive the art trend rather than changing the gallery practice (Jyrama, Ayvari, 2010). In according to Frasche (2017) the gallerists are meticulously choosing promotional strategies with a regard to their everyday business in accordance to their institutional practice. As such, the marketing of their artists and their gallery take place through either traditional strategy (e.g. international or national art fairs, magazine, exhibitions etc.) or through the new promotional possibilities opened by the new media. Yet, it has not been analyzed in depth how commercial art galleries nowadays are exploiting the new media offer for marketing purposes. That is why, this thesis seeks to fill this gap by exploring how Amsterdam dealers embrace digital media in their daily practice.

Furthermore, in according to the scope of the project it is firstly important to look at the particularities of the Amsterdam art market, which has been chosen as the market of interest.

2.1.1 Amsterdam art market: between local ties and international aspirations

The main aim of this paragraph is to frame the particularities of the Amsterdam art market which has been described in terms of both geographical positions (Rengers, Velthuis, 2002) and organizational characteristics (Velthuis, 2013).

The first point is connected with the traditional segmentation of the art market in central and peripheral (Plattner, 1996), as different scholars highlighted various center within the market venues. For instance, Moulin (1987) pinpointed the center of the French art market as Paris. While New York incarnated the central venue of the United states one following Giuffre's study (1999). In other words, the center of the market has described as the place where "the demand is concentrated, reputations are built, and the density of social networks is highest" (Rengers, Velthuis, 2002, p.11). Despite the fact that the Dutch art market is structured in the same way as the other markets, so it has one center in a larger network namely the Amsterdam market, it is anyway considered peripheral if framed in a more international context (Velthuis, 2005; Rengers, Velthuis, 2002). In fact, if compared to other European countries like for instance Germany or the United Kingdom, the Dutch art market has little influence on the international market scene (Velthuis, 2005). However, the Amsterdam art market has an incredibly high density of galleries (calculated per 100.000 inhabitants) compared to the central market of New York (Velthuis, 2005). The study conducted by Velthuis (2005) respectively reported that there are 22.5 galleries per circa 100.000 inhabitants in Amsterdam, resulting in a total of 165 art galleries in the Dutch capital.

The second point regarding the characteristics of the Amsterdam art market has been investigated by Velthuis (2013). In his study, he described the Dutch capital art market as predominantly characterized by the presence of local ties (Velthuis, 2013). Precisely, in a world where the expansion of the art market outside its traditional centers is getting more attentions (McAndrew, 2016), he claimed that Amsterdam is far from being part of this global shift (Velthuis, 2013).

Despite the gap in existing knowledge, there are strong assertions about the globalization that high art and culture are undergoing. In this stream, it has been argued that the globalization of the high arts already started back in the 19th century (Waters, 2001). Furthermore, the agoras of the internet have helped individuals to desegregate the geographical restrictions in order to reunite people in new virtual communities (Castells, 2011). Therefore, the communicational and relational revolutions started by the advent of internet entails the global and continuous open access to the information without physical or place-based constrains (Khaire, 2015). Thus, the increased interest in e-commerce and click and buy procedures of the art markets actors has been partly affected by the worldwide expansion of the buyer's base (Khaire, 2015). Precisely, within the stream of studies that saw digitalization as a shaper of the contemporary world, Sassen (1998) claimed that the latter process is a facilitator for the expansion of the economy beyond national borders, therefore eased the shift toward a more globalized world. On this wise, Internet has covered a pivotal role in the construction of a global marketplace that eliminated the geographical limits thanks to the ability of overcoming

physical distance (Khaire, 2015; McAndrew, 2016). As such, individual galleries might be able to find a path in the internationalization of their business and succeed in create relationships with international collectors or intermediaries thanks to the use of the world-wide-web.

In contrast with what was just exposed, the "late French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, have declared cultural globalization a 'myth'" (Velthuis, 2013, p. 291; cf. Buchholz and Wuggenig 2006). The same point has been supported by Velthuis's study (2013), whereby he seeks to explain the obstacle that the Amsterdam art market interposes to the globalization process by framing it in a context of organization practices and institutional specificities rather than on cultural differences (e.g. Core-periphery model, cultural affinities model). In other words, Velthuis argument goes that despite all the globalization trends, there are still some solid barriers which characterize the Amsterdam art market which prevent its global shift.

The first barrier described is linked with the search and selection process, due to the "case of upcoming dealers that they look for artists to represent in institutional isolation […] they have strong local information advantages" (Velthuis, 2013, p.298). Indeed, dealers could obtain greater knowledge by frequenting local art venues and selecting their artists with whom they already have a link with. In this sense, the galleries egressed out of local ties (Velthuis, 2013). Another barrier described is linked with the different art galleries possession of economical capital, whereby established galleries already have a solid international reputation and can therefore afford to financially support foreign artists. While the upcoming dealers, are struggling in giving the necessary economical sustain for the transportations and other fundamental practicalities that ease the inclusion of foreign artists in their practice (Velthuis, 2013). Moreover, the role of the dealer has been historically (Velthuis, 2005) described as a job of social interactions which in this case incarnated the third barrier to the global orientations. The geographical proximity is essential in building dense interactions and "mutually supportive relationships between artists and their dealers" (Scott, 2006; Cooke and Lazzaretti, 2007; Velthuis, 2013). The fifth point is therefore unsurprisingly connected to the indissoluble need of face-to-face interactions for either create trustful relationships or, on the demand side, favor the artworks acquisitions (Velthuis, 2013; Horowitz, 2012). Additionally, remaining in the dealer's role model, one of the primary scope of the gallery's practice is building a community of art world members (e.g. Critics, collectors, curators) around the circle of artists they represent. In order to accomplish this, it is important staying active within the field and stimulating social interactions inside the physical gallery space (Velthuis, 2013). Finally, the last highlighted motivations for which local ties have remained basilar for the Amsterdam market rely on the importance of building solid trust relationships. As already mentioned, face-to-face type of contact is still depicted as the more efficient way to do so, especially for the upcoming dealers (Moulin, 1987;

Plattner, 1996; Velthuis, 2013). This implicit rule, commonly shared among patrons in the art world, is also applicable to the consolidations of artists-dealer type of relation, which has to be equally based on trust. This model of local search process, together with the trust relationship paradigm and the mutual support artists-dealer interfere with the dealers' international aspirations. Thus, producing local outcome (Velthuis, 2013).

In this project, these barriers that Velthuis have presented as findings of his research will be considered as the traditional characteristics of the Amsterdam art market's protagonists such as the art galleries with their gallery's owners. However, Velthuis (2013) in this study might not have assumed that the digitalization has the power to threaten the solid pillars on which the Amsterdam art market has built its community. On the contrary, this thesis is framed in a stream of knowledge that pointed out that digitalization has the power to affect the art market. In fact, while in the old days the best way to find collectors and artists was by meeting them in person, nowadays connections between people can also happen in a virtual way (Robertson, 2015). Moreover, the digital revolution has "eroded national sovereignty, reshaped conceptions of materiality and place, and facilitate new circulations of culture, capital, commodities and people" (Brennen, Kreiss p. 5-6). Those are some of the powers of the Internet. Thus, Amsterdam art dealers might not only be able to interact with other art actors by using digital tools, but they could also broaden their network of contact (such as collectors and artists for instance) worldwide. Because still no research has been yet conducted on this topic, this project will try to make clear how the inclusion of social network platform (Instagram) within Amsterdam galleries daily business could affect the way they operate. However, in a more general framework, there is a stream of studies that focuses on the way in which the art market has slowly started eroding its traditional features since the advent of the digital revolution.

2.2 THE DIGITAL REVOLUTION

The digital revolution has been proclaimed as the most important event of the last decade that has characterized the advent of the so called (post)modern era (Enhuber, 2015). Specifically, starting from 1980, scholars use the term digital revolution to the advancement of technology from and analogue electronic and mechanical device to the digital technology (Janssen, 2013). This conversion process of information under the form of text, photographs, voice etc. into digital form with the use of specific electronic devices processing, storing and transmitting the information through digital circuits and networks, is called *digitization* (Business Dictionary, 2013). Similarly, Brennen and Kreiss (2016) define digitization as the technical process able to convert "streams of analogue information into digital bits of 1s and 0s with discrete and discontinuous values" (p.1). By contrast, another term connected to the digital shift that society was experienced firstly emerged back in 1971, namely the *digitalization*, that came out around the discussion of the effect that technology has on society (Brennen, Kreiss, 2016). In the discussion of the social implications of the "digitalization of society", the terms have been linked to the different realms of social life that are implicated in the digital communication and media infrastructure (Brennen, Kreiss, 2016). In this framework, Castells (2011) pointed out that the digitalization is a means through which it is possible to explain all the aspects of the contemporary era: from the economy to social life to culture.

In this sense, an academic differentiation between the terms digitization and digitalization have occurred. Whereas digitalization refers to the increasing use of computer technology and digital devices by industries and organizations, digitization it is the technical process of converting information from the analog form to the digital one (Brennen, Kreiss, 2016). Following the aforementioned differentiation, within the art world the term digitization is used to describe the virtual recreation of art space on the digital realm (Enhuber, 2015; Collin, 2013). While the concrete integration of digital media and technologies into the art fields is described as the process of digitalization (Enhuber, 2015; Collin, 2013). Therefore, this project primarily focuses on *digitalization* rather than *digitization* because it aims to investigate how Amsterdam commercial art galleries integrate Instagram as a digital tool in their business practice. Precisely, it looks at which possibilities the concrete inclusion of digital media platforms entails for the primary art market actors. In accordance with its scope, this research stands in the stream of studies that investigate the effects digitalization has on the art field.

2.2.1 The effect on the art market

Even though Robinson and Halle (2002) argue that "the full, revolutionary experience of online art in a digitized world has not yet occurred" (p.369) it is impossible to disrupt the inexorable link that

nowadays connect art and technology. As the latter evolves, so does the former. In fact, the art world has always been characterized by a strong elitist character and a solid hierarchical structure that in the last few decades have been partly disrupted by the advent of the digital 'information revolution' (Arora, Vermeylen, 2013b; Robinson, Halle, 2002). The mutation which the art world undergoes within the contemporary era has been approached by a broad range of scholarship that started to investigate the ways in which art is nowadays traded, consumed and perceived considering the advent of the digital revolution (Arora, Vermeylen, 2013b; Enhuber 2015; Khaire, 2015; Bischop, 2012; Quesenberry, Sykes, 2008).

Firstly, the digital revolution paved the way for the democratization of the art world by making collections accessible for everyone without time and geographical barriers (Enhuber, 2015). Technology has indeed modified the way in which art is consumed and experienced by creating a virtual democratic sphere where audience can have easy access to information regardless cultural, economic or geographical barriers (Trant, Bearman, 2011; Enhuber, 2005). The paradigm of the digitization of the art unravel itself through the creation of several database available online that include tremendous information about characteristics of the work of art, prices, provenance, authorship and track records of the sales (Arora, Vermeylen, 2013). In addition, the art economist McAndrew (2016) highlighted how the process of democratization of the art does not only help to cross physical and geographical borders by expanding the access globally, but it also helps overcoming the gap between the privileged art patrons and the general public that was previously lacking in social and cultural capital (McAndrew, 2016; Bourdieu, 1986).

The art market has been historically characterized by its lack of transparency, defined as the capacity to know, supply and demand as well as market prices and several other features of the trade good (Law, Smullen, 2008). The opaqueness of the art business therefore is connected to the matter of the information asymmetry, whereby the privileged knowledge of sellers about their goods affects the possibility of buyers to have complete access to market information (Coslor, 2016). In other words, "the quality of the art supplied or the willingness to pay on the side of buyers is incomplete, difficult and often expensive to gather" (Velthuis, 2011 p.36). However, the rapid growth of art market digital information providers (such as ArtPrice, Artsy, Artnet, ArtFacts) that erupted simultaneously with the digital revolution, has eased the superior market knowledge. The other side of the coin, however, is that with the increasing number of information available online, customers can face the phenomenon called "information overload" (Dabrowsky, Acton, 2013). which can therefore compromise their purchasing decision. Nevertheless, the Internet helps consumer to feel more empowered when dealing with the new market compositions where the access to information has been eased by the display of information that create a more educated typology of buyers (Arora,

Vermeylen, 2013b). Notwithstanding the significant remodeling that the digitalization operated on the inner traditional structure of the art market, the business still continues to be partly opaque in terms of price exposure (Velthuis, 2005; Coslor, 2016).

Secondly, talking about a digitalized market means including the way in which internet has changed the approach towards the selling side of the art market. Even though there were companies that already started trading and selling art on the Internet back in the early 1990s, it was only in the time spanning between 2010-2014 that the online realm experienced a surge of new clients and entrants (McAndrew, 2016). In fact, nowadays, the web is influencing almost a half of the consumers purchase and the online sales are expecting to compete with the traditional brick-and-mortar retails system in the future (Horowitz, 2012). Following the art economist McAndrew (2016) the digital delivery allows to reduce the entrance barriers and lowered the cost of accessing the new broader markets worldwide. At the moment, the online market was estimated to have a value of the 8,4% of the total one (Hiscox, 2017) and it is expected to grow more in the future. Yet, the lion's share of the online players is approaching the digital realm the same way they were approaching the offline market (McAndrew, 2016). Therefore, the online platforms represent only a structural integration, rather than the new venues for sales in the traditional market's infrastructure (McAndrew,2016). In support to this statement, the puritans of the art world also describe themselves as skeptical about purchasing artworks that they have solely experienced on the virtual universe (Horowitz, 2012). At the same time, there is another stream of scholars that pointed out that the entertainment dimension of the Internet facilitates art patrons that are unable to visit physical gallery space in viewing art images (Quesenberry, Sykes, 2008). Thus, this virtual participation has the capability to maintain and reinforce pre-existent relations and might also ease the introduction of new potential clients to a gallery (Quesenberry, Sykes, 2008). In this fashion, it has been argued that the general tendency of the primary art market relies on the utilization of the online possibilities for marketing purposes and for maintaining and creating a solid relationship with collectors and buyers, rather than doing direct sales (Evans, 2015).

Despite the variety of different perspectives offered by scholars about the digitalization of the art field (Horowitz, 2012; Arora, Vermeylen, 2013a; Arora, Vermeylen, 2013b; Enhuber, 2015; Quesenberry, Sykes, 2008), there is still tenuous knowledge to define what the digital revolution concretely implies for the primary art market. Moreover, the fact that all the presented researches appeared to be in disagreement with each other, underline the need of conducting further explorations on the topic to have a clear and consistent view on the digitalization of the art market. The stream of studies presented, in fact, has only generally explored the way in which the digital revolution started affecting the art market, none of the previous researches has been done specifically on the way in

which the primary art market actors, namely the art galleries, concretely embrace the much-vaunted technological revolution. This is the starting point upon which this research is built, by probing the possibilities that digitalization practically offers for art galleries.

In fact, despite all the different perspectives, scholars agree in recognize the seismic shift which the art market has undergone since the advent of Internet. Prior research has shown that primary art market institutions started employing technology to improve their daily business operations among which their promotional strategies, relationship with collectors and security (Arora, Vermeylen, 2013a; Quesenberry, Sykes, 2008). To what concern the promotional side, the art market's actors have started approaching the virtual universe not solely for advertising their events and artist, but they are also embracing it as a tool where to discover new potential collaborators (Arora, Vermeylen, 2013a). It has been argued that the new communication technologies have in fact the potential to ease the connection between dealers and collectors by lowering the search costs and increasing the efficiency in terms of directness and speed (Arora, Vermeylen, 2013b; McAndrew,2016). In this focus, amongst all the virtual communication technologies, some attention has been lately given to the appearance of the Web 2.0. Arora and Vermeylen (2013a), for example, have affirmed that the commercial art galleries have started expanding their marketing campaign on this new internet realm.

Whereas the internet has represented a vital platform for disseminating digital content worldwide already for a few decades, it is only with the advent of the web 2.0 that the user-driven and participatory generation of content has brought a significant shift in the way information is accessed, constructed and converged (O'Reilly 2007; Arora, Vermeylen, 2013a). In fact, as it was amply argued, the Web 1.0 has opened new possibilities for the art world starting from the way people experience art (Enhuber, 2015) to the way in which art patrons trade artworks and communicate (Arora, Vermeylen, 2013b; Horowitz, 2012; Quesenberry, Sykes, 2008). But, if it is only with the last development concerning the advent of the social media universe that the digital realm has experienced its true revolutionary power, which effects will it entail for the primary art market? Does also the web 2.0 has the power to affect in which marketer could trade artworks? it will enable art actors to easily communicate with each other? In order to answer these questions this project therefore focuses on analyzing the way in which art galleries are embracing the potential of the web 2.0 in their daily business practice. In according to this, it is firstly mandatory introduce which are these new possibilities that the social media could generally offer.

2.3 THE WEB 2.0: SOCIAL MEDIA

The term Web 2.0 has been firstly used in 2004 to describe the new innovative way in which end-users and software developers started approached the World Wide Web (Kaplan, Haenlein, 2010). In fact, the creation of the World Wide Web in 1991 poses the bedrocks for the development of a new type of networked communication (Van Dijck, 2013) that, with the turning of the new millennium, shifted from being a generic communication services to a more interactive, two-way vehicle for networked society (Castells, 2011; Van Dijck, 2013). The advent of the Web 2.0 therefore signed the rise of the social media phenomena, a common definition for a group of "internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations […] that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content (*UGC*) (Kaplan, Haenlein, 2010 p. 61). Historically, media has evolved concurrently with the public as they are socially constructed and technological forms of communication, whereby communication is transformed in a ritualized cultural practice that allow the collocation of different people on the equal mental map (Van Dijck, 2013). As media developed along with the users' common tactics, the maturation of the Web 2.0 has transferred people every day's activities directly into the online environments (Van Dijck, 2013).

Social media universe can be distinguished into several types of platforms on the basis of their characteristics. Firstly, the User Generated Content platform (UGC) that were aforementioned, which composes the fundament of the web 2.0 and are represented by canals such as YouTube, Myspace, Flickr and so forth. On the other hand, another type of social media is represented by the so called TMS (Trading Marketing Sites) which are incarnated by channels like Amazon and EBay. While, the last category is represented by the Social Networking Sites (SNS) (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc.). This latter category of social media mainly promotes interpersonal contact either with singular individual or groups. Moreover, they boost professional connections by encouraging the development of weak ties and by crossing geographical barriers (Van Dijck, 2013). Those elements have been unsurprisingly exploited by retailers that have identified SNS channels as avenues where to expand their marketing campaigns (Paquette, 2013; Mangold, Faulds, 2009). Thus, it has signed the advent of the social media marketing system, defined as "a connection between brands and consumers, while offering a personal channel and currency for user centered networking and social interaction" (Chi, 2011, p. 46).

As already pointed out, cultural industries started embracing and capitalizing this marketing potential offered by the social media platform (Arora, Vermeylen, 2013a). In fact, a 2015 industry report made by Social Media Examiner has shown that more than 96% of the creative businesses are currently exploiting SNSs marketing potential to promote their product (Stelzner, 2015). On the same wise, other institutions of the cultural sectors such as museums started approaching the media realm.

Precisely, those cultural institutions started using them in the early 2000s as an extension for their promotional activity (Padilla, Melendez, Del Aguila-Obra, 2013). As the study conducted by Padilla et al. (2013) claimed, the tools offered by the Web 2.0 not only facilitate the access at the cultural objects, but also encourage and boosts audience participations. Thus, museums are now exploring the full potential of SNSs as an instrument for participatory culture, by moving sociality to online environments (Padilla, Melendez, Del Aguila-Obra, 2013). The inner structures of those digital tools are in fact also altering the nature of human connections, where sharing and following become the new social values that compose the communicative interactions. However, only little research has been done so far on the inclusion of social media platform in the primary art market sector, that have only emphasized the utilization of digital tools for marketing purposes (Arora, Vermeylen, 2013a; Quesenberry, Sykes, 2008). That is why further investigations are required in order to analyze how the characteristics of the SNSs could merge within the art galleries' practice. Therefore, this project aims to look at the way in which the potential of the social media affects the commercial art gallery practice and understand, whether they work as a promotional tool able to boost audience participations also for the primary art market business.

Social media platforms offer the possibilities for people to edit and update content, post, comment, tag and so on. These elements altogether have been described as representative of the "online participatory culture" (Jenkins, 2006), where therefore art world actors might create web content while they are consuming it. Moreover, the underscored concept of participatory culture has also created a new way for users to interact online. Accordingly, to this new paradigm of communication, in addition to the possibility of community building offered by the social media (Castells, 2011) it is interesting observing how these shifts actually affect the business practice of art galleries which has until now been built around the gallery owner's social capital (Moulin, 1987). How the traditional culture of the galleries based on face-to-face contact and informal type of relations has been modified and challenged by the inclusion of social media in their business practice? Considering the lack of researches on the art market topic it is mandatory to expose the broad range of studies that demonstrate how the acquisition of social capital has changed under the SNSs new social paradigm. Precisely, this new paradigm has modified the dynamic matrices of information through which people used to observe the others and make new friends. Considering this change that has occurred within society, it would be possible to transfer these possibilities also within the primary art market sector, whereby art dealers might alter their way of observing the competitors and manage their social relationships.

2.3.1 The online social capital

In order to understand how social relations in the art market change with the development of web 2.0., it is necessary to understand what social capital is and how it works. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) explain social capital as "the sum of resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network or more less-institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (p.14). Moreover, as Coleman (1988) highlights, social capital can accomplish productive activity if the human relations are used to achieve certain scopes. In this framework, social capital does not only represent a means through which is possible to retrieve information and opportunities, but also involves personal relationships in a web of reciprocity whereby it is possible to benefit and receive financial capital (Lin, 2002; Putnam, 2000; Puha, Jin, Kim, 2017b). Social capital stands out being of particular importance for the cultural industries, as Power and Scott (2004) underscore by stressing it as necessary for the access to "collaborators, customers and employees" (p.4). In other words, being part of networks of people connected to the sector of interest is of extreme importance for cultural entrepreneurs in order to achieve economic growth. In witness of this fact, a study conducted by Scott (2012) argued that DIY ('do it yourself') music producers started to exploit Bourdieu's forms of alternative capital to build their career. In according to this, taking the economic capital scarcity of these specific type of cultural entrepreneurs as an entry point, Bourdieu's social capital could represent a functional resource to exploit for increasing their success (Scott, 2012). To put it in a different field, namely the primary art market, the art dealers acquisition of social capital might be transformed into economic capital and thus be convenient for improving their business activities. Therefore, Scott study serves as an example to demonstrate that the real logic behind the functioning of capital is its conversion from one type to another (Bourdieu, 1997). However, the advent of SNSs has modified the way people interact. Thus, it can be questioned whether the acquisition and the conversion of alternative forms of social capital for the cultural entrepreneurs who use social media in their practice might change.

The age of the SNSs sites opened a new chapter in the social paradigm whereby the process of establishing social connections has been eased and transported to the online realm where people can connect anywhere and anytime (Puha, Jin, Kim, 2017b). That is why the world 'social' connected to the media platform, stands for the enhancement of the human collaboration that facilitate and promote connectedness as a social value (Van Dijck, 2013). Namely, SNSs have become virtual venues where creation and conservations of social capital happened (Duggan, 2015; Hampton, Session, Her, 2011; Puha, Jin, Kim, 2017b). Furthermore, the more consumers are utilizing social networks, the more target markets can be reached (Cha, 2009). Thus, they provide an efficient platform for business to promote their products or brand to potential customers. A very insightful

study about the use of social media for promotional purpose for freelance type of business (as in the case of the art galleries) has been conducted by Gandini (2016). He looked at the way social media "has come to represent a working tool that serves the curation of a professional image and the management of social relationships via the enactment of performative practices of sociality" (Gandini, 2016, p.1). Moreover, Gandini (2016) underscore that the the self-branding process that a subject activates when expose himself on whatever type of social media platforms became a form of "digital work". Precisely, this form of "digital work" is seen as an investment in building social relationships with the aim of obtaining personal profit, generally economic (Gandini, 2016). Whereas social relationships have historically represented for several types of business the main possibility for acquire economic capital or/and receiving employment opportunities (Grugulis, Stoyanova, 2012), it can be argued that, in the today's digital environments, social media exposure point at the acquisition of a financial return via the management of social relationship (Gandini, 2016). In according to this, social media work as a platform able to expand businesses' social capital, especially for those activities that massively rely on network of contacts, through the creation of weak ties (Granovetter,1973). Starting from the definition of social ties, social capital within the web 2.0 era can therefore be distinguished in two different forms: bridging and bonding (Putnam, 2000). Bridging social capital comes from weak and distant connections between individuals that create opportunities for information sharing. Bonding social capital instead is linked to strong type of relationship able to provide mutual support based on trust and sometimes defined on the base of emotional kinship (Putnam, 2000). In according to this differentiation, bridging social capital on social media may enlarge social horizon worldwide and providing new economic opportunities for retailer's businesses. In fact, it has been argued that the most successful businesses and jobs seekers are not the ones who take advantages from bonding social capital, but rather who invest in the constructions of weaker ties that come from bridging social capital (Granovetter, 1973; Williams, 2006; Puttnam, 2000). Recent academic research has claimed that SNSs are the new venues where to acquire and utilize both bridging and bonding social capital online. This fact could be interesting if connected to the inner nature of the art gallery business, as an activity that mainly emerged out of social ties and survives thanks to the network of contacts that it has been created around them (Velthuis, 2013).

However, no research has been focused in researching how social media could actually work as a venue where to expand and therefore acquire social capital for the art gallery's business. That is why, this research aims to fill this gap by investigating how commercial art galleries are including social networking site in their daily practice. To be more specific, the focus of attention is directed towards a particular type of SNS platform, namely Instagram. Thus, this project seeks to probe

whether Instagram could function as a useful tool where art dealers may expand their client's base or discover new collaborators and employees.

2.3.2. Social Network Site in the focus: the case of Instagram

"Instagram creates a safe place to enjoy art. They feel part of the gallery before they walk in"

J. Burnt, Unit London gallery Director

Amongst all the social networking sites that nowadays stifled the Web 2.0, Instagram has recently gained more importance for both the cultural industries and the marketing sector. Instagram is an image sharing social media application developed by Kevin Systrom and Mike Kreiger that has been launched on the App store in 2010 (Latiff, Ayuni Safiee, 2015). The app immediately gained popularity around the globe and in only two months it was counting the incredible number of one million users, overcoming the record established by others *SNS* platforms such as Twitter and Foursquare (Latiff, Ayuni Safiee, 2015). Whilst in more recent calculations, it has been estimated that circa 800 million[1] users in the present-days are active on Instagram on a daily basis and around and 16 billion photos have been by far shared and uploaded (Smith, 2014). Started as a small social networking site, Instagram has then emerged as a platform for business to grow (Latiff, Ayuni Safiee, 2015). Hence, it is not surprising that this social media platform has recently attracted the attention of research communities, fostering results in different areas of study from cultural analysis (Hochman, Scwartz, 2012) to urban social behavior (Hochman, Manovich, 2013). In fact, Instagram represents a very challenging environment of study because it mixes the ability of creating user-generated content under the form of visual media with the possibilities of creating social relations (e.g. through the followee/follower options) and social interactions (e.g. through commenting and liking other media users's post) (Ferrara, Interdonato, Tagarelli, 2014). Altogether the novelty characteristic of this social media platform has transposed its usage also within the retails business universe.

The particularity that intrigued brands to expose their product's graphic content on Instagram is because it is a photo-sharing platform that allowed users to show video and post picture with different filters to apply. (Lenhart et al. 2015). This new pleasant and highly stimulated visual way to expose products make Instagram rated as the finest platform where to follow brands[2] and therefore it subsequently exhibited the highest brand community commitment (Puha, Jin, Kim, 2017a).

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[1] https://www.statista.com/statistics/253577/number-of-monthly-active-instagram-users/

[2] In the study conducted by Pin, Jin and Kim (2017a), it has been discovered that Instagram is the most used SNSs platform for following brands (38,0%) compared to the 30,5% of Facebook that is decreasing in its promotional powers.

Furthermore, Instagram's power is also due to the rapidity and directedness in which posts are globally transmitted. As a post is shared, it produced a network response which is translated in what is called in the SNSs jargon: 'buzz'. Those Instagram's buzzes can determinate the rapid surge of a product exposure therefore becoming fundamental for the marketing of brands (Latiff, Ayuni Safiee, 2015). Indeed, Carah and Shaul study (2015) on the branding potentiality of the social media has been exactly conceived Instagram as a visual machine able to capture and direct the user's attentions. In other words, Instagram might enlarge the terrain in which business operate because "combined with the smartphone on which it runs, is a machine that stimulates and captures the productive activity of producing, circulating and attending to images" (Carah, Shaul, 2015 p. 71). The prevalent mode of Instagram promotion is based on interactions between brand and intermediaries and consumers that 'follow' each other on the platform and interact by commenting and peer-evaluating the shared images. In the specific, Instagram enables the creation of hashtags which can group images together around particular topic, taste, identities, events or practice. Moreover, factors such as the number of followers, tags and comments are traced as predictors of the account popularity, whereby the "liking" options become the help in establishing the relationships between the followers (public) and the account's publishers (Alshawaf, Wen, 2015). These strategies are thus amply used by business activities and brand when they need to market their products on the SNS (Puha, Jin, Kim 2017a; Latiff, Ayuni, Safiee, 2015). In addition, Instagram emphasize the feeling of "being in touch" by reducing the physical distance and so enhancing the proximal relationality in a mediated form of connection. In according to this, indeed, this platform enables the connection of physical and digital realms by intensifying someone's online presence and build a virtual identity, thus facilitate the interaction between either person for affective reasons or for business purposes (Abbott et al, 2013). To sum up, Instagram has been defined as a place where market relations happen "through the everyday life and cultural space around the production and circulation of images" (Carah, Shaul, p. 71). In this fashion whereby Instagram stands out being not only a promotional platform but also create a convenient environment where to build market relationships, do the art galleries will embrace this digital tool to exploit those precise offers? Do art Amsterdam art dealers will be able to promote their art through it?

It is indeed important underscore that these elements, altogether with the solely iconic and visual interface create the foundations of the resonance of Instagram within the art world (Latiff, Ayuni Safiee, 2015). Instagram being a sharing application that consents mobile phone users to both post and distribute pictures and videos permit to have an insightful look at what other art-insiders are doing and seeing. Thus, the platform in the last few years has started being approached by several art actors such as auction houses, art collectors, contemporary artists, museums and art galleries. The

attention towards Instagram as a convenient platform to capitalize for the art world has been recently raised thanks to a study conducted by Artsy (2015). The investigation conducted has witnessed Instagram promotional potential for the art sector whereby more than half of New York bigger collectors (51%) claimed that they have purchased art that they have discovered through the new media platform (Arsty, 2015). Moreover, this year's Hiscox report on the art market trend clearly showed that Instagram is becoming a pivotal instrument for the art institutions calculating that 63% of the surveyed art actors' respondents choosing it as their preferred channel for art-related purposes (Hiscox, 2018). The simplicity and directedness of Instagram visual nature is ideally applicable to the art world field, that intertwines with the mobile functionality makes it the smartest app to approach for art patrons (Hiscox,2018). Despite the fact that 79% of art buyers uses Instagram to discover new artists while the 32% art buyers claimed that social media impact their purchase decision and 91% of the galleries actively use social media (Hiscox, 2018), still no academic research has investigated the way in which Instagram is used within the art galleries business. Considering what has been underlined by the Arsty survey (2015), this thesis also seeks to explore whether Instagram product exposure could help Amsterdam art galleries to get new collectors.

In fact, it has been widely discussed how social media platforms are the most efficient way for businesses to reach new buyers and inform them about their products (Mangold, Faulds, 2009). While at the same time it has been also amply investigated the way in which the traditional structure of the primary art market has changed with the new digitalized era. Those changes indeed comprise both the Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 realms and have considered the way in which art is sold, consumed and traded (Enhuber, 2015; Khaire, 2015; Arora, Vermeylen, 2013a; Horowitz, 2012, McAndrew, 2016). However, none of the studies have taken into consideration Instagram as a market venue that has recently unfolds its promotional potential for the art world. If the primary art market was already modified by the advent of the Web 1.0, how does the art gallery practice could further change within the new era of social media? Considering Instagram potential as marketing tool, art dealers may have decided to exploit it for promotional purpose. This research aims to fill the gap between the literature by analysing how the opportunities of Instagram are capitalized by the Amsterdam art galleries.

3. QUESTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS

3.1 Questions

The advent of the digital era has challenged the traditional setting which have hitherto defined the art market historically. None of the art market traditional elements have remained untouched by the stream of technological development that indeed challenged the way in which art is sold, consumed, promoted and traded (Enhuber, 2015; Khaire, 2015; Arora, Vermeylen, 2013a; Horowitz, 2012, McAndrew, 2016; Quesenberry, Sykes, 2008). Although the Web 1.0 has consistently modified the society, the most important breakthrough has arrived with the emerge of the Web 2.0 characterized by social media. On this wise, a particular social networking platform stands out for its being solely iconic and visual within the art world, namely Instagram. Precisely, Instagram allowed marketer to expose their product in a very pleasant and high-definition visual frame, while at the same time it encourages and eased the connection with customers worldwide (Alshawaf, Wen, 2015). Its immediacy and directedness are the reason why Instagram has recently become the platform of choice for several art institutions such as museums, auction houses, collectors, contemporary artists and art galleries. But the way art galleries include Instagram in their daily practice has not been investigated yet. That is why, this research seeks to understand how Amsterdam art galleries embed Instagram, in their daily business practice. Does Instagram as a digital tool, has the power to further modify the everyday practice of the Amsterdam art dealers?

In fact, it is important to take into consideration, Velthuis (2013) description of the Amsterdam art market. Precisely, he claimed that Amsterdam art dealers poses barriers to the global expansion of the market, and those limitations are strictly linked with their necessity to build strong face-to-face trust relationship with both artists and collectors. However, Velthuis (2013) positions does not take into account the possibility offered by the digital media in terms of communication and relational possibilities together with the capability to overcome geographical distance. In this sense, how does the Amsterdam art market traditional structure could be challenged by the inclusion of Instagram within their everyday practice? According to the literature, it has been in fact argued that the art gallery is a business where face-to-face type of relations represent the main source of success (Velthuis, 2013). The role covered by gallery managers is thus directed towards the creations and maintenance of solid and trustful relationship with other art patrons (Moulin, 1987, Velthuis, 2013, Jyrama, Ayvari, 2010). However, the *SNSs* are promising to be the new place where to socialize and maintain contact with people worldwide. Thus, how the social construct on which the galleries historically built their capital has been challenged by the way social media promote interactions?

In addition, it has been argued that social media platforms represent a convenient venue where to bridging and bonding social capital online. In other words, thanks to their capability to connect

people together by overcrossing physical and geographical distance, SNSs allow the creations of new ties and also the management of already existing ones. In according to this point, Instagram could also work as a tool where to bonding and bridging social capital for the Amsterdam art galleries? Furthermore, in the literature section it has been explained starting from Scott's study (2012) on cultural entrepreneurs that capital could be converted in other alternative forms that could help businesses to grow. Thus, if Amsterdam art dealers can acquire social capital through Instagram, how this acquisition could help them improve their activity? Do Amsterdam art galleries will benefit from the inclusion of Instagram in their everyday activity?

3.2 Expectations

Considering what was argued about the inner promotional potential of Instagram as a social networking site, it is expected to find that art galleries in Amsterdam started to capitalize it for this exactly purpose. In fact, where the englobing of the web 1.0 have already produced clear outcomes regarding the way in which art galleries started selling art and communicating with other actors within the field, it was not investigated the way in which these elements where translated upon the social media realm.

Hence, considering what has been described as the social media potential, namely its being a communicational and relational device able to connect people worldwide, I expect that it will allow the disruption of the physical and geographical constrains that were preventing the collaboration with artists and/or collectors. Once having considered this point, it will be then logically expected Instagram to challenge the traditional organizational practices of the Amsterdam art galleries. Together with Dutch dealers' role model, both based on solid face-to-face type of relationship as they have been described by Velthuis (2013). Particularly, I also expect to find a possible alteration in the way in which gallerists manage the acquisition and the management of their social capital. In other words, I will expect Instagram working as a venue where to interact with new possible client and therefore both enhance gallery's recognition and expand its network of contact. Despite all these presented expectations that were easy to formulate because logically retrieved from the theoretical framework, it will maybe be possible to also obtain unforeseen outcomes but still connected to the logic of the use of Instagram for the art gallery practice.

4. RESEARCH DESING

In order to answer to the research question namely how do Amsterdam commercial art galleries embed Instagram as a digital tool in their daily business practice, this project will employ qualitative methodology. Precisely, this particular strategy focuses on the "understanding of social world through an examination of the interpretation of that world by its participants" (Bryman, 2008, p. 366). Thus, it is fits the aim of this research to investigate how Amsterdam commercial art galleries embed Instagram as a digital tool in their daily business practice. Because of its exploratory nature, this study's research question required to be approached qualitatively. That is why, qualitative approach could firstly help obtaining insight about gallery owner's experiences and, secondly to underline the possible changes that the art galleries practice can experience with the inclusion of Instagram in the everyday strategies. According to this, the data required to be studied through an intensive qualitative exploration of the participant's thoughts and actions (Polkinghorne, 2005). However, the qualitative approach is an umbrella term under which a variety of different methods are comprise in. Among all, interviewing is the most widely employed methods for its techniques of gathering data from humans by directly ask them verbally (Bryman 2008). Interviewing is thus the most suitable method to "obtain descriptions of the life-world of the interviewees with respect to interpreting the meaning of the describing phenomena" (Kvale, 1996, p.5-6).

Moreover, a further distinction in the methodological approach following the typology of interview that has been chosen for this particular study. Considering the fact that interviews were conducted only once, without any possibilities of repetition, to collect the required data for answerisng to the research question, semi-structured interviews were chosen as a more efficient data gathering strategy. Moreover, it is also important to mention that due to the clear focus of this project, it is more likely to give a general structure at the interview, so the more specific issue can be addressed (Bryman, 2008).

Having considered that this thesis aims to investigate a specific issue, namely the art galleries use of Instagram within their everyday practice in a restricted context such as Amsterdam, generalizability could not be an expected attribute of this project. Therefore, the research validity relies on the appropriateness of each methodological step that has been taken to extrapolate the desired outcomes and so, coherent with the process of answering the research questions. In this sense, this thesis' reliability dwells within the thesis consistency.

4.1 Operationalization

In this research, the interview guide (see Appendix: Interview Guide) has been divided into three different sections in which, the main conceptual elements present within the theoretical framework

are described. In order to extrapolate the necessary information about how the Amsterdam art galleries traditionally operate several indicators about the gallery practice has been identified. Then, for each indicator various questions have been posed to the interviewees.

The first group of questions is linked with the gallery general description concerning the type of art they sell and showcase. Moreover, following what has been exposed about the traditional Amsterdam dealers' way to manage their business, more specific questions were performed. Firstly, I looked at the way each gallery manages the artists selection process and then I also retrieved information about how they work and communicate with them. The same procedure has been also applied for information about collectors. Moreover, the nationalities of both artists and collectors were asked in order to then probe whether Instagram have helped them expand their network of contact worldwide and see if it has changed their traditional way to operate. This part is linked (construction of relationship and selection process) with the barriers described within Velthuis (2013) study about the Amsterdam art market that has been taken as a description of the traditional organization specificities and dealers' role model of the Dutch capital art market itself. However, the primary art market, as it was argued in the theory section, has undergo several modifications since the advent of the digital revolution (Enhuber, 2015; Horowitz, 2012; Arora, Vermeylen, 2013). In order to understand how digitalization and the possibilities of this revolution has been englobed by the galleries, several questions about the use of digital tools has been posed. Firstly, it was asked with what type of media they usually include in their business to also understand If, besides the Web 1.0, also the Web 2.0 has been employed in the gallery's practice. Moreover, information about the way they use these digital offers (website, online platform, social media in general) were asked. Subsequently, social media importance and impact have been designed as the last indicators of this section in order to retrieved more detailed information about the galleries perception of their practice since the advent of the Internet. Here, the importance of being online has been generally investigated by watching at the way galleries sell, expose and display art on the digital environment. The third part of the Interview guide finally goes into the digital tool of interest of the thesis, namely Instagram. In this section, different indicators have been used. The first one aims to investigate how practically galleries manage their profile on Instagram (what type of information they display and what type of post they do and so forth). Then, the second indicator concentrates on its usage in order to see whether Instagram could be employed for promotional purposes, help dealer to manage their social relations (e.g. with collectors and dealers) and thus, generally help their business to grow. The first point is linked with the theory part describing Instagram marketing potential (Latiff, Ayuni Safiee, 2015; Mangold, Faulds, 2009; Puha, Jin, Kim, 2017a). The second one instead is connected with the discussion about SNSs as a fertile ground for cultural entrepreneurs where to acquire and then convert

alternative form of capital (Gandini, 2016; Scott; 2012) (e.g. social capital into economic capital). Precisely, by asking which type of contact dealers have in their Instagram follower's base I will be able to see whether they connect with new or already existing collectors and artists (bonding and bridging social capital) and whether after the connection it follows a purchase or a collaboration. Finally, the last indicator sets out to explore what are gallerists' opinions about Instagram's possible future developments. This aims to firstly make a point on how gallerists' practice has changed with the use of Instagram in their business. Secondly, it wants to understand if they perceive Instagram as a digital tool able to affect the future of the primary art market in general. or, on the contrary they feel that some elements of their practice will remain anchored to the tradition.

4.2 Sample

Table 1. respondents and information displayed on their Instagram accounts

GALLERIES	FOLLOWERS	CONTENT	POST	INFORMATION	DISCIPLINES
1.	1332	Photo, video	223	website	Contemporary abstract and minimal art
2.	15000	Photos, video, stories	626	Number, email, website	Drawings, design, illustrations
3.	1336	Photo, video, stories	283	website	Contemporary fine art photography
4.	276	Photo, video	114	Email, number, website, directions	Contemporary paintings and sculpture
5.	1258	Photo	30	website	Contemporary art
6.	4393	Photo, video, stories	767	Email, number, website, directions	Urban contemporary graffiti and street art
7.	1177	Photo, video	84	website	Conceptual art, paintings, installations
8.	1713	Photos, video	154	Email, number, website, directions	Conceptual performance, video art
9.	1034	Photos, video	153	Email, number, website, directions	Fine art photography
10.	283	Photos, video, stories	182	Email, number, website, directions	Mixed disciplines

The scope of this research has been limited solely to the city of Amsterdam. This choice has been firstly made for practical reason following the indication of Amsterdam as the center of the Dutch art

market (Renger, Velthuis, 2002). Secondly, it is linked with the theoretical discussion whereby the capital city has been pinpointed for its high density of commercial art gallery (Rengers, Velthuis, 2002). The unit of analysis of this project is represented by Amsterdam art galleries that have an Instagram account. In order to obtain a consistent sample of galleries present on the social media app, a list of the entire population of the commercial art galleries in Amsterdam was composed. Following the approach that Velthuis (2013) used to identify all the activities in the capital city, a complete list of the total 253 registered commercial art galleries has been retrieved from the Artfacts[3] online database. Starting from this, the entire units of galleries obtained from this catalogue has been then skimmed in order to eliminate the failed activities. In this part of the selection process, 210 operating commercial art galleries has been identified out of 253[4]. Subsequently, considering the scope of the project, from the overall number of art institutions, "information rich-cases" namely the galleries with an Instagram account, have been selected using the purposive sampling strategy (Patton, 2002, p.169). Purposeful selection involves the choice of people from whom it is possible to extrapolate the information from, that will be then used to answer the research question (Patton, 2002). In this thesis's case the "rich-cases" are represented by the commercial galleries that have an active Instagram account. In order to sample the galleries, I have selected starting from the general population only the galleries present on Instagram with two different methods. Firstly, I directly search them on the media app. Subsequently, in the cases where was difficult to trace them directly on the app, I checked each gallery website to see if they linked their Instagram account there.

The first round of selection resulted in sixty-four galleries active on Instagram. Hereby, it is mandatory to specify what "activeness" means. The truth is that a precise definition of what means being active on social media does not exists within the academic literature, and when it is mentioned usually appears with complete different descriptions for each platform. In this research I will take into consideration as active, galleries that have more than 150 followers, with an open profile and a minimum of 5 posts. Altogether, these elements represent galleries that not let their account languish between infrequent updates[5] and therefore, the choice of "active galleries" has been made to achieve this thesis's goals.

All the galleries' Instagram accounts were observed, studied and catalogued following various characteristic such as the number of followers of each page, the number of posts, the type of information displayed (e.g. type of content, contact information) and the type of art disciplines they specialize in. This brief content analysis worked as a bedrock for the construction the second the

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[3] https://www.artfacts.net/index.php/pageType/galleries/sel1/geo/sel2/0/country/4/city/34/lang/1#1
[4] 43 commercial art galleries closed their activities in the last decade.
[5] Following this point 17 galleries were left out the sample because they did not fit with the description of activeness required.

heterogeneous sample for the interviews. Thus, galleries have been differentiated and then grouped together on the basis of the number of followers they have on Instagram and their frequency of posting (number of posts). Galleries with the highest number, average number and lowest number of followers have been selected. The presented techniques are coherent with a heterogeneous approach respectively called maximum variation sample, mostly used to capture a wide range of different attributes and approaches of the unit of analysis of interest (Creswell, Plano Clark, 2011; Palinkas et al. 2015). As a result, twenty commercial art galleries were selected and contacted. From this group I have obtained seven respondents, which in percentage means that 35% of the galleries accepted to be interviewed. In order to reach the desired number of respondents, another group of ten galleries was selected following the same heterogeneous approach and, in this case, other three respondents have been added to the interviewees. In total 10 commercial art galleries (Table 1) with an Instagram account were interviewed which have saturated the required hours necessary for the success of the project.

4.3 Data collection and analysis

The ten interviews were conducted between April and May 2017. All the selected galleries were firstly contacted via e-mail and informed about the subject of the research and then, if necessary, contacted either via telephone or even directly at the gallery venue. While contacting the galleries it was clearly specified that, due to the practicality of the question (see Appendix: Interview guide) it was also possible performing the interviews with the gallery assistant in the case they were the one in charge of managing the account. That is why, two out of ten interviews were conducted with the assistants, whilst the other 8 residuals were conducted with the gallery owners. All the interviews except for one took place inside the gallery space, either during the working hours, or on private appointment during gallerist's free time. Only one was scheduled in a public space (restaurant) because the activity was moving to another location and therefore the gallerist was temporarily without a physical gallery space.

All the interviews were conducted in English and concurrently with the start of the recording they were informed about the anonymity and privacy clauses. They all signed the consent form that is presented in the appendix to give their permission to be recorded (see Appendix: consent form). Overall, interviews lasted from a minimum of thirty-one minutes to a maximum of one hour and thirty-three minutes, for a total length of circa ten hours and five minutes. Generally, interviews were recorder via telephone or computer and the audio file has been saved and converted from Mp4 into a Mp3 format in order to ease the process of transcription. For the transcription two different programs

has been used, respectively Otranscribe[6] which is an online free service and ExpressScribe which is a computer software. Both the programs allow to slower the audio and transcribe simultaneously with the listening. The majority of the interviewees were quite informal, and the flow was sometimes closer to a normal conversation. However, each respondent shared their experience and thoughts without hesitation, therefore all the vital information and data for the research has been easily collected and analyzed.

In order to analyze the data, all the interviews have been coded through the program Atlas.ti. Precisely, two different rounds of coding have been performed. The first one coincides with an initial open coding which is the process for breaking down, examining and comparing all the data. Generally, this process of coding yields small concepts (see appendix: Coding scheme) that will be afterwards grouped into broader categories (Bryman, 2008). Within the first coding approach, a list of very detailed elements whereby every code has been associated to a particular line of the text, helped me obtain a first overall impression of what issues was addressed in the interviews (e.g. working with new artists, contact collectors, expanding client base, promotional tool and so forth. See Appendix: Coding scheme). Charmaz (2006) defined this stage as crucial for generating as many elements as possible and therefore obtaining enough codes that will encapsulate the data. After this first round of data gathering, another approach of coding has been applied in order to group together the initial codes obtained. Thus, a focused type of coding scheme has been used. This approach to data, concentrate the attentions on the codes that are perceiving as the most revealing and important for the research. Thus, it implies that many initial codes listed will be discarded. As a result of this approach, codes where then combined and grouped under more general descriptive categories (e.g. type of digital media, digital promotional strategies, online communication, online sales, traditional market structure, Instagram practical information, Instagram usage, Instagram practical information, type of digital media, gallery description). These categories permitted to then identify the most noteworthy patterns (e.g. Impact of digital media on the gallery practice, Instagram promotional tool, online social capital, worldwide expansion of the visibility, stable element) that were further thematically analyzed. Braun and Clarke (2006) defined thematic analysis as the fundament of the qualitative approach, whereas it helps summarizing the data under larger categories, namely the patterns of the data. To be specific, those themes emerged out of the coding analysis were directly extrapolated and then studied as theory related material. Thus, every pattern discovered has been deductively interpreted on the base of the research's theoretical framework.

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[6] http://otranscribe.com

4.4 Researcher effect

After having conducted all the interviews, I have decided to keep on tracking and observing interviewee's Instagram accounts by following them on the media app. Surprisingly, I have noticed that most of the galleries upgraded their profile within the few days following the interviews. To be specific, one gallery has started to post more often on a weekly basis, when during the interview the respondent has clearly claimed that the utilization of Instagram was limited to the monthly use. While, another gallery's account started embedding videos and stories in the strategic use of Instagram, which showed a progress in the platform usage. Moreover, another gallery has posted on the business account an image in which a quotation of what the respondent told me about Instagram during the interviews. Altogether these elements showed that my work has interfered with their normal activities and has produced a direct effect on the participants. This, is commonly referred as the Hawthorne effect within the social science and education research that describe the unexpected outcomes which is believed depending on the fact that the studied subject is aware to be part of a study (Merrett, 2006). In other words, Hawthorne effect can be defined as an influence that occur in experiments when the subjects know they are studied and therefore they change their behavior as a result (Merrett, 2006). This is due to the high level of subject's reactivity in experiment. In fact, as human beings we are continuously aware of the world that surround us, and we pay attention at the inputs that we receive in an unsystematic way which help the navigations through our daily activities. Considering this, the researcher might affect the way in which respondent make sense of their behavior and also, in this case, the way in which they normally act. In this study, interviewees reactivity has produced an improvement in their way to manage their Instagram accounts. Precisely, some interviewees displayed their reactiveness by start posting on Instagram more often compared to what they affirmed during the interviews while some others started improving their Instagram strategies by including different type of posts. However, these elements have only been noticed after the research was conducted, when interviews and analysis were already done. In other words, I did not assume that this discover could have the potential to change the validity of this thesis's results. Therefore, the elements observed have been just taken into consideration as a consequence of the study, as an ex-post element which underline the interviewees reactivity to experiment by assuming that the topic of the study was particularly interesting for them and their business.

5. RESULTS

The analysis of the ten semi-structured interviews conducted with the Amsterdam art gallerists, have underscored several characteristics of the Instagram usage for businesses purposes within the art galleries daily practice. In this sense, a first chapter concerning the practical way in which Instagram has been employed by the interviewed art galleries will be presented. Moreover, it has been discovered that the inclusion of Instagram in the Amsterdam art gallery practice has change modalities and approaches of interacting and communicating with other art intermediaries and patrons. These alterations, that are direct consequences of the exploitations of the Instagram's potentialities, will be presented together with what, instead, has remain fundamentally the same since the advent of social media in the art gallery universe.

5.1 ART GALLERIES INSTAGRAM USAGE

Before starting introducing the patterns discovered it is important to do a premise. It was observed that there was no coherence in the way galleries approached Instagram, despite the characteristics the have been considered and described in the methodological section. In fact, although there are differentiations in the galleries usage of Instagram, these differentiations do not follow the numbers of posts and followers of their Instagram accounts. To sum up, it was clear at the end of the analysis that the behavior of the interviewed art dealers in relation to Instagram could not be divided into different types but could be explained by describing why and how they use it.

5.1.1 Promotion

All the 10 interviewees claimed that they employ Instagram as a promotional tool that amplifies the traditional galleries' marketing strategies within the online realm. The idea of capitalizing Instagram for broadening the art galleries visibility is firstly in line with what Arora and Vermeylen already stated (2013a) about the general utilization of social media for promotional purposes in their study on the digitalization of the art market. Secondly it fits with the stream of knowledge that underlined Instagram as a perfectly suitable platform for both exposing products and doing promotion (Puha, Jin, Kim 2017a) for its being iconic and visual (Latiff, Ayuni Safiee, 2015). As it was expected, this pleasant and aesthetic way of displaying products came out being particularly suitable for the art galleries' owners and assistants that I have interviewed. As one of the art dealer interviewed put it:

> "I use Instagram to reach my clients or new potential clients, so I have to inform the world of what it is going on in here (in the gallery). It is like that, when they open the app on their phone people can see the artworks we display and sell […] Instagram is very visual in a sense

that you only have to display the picture and it is also simple: picture and a little text and that's it."

<div align="right">(I-7, followers 1177, conceptual art paintings and installation)</div>

In fact, the majority of the respondents have indicated Instagram as their new preferred platform of choice for exposing art and art related contents, which in the last few years have overcome the power of other social networking platforms, such as Facebook. For all the ten galleries, Instagram has become the more preferred venues where to extend their promotional strategies due to its simplicity and immediacy, as the aforementioned quote also pointed out. Respondents have indeed affirmed during the interviews that because Instagram is a digital platform that runs on a smartphone app, it is a more immediate and functional method for searching information compared to other software such as Google search. Therefore, collectors or general art consumers, can easily learn about the art galleries' products. The ease with which Instagram exposes and makes information and content approachable and reachable for everyone who is on the platform, supports the argumentation about the democratization (McAndrew, 2016; Arora, Vermeylen, 2013) of the art market that arose with the advent of virtual art database within web 1.0 (Artsy, Artland and so forth). The art galleries information displayed on the app are not only accessible to art patrons, but also to the general public who was previously lacking in the cultural capital necessary to accede the art world. Therefore, the promotional paradigm offered by Instagram as a social media tool for the art galleries might also have the power to challenge the matter of informational asymmetry which have hitherto characterized the art world (Coslor, 2016; Velthuis, 2011). It can be also assumed that Instagram promotional potential whereby art galleries are challenged to expose their product in a very direct and simple manner, stands in the stream of the democratization process of the art market already started within the web 1.0. Precisely, Instagram as a digital tool enables art market stakeholders as well as art lovers to have open access to what art galleries display without actually entering into the physical gallery space. In this fashion, an art gallery's owner recounted:

"You want to have people involved with the gallery, so by expose your artworks on Instagram you show a little bit what is happening inside the gallery, what a gallery is about, because people still think about the gallery as a scary place where not to enter"

<div align="right">(I-2, followers 15000, drawing and illustrations)</div>

This quote also underscored another important element about the importance of art galleries' online presence. Every gallery that I have interviewed in fact, affirmed that people are extremely skeptical

and sometimes even scared to enter in the gallery space. The white-cube type of format and its reputation of an elitist ambience, make it difficult for gallerists to engage with the more general public and sometimes even with art patrons. In this sense, it could be argued that the Amsterdam art galleries interviewed have approached Instagram as a medium where to expose and promote their galleries in order to virtually engage the public. In this sense by creating an already virtually engaged type of public, art galleries are hoping that people will be less hesitant to enter the real physical gallery space. Moreover, linked to the exploitation of Instagram for promotional purposes, all the galleries interviewed have claimed that the main reason for approaching this realm is because it enhances the visibility of the art gallery worldwide. For instance, some of the Amsterdam galleries participating in the project put it:

> "I think Instagram is very nice for people that are not only focused on Amsterdam, it can broad worldwide the attentions"
>
> (I-3, followers 1336, contemporary fine art photography)

and also:

> "you immediately enter in a broader art world with other international galleries, as a Dutch gallery it is very important to see yourself amongst other international business"
>
> (I-9, followers 1034, fine art photography)

Following the words of the respondents, it can be assumed that Instagram could be seen as a powerful crossing-borders tool able to make galleries interact with a more international public by expanding gallery's visibility worldwide. Therefore, it can be assumed that Instagram's power for the art galleries resides in the rapidity and directness with which contents are globally transmitted, as described in the literature session (Puha, Jin, Kim, 2017a; Latiff, Ayuni Safiee, 2015). Moreover, it is also possible to assume that the art gallerists interviewed are considering Instagram as a tool able to overcome geographical constrains. Hence, Instagram enables the galleries to internationally expand their visibility and therefore client's base, as it will be in depth argued in the next chapter.

5.1.1.1 Strategies for promoting art on Instagram

Having stated that the Amsterdam art galleries interviewed exploit Instagram mainly as an implementing of their promotional strategies, it is then important to look at what and how the respondents usually promote on their Instagram accounts.

To start with the description of what the art galleries interviewed generally promote, it has been discovered that in order to construct a solid promotional strategy via Instagram, art galleries are

used to display a variety of different content. First, all the art gallerists and assistants interviewed claimed that they exhibit mainly artworks' picture and/or video to clearly show to customers their products. Generally, the respondents claimed that they approach Instagram in a similar way they are approaching their website speaking about the type of information that there are showcased. For instance, each artworks' picture it follows a concise textual description containing the most important information such as title, name of the artists, type of used materials. Sometimes pictures of the artworks are also presented with a brief description of the products themselves to make the public more engaged with it. Furthermore, what came out from the interviews is a general interest not only in exposing the art galleries artistic production but also an attention in informing people of the events gallerists organize, or where they are guests, as well as art fair participations and gallery's openings. In this sense, respondents claimed they can also maintain informed people of what is happening inside the art gallery.

Although the Amsterdam art gallerists interviewed seemed to all generally agree with which content showcase on Instagram for promotional purposes, their approaches are slightly different from each other for what concerns the manner in which they promote their businesses on the app. For instance, galleries 2-6, which are respectively the galleries with the highest number of followers on Instagram, claimed that they want to have their public particularly engaged with their content. In order to achieve they for instance posts picture of their artworks exposed inside the buyers' home. Another method these galleries follow is for example to augment their collaboration with artists who are already particularly famous on Instagram (who have high number of followers) thereby by tagging them in their posts they could enhance their gallery's visibility. Moreover, these two art galleries not only have a high frequency of posting but they are also very active in answering to the comments and liking other pages. In this sense, galleries 2-6 seems to exploit the Instagram's participatory culture (Jenkins, 2006; Van Dijck, 2013) that enables users to communicate with each other's and peer-evaluate each other's content. Their activities in other words could be summarized as a fruitful strategy of engagement on the platform (Carah, Shaul, 2015). Having understood how to actively engage the public and therefore having obtained positive feedback from their Instagram usage, these two galleries do not only have the highest number of followers but are also the most confident in investing money and time in promoting their activities on Instagram.

Another strategic approach about how to promote art galleries on Instagram has been described by the respondents (9-5) who preferred to instead have what they called an "Instagram schedule" whereby they planned what to showcase on Instagram by following a thematic approach. In other words, every day of the week has a specific content that have to be complied (e.g. Monday: artworks, Tuesday: overview of the gallery and so forth). In this manner, they claimed that people

can become more familiar with their gallery and they know what type of information they can have access to. Moreover, it helps art galleries to coherently and systematically work with the app and easily manage the posting practice by saving time.

In general, each gallery interviewed described the inclusion of Instagram in their daily business as a practice that is indeed changing their working approach. As the respondents 1 for example recounted, the gallerists have to now also think about how to promote their activity online, it is another universe of work to manage apart from the one in real physical life. It could be assumed that the virtual Instagram universe has thus become a place where now art galleries are also operating their promotional strategies.

5.1.2. Instagram not as a selling platform

Having assumed that the path towards a more digitalized manner of buying and selling art was already established (Hiscox, 2017; Hiscox, 2018; Artsy, 2015), I asked the respondents during the interviews what they thought about a possible future inclusion of e-commerce on the Instagram page. Precisely, what has emerged from the discussion is that, even though some interviewees (2-6-3) were able to sell art to collectors they found on Instagram, the general disposition of the Amsterdam art gallerists is that Instagram could not been employed as a selling platform. As it will be further in depth argued in the next section concerning the relationship with collectors, selling artworks through Instagram is possible because of the connection it creates with buyers. In other words, gallerists could be contacted through Instagram from collectors who discover them directly on the app and then proceed with purchasing the artworks through more conventional canals (e.g. email, telephone).

Despite this premise, the Amsterdam art gallerists interviewed did not give Instagram the endorsement as a selling platform, or better still, they had not come out in favor of a direct exchange of goods on the platform. One of the gallery's owner have in fact pointed out:

> "I personally would never buy an artwork from Instagram because you can't see what this will look like in real life [...] like on Instagram you can only see a little image but how can you see how it is produced the materials etc [...] my idea is always be that ok website and also social media are very important (..) but you have to see artworks in the real life at least once"
>
> (I-4, followers 276, contemporary paintings and sculpture)

This quote perfectly exemplifies the issues that recurrently came out during the interviews. The first issue refers to the fact that Instagram's size of posts is not big enough to permit the client to have an

exhaustive view on the artworks, even though it allows the exhibition of images in a very aesthetically pleasant frame. Connected to this visive limitation, in fact, some gallerists (7-4-1-9-10-8-5; see *table1* for the description of the type of art each gallery expose) defined their art as impossible to experience only through the Instagram digital realm. Consequently, they also described themselves as skeptical in using others virtual platforms expressively constructed for buying and selling because they think that their art can not be explained solely on Internet. Precisely, the art galleries of interviewees 7 and 8 focus on types of art, such as performance art and installations, which are incredibly difficult to be totally appreciated on the virtual realm, even having considered all the improvement in the digital image resolution and other technological development (e.g. 3D, holograms etc.).

Moreover, Arora and Vermeylen (2013b) defined the art valuation as a nebulous process, where quality tends to be linked with aesthetic judgment. However, the definition of aesthetic judgments has been nowadays enlarged to include other proprieties, such as originality, novelty, coherence and complexity. In according with this point, it is thus difficult to qualitatively evaluate artworks by solely look at them within the Instagram frame. Especially if considering the phenomenon that the interviewees have depicted as "Instagrammable art" whereby some particular types of art appear to be more aesthetically appealing on the app because their nature is consistent with the Instagram visive format (e.g. design, illustrations, photography). In this frame, the art gallerists interviewed claimed that it is always suggested, once having virtually experienced the artworks, to then proceed with physically viewing them in order to ensure their quality. Having said so, this outcome could be included in the streams of the academics whereby it has been underscored the art world puritans' hesitation in doing purchase without having experienced artwork in the real life before (Horowitz, 2012). In other words, the Amsterdam art gallerists interviewed think that it is not likely that the Instagram conversion in a web shop could work for their practice. Instagram could certainly create sales opportunities by enhancing professional connections as it will be exposed in the next section, but the art market does not see direct e-commerce in its future. To be more precise, the general feeling of the Amsterdam art dealers interviewed is that Instagram could be employed as a promotional instrument, due to its capability to pleasantly and engagingly expose art, but because of its bi-dimensional and limited view to product it could not be seen as a sales platform for the art market. Hence, apparently this rule seems to work also for some Amsterdam art dealers which would not described themselves open to the art trade without having confirm the quality of the artworks in real life. These argumentations support the stream of knowledge which described the tendency of the primary art market as reluctant in the use of Instagram for direct sales purpose (Evans, 2015). Together with the more general hypothesis that the online platforms only represent an integration, rather than a new sales venue within the traditional art market's infrastructure (McAndrew, 2016).

5.2 INCLUSION OF INSTAGRAM IN THE ART GALLERY DAILY PRACTICE

5.2.1 What has changed within the Amsterdam art gallery practice

Considering all the changes which the primary art market undergoes since the advent of the digitalization within the contemporary era (Arora, Vermeylen, 2013a; Enhuber 2015; Horowitz, 2012); altogether with what has just been exposed about the promotional potential of Instagram as a prominent web 2.0 platform. It was expected to discover further modifications within the art galleries practice since the employment of Instagram for businesses purposes.

5.2.1.1 Selection of the artists

Several elements within the Amsterdam art galleries interviewed have indeed changed since the emergence of Instagram as a digital tool in their everyday business practice. One of them concerns the artists' selection process.

The general feeling of the art galleries participating in the research is that Instagram presents itself like an open window on the art world, where information is displayed continually and without any barriers. That is why, it can allow art market's stakeholders to broaden their view on new trends and trend-setters of the art world. Starting from this point, six out of the ten galley owners interviewed have in fact affirmed that one of the main reason they are approaching Instagram is for discovering artists to work with. As one interviewed puts it:

> "yeah, that is exactly ehm the reason why I actually decided to open the account, so I can watch firstly what other artists are doing, so for example (showing an artwork on the wall) this artist here is an artist that I have discovered on Instagram. I was ehm yeah watching the Instagram feed and then I saw this artist and I thought that was interesting, so I went to his profile and I checked the artworks he had on the page and then I contact him"
>
> (I-6, followers 4393, graffiti and street art)

As witnessed by this quote, the artists' selection process in this case and the establishment of the dealers-artists liaison could also occur through Instagram. This fact demonstrate that the majority of the art galleries interviewed start to choose social media as a canal for expanding their network of collaborators, instead of erecting professional relationship with artists solely through frequent face-to-face type of encounters. Whereas dealers were traditionally obtaining knowledge about the artists by merely frequenting local venues (Velthuis, 2013), with the advent of Instagram dealers could, on

the contrary, gather the necessary data by looking at their Instagram profile where all the information are easily showcased (e.g. artworks, contact information). Therefore, it can be assumed that Instagram could become a new mode in which Amsterdam art galleries expand their method to select artists they want to work with. As interviewees 6, 2, 4, 3, 10 and 7 explicit in fact, once you follow artists on Instagram you can first have access to the entire gallery of their artistic productions and thus, still being informed about their productions in a context of physical distance. While secondly, as interviewee number two reinforced:

"once you started following an artist that you like you can also watch the network of people that he likes or which artists he exhibits with you do see that there is a network of people connected worldwide and I just follow like a bunch of artists and I select the one that I think fit the gallery programs"

(I-2, followers 15000, drawing and illustrations)

In this sense, gallery's owners could also retrieve informed about the social community in which the artists they want to work are part of. In this sense, the pivotal role that the face-to-face type of interactions were covering within the information's gathering process traditionally described by Velthuis (2013), have now been challenged by Instagram. In fact, both the information about the cultural circle in which artists orbit and the artworks practicalities could be easily obtained by solely digging into artists' Instagram profile. Thus, having stated so, dealers might use these information as a barometer to test the artists credits within the market, to probe to if the artists have an affirmed reputation and working history. Moreover, art dealers have always emphasized the importance, apart from the artistic fit, of the so-called social click with the artist that needs to exist in order to have fruitful collaboration (Plattner, 1996). This social click was historically tested via face-to-face long-lasting type of encounters to probe whether the dealer and artist temperament could have matched. Now this click could be translated into a new, digital environment, whereby it happens in a blink of an eye through the visualization of artworks captured in an appealing visual frame. After having obtained all the information necessary to decide whether artists could fit the gallery program, art dealers have just to click on the artists page to contact them thanks to the instant messaging form offered by Instagram called "direct". In addition, it is also possible to directly call and/or email the person of interest if they have attached their contact information on their account. These offers are appealing for the art dealers for its being time saving and immediate. As witnessed by this Amsterdam art dealer interviewed:

"I am constantly search for new people and sometimes I follow artists, and I contact them directly through Instagram, in the direct message section, it is easy and fast, and maybe later we can keep in contact through email or telephone"

<div align="center">(I-3, followers 1336, contemporary fine art photography)</div>

Furthermore, I have observed two different approaches in relation to how art dealers work with artists discovered via Instagram. The first approach could be summarized as the, for example, interviewee 7 way of discovering artists via the social media app. Precisely, this art dealers claimed that for him Instagram works as a catalogue that you can browse until you find something that catch your eyes. In this case, even though the first connection happens through Instagram, the genuine interaction will be moved to the real physical world. This approach works better especially for the galleries that exhibit a particular type of art which can not be totally appreciated or understood solely via the social media platform (e.g. installations or performances).

While other galleries interviewed (2- 6), explained that they usually initiate professional collaborations with artists that they have solely approached and interact with virtually, therefore with whom they do not have any physical or personal connection with. One of them for instance explained, in his last gallery's exhibition he presented artworks of an artist that he never has met personally. The contact started through Instagram and continued via more traditional type of communication but never happened in a situation of physical proximity due to geographical limitations. In line of what was argued in the literature section, Instagram thus do emphasize the feelings of "being on touch" by reducing the physical distance and so it can enhance the proximal relationality in a mediated form of virtual connection (Aboott et al. 2013). In according to this it can be assumed that Instagram expansion of the communicational possibilities and the facilitation which it enables in connecting with new people allowed some of the galleries interviewed to work artists radically new and not already part of their offline network. This novelty in gallerists' way of working within the Instagram era, goes against Velthuis (2013) argumentations. Her stated that Amsterdam dealers have to work with artists in a mutual supportive and trustful environment which can occurs only in a situation of physical proximity. Moreover, linked to the interactional possibilities offered by Instagram as a digital platform, some of the respondents (3,6,2,10) have affirmed that, when they scout artists on Instagram they can expand their research terrain worldwide. As a witness of this statement, this respondent indeed claimed:

"now everything is becoming more international, still a lot of galleries are local, but the general tendency is to aim for a more international environment of artists to work with, now that is easier to do so with the technological offers"

<div align="right">(1-2, followers, 15000, drawings and illustrations)</div>

The declaration of this Amsterdam commercial art gallerists, that is also shared by the other gallerists who have approached Instagram for scouting artists, lead to the assumption that Instagram might have stimulated the international expansion of the artist's base. As a result, artists from non-European countries or also even non-Western countries could easily enter in the Dutch dealer's radar thanks to social media crossing-borders possibilities (Van Dijck, 2013; McAndrew, 2016; Enhuber 2015). Thus, geographical distance does not represent a barrier anymore to establish relationship since the inclusion of digital media within the gallery practice. The possibility to discover artists from the other side of the world that are completely extraneous to the gallery's offline network thanks to Instagram stood out for its particular algorithm, wherein the photos and users suggested in the feed are based on the likelihood that people will be interest in the content considering their previous contacts, comments and likes. Thus, Instagram algorithm focuses on prioritizing the content it thinks each user would like to see and that is why, the more a dealer search for art related content, the more he/she will have similar suggestion in the feed. Considering this fact, it is nor surprisingly that some dealers (e.g. interviewed number 3 have discovered an artist from Argentina) do ended up scouting artists from the opposite side of the world. It can be therefore assumed that Instagram might helped to desegregate the barrier to the globalization which hitherto have defined the Amsterdam market (Velthuis, 2013). However, even though the boost to the internationalization of the market stood out in the discussion with interviewees, empirical researches about how the percentage of international artists in these galleries have grew since their exploitation of Instagram for scouting artists is lacking. Therefore, it can be only possible generally assume that Instagram offers a possibility for commercial galleries to overcome geographical limitations and reduces the proximity issue by expanding the art gallery line of vision worldwide. In this case, contrarily to what Velthuis (2013) found in his study, it is maybe possible that non-European artists will be discovered and therefore represented on the European terrain thanks to the Internet, which functions as a vehicle of the globalization (McAndrew, 2016; Enhuber, 2015).

5.2.1.2 Relationship with collectors

Another important element of novelty that emerged out of the research concern the way in which Instagram allowed the creation and the management of new ties with other art actors within the art

world. Nearly all the respondents of this project have pointed out that they have decided to expand their promotional strategies on the Instagram realm to reach new customers/buyers/collectors. In this fashion, Instagram could be seen as a place where the art gallery interviewed might invest in the creation of social interaction. Instagram in fact enables, through auto-promotional practices of product's exposure, to get economic benefit. Whereas Gandini (2016) described the possibility of improving retailer's businesses economic capital via social media, in this case this possibilities of SNSs it is confirmed being true also for Instagram. In other words, the Amsterdam art galleries participating in the research approached Instagram not only as a platform where to promote and expand their visibility worldwide, but to also search for new contacts to add to the business' social network. Among all, collectors are the most preferred users to interact with as they could become part of the dealers' client base. Moreover, it stood out from the interviewees that this dealers-collectors liaison usually virtually occurs, and it is managed directly on the social media app thanks to the "following" options offered by the platform. Therefore, a gallery can easily add to its online network of contact, namely the "following" option of Instagram with just one click. Vice versa, collectors could add art galleries to their list of contact, as one interviewee puts it:

> "they followed me on Instagram they check my website they follow the artists that we exhibit and they come here and after one year we have personal contact while we already have before this connection ehm (…) so it is like "oh this is working" because they were already engage with the gallery even though they hadn't meet me before or came into the gallery."
>
> (I-3, followers 1336, contemporary fine art photography)

In this case, Instagram presents itself as a convenient medium for art dealers where to not only be discovered by collectors, but where to also maintain long-lasting relationships with buyers in lack of physical proximity. In this case, the collector possibilities to visualize the gallery's content and therefore keep track of its exhibitions and collaborations, have shored up the bond between the stakeholders even before the encounter in the physical world took place. In this sense, whereas it was argued that solid trustful dealer-collectors relationship could only be a consequence of face-to-face type of encounters (Moulin, 1987; Velthuis, 2013), for some Amsterdam gallerists Instagram has demonstrated to be a valid solution in creating trustful ties with clients. Moreover, it can be also underscored that, the information and product exposure that galleries operate on Instagram allow collectors to gain knowledge about gallery's practice in advance. This it eases their decision to whether or not proceed with a real-life meeting.

There are, however, some differences in the way in which Amsterdam art dealers manage their social network of contacts on the Instagram virtual universe. Among the respondents, on one hand have been identified dealers who connect with people on Instagram that are already in their client's base (Interviewee 1, 6). While on the other hand, there are gallerists who are more interested in creating new ties by following art patrons they don't have any prior contact with (interviewees 2, 10, 6, 3, 7). Before going more in depth on the aforementioned differentiation, it could be generally assumed that, whereas previous researches have argued that social ties represent the main form of capital for the cultural entrepreneurs (Scott, 2012), especially for the one operating within the art sector (Velthuis, 2013; Moulin, 1987; Jyrama, Ayvary, 2010), the digital environment could represent a new venue where to virtually acquire this social capital. In fact, the SNSs opened a new chapter in the communicational paradigm that enable the enhancement of professional collaboration (Puha, Jin, Kim, 2017a) as witnessed by the Amsterdam art dealers interviewed. In fact, following the aforementioned different ways to manage their social network of contact, the outcomes they could obtain may vary. Within the first approach, the two Amsterdam art dealers who have claimed to virtually connect with people that already have in their client's base argued that in this manner, collectors could remain informed about everything that is happening inside the gallery space. As the interviewee 1 for instance recounts:

"they probably already bought something with us and they want to stay up to date in the case they want to purchase art again"

(I-1, followers 1332, contemporary abstract and minimal art)

Thus, this Amsterdam art dealer operate what has been defined the process of bonding social capital (Puttnam, 2000) but translated into a digital environment, namely the gallerist has virtually reinforced an already strong type of relationship he had. This point, is in line with the study in which SNSs are described as a convenient venue where bonding social capital online (Puha, Jin, Kim, 2017b). However, the most consistent part of the respondents (2,10,6,3,7) have an opposite idea about the possibility to interact with collectors online. They have the feeling that the galleries' buyers do not come from the traditional venues such as the art fair anymore but instead they come from the Internet. Therefore, these five art dealer's aim is to expand their client base by exploiting Instagram promotional potential. For this reason, these Amsterdam art dealers are more likely to use Instagram for connecting with new people. As an example, one of the respondents have describe that:

"we were invited a year ago by somebody that I didn't know from New York that want to organize an exhibition with one of my photographers through Instagram, he saw, he was looking on Instagram, saw an image and "yes this is what I want to have in my gallery" it was an architect who has a gallery in his office and he wanted to make exhibition every three month and he saw this photographer and he decided that he wanted to have it in his gallery. So, from the other side of the world, someone that you don't know that you never saw the work in the real life, but only on Instagram, just a little square on a screen, want to work with me that I am in Amsterdam"

(I-3, followers 1336, contemporary fine art photography)

This example witnesses that Instagram provide for some Amsterdam dealers a convenient tool where to also find new collectors that they did not have any contact with before. Therefore, it could be assumed that Instagram represents a convenient venue where to create new ties, thanks to its capacity to enhance human communication. In other words, Instagram might augment art galleries professional opportunities through the management of these new virtual ties it enables. Within the academic jargon the exploitation of new ties for business purpose has been called bridging social capital (Puttnam, 2000). Hence, this outcome supports the discussion about first the advantages that retailer's businesses could obtain from bridging social capital, whereas it has been said that it is exactly from the investment in weaker ties that enterprise gets more benefits (Gandini, 2016; Puttnam, 2000). While secondly it straightened the argumentation, which was expecting social media being the exactly place where to do so (Puha, Jin, Kim, 2017b). Thus, Instagram virtual participation into the gallery space not only has the capability to maintain and reinforce pre-existent ties but also might also ease the introduction of new potential clients as it was similarly argued by the Quesenberry and Sykes' (2008) study about art galleries leveraging technology for promotional purposes. In addition, Interviewee 3 clearly showed that through Instagram dealer-collector connection he was able to obtain economic benefit. To rephrase it in support of the literature (Scott, 2002; Gandini, 2016), the online acquisition of social capital obtained through the expansion of his client's base has been then converted into another form of capital, namely economic. This happened because of the professional collaboration that it has been established between the two stakeholders.

Moreover, part of the respondents explained that they were willing to expand their network of connections internationally. Most of them were able to communicate and work with collectors that otherwise will never have the possibility to meet in the real life. In other words, as it has been described in the afore mentioned quote, collectors might use Instagram to contact dealers because of the geographical constrains which impede the interactions in the real life. These limitations might be

connected to high travel expense or, buyer's lack of time to travel and reach the gallery's physical space. It could be thus assumed that the inclusion of digital tools in the Amsterdam galleries daily practice could heighten the opportunities to find new collectors. Particularly, whereas before the art galleries working opportunities where only confined within the local community (Velthuis, 2013), the advent of Instagram in the interviewed Amsterdam galleries extent these working possibilities to a more international environment.

5.2.2 What has remained the same within the Amsterdam art gallery practice

Even though Instagram have introduced some novelties within the Amsterdam art galleries daily business practices, as described in the previous sections, other elements have contrarily remained the same. Or better to say, the importance of certain elements of the art gallery traditional practice have rather been reinforced since the advent of Instagram within their business.

5.2.2.1 Importance of the gallery space

During the final part of the interviews it has been asked to the respondents about their opinion on the future of the art market considering the new massive novelties introduced by the digital revolution like online fairs, online exhibitions and also online galleries that are now popping up everywhere on the internet. What came out is that, even though gallerists start to feel the pressure of an incredibly changing digitalized market, there are some unquestionable pillars upon which their practice is solidly built on. One of this is linked with the commercial art gallery being a physical space. For instance, one of the most active on Instagram Amsterdam art dealers interviewed recounted:

> "I think it will always be important to have a physical space beside what you are doing online. (…) yeah, the balance between physical gallery and online gallery it is very important in every situation. So, for example you have create your digital gallery that operates online but then people need to still have a real gallery to refer to a physical space where to go"
>
> (I-2, followers 1500, drawings and illustrations)

In fact, as witnessed by the aforementioned quote gallery space remain one of the most important elements which could not be challenged by the advent of digitalization. Firstly, because it ensures the gallery's credibility. To better say, it came out that gallery's space could stands out as a guarantee of the art gallery's recognition. This point has also been endorsed by the interviewee 5 who claimed that having a gallery space it is as important as it is for every retailer's business because it give the idea of a safe and trustful commerce of goods. Therefore, even though the connection with costumers

could easily start within Instagram, it is important for clients to have a physical space where to refer to if necessary (e.g. complain about the artworks, necessity to have a meeting). Secondly, artists pretend to have their artworks exposed in a real physical space when collaborating with art galleries. Especially because openings and personal exhibitions are still the preferred methods for acceding to the social circle of art critiques and intermediaries who could help the artists to upgrade his/her career. However, paradoxically, the Amsterdam art dealers interviewed have underscored that nowadays the art gallery space it is in danger. Despite they all agree on its importance for the business, the art gallerists have confessed that the gallery space could not be managed in the same ways since the advent Internet. In fact, web 1.0 and web 2.0 have deeply changed the manner in which public could have access to the information and so make the art galleries content openly accessible for everyone as it was amply argued. Consequently, general public as well as collectors might not be interested in visiting the physical gallery space anymore after already having experienced them online. In this sense, interviewee 3 claimed that because of this stream of renovation, the art gallery space itself has to be modified for accomplish the public's demand of being more captivating and thus, encourage people to still visit the real gallery (e.g. interviewee suggested to have pop-up shop or to organize live music event inside the gallery). In conclusion, it could be possible suppose that, since the inclusion of the digital technology within the art gallery business, the necessity of having a physical space has been reinforced because it became a guarantee of the art gallery success. However, at the same time social media challenged the art galleries to be more engaging by improving its physical space construction. Overall, Instagram and the entire universe of digital media tools, could work as parallel opportunities where to show up their products and where to be visible but it is yet not considered a substitute to the real space for the art dealers interviewed.

5.2.2.2 Importance of gatekeeping

Another element that has been unexpectedly discovered in this research that the inclusion of social media within the Amsterdam art market has not completely disrupted the importance of the art gatekeepers. For instance, one of the art gallerist interviewed affirmed:

> "because there are so many artists on Instagram, people still want to have gatekeepers active, they want to have curators, they want to have experts who help them and represent them. They want people who have more knowledge and that know collectors, so I think that gatekeepers are important and will always be so."
>
> (I-2, followers 15000, drawing and illustrations)

In according with what exposed in the quote, in fact, Instagram came out being a fruitful terrain for emerging and established artists where to alternatively and independently promote their art and manage their business. Having stated this, Arora and Vermeylen (2013b) in their studies draw their expectations on the idea that social media's power of emancipating artists from the repressive chains of the art gallerists system, could have questioned art experts power position within the art world. On the contrary, from the interviews conducted it stood out that it is exactly because of the dissemination of art content that the need of having a figure of expertise who guarantee artworks quality, emerged. It could be therefore assumed that the crucial role inside the art marked occupied by the art dealers historically (Arora, Vermeylen, 2013b) has not been questioned since the advent of Instagram within the art world. In fact, art experts are still the preferred figure credited for determining the value of art in a world where art related content are disseminated everywhere in the virtual universe.

Furthermore, it has also been underscored by the respondents that, even though Instagram allow artists to freely promote themselves on the app, it will be still difficult for them to have access to the art communities. Precisely, some of the interviewees underscore that, the only possible connection to important intermediaries which artists could have access to derive from the art galleries social network of contact. In other words, the Instagram promotional powers which came out being particularly suitable also for the other art actors, will not disrupt the dealers' role of patrons as it still represents for artists the opportunity to enter in important collections. This discover support the logic whereby the art gallery grants the access to a community of critics, collectors and other members of the art world (Velthuis, 2013) which represent the support base for the artists' career achievement.

In conclusion, the Amsterdam art dealers participating in the project have clearly stated that their role will always be the founding part of the primary art market sector. Therefore, despite the changes that the use of Instagram brought inside the Amsterdam art gallery practice, art dealers expertise and the importance of their gatekeeping position have not been questioned. But rather, art gallerists knowledge has been reaffirmed as essential because of Instagram and social media enhancement of crowd wisdom.

6. CONCLUSION

This thesis has investigated how Amsterdam commercial art galleries are embedding Instagram as a digital tool in their daily business practice. As a consequence of the inclusion of Instagram as a prominent social networking site marked by its promotional, communicational and interactional potential, this project also looked at the manner in which these potentialities have challenged the traditional approach of Amsterdam art gallerists in managing their business. The ten semi-structured interviews conducted with gallery owners and assistants who actively use Instagram in their daily working activities, enable the gathering of several important elements. These elements concern the use of Instagram for art galleries purposes and the consequent novelties which this digital tool brought inside the Amsterdam primary art market sector.

Having considered what has been amply discussed in the literature sections about Instagram potential to display products in an iconic and visual frame (Carah, Shaul, 2015; Puha, Jim, Kim, 2017a), it emerged from the results that Amsterdam art galleries employed Instagram in their daily activities for implementing their promotional strategies. Moreover, Instagram as a social networking site is characterized by its participatory culture which enables the art gallerists to actively engage with their costumers (Van Dijck, 2013; Jenkins, 2006). Even though Instagram has a marketing potential, it can not be employed as a sales platform. In fact, it does not permit to exhaustively experience and understand the artworks materials and therefore do not ensure the quality check. The argumentation brought by Horowitz and McAndrew (2012; 2016) about general skepticism in conducting sales directly online without experiencing the art world in the real world has been thus hereby confirmed.

What is more, having assumed, in accordance with the literature (Enhuber, 2015; Arora, Vermeylen, 2013a; Arora, Vermeylen, 2013b; McAndrew, 2016; Horowitz, 2012), that the Web 1.0 is a powerful instrument able to challenge the solid pillars upon which the art market has built its hierarchical structure, the Web 2.0 revolutionary paradigm was expected to act likewise. In this fashion, the universe of social media has presented itself as a revolutionary construct capable to further modify the primary art market historical commandment. This was especially true when the interactional and communicational Instagram's pledges bumped into the traditional Amsterdam art market protagonists way of managing their business (Velthuis, 2013). In this particular frame, Instagram stood out being a new fruitful option for establishing interpersonal relations and expand professional connections for the art gallery business. Moulin (1987) described the historically role of art dealers as the primary art market protagonists. According to him, their leading positions consist on the maintenance of the artists-collectors liaison. Yet, Instagram enables gallery owners to improve their possibilities to do so and therefore to fulfil this requirement in a new, convenient, virtual manner.

It has in fact been noted that the majority of the art gallerists participating in this research project, have started to embrace the interactional potential of Instagram in order to expand their client base internationally. Therefore, this has enabled them to enlarge their social network of contacts whereby no physical proximity or geographical vicinity are required to establish the professional bond. Hence, the maintenance of the art dealers-collectors relationship could also happen virtually without requiring any face-to-face type of encounters as Velthuis (2013) previously stated. In this sense it is no longer true that the creation and the management of the art gallerists social relationships must happen in a situation of physical proximity as Velthuis (2013) affirmed. Instagram capability to expand the gallery's visibility worldwide and make possible to collaborate with international collectors and artists, have challenged the Amsterdam art market to be more internationally focused.

In the same wise, together with the discovery of new collectors it was also possible for the Amsterdam art gallerists to discover new artists to work with within the Instagram universe. Generally, it has been noted that collaborating with artists from the other side of the world in a situation of geographical distance is not an obstacle anymore because of the communicational possibilities opened by Instagram. In fact, the interactional barriers constructed upon the emergence of establishing relations through face-to-face encounters that were relegating the Amsterdam art market in a local environment (Velthuis, 2013), are nowadays challenged by the inclusion of Instagram in the art galleries practice.

It can be more analytically stated that Instagram enables gallery owners to virtually acquire social capital, upon which their economic success is based. This acquisition happens in multiple ways: from the capitalization of the weak interactions with users on the media app, to the reinforcement of already existing ties. As it was in fact amply outlined in the literature section, SNSs were depicted as a convenient platform where to both bridging and bonding social capital online (Puttnam, 2000). In this sense, it has noted that Amsterdam art gallerists manage to include new contacts in their clients lists through Instagram. Hence, Instagram stood out being a fruitful platform for the Amsterdam art galleries to virtually bonding and bridging social capital. Moreover, considering the fact that these interactions usually have led to a professional collaboration and/or a purchase in the case of art buyers, the art galleries online social capital has, in this sense, converted in another alternative form of capital (Bourdieu, 1997; Scott, 2002; Gandini, 2016). In particular, when Instagram virtual collaboration directly accompanies new buyers to purchase art, bridging the online social capital, directly improves the gallery economic capital. Therefore, it can be stated that Amsterdam art galleries embed Instagram in their daily practice because it is a convenient instrument that encourages the inclusion of new working contacts and then improves the business economic benefits. In fact, Granovetter (1997),

Puttnam (2000) and (Williams, 2006) stated that usually it is exactly by bridging social capital that it is possible to obtain the most fruitful professional opportunities.

Despite the novelties and improvements that Instagram entails for the Amsterdam art galleries who actively used it in their everyday practice, there are some elements of business which have remained untouched by the digitalization of the art market. Among these, the importance of the gallery physical space has been underscored as component of the art gallery which serves as a guarantee of its validity. While, having considered the tremendous amount of art related information that are continuously displayed on the Instagram, art experts' knowledge and the importance of their role of gatekeeping of the art quality within the market has been reinforced since the general digital revolution.

6.1 Limitations and Discussion

This research has drawn its intention around a specific context, namely the Amsterdam art market. As it was discussed, the choice Amsterdam has been made for practical reason, because it is the center of the Dutch art market. In this sense, this thesis' limitations lie in its being concentrated on one market only. Therefore, further research could look at the way in which other art markets are including Instagram in their daily practice.

Moreover, as the results of this project demonstrated, Instagram is a powerful instrument able to expand the art gallery's visibility worldwide. It also enables the possibility for gallerists to expand their artists and clients base internationally. However, it was not possible to look in depth at the way in which this global expansion of collectors and artists has concretely helped the Amsterdam art galleries to globalize their practice and so, the art market itself. Hence, further research could be more focused on how concretely the inclusion of Instagram has permitted art galleries to include non-Western artists in their practice.

Another limitation of this research concerns the fact that it focuses merely on one art market's protagonists, namely the art galleries, but it does not look at other stakeholders' perspectives. It has only been suggested in the results that artists have started to more actively and independently promote themselves on the media app. In this sense, it could also be interesting to further investigate if Instagram helps artists to improve their career or how they brand themselves through it.

In conclusion, this research has clarified the main reasons why Instagram could be fruitfully employed for art businesses purposes in the galleries daily practice, as well as explaining the modalities in which it is actually employed by the Amsterdam art galleries. In this sense, all the galleries that I have interviewed showed a particular interest in this research as they were aware of Instagram's increasing importance within the art world. However, only few respondents were able

to capitalize and consistently exploit all the Instagram potentialities. Within this frame, this thesis could provide a more exhaustive overview on how to take advantages from the Instagram usage for the art gallerists. Finally, this project hopefully will persuade the still skeptical and more traditional art actors to be present online, because the world we are living in is in a constant flux of changes and the art market cannot be left behind.

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APPENDIX

A: OVERVIEW OF THE RESPONDENTS

RESPONDENTS	GENDER OF THE RESPONDENTS	OCCUPATION OF THE RESPONDENTS
GALLERY 1	FEMALE	**GALLERY OWNER**
GALLERY 2	FEMALE	**GALLERY OWNER**
GALLERY 3	FEMALE	**GALLERY ASSISTANT**
GALLERY 4	FEMALE	**GALLERY OWNER**
GALLERY 5	FEMALE	**GALLERY ASSISTANT**
GALLERY 6	MALE	**GALLERY OWNER**
GALLERY 7	MALE	**GALLERY OWNER**
GALLERY 8	FEMALE	**GALLERY OWNER**
GALLERY 9	MALE	**GALLERY OWNER**
GALLERY 10	MALE	**GALLERY OWNER**

B: INTERVIEW GUIDE

CONCEPT	INDICATORS	QUESTIONS
Art Market: characteristics of the gallery, distribution of art, gallery practice, strategies and ties.	Descriptive information	- *What kind of art do you expose and sell in your gallery?* - *What kind of artists do you promote in your gallery? Where do they come from?* - *How do you select the artists you work with?* - *How do you promote the artists you work with?* - *What kind of strategies does your gallery uses to improve its reputation?*
	Target of buyer	- *Who are the typical buyers of your gallery?* - *How would you describe them? Where are they from? What is special about them?* - *How do you find new buyers/collectors?* - *how do you maintain relationship with collectors?*
	Gallery owner	- *How would you describe the work of the gallerists?* - *What does the role of the gallerist play in shaping the image of the gallery?*
Digitalization (Online platforms, websites, social media). **How galleries approach the internet and web 2.0.** **Effect of digitalization on the traditional structure of the primary art market.**	Type of media	- *Do you use digital tools in the gallery daily business practice?* - *Which digital tools do you use? And why do you use them?*
	Website	- *Does your gallery have a website?* - *What kind of information do you show in the gallery's website?* - *Do you sell art via your website? Why? Why not?*
	Online platforms	- *Do you use online platform to sell and promote artists and their work?* - *Do you think having an online platform is helpful for the art gallery? Why?*

	Media importance and impact	- *What kind of information do you share on those kinds of platforms? Do you share the artwork's prices? Why? Why not?* - *Do you think is important for an art gallery to be present online today? Why? Why not?* - *What has changed in your business daily practice since the advent of the social media?*
Instagram potential: promotion and communication Expansion of the network worldwide, online social capital.	Profesional figure Information	- Who is taking care of the Instagram page? And *why have you decided that?* - *What type of information do you show on your gallery's Instagram page? And why?* - *How often do you post on Instagram? And why?* - *What kind of post (photos, videos, multiple picture, stories) does your gallery share on Instagram? And why?* - *Do you post information and/or picture of exhibitions and art fairs? Why? Why not* - *Do you promote events of your gallery via Instagram? Why? Why not?* - *Do you also have a personal Instagram page? If yes, what kind of information do you post on your personal Instagram page? Do costumers contact you there?*
	Usage	- *How often do you check Instagram?* - *What do you usually check on Instagram? And why it is important to do it for your professional practice?* - *Do you use Instagram to keep track of the latest art world's trend? And/or check the competitor?* - *Do you use Instagram to find/discover new artists? If yes where are they generally from?* - *Do you use Instagram to contact artists you work with or do you want to work with?* -

	Dealers practice	- *Do you have a target of audience you would like to reach by using Instagram? If yes, which one and why? If no, why?*
		- *Have you ever find new clients via Instagram? If yes, how do they contact you? Did they purchase art? where are they from?*
		- *How do you use Instagram to engage with the consumer/audience?*
		- *How do you expand your network of "followers" on Instagram? Do you use hashtags and tags?*
		- *Would you say that Instagram has an impact in the gallery's everyday practice?*
	Effects and future development	- *Do you think Instagram might change the position of the art dealer within the art market? If yes, how do you think Instagram is changing this position? And why? If no, why not?*
		- *What do you think about a possible future inclusion of e-commerce on Instagram?*
		- *How do you see the future of the art gallery space considering the advent of the virtual gallery on Instagram?*
		- *Do you think that the traditional position of the gallery and the dealer could be threatened by the advent of Instagram?*
		- *How do you see the future of the art market in general with the advent of the social media platforms?*
		- *Would you like to add something to this interview?*

C: CODE SCHEME

1. GALLERY DESCRIPTION
   1.1 type of art
   - 1.1.1 art period
   - 1.1.2 art style
   1.2 type of artists
   - 1.2.1 age of the artists
   - 1.2.2 nationality of the artists
   1.3 type of buyers and/or collectors
   - 1.3.1 age of the buyers
   - 1.3.2 nationalities of the buyers
   1.4 geographical focus of the gallery
   - 1.4.1 International
   - 1.4.2 National/Local
   1.5 Existence of the gallery
   1.6 Gallerist description
   1.7 Type of gallery practice
   1.8 Selection process (traditional)
   1.9 Management of relationship

2. TRADITIONAL MARKET STRUCTURE
   2.1 network
   2.2 intermediaries
   - 2.2.1 curators
   - 2.2.2 museums
   - 2.2.3 critics
   2.3 lack of transparency
   2.4 secondary art market
   2.5 Old-fashioned (traditional approach)
   2.6 Type of Market
   - 2.6.1 International Market
   - 2.6.2 Local Market

3. PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES (TRADITIONAL)
   3.1 exhibition
   3.2 art fairs
   - 3.2.1 international fairs
   - 3.2.2 national fairs
   3.3 flyers
   3.4 (printing) news letter
   3.5 Books/magazine
   3.6 Artists talks
   3.7 Visibility
   3.8 Pop up shop

4. TYPE OF DIGITAL MEDIA
   4.1 website
   - 4.1.1 type of information displayed on the website
     - 4.1.1.1 art available
     - 4.1.1.2 art fair participation
     - 4.1.1.3 artist background
     - 4.1.1.4 artworks
     - 4.1.1.5 contact information
     - 4.1.1.6 description of the artworks
     - 4.1.1.7 exhibition/openings
   4.2 online platform
   - 4.2.1 type of information displayed on the online platform
     - 4.2.1.1 Price range
   - 4.2.2 Artsy
   - 4.2.3 Artland

15.2   Physical gallery space

    15.2.1 fear of entering the gallery

            space

15.3   Experience art in real life /

importance of seeing artworks in

real life

15.4   Gallerists position

D: CONSENT FORM

FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY, CONTACT:

Terzitta Giulia

Schiekade 42a, 3032AJ, Rotterdam, Netherlands

giuliaterzitta@yahoo.com

+393482266984

DESCRIPTION

You are invited to participate in a research about the use of Instagram for Amsterdam art galleries. The purpose of the study is to understand how commercial galleries in Amsterdam embed Instagram as a marketing tool in their daily business practice.

Your acceptance to participate in this study means that you accept to be interviewed. In general terms:

- the questions of interview will be related to the use of digital tools – specifically Instagram, for commercial art galleries in Amsterdam.

Unless you prefer that no recordings are made, I will use a tape / video recorder for the interview.

You are always free not to answer any particular question, and/or stop participating at any point. [If participant observation is involved]: Every time I want to accompany you in any activity (such as XX, XX, XX), I will ask you your permission again.

RISKS AND BENEFITS [alternatives A and B are presented below, but there may be further variations]

A. As far as I can tell, there are no risks associated with participating in this research. Yet, you are free to decide whether I should use your name or other identifying information [such as gallerist's name, gallery's name] not in the study. If you prefer, I will make sure that you cannot be identified, by [measures that will be taken: pseudonym, general identification only mentioning age and gender, etc.].

B. I am aware that the possibility of identifying the people who participate in this study may involve risks for your gallery's reputation. For that reason—unless you prefer to be identified fully (first name, last name, occupation, etc.)—I will not keep any information that may lead to the identification of those involved in the study. I will only pseudonyms to identify participants. I will use the material from the interviews and my observation exclusively for academic work, such as further research, academic meetings and publications.

TIME INVOLVEMENT

~~Your participation in this stud~~y will take approximate 1 hour. You may interrupt your participation at any time.

PAYMENTS

There will be no monetary compensation for your participation.

PARTICIPANTS' RIGHTS

If you have decided to accept to participate in this project, please understand your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. If you prefer, your identity will be made known in all written data resulting from the study. Otherwise, your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

CONTACTS AND QUESTIONS

If you have questions about your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact –anonymously, if you wish— Erasmus University

SIGNING THE CONSENT FORM

If you sign this consent form, your signature will be the only documentation of your identity. Thus, you DO NOT NEED to sign this form. In order to minimize risks and protect your identity, you may prefer to consent orally. Your oral consent is sufficient.

I give consent to be audiotaped during this study:

Name   Signature   Date

I prefer my identity to be revealed in all written data resulting from this study

Name   Signature   Dat

This copy of the consent form is for you to keep.