

Corporate Art Collections in the Changing Workplace Environment

A Qualitative Study of the relevance of Corporate Art Collections in the Netherlands within the Changing Workplace Environment

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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the relevance of Corporate Art Collections (CACs) in the Netherlands within the changing Workplace Environment (WE). Throughout the past 14 months the world has been in the grip of global health crisis referred to as the COVID-19 pandemic. For the corporate world this has led to many people working from home (WFH) and offices are now empty. This also means that the works of art inhabit these buildings, are no longer seen. What is the purpose of these CACs when they are not physically experienced by employees? This qualitative research aims to create an understanding of the relevance of these CACs in light the developments within the WE of the last several years, and ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic might have amplified these. To investigate this topic, 11 interviews with were conducted with experts in the field. The recordings of the semi-structured interviews were transcribed manually. Thereafter, the transcriptions were coded, and a thematic analysis was performed to go from data to conceptual findings. The findings that emerged through the thematic analysis that contribute towards answering the research question are the development of a *hybrid WE*, the *embedded nature of the value of the CAC*, and the *integration of the CAC into the WE*. These findings pointed out that to stay relevant within the changing WE, the CAC must establish new ties to both the physical and virtual WE. Moreover, the findings suggested that CACs must take a critical stance regarding the ownership of artworks.

KEY WORDS: *Corporate Art Collection, Workplace Environment, COVID-19, Work-From-Home, Corporate Social Responsibility.*

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1. Introduction

A dense body of research has been conducted about organizations' motives for maintaining a corporate art collection (CAC). More so, an extensive body of research exists regarding the changes in the workplace environment (WE). The origins of the CAC are in the WE, where they served a decorative purpose. Besides the core activity of collecting art for in the WE, the CAC gained an increasingly versatile role and became committed to several other activities. Such activities can include hosting artist competitions, loaning artworks to cultural institutions or giving tours of the CAC within the WE. With this gradual development of CACs in the corporate environment and the art world, they have a tendency of institutional pushing boundaries in the WE.

In recent years the layout and design of the WE has been changing as organizations and corporates move to new headquarters or remodel to take on a more modern image. Furthermore, the corporate world is currently subject to restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic. This has caused a widespread adaption of employees to the virtual WE and working-from-home (WFH). The pandemic is a temporary phenomenon, whose restrictions are expected to be lifted when herd immunity is achieved, and most of the adult population is vaccinated. However, the fact is that for the last 14 months, people have been WFH and employees of corporates have been largely unable to return to the physical WE. This current research would like to fill the gap in the literature regarding the tension of the relevance of the CAC, with a focus on the changing WE. To shape this investigation, the following research question has been formulated:

'To what extent are CACs in the Netherlands still relevant within the changing WE?'

The research question will be answered through the following sub-questions:

1. *What are the motives for companies to maintain a CAC in 2021?*

2. *How is the CAC manifested in the physical WE?*
3. *How is the CAC manifested in the virtual WE?*
4. *What are possible implications of the COVID-19 pandemic regarding the WE?*

First, the Literature Review, in [chapter 2](#), discusses the historic development of CACs and previous literature regarding their legitimating motives. Moreover, it represents the case of the ABN AMRO Art & Heritage Foundation to illustrate exactly what constitutes a CAC and the key activities that it engages in. Next, it presents an overview of the historical developments of the WE and places the research inquiry into the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. From each section of the literature review key-concepts, that form the basis for the interview guide, are extracted.

[Chapter 3](#) discusses the Research Design and presents the methodological framework used for this research inquiry. This research employs a constructivist ontological approach that it looks at the social world as it is experienced by members integrated into the scene being investigated (Bryman, 2016, p.575). This allows the research to be receptive to human perceptions and examining the social world through the eyes of its participants (Bryman, 2016, p.37). Furthermore, this research takes an interpretivist epistemological approach that enables the understanding of the subjective meaning of social action (Bryman, 2016, p.30). Therefore, to answer the research questions, semi-structured qualitative interviews are conducted with managers of corporate art collections, also to be referred to as the experts. To sample respondents the researcher has made use of personal connections as well as cold calling. The conducted research is qualitative in nature and uses a deductive reasoning approach that uses existing theory to inform and shape the research. Therefore [chapter 3](#) also discusses the process of operationalizing the key concepts extracted from [chapter 2](#), the literature review.

Finally, the results of this inquiry are presented in [chapter 4](#) and discussed regarding the theoretical framework. As explained in [chapter 3](#) on the Research Design, the thematic analysis presented in [chapter 4](#) makes use of an international Framework developed by the National Centre for Social Research in the United Kingdom. This framework helps organize the data points and interpret their meaning with regards to the research question.

2. Literature Review

The following chapter creates a theoretical framework that lays the groundworks of this thesis. To construct this framework, regarding the relevance of CACs within the changing WE, this chapter outlines the historical development of CACs. Moreover, it discusses the legitimating motives behind CACs that previous research has pointed out. Next, it briefly discusses the meaning of the term legitimacy and its value in the art world. Then, this chapter addresses the WE, another aspect of this research to which plentiful previous research has been devoted. Similarly, its corresponding sub-chapter discusses the historical development of the WE. At the end of this chapter the which the research will discuss the history of CACs, as well as preceding literature regarding the motivation behind collecting. An understanding of the historical context of CACs as well as the motivations for collecting is necessary to look at the priorities of CACs today. Furthermore, this chapter reviews some of the literature regarding the WE and how its conception has changed throughout the years. Next, the novel context for this research will be enlightened by addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and how it currently has the world in its grip. Finally, these theoretical concepts are tied together and their role in guiding this research is explained.

2.1 Corporate Art Collections

Throughout chapter 2.1 the historical developments of the CAC in the Netherlands is presented. Next, previous research regarding organization's motives for maintaining a CAC is presented. Furthermore, this sub-chapter discusses the concept of legitimacy in the art world and explains its ties to the relevance of a CAC. Finally, this sub-chapter presents the case of the ABN AMRO CAC to illustrate the different aspects and activities of CAC in the Netherlands.

2.1.1 Historical Development of Corporate Art Collections

CACs can be seen as a form of artistic intervention in the corporate world. An artistic intervention can be defined as short- and long-term collaborations that people, processes, or products from the artistic and cultural industry bring into a firm (De Zanger, 2020, p.7). These CACs have seen a dynamic development throughout the past century internationally as well as within the Netherlands. A CAC is a collection of artworks that is owned and maintained by organizations such as banks, corporates and (semi-) governmental institutions. The works in such a collection can be, but are not limited to, paintings, sculptures, antiques, photographs, film, or installation. CACs are often maintained and curated by conservators with a degree in arts history, or a similar background (VBCN, 2021). Art collections may have originated from a small object being collected by an employee, with the purpose of decorating the WE, or with a director buying a Mondrian, to signal their success. However differently some CACs once found their beginnings, collectively they have come to hold a significant place in the market for contemporary art in the Netherlands. To date, Dutch CACs account for almost 20% of the market share for contemporary arts the Netherlands (VBCN, 2021). Therefore, these collections constitute an important power within the art. Throughout the past century managers within organizations increasingly looked towards the art as playing an active role within the organization. In 1951 the Dutch government issued the 1% rule, which is still part of Dutch building and culture policy today, which posits that 1% of the sum of capital spent on a building projects, is to be allocated to arts and culture. This led to many organizations in the Netherlands establishing official CACs (Witte, 2008, p.83). This change also insinuated a shift in the kind of art that found a place in the WE. Previously more figurative artworks in editions were acquired for the WE. With the 1% rule and the move towards professionalization of CACs this shifted

towards more monumental work, tied to building project that allowed for the budget allocation (Witte, 2008, p.84).

In the Netherlands an example early of this phenomenon is the British American Tobacco (BAT), also to be referred to as the Peter Stuyvesant collection. This collection was established by the “enlightened director” of the Dutch division of BAT, Alexander Orlow (Witte, 2020). The goal of this collection was to expose the working class to the arts. This collection grew with the help of semi-governmental institutions called arm’s length bodies, who donated works to the collection and held exhibitions in its honour. To achieve their vision of educating the working class in the WE, figurative works of art were suspended above the factor floors in the BAT Turmac factory in Zevenaar. Next to the art itself, there were interviews with Orlow regarding the power of the art in the workplace, and publications on the effect that the art could have on employees. The case of the Stuyvesant collection is an early example of not only a CAC but also the narrative regarding the power of art in the WE. See figure 2.1 on the next page for a visual illustration of how the art was presented within the BAT Turmac factory in Zevenaar.

Figure 2.1

A photograph showing the works of the Peter Stuyvesant Collection suspended above BAT Turmac factory floors in Zevenaar.



Since then, the phenomenon of the CAC has only become more profound in Dutch culture. In the 1960s companies that acquired works of art started to be increasingly concerned with matters outside strategic objectives such as art as increasing the productivity of the employee or enhancing the organization's image, they also became increasingly concerned with philanthropic motives for collecting art such as supporting the art world, artists, galleries and encouraging cultural participation (Witte, 2008, p.8). Towards the end of the 1960s there was a greater concern with the role of art towards the development of a *corporate identity*. It was suggested

that art can have a positive effect on the image that stakeholders such as employees or clients of the company. In the 1980s this concern for the *corporate identity* was followed the surge in sponsoring of the arts and cultural scene (Witte, 2008, p.83). According to Leclair & Gordon (2000, p.227) the support for the arts by corporates has risen measurably since the early 80s.

In this development towards increasing support of the arts, organizations began using the term *corporate social responsibility* (CSR), with implications of a wider concern for society externally and for employees internally (Witte, 2008, p.84). Witte posits that organizations used a combination of these motives, brand image and CSR, to legitimize the role of art in the WE. Moreover, besides legitimizing their practices, the CSR as benefactors of the arts allowed for the CACs to gain an autonomous and increasingly significant role in the art world, outside the WE. Witte (2008) finds that around the start of the 21st century CACs were seeing a development towards professionalization (p.86). According to Arnold Witte (2008) this professionalization entails the large market share of CACs in the market for contemporary arts as well as the increasing “financial, institutional and artistic” legitimacy (p.86). Developments that contribute to this professionalization of CACs are the way they are managed, documented, and described (Witte, 2008, p.86). The narrative created around, and the knowledge shared with regards to, CACs within associations like the Vereniging Bedrijfscollecties Nederland/ Association for CACs in the Netherlands (VBCN). This professionalization is also characterized by an increased level of autonomy for the managers of the CAC, in acquisition and curation. As the term autonomy might imply, this resulted in an independence of CACs from their organizations. CACs were not mere collections of art for in the WE but held an influential and autonomous role in the art world. Witte (2008, p.86) refers to this as the paradox of the professionalization of CACs. This phenomenon is referred to as a paradox because Witte (2008) finds that the

tendencies of the increasingly autonomous and professional CAC can interfere with the original intentions of the CAC. As described earlier, these intentions originally laid with the organization through *brand image* and *CSR*. Witte (2008) warns that this tendency towards professionalization can “undermine the connection to the organization to which the CACs belongs”, eventually risking rejection of the CAC from the WE (p.86).

Furthermore, CACs are guided by policy regarding the acquisition of new works, their organization within the WE and beyond. Moreover, most CACs in the Netherlands publish a yearly report regarding their acquisitions and projects. The latest report about the ABN AMRO CAC is used to illustrate a real-life case of a CAC in the Netherlands in [chapter 2.1.4](#). The transparency in sharing such information about the CAC’s activities is partially a signal to critics or experts in the field of quality of a collection. Moreover, this also provides a transparent overview of what happens to the budget that is allocated to the CAC after the 1% rule. For example, as mentioned on the VBCN website, the KPN CAC has an acquisition policy that states “Besides the quality criterium always being first place, tracking innovation has always been key to KPN’s acquisition policy.” The KPN acquisition policy “is dual”. “On the one hand, it is about early scouting and acquisition of young talent, and, on the other hand, the focus is on development of artists within the collection” (VBCN, 2021). This approach is formulated as such to collect works from key stages in the artist’s development. Their acquisition process is thematic and collected in clusters to “create a broad image of a selected group of artists.” Additionally, the works are presented in clusters to show create a sense of coherence amongst the different types of works in the collection (VBCN, 2021). These descriptions of how the CAC is shaped points towards their professionalization and the legitimating process it engages in.

The table below presents several facts and figures of members of the VBCN.

Table 1*Overview of the purpose and make-up of the different CACs in the Netherlands.*

CAC	Year Established	Number of Artworks	Activities	Recap of Acquisition Policy
ABN AMRO	1977	5,000	ABN AMRO Art Prize, Expositions, Loans	Contemporary Art that has a connection to the Netherlands.
AkzoNobel Art Foundation	1996	1,800	Exhibitions, Art Prize	Contemporary art by young, as well as established artists.
BPD (project development)	1976	1,000	Decorate offices, CAC, Cultural Foundation, BPD Lab work in close connection to achieve organizational goals pertaining	Art that connects to the organization and stimulates employees. CSR towards CCIs.

			to the company's core business.	
De Nederlandsche Bank (DNB)	Early 20 th century	1,250	Decorate company offices, collect quality art that inspires.	Decoration and brand image. Supporting young Dutch artists.
Erasmus University Rotterdam	1963	2,000	Decorate WE of employees and get students in touch with art.	Collect quality art and support young, talented and promising artists.
ING (bank)	1974	7,000	Decorating offices worldwide, ING Art Prize.	Explores the boundaries of art and collects contemporary art that represents the international and innovative identity of the company.
KPMG	1990, since 2006 a part of the	500	Decoration of offices to create	Contemporary art of promising

			KPMG Art Foundation		a pleasant WE environment.	artists with a connection to the Netherlands whose work mirrors the company's core values.
KPN Art Affairs	1945	6,500		Create a high-quality collection that is embedded in several themes and contexts. Artworks are used to decorate the WE and are loaned to institutions.	Contemporary art of young talented artists that are followed in their development and through their oeuvre.	
NN Group	1963	2,000		Make art available to every demographic. Collaborates	Collect that is experimental, research-based, and innovative.	

			with Dutch museums and artists.	
Rabobank	1984/1995	2,300	Rabo Photographic Portrait Prize, Decorate WE.	High quality works of different generations of Dutch art.

Note This information was retrieved from the VBCN (2021) website that keeps an active account of each of their members' CACs.

The table above gives an overview of the activities and acquisition policy that guides 10 members of the VBCN. This table shows how long certain collections have been around and the amount of works that they have in their CAC. Furthermore, it presents the kinds of activities they engage in. Furthermore, the main aspects of the CACs' acquisition policy is shared, showing how the focus of certain CACs can differ slightly, often due to the organization's history. The motives for engaging in different activities and forming a policy by which to work is addressed further in the next sub-chapter.

2.1.2 Motives for Establishing and Maintaining a Corporate Art Collection

The previous sub-chapter discussed the historical development of the CAC throughout the past century, and briefly touched on the shifts in focus and motivation for collecting. The following sub-chapter discusses more in-depth the motivations for collecting art within an organization as examined by previous empirical research. This understanding of motivations for collecting creates a useful overview of the existing legitimations for collecting art as an

organization. Such a theoretical basis helps form the operationalization of the research inquiry regarding the place of the CAC through the changing WE.

Through interviews, surveys, and ethnographic research, researchers have tried to uncover the exact reasons that companies collect art. As touched upon in the previous sub-chapter, the historical context in which CACs thrived are closely related to the reasons for having art within an organization. For example, Leclair & Gordon (2000) conducted analytical research that indicated that there is a positive correlation between advertising expenditure and corporate support for the arts. This would indicate that brand image is one of the main motivators for sponsoring the arts (p.225). Similarly, Kottasz et al. (2007) outline several motives for collecting art amongst which corporate image, signalling a type of corporate culture, prestige and commercial advantage found their place. However, there were also other motives involved in motivating organizations to collect the arts. For example, as Kottasz et al. (2007) also pointed out amongst their motives for collecting were more altruistic motives such as philanthropy and enhancement of the WE. Here the literature on motives behind the CAC presents a direct tie to the WE: the enhancement, or what could otherwise be put as decoration, of the WE.

Preceding research built on these findings by positing that these motives were not mutually exclusive, meaning that it is most likely for a firm to be motivated to collect art for several reasons, all at once. Along this mutually inclusive narrative, Lindenberg & Oosterlinck (2011) explored five motivational dimensions during interviews with managers of Belgian financial institutions' CACs. These five dimensions are well-being, education, brand image, corporate philanthropy, and investment. Their research resulted in the conclusion that CACs serve different purposes simultaneously, stating that it would be "unwise to use artworks for philanthropic purposes only, without considering the company's brand image, the decorative

aspect or the economic value of the purchase” (Lindenberg & Oosterlinck, 2011, p.7). Moreover, Lindenberg & Oosterlinck (2011) created a typology of the different motivations behind Belgian financial institutions’ CACs with the use of their managerial approaches. These types were the secret art lover, the state heir and the socially responsible. However, much like their own statement that it would be unwise to assume that a company considers only one of the possible motives for collecting art, it must also be possible to all three types of art collector typologies within your organization when it comes to managing a CAC. Witte posits that organizations used a combination of these motives, brand image and CSR, to legitimize the role of art in the WE (2008, p.84).

2.1.3 Defining Legitimacy in the Art World

The previous sub-chapters discussed the historical development of CACs and their legitimating motives. In the following sub-chapter, we define what exactly this sense legitimacy means in the context of the art world, and that of CACs. Having this understanding feeds into the operationalization of the research as well as the analysis of its results.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines legitimacy as “the state of being legitimate”, where the state of being legitimate means “conforming to recognized principles or accepted rules and standards”. That is how one could look at the CAC within a corporate environment, as conforming to a set of recognized principles. Legitimacy is a concept that is used more widely with regards to the art world and the cultural and creative industries (CCIs). For example, Lindenberg & Oosterlinck (2011), in their research of Belgian financial institutions, find that collecting art is a way of “legitimizing the bank’s support of domestic artists” (p.15). However, what does this legitimacy really entail? One aspect of legitimization is that of the artist. Kackovic & Wijnberg (2020, p.2) look at entrepreneurs, or young artists, gaining legitimacy in the art

market and argue that legitimacy is achieved when a legitimating power assesses that entrepreneur's qualities and makes a judgement in line with the standards of that particular social system. The idea that a social system's norms, values, or standards helps judge the legitimacy of an actor helps in understanding what legitimacy means for a CAC. The CAC is assessed considering the vision and mission of the organization within which it finds itself. That would mean that the level of legitimation of a CAC differs per collection, as they are maintained an organization whose standards may differ somewhat from one another.

In 2005 THE VBCN was established to “stimulate artistic activities and optimal collection policy” within organizations. The VBCN offers a platform for debate and knowledge sharing amongst the CACs that are member. Moreover, their mission is to use their “unique position in the cultural field” to connect the visual arts with organizations and society (VBCN, 2021). The VBCN acts as a source of legitimacy by institutionalizing the tradition and upkeep of the CACs. This sets standards and creates a narrative around what it means to be a legitimate or relevant art collection. Kackovic & Wijnberg (2020) contribute that CACs often act as mediator, or gatekeeper, in the artworld. This means they can validate and grant access to new entrepreneurs entering the scene. The role of the CAC as gatekeeper is one of the ways that the CAC gains legitimacy and relevance in the social world. This gatekeeping process can occur when the CAC acquires a work of art, commissions an artist to create an artwork for their organization or when artists are nominated for the organization's art prize, for example.

2.1.4 The Case of the ABN AMRO Corporate Art Collection

The previous three sub-chapters discussed the historical development of CACs throughout the past century, the motives for maintaining a CAC for organizations and concept legitimacy in its relation to the art world and the CAC.

The following sub-chapter elaborates on the case of the ABN AMRO CAC. With this case the activities and legitimization of this Dutch bank's CAC is presented. The ABN AMRO has a long history dating back 300 years to the year 1720. Since then, the bank has collected several historical objects, antiques and artworks that now fall under the ABN AMRO Art & Heritage Foundation. Seeing as the Dutch government issued the Percentage Rule in the 1950s, as explained in [sub-chapter 2.1.1](#), the bank was inclined to establish the ABN AMRO Art and Heritage Foundation. This is a public benefit institution which, in the Netherlands, is referred to as an ANBI- status organization. An organization can have this status if its activities and commitments are largely for public benefit (Belastingdienst, 2021). With this status come numerous tax-benefits and tax incentives. There are four pillars of this Foundation: the CAC, loans, the Art Prize, and the historical collection. The ABN AMRO CAC, historical collections and archives are officially under the proprietorship of the Foundation since 2011 (ABN AMRO, 2021).

The mission and vision for the CAC of ABN AMRO is to support the Dutch cultural environment. By acquiring, maintaining, and showing contemporary artworks, the Foundation looks to create an intergenerational collection (ABN AMRO, 2020). Expressing an interest for supporting artists and generating bequest value points towards the legitimizing motive of CSR. Moreover, the Foundation looks to use the CAC as a tool to create a positive brand image of the bank, for clients and employees alike. More specifically, it looks to establish a brand image of

modernity and innovation (ABN AMRO, 2020). This focus reflects the findings of Lindenberg and Oosterlinck (2011), Kottasz et al. (2007) and Leclair & Gordon (2000) in that the CAC contributes the organization's brand image. The organization finds it important to share their CAC with a large audience. There are several ways in which the Foundation makes their CAC visible to a large audience. One is through the permanent exhibition space in the ABN AMRO "circular pavilion" called the 'CIRCL' in Amsterdam, where the head office has been based since 2017. Here the Foundation organizes four exhibitions per year with works curated from the ABN AMRO CAC. These expositions can be seen digitally on the ABN AMRO website. Further activities that carried out by the CAC are the decoration of the offices. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic these activities were only able to continue in 2020 in a limited form. In 2020 the bank also launched a new website that allows viewers to explore the different themes of the CAC and the digital exhibitions (Stichting ABN AMRO Art & Heritage, 2020). By presenting themselves through these different media and platforms, beyond the WE, the CAC is allowing this legitimizing process to occur at the level of the art world.

Moreover, the Foundation lends works to several museums and other cultural institutions in and outside the Netherlands each year. On the ABN AMRO website you can see the current and past loans. For a recent exhibition on Surrealism and Cobra Art held in the Cobra Museum in Amstelveen, 24 artworks of renowned Cobra-artists were lent to the museum by the ABN AMRO CAC. See [Appendix F](#) for the images of two of the works on loan, *La Sirène* by Corneille, and *Le Regard* by Karel Appel. Loaning artworks to institutions such as a museum, the CAC can share artworks with the wider public, adding to their CSR. Moreover, loaning works can contribute to the organization's brand image by exposing their name alongside art

within renowned institutions. Therefore, this is another activity of the CAC that can be referred to as legitimating for the CAC.

The third pillar of the ABN AMRO Art and Heritage Foundation is the Art Prize. This art prize is awarded annually. In April 2021 the tenth edition of the Art Prize was awarded to Neo Matloga. The artist, of South African descent, connects the familiarity of childhood and family functions to the socio-political background within which these were situated. The jury of the Art Prize was impressed by the multi-layered aspect of the artwork and its ability to touch upon socio-political issues related to race and inequality. Upon being granted the prize, Matloga's work is then acquired by the CAC. Granting an artist such a prize and acquiring their artwork for the CAC is testimony for the gatekeeping role of the CAC, as discussed in the previous chapter. Moreover, having a prize is a sign of the organization's concern for CSR, as they provide a young artist with the opportunity to kickstart their career and gain a certification, or stamp of approval.

Together with the CAC, the historical collection and archive of ABN AMRO has also been put up under the Foundation to maintain the collections for future generations (ABN AMRO, 2021). The historical collection and archive are separate from the CAC that has an active policy for acquisition. It is more of a collection antiques and collector's items such as atlases, maps, sculptures, books, photos, and many other objects, that constitute an important part of the long history of the company. The bank has taken financial responsibility for the maintenance of the collections. Further costs related to the acquisition for new works of the CAC are taken up by the Foundation.

The case of the ABN AMRO Art & Heritage Foundation illustrates the core activities that CACs in the Netherlands are concerned with. In their annual report for 2020 they stated that

despite the uncertainty and changes that the organization was subject to due to the Covid-19 pandemic, many of their usual activities were able to continue. These activities included acquisition, the art prize, and loans, as described above. Moreover, this case demonstrated the various aspects of legitimization of the ABN AMRO CAC. Particularly, this case showed the extensive activities that the CAC engages in that legitimize it in the eyes of the art world. The focus of this legitimacy is perhaps less on its relevance within the WE, as that is where it originates and is funded through. This also elucidates the concept of the professionalization paradox addressed in [sub-chapter 2.1.1](#) (Witte, 2008, p.86).

Throughout [sub-chapter 2.1](#) there several concepts emerged from the literature regarding motives for establishing a CAC. The concepts were corporate identity, brand image, investment, gatekeeping, and legitimacy. Furthermore, there were several concepts that fall under the concept CSR, namely enhancement of the WE, employee well-being and education. Several of these concepts are summarized into the key concepts motives for maintaining a CAC, legitimacy, and acquisition policy. These key concepts are then used in the process of operationalization in [sub-chapter 3.4](#).

2.2 The Workplace Environment

The following sub-chapter discusses the changes that have occurred in the workplace throughout the past seventy years to create a better understanding of physical space in the office. Then, more recent developments regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and how the workplace has adapted.

2.2.1 The Office: From Cubicles to Flex Spaces

Amongst one of the first offices is said to be that of the East India Company in London in the early 19th century, as a Charles Lamb wrote a letter describing the confinement to poet

William Wordsworth (Nixey, 2020). Since then, the WE has undergone significant changes and shifts of focus. By the 1930s, the office was said to be laid out like a “bull-pen”, meaning that there was an open floor plan in the middle of the office with a centralized function such as a pool of copywriters (Baldry, 1997, p.369). This format for the office was mostly designed from the perspective of its function. Open-plan offices had their advantages, such as a larger number of employees could fit onto a smaller workspace than with traditional cellular offices that were connected by corridors. Also, the open-plan office easier to install, plus there was the advantage to management of having an easier line of sight for supervision and hierarchical communication (Baldry, 1997, p.369). Approaching the 1960s, a new conception regarding the lay-out of the office emerged from a man named Robert Propst, the so-called father of the cubicle. The cubicle was seen as a step up from the open floor “bullpen” as it provided a smidgen of auditory and visual privacy for employees. Until now conceptualization of the WE had come from an Industrious and Fordist mindset of working. Propst was amongst the first to conceptualize that the work performed in the office was fundamentally different from factory work (Seabrook, 2021). This is where thinking about creating a better environment for the employees’ state of mind started to evolve. While the cubicle was born in the United States, facility managers in Germany came up with the idea of the Bürolandschaft, or the office landscape. This idea aimed to create flexible, interesting interiors that suited teamwork (Baldry, 1997, p.370). Here the “island” configuration of grouped tables also emerged and acoustic screens were used to create spaces that fostered interaction, rather than control (Baldry, 1997, p.370). However, towards the end of the 60s it turned out that this office landscape was essentially the same as its preceding “bullpen”, just with plants added to it. Therefore, it turned out once again that the office layout was still not meeting the needs of employees. By the 1970s these white-collar office workers

accounted for almost half of those employed in major industrialized countries (Baldry, 1997, p.371). Throughout the 1970, due to an energy crisis in 1973, facility managers started thinking more critically about ways to regulate the office climate. This outed itself in more controlled environments for employees, who had less agency over their environment. Throughout the 80s technology was incorporated into the office to create what was referred to as intelligent buildings (Baldry, 1997, p.371). This influx of technology in the workplace was increasingly reflected in the changing use of the office space (Baldry, 1997, p.372). Many administrative tasks were increasingly taken over by computers which meant that the tasks that white-collar office workers were engaging in each day were changing too.

Towards the end of the 1980s the computerization of the WE, that came mostly out of Silicon Valley, brought along a democratizing spirit. (Seabrook, 2021). The big tech firms there, now that increasingly more tasks were becoming automated, were focused on collaborative and more communal space. This was accompanied by a democratization of the office layout. The perimeter offices moved to the middle of the floor, allowing more natural light into the open and collaborative work areas and cubicle walls dropped, before disappearing altogether (Seabrook, 2021). These new open floor plans, nonetheless, were a source of scrutiny due to complaints about noise and distraction. A solution to this issue came out of the Netherlands in 1994, when Dutch design consultant Erik Veldhoen came up with the idea of ‘activity-based working’ which meant creating an office floorplan with open areas for team-based works, ‘living rooms’ and ‘huddle spaces’, meant to promote collaboration as well as focused work (Seabrook, 2021).

In the 1990s the office was designed as a flexible shell within which teams could move around and relocate (Baldry, 1997, p.373). During this time a lot of faith was placed in the use of computerized technology, saying that its use through collaborative work would be able to

empower employees and deliver work of a higher quality, making the office worker a more flexible “new professional”. At this point facility managers, designers and architects became more concerned with creating the “office of the future (Baldry, 1997, p.373). Another critique on this approach to the WE was the anonymity of the office building, inside and out. The personal was almost eradicated completely from the WE (Baldry, 1997, p.374). So, workers responded to the erosion of personal space by walling themselves off with headphones. Research amongst two Fortune 500 companies showed that after the companies shifted from cubicles to open floorplans, face-to-face interactions decreased by 70%, while virtual meetings increased to compensate (Seabrook, 2021).

Throughout the past decade there has been increasing attention towards the spatial design of an organization and how this could foster certain processes within the workplace (De Paoli et al., 2019, p.331). At this point research has shown that space, environment, and other structural qualities of the WE, can affect and shape behaviour (De Paoli et al., 2019, p.332). One study of a newspaper relocating to a new location showed that careful and thoughtful design of the WE can stimulate openness, equality, and a sense of collectivity within the organization. These factors were found to be fruitful in fostering organizational creativity (De Paoli et al., 2019, p.332). De Paoli and Ropo (2017, p.164) showed that to foster organizational creativity the employee needs to have access to both enclosed as well as open, collaborative places. Furthermore, De Paoli and Ropo (2017, p.164) also proposes that a place for spontaneity in the WE is also an important player in fostering creativity. Moreover, studies of a flexible workplace environment have proved to be beneficial to employee health as well as reducing gender inequalities in the labour market (Gonsalves, 2020, p.1059). So, the concepts feeding into the key concepts of the changing WE are openness, equality, collectivity and creativity.

2.2.2 COVID-19: Working from Home

Throughout the process of performing this research inquiry and the fourteen preceding months, the world has been in the grip of the global pandemic caused by the COVID-19, or also the coronavirus disease 2019. A virus that allegedly originated in an open-air food market in Wuhan, China sometime in 2019 has since infected millions of people globally and caused several millions of deaths. Due to the extremity of the virus and the high mortality rates associated to contracting the air-borne virus, the day-to-day activities and business as usual in many nations around the world has been suspended for an impending period of fourteen months at the time of the research. In the western world, this has caused many of the once daily office workers to be relocated into their homes. This is how the WFH movement came into being. At the same time this has meant that the skylines of offices and corporate buildings around the world have been vacated. The same delocation has become a temporary norm in the Netherlands since the 27th of May 2020. This meant that the offices that have been actively redesigned and remodelled throughout the past several years, have been rendered empty vessels. With these developments the work has almost exclusively gone digital. The WFH for employees of corporations means that entire days are spent sitting down behind screens and attending a consecutive chain of Zoom and Microsoft Teams calls to communicate with clients, colleagues, or managers. Researchers are currently asking questions about the influences, short- and long-term, of the COVID-19 pandemic on the employee and the office. As explained in the previous sub-chapter on the development of the WE, the digitalization and flexibility of WFH or at the office is not a completely new concept. However, how has this forced displacement and isolation really affected the way that we work? How has it affected social life? How has it affected our relationship to physical space? Now that workers are forced to WFH and the office is left empty

by large, how has the displacement affected the role of the CAC within the organization?

Although the pandemic is likely a temporary phenomenon and the restrictions will most likely be lifted in several months, the pandemic amplifies questions regarding the tradition of CACs. It raises questions regarding physical ownership, maintenance, and relevance. Therefore, this research will take the COVID-19 pandemic as a prominent variable in shaping the WE. From this sub-chapter several concepts regarding the COVID-19 pandemic arose, namely WFH, digitalization and the role of the CAC within this virtual WE.

From [sub-chapter 2.2](#), where developments of the WE were discussed, the concepts of openness, equality, collectivity, and creativity arose from the literature regarding the pre-COVID-19 WE. Furthermore, the concepts related to the COVID-19 pandemic is WFH, digitalization and the role of the CAC within the virtual WE. These concepts were translated into the key concepts the changing WE, COVID-19 and WFH which are used in the operationalization table presented in [sub-chapter 3.4](#). This operationalization table takes the key concepts that emerged and uses them as a basis for formulating the central interview questions.

2.3 Concluding Remarks of the Literature Review

[Sub-chapter 2.1](#) discusses the historical development of CACs as well as previous research regarding the motives for companies to establish a CAC. [Sub-chapter 2.2](#) gives a historical overview of the changing WE and introduces the most recent context affecting the WE, the of the WE, the COVID-19 pandemic. Thereafter the case of the ABN AMRO Art and Heritage Foundation was presented to illustrate the concepts discussed with regards to the motives and legitimacy of the CAC in the WE. Despite the CAC originating within the WE, the previous chapter discusses the tensions that arise in developments towards autonomy and professionalization of the CAC. As discussed in the literature review, there are significant

parallels between the motives for collecting art and changing the structure of the physical WE. However, a gap exists in the literature on CACs when it comes to its connection to the WE. To fill this gap, the following research looks at the effects of the changing WE and how the CAC adapts, to come to an understanding regarding the relevance of CACs anno 2021.

The concepts that emerged from chapter 2.1 were corporate identity, brand image, investment, gatekeeping, and legitimacy. Furthermore, there were several concepts that fall under the concept CSR, namely enhancement of the WE, employee well-being and education. Several of these concepts are summarized into the key concepts motives for maintaining a CAC, legitimacy, and acquisition policy. The concepts that emerged from chapter 2.2 were openness, equality, collectivity, creativity, WFH, digitalization and the role of the CAC in the virtual WE. These concepts were translated into the key concepts the changing WE, COVID-19 and WFH. Therefore, the different concepts addressed throughout the literature review resulted in 6 key concepts. These key concepts form the basis of the operationalization that mitigates between the theory and the collection of data. See [sub-chapter 3.4](#) for an overview of the process of operationalization.

3. Research Design

The following chapter presents the framework of analysis used to conduct this research. First, in [sub-chapter 3.1](#) the methodological framework is discussed. This involves an overview of the empirics put in place and the method of inquiry that shapes this research. Next, [sub-chapter 3.2](#) explains which sampling methods are used to get in touch with the field experts who have been interviewed for this research. In [sub-chapter 3.3](#) the method of data collection is explained. Then, [sub-chapter 3.4](#) shows how the theoretical framework, outlined in [chapter 2](#), was used to operationalize certain variables into interview questions that would help gather data regarding about the legitimization of the CAC within the changing WE. Subsequently [sub-chapter 3.5](#) discusses the exact methods of analysis used to interpret the data. Finally, [sub-chapter 3.6](#) goes over the elements of validity and reliability of the thesis.

3.1 Methodology

This research inquiry employs a qualitative research approach to answering the research question *'To what extent are CACs in the Netherlands still relevant within the changing WE?'*. The conducted research is qualitative in nature and uses a deductive reasoning approach that uses existing theory to inform and shape the research. Furthermore, this research takes an interpretivist epistemological approach that enables the understanding of the subjective meaning of social action (Bryman, 2016, p.30). Moreover, this research employs a constructivist approach, meaning that it looks at the social world as it is experienced by members integrated into the scene being investigated (Bryman, 2016, p.575). This allows the research to be receptive to human perception and allows the researcher to examine the social world through the eyes of its participants (Bryman, 2016, p.37). Therefore, to answer the research question, semi-structured qualitative interviews are conducted with curators and managers of CACs. Subsequently, the 6

key concepts that emerged from [chapter 2](#) are operationalized in [chapter 3.4](#) to show how the interview guide was formed.

3.2 Sample

The organizations with a CAC that constitute the data sample include, but are not limited to, those specified in Table 1. This information is not specified in order to safeguard the privacy of the respondents. CACs managed by, and displayed within, hospitals have been left out of the data sample because of their separate connection to art within a ‘healing environment’ (Witte & Brands, 2013). Initially, interviewees were sampled through personal connections that are employed within a CAC that is a member of the VBCN. One of the expected methods of sampling was snowball, which would mean that one respondent is able to put me in touch with a respondent curator or manager at another CAC in the Netherlands. Although that worked to attain two other respondents next from the personal connection, the other respondents were not so free in relaying the role of respondent to a connection in the field. Therefore, further sampling was done through cold calling via the contact information available on the VBCN and the companies’ own websites.

Table 2

Respondents Interviewed (anonymized to maintain the respondents’ privacy)

Respondent	Position	Date of interview
1	Director Art Affairs	26/04
2	Curator/Administrator CAC	29/04
3	Curator CAC	03/05
4	Director CAC	04/05
5	Curator	08/05

6	Curator and Art Journalist	08/05
7	Arts & Culture Advisor	10/05
8	Curator and Art Advisor	12/05
9	Director Art Affairs	18/05
10	Head Curator & Secretary of Art Commission	20/05
11	Director of Branding & Communications	21/05

3.3 Data Collection

The data collection for this research inquiry consisted of a series of 11 interviews. Two of these interviews have been held in person, with the COVID-19 regulations in mind. The other nine interviews were held through either Google Meets, Zoom or Microsoft Teams. The length of the interviews ranged between 45 to 90 minutes. In total the interviews amounted to 10 hours and 36 minutes of interviews. With permission of the interviewees, each interview was recorded to be transcribed for the process of qualitative data analysis. Each respondent signed an informed consent form before commencing the research. This form outlined what was expected of them and how the data collected would be used and analysed.

3.4 Operationalization

In this sub-chapter the key concepts are operationalized. First, it is shown how the concepts, which stood out from the literature, shaped the key concepts that form the basis of the interview questions for the interview guide. Next, it is explained how these key concepts

contribute to answering the research question *'To what extent are CACs in the Netherlands still relevant within the changing WE?'.*

The concepts that emerged from the literature on CACs were corporate identity, brand image, investment, gatekeeping, legitimacy, and those relating the CSR, enhancement of the WE, employee well-being and education. These concepts translate into the key concepts: motives for maintaining a CAC, legitimacy, and acquisition policy. Next, the concepts that emerged from the literature on the pre-pandemic WE were openness, equality, collectivity, and creativity. And the concepts related to the WE during the COVID-19 pandemic were WFH, digitalization and the role of the CAC within the virtual WE. The many concepts were funnelled into larger order concepts that posed as variables that could be translated into interview questions through the operationalization. It was important for these concepts not to formulate into too specific questions, in order not to limit the respondent in their interpretation of the question. Moreover, this process allows the interview guide to ask open questions that allow the respondent to bring the specific topics to the table, without asking leading questions (Bryman, 2016, p.473). Therefore, the interview questions were formulated in a way to help answer the research question *'To what extent are CACs in the Netherlands still relevant within the changing WE?'* without being too specific.

The term operationalization is derived from quantitative research in the field of physics whereby it refers to the operations or measurements of a concept (Bryman, 2016, p.161). To find a measure, or an operational definition, of a particular concept, it is necessary to develop an indicator for that concept. An indicator is used to study concepts that are not quantifiable (Bryman, 2016, p.164). Since this research looks to understand the qualitative relationship between the changing WE and the relevance of CACs within this context, developing indicators

is the most useful in mitigating between the theory and scientific data collection. An indicator can be devised as a question that entails the main idea behind the concept. Moreover, the question could be concerned with the respondents' report of an attitude, their social situation or elucidate their behaviour (Bryman, 2016, p.165). This process of operationalization through developing the main interview questions that shape the interview guide is shown in table 3.

Table 3

Operationalization of key concepts into interview questions

Key Concept CACs	Description	Question
<i>Motives for Maintaining a CAC</i>	<i>As discussed in chapter 2, there are several motives for companies to establish maintain a CAC.</i>	What is the most important aspect of your company's the CAC? For what purposes does your company maintain a CAC?
<i>Legitimacy</i>	<i>'To conform to widely accepted standards', legitimacy can be gained and granted through means specific to a social world.</i>	<i>How would do you think [company name]'s CAC can stay relevant in times of corona?</i>
<i>Acquisition policy</i>	<i>As explained throughout sub-chapter 2.1.1, acquisition policy refers to the kinds of artworks an</i>	<i>How do you think the changing WE has influenced the acquisition policy for the CAC?</i>

organization acquires for their CAC and is closely tied to their legitimization and mission.

The changing WE

As explained throughout sub-chapter 2.2, the WE has experienced several structural and paradigmatic changes throughout the past century, caused by shifting legitimating motives.

How has the physical WE at [company name] changed over the years? How do you think the office redesign affects the CAC at large?

COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic is a phenomenon that has caused a global health crisis resulting in restrictions that have characterized the year 2020 and the current time.

Have the effects of COVID-19 had any influence on the way that people at [company name] work together?

WFH

One of the permeating COVID-19 pandemic restrictions in the Western and corporate world is the 'working from home' phenomenon.

Is there a particular link between the online WE and the physical space at [company name]?

The questions that have been delineated from the operationalized concepts are used to shape the general outline of the interview guide. Although the premises and purposes of the interview has been discussed with the respondent prior to the meeting, the interview guide starts by giving the respondent an overview of the goals of the interview. This is meant to locate the conversation to the topic of interest. The main questions that shape the interview guide are asked in a chronological fashion, starting with background information, the WE within their organization, their motives for collecting art. Then, the interview moves on to the more recent developments and experiences with WFH, the COVID-19 pandemic and the relevance of the CAC under these circumstances. Although the interview is structured with the interview guide, there is some freedom and leeway to ask questions that are not in the interview guide but help come to a deeper understanding of the respondent's insights (Bryman, 2016, p.471). Overall, a similar structure and phrasing is used with reach of the respondents (Bryman, 2016, p.471). Moreover, the emphasis throughout the interview is on how the respondent frames issues and explains events or observations. Therefore, it is important to allow for flexibilities in leaning into what the respondent is sharing, and how that could inform the research inquiry (Bryman, 2016, p.471). To avoid asking leading questions, that shape the respondent's answers, only open questions are used in the interview guide. This means that they are specific enough to address the concepts under investigation and encourage respondents to open up and interpret the question in light of their personal experiences" (Bryman, 2016, p.473). The English interview guide can be found in [Appendix A](#), and in Dutch version in [Appendix B](#).

3.5 Methods of Analysis

The following sub-chapter explains the methods of analysis used to deduct findings from the collected data. This research started with a theoretical framework, presented in [chapter 2](#). The

theoretical concepts that emerged here, were used to shaped into interview guide, the main material for inquiry. Then, the data was collected by form of semi-structured interviews. The data, collected by recording and transcription, was then analyzed in the software Atlas.ti. The analysis consisted of “segmenting data and reassembling them with the aim of transforming data into findings” (Boeije, 2010, p.94). First, data was analyzed in Atlas.ti through the process of open coding. Open coding refers to the breaking down, conceptualizing, and categorizing the data by assigning codes to them (Boeije, 2010, p.96). From this process, a code scheme or code book emerged (see [appendix C](#)). Despite the deductive nature of the process of analysis, coding is not limited a priori by the concepts from theoretical framework. Open coding allows the interpretation of the data and gain a sense of familiarity with the data (Boeije, 2010, p.102). Next, the process of axial coding was used to put the fragments of data, created through open coding, back together while making connections between categories (Boeije, 2010, p.108). This process is also referred to as focused coding and is used to delineate categories from data and previously constructed code book (Boeije, 2010, p.114). The process of axial coding is what resulted in the first-order concepts presented in table 3 below. These codes are the result of grouping together and conceptualizing the meanings of the data. From axial coding the analysis moved into selective coding (Boeije, 2010, p.114). In table 3 this is presented in the shift from the first-order codes to the second-order categories. Throughout this process connections between categories were found to make sense of the developments in the field with regards to the research question *‘To what extent are CACs in the Netherlands still relevant within the changing WE?’*. Finally, the process of deducting meaning throughout this analysis resulted in the definition of three core categories, or themes, that form the base of the thematic analysis. “The core category or core concept is a construction of the researcher which does not magically

emerge from the data. The core category describes and explains the researcher’s observations” (Boeije, 2010, p.115-116). The constructed theme or core concept, presented in the table below, represents the consecutive development from their respective first-order and second-order concepts.

Finally, the Framework, developed by the National Centre for Social Research in the UK, was used to categorize the codes and their allotted data. It is, as the name suggests, a framework used for organizing and framing qualitative research during a thematic analysis (Bryman, 2012, p.579). The Framework can be found in in [Appendix D](#). More specifically, within the Framework there are three tables, for the three themes. Within these three tables, the respective Second-Order concepts and their allotted quotes are outlined. This Framework was used throughout the process of writing out the findings and can be used to have the overview of the data linked to the different concepts. Below is the table that visualizes the coding process into the thematic analysis.

Table 3

Process of Analysis

First-Order Concepts (Axial Codes)	Second-Order Concepts (Selective Codes/Categories)	Themes (Core concepts)
Fostering Connectivity		
Providing New Perspectives		
	Positive Aspects of WFH	
Virtual Overkill		
Lack of Advanced Technology	Negative Aspects of WFH	

Need to see the art in real life

The Hybrid WE

Spontaneous interaction

**Positive Aspects of the
Physical WE**

Fostering **Connectivity**

Open floor plan can be
distracting

**Negative Aspects of the
Physical WE**

**20% stake in market for
contemporary art in NL**

**Supporting CCI's/artist
communities**

CSR

Employee well-being

Fostering Connectivity

Value Added

Corporate identity

Brand image

Representation of company

(art expresses the values of
the organization)

Representation in other

institutions (loans)

Representation to the art

world (artist prizes)



3.6 Validity and Reliability

The following sub-chapter discusses elements of validity and reliability of this research. Reliability is concerned with whether a study is replicable, though ironically replication is rare in social research (Bryman, 2016, p.47). The social context within which the research takes place is largely responsible for the outcomes of the analysis. As this context is subject to change, it makes the research inherently irreplicable. However, due to the step-by-step description of the process of inquiry, the research is replicable within a new social context. Moreover, the validity of the research is more telling as it “is concerned with the integrity of the conclusions that are generated” from a research (Bryman, 2016, p.47). This integrity of this research is manifested through measurement validity, internal validity, external validity, and ecological validity. Measurement validity is concerned with whether the measurement devised of a concept really reflects the concept it is meaning to denote (Bryman, 2016, p.47). In this research the measurement validity was derived from the process of operationalization, and the process of analysis as described in table 3. The internal validity of the research questions the relationship between the independent and dependent variable. More specifically, it questions how confident we can be that the independent variable is responsible for the changes in the dependent variable. In this research the independent variable would be the changing WE, and we are looking at its

influence on the dependent variable: the relevance of the CAC. As discussed further in chapter 4, the respondents clearly indicate that there is a relationship between the independent and dependent variable. Furthermore, the external validity, whether the results are generalizable, is supported by the fact that there are CACs worldwide. These CACs are also likely experiencing changes to the WE, especially related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, this research also has an external validity. Finally, this research has an ecological validity. Ecological validity is concerned with whether the findings are applicable to people's everyday life (Bryman, 2016, p.48). This research also has an ecological validity due to the nature of this research. The semi-structured interviews were held with employees working for the CACs of Dutch banks and firms. These people are concerned with the changes in the field and how they might best adapt to remain relevant. Therefore, this thesis fulfils the 4 different aspects of validity for social science research.

3.7 Limitations of the research

Although the previous sub-chapter discusses the levels of reliability and validity of this thesis, there are several limitations to the research design. For example, the fact that the respondents were all employees and spokespersons for the CACs, a certain bias could exist within the data regarding the extent of the relevance of the CAC. This bias can present itself through the *social desirability effect*. This implies that respondents' answers to the interview questions were influenced by what they deemed a socially desirable answer. Moreover, a socially desirable answer is said to be more likely to be endorsed through the analysis than other answers (Bryman, 2016, p.223-224). However, the awareness of the possibility of a social desirability effect throughout the analysis of the data helped steer clear from concluding with socially desirable, or biased findings. More specifically, general statements regarding the level of esteem

for the value of the CAC expressed by respondents were not used directly in the analysis but were analysed in their respective context. This process was described previously in [chapter 3.5](#).

4. Findings & Discussion

The semi-structured interviews regarding Dutch CACs, that have been transcribed and coded, are presented using a thematic analysis throughout the following chapter. To create an understanding of the relevance of CACs anno 2021, the key concepts presented in sub-chapter 3.5 were addressed throughout. These concepts are reflected again in the data and findings of this inquiry. The interpretations of the data will be presented and discussed considering the theoretical context outlined in [chapter 2](#). To increase the reliability of this research the Framework (see [Appendix D](#)), developed by the National Centre for Social Research in the UK, was used to organize the analysis. From the analysis, outlined in [sub-chapter 3.5](#) in Table 3, 3 central themes emerged. The themes *the Power of the Hybrid WE*, *The Embedded Nature of the Value of the CAC* and *the Integration of the CAC into the WE*. Together, these themes address and answer the research question ‘*To what extent are CACs in the Netherlands still relevant within the changing WE?*’. The research question is answered within each sub-theme that supports the overarching theme, by discussing the interpretations in light of their context and the theoretical framework.

4.1 The Power of a Hybrid Workplace Environment

One of the themes that emerged during the analysis of the interviews regarding the relevance of CACs is the power of a hybrid WE. Throughout the interviews respondents pointed out several of the positive, as well as negative, experiences regarding the temporary WFH movement and the virtual WE. Several respondents point out that WFH and the virtual WE is not always a good alternative medium to the physical WE to create a platform for the CAC. Furthermore, they point out that besides WFH, and being behind a screen all day can be extremely demotivating, as pointed out by the data materials:

“What you can also see in these Team meetings, everything is becoming really efficient. So, the small talk at the coffee machine, that all falls away. And you need to keep up the narrative that the art, and the accompanying way of thinking, the creativity that that brings with it, the innovation, that is still important. But that's quite difficult when you're also sitting behind a screen all day” (Q6:62).

This direct quote illustrates that it is difficult for respondent 9, as representative of the company CAC, to keep up the narrative surrounding the CAC as they would in normally the physical WE. This finding would point toward the important role of the physical WE for maintaining the relevance of the CAC. Such findings, that point out the aspects that make it difficult for a CAC to remain relevant in this time, are further discussed in [sub-chapter 4.1.2](#). However, there is also another, more positive perspective of the virtual WE, addressed through the sub-theme of connectivity in [sub-chapter 4.1.1](#). Another sub-theme that emerged through the analysis, that contributes to the theme of the hybrid WE, is the increased online presence of the CAC. This finding is discussed further in [sub-chapter 4.1.3](#). Finally, the sub-theme that discusses the expectations of respondents beyond the pandemic, and directly relates to the over-arching theme of the power of the hybrid WE, is the hybrid future of the WE post-COVID-19. This theme will be discussed with regarding the functions of the CAC within a company in [sub-chapter 4.1.4](#).

4.1.1 A Positive Aspect of Working from Home: Connectivity

The thematic analysis reveals that during the pandemic the use online communication tools was enhanced by the activities of the CAC that were translated into the virtual WE. Respondent 5 explains that before the pandemic they would give a small presentation about an

artwork in the collection. This presentation would touch upon the context and meaning of the artwork, as well as how the perspective of the artist could help employees look at their tasks or life through a different lens. The respondent explains how during the pandemic this activity has been translated to the virtual WE and that it enabled respondent 5 to use the CAC to foster a newfound sense of connectivity amongst employees. She states: “now I do that online. And it has grown into something where employees give a small presentation about the art in their own home to their colleagues. You get a really connected feeling and a different kind of connection amongst employees” (Q5:25). Here respondent 5 points towards a newfound relevance of the CAC in enabling connectivity amongst employees through the medium. This implies that it is not necessary to see a work of art in real life for its narrative and context to be use in the WE, be it physical or virtual.

Similarly, respondent 1 shares that the focus of the CAC before the pandemic was very much on fostering a particular corporate culture within the organization that aligns with the organization’s values. However, due to the temporary circumstances of the pandemic, and the uncertainty and isolation that it accompanies – linked to health risks and social restrictions – respondent 1 shares that this focus is more on fostering connectivity. This can be found in the data where the respondent states: “usually, the emphasis would be on the culture of innovation and change within the organization. But under the circumstances, the art functions as a sort of vehicle of connectivity, a connecting body” (Q1:34). The notion of the CAC as a vehicle for fostering connectivity amongst co-workers in the WE is a novel finding with regards to the CAC. However, as mentioned in the literature, De Paoli et al. (2019, p.332) find that “careful and thoughtful design of the WE can stimulate,” amongst other developments, “collectivity”. This shows how the purpose of the CAC within the WE, and the design of the WE itself, run rather

parallel to one another. This makes sense as the CAC was once established in the organization to serve the WE, and the WE environment alone. Moreover, the preceding literature does not explicitly address the CAC as a source of connectivity amongst colleagues. Therefore, this finding, while according with the literature on the design of the WE, can be seen as a novel insight. Additionally, certain aspects such as employee well-being, education and a corporate culture are reminiscent of the concept of connectivity in the WE (Lindenberg & Oosterlinck, 2011, p.7, Witte, 2008, p.84). Therefore, fostering a bond amongst co-workers can translate indirectly into their well-being. And a sense of connectivity and togetherness would contribute to a healthy corporate culture within the WE. Therefore, it seems that throughout the changing WE the CAC retains its relevance by fostering human bonds and connections by bringing them beyond the general expectations of the WE. As contributed by respondent 4, “because of the art, the WE becomes somewhat soulful or vivacious” (Q4:19).

In the same sense there are aspects of connectivity that are prescribed to the physical WE, that cannot be replicated naturally in the virtual WE or WFH. Respondent 9 explains that they have an initiative with artists in residence that is on hold due to pandemic because of its strong relation to the physical WE. Respondent 9 shares that they think “the connection with employees is extremely important” (Q6:36). They explain that it is not possible to replicate the spontaneous interactions, and sense of connectivity that employees can have within the physical WE, online. Therefore, to a certain degree, not all activities undertaken by the CAC can be translated effectively into the online WE. Therefore, this finding shows that to stay relevant in the WE, the respondents in control of the CAC should look at a hybrid form of working that lets them achieve their goals in both the online and virtual WE.

4.1.2 Adaptation: Increased Online Presence

The second sub-theme that contributes to the overarching theme of the hybrid WE is the increased online presence created by many CACs during the COVID-19 pandemic. Before the pandemic CACs were often not as active through virtual channels. However, throughout the interviews, respondents shared that they regarded the pandemic as an opportunity to invest time and resources into new channels to communicate information about the CAC with their stakeholders. For example, respondent 1 shares the following insight about their decision to invest time and resources into the website of their CAC:

“No, I hope we can go back to, for the most part, experiencing the art within the physical WE. Our website has been a wish of ours for quite some time. But A: we never had time for it. So, with corona I took it upon myself, and said to myself ‘ok, we can’t do our presentations, our tours or other activities. So, let’s focus on the website this year’, otherwise that might not have been a priority at this point” (Q1:61).

In this excerpt the respondent directly credits the COVID-19 pandemic as a blessing in disguise that enabled them to finally take on the task of building a website for the CAC. Though the website was only realized during the pandemic, the respondent shares that the exploration of the online environment, in reaching a wider audience with their CAC, was a goal of theirs for longer. This finding reveals that the exploration and development of a hybrid WE is not something completely new, and has been in the works for several years prior to the pandemic. However, with the onset of the pandemic and WFH, these CAC

were able to actively explore the other path that was otherwise not seen as a priority. This finding proposes that the hybrid WE is more likely to be a part of the future WE.

Therefore, the CAC also gained avenues to explore, essentially enabling the maintenance and development of the CAC in the WE. As discussed in chapter 2

Moreover, respondent 3 shares how for the online platform of their CAC they invited artists from their collection to record a video of themselves in their studios. The respondent shared that “they all provided us with really a unique tour, a unique... their latest artworks, or an explanation about their work in the exhibition” (Q3:15). The respondent points out that the COVID-19 pandemic, to a certain extent, inhibited their ability to legitimize their CAC for their stakeholders. Therefore, they took to the virtual environment to compensate for any shortcomings. Although they already had an online presence before the pandemic, the focus was really put on these channels during it. Additionally, the respondent shared: “we wanted people, because they couldn't come to the office, to enjoy the art at home” (Q3:20).

Furthermore respondent 3 shares that the increased online presence does not solely act as a platform for the CAC, it relates to the day-to-day activities of the curators. Because the respondents and other curators were also limited to the confines of their own home, their way of scouting young talent or keeping up with artists in their collection also changed. Respondent 3 states that “it really changed because you can't physically go to galleries. But I think on the other hand, they opened up to more, you know, looking at things online” (Q3:51). Therefore, increasing their online activity was in the best interest of the respondents to share the CAC with their stakeholders, as well as to explore the art world and search for new art works themselves.

4.1.3 Negative Aspect Virtual Workplace Environment: Virtual Overkill

One of the sub-themes, expressed by respondents as a less desirable phenomenon accompanying the virtual WE, is virtual overkill. This forms a sub-theme regarding the power of a hybrid WE in that it is one of the negative aspects of the virtual WE. Besides the positive attributes discussed in the previous two sub-chapters, there is also evidence to suggest that the virtual WE is not a complete alternative for the respondents in performing the activities related to the CAC. For example, in reference to the increased online presence of CACs during the pandemic, respondent 4 shares that “we tried to have a natural approach. Not to edit too much, not to post too much... just not too much” (Q4:31). The respondent pointed out that through their social media channels and online several other CACs can have such an overwhelming presence, that they choose not to add to it with more material. By not sharing too much the respondent hopes to keep from overwhelming their target audience by showering with content. The respondent finds that seeing as everyone is spending the entire day receiving an abundance of materials through the same one-dimensional screen, they must limit what they put out into the world. With this, they are keeping in mind the well-being of their audience and the limit that an individual might have in that they can only process so much information in a day. Therefore, by focusing on producing less material, of a higher quality, they hope to continue to inspire stakeholders with their CAC.

Similarly, with regards to institutions adapting to the online WE by creating online exhibitions and virtual tours of the CAC, respondent 3 shared: “I saw more online tours and online exhibitions. But what I've noticed is that at some point they were doing... a lot of institutions and museums were doing it... and we decided not to do that because it might have been an overkill” (Q3:22). Again, a respondent shared that instead of also putting out more

content, they thought about how it would be received on the other end by their stakeholders. The respondent found that it would be better for their brand image as well as employee-wellbeing, to not follow the herd by also creating these tours and exhibitions online. The respondent adds to this argument by saying “it’s hard to keep the attention span” (Q3:23). Again, pointing out that the WFH experience has been overwhelming. Respondent 1 themselves said that “looking at virtual exhibitions I was bored within seconds,” (Q1:65). Which painstakingly points out the pitfalls of the virtual WE in limiting the relevance of the CAC. Furthermore, respondent 3 states that “in the end, you want to see the arts in real life” (Q3:24). These excerpts taken from the data reveal how the new concept of ‘virtual overkill’, that comes out of this pandemic, points towards a hybrid WE. This hybrid WE allows the CAC to be experienced not just through narrative, as explained in sub-chapter 4.1.1, but to be experienced comprehensively through the senses, space and time.

4.1.4 Beyond COVID-19: A Hybrid Future

The previous sub-chapters discuss different aspects of the respondents’ experience of the virtual WE during the COVID-19. The findings reveal that there is a newfound sense of connectivity present in the virtual WE, different from what was experienced prior to the pandemic. Additionally, it was found that an increased online presence paved new avenues for the CAC to reach its stakeholders, beyond the WE. A new concept that emerged from this research is that of virtual overkill. This concept relates to the long hours spent behind computers by employees, and how the CAC does not want to add to this experience as it does not act in the best interest of either the collection or the organization. While these findings do not contradict previous research, they do not directly reinforce them either.

Furthermore, respondents explicitly expressed that they believe the future of the CAC within the WE is hybrid. When asked about the relevance of their CAC and how it can be legitimized during this extraordinary time, respondent 1 shared “of course sharing online is always a goal of ours” (Q1:37). However, she counters this argument, which was elaborated on in [sub-chapter 4.1.2](#), with the statement “look, you just really need to see art in real life (Q1:36). Again, this quote retrieved from the data shows how organizations have made the temporary situation work for them as much as they could, to legitimize their CAC temporarily. However, in the long run, it seems to always come down to the physical and real-life power of the art that can only be experienced in real life.

Similarly, respondents also express their faith in that WFH is here to stay. For example, when asked about the influence of the pandemic on the relevance of their CAC, respondent 2 acknowledged that the collection is seen less by employees at this point. However, they are confident that they will be able to go back to the office during the summer of 2021 (Q2:34). Throughout their interview this respondent expressed little interest in adapting a lot to the current circumstances seeing as they are only temporary. The unwillingness to create new paths for the organization to explore with regards to their CAC was shown by very few respondents. However, this finding also contributes to the theme of a hybrid WE. Additionally, respondent 2 shared “it will be partially WFH,” referring to the internal communication regarding the management, and policy formation, of the CAC (Q2:34).

Most other respondents were completely in support of finding a hybrid way of working after the pandemic. For example, respondent 3 shared that “working from home is still going to stay. That people are going to do, half/half” (Q3: 27). Similarly respondent 5 states that their organization does not “believe that people will all just go back to the office, not after they

experienced the WFH” (Q10:46). However, the respondent also supports the concept of virtual overkill and a hybrid WE when they say, “I can imagine that people will be completely fed up with the virtual and will want the physical and tactile again” (Q10: 67). As mentioned earlier, with regards of the real life and aesthetic power of art, respondent 5 here emphasizes the same physical and tactile qualities in the WE. This is already an example of the parallel and integral nature of the CAC in the WE that is discussed later in [sub-chapter 4.3](#). Moreover, an excerpt from the interview with respondent 9 states: “We're still WFH until September. After that it will look different. It will mean two or three days in the office and the rest at home. That means that the office will be used differently” (Q6:16). Again, the respondent shows a very open attitude towards a WE that will look different from the pre-pandemic WE. They also point out the fact that the physical WE will be used differently by employees. The respondent explains that their vision of the hybrid WE is that employees will be WFH mostly to complete focused and individual tasks. They believe that the role of the physical WE will become increasingly instrumental in enabling certain organizational processes. An excerpt from respondent 9’s interview goes as follows: “when you go to the office it will be more related to interaction, sharing ideas, sharing thoughts. It would be wonderful if we could contribute to that in a very constructive way with the arts” (Q6:66). This finding shows that the role of the CAC in the physical WE is bound to become increasingly important in achieving the said goals of stimulating the employees. These findings coincide with De Paoli & Ropo’s (2017) findings that in order to foster organizational creativity the WE needs to offer both enclosed and open, collaborative spaces for their employees to use (p.164). Although previous research (Lindenberg & Oosterlinck, 2011; Witte, 2008; Kottasz et al. 2007) has pointed out that the CAC can be used as a way of enhancing “employee well-being”, this research inquiry finds that the CAC

contributes to the employee beyond their well-being. It proposes that the CAC can contribute and enhance organizational processes related to knowledge-intensive work. These findings will be elaborated upon in [sub-chapter 4.2.3](#). Moreover, respondent 9 shares that “there’s the idea of starting some sort of art lending program for employees at home. You see that the workplace at home is becoming increasingly important, so a work of art would complete that” (Q6:19).

Besides the insights that the CAC can contribute to the physical WE, this quote shows that the CAC can also contribute to the environment of the employee WFH. Therefore, these excerpts from the data allow this research to come to the finding that the hybrid WE can act as a more profound vehicle for the CAC. Lastly, the respondent added to this saying “so I’ll be happy when we can see each other and look for a hybrid way of working” (Q6:63). This same insight was expressed by respondent 11 who shared: “it’s not the goal to completely go back to the office all at the same time. We want to make it much more hybrid” (Q8:22). As discussed in chapter 2, Baldry (1997, p.373) describes how the faith in computerized technology was said to make the office worker a “more flexible ‘new professional’”. Moreover, the study by Gonsalves (2020, p.1059) discusses how the flexible WE proves beneficial to employee well-being. The research conducted regarding the relevance of the CAC in the WE in 2021 finds that to do so it must adapt to the hybrid WE. These findings coincide with literature regarding the flexible WE and flexible work practices in that their concerns for employee well-being align. Moreover, as discussed in this sub-chapter there are several novel findings with regard to the relevance of the CAC in the hybrid WE. One of the sub-themes that emerged is the newfound importance of the CAC as a vessel for connectivity amongst employees. As discussed previously this concept coincides with De Paoli et al.’s (2019, p.332) finding that the design of the WE can foster a sense of collectivity within the organization. Another concept that arose from the discussion regarding

WFH was virtual overkill. This concept also feeds into the relevance of the CAC within a hybrid WE, one where employees get to interact in a dynamic online and offline environment but are not bound exclusively to either.

4.2 The Embedded Nature of the Value of the Corporate Art Collection

The second theme that emerged from the thematic analysis, as pictured in Table 3 in [sub-chapter 3.5](#), was the embedded nature of the value of the CAC. The sub-themes include *brand image*, *CSR*, and the *legitimizing value of the CAC for the WE*. These sub-themes pointed towards embedded nature of different aspects of the CAC in the WE, as well as other realms of the social world such as the art world. For example, many of the normal activities of the CACs involved in this research were able to continue despite restrictions of the pandemic, such as the CACs' respective art prizes. This is an example the CAC's legitimating activities that contribute to their organization's brand image and CSR. This embeddedness ensures that the relevance of the CAC within the WE, here meaning under the umbrella of the organization, is maintained. Below these sub-themes will be discussed in more depth with support of the data and in light of the theoretical framework presented in [chapter 2](#).

4.2.1 Brand image

One sub-theme that emerged from the first-order analysis was the second-order concept, or sub-theme, of *brand image*. As discussed in the theoretical framework, Leclair & Gordon (2000) found a positive correlation between advertising expenditure and corporate support for the arts, indicating that enhancing brand image is one of the main motives for their support the arts. Similarly, Kottasz et al. (2007) described how organizations had several motives for establishing a CAC such as the corporate image, signaling a type of corporate culture, prestige, and commercial advantage. The findings of this research coincide with the literature in that

respondents revealed that the CAC still is very much a form of shaping the perception of the organization both internally and externally. For example, during their interview respondent 1 shared that “in the end, you try to create an inspiring environment with the art” (Q1:75). Respondent 1 shares that this is an environment they want to create within the WE for the employees, but also for their clients. This can be seen from the following excerpt from their interview: “well, in that way we can bring that sense of creativity to our client” (Q1:76). Respondent 1 then states that by having art in the WE that inspires their stakeholders and acts as a vessel for creativity, “that's also the image the client forms about our company” (Q1:30). In this same narrative respondent 10 shares: “for us it's about the well-being at the office, the experience and the internal brand” (Q8:26). Respondent 10 points out that the CAC is a way of reflecting a corporate culture and creating a brand image for employees within the organization. Similarly, respondent 3, when discussing the relevance of a CAC within the corporate environment of their organization, states “it enables us to reflect and support our identity and the company brand towards the outside world, and to make a positive contribution to our image” (Q3:4). As respondent 3 is referring to the value of their organization’s CAC is that it is a support mechanism for the brand identity and brand image. Respondent 4 also expresses how their organization’s CAC represents the values of their organization and visualizes these through the art. The following is the excerpt from their interview that indicates this phenomenon: “I also think the non-static principle is great, because a CAC is never static, nor is the organization (Q4:10). Respondent 9 also contributed to the notion that the CAC plays an important role in reflecting its organization’s brand image. They explained how the organization’s core business is concerned with “many important issues in society” and expressed that they “have a particular opinion about and want to commit ourselves to”. Respondent 9 shares: “I have also tried to allow

the art to leverage all these different facets” (Q6:9). With this statement the respondent indicates that they see the art as having a crucial role in expressing these core values, within the WE and towards the outside world, through the CAC. Again, this finding coincides with Leclair and Gordon (2000) in that a lot of financial capital is put into the CAC, which is why its budget coincides with the capital spent on PR or commercial activities. However, since it is not seen as a directly commercial endeavor, nor can it be translated into a report with the outcomes of investment, it has a much more elusive role within the organization. Nonetheless, the data collected from the respondents points towards the influence of the CAC on the organization’s brand image.

Furthermore, while contributing to brand image, the CAC can supersede internal and direct perception within the WE. Such a process can also occur indirectly, outside of the organization. In their interview, respondent 5 shares that the art acquired for the CAC was not always appropriate for within the WE. The following is an excerpt from their interview:

Sometimes we would buy works of museum quality that were not actually suited for the offices. But that was not necessarily a criterium for us, at least not for me, to not buy the work. I preferred to acquire sensitive, difficult, and controversial works of art. And, actually, that could not function within the organization” (Q10:31).

Respondent 5 shares that the art acquired for the CAC is not always intended for the WE but to be shown in other institutions through exhibitions. This standpoint is expressed in the excerpt: “but those works were always asked to be a part of exhibitions for museums” (Q10:30). The

respondent explains that by acquiring such avant-garde, non-conforming or controversial works of art, the organization's CAC gains a sense of credibility and legitimacy in the art world. By acquiring work that is never intended for the WE, but to be presented and seen by a wider audience in artistic institutions, the respondent creates a form of self-expression for the CAC beyond conventions. The WE, commercials, print media or the company website present a conventional way of sharing information or intellectual property regarding the organization with stakeholders. By presenting a controversial work within a museum, and having the company name next to it, the CAC allows for the company image to be reflected in an unconventional way and reach a wider audience. The respondent explains, "so, indirectly, that was very supportive of the corporate image" (Q10:30). Respondent 5's feedback regarding the role of the CAC can fulfill for the organization with regards to brand image shows the embedded nature of the CAC, perhaps beyond the WE. However, through its meaning making capabilities in other spheres, it brings it back to the WE with enhanced brand image for the organization.

On the other hand, as discussed in chapter 2.1.1, there are certain risks regarding multifaceted role of the CAC within the organization and the artworld. Witte (2008) points out a paradox of professionalization that takes a critical perspective on the legitimizing processes of the CAC outside the WE, stating that there is a risk of self-alienation from its home, the WE. The finding of the interviews with CAC professionals shows how respondents can be unaware of the possibility of alienation for the CAC within the WE. This concept of the paradox of professionalization of CAC presents a risk for the relevance of the CAC in the WE. Therefore, the findings coincide with previous research regarding the tensions of the relevance of the CAC in the WE. These insights, regarding the paradox of professionalization and the focus of CSR, will be discussed further in [chapter 5](#).

Finally, respondent 10 contributed to the embedded qualities and contributions of the CAC in reflecting a brand image by stating:

“The role of the CAC might be increasingly important for organizations to distinguish themselves from others. People are becoming increasingly concerned with the network that they can build and the environment that they are in. From that perspective we are investing more in the arts” (Q7:43).

Here, respondent 10 discusses how organizations are increasingly concerned with being able to distinguish themselves through expressing a unique or positive brand image. By creating a WE that is considered more amenable or attractive, organizations hope to attract new employees and clients to choose their organization over others in the industry. The respondent points out that for such reasons, their organization is investing more in the arts, to enhance the perception of the organization, or brand image. This finding is another point that feeds into the theme regarding the embedded nature of the CAC in achieving organizational goals. This finding, directly or indirectly, contributes to the relevance of the CAC in the WE.

4.2.2 Corporate Social Responsibility

The second order concept that falls under the theme of the embeddedness of the CAC in the WE is CSR. Respondents expressed that the CAC is manifested as a reputed gatekeeper in the art world, and to a certain degree, carries a plight to supporting the contemporary arts and young artists. For example, respondent 10 shares that “you support people that are free from limitations and expectations, they are autonomous and decide what they want to address with their art” (Q7:38). This excerpt shows the multiplicity of the motives for maintaining a CAC

within the WE. On the one hand there are philanthropic motives in that the organization aims to support autonomous artists. This finding coincides with Kottasz et al. (2007) findings of altruistic motives of corporate philanthropy amongst the motives for collecting. On the other hand, in this context the respondent refers to the WE is having particular limitations. As opposed to the autonomous and freethinking artist, the WE might present certain constraints or limitations for employees. Therefore, by investing in the arts the organization is also addressing their CSR internally, by allowing new and diverse perspectives to enter the WE.

Furthermore, the philanthropic aspect of CSR was also addressed by respondent 11. An excerpt from their interview states: “we look at younger artists, to really give them a chance” (Q8:18). Similarly, respondent 10 explained that their company likes to look at the cultural and creative climate of its company’s locations. They added that they tend to look at the work of artists graduating from local art academies. The respondent shares: “we invest in local artists because we have a social responsibility” (Q7:1). They added that “you have a societal impact because you give artists the chance to realize something” (Q7:37). This excerpt from the data shows how organizations express a CSR by supporting artists through the CAC. These findings coincide with the work of Arnold Witte (2008, p.84) who argues that patronage and support of the arts is an increasingly important part of CSR for organizations. Similarly, respondent 5 shares that as an organization you have the “reputation of making young talent big, giving artists the opportunity to create a work for such a big firm” (Q10:1). This insight refers to the legitimating role of the CAC as gatekeeper. This finding coincides with the observation made by Witte (2008, p.86) of the “growing financial, institutional and artistic influence of CACs on the artworld in the Netherlands”. Moreover, respondent 5 emphasized that for acquiring work for their CAC they “look within several parameters,” or which “quality is the most important”, as well as “scouting

young talent” and “supporting young talent” (Q10:27). Respondent 1 also expresses a concern for the social responsibility as an organization, saying “we want to create a platform for Dutch artists” (Q1:8). Additionally, respondent 3 explains how they often are asked questions about why their organization collects art and so much financial capital is invested in it. Respondent 3 explains that their explanation is that “in the end we're giving something back to the artist community” (Q3:6). With this statement the respondent is referring to the CSR of the organization and that by investing in the arts they are contributing to their own organization, and employee well-being, and to the cultural field.

During their interview respondent 8 shares:

“But I believe CACs in the Netherlands have about a 25% or a 20% stake in the market for contemporary art. So, that also makes sure that when a CAC buys a work, it shows reflects well on the artist or the gallery it was bought” (Q5:33).

With this statement the respondent touches upon the professionalization of the CAC, as discussed in the theoretical framework, through findings proposed by Arnold Witte (2008). As mentioned in chapter 2, CACs in the Netherlands are shareholders of about 20% of the Dutch market for contemporary arts. This ascribed increasing power to CACs within the market for contemporary art, more than Dutch museums, who account for just 4% (VBCN, 2021). By stating that it reflects well on both artist and gallery when a work is acquired by their CAC, respondent 8 touches on the legitimating power of the CAC as a gatekeeper to the artworld. Therefore, this finding suggests that CSR for organizations with a CAC goes beyond the support they provide to young artists through financial means. This finding indicates that the support is

extended to the social and cultural capital of an artist or a gallery, which could be a whole lot more valuable in the art world. Although these findings, regarding CSR, help legitimize the role of the CAC, some of them are not directly related to the WE. This draws back to the argument of the professionalization paradox that was discussed at the end of the previous sub-chapter.

Therefore, this recurring theme, that presents a tension for the CAC regarding its relevance in the WE, is discussed further in [chapter 5](#).

4.2.3 The Legitimate Value of Art in the Workplace Environment

The final concept that falls under the theme of the *embedded nature of the CAC*, is the *legitimate value of art in the WE*. Most respondents shared several attributes that the CAC brings into the WE, that would legitimize the role of the CAC in the WE.

For example, respondent 4 expressed that throughout the past years the role of the CAC has shifted from being mainly focused on representative and decorative functions “it now has a much more dynamic and inspirational role” (Q4:40). Moreover, respondent 1 emphasized that “we believe our relevance is derived from reinforcing a culture of innovation and change within the organization” (Q1:10). Therefore, these respondents suggest that the art in the WE can inspire employees and foster a certain desirable corporate culture. Additionally, respondent 1 shares that the art can also be a vehicle for starting conversations about subjects that otherwise are unable to find their way into the corporate environment. Respondent 1 expresses this in the following excerpt: “So in this way the organization pose certain questions that normally may not enter the WE, but the art is able to put it on the table and open a dialogue” (Q1:20). Respondent 3 explains that they have noticed that employees will choose to be in an environment with a particular artwork to have certain conversation or meeting. The following quote embodies this insight: “what we've noticed is there's employees that have meetings feel like the art is inspiring

and provides them with a good conversation starter” (Q3:41). They also comment on the ability of the CAC to inspire employees saying that the mission of their CAC is “to help us understand the world better through art. To inspire and stimulate everyone” (Q3:40). Respondent 3 emphasizes their point of view again by sharing “it still creates an inspiring workspace, work environment for the people that work here” (Q3:36). Much like insight provided by respondent 1 that describes the ability of the art to influence the culture within the organization, respondent 4 expresses, that “Bringing the outside in through the collection breaks people open in a unique way” (Q4:21). Respondent 4 believes that the art can have this effect on employees largely because “artists go much deeper; they are by definition pioneers” (Q4:8). This coincides with the point that was brought up in [sub-chapter 4.2.2](#) by respondent 10, that artists are autonomous and able to address whichever subject, without restraint.

Respondent 5 explains that the CAC can play an important role in the organization by entering a different type of creativity into the WE saying, “you can take it seriously and see that any corporate is benefitted by bringing a different type of creativity into the organization” (Q10:63). An excerpt from the interview with respondent 6 agrees with this insight by addressing the capability of art to help employees think outside of the box. The excerpt goes as follows: “something that can push me into a different direction or lets me look the other way. I think that is really useful” (Q10:64). Coincidentally, respondent 8 expresses:

“We can really stuck in our ways. Sometimes you need to see things from a different perspective, to be forced to look through the world from someone else’s viewpoint. I have experienced that art is a great medium for that. To be invited to

step out of your comfort zone and to trigger your empathetic side and the other part of the brain that is connected to creativity” (Q5:3).

Seeing as most of the respondents address the ability of art to bring in new perspectives, inspire employees and foster a more creative environment, there is still a sense of legitimate value to the CAC in the WE. Again, respondent 9 also shares this view on the function of art in the WE. They talk about the characteristics of art in the CAC saying, “it's beautiful, it's about beauty, it tells a story, but also that it touches on the less perfect sides of life” (Q6:24). The respondent shows how art is nuanced and free, and the contemporary art that is collected, is not limited, like the figurative art that was collected decades ago, to being a pretty picture on the wall. The respondent shares “I find it great that the art can prompt that dialogue” (6:27). This point coincides with one that was made previously regarding the benefit of bringing new perspectives into the organization through the CAC. Next to bringing in new perspectives, creativity, prompting dialogue or inspiring employees, respondent 10 adds that the art shapes stakeholders as well. This interpretation was gathered through the following quotes from the interview with respondent 10: “Look, art stimulates a part of your know-how, but also broadens your perspective” (Q7:9) and “you give the people in the organization something besides knowledge sharing, it shapes them” (Q7:11). The findings presented throughout [sub-chapter 4.2.3](#), regarding the legitimate value of the CAC in the WE, prompt that there is an inherent value of the CAC, despite current changes within the WE. The findings presented above coincided with the literature that suggested that the “careful and thoughtful design of the WE can stimulate openness, equality and a sense of collectivity within the organization”, which were found to contribute to organizational creativity (De Paoli et al., 2017, p.332). The findings present that the

CAC contributes to inspiring employees, exposing them to new perspectives, and stimulating them. These descriptors of the legitimating effects of the CAC within the WE coincide with the findings of De Paoli et al. (2017) since the CAC implicitly falls under the “thoughtful design of the WE” (p.332). Therefore, however, this research contributes to the literature by making explicit the legitimate values of the CAC within the WE, despite changes in the WE.

4.3 Integration of the Corporate Art Collection into the Workplace Environment

The third overarching theme that emerged through the first- and second-order analysis is the integration of the CAC into the WE. One of the second-order concepts that will be discussed in sub-chapter 4.3.1 is the inclusion of the representatives of the CAC into the dialogue and decision-making regarding the WE. Another sub-theme of this analysis is comprised in the sub-theme *monumental art*. This discusses the observed trend of CAC increasingly focusing on monumental art and art that is more integrated into the WE. The last sub-themes regarding the integration of the CAC into the WE are *commissioned work* and *critical perspectives on ownership*.

4.3.1 Inclusion into the Dialogue Regarding the Changing Workplace Environment

Another sub-theme, of the development of the integration of the CAC into the WE is the inclusion of the CAC into the dialogue regarding the changing WE. The data from the transcriptions showed that most respondents feel that they are very much involved in the process of change in the WE with the CAC. For example, respondent 1 shared that they “work closely with the interior architect, who does the furnishing of the offices” (Q1:59). Similarly, respondent 4 notes that they have “been on all the building committees” (Q4:25). Respondent 4 explicitly recognizes this close relationship and involvement in the dialogue by stating: “So, the CAC has definitely been taken into account” (Q4:27). Respondent 8 expresses the extent of their

involvement in the decision-making process as “more than I ever dared to dream” (Q5:15). However, respondent 8 also noted that “there is always room and people for more, of course” (Q5:15). Respondent 10 also found themselves very much integrated into the discussion surrounding the place of art in the organization. They shared “I must say I am well-embedded within the organization. If the chairman is ok with it, others soon follow” (Q7:22). Similarly, respondent 11 shared that they are very much involvement regarding decision making in the changing WE, stating: “the art committee was always involved” (Q8:7).

Though this involvement may be very much integrated in certain organizations, there are others where the respondents shared that they often must work very hard to be a part of the change. For example, respondent 9 shared “I make sure that I put my foot between the door and say: ‘Well, of course we will be installing art there as well’” (Q6:39). This development was most ascribed to the displacement and WFH related to the pandemic. This resulted in the respondents not always being able to be present in the WE, which led in certain decisions being made without the involvement of the CAC. This observation indicates that the consequences of physical displacement caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has temporary reverse effects on involvement of the CAC in the dialogue regarding the changing WE, seeing as respondent 9 has to work hard to “put their foot in the doorway” (Q6:39). Although respondent 9 currently works harder to be involved in the change, they still express that they are involved. Moreover, respondent 7 clearly expresses that they are kept in mind throughout the process stating: “So from the initial design phase we are involved with the collection, so that we don't come in at the last minute as a sort of afterthought, but that the art also becomes an integral of that process and the building” (Q9:9).

4.3.2 Monumental Art

The second sub-theme underpinning the integration of the CAC into the WE is that of *monumental art*. The data collected from the semi-structured interviews revealed that the respondents are increasingly concerned with commissioning artists to create monumental works of art for the WE. By commissioning an artwork for a particular purpose and place within the WE the work of art becomes more closely tied to the space and the organization. This finding is reflected in the following excerpt from the interview with respondent 1: “In the last couple of years we decided to integrate the art. To install more monumental and large works that become a part of their surroundings, who react to the surroundings, the architecture” (Q1:16). They add that in comparison to works acquired otherwise, they find monumental art is “qualitatively more attractive” (Q1:47). Similarly, respondent 2 shared that their CAC holds several “really large works, that are drawn into the design” (Q2:16). This data point also touches upon the integrated and increasingly intertwined nature of CACs and the physical WE. Moreover, respondent 9 also touches on their preference for monumental art in the WE, stating that “there are more open spaces where the art is more of a statement piece” (Q6:48). This also shows that the changes in the WE, making it a more open space, allow for a more integrated and monumental type of art. Respondent 9 also touches on the democratizing aspect of monumental art and discusses how art is not only for the board room. They share: “I think it is important to make big statements, especially in the places everyone passes through” (Q6:50). These findings coincide with insights provided by Witte (2008, p.84) who notes that there is a growing tendency for monumental art in the WE due to the budget allocation following the 1% rule (p.84). However, the data from this research suggests that overall, there is a greater appreciation for the aesthetic, conceptual and democratizing value of monumental art within the organization. This finding goes beyond

Witte's observation regarding monumental art, and suggests that the future of the CAC is more tied to integrating art into the WE by commissioning monumental works of art. By focusing on integrated and monumental art, the CAC would be able to remain directly relevant within the changing WE.

Respondent 11 also touches on the integration of the art from the CAC into the physical WE. They state "the remodeling has given us the change to think about the type of art we want to integrate into the space" (Q8:3). Respondent 1 shares that there is a difference between how art is used in the headquarters as opposed to with other offices. They describe that in other offices art is often somewhat color coordinated, and they look at how the art can work with the space. However, in their headquarters, it comes down to this idea of integrating works of art into the WE design. Respondent 1 states "look, in the headquarters we really have statement pieces" (Q1:52). Similarly, when discussing the remodeling of their WE, respondent 2 describes that "large works have been drawn in, so there are several designated spots where the works will be presented" (Q2:16). Respondent 5 addresses the changing paradigm that arose earlier in the findings, that points out the shift from decorative and representative art to dynamic and inspiring art in the WE. Respondent 5 describes that "and all the sudden there would be bins with above the quality artworks. That was no longer something to be ashamed of, that was something to be proud of" (Q10:44). Respondent 5 describes how their CAC is no longer concerned with mirroring a white-cube or museum-like context in the WE. One with white walls and no indications of human touch. They find items such as bins, that now represent something more than trash: sustainability, are not a forbidden item amongst art anymore. Therefore, respondent 5 shows that the CAC is increasingly integrated into the WE and not standalone. Respondent 7 reveals a similar standpoint regarding art in the WE. An excerpt from their interview states: "We

started focusing more on artworks that relate to the architecture, or the space, or the public space, or the built space, so it's definitely quite focused on the organization.” (Q9:3). Furthermore, they add “we include the artist in the beginning of the process to create an integrated design, so the artwork is not standalone” (Q9:1). This statement shows how the art is becoming integrated at the very start, during the ideation process of the artist. Finally, respondent 7 posits that the traditional model of acquiring art for the CAC and decorating the walls in the WE with it, is over. They state:

“a lot of money is spent, and it does not directly translate back into the organization's balance sheet. So you have to explain yourself. We can tell that just buying works and hanging up them up, like we did 20 years ago, is just not done, that's not the way to do it anymore” (Q9:35).

Respondent 7 here highlights that the old way of using the art does not work in the changing WE. Therefore, the findings point towards a more integrated and monumental approach for the CAC in the WE. Below are two examples of a monumental artwork in the WE. The first example is a work of art integrated into the walls of the Polak Building on the Erasmus University Woudestein campus. The second work of art is an interactive and monumental work that can be seen in the lobby of the ING headquarters.

Figure 4.1

Willem Oorebeek, Oogenblikken (2015) on the Erasmus University campus.



Figure 4.2

Daniel Canogar, Billow (2000) in the ING CAC.



4.3.3 Commissioning Artworks

Lastly, we discuss the sub-theme of *commissioned work* as a part of *the integration of the CAC into the WE*. As the previous sub-chapter discusses the shift towards monumental and a more integrated art form in the WE, the concept of commissioning artworks already came up. Most respondents pointed out that, to integrate monumental works into the WE, they favour commissioning artist to create artworks specifically made for their organization. As discussed in chapter 2 and iterated in the previous sub-chapter with regards to monumental work, the 1% rule led to a surge in monumental and integrated works in organizations. Respondent 10 points this out by saying “our organization has commissioned artists for a long time, we have much larger works” (Q7:5). Moreover, respondent 1 shares that in the big hall, as discussed previously considering the democratizing power of monumental art, they “commission a large artwork” (Q1:74). Similarly, respondent 2 stated that “large outdoor sculptures are being bought and commissioned” (Q2:32). Respondent 5 emphasizes the progression and integration of the CAC into the WE in stating “so you see this shift from buying artworks to commissioning artists to create something within the WE” (Q10:29). Respondent 11, when showing a photo and describing their latest commission, states “this work was made specifically for that spot. The artist was commissioned to create this work, which took a year to make” (Q8:13). Similarly, respondent 7 describes that their organization has an interest in art in the public sphere, and for public benefit. The excerpt from the interview with respondent 7 goes as follows:

“We are moving towards art in the public sphere, and how we can work together with artists, whose work is already in the collection, if we can commission them

to create a work that ties closely to our collection, so it is even more connected”
(Q9:18).

They add that they “try to acquire works in that way, more focused, more in commission” to have the works tie more closely to the organization, its core business, and employees (Q9:17).

A concept that also arises from the findings on inclusion into the dialogue of the changing WE, the shift towards more monumental and commissioned work, is a new perspective on ownership. For example, in the following excerpt respondent 7 expresses how limiting the acquisition, to focused and tailored commissioned artwork contributes to their CSR:

“We don’t have a standard budget for the acquisition of random works of art. That is a very conscious decision because we have less walls, like many other CACs, and we don’t find it responsible to buy a dozen works per year, that we can’t actually show in the WE” (Q9:16).

The respondent points out that, despite focusing on commissioned work, they see acquiring indefinitely, without regard for the space in the WE, is no longer responsible. Similarly, in their interview respondent 9 states:

“but if you think about what it actually means, as an organization, to have an art collection you don’t only address the aspect of ownership. Ownership might also weigh you down. So that is something that’s being looked at differently now, also in the future. (Q6:5).

Such a critical perspective on ownership coincides with the discussed a paradigm shift towards a CAC that is more conscious and focused on the WE. When asked a question about what the next steps would be for CACs in the current environment respondent 6 shared that “I think the CAC is important for the corporate world. But it will have to take on a new role. I think it will be much more interactive, much more integrated, in the form of commissioning, or maybe artists in residence.” (Q10:62). This statement unites the sub-themes discussed under the theme of the integration of the CAC into the WE. The insights gathered from this statement contributes to the findings of this research by suggesting that to stay relevant within the WE, the organization must critically assess the responsibility of ownership for the CAC.

5. Conclusion

Having identified the gaps in the literature regarding the CAC and the changing WE this thesis set out to answer the research question ‘*To what extent are CACs in the Netherlands still relevant within the changing WE?*’. The research question was answered partially through the conclusions drawn from the thematic analysis presented throughout [chapter 4](#). The three themes that were drawn from the data and contribute to answering the research question are *the hybrid WE*, *the embedded value of the CAC* and *the integration of the CAC into the WE*.

The findings of this research substantiated the value of the theoretical perspectives on the paradox of professionalization as proposed by Witte (2008). To avoid the risks associated with the professionalization of CACs, CACs must commit to their presence and relevance within the WE. The findings of this research propose that under the circumstances of the changing WE, the CAC is presented to opportunity to strengthen ties to the physical WE by becoming increasingly integrated. As discussed throughout chapter 4, by entering the dialogue regarding change, integrating monumental works into the physical WE and commissioning these works, the organization can remain relevant within the WE. Moreover, the findings suggested that the CAC can also create new ties to both the physical and virtual WE. The findings showed that beyond the physical WE, the CAC has the power of fostering a sense of connectivity amongst employees in the virtual WE. Finally, the findings show that CACs must take a critical stance regarding the ownership of artworks. Growing your CAC exponentially does not seem to fit with a time where offices are downsizing and shifting towards a more hybrid approach. Therefore, to stay relevant in the changing WE anno 2021, the CAC must maintain a balance of regarding internal and external legitimacy. The findings also show that to maintain such a balance within the changing WE, it is important to take an integrative approach to art in the WE.

The current research was conducted throughout a time that the respondents were experiencing the changes to the WE as caused by COVID-19 first-hand. This means that the operations and ways of dealing with the changes were more reactive in nature than reflexive. Therefore, it would be interesting to continue a line of research inquiry into the role of the CAC within the *changed* WE when the COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted and a retrospective approach can be taken to the analysis of the influences of this time on the WE and the place of the CAC within it. How will companies have adapted to the New Normal? Will they accommodate a hybrid WE for their employees? Will the CAC have a more profound role in achieving organizational objectives in the virtual WE? These are all questions that are open to future research.

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APPENDIX A. English Interview Guide

The following appendix includes the interview guide that was formed after the operationalization in chapter 3.4. The interview guide starts below:

Thank you so much for taking time out of your schedule today to come talk to me about your experiences with curating/managing the CAC at [company name]. If you are ok with it, I will start recording at this point.

First of all, I'll kick off the interview by telling you a little bit about myself and how I got here. My name is Dana, I am Dutch and grew up for the larger portion of my life in Belgium. Here I attended the International School of Brussels, and I would say this has been the most shaping time in my life. I went on to study international business administration but made a switch after the first year to international arts and culture studies, which I think fits me much better. Last summer I finished this bachelor where I wrote my thesis about radical pedagogy within arts institutions and how educators can make the classroom a safe space. This past academic year I have been enrolled in the Master program Cultural Economics and Entrepreneurship. I've always been rather fond of and surrounded by the arts, my mother painting for as long as I can remember and myself gaining a deeper interest in artist's practice during the IB.

I've been fascinated by CACs and their origins for quite some time, but a few years ago one of my friends started working at DNB (she now works at Akzo) it became more of a topic for conversation. Now, I've chosen to conduct research regarding the relevance of CACs in 2021, where priorities lie, how missions might have changed, and more specifically, how the WE affects the way the collection is maintained. So, I've made it my mission to answer the research question: *'how do corporate art collections in the Netherlands expect to adapt to the changes in workplace environment?'*. In order try and do this I'd like to start the interview by asking you to tell me a little bit about yourself and your background.

- a. How long have you been working at [company name]?
- b. How long have you been working within this industry?
2. What projects are you currently working on?
3. What is the most important aspect of your company's CAC?
 - a. For what purposes does your company maintain a CAC?
4. What kinds of works make up the CAC?

5. Does the CAC represent the company in any way? If yes, how so?
6. What is one of the most important processes put in motion by the CAC?
7. How would you describe [company name] corporate culture?
8. Who is [company name]'s collection targeting?
 - a. What is the role of the art collection towards [company name]'s employees?
 - b. What is the role of the art collection towards [company name]'s clients?

Throughout the last several years, many companies are redesigning the workplace environment to get rid of unused space and change the workflow.

9. How has the physical WE at [company name] changed over the years?
 - a. To what ends was the WE changed?
10. Has the physical WE been important to the CAC over the years? How?
11. Do you believe that with such spatial workplace changes, the role of the CAC has been held in mind?
 - a. Did you experience there to be an open dialogue regarding the space and the place of the CAC within it?
12. Would you say that the physical space affects the way that the art collection is presented or used?
 - a. Or more the other way around?
 - b. How would you describe this interaction?
13. How do you think the office redesign affects the CAC at large?
 - a. How do you think it affects the curatorship?
 - b. How do you think it affects the acquisition process?
14. Have the effects of COVID-19 had any influence on the way that people at [company name] work together?
 - a. Have they influenced the way people use space?
 - b. How does this online space relate to the physical space at [company name]?

15. Is there a particular link between the online WE and the physical space at [company name]?
16. How have the changes and uncertainties such as the pandemic affect the budget allocation within the company?
17. How has the changing WE affected the corporate culture within [company name]?
 - a. How do you think it affected your curatorship?
 - b. How do you think it affected your acquisition tendencies?
18. With the de-location and many employees having to work from home, have you come up with ways of bringing your target audience in touch with the CAC of [company name]?
19. Do you believe it is important for the collection to change and adapt with the time?
 - a. Or do you find that the collection has had an avant-garde role in the company, much like artists in society?
20. How would you define legitimacy within the art world?
21. How would you we define legitimacy or relevance of a CAC?
22. How would do you think [company name]'s CAC can stay relevant in times of corona?
23. How would you say that [company name]'s CAC has remained relevant throughout the years?
24. How has COVID-19 affected the relevance of [company name]'s CAC?

APPENDIX B. Dutch Interview Guide

Wat fijn dat je vandaag tijd kon maken voor dit interview. Vandaag zou ik het dus graag met je hebben over de Akzonobel Art Foundation kunstcollectie en haar band met de werkplek omgeving.

Allereerst zal ik je iets meer over mijn achtergrond vertellen. Ik ben dus Dana, ik ben geboren in Nederland en vanaf mijn negende naar Brussel verhuisd. Hier heb ik dus, net zoals Eleonora, op de internationale school gezeten. Ik heb sowieso altijd al iets met kunst gehad, mijn grootmoeder schilderde graag landschappen. En mijn moeder heeft in Brussel nog jaren aan de BKO geschilderd. Naast het conceptueel bezig zijn met structuren, kleuren en licht heb ik het daar ook altijd veel met mijn moeder over gehad. Dat soort gesprekken gingen dan vaak ook over op andere thema's en na mate ik ouder werd ook politieke onderwerpen. Zelf heb ik toen in mijn laatste twee jaar high school visuele kunst als een van mijn hoofdvakken gekozen waar ik graag bezig was met het continue proces van een onderzoek en conceptsopbouw. Daarna heb ik mijn Bachelor International Arts & Culture Studies aan de Erasmus Universiteit in Rotterdam voltooit met een focus op sociologie en kunstgeschiedenis en nu ben ik dus bezig met een Master Cultural Economics & Entrepreneurship.

Voor dit onderzoek wilde ik dus ook graag kijken naar de bedrijfscollectie en haar band met de werkplek omgeving omdat ik het gevoel kreeg dat deze op een bepaalde manier parallel aan elkaar lopen. Uit een aantal onderzoeken van de laatste jaren blijkt dat de werkplek omgeving bepaalde doeleinde kan behalen, zoals bijvoorbeeld het stimuleren van creativiteit of samenhang. Ergens is dit natuurlijk ook het geval bij de bedrijfscollectie. Er is een bepaald streven aanwezig in het conceptualiseren van een werkplek omgeving en het beheren of het conserveren van een bedrijfscollectie, wat ervoor zorgt dat ze parallel aan elkaar lijken te lopen. Zo heb ik dus besloten om deze twee disciplines aan elkaar te koppelen of met elkaar te verbinden door het over beide te hebben.

Laten we dus vooral doorgaan naar de vragen.

1. Zou ik je als eerst mogen vragen om iets over je eigen achtergrond te vertellen?
 - a. Hoelang werk je al in de kunstwereld?
 - b. Hoelang werk je al voor [naam bedrijf]?
2. Met welke projecten ben je momenteel bezig?

3. Wat is volgens jou het meest belangrijke aspect van de [naam bedrijf] bedrijfscollectie?
4. Wat is volgens jou het meest belangrijke aspect van de kunstcollectie voor het gehele bedrijf?
5. Uit wat voor werken bestaat de collectie?
6. Vertegenwoordigd kunstcollectie het bedrijf op een bepaalde manier?
7. Op wat voor manier?
8. Wat is een van de meest belangrijke processen die de kunstcollectie in gang heeft gezet over de jaren heen?
9. Hoe zou je de *corporate culture* bij [naam bedrijf] omschrijven? (Hiermee bedoel ik de onderlinge band tussen werknemers en de algehele sfeer binnen [naam bedrijf])
10. Op wie is de [naam bedrijf] bedrijfscollectie gericht?
11. Wat voor rol heeft de kunstcollectie tegenover de werknemers van [naam bedrijf]?
12. Wat voor rol heeft de kunstcollectie tegenover de cliënten van [naam bedrijf]?
13. Hoe is de werkplek omgeving binnen [naam bedrijf] veranderd over de jaren heen?
 - a. Welke achterliggende redenen zou de werkplek zijn veranderd?
14. Wat heeft deze omgeving betekend voor de kunstcollectie?
15. Is er volgens jou rekening gehouden met de kunstcollectie bij beslissingen over de werkomgeving?
 - a. Was er tijdens deze veranderingen een open dialoog over de plek van de kunstcollectie binnen vernieuwde werkplek omgeving?
16. Zou je zeggen dat de fysieke ruimte binnen het bedrijf een grootte impact heeft op het aantal of het soort kunst dat wordt aangekocht?
 - a. Wat voor soorten kunst krijgen de aandacht?
17. Wat voor een effect heeft de COVID-19 pandemie gehad op de manier waarop werknemers binnen [naam bedrijf] te werk gaan?
 - a. Wat voor effect heeft het gehad op jullie werkzaamheden binnen de bedrijfscollectie van [naam bedrijf]?
18. Bestaat er een bepaalde link tussen de online werkomgeving en de fysieke binnen [naam bedrijf]?
19. Heeft de onzekerheid van de pandemie jullie budget op een bepaalde manier aangetast?

20. Wat voor een effect heeft de verandering van werkplek omgeving gehad op de corporate culture binnen [naam bedrijf]?
 - a. Hoe denk je dat het jouw conservatorshap heeft beïnvloed?
 - b. Hoe denk je dat het jouw acquisitie interesses heeft beïnvloed?
21. Op wat voor manier hebben jullie het laatste jaar gezorgd dat de collectie relevant blijft voor de werknemers van [naam bedrijf]?
22. Op wat voor manier hebben jullie het laatste jaar gezorgd dat de collectie relevant blijft in het oog van buitenstaanders?
23. Tot hoeverre is het van belang voor de [naam bedrijf] bedrijfscollectie om zich mee te bewegen met de tijd?
24. Hoe zou jij legitimiteit definiëren binnen de kunstwereld?
25. Wat betekent het om te legitimeren of te verifiëren?
26. Hoe heeft de pandemie jullie manier van legitimeren beïnvloed?

APPENDIX C. Code Book

Table 2

Codes used to interpret the transcriptions of the 11 respondents

Colour	Name	Groundedness	Groups	Comment
●	CAC Fostering Creativity	11	Description CAC	26/05/2021, 14:27, merged with Descriptive CAC: stimulating creativity
●	CAC Fostering Innovation	11	Description CAC	
●	Connectivity	23	Description CAC	26/05/2021, 12:11, merged with Sense of togetherness
●	Decorative	8	Description CAC	
●	Descriptive CAC: Addressing relevant topics	18	Description CAC	
●	Descriptive CAC: Approachability	8	Description CAC	
●	Descriptive CAC: Art as a source of Knowledge	9	Description CAC	
●	Descriptive CAC: Bringing the Outside In	22	Description CAC	
●	Experimentation	7	Description CAC	
●	Fostering Dialogue (amongst employees/subjects)	24	Description CAC	
●	Freedom to the viewer/Freely Interpretable	8	Description CAC	
●	Freeport	10	Description CAC	
●	Inclusivity	10	Description CAC	
●	Inspiring	11	Description CAC	
●	Monumental	7	Description CAC	

●	Representation	8	Description CAC	
●	Soul	9	Description CAC	Respondent 4 emphasizes that without art the WE does not necessarily have a soul. 26/05/2021, 18:40, merged with Descriptive CAC: Creating a Certain Atmosphere
●	Uplifting	8	Description CAC	
●	Acknowledgement CAC is not 1st priority	9	Changes COVID	
●	Alternative Working Process	16	Changes COVID	Due to the COVID-19 pandemic organizations have taken a new approach to achieving their tasks as a CAC.
●	Art At Home	4	Changes COVID	
●	Create Wider Reach	16	Changes COVID	Being more focused on online tools of communication, many respondents emphasize their focus on reaching a wider audience online to create awareness about the CAC.
●	Excluded from dialogue changing WE	6	Changes COVID	

●	Focus on Quality of the Art	4	Changes COVID	There is an influence of the WE on the types of acquisitions. There are less works being bought. The ones being bought are more monumental and of a higher quality. 26/05/2021, 13:59, merged with Not limited by the WE
●	Habits/back to Old Normal	2	Changes COVID	
●	Hybrid Format/New Normal	10	Changes COVID	26/05/2021, 16:31, merged with Changes: WFA: work from anywhere 26/05/2021, 16:32, merged with New Normal will look different
●	Importance of Connectivity	26	Changes COVID	
●	Included in Dialogue Changing WE	10	Changes COVID	
●	Increased Online Presence	27	Changes COVID	26/05/2021, 16:19, merged with Changes: Digitalization
●	Lacking Advanced Technology	2	Changes COVID	
●	Less spontaneous interaction	2	Changes COVID	
●	More Efficiency Online	1	Changes COVID	
●	Need to See Art in Real Time	16	Changes COVID	
●	Pacing Online Presence	5	Changes COVID	
●	Virtual Overkill	7	Changes COVID	
●	WFH	12	Changes COVID	

●	Alignment Brand Image and Corporate Culture	7	Observations	26/05/2021, 13:52, merged with CAC does not mirror corp. identity
●	Aspect CAC: Ownership	4	Observations	
●	Cancel Culture	1	Observations	
●	Critical Self Evaluation	11	Observations	Similar to Questioning Existence CAC 26/05/2021, 14:13, merged with Questioning Existence CAC During crisis and extreme uncertainty the curator addressed the existence of the CAC, its purpose and role within the organization.
●	CSR	6	Observations	26/05/2021, 13:37, merged with Social Role
●	Desensitvity to the Art	3	Observations	Certain employees may become desensitized to the art they are surrounded with after a while. Only when it is taken away do the employees miss the presence of the art.
●	Identifying a Corporate Identity	8	Observations	
●	Integrating Art Into WE Design	6	Observations	

●	Lack of sense of responsibility for the art	1	Observations	This respondent notes that the changes in the WE, such as it becoming more open and people not having assigned desks, resulted in employees having less of a sense of responsibility for the artworks.
●	Parallel growth CAC & WE	4	Observations	
●	Beautiful	7	Description WE	
●	Bottom-Up	5	Description WE	
●	Flex Space	9	Description WE	
●	Fostering Connectivity	18	Description WE	26/05/2021, 14:34, merged with Descriptive WE: Fostering Interaction
				26/05/2021, 14:44, merged with Descriptive WE: Socializing
●	Fostering Innovation	2	Description WE	
●	Non-Sterile	3	Description WE	
●	Open	12	Description WE	
●	Taking the CAC serious	2	Description WE	
●	Top-Down	2	Description WE	
●	Transparency	4	Description WE	
●	Active Policy	12	Legitimization	
●	Autonomy	10	Legitimization	Autonomy in curatorship and narrative.
●	Bequest Value	1	Legitimization	Leaving something behind for future generations.
●	Collective Legitimization	5	Legitimization	[CACs] having a legitimating effect, as gatekeepers, collectively in the art world for artists.

●	Context-Specific	5	Legitimization	Place the art in a particular context for the employees and within the organization. This context helps the subject approach and come to insights regarding the work and the person who made it.
●	Create Positive Brand Image	11	Legitimization	26/05/2021, 13:47, merged with To impress the client or employee
●	Create Visibility	6	Legitimization	
●	Democratizing Effect	13	Legitimization	
●	Fostering Change	4	Legitimization	26/05/2021, 13:44, merged with corporate culture: change 26/05/2021, 15:37, merged with Legitimization: in flux
●	Gatekeeping	10	Legitimization	26/05/2021, 15:58, merged with Legitimization: sifting art/artist 26/05/2021, 15:46, merged with Legitimization: tracking artists

●	New Perspectives	25	Legitimization	26/05/2021, 12:14, merged with Legitimization: Stepping out of your comfort zone
				26/05/2021, 12:16, merged with Legitimization: Stimulate deeper conversation the art allows conversation to take a different turn and allows employees to address different issues and questions that would normally not be addressed in the WE.
				26/05/2021, 14:16, merged with Descriptive CAC: Dynamic
				26/05/2021, 15:55, merged with Legitimization: pioneering
●	Pride in working in such an environment	4	Legitimization	
●	Proving the Collection Internally	7	Legitimization	
●	Redefining the Collection	8	Legitimization	
●	Staying Relevant	11	Legitimization	26/05/2021, 15:48, merged with Legitimization: in- with-the-times
●	Supporting Artists	23	Legitimization	26/05/2021, 16:00, merged with Legitimization: Supporting the Artist

●	Sustainability	3	Legitimization
●	Timelessness	4	Legitimization
●	Value of Art	4	Legitimization
●	Conceptual Art	3	Description CAC
●	Contemporary Art	2	Description CAC
●	Figurative Art	1	Description CAC
●	Internationalisation	3	Description CAC

APPENDIX D. Framework for Thematic Analysis

The following Framework, developed by the National Centre for Social Research in the UK is a framework for organizing and framing qualitative research during a thematic analysis. The following Framework outlines 5 of the central themes that arose from coding the 11 semi-structured, in-depth interviews conducted with curators and managers of CACs in the Netherlands. The 5 main themes are: *Fostering Connectivity, Addressing Relevant Topics, Representation/Staying Relevant, Hybrid WE/New Normal, Parallel Growth WE & CAC*. These 5 themes help answer the RQ in Chapter 4 Results and Discussion.

The location of the quotations can be found in parentheses. ‘Q’ refers to ‘quote’ which is followed by the respondent number and the quote number at which the excerpt can be found in the transcriptions in Atlas.ti. (Layout: Q ‘Respondent Nr.’: ’Quote Nr’)

Theme 1: The Power of the Hybrid WE

Respondent	Positive Virtual WE: Connectivity	Negative Aspect Virtual WE: Overkill	Adaptation to Virtual WE: Increased Online Presence	Hybrid WE
1	“Usually, the emphasis would be on the culture of innovation and change within the organization. But	“Looking at virtual exhibitions I was bored within	“We can let an artist working on a big project do a takeover, so we follow what they're doing. We	“Of course sharing online is always a goal of ours” (Q1:37).

	under the circumstances, the art functions as a sort of vehicle of connectivity, a connecting body” (Q1:34).	seconds,” (Q1:65).	want content for on our social media channels” (Q1:26).	
2				“It will be partially WFH,” (Q2:34).
3	“it shows us how online communication can really help with exposure” (Q3:58).	“a lot of institutions and museums we're doing it... and we decided not to do that because it might have been an overkill” (Q3:22).	“they all provided us with really a unique tour, a unique... their latest artworks, or an explanation about their work in the exhibition” (Q3:15). “we wanted people to - because they	“the sort of working from home is still going to stay. That people are going to do, half/half” (Q3: 27).

couldn't come to
the office - to
enjoy the art at
home” (Q3:20).

“It really changed
because you can't
physically go to
galleries. But I
think on the other
hand, they opened
up to more, you
know, looking at
things online”
(Q3:51).

4

“We tried to
have a natural
approach. Not
to edit too
much, not to
post too
much... just
not too much”
(Q4:31).

“We started doing
more and more
things digitally”
(Q4:28).

5

“People can just
orient themselves
and explore via
Instagram”
(Q10:66).

“We don't
believe that
people will all
just go back to
the office, not
after they
experienced
the WFH”
(Q10:46)

“I can imagine
that people
will be
completely fed
up with the
virtual and will
want the
physical and
tactile again”
(Q10: 67).

6

“Because I
think the CAC
is important

for the
corporate
world. But it
will have to
take on a new
role” (Q10:62).

7

“Together with
several other
institutions we
created an online
exhibition”
(Q9:14).

“Some people
don't mind it as
much. But I
really miss
being around
people”
(Q9:26)

8

“Now I do that
online. And it has
grown into
something where
employees give a
small presentation
about the art in
their own home to
their colleagues.
You get a really

“We brought this
project to life
during the
pandemic”
(Q5:21).

connected feeling
and a different kind
of connection
amongst
employees”
(Q5:25).

9 “the art collection
is a free space
within the
organization where
you... can just have
a conversation
about anything”
(Q6:12).

“I think the
connection with
employees is
extremely
important”
(Q6:36).

“I think that the
website will be
increasingly
important. So we
will have to start
focusing on that”
(Q6:37).

“So that project is
much more
recent, from this
past year”
(Q6:15).

“We're still
WFH until
September.
After that it
will look
different. It
will mean two
or three days
in the office
and the rest at
home. That
means that the
office will be
used
differently”
(Q6:16)

“So I’ll be
happy when
we can see
each other and
look for a
hybrid way of
working”
(Q6:63)

10 “The works
integrated into the
WE create this
connection with the
employees and the
environment”
(Q7:19).

“We’ve rolled out
a digital project”
(Q7:18).

“We get a lot of
questions from
people about our
initiatives during
the pandemic and
if they can stay
when things go
back to normal”
(Q7:44)

“It’s all
digitally now,
and that works
pretty well”
(Q7:16).

11 “But we really paid
special attention to

“So we try many
different things to

“It’s not the
goal to

it. We are very aware of the fact that it is more difficult, and you have to work harder, to maintain that connection to the employees” (Q8:24).

maintain a good connection with the employees” (Q8:20).

completely go back to the office all at the same time. We want to make it much more hybrid” (Q8:22).

Theme 2: Value Added

Respondent	Brand Image (Representation, Loans, Art Prizes)	CSR: Supporting Artists	Legitimizing Value of Art in the WE: new perspectives, dialogue, bringing the outside in, stimulation
1	“That's also the image the client forms about our company” (Q1:30).	“From the perspective that we want to create a platform for Dutch artists” (Q1:8).	“We believe our relevance is derived from reinforcing a culture of innovation and change within the organization” (Q1:10). “So in this way the organization pose certain questions that normally may not enter the WE, but the art is able to put it on the table and open a dialogue” (Q1:20).

2

- 3 “it enables us to reflect and support our identity and the company brand towards the outside world, and to make a positive contribution to our image” (Q3:4).
- “in the end we're giving something back to the artist community” (Q3:6).
- “to help us understand the world better through art. To inspire and stimulate everyone” (Q3:40).
- “what we've noticed is there's employees that have meetings feel like the art is inspiring and provides them with a good conversation starter” (Q3:41).
- “It still creates an inspiring workspace, work environment for the people that work here” (Q3:36).
- 4 “I also think the non-static principle is great, because a CAC is never
- “artists go much deeper, they are by definition pioneers” (Q4:8).

static, nor is the organization (Q4:10).

“Bringing the outside in through the collection breaks people open in a unique way” (Q4:21).

5 “So indirectly that was very supportive of the corporate image” (Q10:30).

“So there's a reputation of making young talent big, giving artists the opportunity to create a work for such a big firm” (Q10:1)

“You can take it seriously and see that any corporate is benefitted by bringing a different type of creativity into the organization” (Q10:36).

“We look within several parameters; quality is the most important. Scouting young talent, supporting young talent” (Q10:27).

6

“Something that can push me into a different direction or lets me look the other way. I think that is really useful” (Q10:64).

7

“In that sense we representation the organization to a certain degree” (Q9:3).

“They found it important that employees came into contact with the arts” (Q9:2).

8

“But I believe CACs in the Netherlands have about a 25% or a 20% stake in the market for contemporary art. So that also makes sure that when a CAC buys a work, it shows reflects well on

“We can really stuck in our ways. Sometimes you need to see things from a different perspective, to be forced to look through the world from someone else’s viewpoint. I have experienced that art is a great medium for that. To be invited to step

the artist or the gallery it was bought” (Q5:33). out of your comfort zone and to trigger your empathetic side and the other part of the brain that is connected to creativity” (Q5:3).

“To be invited to step out of your comfort zone and to trigger your empathetic side and the other part of the brain that is connected to creativity” (Q5:3).

9 “These are important issues within society that we have a particular opinion about and we want to commit ourselves to. So I have also tried to allow the art

“The artist is often invited in the conversation” (Q6:51).

“You relate to an artist in such a different way that you may relate to an artwork on the wall” (Q6:11).

“That means that it's beautiful, it's about

to leverage all these
different facets” (Q6:9).

beauty, it tells a story,
but also that it touches
on the less perfect sides
of life” (Q6:24).

“I find it great that the
art can prompt that
dialogue” (6:27).

10 “With corona we asked
ourselves 'how can we
contribute something to
our own organization?’”
(Q7:31).

“We invest in
local artists
because we have
a social
responsibility”
(Q7:1).

“Look, art stimulates a
part of your know-how,
but also broadens your
perspective” (Q7:9).

“The role of the CAC
might be increasingly
important to distinguish
themselves from other
organizations. People are
becoming increasingly
concerned with the
network that they can
build and the

“You have a
societal impact
because you give
artists the chance
to realize
something”
(Q7:37).

“You give the people in
the organization
something besides
knowledge sharing, it
shapes them” (Q7:11).

environment that they are in. From that perspective we are investing more in the arts” (Q7:43). “You support people that are free from limitations and expectations, they are autonomous and decide what they want to address with their art” (Q7:38).

11 “For us it's about the well-being at the office, the experience and the internal brand” (Q8:26). “We look at younger artists, to really give them a chance” (Q8:18). “It has to do very much with internal engagement and creating a positive WE for our employees. A lot of time and resources has been put into that” (Q8:2).

Theme 3: Integration CAC with WE

Respondent	Inclusion CAC in Dialogue Changing WE	Monumental Art & Integration Art into WE	Commissioning Artworks
1	<p>“Next to that we work closely with the interior architect, who does the furnishing of the offices” (Q1:59).</p>	<p>“In the last couple of years we decided to integrate the art. To install more monumental and large works that become a part of their surroundings, who react to the surroundings, the architecture...” (Q1:16).</p> <p>“I think we do that much better, much more monumental and qualitatively</p>	<p>“For that we commission a large work” (Q1:74).</p>

more appealing”

(Q1:47).

“In the offices,

look in the

headquarters we

really have

statement pieces”

(Q1:52).

2

“The large works

have been drawn

in, so there are

several designated

spots where the

works will be

presented” (Q2:16).

“Large outdoor

sculptures and being

bought and

commissioned”

(Q2:32).

3

“You're sort of a

museum on your

own” (Q5:1).

4

“I've been all the

building committees”

(Q4:25).

“So the collection is

definitely kept in

mind throughout this
process, definitely”
(Q4:27).

5

And all the sudden there would be bins with above them quality artworks. That was no longer something to be ashamed of, that was something to be proud of” (Q10:44).

“So there's a reputation of making young talent big, giving artists the opportunity to create a work for such a big firm” (Q10:1).

“So you see this shift from buying artworks but commissioning artists to create something within the WE” (Q10:29).

6

“I think it will be much more interactive, much more integrated, in the form of commissioning, or maybe artists in residence. I think it will be much more interactive, much more integrated, in the form of commissioning, or maybe artists in residence. I think it will be much more

residence. I think it will be much more interactive, much more integrated, in the form of commissioning, or maybe artists in residence” (Q10:62).
 commissioning, or maybe artists in residence” (Q10:62).

7

“So from the initial design phase we are involved with the collection, so that we don't come in at the last minute as a sort of afterthought, but that the art also becomes an integral of that process and the building” (Q9:9).

“A lot of money is spent, and it does not directly translate back into the organization's balance sheet. So you have to explain yourself. We can tell that just buying works and hanging up them up, like we did 20 years ago, is just not done, that's

“We are moving towards art in the public sphere, and how we can work together with artists, whose work is already in the collection, if we can commission them to create a work that ties closely to our collection, so it is even more connected” (Q9:18).

not the way to do it anymore” (Q9:35). “So, we try to acquire works in that way, more focused, more in “We include the commission” (Q9:17). artist in the beginning of the process to create an integrated design, so the artwork is not standalone” (Q9:1).

8 “Especially with furnishing or facility management projects, so the art can be integrated into the buildings, and the ideas that are formed for it” (Q5:7). “Even more included than I dared to dream” (Q5:15).

9	<p>“I make sure I put my foot between the door saying 'but we're definitely putting art there as well” (Q6:39).</p>	<p>“So there are more open spaces where the art is more of a statement piece” (Q6:48).</p> <p>“But I think it is important to make big statements, especially in the places everyone passes through. Not just with the board of executives you see” (Q6:50).</p>	<p>“But if you think about what it actually means, as an organization, to have an art collection you don’t only address the aspect of ownership. Ownership might also weigh you down (Q6:5).</p>
10	<p>“I must say I am well-embedded within the organization. If the chairman is ok with it, others soon follow” (Q7:22).</p>	<p>“The role of the CAC might be increasingly important as a way to distinguish themselves from other organizations. People are becoming</p>	<p>“Because our organization has commissioned artists for a long time, we have much larger works” (Q7:5).</p>

increasingly
concerned with the
network that they
can build and the
environment that
they are in. From
that perspective we
are investing more
in the arts”
(Q7:43).

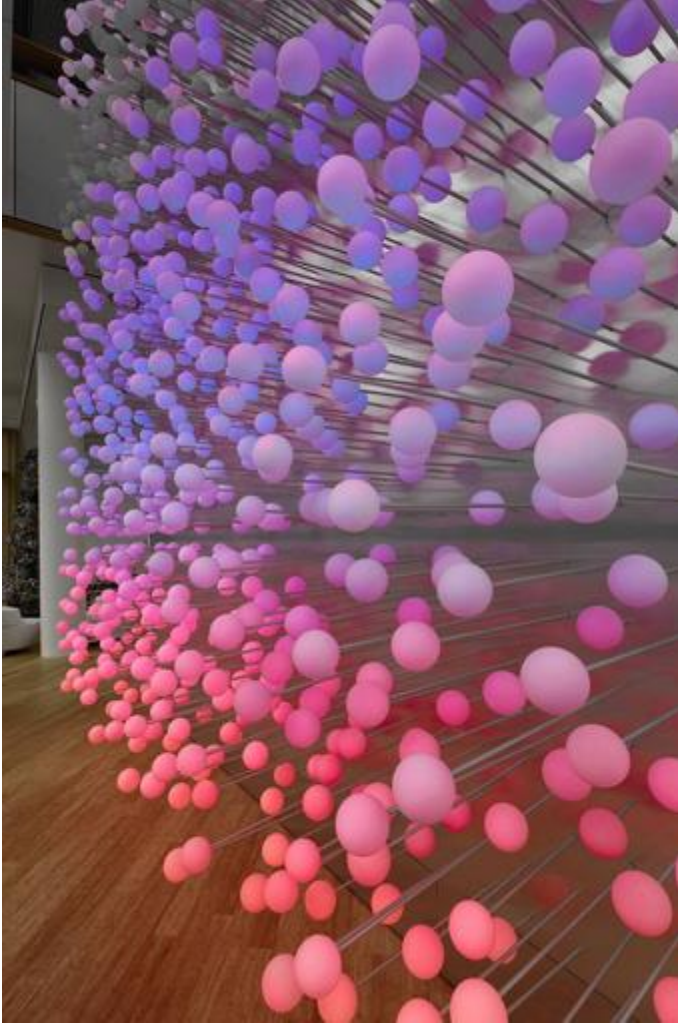
11	“The art committee was always involved” (Q8:7).	“The remodeling has given us the change to think about the type of art we want to integrate into the space” (Q8:3).	“This work was made specifically for that spot. The artist was commissioned to create this work, which took a year to make” (Q8:13).
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APPENDIX E. Examples of *Monumental Art* in the WE of companies with CACs

Below photos of several monumental works within Dutch CACs are shown.



Daniel Canogar, *Billow* (2000) in the ING CAC.



Allard van Hoorn, *Skies Over Snaefell* (2012) in the AkzoNobel Art Foundation.



Karel Appel, *City People* (1966) a tableau of ceramic tiles on the Tinbergen Building, located the Erasmus University Rotterdam Woudestein campus.

Artist Last Name, First Initial. Second Initial. (Year). *Title of the artwork* [Format]. Location. URL



Joana Schneider, *Aero Plus* (2019). Part of the Deloitte CAC, installed on the top floor of the Maastoren office building in Rotterdam.



Anish Kapoor, *Untitled* (1999) in the entrance hall of the ABN AMRO office building on the Zuidas in Amsterdam.



Tabor Robak, *Northstar Special Edition* (1986). A 15-metre-wide work in the lobby of the ING head office in Amsterdam.



Fernando Sánchez Castillo, *Liberty for All* (2020)

The photo depicts a smaller edition version of ‘Statue of Liberty’, a 5-meter-tall statue currently installed in the entrance of the Head Office of the Rabobank in Utrecht.

APPENDIX F. Photos of Works on Loan for Surrealist & Cobra Exhibition at Cobra

Museum Amstelveen



Corneille, La Sirène (1922).

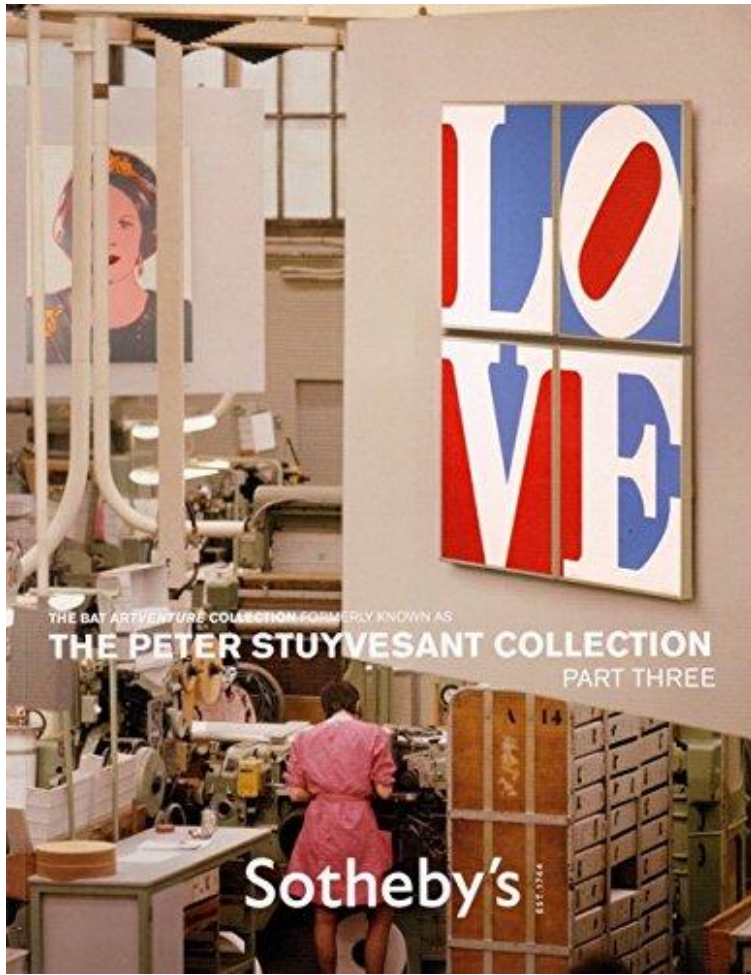


Karel Appel, Le Regard (1921).

APPENDIX E. The Peter Stuyvesant Collection in the Factory

Below are some photos of the Peter Stuyvesant collection suspended above factory floors of the BAT factory in Zevenaar.





THE BAY ART VENTURE COLLECTION FORMERLY KNOWN AS
THE PETER STUYVESANT COLLECTION
PART THREE

Sotheby's

