

No, no, YES, no, maybe, let's see...

How Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen Decides on Collection Accessions



Hammershøi, V. (1911). *The Balcony Room at Spurveskjul* [Painting]

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Abstract

This thesis examines the decision-making process of Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen on collection acquisitions. The financial and managerial structures of museums are changing. Museums implement alternative fundraising techniques and aim to increase their revenues. Because decreasing public subsidies, museums rely increasingly on these alternative revenues. Because of various catalysts, the management has developed a new strategy to accomplish the goals of the museum. The museum depends increasingly on funds and donors for collection acquisitions. In literature, this dependency is often suggested to affect the decision of the director and curator.

This case study of Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen is an extensive description of the decision-making process based on ten interviews with employees, annual reports and the collection plan. The most influential factors on this decision-making process are the financiers, the criteria from the curators and the management style of the director. Recent developments relating to museum acquisitions are examined as well. The starting point of the decision-making process is the proposal of the curators for a collection accession. This can be a suggested donation of a donor or the curator proposes to buy an artwork on the market. Based on the expertise of the curators and director, the qualities and the added value of an artwork to the collection is evaluated. The artistic, technical or conceptual connection of the artwork to the museum collection is important to the director and curator. During the evaluation, the feasibility of the fundraising strategy for the acquisition is directly considered. There are four types of financiers identified in this study: funds, corporate donors, private donors and 'huisstichtingen'. The museum relies heavily on these financiers because of their limited resources. Corporate donors, private donors and huisstichtingen act in line with the decision of the museum staff. The Mondriaan Fund and the Rembrandt Association play a decisive role in the realization of expensive acquisitions. The differences in decision-making between acquisitions and donations are analyzed. While donations are financially advantageous in comparison to acquisitions, the curators are nearly as strict on accepting donations as on acquisitions. The main reasons for the strict selection are the costs of conservation, depot space limitations and the laborious process of deaccessioning. The director manages the decision-making process by setting a biweekly curator meeting where proposals are discussed. The director decides which artworks are bought based on the argumentation of the curator and the feasibility of the fundraising strategy.

Key words: Dutch art museums – Decision-making process – Acquisitions – Donations – Funds

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Introduction

Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen receives mails and calls regularly from individuals who want to donate or sell one or more of their artworks. The stories on how the artwork was acquired differ. They might have inherited the artwork. They can also be a collector. The owner can be of age and wanting to find a good, caring place for their artwork turn to a museum. As the prices are skyrocketing in the art market and museums generally have a small budget for acquisitions, donations are always appreciated. Before a donation is accepted, the museum curators and director need to agree on the quality of the artwork and the added value to the collection. Only the best, most unique, aesthetically interesting and greatest ideas will be preserved for eternity. These aspects all play a role in a museum acquisition. The decision-making process of museum acquisitions is the core of this research.

My personal interest in museum acquisitions started during my bachelor Art History. The question that intrigued me most was: Who decides what is art? And even more importantly: Who decides what is good art? This interest originated mostly in my astonishment on the position of female artist in the art historical canon. Why is there a discrepancy between male and female artist in cultural and financial valuation? While attention for female artists has gained steam over the past couple of years, the question keeps intriguing me. Especially because the large sums of money that circulate in the art market. I am happy to dive in the topic, particularly since I started my job as receptionist and secretary at Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. This job gave me the opportunity to research this museum and interview the employees.

This thesis is a case study of Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. I answer my research question by conducting interviews and analysing the transcripts and relevant documents through a qualitative method. I have interviewed ten (former) employees of the museum on the decision-making process on acquisitions. An influential factor in this decision-making process is the quality assessment of the artworks by the expert. Hence, I interviewed the curators and director on this topic. Donors and funds are influential in this process because they partly finance the acquisitions. Therefore, I interviewed employees from the fundraising department. The goal of this research to be an explorative, extensive description of the decision-making process on acquisition of Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen.

The art museum defined

The common definition of a museum is given by the International Council of Museums (ICOM):

A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing. (International Council of Museums, 2022)

Various core activities and organisational goals are mentioned in this definition. The focus of the definition is the social and cultural activities. The main critique on this definition is that it is an implicit normative definition. The definition is setting an agenda for museums. Moreover, Fernández-Blanco and Prieto-Rodríguez (2020) criticize this definition as it excludes for-profit museums and neglects the economic factors of museums. They come up with an economic definition of museums: 'An organisation that follows a general path specified by economic behaviour, that is, the maximization of an objective output under a set of economic and institutional restrictions' (Fernández-Blanco & Prieto-Rodríguez, 2020). This strict economic definition becomes rather abstract and simplifies socio-cultural activities to input and output. This definition applies to any other art organisation, not specifically to museums. Puček et al. (2021) lay out various approaches to define a museum. I found the management and economic-cultural approaches the most useful for this research. The economic-cultural approach is 'the museum as an institution producing a 'museum service' and as an institution caring for cultural heritage'. A management definition is 'the museum as a purposefully managed system implementing certain functions'. The approaches recognize the museum as an organisation which produces a service. From these perspectives, I came up with my own definition: 'A museum is a managed organisation which produces educational and cultural services and care for cultural heritage'.

The financier and the museum

Art museums vary in size, content, age and institutional form (Frey, 2019). While there can be great differences, every museum manages a collection and collects (art)objects (Towse, 2019). The museum collection is often formed over a greater period and the formation can be historically explained (Van der Laarse, 2005). Most museums are a mix of public and private funding. The type of funding has an influence on the organisation. For instance, collection management between public and private museums differs as private museums can more easily sell an artwork because they are not restricted by regulations of the government (Frey, 2019). The funding structure of the museum also influences the acquisition strategy of the museum. In recent years, the financing structure of the museum has changed as public funding has been decreasing (Romolini et al., 2020). Museums are attempting to improve their self-generated revenues, for instance, by private patrons, sponsorship and funds (Romolini et al., 2020). These new incomes strengthen their budget and can be used for acquisitions as well. With increasing prices in the art market, these revenues are essential if a museum wants to improve the collection with high quality art on an international level. Private donors, sponsorships and funds are necessary to realize these acquisitions. The limited resources create competitive behaviour between museums, especially in times of financial crisis (Palumbo et al., 2021; Romolini et al., 2020). The financial viability of the museum has a great influence on the decisions of the museum management.

The developments in funding relate to the managerialization within the museums (Palumbo et al., 2021). Managerialization is an organizational transformation of cultural institutions. The reason for this development is the necessity of managerial action to fulfil the organisational goals (Palumbo et al., 2021). The catalysts for managerialization are legislative forces, the changing financial structure and

accountability towards stakeholders (Abraham et al., 2002; Moreno-Mendoza et al., 2019). These developments result in the increasing dependency of museums on funds and donors. The limited resources are expected to influence the decision-making process on acquisitions. The aim of this research is to describe and analyse the decision-making process of Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen.

The research question is:

- How does Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen decide on collection acquisitions?

The subquestions are:

- How do funds and donors influence the decision-making process on acquisitions?
- How does the decision-making process on acquisitions and accepting donated art differ?
- How do curators and directors judge the added value of an acquisition to the collection?
- How is the decision-making process managed?

This research is scientifically relevant because collecting is a core activity of a museum, but this activity is under pressure because of high art prices and decreasing public funding. Existing research does focus on acquisition policy and changing financial structures and management. However, these developments have not been linked to the decision-making process of acquisition. Literature suggests that the museum is more dependent on funds and donors which affects the autonomy of the museum. It is relevant for society to know if a museum is autonomous in their decision-making and acts with integrity. By this case study, I research a globally renowned art institution and thereby contributing to existing research. The first chapter is the theoretical framework of this study. The second chapter is the methodology of this empirical research. The third chapter sums up all the findings from the interviews and data. In the conclusion the research questions are answered and the findings are discussed.

Chapter 1 – Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework examines the main concepts. The main concepts are collecting behaviour, funding structures of an art museum, museum management and expert decision. Economics and cultural implications of collecting are discussed as well.

1.1 Collecting behaviour and collection management

Collecting is one of the core activities as is seen in the definition of the International Council of Museums (2022). In the creative industries, the collection management is unique for museums (Towse, 2019).

Collection management includes identification, documenting, accessing and preservation (Fernández-Blanco & Prieto-Rodríguez, 2020). Collections are the main output of the museum next to exhibiting and other services like the museum shop (Fernández-Blanco & Prieto-Rodríguez, 2020). There are multiple reasons for adding objects to a collection: preserving cultural heritage, improving the art collection and make the art accessible for public. Collecting art has the purpose to conserve heritage for future generations and to make art accessible to the public. The collection is used as a source for creating exhibitions. Loaning objects can be a source of income or a favour to another museum. This favour benefits both museums. Curators tend to always collect more, which is called the magpie tendency (Towse, 2019).

The collection is the main capital asset of a museum (Towse, 2019). The monetary value of a museum collection is mostly ignored or kept secret, as other values of the collection are overruling the price (Rodner & Thompson, 2013). Moreover, the monetary value is deemed not relevant, as the artworks are unlikely to be sold (Towse, 2019). However, the monetary value of the collection is necessary to establish an agreement with the insurance. The value of collection is totally or partly insured as there are threats of theft, damage or loss (Puček et al., 2021). Public museums sometimes have legal constraints to deaccession the collection (Frey, 2019). Moreover, the profits of a publicly owned art piece would go to the state treasury and thus would not be beneficial for the individual museum (Frey, 2019).

1.1.1 (Non-)economic implications of an acquisition

There are various economic implications when an object is added to a collection. The first implication is that the meaning of an object changes when it is added to a collection (Van der Laarse, 2005). This process is called ‘musealising’ (Van der Laarse, 2005). Adding something to a collection means it going to be conserved for as long as possible, which means the object has a whole new context. The economic implication is that the museum approval of an artwork is the highest approval possible (Rodner & Thomson, 2013). This makes it more valuable, but it becomes ‘worthless’ in the sense that is unlikely to be sold (Rodner & Thomson, 2013; Thornton, 2009). The second economic implication is the prestige of the artists increases by the museum acquisition (Thornton, 2009). The approval of the museum signals quality to the market (Rodner & Thomson, 2013). The prestige and popularity of the museum itself influences the quality signal (Frey, 2019). This signal helps overcoming information asymmetry in a market with a

great supply. The third economic implication is the prestige for the seller or donor of the artwork. The museum approval signals connoisseurship, social status and prestige of the seller (Rodner & Thomson, 2013). This also connects to the theory of Beckert (2009), who states that value of artistic products depends on the symbolic interpretations constructed by institutions, consumers and other market actors. The status of the consumer affects the status of the product (Yogev, 2010). The consumers of an art museum are known to be highly educated and have higher levels of cultural capital (Willekens & Lievens, 2016).

While collecting is an economic activity, it is often disregarded as such. The reason is that non-market values transcend the market values. There are multiple positive external effects to the museum activities which are not captured in market values (Frey, 2019). First, the existence value is that people benefit from the mere existence of art, even if they don't attend the museum (Frey, 2019; Throsby, 2001). Second, the option value is that people want to have the option to attend a museum in the future (Frey, 2019; Throsby, 2001). Third, the bequest value is about the preservation of arts and heritage for future generations (Frey, 2019; Throsby, 2001). The prestige value contributes to the reputation of a city or country (Frey, 2019). Lastly, the educational value of museum is not captured in the market (Frey, 2019).

1.1.2 Recent developments

The last years, it is more common for Dutch museums to organize blockbuster exhibitions (Juscisinova et al., 2021). Blockbuster exhibitions are a type of exhibition which aims to attract a wider audience and often include expensive international loans and high insurance costs (Juscisinova et al., 2021). It also states that 'people expect big names and big exhibitions' from museums (Juscisinova et al., 2021). It expresses that there are certain expectations on museums and I expect that this is translated in the acquisition policy. The notion of Collectie Nederland¹ was coined in 1990 by Hedy d'Ancona, minister of Welzijn, Volksgezondheid en Cultuur. The purpose of the term was to increase the quality of museum collections and increase the sense of a national collection (Van der Berg, 1999). Especially funds are keen on this notion (Van der Berg, 1999; Rembrandt Association, 2022). It is expected that the museum checks the collections of other museums before an acquisition is done if there are similar artworks already in ownership. Recently, there are more and more examples of two or three museums buying an artwork together. This phenomenon is called collective acquisitions in this thesis. For instance, Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Van Abbemuseum and the Frans Hals Museum bought the installation *Guess who is coming to dinner too?* [Installation] by Patricia Kaersenhout (2021). This acquisition was supported by the Rembrandt Association and the Mondriaan Fund. All developments point at a better cooperation between Dutch art museums.

¹ Translated to English: Dutch National Collection

1.2 The artworld, expert decision and quality assessment of art

A museum adds an artwork to a collection if it has added value to the collection. This value is assessed by the museum expert. In this section, value assessment and quality assessment by experts are elaborated on. First, I will explore how value is generated in the artworld. What is valuable or important art is not straightforward per se, especially for contemporary art (Yogev, 2010). Therefore, this social and cultural system of value creation and quality assessment is explained. Second, the museum as gatekeeper is examined. The cultural value of art is laid out next. Cultural values are aesthetic, symbolic, historical, authenticity, social and spiritual values. Lastly, trends and tastes in the artworld are discussed.

1.2.1 Generating value

The term artworlds is used to describe the ‘people and institutions who have an influence in defining what (true) art is in an artform, genre or style’ (Abbing, 2022). These actors have a significant influence on what is considered high quality art and what isn’t (Abbing, 2022). These actors form a social network and react to each other’s activities (Chong, 2010). Value is generated through certain processes within these social networks, which are laid out in the following section (Rodner & Thomson, 2013). Moulin (1994) argues that museums have the position to confirm to the market quotation or can initiate new trends. The curator has the power to intervene in cultural and economic values of art as they are art professionals (Moulin, 1994). This theory refers to a free choice of curators to decide what is high quality art is. However, Drummond (2006) and Rodner and Thomson (2013) show that museums are not in the position to initiate new trends as they rely heavily on the other actors in the artworld.

To understand the value assessment of artworks by museum experts, it is necessary to understand which components play an essential role in creating value in the artworld. There is a difference between art from deceased and contemporary artist. For deceased artists, including Old Masters, the model of Drummond (2006) includes five stages between studio to the market: 1) creation of the artwork, 2) quotation of the artwork by other artists, 3) interpretation of the artwork by critics and academics, 4) recontextualization of the artwork in new medias and 5) consumption of the artwork by individuals who buy the artwork, buy a ticket to a museum or buy a reproduction. This model can explain how deceased artists gained a certain status in the artworld. It can differ per artist in popularity based on quality and status. In general, this applies mostly to male artists, as female artists have been structurally left out by critics and academics (Nochlin, 2022). The model of Drummond (2006) emphasizes the role of critics and academics, but leaves out the role of art schools, dealers, galleries, fairs, collectors and museums. These actors are essential to understand the

Rodner and Thomson (2013) do include these factors in their model ‘the art machine’. They present the artworld as ‘a mechanical network (or *art machine*) made up of art professionals and institutions that purposely benefit from both the symbolic and financial value created by the interlocking mechanisms, or *cogs*, which tie the different elements together’. They describe various stages through which an artist can gain artistic and commercial success. This artistic and commercial success also refers to the cultural and

economic values which are attributed to an artwork. The actors in the art market are art dealers and galleries, art critics, auction houses, collectors, art fairs and international events, and lastly museums (Rodner & Thomson, 2013). Art schools also have indirect influence on the art market (Chong, 2010, Rodner & Thomson, 2013). The approval of a museum is the highest institutional validation an artist can get (Rodner & Thomson, 2013). The curator must measure the artworks additional value to the collection and judge the audience response (Rodner & Thomson, 2013). The curator's approval signals high value as the budget of the museum is limited and the curator cannot afford to make the wrong decision (Rodner & Thomson, 2013). Chong (2010) approaches this social mechanism as an art eco-system, where relationships between various actors are explained. This theory overlaps with the art machine theory.

1.2.2 The museum as gatekeeper

Museums are institutions that are part of the artworld, or art machine, and can also be considered gatekeepers. The role of the museum as a gatekeeper is explored because this relates to the decision process on acquisitions. Gatekeepers provide information to the consumer and this information influence the consumers taste (Towse, 2019). Gatekeepers need to be trusted by the consumer as they select products from a crowded market (Towse, 2019). This selection process can also be approached as controlling and usually limiting access to the artworld (Abbing, 2022). In the art machine of Rodner and Thomson (2013), the first cog represents the art schools. Abbing (2022) describes the selection process of art schools on new students as controlling and excluding process. In the perspective of the potential art students, this process can be determining their career and success as an artist. This process of exclusion by gatekeepers is explained with a few arguments. One argument is the high education and reputation of art experts, like critics and museum experts. This gives them a certain authority and expertise in the artworld (Moulin, 1994). Towse (2019) theorizes that the gatekeeper as an intermediary is 'natural' result of the great supply in the market. Moreover, because the complex relation between price and valuation in the art market, gatekeepers have an important role in bringing order and stability in the market (Coslor et al., 2019). When a museum buys a work from a contemporary artist, this increases the visibility, credibility and value of the artist's work in general (Coslor et al., 2019; Yogev, 2010). Thus, artists are heavily dependent on gatekeepers for their success (Yogev, 2010).

Gatekeepers fulfil three main functions as identified by Foster, Borgatti and Jones (2011): the gatekeeper as co-producer, as tastemaker and as selector. The co-producer is actively involved in the production process and shapes the contents of the artistic product (Foster, Borgatti & Jones, 2011). The tastemaker is not involved in the production process but presents and evaluates artwork to promote specific artworks to the public (Foster, Borgatti & Jones, 2011). The selector gatekeeper is a term which refers to the search and selection functions used to identify emerging artists (Foster, Borgatti & Jones, 2011). The search and selection process proceeds through complex social networks and information exchange through these networks (Foster, Borgatti & Jones, 2011). The gatekeeping theory mostly applies to the contemporary art market (Coslor et al., 2019; Yogev, 2010).

First, the museum always functions as a tastemaker. Curators gain status through their position in the market and solidify their part as tastemakers (Yogev, 2010). A museum acquisition is a social and cultural process where the curators define what is good art and interact with the artistic canon (Yogev, 2010). While the museum is highly influenced by the artworld, the museum approval of an artist through acquiring an artwork is a clear signal of quality to the market (Rodner & Thomson, 2013). Second, the museum can co-produce if the museum commissions artist. The level of involvement can differ per project and can also be influenced by funding. If a commission is financed by an art fund, the fund can set requirements to the project. The museum can also be a co-producer together with museum visitors or communities (Kershaw et al., 2020). The goal of this co-production is to empower citizens and position the community members as active agents (Kershaw et al., 2020). The result of this co-production varies between exhibitions and singular artworks (Kershaw et al., 2020). Lastly, the gatekeeper as selector can also be applied to the museum's practices. The curators are expected to select the acquisitions through professional and social networks and information exchanges within their own network (Foster, Borgatti & Jones, 2011).

1.2.3 Assessing cultural value

There are multiple characteristics of an artwork that can make an object valuable. Throsby (2000) refers to cultural value as an umbrella term for the following six characteristics. The first is that there is an aesthetic value. The properties of harmony, beauty and form can contribute to an aesthetically pleasing artwork. The assessment in aesthetic value is a subjective practice and can be influenced by taste. Second, there is the spiritual value of an object. The object can have a formal religious context, or can relate to universal dimensions of enlightenment, understanding and insight. The social value is the next characteristic of an artwork. The artwork can relate to the sense of identity and social coherence of a particular social group or society. The fourth aspect is the historical value. The historical connections of an object can relate to past events. Next, the symbolic value means the artwork is attributed meaning beyond its physical form. The last characteristic is the authenticity value. This refers to the fact that the artwork is original, unique and real. Per artwork it depends on its properties what makes the artwork valuable or not. (Throsby, 2000)

The cultural value does not necessarily correspond the quality of the artwork. Quality in art is disputed in the art historical discourse because the term refers to positive properties of an artwork. For instance, a positive property of an artwork can be the use of light or composition. The problem in the art historical discourse is that it is disputed what exactly are positive properties and they recognize the subjectivity in attributing these properties. The theory on cultural value can be used as a proper framework to comprehend the additional value to the collection. In the case of museums, the cultural value is a more insightful perspective in comparison to economic value. The economic value refers to the price of the artwork and this is not relevant for art historians (Throsby, 2000). The cultural value transcends the economic value for art historians (Throsby, 2000). As mentioned before, the economic

value is mostly ignored after the acquisition, except for the insurance. Therefore, the cultural value is the framework used in this thesis.

1.2.4 *Trends and tastes*

The listed values can be a guide to identify the various arguments which curators give to add an artwork in a collection. The expert can use these six characteristics to assess the cultural value of an artwork.

However, it is not straightforward how this cultural value is assessed. For instance, the aesthetical assessment is a matter of taste and can be influenced by fashions and trends. There are various historical examples that show that this can be of great influence on the collecting behaviour of museums (Barents et al., 1997). One example is how German Expressionism became fashionable in modern Dutch museums like Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in the 1950s (Barents et al., 1997). Multiple economists suggested that taste for the arts is a cultivated taste (McCain, 2003). This means that preferences develop through experiences (McCain, 2003). This could also be applied to art experts. Therefore, trends and tastes need to be considered in the selection process of the art expert.

1.3 Financing acquisitions: funds and donors

Financing is key to realise an acquisition. To understand the financing of an acquisition, the financial structure of a museum is explained. Next the types of private and corporate donors are discussed. The role of funds is discussed as well.

1.3.1 *Financial structures of a museum*

There are two different types of financial structures for a museum. This financial structure influences the budget for acquisitions. For-profit museums are private owned and often founded by a rich art collector (Kolbe et al., 2022). The personal taste of the collector is highly reflected in their acquisition choices (Kolbe et al., 2022). Frey (2019) claims that for-profit museums are more market oriented. They are more likely to emphasize on the visitor experience and less on education and preservation (Frey, 2019). The ticket sales and the financial input of the founder form the greatest share of the income of private museums (Frey, 2019). The non-profit museum is often publicly owned on a national or international level or by a foundation. Purely public museums rely on funding by the government and are generally less market oriented (Frey, 2019). Most non-profit museums receive a mixed funding of government subsidies, donors, ticket sales and other services.

1.3.2 *Fundraising strategy*

Museums are experiencing a decline in public funding due to the financial climate and policy decisions (Romolini et al., 2020). Therefore, the importance of alternative funding is increasing, and museums feel more urgency to attract new sources of income (Romolini et al., 2020). Moreover, it forces the museum to boost their self-generated revenues by increasing the admission fees, improving the sales of the shop or

café and space rentals for special events (Romolini et al., 2020). Other new sources of income are attracting more donors, sponsors and funds. To attract donations and sponsorship, the museum needs to implement a fundraising strategy in the organisation (Decker, 2015). A successful fundraising strategy needs to be linked with the general strategic planning of the organisation (Decker, 2015; Puček et al., 2021). Moreover, the staff is responsible for being truthful about the intended purposes with the donations (Decker, 2015).

Donations are gifts from individuals to a museum. These gifts include money and objects. Prestigious organisations have extensive schemes to structure the donors based on the size of their donations (Abbing, 2022). For every segment in the scheme there are different privileges. These privileges include contact with the top staff, prestigious events and being named in the annual report (Abbing, 2022). These events create a sense of community and increase the participation of the donors (Romolini et al., 2020). Accepting a donation from a donor with a controversial reputation can transfer to the museum and can affect the credibility of the museum (Puček et al., 2021). Great donors can have board influence, which is often openly communicated (Abbing, 2022). In general, pleasing and being friendly with the donors is part of the job and it is suggested that this could influence the decision-making processes of the organisation (Abbing, 2022). A slightly other form of a donation is leaving (part of) a heritage to a museum. Depending on the size of the heritage, this can be appropriated to a small fund with a specific purpose. For instance, the funds' purpose is to support research to a specific art form or to contribute to acquisitions. The donor can leave a legacy by supporting something the donor values.

Corporate sponsors purchase advertisement space. Often, the sponsors pay more than the market value of the advertisement space (Abbing, 2022). In this sense, the transaction is partly a gift and thus the sponsor is also a type of donor. Sponsorship is a financing form that generates an association between the sponsor and the sponsored through image transfer (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999; Romolini et al., 2020). This image transfer is mostly the result from the advertising practices of the museum. This generated association reflects in the reputation of both the sponsored and the sponsor (Abbing, 2022). The sponsorship is not purely philanthropic as the business receives services (Abbing, 2022). These services are often formally stated in a contract. Services include for instance a mention on a flyer and in the annual report (Abbing, 2022). The effect on the museum practices of these mentions is small but the extra income is important (Abbing, 2022). A partnership is a long-term relationship between a corporate sponsor and the museum (Proteau, 2018). Partnerships have the potential to increase resources, competences and visibility (Romolini et al., 2020). Proteau (2018) describes the (dis)advantages of corporate sponsorships and concludes that the ethical implications of the corporate partnership should be carefully examined. In anticipation of the findings, the FriendsLottery is the most obvious example of corporate partnership in the Netherlands. The FriendsLottery provides Dutch museums with large sums of money. In return, the FriendsLottery can offer free access for their players to these museums. Moreover, the FriendsLottery is mentioned as a standard sponsor in advertisements. The museum benefits financially from the partnership with the FriendsLottery. The FriendsLottery benefits from the

positive image transfer through advertisements and free access for members. This is example illustrates interaction and transaction between corporate sponsors and museums.

Funds can be public or private. Funds want to finance high quality art, but there can be difficulties with assessing the quality of art. Funds cope with this by trusting organisation with a long history and prestigious reputation. Public funds want to protect the autonomy of an art organisation. However, the funds have certain conditions to give a museum a subsidy. This way, the fund directs the recipient to certain behaviour. Private funds tend to direct the art organisation in a more direct manner. (Abbing, 2022)

1.4 Museum Management

In the recent decades, museums changed on an organisational level as there has been a shift in structure and management (Palumbo et al., 2021). This transformation is called managerialization and contains the implementation of managerial actions in the museum organisation (Palumbo et al., 2021). This transformation is the result of various external and internal triggers to innovate, broaden the mission and pressures of value creation (Coblence & Sabatier, 2014). A successful implementation of a management system can result in a more effective allocation of resources and the achievement of the museum goals (Puček et al., 2021). First, effective museum management through strategic planning and leadership is laid out. Implications of the financial management of the museum follows. These management developments are related to the collection management and acquisition policy lastly.

1.4.1 *Strategic planning through (dual) leadership*

Museum management concern strategic planning, organization and the control of museum activities. Effective museum management is achieved if goals and functions are clearly articulated and achieved. Next to effectiveness, formulating goals compels the organisation to discuss what is valuable for them and what the organisation wants to realize. These goals are necessary to produce goods which are in line with the ideals of the director and organisation (Klamer, 2017). To 'do the right thing', the organisation needs a mission to realize the values of the organisation (Klamer, 2017). According to Puček et al. (2021), effective museum management has a few features. The first feature is integer behaviour which is a basic trait in all museum activity. The second feature is that the museum should make correct decisions. Correct decisions can be achieved by being ethical, being legal and the expected outcome aligns with the general goals. The third feature is to allocate resources in an economic rational manner. This can be achieved by a strong financial management. The last feature is the process of articulating, achieving and evaluating goals and functions of the museum.

Strategic planning is a practical instrument to execute an effective museum management. Strategic planning includes a few steps which are formulated in a museum strategic plan or museum development concept. The first step is to assess the current situation of the organization. Second, the manager develops a vision and goals. Performance indicators of these goals are formulated to make the goals concrete.

These indicators make the goals workable and feasible to evaluate. To achieve the goals, a financial framework provides a clear overview of available resources and the allocation of the resources. The last step is to incorporate the strategy in the daily running of the museum. (Puček et al., 2021)

Effective management and strategic planning set a framework and rules on the behaviour of the organisation. It takes time and resources to implement and preserve an effective management system. Moreover, this management system needs a director with certain leadership qualities. Optimally, the museum manager has analytical skills, managerial personality traits, moral qualities and the managerial capacity to lead the organisation to achievement of goals. A successful museum manager reacts flexible and creative to challenges and opportunities. Opportunities for a museum are accepting an exceptional piece, attracting new resources and digital innovations. Challenges are less resources in times of crises, increasing competition and institutional risks like personnel, legal or financial risks. (Puček et al., 2021)

Most definitions of leadership claim that one person decides and controls other people in an organisation (Pierce & Newstrom, 2011). However, dual leadership is a common management strategy implemented in Dutch art museums (Cray, Inglis & Freeman, 2007; De Voogd, 2006). In non-cultural organisations dual leadership is only a temporary strategy to resolve a management impasse (De Voogd, 2006). The main reason is that museums are led by art historians, who often lack business skills necessary to manage the museum (De Voogd, 2006). Museum management becomes especially challenging when public funding decreases and the involvement of multiple stakeholders increases (Cray, Inglis & Freeman, 2007). A second director is positioned to handle the financial and logistic matters (De Voogd, 2006). The artistic director is often the dominant leader because of the importance of the artistic vision for the organisation (Cray, Inglis & Freeman, 2007). The disadvantage of dual leadership is that a disagreement in decision-making between two leaders can lead to conflict and management crises (De Voogd, 2006). An alternative management strategy is a singular leader with a management team (Cray, Inglis & Freeman, 2007; De Voogd, 2006). This management team supports the leader in financial and strategic choices.

1.4.2 *Financial management*

The financial management of a museum concerns the budgeting, managing the budget and auditing every year. Sound financial management is necessary to be a trustworthy organization. Being transparent about the finances is important too because the museum is financed by private and public funders. Various museum projects are funded by grants, which effects the planning, organizing and managing of the project. The increasing importance of private donors, corporate donors and public funds influences the financial management. The museum should clarify how the donations contribute to the performance of the museum and state the rules for donating in various forms. The tax implications of a donation should be clearly communicated as well. (Puček et al., 2021)

1.4.3 *Collection management and policy*

A formulated plan on the collection management is an outcome of managerialization (Palumbo et al., 2021). In this plan, often called the concept of collection activity or collection policy, the goals concerning acquisition, restoration, administration, loans and use are articulated (Puček et al., 2021). This document functions as a guideline for the decision-making process on acquisition. Additionally, the experts and managers lean on their experience of previous decisions (Puček et al., 2021). The collection policy is publicly shared and increases the transparency of the museum organization. The requirements for new acquisitions depend on the size and type of the collection and the ambitions of the museum. Generally, the acquisition policy leaves room for unexpected opportunities. The museum manager needs to be flexible to react to this kind of opportunities (Puček et al., 2021).

1.5 Expectations

Based on the mentioned theories, I expect the following.

- I expect that the value of the collection is mostly assessed through the cultural values of Throsby (2000): aesthetic, symbolic, social, historic, spiritual and authentic. Moreover, the cultural values transcend the economic value for the curators.
- Based on the historic examples, I expect that there are acquisition trends and that the acquisitions are influenced by the acquired taste of the curator and director (McCain, 2003). There is a consensus within the artworld on what quality art is in old and modern art and I expect that the museum conforms to this consensus (Drummond, 2006; Rodner & Thomson, 2013).
- I expect that the museum functions as a gatekeeper through social networks (Foster, Borgatti & Jones, 2011). This is in line with the theory on the dynamics of the art market (Rodner & Thomson, 2013). Moreover, I expect that the museum functions as a co-producing gatekeeper through the commissions (Foster, Borgatti & Jones, 2011).
- I expect that the donors, funds and corporate donors influence the decision-making process on acquisitions (Abbing, 2022). The museum has become more reliant on alternative funding strategies for acquisitions because there has been less public funding available (Romolini et al., 2020).
- I expect that museum management has transformed in the recent years and a new improved management strategy is implemented (Palumbo et al., 2021). The aim of this strategy is to allocate resources effectively and achieve the goals of the museum (Puček et al., 2021). Funding strategies have become more important to finance the museum activities and has become implemented in the museum management (Romolini et al., 2020).

Chapter 2 – Methodology

This section dissects the methodology for this research. First, the research design includes the research questions and the general information on the design. Second, the method lays out the strategy to find answers to the research questions. The selection method for the interviewees is reviewed next and entails the description of the interviewees. In addition, the documents used in the analysis are described. Lastly, the limitations and issues of the research method are examined.

2.1 Research Design

This is a qualitative case study of Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. Based on semi-structured interviews and documents, the research question is answered in the conclusion. A research question is formulated as followed:

- How does Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen decide on collection acquisitions?

There are multiple subquestions formulated which closely relate to the research question and thus function as a guide for a deeper understanding of the topic:

- How do funds and donors influence the decision-making process on acquisitions?
- How does the decision-making process on acquisitions and accepting donated art differ?
- How do curators and directors judge the added value of an acquisition to the collection?
- How is the decision-making process managed?

Foremost, this research is a qualitative study of Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. The study is qualitative and is rather concerned with words than with numbers (Bryman, 2012). The reasoning is a combination of inductive and deductive reasoning. Theories formed certain expectations which were the base of the interview guide. In this sense, the reasoning is deductive. However, during the semi-structured interviews some observations came to light which gave a complementary insight to the expectations from theory. From these observations, general patterns connected to existing theory and resulted in additional conclusions. This is a more inductive approach, which is a characteristic of qualitative research (Bryman, 2012). Moreover, the social dynamics within the organisation are examined through the eyes of the interviewee. This is also a feature of qualitative research (Bryman, 2012). The qualitative strategy provides a deeper understanding of a phenomenon and to support these findings I refer to other empirical studies and documents from Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen.

Another key component of the research design is that it is a case study of Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. This museum is an exemplifying case as it is likely to be representative for the broader category of which the museum is a member (Bryman, 2012). The broader category is Dutch art and design museum. The choice to do a case study of specifically Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen was not taken intentional, but this rather was an opportunity. The collection of Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen has

various art disciplines and covers a wide historic period. The aim of this research is to generate an intensive examination of a single case in relation to the theoretical framework. The theories support the results and the conclusions of this research. The aim of this type of research is not to generalise the findings to the broader group, as there are concerns on external viability of a case study research design. Therefore, the aim is to generate theory from the findings and to identify differences and similarities with previous research. To increase the credibility of the research, the triangulation method is used. Triangulation is a cross-checking method of multiple sources. In this case, this is the interviews and the documents to check for differences and similarities.

As I work at the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, I am close to a participant observer of the case. While I don't have influence on the decision process of the museum accessions, I make the minutes of the curators meeting where the acquisitions are discussed. It also means that I observe the discussions and decisions on acquisitions. This gives me more background knowledge and insights on the argumentation of curators and director. These insights form a base when I interpret the interviews and documents. This is important to mention as I need to stay aware of my position in the organisation in relation to my research.

2.2 Research method

The research is accomplished through various stadia: analysing theory, gathering evidence and analysing through triangulation. The first stadium is reading and analysing literature to gain knowledge about the topic. From these literature, relevant concepts and theories are formulated in the theoretical framework. This is the foundation of the research. After narrowing down the topic, a research question was composed, and a suitable research method was chosen.

The second stadium was to organise the semi-structured interviews. I chose semi-structured interviews to get a deeper understanding of the dynamics inside and outside the organisation. Moreover, interviews allow nuances in the argumentation of the interviewee which is extremely important to understand the decision-making process of acquisitions. The interview type indicates an interview guide with predetermined topics and questioned, while allowing the interviewer and interviewee to wander off to other relevant issues. Thus, the interview guide functions as a guideline (see Appendix B). The functions of the employees differ and thus the focus of the interview differ per interview. For the staff who is researching the collection like the curators, the focus of the interview is the expert decision, quality assessment and the relation with collectors. Moreover, I ask about their attitude towards collection mobility and buying collectively with other museums as an alternative to acquisitions. The staff from the department Relations and philanthropy is questioned about the fundraising strategies, the groups of donors, the privileges and funds. The directors are questioned about the management, acquisitions, financing structure and leadership.

Next to the interviews, the annual reports 2017-2021 and collection plan 2022-2023 are studied through a qualitative content analysis. In the annual reports, information is given on the museum

acquisitions and who financed them. Moreover, motivations are written down for a few acquisitions and numbers on how many objects are donated or acquired. This provides complementary empirical evidence. The collection plan is a document that functions as a guide in the decision-making process on collecting and thus increases the transparency to stakeholders. It shortly states the history of the museum and the vision for the future. This document is updated every other year and thus gives an updated version of the mission and vision of the museum on the collection.

The interviews are transcribed and then analysed through codes using ATLAS.ti. The coding process was intuitive. The documents are analysed using the same coding system. The purpose of the coding was to structure the texts and to label relevant statements and topics related to the research question. After the documents and the interview transcripts were coded, they were compared. This comparative approach is called triangulation and refers to a process of cross-checking results from multiple sources (Bryman, 2012). This increases the credibility of the findings. After analysing the findings, the research question could be answered in the conclusion.

2.3 The selection method

The unit of analysis is Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. The selection strategy is purposive and thus a non-probability strategy (Bryman, 2012). This strategy includes an active selection of the participants based on their relation to the research topic (Bryman, 2012). The research questions consist of a few key concepts: decision-making on acquisitions, funds and donors, management and quality assessment of art. Based on these concepts, I have selected employees of Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen whose function is related to these concepts.

2.3.1 Interviewee description

After analysing the concepts of the research questions, three categories of employees were formed: art experts, philanthropy staff and management. The first category, the art experts, consist of the curators. The curator is responsible for the collection, exhibitions, research, accessioning and deaccessioning. The curators have various specialities: modern art, old art, crafts, design, prints, drawings and contemporary art. For this research, I have interviewed four out of nine curators. These four curators had different expertise: prints, design, modern art and old art. A varied selection of experts was chosen because the art market and the quality assessment differ per art form.

The second category is the philanthropy staff. In the organisation, the department Relations and Philanthropy is responsible for the private and corporate donors and the funds. Donor types are divided over a few employees: (junior) manager relations and (junior) manager corporate relations. As the functions (junior) manager corporate relations were both unoccupied during the time of this research, these are left out of the research. Therefore, the conclusions I make about the corporate relations rely on the input of the director, other fundraising staff and documents. At the time of the interviews, there were approximately nine people working at the department. This is only an indication as there were multiple

personnel changes around the period of the interview. I have interviewed three people from the department: the junior manager relations, senior manager relations and fundraiser. The managers relations are responsible for maintaining the relation with donors and attracting new donors. Each manager relations is responsible for multiple groups of donors. The fundraiser is responsible for the requests at funds for acquisitions, exhibitions, and educational programs.

The third category is the management. The director is responsible for the whole organisation and the mission and vision of the museum. This vision on the collection is also highly relevant for the acquisition policy. I have interviewed the current director and the former director. Unlike most other museums, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen does not have a separate artistic and business director. Both directors understand business and artistic goals of the museum.

	Function	Years of Employment	Gender
1	Director	10	Female
2	Former Director	18	Male
3	Curator	2	Male
4	Curator (anonymous)	-	-
5	Curator	20	Male
6	Curator	17	Female
7	Researcher	2	Male
8	Manager Relations	7	Female
9	Manager Relations	2	Female
10	Fundraiser	6	Male
11	Interviewee Rembrandt Association (anonymous)	-	-

Table 2.1 – List of interviewees

2.2 Limitations

There are a few limitations of this research. First, no generalised conclusions about Dutch art museum can be drawn from this research as it is a case study. Second, the fact that I am working in the organisation can influence my objectivity as a researcher. While this gave me the opportunity to interview a great share of the museum employees in the first place, it also means I work with the interviewees. This work relation can influence the interviews and my interpretation of their answers. While being part of the organisation gives a greater insight in the dynamics within the organisation, it also challenges my objectivity. The third limitation of this research is the replicability of the research. As the interviews were semi-structured, the interview guide was not strictly followed and I asked extra in depth questions suitable to the interviewees answers. Next, there are common issues with a case study as research design according to Bryman (2012). The main concern is the quality of theoretical reasoning of the researcher. As I am still being post-graduate and the purpose of this thesis is to practice theoretical reasoning and empirical research, I must rely on other peer-reviewed studies and textbooks. To deal with the issue, I need to reason as clearly as possible and be transparent about my sources. Moreover, I cannot generate new theory as I am still inexperienced. This is problematic as I have chosen a qualitative research design and a key feature of

qualitative research is inductive reasoning. Therefore, I mostly reasons deductively. The next issue is that the museum is highly dependent on the financing of the funds and donors for acquisitions. Because this thesis might be publicly published, some interviewees were reluctant to participate in the interviews as they were afraid that their words would be misinterpreted. To solve the issue, interviewees could participate anonymously. Moreover, the interviewee will not be cited if they expressed any negative attitudes towards citations.

Chapter 3 – Findings

In this chapter, the findings from the interviews and documents are stated. The findings describe and analyse the decision-making process for acquisitions for Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. First, the process of buying art is explained through the market, the curators meeting and the financing. Second, the decision-making process on donated art is explained. The criteria for adding an artwork correspond for donating and acquiring and these criteria are discussed. Next, the role of the director in the decision-making is elaborated on. Lastly, recent developments are discussed.

Table 3.1 illustrates the proportions of the acquisitions, donations and long-term loans from 2011 to 2021. The data for this table is retrieved from the annual reports 2011-2021. In this period, 3355 artworks have been donated, 2117 artworks have been acquired and 1446 artworks were obtained as a long-term loan. The high number of donated artworks shows the impact of donations and legacies on the collection. Moreover, an interviewee states that ‘with a long-term loan, there is always the wish that the loan will become a donation’. Thus, the number of long-term loans show possible future donations. However, the numbers don’t indicate the costs of an acquisition or the impact of the artwork on the collection. For instance, the high cost for the painting of Miró (1927) isn’t visible in this table. The artwork was highlighted in the annual report 2022 and has been realised with the contribution of multiple donors. The table provides a perspective on the ratio of donated and acquired items.

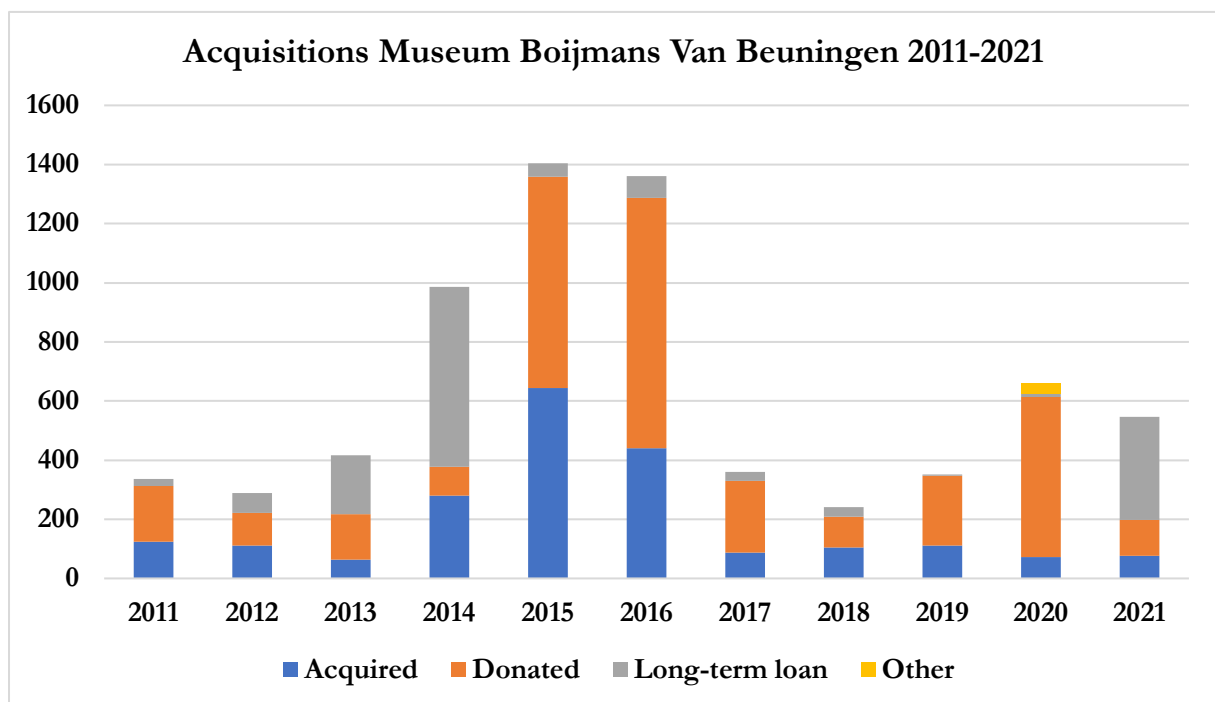


Table 3.1 – Acquisitions Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen 2011-2021, retrieved from annual reports

3.1 Decision-making on acquisitions

The decision-making process on acquisitions exists in multiple steps and is not necessarily a linear process. First, the assessment of the art market by the curator and director is examined. After this selection, the curators and director meet to discuss the proposed acquisitions. If there is an agreement on the selected artwork, the acquisition is discussed in an extended board meeting and the fundraising strategy is determined. For acquisitions with a higher price, the museum relies on funds and donors. Funds have a standard procedure for judging requests. The acquisition can be realised when the request is accepted by the fund.

3.1.1 Art market: auctions, fairs, dealers and collectors

Two factors influence the chance of the realization of an acquisition when a museum wants to buy from an auction, fair or a dealer. The first factor is the prices of the art market. According to the interviewed curators, the prices vary per type of art. The popularity of the artist or period increases the price. Certain art periods like Dutch 17th century or impressionist paintings are fashionable nowadays. Moreover, the interviewee from the Rembrandt Association explains that artworks from female artist are more wanted now and increase in price. The second decisive factor for realizing an acquisition is the pace of the art market. Five interviewees state that the prices for old and modern artworks are almost always higher than the budget of the museum. Therefore, the museum needs time to raise funds. The time to raise funds can be a dealbreaker for an acquisition. Private collectors can be much quicker in deciding on and buying an artwork. This causes a high competition in the higher segment of the art market. With auctions, time is essential as well, as the auction is announced a limited amount of time in advance.

Curators want to be informed on the art market. As there is such a great supply in artworks and a great number of sellers, one curator states ‘that is impossible to know in reality’ what is offered in the market. Moreover, two curators state that it is difficult to assess the visual qualities and the condition of a painting through a picture. Therefore, the curator needs to filter which sellers offer the most relevant artworks for their discipline. Examples are auction houses Sotheby’s and Christies or art dealers with a good reputation. A curator explains that he knows ‘art dealers as well from who I get newsletters, you try to keep up to date on what is available on the art market.’ The curator gets informed by newsletters from sellers. The curators or director can also be informed personally by dealers through mail or message through the mobile phone. This is a personal strategy where the seller needs to be informed on the vision and preferences of the curator or director. As curators and directors are often occupied with other tasks, it can be useful if a dealer selects a piece based on this information to overcome the great supply of the market. This can be an effective strategy from the seller. The following quote from the former director illustrates this:

There was a Dutch representative [at Christies] who said: [...], tonight there is a piece from Tanguy for sale, I don’t know if you know it, but I will send you a picture. [...] I don’t know

anyone who will bid at this piece except for you. Of course, this is a very funny remark, [...] so I said: you make me curious, which is of course exactly the point. I immediately thought this [artwork] is amazing, truly amazing.

This approach from the seller was effective as the former director acquired the artwork of Tanguy (1928).

Art fairs have an important role in the art market. An important fair is the TEFAF. A curator gives an example on the decision-process of another Dutch museum. They have the strategy to set a time for the curator and director to roam around the fair and directly afterwards, they decide on the spot on the acquisition. At the time of the interviews with the curators, the TEFAF had finished some weeks ago and they had not decided on possible acquisitions yet. This caused unclarity for the curators, as they didn't know if the wished pieces were still available. Art fairs bundle high prestige art dealers who present their finest art, which is convenient and timesaving for curators and directors. A curator states that 'even if I didn't attend [the fair], I will examine through media what was offered'. While the prices of the art and the competition between buyers can be a dealbreaker for realizing an acquisition, the art fair informs the curators on developments in the art market.

Next to sellers like auction houses and dealers, there are collectors and other type of private sellers who may have contact with the curator or director. While donating art has tax benefits, not everyone is in the financial position to donate an artwork or not willing to donate due to other reasons. However, art owners often do see the value of their art pieces being owned by a museum, like the high-quality storage facility, the accessibility for public, educational services etc. Moreover, selling to a museum is also a matter of prestige (Rodner & Thompson, 2013). Therefore, the curator says that the seller also contacts the museum directly with an offer. A curator states that an interesting proposition came in, but they didn't react for a while as there was a switch in personnel. After contacting the seller eventually, the artwork was still available for sale. Thus, time is less pressing for the sale. Time is necessary for the decision-making of the director and determining the fundraising strategy.

The artist could also be the seller. There are multiple ways for the curator to get in touch with a contemporary artist. First, a curator states that a temporary exhibition at Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen always includes contemporary work. For the curators and director, it is interesting to add a piece from a temporary exhibition to the collection as memorabilia of the exhibition, and therefore, a part of museum history. This was confirmed by four interviewees. The curators inform themselves on emerging contemporary artist through their network. A curator gives the example of the Stimuleringsfonds, which is a fund which directly supports emerging artists. The curator explains that the selection of these artists is made by experts of the Stimuleringsfonds. The curator relies on this selection for emerging artists as there is a great number of contemporary artists. Moreover, the curator states that she informs herself through her social and professional network. She states that 'I think it is important to talk to designers themselves. Through them I hear things about new talent [...]. It is also the network itself which informs you.' This is in line with the theory of Foster, Borgatti and Jones (2011) about the gatekeeper which selects and informs themselves through the network.

Second, the museum commissions artist to produce with a specific purpose and then the curator and director can also consider an acquisition. A curator explains that it depends on the purpose of the commission how involved the museum is. The museum co-produces with the artist or designer when the purpose is to make a permanent interior piece. Here, the museum functions as a co-creating gatekeeper (Foster, Borgatti & Jones, 2011). When an artwork is commissioned for a temporary exhibition, the curator states that she advises the commissioned artist. The curator gives the following example. Sabine Marcellis made small lamps just after her graduation. When the museum commissioned her, the curator encouraged her to make something more sizeable. The curator states that the commissioned work ‘turned out fantastic [...] as the promise of her work lies in the size’. However, a commission is not a guarantee to be included in the collection. A curator explains that they pay the production costs and a fee, which is different than the total price of the artwork. The reason is that the curator or director can’t foresee the quality the artwork and therefore can’t promise if the work is going to be acquired. A director states that ‘you have to deal with this promise [of being included in the collection]’ in a polite and correct manner. A curator states that a commission will add a new perspective to the exhibition, and it is a nice way to promote a career. In short, there are several routes for a curator to inform themselves about supply of the art market. The curator can propose an acquisition through this information.

3.1.2 Curators and director meet

There are three moments that a proposed acquisition is discussed. First is a meeting with the director and the curator. Individual curators meet regularly with the director to discuss current affairs. A curator states that they propose acquisitions in this individual meeting for a first reaction of the director. If the proposed acquisition has potential, the curator communicates the proposal in the curators meeting. The director and curators have a biweekly meeting, and this is the moment they discuss proposals for acquisitions. This is a relative new work routine that is initiated by the current director. The curators differ in their attitude to this new routine. Three curators are uncertain about the benefits of this new process. The main reason for this uncertainty originates from the understanding that curators from other disciplines need form an opinion on their proposal. However, all curators acknowledge the benefit of transparency in this new routine. The director explains the intention of this new process is to structure the decision-making. Moreover, it is a planned and plenary moment to discuss the proposals. The director adds that the curator with the expertise on the proposed artwork has the most weight in the discussion. The benefits, terms and conditions of the proposal are discussed. If the participants of the meeting are positive and the director agrees but the price is relatively high, the director will discuss the acquisition in the extended board meeting. In this third meeting the proposal is discussed with managers from various departments. If it is decided to realize a proposal, the fundraising strategy is determined.

3.1.3 Financing

To finance acquisitions, the museum is dependent on various financiers because their budget is too small to realize acquisitions. The budget for acquisitions is €50.000. An interviewee states that ‘this is what we always call trigger money, it is the first share and you hope that others will join’. This interviewee explains that this is necessary as every fund has their own rules on what percentage they will contribute and there is a demand that the museum must contribute as well. From the annual reports and the interviews, four types of financiers are: funds, huisstichtingen², private donors and corporate donors. The contribution of the financiers varies in the manner and conditions. For acquisitions with a high price, it is always a combination of the financiers as requirements of funds force a complementary strategy. For example, *Peinture-poème (Musique, Seine, Michel, Bataille et moi)* from Miró (1927) was bought in 2022. The following quotation was retrieved from the website of Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen and sums up the financiers of the acquisition of the painting of Miró (1927):

Purchase with support of: Rembrandt Association (made possible thanks to the contribution of its Nationaal Fonds Kunstbezit, its Dura Kunstfonds, its Innorosa Fonds, its Themafonds Moderne Kunst and the annual contribution of the Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds), Museaal Aankoopfonds, Mondriaan Fund, Stichting Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, FriendsLottery, Stichting Bevordering van Volkskracht, G.Ph. Verhagen-Foundation, Kring van Eyck, Boijmans Business Club and Boijmans Corporate Members, Stichting Elise Mathilde Fonds, Erasmusfoundation and several private donors, 2022.

The Rembrandt Association supported the acquisition with incomes from five funds. These five funds are managed by the Rembrandt Association. The government supported through the Museaal Aankoopfonds and indirectly through the Mondriaan Fund. Multiple other funds like Erasmusfoundation supported, as well as corporate donors like FriendLottery and private donors like Kring van Eyck. Stichting Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen is a huisstichting. In the following subsections the types of financiers are elaborated on.

Funds

According to the interviewed fundraiser, there are many funds in the Netherlands. He mentioned that funds have been reluctant to contribute to acquisitions the last few years because they believe that acquisitions don't have a direct impact on society. The fundraiser states that funds rather contribute to educational programs or projects with contemporary artists. As a result of this development, two main funds kept contributing to acquisitions: the Mondriaan Fund and the Rembrandt Association. The funds differ in their organizational structure according to their websites. Museums can do a request for financing an acquisition. One curator states that the museum decides strategically for which acquisitions they

² Translated to English: foundations related to Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen.

request a subsidy from the Mondriaan Fund and the Rembrandt Association. In addition, she states that the museum prefers to requests for old or modern art. Three curators state that the prices for old and modern art are the highest of the disciplines. The high prices explain the strategic choice of the museum.

One representative from the Rembrandt Association is interviewed. The interviewee states that the mission of the Rembrandt Association is to support museum with acquiring artworks. Next to this main goal, the association supports research and restauration. More recently, the association is enabling loans between museums in the Netherlands. The interviewee states that the decision to grant or reject a request is made by the board in the board meeting by a vote. The interviewee elaborates that this meeting is prepared by sharing the request for the acquisition and an advice from one or two member of the advisory committee with the members of the meeting. The interviewee claims that the request will never be accepted if there is a negative advise from this advisory committee. There is a discussion about the request and the decision is made through a vote according to the interviewee. The Rembrandt Association has three main criteria for the judgement of a request according to their website (Rembrandt Association, n.d.a). The first criterium is high quality. As the Rembrandt Association supports all kinds of art forms and periods, there is an advisory committee with art historians with various specialties. The interviewee states that this committee assesses the quality of the work by researching the historical relevance, the oeuvre of the artist and the visual qualities of the artwork. The second criterium is that the artwork needs to be an addition to the museum collection and Collectie Nederland. According to the interviewee, the Rembrandt Association values art collections in the Netherlands as one whole. If a similar artwork in the Netherlands is already part of a museum collection, the chances of the Rembrandt Association supporting the request decrease. The interviewee states that this is also the reason why the associations started to enable loans. The third criterium is that the artwork must be visible for public. There are a few additional demands (Rembrandt Association, n.d.b). One demand is that the museum can't ask for a fee on a loan request of a Dutch museum. The Rembrandt Association supports a maximum of 50% of the price. The museum needs to be registered at the Museumvereniging. The decision-making process takes a month minimum. The Rembrandt Association manages around 60 different funds. If the board decides to buy a work, the interviewee states that if there is a Fonds op Naam, the private donor will be contacted about the acquisition and their possible contribution. This donor doesn't have an influence on the decision as they are contacted after the decision by the board.

The Mondriaan Fund financially supports the visual arts in the Netherlands. The fund is subsidized by the government. It has various arrangements to support museums, artists and events. The Mondriaan Fund also supports acquisitions for Dutch museums (Mondriaan Fund, 2022). The decision about the request is made by the board of the Mondriaan Fund (Mondriaan Fund, n.d.b). Before the board meeting, an advisory committee is assembled through an open call to their advisors. There is a protocol on the advisors and about the prevention of conflict of interest (Mondriaan Fund, n.d.a). The procedure on how an advisor is selected is transparent and they claim to alternate the advisors regularly. The board never grant the request if there is negative advice. The purpose of the acquisition is to increase the quality of the Collectie Nederland (Mondriaan Fund, 2022). The Mondriaan Fund doesn't claim to look at the quality of

the work, but judges on the motivation and the significance of the work (Mondriaan Fund, 2022). Like the Rembrandt Association, the Mondriaan Fund has similar demands: the acquisition needs to be publicly visible, no fees for loans request of Dutch museum and the artist is underrepresented in the Collectie Nederland. The Mondriaan Fund state that ‘if two institution request for the same work, this is beneficial for the request and the possibility for a collective acquisition can be explored’ (Mondriaan Fund, 2022). The Mondriaan Fund supports a maximum of 40% of the price.

There are quite a few similarities and differences on the decision-making process between the Rembrandt Association, the Mondriaan Fund and the museum. The first similarity is that all the institutions judge a possible acquisition on the added value to the collection of the museum and an improvement to the Collectie Nederland. Funds claim that artist of the requested artwork needs to be underrepresented in the Collectie Nederland. What is contradictory is that the Rembrandt Association makes an exception if the Rijksmuseum wants to buy a Rembrandt painting and contributes €15 million to the acquisition (Rembrandt Association, 2023). An interviewee states that ‘if you have already 35 paintings of Rembrandt in your depot which you can’t all exhibit [...] to what extent is this acquisition [of the Vaandeldrager] an enrichment?’. Thus, while the criteria of an enrichment for Collectie Nederland is considered at the funds and the museum, the interpretation of an enrichment is different. For five interviewees from Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, the own collection and museum profile is the main criterion. This is different for the funds; they will put the value of Collectie Nederland over the individual museum. The interviewee of the Rembrandt Association state that the Collectie Nederland is a more important criteria than the individual museum collection. Therefore, they also support collective acquisitions. A collective acquisition is an acquisition by two or more museums. Two curators expressed a negative attitude toward collective acquisitions because the individual museum profile will be affected in the long term, see section 3.5.1. This is a tension between the fund and the museum, as the funds promote collective acquisition. Another similarity is that both funds and museum rely on the expert input. The advice of the advisory committee of the Rembrandt Association and the Mondriaan Fund is highly influential or binding to the board. In the museum, the curator also has a great influence on the decision-making process. A difference between the funds is the advisory committee. The Mondriaan Fund has transparent and protocolled routine on the selection of advisors and the group of advisors renew regularly. The Rembrandt Association has a solid set of advisors who are selected by the fund. An important difference between the funds is the notion of quality and the weight of quality in the judgement of the request. The Rembrandt Association explicitly states that requested artwork needs to be of high quality. The interviewee of Rembrandt Association acknowledges that the notion of quality is under discussion in the art historical discourse but pleads that quality does exist and can be determined through historical and visual examination. The Mondriaan Fund leaves out the notion of quality entirely and focuses on the importance of the requested acquisition for the museum. In the museum, the ideas on quality and the assessment differs per discipline and overall they motivate the acquisitions with various arguments additional to visual qualities and historical relevance (Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, 2022). A last difference is how the Mondriaan Fund and the Rembrandt Association are funded. The Mondriaan

Fund is a public cultural fund and receives their funding from the government. The Rembrandt Association manages around 60 funds (Rembrandt Association, 2022). These funds are categorized in Themed funds, Personal Funds and Circles. Moreover, the Rembrandt Association manages fundings from Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds and Friends Lottery. The interviewee from the Rembrandt Association argues that their donors don't have an influence on their decision-making process.

Huisstichtingen

The museum has various huisstichtingen. These are funds connected to the museum. They are connected to Stichting Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen or Stichting tot beheer Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen (Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, 2022). Huisstichtingen are governed by a board. Most huisstichtingen are results of a heritage of a person or couple and are also referred to as Fondsen op Naam³. The purpose overlaps with the personal interest of the person. The huisstichtingen have various purpose for acquisitions. For instance, one interviewee explains that the Lucas Van Leydenfund is destined to expand the print collection, was legislated by J.C.J. Bierens de Haan in 1951 and governed by Stichting Boijmans Van Beuningen. The Lucas Van Leydenfund has a three-headed board which includes the director of the museum (Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, 2022). Another curator explain that the Kalthorn-Timmermansfund is for acquisitions in silver objects and contemporary design, was founded in 2009 and is governed by Stichting Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. This fund has a small committee for the management of the fund. An interviewee states that it depends per year per fund how much is available, as it depends on the stock market and other investments profits. The funds capital is mostly maintained, and the profits are used for acquisitions for an enduring use of the capital. The director doesn't always have the mandate to decide on funds of the huisstichting. If the acquisition is in line with the funds purpose and the collection policy of the museum, the chances are close to zero that a committee would disagree with the acquisition.

Private donors

Private donors are ranked in different groups. The Friends of the museum donate €50 to €250 yearly. There were 1.676 Friends in 2021. The Van Eyck Circle donate €1.000 yearly or €5.000 once. The Gezelschap⁴ Bas Jan Ader donates from €4.000 yearly or €20.000 once. The Gezelschap Salvador Dalí donates €10.000 yearly or €50.000 once. The Gezelschap Paul Cézanne donates €20.000 yearly or €100.000 once. The Gezelschap Jheronimus Bosch donates over €200.000 yearly or €1.000.000 once. The Kring Van Eyck and the Gezelschappen had 159 members in 2021. Every group has their own exclusive privileges. This includes unlimited entrance to the museum or depot and invitationa for special events. According to the manager relations, the privileges are generally not used extensively. The manager relations explains that the Gezelschappen can label their gift for a specific purpose: (scientific) research,

³ Translated to English: fund established through the heritage of a person or couple

⁴ Translated to English: club or circle

acquisitions, restoration or education. The manager relations state that three or four donors labelled their gift for acquisitions. If an acquisition is considered, the manager relations will offer to show the artwork to these donors. This is a kind gesture to engage the donor with the museum practices. The manager relations can't recall that a donor was unwilling to contribute to an acquisition. However, it is understood by two interviewees that donors generally are keen on educational programs. While this isn't decisive, this can influence the purpose of the yearly revenues of a certain group and is a way to satisfy the donors.

There is one *Gezelschap* which is only for exceptional gifts: the Jheronimus Bosch. The donors in this segment are more engaged in the acquisition according to two interviewees. The contact between the donor and the director is more intensive. There are two known donors in this group: the couple Piet van der Slikke and Sandra Swelheim and Han Nefkens with the Han Nefkens Fashion on the Edge Foundation. Piet van der Slikke and Sandra Swelheim contributed to the artwork *Het Leven Verspillen Aan Jon* [Video installation] by Pipilotti Rist (2021) among other projects. Han Nefkens is a patron who contributed to a contemporary fashion program and financed previous acquisitions of international contemporary artist. The former director states that he and Han Nefkens collaborated to realize special art projects for Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. In this case, the patron is more involved in these projects and the kinship between patron and director resulted in a mutual respect. A manager relations confirms that the director always proposes which artwork to buy to the patron and never vice versa. This is necessary as the museum needs to act with integrity (Puček et al., 2021). If a museum buys an artwork, this increases the market position of the artist (Rodner & Thompson, 2013). If the donor would suggest which artworks to buy, it could financially or socially be beneficial for the donor. This would negatively affect the reputation of the museum.

Corporate donors

The corporate donors are separated in two groups: Business Clubs and Corporate Members (Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, 2022). These corporate donors have privileges like free entrance, guided tours and invites to exclusive events. An interviewee states that corporate donors are often donating in line with their *Maatschappelijk Verantwoord Ondernemen* (MVO), which means that the enterprise attempts to positively influence society (MVO Nederland, 2023). What practices exactly have a positive effect, is free for interpretation by the enterprise (MVO Nederland, 2023). According to the fundraiser, few enterprises believe an acquisition has a direct educational and societal impact. Thus, companies prefer that their contribution to the museum serves an educational purpose or an exhibition. The director decides how their contribution is used and like the private donors, the museum wants to take the preferences in account to satisfy the donors on a long term. The FriendsLottery is a corporate partner who contributed more than €10,5 million since 2006 (Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, 2022). In 2021, half of their yearly contribution is saved for the museum renovation and the other half is used for acquisitions (Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, 2022). The fundraiser states that the FriendsLottery is not involved in the decision-making process and the museum decides how the money is used. In return, people who joined the lottery have a free entrance of Depot Boijmans Van Beuningen. This could be qualified as a

partnership, as it is a long-term cooperation and the compensations are specially established for this donor (Proteau, 2018).

Concluding, time and money are two decisive factors in the art market. The museum has limited resources for acquisitions and depend on various financiers. The museum needs time to determine a fundraising strategy. Funds have a definitive role in the realization of an acquisition with a high price. The decision to acquire an artwork is made by the director in discussion with the curators. In the next section, the decision-making process on donated art is discussed.

3.2 Decision-making on donated art

The curator and director can be notified in various ways on a donation. Artworks can be donated in the form of a legacy or a donation. A curator states that the donor of the artwork often has a personal connection of museum. A curator states that sometimes the donor is unknown to the museum and the donation is more or less out of the blue. Therefore, proposed donations are unpredictable. However, the curator states that often the donor is known by the museum and sometimes the donor and the curator have had correspondence before. The main difference between a donation and an acquisition is that there is a funding strategy necessary for an acquisition. Another difference is that when an acquisition is made, the curator or director was often searching for the piece and there is a clear motivation on why the object needs to be acquired. When a donation is suggested, the curator needs to assess the quality and relation to the collection more spontaneously.

A donation is financially favourable because the financial resources for acquisitions are limited. The artwork is examined with the same criteria as an acquisition: high quality and connection to the collection. Two curators state that they are not less critical in the judgement on a donated piece than an acquisition. Four curators state that an accession needs to be high quality, donated or not. Two curators state that they have accepted an artwork that they wouldn't have bought, because they would have been more selective or would have preferred another work from the artist. Thus, the curator is not less critical on the quality or the connection to the collection, but the curator is more compromising as there is little financial pressure. A curator states on the donations of prints that 'in a sense you are less critical because you accept artworks that you wouldn't buy [...] but that doesn't mean that the artwork is bad, the quality must be sufficient'. In comparison to acquiring, the relation with the donor can be a factor as well. A majority of the curators aim for a trustworthy, transparent and long-term relation with collectors. If the collector suggests a donation, the curator can take this relation into account. The relation with collectors can be important for the curator for information exchanges and knowledge about private collections. Multiple curators state that the purpose of the relation between curator and collector isn't to attract donations. A donation which results from a good relation is rather a favourable extra.

Four interviewees state that the donor is mostly motivated by a personal connection to Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. Moreover, the donor has a personal connection to their own collection as the collected items are accumulated over the years. Their tastes, preferences and ideas on art are reflected in

their own collection. This personal relation with the collection can result in a strong preference to keep the collection complete and donate it altogether. A manager relations states that ‘the collection is put together with so much love that it is almost like a child and the collector want the collection as a whole and in good care’. In this case, the curator needs to consider the quality of the total collection. The quality and the connection to the collection can vary per piece. If the donor only wants to donate the collection as a whole, the curator needs to assess the importance of the collection in its totality. The former director gave another example of when a donated collection was accepted. He explains that another former director was successful in attracting heritages. The agreements on the heritage were already formed during lifetime while the collector was still collecting. This resulted that when the heritage came in, the curator didn’t have a good idea on what was added to the collection and couldn’t select (Simon Thomas, 2022). Nowadays, when a heritage comes in, the curator makes a selection and the unwanted artworks are auctioned to raise funds for the museum. It is preferred by the curators to select because of a few factors. First, the collection plan mentions that ‘the expectation is that the collection can be reduced by 5%, but this ambition can probably not be realised because deaccessioning is a long process and values change overtime’. As deaccessioning is labour intensive because of regulations and precarious judgements, it is understandable that the curators are strict on accepting donated art. Other disadvantages of excepting insignificant artworks are that the conservation costs money and depot space. One curator states that it is uncommon nowadays that a collection is accepted in its totality because of these disadvantages.

Suggested donations are discussed internally with directors and curators in the biweekly curators meeting and among each other. The museum has a positive attitude towards donated art. In their collection plan, it is stated that ‘the museum collects collections’ (Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, 2021a). Historically, this is clearly the case (Ter Molen, 2000). Curators and director are selective and critical on which donations they accept. When a collection is offered as a donation in its entirety, the curator carefully examines the artworks and reviews the collection with the collector. The decision on accepting is made by the director, but the opinion of the curator is highly influential.

3.3 Criteria for acquisitions

There are a few criteria for an acquisition which apply to almost all disciplines. The first is that the artwork is of high quality. The second is that the artwork has a link to the collection. The third is that it fits the profile of the museum. The fourth is that the provenance is documented sufficiently and there are no gaps in the provenance in times of war. The fifth criterium is a satisfactory physical condition.

3.3.1 *Quality assessment*

An artwork can be of high quality because of various reasons. A curator says that the definition of art is stretched wider and wider throughout history. Old art was defined more clearly and being an artist was a kind of an artisan or craftsman. With modern and contemporary art, the concept or idea of the artwork became more and more important. Thus, a critical note must be made that the quality assessment varies

per type and period. Therefore, general theory on the quality of art always needs to be interpreted with this note in mind. In the art historical discourse, there is a discussion if objective quality even exists in art. Most interviewees acknowledged that there is a subjectivity and matter of taste in the quality assessment. Aesthetic qualities are most likely to be judged by taste, as multiple historical examples show. One interviewee adds that ‘quality is always affected by tastes and trends, I will rather choose artworks that I think are interesting’. Two interviewees state they think that buying art from female artists is a trend. However, six interviewees stretched the importance that they try to be as neutral as possible because they are collecting from the museum and not for themselves. They always write a motivation on why the object is of added value to the collection and why the quality is sufficient.

Expertise is essential because the differences in quality assessment per discipline and period. Especially with the great supply in the art market, the curator needs to know how to assess the quality and can recognize connections between artworks and the museum collection. To develop this ability, the five experts state that this is a matter of studying as many artworks as possible and study art history. There are a few components which are mentioned by the interviewees. The historical or documentary relevance of an artwork can be significant. This includes the reception history. The visual and aesthetic aspects can be evaluated based on the following factors: composition, use of light, expressiveness, perspective, texture and wall power. Moreover, the theme or story depicted in the painting can be composed in an inventive manner. Additionally, the idea or concept can be inspiring and symbolic. For prints, the quality is assessed technically through the quality of the paper, sharpness and depth of the ink and overall adequateness of the applied pressure. The quality of design objects is assessed a bit differently as the object is functional. A quality can also be that the object is usable. When a design object is added to the museum collection, the function changes from being used to being looked at. The focus for design objects is inventiveness in aesthetics, technique or concept. In short, the museum examines art through expertise. The following criteria are important as well.

3.3.2 Connection to the museum history and collection

The connection to the collection is one of the criteria that is mentioned. The history is essential to understand how the collection is originated. The connection to the collection of a proposed acquisition is examined and this connection can be determining. Thus, the future collecting policy is founded in the history. In this section, the history of the collection is summarized and the criteria is further explored.

The museum collection is established historically through donations and legacies of private collectors (Ter Molen, 2000). The historical significance of the collectors F.J.O. Boijmans, D.G. Van Beuningen and more are elaborated on in the collection plan (Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, 2021a). Their tastes and interests reflected in their collections is the base of the collection nowadays. To illustrate, the collector J.C.J. Bierens de Haan left his collection prints and etches in 1951 to the museum along with a fund ‘Stichting Lucas Van Leyden’. The purpose of this fund was to expand the collection with more old prints. Thus, the preferences and interests of a collector translate to the purpose of the fund. Attracting

collectors was essential to develop the collection. A historical example of a strategy to attracting donors was when director Dirk Hannema build a new museum building with Ad van der Steur. According to the former director, the new building was more spacious than the previous building and resulted in a boost in donations as the donated works could immediately be exhibited. Another important factor is the director. Most directors have a slightly different focus and vision on the collection: director Ebbinge Wubben with the curator Hammacher-Van den Brande focused on surrealist art, director Beeren on international renowned artists and director Decron on experimental and interdisciplinary art. The vision on the collection and understanding of art has an impact on the collection. For instance, the surrealist art is a core in the collection which originates in the practices of curator Hammacher-Van den Brande and director Ebbinge Wubben. The former director broadened this surrealist core with surrealist acquisitions and even applied a surrealist vision on the whole collection. (Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, 2021a)

At present, proposed acquisitions are examined on the connection to the collection. This can be based on the theme, technique, art historical narrative and/or artist. To an extent, this means that the past collecting behaviour determines the future collecting. To illustrate, the museum acquired *Peinture-poème (Musique, Seine, Michel, Bataille et moi)* from Miró (1927) in 2022 (Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, 2023). The painting was bought for €8.1 million and supported by many funds and donors. It was possible to realize this acquisition because it fits the surrealist tradition, and the museum expressed their wish for a painting by Miró since the seventies according to the interviewed fundraiser. Therefore, the acquisition was convincing for the funds and donors. The fundraiser claims that no other museum in the Netherlands could have realized this acquisition as it would be too random. Moreover, curators state that the symbolic and historical value of an artwork increases in the context of the collection. The connection to the collection is important for acquisitions and most interviewees state that an acquisition is very unlikely to be realised if there is no connection. One interviewee expresses that the connection is not a decisive factor and argues that the connection to the collection is about the artistic interpretation. This interviewee gave the example of Hammershøi (1911) called *The Balcony Room at Spurvevej*. While there was no Danish art in the collection, the former director saw artistic parallels with other artworks and argues that the painting is high quality and unique (Ex, 2015). After this acquisition, a curator states that more Danish art acquired after this acquisition. Thus, it is possible to start a new domain in the collection, but it is uncommon.

The museum history contributes to the positioning and profile of the museum. The museum positions themselves on a regional, national and international level. In the introduction of the collection plan, the positioning is elaborated on. The unique points of the museum and its collection are stated. To illustrate, the connection to Rotterdam is inherent to the history of Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen because it is located there. This is one of their focus points in their mission and vision as well. Positioning also means that they compare their collection to regional, national and international museums. As this affects the mission and vision, acquisitions also need to fit in the profile of the museum.

3.3.3 Exhibiting

Collecting is also connected to past, present or future exhibitions according to two interviewees. A curator collects towards an exhibition for additional pieces in the specific theme. An interviewee states that the research before the exhibition also strengthens the expertise of the curator and can make them more alert on possible interesting additions. The exhibition also highlights a perspective or idea throughout the collection. This theme or idea of the exhibition can become a new perspective for the curator to approach new acquisitions. A curator describes that 'you can make an exhibition with multiple artworks from the collection and in that sense, an acquisition is always in dialogue with the other objects'. A curator states that an exhibition at Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen almost always presents new contemporary work. Sometimes, this contemporary work is commissioned by the museum. According to three interviewees, the curator and director consider adding the commissioned work to the collection as a part of museum history and willingness to support an artist in their career. At the end of an exhibition, the curator and directors evaluate the exhibition and discuss potential acquisitions.

The goal of an acquisition isn't to exhibit the artwork immediately. However, with acquisitions supported by the Rembrandt Association and the Mondriaan Fund, it is a demand to exhibit the artwork. The acquisition can also become part of the touring exhibitions. Touring exhibitions, or BVB Collections, is a bureau in the organisation which sells exhibitions to international art institutes. The collection highlights are the most popular for international loans. The Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen has a strong international position for loans. A curator states that surrealist exhibitions have been sold many times in the recent years. This was possible because these artworks are relatively invulnerable and popular with a great audience. It can be argued that acquisitions of high-quality and popular pieces can increase the strengthen the loaning position and can make the collection more appealing for international loans. As the museum can ask a fee for these international loans, the acquisition could indirectly result in a source of income. This is never a main purpose of an acquisition, but rather a favourable bonus.

3.4 Managing the decision-making process

The director has a great influence on the decision-making process because the director has the final decision on the acquisition, manages the decision-making process and has a vision for the museum. The leadership style is influenced by the personality of the director. At the time of the interviews, there had been a recent switch in director. The following results are based on the interviews with the former and present director and the experiences of the curators.

3.4.1 (Dual) leadership strategy

At Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, the current director is leading a management team. The former director was employed for 18 years. The last three years of this period, the former and the current director were co-directors. There was an artistic director and a business director. This was a temporary dual leadership strategy (De Voogd, 2006). The current director comments on this dual leadership that:

[The former director] was not a standard artistic director and is very knowledgeable on the financial management. [...] Moreover, I have a background in art history as well. [...] This meant that we had a good understanding of each other because he understood the limitations on his artistic ambitions and I understood why he had certain artistic ambitions.

In this case, the dual leadership strategy was temporary. The current director set up a management system through three clusters. The first cluster is responsible for the artistic and research goals. The second cluster is responsible for the exploitation and marketing of the museum. This cluster also includes the department Philanthropy and Relations. The third cluster is responsible for the operational processes and facilities. She explains that this is a relative new scheme implemented by the Rijksmuseum as well. She adds that the increasing revenues of the museum come with more risks. This intensifies the importance of a sufficient and strong management system. This development is in line with the managerialization theory (Palumbo et al., 2021). However, Palumbo et al. (2021) doesn't mention that the increasing revenues and the paired risks is a cause for the museum to strengthen the management.

3.4.2 Leadership style

The former director had a strong artistic vision which resulted in a less formalized and quicker decision-making process. The base of this strong artistic vision lies in the experience as a museum director and great art historical knowledge. Moreover, the former director has a good understanding of the available funds and financing options. The former director states 'that you can't tell me if a painting is good or not. I see that myself'. The former director argues he has an eye for art which he developed through his experience. This was leading when he decided on acquisitions. If the curator proposed an acquisition, this director made a quick decision based on his own knowledge. A curator states that this gave a sense of trust and freedom in the acquisition process, which contributed to a positive work experience. However, this curator explains that this quick decision sometimes gave the impression that the decision was made too quickly. An advantage of this quick decision was that it allowed the director to directly react to the art market and increased the flexibility. The acquisition of an artwork by Tanguy illustrates this which was mentioned in section 3.1.1.

The current director has a structured approach in the decision making. The director has a background in art history and functioned for multiple years as a business director at Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. The director listens to the argumentation of the curators and decides after analysing their argumentation. The director states that 'the curator with the expertise in the artwork has the most influential voice'. Moreover, the proposition of the curator is mostly discussed in the biweekly curators meeting. This formalized process presses the curator to articulate the motivation for the acquisition and to inform other curators. At the time of the interviews, this process is quite new and not fully implemented in the routine of the curators. According to a curator, this can cause a delay in the decision, which also

increases the chance of missing an acquisition opportunity from the market. In short, the director makes the final decision on acquisitions and oversees the activities of the whole museum. How the director decides, is determined by their personality and experiences. The director has a good understanding of the finances as well and knows what acquisitions are possible with the available resources.

3.4.3 Collection policy

The collecting policy is formulated in the 'Collectieplan 2022-2023', also referred to as collection plan (Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, 2021a). This document consists of multiple chapters including the museum history, an analysis of the collection and the collection policy. There are three sections in which criteria are formulated. The first section includes criteria which apply to all disciplines. The leading elements are 'Eenheid in verscheidenheid', 'grensverleggend / grensoverschrijdend', international context, relation to exhibition programme and commissions. The second section articulates three main themes: Surrealism and the surreal, Old masters, new vision and Look ahead. These themes are used as a guide for thematic and art historic coherence in the collection and invite to make interdisciplinary connections. The last section formulates per discipline how the existing collection can be improved. The collecting policy is a management tool as it communicates internally and externally what the vision is of the museum. There are also some names mentioned of artists of whose work the museum would like to buy. This makes the motivation on an acquisition more convincing, also in requests to funds. The director states that the collection plan increases the transparency of the museum in addition to the annual reports.

3.5 Developments

3.5.1 Collectie Nederland: collective acquisitions and collection mobility

A development is the growing notion of Collectie Nederland and stimulation of collection mobility. Collectie Nederland was brought up multiple times by eight interviewees without asking about it. The notion also has an impact on the decision-making process: if a similar artwork is already in Collectie Nederland, it is less urgent to buy this work and rather ask for a loan. A curator states that 'if the curator Design from Stedelijk [Museum] Amsterdam considers an acquisition, she will first call if we have a similar work in our collection?'. The interviewee from the Rembrandt Association underlines the importance of Collectie Nederland. Another interviewee argues that the only exception is if it is planned to be displayed multiple times or would function as a core piece in the collection. The impact of the increasing importance of collection mobility is expected to be insignificant for the museum itself by the curators. As Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen positions themselves in the top of the Netherlands, the curators expect that they will loan artworks to smaller museums. The museum tries to keep the costs for national loans as low as possible.

According to the interviewee from the Rembrandt Association, museums should not focus too much on their individual collection but more on the Collectie Nederland. This interviewee adds that the Rembrandt Association prefers collective acquisitions. At the time of the interviews, Museum Boijmans

Van Beuningen hadn't realized an acquisition in combination with another museum. The opinions about collective acquisitions vary. Three interviewees see a collective acquisition as an option. Three interviewees are rather reluctant to realize a collective acquisition. They are keen on the museum's identity and history and think a collective acquisition conflicts with this. Moreover, they see more practical difficulties like restoration and storage responsibilities. A curator expresses a negative attitude towards the extra administration and regulations. She adds that 'it is more practical to let the other museum buy the artwork and I will loan the object [for an exhibition]'. Another curator says that 'collective acquisitions are highly exceptional [for old art]'. He gives the example of the acquisition of Joshua Reynolds (1776) *Portrait of Mai (Omai)* by the Getty Museum in Los Angeles and The National Portrait Gallery in London and comments that 'this is not ideal because the painting needs to move every few years' (Bailey, 2023). Traveling is risky because of the vulnerable state of the (old) artworks and danger of damage. Thus, they reason that this development will not have a great impact on the future acquisitions of Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. However, the interviewees also see the advantages of collective acquisition because there are more resources and thus a way to cope with the high prices in the art market. Moreover, the work is acquired for Collectie Nederland and it is deemed valuable to keep certain art objects in public ownership for research, educational purposes and enjoyment of the visitors. The Mondriaan Fund and the Rembrandt Association try to stimulate collective acquisitions. The Mondriaan Fund states on their website that 'when a request is done by two or more organizations, it will contribute positively [in the judgement]' (Mondriaan Fund, 2022). In short, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen is reluctant to realize collective acquisitions because of it conflicts with the individuality of the museum and practical reasons, but it can be an option if an acquisition otherwise cannot be realized.

3.5.2 Diversity and inclusivity

Six interviewees state that they expect that diversity and inclusivity are going to have an impact on acquisition policy. There are still some unclaritys by the employees about the concrete impact. Diversity and inclusivity in acquisition policy are now understood as buying more female artists and artists with various cultural backgrounds. The interviewees expect that buying more diverse art is easier for contemporary art but will be more challenging for old arts. One curator adds that '[old prints by female artists] are getting more and more expensive because there is a small number of artworks available and everyone is eager to buy them'. The most unclaritys arise when non-western artworks were discussed. The director states that it is more straightforward to look at the male/female artist ratio but that 'I think it becomes complicated how to deal with the fact that it is a western collection, very European in our case. [...] The question is: do we need to collect everything ourselves?' She adds that non-western artworks can also be incorporated in exhibitions by loaning these types of artworks. She questions to what extent the museum needs to add non-western art to the collection. A curator adds that 'if you want to be serious [about collecting non-western art] you need extra money and extra specialists who can judge that [type of art]'. This statement is in line with the previous finding that expertise is highly important in

evaluating the qualities of an artwork. It also applies to art from female artists as the interviewed researcher states that ‘I now know a lot about female artists [...] so will probably notice other interesting artworks than [name curator]’. The interviewed fundraiser states that the Mondriaan Fund is keen to support acquisitions that contribute to a more diverse and inclusive collection. The Mondriaan Fund also states this on their website. The interviewee of the Rembrandt Association expresses that ‘we take it into account, but it is never the main argument’. The fundraiser of the museum expresses that the acquisition of Leonora Carrington’s painting *Again, the Gemini Are in the Orchard* was deemed ‘important to support by the funds, also because she is a female Surrealist’. This indicates that it became easier to raise funds because the acquisition is in line with the ideas on diversity and inclusivity.

Conclusion

The research question of this thesis is: How does Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen decide on collection acquisitions? The director decides based on the arguments of the curators, the financial viability and the mission of the museum. The director's leadership style has a great influence on the decision-making process: the former directors had an intuitive, visionary leadership style while the current director has structured and cooperative leadership style. The decision is managed through biweekly curators meetings where the proposed donations and acquisitions are discussed.

The director bases the decision on the arguments of the curator. The curator has an expertise in a specific discipline and period. In addition, the curator has a deep understanding of the artworks in the collection. With this expertise, the curator can evaluate the artwork based on the aesthetic qualities and innovativeness in technique, concept or visualization of ideas and stories. Through their knowledge of the collection, the curator knows how to connect a proposed artworks to the collection. New perspectives and (art)historical relevance are important to the curator. The artwork also needs to be in a good physical state.

The decision for the acquisition is always made by the director based on the input and expertise of the curator, but if an acquisition is realized depends on the financing. I have identified four financiers for acquisitions: funds, huisstichtingen, corporate donors and private donors. The director controls the budgets of the corporate and private donors and is advised by managers relations. A few huisstichtingen have the formal purpose to support specific acquisitions of a discipline and/or period. This purpose is determined by the donor. The allocation of the huisstichtingen is managed by the museum or a committee and is in line with the decision of the director. The Mondrian Fund and the Rembrandt Association are the most prominent funds for acquisitions and their decision on requests determines if an acquisition can be realized. In the decision-making process, the fundraising strategy for an acquisition is always considered and the chances to realize the acquisition are estimated. The financiers don't have a direct influence on the decision-making process, but an indirect influence because the resources of the museum are limited.

The decision-making process differs for accepting donated artworks and buying an artwork in four aspects. The first aspect is that there is no fundraising strategy necessary for accepting a donation. The second aspect is that the curator must assess the qualities of the artwork and the connection to the collection spontaneously. When an acquisition is proposed, the curator has already thought about motivations for the acquisition. The third difference is that the relation with the donor is considered with the decision to accept or denied. The fourth difference is that the notion of Collectie Nederland is less determining for donations than acquisitions. This also relates to importance and understanding of Collectie Nederland for funds.

Discussion and recommendation for future research

Towse (2019) argues that curators have a magpie tendency and always collect more. In a sense, this is true because there is always more to collect. However, the limited resources and the limited depot space force

the curators to be critical on what to acquire. The curator and director are critical on donated items as well. So, I don't agree with Towse (2019) that curators have a magpie tendency because the curators are too critical on acquisitions to compare them to magpies.

The curator or director are not occupied with how the value of an object changes if it is added to a museum collection. This is in line with Thornton (2009) as the artwork becomes 'worthless'. The museum is aware on how they can positively influence the career of a contemporary artist and can take this into account when an artwork is acquired or commissioned (Rodner & Thompson, 2012). Frey (2009) lists five non-market values of museum practices: existence, option, bequest, prestige and educational. For collecting, these non-market values don't all directly apply. The bequest value is a value that came up most as it considers the value of preservation for future generation. New perspectives and innovative ideas are important criteria for acquisitions for curators. The cultural values of Throsby (2000) are useful to identify what a new perspective or innovation is. A new perspective can be categorized under the cultural values: historical, aesthetic, symbolic, spiritual, social and/or authentic (Throsby, 2000). Most motivations for an acquisition fit in these cultural values. Technical innovation in artworks and design are left out of the cultural values, while the curators mentioned that this was of importance too. I recommend that technical innovation in relation to the cultural values can be explored in future research.

One curator explains that she gets informed by multiple institutions on upcoming and recently graduated artists for commissions. This network informs the curator and functions as a tool for searching and selecting new talent (Foster, Borgatti & Jones, 2011). Moreover, the museum can also function as a co-producing gatekeeper, as the director and curator can guide the artist in a certain direction or help experimenting (Foster, Borgatti & Jones, 2011). From a theoretical view, I argue that the art machine (Rodner & Thompson, 2012), art eco system (Chong, 2010), value generating (Drummond, 2006) and the gatekeeper theories (Foster, Borgatti & Jones, 2011) point to the same sociological and economic processes. I argue that the art machine theory and Drummonds (2006) theory simplifies the nuances too much and leaves the impression of a straight, linear process, while the process of value generation is ideocratic. The gatekeeper theories from Foster, Borgatti & Jones (2011) provide an understanding of the social and economic systems through the search and selection functions of the network.

There are some managerial implications for art museums. It must be communicated clearly to the employees how decisions are made and based on what arguments. This increases the cooperation between employees and managers. Logically, a switch in directors causes some changes in the organisation and the employees need time to get used to new routines. To benefit this process, communication is key. The decision-making in a biweekly meeting is viable strategy. However, as it is a relatively new process, it is important to keep the meeting clearly structured. The meeting could also benefit the curator's teamwork, be a controlling mechanism to act in line with the collection policy and support a solid interdisciplinary collecting strategy. For Dutch art museums, I recommend communicating clearly what the purpose is of collecting in the collection plan, recommend that acquisitions are communicated within the organisation and clearly state the reasoning behind acquisition choice. The purposes can be communicated as goals and

can be measured through performance indicators (Puček et al., 2022). This is called strategic planning and increases the efficiency of the organisation (Puček et al., 2022).

A recommendation for future research is to research how the deaccessioning process could be managed the best. Deaccessioning came up in multiple interviewees and it is a laborious process. This work process could be evaluated to streamline the process and make it more feasible for museums to deaccession. The difficulties on what should be collected for future generations can be mapped out to redesign this working process. Another recommendation is to explore the impact of the notion of Collectie Nederland. For instance, the attitudes of funds, museums and governments towards this notion could be compared to describe the impact. Moreover, I have found in my research that attitudes towards acquisitions differ between funds and museums and the impact of this contradictions could be further explored. Next, a recommendation is the quantitative study how many artworks have been exhibited or commissioned first and bought for the collection afterwards. In the interviews, the relation between exhibiting and acquisition is explained which could be tested quantitatively. A last recommendation is a study on the term quality in the arts. As I understood, quality refers to a set of positive properties of an artwork. However, the term is used extremely broad. To a certain extent, I had to guess what the expert meant. Thus, I would recommend mapping out the use of the term quality.

Limitations

In this research, the various financiers for the acquisitions are discussed. The information on specific financial contributions of donors or funds isn't always public. This is a limitation of the research as the specific sum could give a concrete insight in how much the financier contributes. This could be related to their indirect influence in the decision-making process. A limitation is that there were no more interviews with donors and funds. The analysis of these additional interviews would make the thesis too broad. Due to the time constraints of this thesis, the research had to be limited to the singular case of Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. A comparative study with another museum would give a deeper understanding of the decision-making process on acquisitions. Because this thesis was an explorative study, many topics were discussed. A limitation of this thesis is that due to time-constraints and word count constraints these topics were only touched upon.

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Appendix A: List of interviewees

	Function	Years of Employment at Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen	Gender
<i>1</i>	Director	10	Female
<i>2</i>	Former Director	18	Male
<i>3</i>	Curator	2	Male
<i>4</i>	Curator (anonymous)	-	-
<i>5</i>	Curator	20	Male
<i>6</i>	Curator	17	Female
<i>7</i>	Researcher	2	Male
<i>8</i>	Manager Relations	7	Female
<i>9</i>	Manager Relations	2	Female
<i>10</i>	Fundraiser	6	Male
<i>11</i>	Interviewee Rembrandt Association (anonymous)	-	-

Appendix B: Interview guide

Topic	Keywords and questions
General information	Name, age, gender, function in the company and years employed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is your name and age? - What is your function at Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen? - Could you shortly describe your responsibilities in the organisation? - How many years are you employed?
Expert decision	Quality assessment, expertise, connoisseurship, aesthetic value, symbolic value, historical value, social value, spiritual value, authenticity value, collection, collectors, artworld, reputation, trends and taste
<i>Quality assessment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do you evaluate the quality of the artwork? - How do you evaluate the added value of the artwork to the collection? - Which values do an artwork need to have to become part of the collection? - When do you consider adding an artwork to the collection?
<i>Collectors</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the role of private collectors in relation to the museum? - What is the role of corporate collectors in relation to the museum?
<i>Trend and taste</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you recognize trends in acquisitions? If so, which? - How do trends in the art world influence the acquisition policy? - Do taste of the curator influence the museum acquisition? - How does the taste of the collector shape the collections?
Fundraising	Fundraising strategies, private donor, corporate donor, donor privileges, donor participation, image transfer, reputation, partnership, private funds, public funds, collectors
<i>Strategy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the fundraising strategy of the museum? - How is the fundraising strategy incorporated in the daily running of the museum? - How did the strategy develop over the past years? - How can the strategy improve?
<i>Donating objects</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are motivations of donors to donate objects to the museum? - What are the privileges of the object donors? Are the donors content with the privileges? - Are there exceptions made for special donors? When are exceptions made? - Are there any agreements on the conditions for conservation or presentation of donated objects? - To what extent do donors enjoy their privileges?
<i>Donating money</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are motivations of donors to donate money structurally to the museum? - To what extent are donors content with their privileges? Does this differ per circle?

<i>Involvement</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are there exceptions made for special donors? When are exceptions made? - What are reasons for donors to stop donating structurally? - How involved are donors in the organisation? How do you protect the autonomy/integrity of the organisation if donors are highly involved? - Do donors express their opinions about the acquisitions of the museum? How do you cope with donors with other opinions? - To what extent is the museum concerned with the negative reputation of (corporate) donors?
<i>Funds</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To what extent do funds influence museum acquisitions? - Is there a difference between public and private funds? How does this difference relate to their requirements for acquisitions? - Do funds have a different understanding of quality of art? Does this influence the application for the fund?
<i>Management</i>	<p>Museum management, financial management, decision-making process, strategic planning, leadership, collection policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the role of the director in the decision-making process on acquisitions? - How is the decision-making process on acquisitions managed? - How does the manager make sure that the collection policy is followed? - Did the managerial process of acquisitions change of the last ten years? - How do you see the decision-making process in the future? - Are there disagreements on this process?
<i>Collecting behaviour</i>	<p>Collecting motivation, collection mobility, collective acquisition, developments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why does a museum collect? - What is the ideal case of decision-making process of the acquisition? - What is the attitude towards the notion of collection mobility at the museum? Will this decrease the importance of museum acquisitions? - What is the attitude towards acquisitions made in cooperation with other museums? - How do you see collecting behaviour of museum in the future? - What is the future of museum acquisitions?