

Art vs. Business.

A qualitative study on collaborations between commercial companies and the art world

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Abstract:

Collaboration is an integral part of any artistic production, in various forms, from artist-to-artist to those between artists and commercial companies. This thesis explores the collaborations between firms and artists or museums, analyzing their motivations, benefits, and potential drawbacks. Such collaborations can enhance brand prestige and provide financial support for artists; however, they might also raise concerns about commodification and artistic value, or simply not be fair and fail to provide the same amount of benefits for both parties. The research focuses on collaborations outside the fashion industry to avoid overlap of cultural significance and artistic merit of the parties involved. Therefore, it will explore the subject of collaboration only with companies that are not directly connected to art and culture. The thesis offers valuable insights for companies and artists, suggesting a need for thoughtful collaboration strategies that respect artistic independence and at the same time foster the cultural engagement of the company. This approach might lead to a shift in the role of brands in the cultural scene, potentially pushing them to become contemporary patrons of the arts. The collaboration between two different worlds, the artistic world and the business world, can also foster innovation in both the approach and the outcome due to the clash of different logics, values, and specializations. This study investigates the dynamics of these collaborations through a qualitative approach, involving eleven in-depth interviews with experts from both the business and artistic sectors. Key findings align with existing literature; although, new themes have also emerged from empirical data. The study highlights a positive impact on the accessibility of culture and the educational value provided to the public through these collaborations.

Keywords: collaboration, brand partnership, commodification, value, innovation

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1. Introduction

Collaboration is a crucial part in any form of artistic production. Whenever it is between the artists, or between an artist and manufacturer of tools or between artist and the distributor (Becker, 1982). Collaboration also takes place between artists and the so-called “outside world”. Nowadays commercial firms tend to collaborate with specific artists or museums. A clear example could be fashion houses like Louis Vuitton collaborating with artists like Yayoi Kusama, or vehicle manufacturers like BMW and its cultural engagement strategies like BMW Art Car, or even beverage companies like Absolut Vodka and its collaborations with artists for the bottle design and more. There are plenty more examples, and although the most common collaborations are with fashion houses, other industries also find their way to get engaged with art in creative ways. This trend brings the attention of many companies that want to get associated with art due to its specific characteristics and notions (Dell’era, 2010), however the strategies that are applied are not always beneficial in the long term nor equally profitable for both parties involved. The problem starts when art starts to be omnipresent in its commodified and ready-to-consume form, therefore the question about the value of art and of the collaborations per se arises (Gałązkiewicz, 2023; Van den Braembussche, 1996). There has been an ongoing discussion between scholars about the valuation of art being context dependent (Van den Braembussche, 1996 ; Klammer, 1996 b). The phenomena of collaborations contributes to that by adding the aspect of commodification of art (Baudrillard, 1972). This research contributes to the discussion on the value of art in the context of collaboration, not only considering its production but also distribution and consumption. Since most of the literature written on the subject from marketing, economic and artistic fields have presented only theoretical implications, the finding of this qualitative research might bring up new notions and themes that have not emerged before.

The topic of the value of such collaboration has caught my attention and during the past year I could observe more collaborations taking place. As someone with an academic background in art history and interest in economics I couldn’t help but wonder about the efficiency and possible backlash those collaborations can have both on the artists and the companies. Collaboration also takes the form of partnership (Chailan, 2018) which is observed in the case of museums, however that has become something normal and usually unnoticeable by the visitors. Although, if the match between them does not seem authentic the museum can experience loss of credibility or independence in their practice (Schroeder, 2005). I believe

that due to increasing popularity of the phenomena it is important to look closely and analyze its outcomes. Might seem intuitive that the companies are the ones with power in this case, therefore its presence in the cultural scene should be questioned in order to maintain a balance and ensure that the condition of artists and cultural institutions is rather reinforced through the collaborations and not weakened. This might also bring the attention to the consumption of culture, how people decide to interact with art, and how it is present in daily life. Do we prefer a tea cup with a reproduction of Van Gogh's *Sunflowers* on it over the one without it (Hagtvedt, Patrick, 2008 a)?

To tackle the problem in a holistic and the most complex way I have developed the following research question and two sub-questions:

How do commercial companies collaborate with artistic partners like artists or museums? Is collaboration beneficial for both parties? How to create more meaningful and successful collaborations?

I have conducted a qualitative study with eleven in-depth interviews with the experts from both fields. The point of the interviews was to discover their point of view on the subject and contrast it with the respondents from the other group. To create a meaningful contrast the sample group was divided in two, where five respondents proceed from the business world which included communication departments of companies or marketing strategists and consultants that carry out these sorts of collaborations. The other side represented the artistic world; that being three artists and three museum representatives from fundraising and development departments. Due to the overlap of cultural significance of art and fashion these collaborations will be omitted on purpose and the study will focus only on collaboration with companies that are not directly related to culture. The thesis will firstly present the academic literature on the subject. The theoretical framework will touch upon subjects like collaboration, value, innovation, benefits, branding, and the way to find a proper match for the collaboration. Consequently it will present the methodology and explain the choices that have been made in the conducting of the research. The following part will present the results and data collected during the interviews, which will be analyzed and compared with the previously presented theoretical framework. The last chapter will be dedicated to the main conclusions and will give answers to the research questions.

2. Theoretical framework

To answer the research questions: *How do commercial companies collaborate with artistic partners like artists or museums?* and its sub-questions: *Is the collaboration beneficial for both parties? How to create more meaningful and successful collaborations?* The following theoretical framework present existing theories from different academic disciplines, like the arts, marketing and economics. The first section considers the phenomenon of collaboration within and outside the art world, it also brings the topic of value and innovation. The second part analyzes the motivations and benefits of both parties, and is followed by a section about possible symbolic outcomes of such collaborations. The theoretical framework also presents themes from the marketing field, therefore notions like brand creation and branding within the art world and outside are discussed. The further sections are about finding a balance and a proper match for the collaboration to ensure benefits for both parties involved. Lastly, a novel concept of *Art Branding* recently developed by a polish marketing specialist Igor Gałązkiewicz, is introduced and which will be helpful to understand this very specific phenomena.

2.1 Art world and collaborations

Central theme of this thesis relies on the notion of collaboration itself thus, it is crucial to look at the nature of it. Especially within the art world, all artistic work is the result of cooperation of many individuals, not only when it comes to distribution but also manufacture of the necessary utensils and materials for any artistic expression according to Becker (1982). That is also why in a production of cultural goods the workers usually assume a “bundle of task” which contrasts to the view of the genius artist that creates a work of art on his own (Becker, 1982, p. 9). This myth of the singular genius artist is very present in western societies however the reality is very different and it has always been. According to Becker, the value and reputation of the artist and of the specific artwork, are codependent; so that the cooperation in that sense can be a disbalancing factor (Becker, 1982). Nevertheless, collaboration is fundamental for any cultural product to come together as well as for its distribution and consumption. It doesn't work on its own, but is rather situated in the complex network of individuals and a specific context (Becker, 1982).

Collaborations come in all sorts of ways; between artists, between intermediaries or in the valuation process, etc. They also take place between the art world and the outside world as

nowadays it's easy to observe the collaborations happening between commercial companies and artists or museums. What first might come to mind are collaborations between famous fashion houses like Louis Vuitton and an artist, as they did with Yayoi Kusama in 2023. Nevertheless, there are more industries that start to get involved with art through partnerships and collaboration, for example car industry (BMW Art Car series) or alcohol beverages (Absolut Art Collection). What actually favors the creation of the collaboration between those groups is the increase of business-like mindset of artists and artistic agents as well as the increase in focusing on the culture inside and outside of the company involved in the collaboration (O'Reilly, 2005).

The professional encounter between these two different worlds might highlight more differences than similarities, therefore it is essential to look at whose aspects to secure an effective space and conditions for the collaboration to happen. According to cultural economics, these types of opportunities may lead to conflict since both groups follow different logics; artistic and economic logics (Eikhof & Haunschild, 2007). The first one means being passionately involved with work which requires a lot of independence and individuality and the other one being market-focused, pursuing profit, based on calculations and measurements (Eikhof & Haunschild, 2007). That is why the collaboration can bring in different meanings by combining two different sets of skills and experience for both parties (Bomnuter et al., 2022). Although it can cause conflict arousal, another issue that has been proven to occur is the crowding out of artistic logic when economic logic prevails, leaving the party involved without artistic resources, the main essence of the collaboration or a product (Eikhof & Haunschild, 2007). Therefore it is crucial to ensure following aspects for the success of the collaboration: the environment and context, the personal characteristic of the members, the whole process and the structure of the work, communication between the parties, shared purpose and lastly the available resources (Bomnuter et al., 2022).

2.1.1 Discussion on value

Another issue that arises is about the value that is being created, both in the economic and artistic understanding of the term. According to Van den Braembussche (1996), art has value that goes beyond measure, therefore it clashes with money, due to its ambiguity, so the economic view on it is based on the commodity fetishisms of the subject. The tension between the two perspectives was analyzed by Herrnstein Smith (1983), she stated that one side of the spectrum is economic theory where money, production and consumption matter and where

the agents act based on calculations, profits, and utility. The other side of the spectrum would be culture, art and creation which are ruled by inspiration, taste, intrinsic and transcendent value (Herrnstein Smith, 1983). The first one is understood in the terms of utility and instrumental rationality meanwhile the other one stands for humanism and value rationality (Van den Braembussche, 1996).

Art inclusion on the market is undeniable, therefore it is always subject to economic measurements of value leading to commodification and commercialization of it (Van den Braembussche, 1996). Even though a big part of the artistic community still mistrusts the power of money and commerce and prefers to keep the engagement with it to the minimum (Klamer, 1996a). The art will always appear “impure” and “contaminated” with elements and effects of the market. The valuation of art will persist to be relative; socially, historically and economically conditioned and therefore context dependent and radically contingent (Van den Braembussche, 1996). Also considering the history of art, art has been changing its roles and uses as a product or as an experience, and each of its forms was measured in a different manner (Klamer, 1996 b).

The notion of value is related to quality and utility of a product or can be understood only for its intrinsic value according to Van den Braembussche (1996), which aligns with Baudrillard’s (1972) theory about use-value and sing-value in culture. The instrumentalization of culture relies on the commodification of an artwork where its use-value is actually transformed into exchange value and at the same time acquires a meaning and becomes a signifier (Baudrillard, 1972).

As a result, the commercialization, sponsorships or partnerships are the ways to measure and to prove the value of art on the market (Klamer, 1996 b). However, contrasting it with Tomiuc (2015), the value of an artwork must be first established by the agents of the artworld like critics, curators, galleries and museums. It must be recognized to become unquestionable, which is a result of a collective agreement or disagreement on that (Tomiuc, 2015). The recognition of a powerful institution or individual from the art world is the basis for a confirmation for art status of a work or a person (Tomiuc, 2015). On the other hand, the price of an artwork can be read by the market and by the art world, but can signal different things. The increase of the price can mean the increase in the demand, in the market terms, or for the artist it can actually signal its acceptance by the art world, therefore the price tells a

story not only about its market position but also about the artist, collectors and dealers (Velthuis, 2005).

2.1.2 Types of collaborations and innovation

How do collaborations between companies and artists/museums relate to the issues of value and price? It's again a very dependent subject. Since there are many ways and platforms on which the collaboration can take place, some of the examples would be: creating co-branded products, or co-branded experiences and events, or perhaps cross-sales promotions (Michel & Willing, 2020b). Co-branded events can take place both in a commercial or artistic setting, as Andy Warhol said "All museums will become department stores and all department stores will become museums" (Michel & Willing, 2020 b, p. 60). Other strategies applied are: patronage of the arts, mentoring or creation of a foundation (Chailan, 2018). Another type of collaboration can be directed toward the employees of the company (Michel & Willing, 2020 a) which would enter the category of employee branding. The collaboration can be based on a specific artwork (as it is done by the museums and their merchandising strategies) or directly connected to an artist (Bomnuter et al., 2022). Options vary from creating a corporate art collection, or any other type of artistic intervention within the inside of the company; to organizing art contests for the employees or creative workshops done by an artist or an art educator. Other examples include commissioned art that could be used to create a logo, a video or any type of communication material for the company, as well as an artwork can be used in the advertisement or could be artist endorsement of a certain product or service (Bomnuter et al., 2022).

However, in this fast-paced world the strategies must change and adapt to maintain competitive advantages and innovative approach might play a crucial role in order to achieve that. Although collaboration with the art world is not an innovative phenomena, the arts have been always supported by religious or political institutions, nowadays some of these functions have been assumed by companies. The art world itself has the biggest creativity supply, therefore the collaboration with it can bring in an outcome of a high level of creative innovation (Fillis, 2006). The new approaches can be learned from the arts, since unlike in marketing, the arts don't seek consumers but rather consumers seek it (Fillis, 2006). Pooling information and knowledge foster entrepreneurial activity as well as creativity, which leads to the discovery for new opportunities (Potts, 2019). The term *Innovation Commons* (Potts, 2019, p. 1) stands for a system of rules that facilitates cooperation, and must be organized and

incentivized by an institution that creates a platform for pooling ideas and resources. In the case of collaboration, it could be an ideal space, as innovation stems from human creativity which creates value, but needs to be economically sustained. Innovation can foster imagination of the audience of the collaboration, but also the match between art and other industry can leave a positive impact for the product and customer orientation (Fillis, 2006). The connection between different semantic fields like art and other industries can democratize access to art (Dell'era, 2010) which could be another interesting and novel outcome. Nevertheless, innovation drives economic development and prosperity which is profitable for both groups (Potts, 2019). Innovation may be understood in many different ways hence, integration between art and business can be a very fertile ground for it to grow.

2.2 Incentives and Benefits

Following the research sub-question, *Is the collaboration beneficial for both parties?*, various types of collaboration must be considered since, indeed, each of them can bring very different benefits for both parties, and therefore the incentives also vary. In the following section, first, the benefits and incentives for the artistic side will be discussed, and further on, how it is seen from the company perspective.

One of the main benefits for the artistic side is the financial benefit. For the collaboration to happen there must be financial incentive, because the collaboration with partners is not something essential for artists/museums to maintain their existence but rather a collateral activity or project. The acceptance for the collaboration depends on the alignment with the company's goal and values according to Baumgarth (2018). Following his thought, it depends as well on the *spill-over effects* (Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2008 a, p. 214) that this collaboration can leave on the artist's image (Baumgarth, 2018). These are the possible incentives for both; artists and museums, however the willingness to collaborate may differ for them. The main motives for artists might be frequent challenges they face, like poor income or unemployment (Throsby, 1992; Bomnuter et al., 2022). Thus, the myth of a starving artist that puts his intrinsic motivation (freedom and autonomy) over extrinsic motivation (financial prosperity) is to be proved wrong in this case (Bomnuter et al., 2022). Additionally according to Throsby (1992) artists also follow the traditional model of investing in skills by training, gaining expertise through experience which lead to greater earning capacity, but due to artist specificity as a group, other factors also play a role like innate creative talent which is not easily measurable. Nevertheless, the overall presence of governmental subsidies or even

private sponsoring, crucial for art creation, might also put into question the intrinsic motivation for artistic creation (Van den Braembussche, 1996). The reality lies somewhere in between and the willingness to cooperate depends on intrinsic factors such as job autonomy, skill development and on extrinsic factors like recognition, remuneration and perceived brand fit (Bomnuter et al., 2022). Other conditions that influence the decision to collaborate and the quality of the collaboration are: mutual trust, role clarity and stage of career of an artist (Bomnuter et al., 2022). Those factors are applicable to the museums as well, furthermore another benefit for them would be being exposed to a bigger and perhaps unusual and unfamiliar audience (Bomnuter et al., 2022). Besides, the audience of the collaboration is more than one type, usually it consists of the general public and also the peers from the industry (Fillis, 2006). Hence, the value that the artist or museum creates during the collaboration is understood in more than one way due to the diverse public (Fillis, 2006). The final outcome can be received in different ways which can be even contradictory, from there the difficulty to find and satisfy the target group, which again can be a decisive factor for the decision to collaborate.

For the company the incentives are very different, for them the biggest advantage is to gain cultural relevance in the society and to enter or be associated with the art scene (Michel & Willing, 2020 b). This alignment permits the company to be recognized and viewed as a common good on a cultural level and to escape the market categorization and evaluation of their work, to a certain point (Michel & Willing, 2020 b). When a brand is connected to culture that signals its interest in the current cultural scene, it wants to take part in it and communicate with their community, share values and provide a platform of interchange between different artistic world and the customers (Dell'era, 2010). At the same time this collaboration can increase company's credibility and legitimacy, or create new associations with the world of luxury (Michel, & Willing, 2020, a & b). Being related with art also signals atemporality, something intricate to art, that a company is also seeking for their image (Chailan, 2018). Collaboration with an artist can be perceived as something creative, rejuvenated and innovative, additionally it can enhance creativity and inspiration for the employees or stakeholders of the firm (Michel & Willing, 2020, a & b). Those types of actions directed to the internal members of a company, enter the category of social responsibility and can leave a long term positive impression on a company's image (Michel & Willing, 2020 a). Overall, the main goal of the collaboration and connection with culture it to create a strong image and position on the market (Dell'era, 2010)

2.3 Artification and Symbolic Innovation

The collaboration between a commercial brand and an artistic partner can be also understood on a symbolic level, since a merge between art and other industry is adding symbolic value to a commercial goods thus, they can be seen less as a mercantile (Michel & Willing, 2020 a). The effect of such collaboration according to Dell'era (2010) acquires a name of *Symbolic Innovation* where art meets the product (Dell'era, 2010, p. 74). *Symbolic Innovation* happens when new social meaning is assigned to an already existing product (Dell'era, 2010), which might be a crucial aspect for the research's sub-question about creation of meaningful and successful collaborations. The outcomes might become substantial, also thanks to the process of *artification*. Which is a very important aspect that companies pursue through this type of collaboration. According to Shapiro & Heinich (2012) *artification* is a result of the dynamic process of transforming an object into work of art, which implies social and relationship changes. Something very similar to what Becker (1982) stated about the creation and consumption of art being always embedded in a specific social context. Although here the process requires construction of meaning through intellectualization, displacement or recategorization of an non-art object (Shapiro & Heinich, 2012).

Frequently, luxury products tend to be the ones most likely to be associated with art and high culture not only through the *artification* process, but also due to some similarities between a luxury product and an artwork, which companies tend to emphasize (Joy & Belk, 2020). The paradox of luxury firms is in the desire to be assimilated to scarcity and exclusivity and on the other hand pursuing the popularity to increase the sales, which is contradictory to the first desire (Chailan, 2018). The middle class is expanding just as the demand for luxury is increasing, therefore it is problematic to preserve the exclusivity aspect of those products or services (Chailan, 2018). Art has the potential to eliminate that paradox by providing an exclusivity aspect due to its duality of meanings and the learning values (Chailan, 2018) which in a case of a collaboration might create meaningful value also for the audience and consumers.

The customers seek more satisfaction than the one derived just from the consumption; they also want to achieve psychological satisfaction not only based on the utility, but also from the aesthetic or symbolic value (Dell'era, 2010). The brands and their products have become a part of everyday life, on the symbolic level and they also exist in contemporary culture, they

circulate meaning through its products or services (O'Reilly, 2005). This circulation of meaning embedded in consumption consumers can use as signifiers of their identity (O'Reilly, 2005; Pogorzelski, 2018). This is the case especially when purchasing a luxury product, which is not about the utility, but its social recognition is as important, or perhaps even more important, than its utility (Chailan, 2018). People need stories to connect with, authentic stories that can also stimulate their imagination and inspire them, this is where the cultural dimension of consumption is needed and could be satisfied by art and brand collaborations (Dell'era, 2010). The consumer choices are seen as an expression of identity (Chailan, 2018; Pogorzelski, 2018), they have a direct translation to lifestyle. Hence, the contact with art even with everyday products may fill that gap and satisfy the psychological needs of consumption and of creating a specific identity.

2.4 Brands and branding

In order to approach in a broad and holistic way the research questions, this section will analyze what is a brand and branding. It is dedicated to branding strategies, brand embeddedness in culture and its similarities to artistic expression.

Brand is what differentiates a company in highly competitive markets, thus their logo, name or symbol must be a well-thought strategy and distinctive enough to become successful (Karlsson et al., 2018). Branding is mainly a strategy of image creation of a company for the general public, its consumers or stakeholders. To create a strategy it is necessary to establish various elements like; the *brand core*, the fundamental values and the way it wants to communicate and the *brand identity* which is something unchangeable, something that differentiates the brand from the others (Karlsson et al., 2018, p.3-5). Creating a collaboration with an artist or the museums is a type of branding strategy, which might be beneficial especially in the case when the company is not related to culture due to *cognitive flexibility* (Kim et al., 2018, p. 308). The alignment with artistic work causes a higher *cognitive flexibility* in the customers; their thinking of the brand gets much broader and extends their cognitive capacity when it comes to making connections with various brand extensions or strategies (Kim et al., 2018). The presence of art itself is also confirmed to have a positive influence on the perception of the brand (Kim et al., 2018). That is very important for companies, since they are competition oriented and seeking positioning on the market (Karlsson et al., 2018).

The communication function of brand and art collaboration can be understood as a relation of noise and signal; where the brand can be a key signal that dominates the communication and the artistic notion is just a secondary noise (Kim et al., 2018). However when brand becomes the noise it might be more beneficial for customer *cognitive flexibility*, as well as for the artistic partner, as it will gain more protagonism (Kim et al., 2018). Collaboration with art not only works positively on the habitual consumers but should attract new ones that are not familiar to the brand and might change their perception on it (Kim et al., 2018). Therefore the brand strength could be measured in market share, market leadership and the loyalty of the customers (Karlsson et al., 2018). Branding, however, is about creating an image which can be very ephemeral, hard to capture and measure, hence the strategies with collaboration with artists/museums do not always bring specific calculative results.

Branding as a communication strategy is indeed embedded in the culture, to create a successful strategy a marketer must recognize current cultural zeitgeist to apply adequate cultural codes to reach the customers (Stolley & Glynne, 2022). Cultural codes work on the subconscious level of consumer thinking about the brand and its evaluation (Pogorzelski, 2018). On the other hand, according to O'Reilly (2005) brands can become icons, as they can be read as texts that have been socially constructed; they represent and construct identity for the company and for the customers. Therefore not only the products of the brands can be perceived as cultural products, but also the brand itself, since its operating on cultural codes and symbols, hence they are both culturally produced and consumed (O'Reilly, 2005). Which again makes a reference to Becker (1982) and his theory about art as well being socially constructed and consumed. We can observe how cultural and commercial worlds overlap; they develop taste and influence consumer choices (Stolley & Glynne, 2022). Besides, brands can be recognized as cultural intermediaries, always market-oriented, but with tools and approaches proceeding from the art world (Stolley & Glynne, 2022).

Surprisingly or not, branding has more things in common with art than it might seem. Branding itself as a branch of marketing relies strongly on visual expression in order to create brand identity and catch the attention of the customer (Schroeder, 2010). Moreover, it relies on cultural systems of symbols, meanings and values and just like any artistic expression, it connects value to images (Schroeder, 2010). Brands can use cultural symbols and images in many ways, one of them is by creating a collaboration with an artist to co-create a product

with them. Such action can lead to the *Spillover effect*, in this case when the art influences the perception of the other product associated with it (Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2008 a, p. 214). The more adequate term developed by the same scholars is *Art Infusion Effect* which proves the *Spillover Effect* of art on the valuation of the product it is associated with (Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2008 b, p.379). *Art Infusion Effect* is when the presence of art or an art image influences the perception of the product related to it in a positive way (Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2008 b, p.379). Something indeed beneficial and unique for the company to pursue. The overall flow of images, cultural symbols that interact and co create brand's image has been called by Schroeder (2010, p.1291) the *Brand Culture*. Perhaps it is a very essentialist view on the subject, although the closure between the two areas is stronger than it may appear.

2.4.1 Art and advertisement

After having analyzed the concept of branding specifically, I will take a step back to look now at the context of marketing and advertising in which branding is embedded. Collaborations often enter that area of publicity therefore to approach the research question this section will look into the subject from this perspective.

Art has more than one purpose, when it's used in advertising it can serve as a semiotic tool that adds information on both emotional and intellectual level (Conradie & Niekerk, 2016). However, according to Hetsroni (2005, p. 63): “fine art cannot damage advertising as advertising can damage fine art. Art is only art because of its original motivation. When it is taken out of context and used for a different purpose (...) it becomes a trivial decoration and its motivation is negated.” Conradie (2016) confirms there is a risk that commercial communication will transform it to a mere illustration, and lose its previous meanings and the communicative potential embedded in art. Both scholars agree that the dependent factor is the previous familiarity with the artwork presented in the advertising (Conradie & Niekerk, 2016; Hetsroni, 2005). In fact, the presence of art in advertising frequently emphasizes the contrast between high and low culture, hence surprisingly the inclusion of it in the advertisement actually reaffirms its high position in the cultural hierarchy and gets even more recognition (Hetsroni, 2005). Similarly products that are often advertised with the juxtaposition with art share similar qualities like: limited supply, high quality, high status of consumers, reputation of the brand or the artist (Hetsroni, 2005).

2.5 Branding in the art world

As it has been developed in the previous sections, branding and in general terms marketing are also very present in the art world. In fact, museums like MoMA or big auction houses like Christies or Sothebys position themselves on the market using branding strategies, and are referred to as a brand (Tomiuc, 2015). Nowadays the artists themselves are considered to be personal brands, more contemporary ones like Damien Hirst or the pioneer of the phenomenon Andy Warhol. The artist's understanding of branding is vital, since it's all about the image; the corporate image, the brand image, identity image; understanding that dynamics and image importance in the society, gives reasonable advantage to the visual artists as image makers (Schroeder, 2010). The artistic practices might actually lead to a deeper understanding of the image-creation practice, as well as the art history or cultural studies might provide important insights and investigation on representation and image creation (Schroeder, 2005). On the other hand the art world also has a specific hierarchy dependent on the economic transactions and the market itself, therefore branding can be a crucial element for the creation of artistic value and merit (Tomiuc, 2015). The separation between the business and art worlds that is so often highlighted by the both sides (Eikhof & Haunschild, 2007) perhaps can create more benefits for each other than is expected (Schroeder, 2005).

A historic example of a merge between branding and the art world or specifically of a personal brand, coincides with the popularization of the mass media in the 60s and 70s when an artist has started to be associated with a celebrity (Tomiuc, 2015). Andy Warhol which nowadays circulates as a symbol or a brand itself, was the first one to integrate self promotion and his artistic practice (Tomiuc, 2015). He developed an iconic name, style and look, everything that is needed for a brand creation (Schroeder, 2010). He created a capital of brand image with his artistic work and used media mechanisms to be perceived and acquire celebrity status (Tomiuc, 2015). Moreover, his style was based on consumer culture and commodification symbols (Schroeder, 2010). Warhol was a brand himself and again he was using brand symbols for his artistic practice as a way of critique of the *brand culture*. The variety of works done by him reminds of brand extension strategy, since he was a filmmaker, model, and was involved with the music industry (Schroeder, 2010). Andy Warhol is a pioneering example of a merge between artist and branding taken into different level, however still present and followed by other human-brand artists.

Branding is one of the main strategies applied by museums or art galleries, their position depends on the economic efficiency and recognition, therefore there is a shift in the importance and value taken from the art to the brand itself (Tomiuc, 2015). Nowadays promotion and branding are the key indicators and tools to achieve success on the art market, apart from being recognized by the art world (Tomiuc, 2015). Branding can be also used by museums to build identity and align with its purpose (Ferreiro-Rosende et al., 2023). Strong image attracts broader audiences and that closure to the community might actually lead to attracting better grants and funding opportunities for the institution (Ferreiro-Rosende et al., 2023). There are many strategies on how to create the branding plan and what should it be based on, in the museum case a competitive advantage is usually earned when it's based on a person, that being one artist for example Picasso Museum (Ferreiro-Rosende, et al., 2023). Art institutions as well as artists are very much aware of the power of branding not only in the marketing understanding of that, but also the power of it as a form of representative system (Schroeder, 2005). Collaboration between companies and artistic partners is a branding strategy that is very familiar for both parties therefore the encounter between the two might bring interesting results, when done in a conscious way.

2.6 Finding a perfect match

As mentioned before, branding strategies are present in both, business and art world, although, how should they be conducted when it comes to a collaboration between the two? One of the biggest challenges might be to find a good partner, since an authentic connection between the parties is necessary (Michel & Willing, 2020 b). The conceptual fit between *brand core* and *brand extension*, which in this case would be engaging with an artistic agent, must therefore stimulate imagination and creativity in the consumers and broaden the thought-patterns about the brand (Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2008). The alignment of values for the both parties is crucial for that however, the changing nature of the character and image of a living artist or artistic institution, or even the brand might become problematic (Chailan, 2018). The fit and the combination should actually consider three parties: the brand, the artistic partner and the client, where target consumer should align with the company or with the artist or with both (Kim et al., 2018). In both scenarios the brand benefits from the congruence with the customer which can be newly acquired or strengthened by the collaboration and alignment with them (Kim et al., 2018).

Other important aspects that must be considered is the time framework, how long will the collaboration last and the intensity of the engagement of both parties, since the strategies then might vary from patronage, mentoring, artistic collaboration ect, however the long term strategies seems to be the most effective (Chailan, 2018). Also according to Karlsson (2018) the collaboration is more likely to be successful when it's based on the long term actions which then appear to be more authentic. The integration of the artist into the production process is crucial, as well as the stage of involvement and focus of both parties, the range of activities or products, and especially clear role division play an important role (Karlsson et al., 2018). The integrity aspect might also have an influence in the way that the brand will become an artistic brand and not just a brand with art, which then depends on the goals of the company and what they want to achieve through the collaboration.

2.7 Art Branding

The complexity of arranging a successful collaboration is very high. Although it is certainly not a new phenomena there are still many aspects that would require more clarity and development. Since many industries get more interested and invested in art, it is interesting to bring attention to the novel term developed by polish marketing strategist Igor Gałązkiewicz, *Art Branding*. The term has been introduced as a title of two of his books published in 2016 and 2023. *Art branding* is a term that englobes all the connections and collaborations between companies and artists which are part of their branding and communication strategy; it stands for the connection between art and business (Gałązkiewicz, 2023). The author emphasizes the new cultural-making or contemporary patronage of the arts position of the companies. Which is observed globally; nevertheless, the key element must be the maintenance of balance which requires sensibility and mediation (Gałązkiewicz, 2023). The fact that brands are reaching out to communicate through art, indicates audience sophistication and readiness to consume this type of content, also it might be a relief from marketing hacks and can promote and educate about art (Gałązkiewicz, 2023). Similarly to Dell'era (2010) the connection between different semantic fields like art and other industries that may lead to the democratization of the access to art. On the other hand it might also balance out the romantic view of the genius starving artist, but at the same time maintain the belief of supremacy of artist expression over economic transactions and its intrinsic universal value (Van den Braembussche, 1996). The saturation of the digitized world perhaps can be escaped by looking back at art and culture, which might

turn out to be extremely relevant and serve as the solution (Gałązkiewicz, 2023). That brings back the research sub-question about how to make those collaborations more successful and meaningful so that the value can be created for everyone.

3. Methodology

The thesis will answer the following research questions: *How do commercial companies collaborate with artistic partners like artists or museums? Is collaboration beneficial for both parties? How to create more meaningful and successful collaborations?* In order to do that, the study was conducted in the qualitative manner to provide interesting insights on the subject from two distinct worlds; the artistic one and the business one. The qualitative study should rely on criteria like reliability, replication and validity (Bryman, 2012) therefore it must be consistent, credible and transferable which then leads to interesting exploration of the subject. The literature that was already written in this regard is broad and covers multiple aspects, but only from the theoretical perspective. Therefore the qualitative results might enrich the existing research with information from the real life practices, since qualitative research focuses on how individuals interpret the constantly changing social reality and circumstances (Bryman, 2012, p. 79). Research questions and the following theoretical framework refer to notions that can be understood in a subjective manner or can be even contradictory sometimes, so the in-depth interviews provide new relevant data on the topic. The research design follows the comparative structure, where the same phenomena is being analyzed and described by two distinct groups from the sample. That leads to more profound understanding by creating meaningful contrasts in the perspectives (Bryman, 2012, p. 115).

Eleven semi-structured interviews were conducted; half of the respondents were from the artistic world, which included artists and museum employees responsible for partnerships or fundraising, and the other half was from the business field. The total time of the interviews was 8 hours and 42 minutes, with 46' minutes on average per meeting. The interviews took place in the months of April, May and June 2024, most were conducted online, via Google Meet due to lack of availability and time shortage. The interviews were conducted in three different languages: mainly English, Polish and Spanish in order to be the most truthful form of communication depending on the respondent. Due to a broad variability among the interviewees, each of them had different knowledge and experience in the field of collaboration, that was an enriching aspect for the data collection. Most of the interviewees

were contacted via LinkedIn or email, where I had presented my thesis subject as well as its relevance in their professional field and in the broader societal perspective. I always have emphasized the importance of their expertise and experience in this specific phenomena, which would be crucial to my research. After, mostly short, correspondence clarifying doubts, I had proceeded to scheduling 10 online interviews and one interview on site, in the workplace of the interviewee. All of the interviewees were asked to sign the consent form that was informing about the permission to record as well as stating the agreement to the use of the data collected during the encounter. They were also informed that the interview is anonymous, so that they can express themselves freely and authentically always based on their experience and opinions.

3.1 Operationalization

The operationalization process started with analyzing the main points and ideas from the theoretical framework and transforming them into the interview guide (see Appendix 1). There were two variants of the interview guide; one directed to the artistic group and the other one to the business group. Both were divided into two big parts; first focusing on the collaboration and branding strategies and the following one was touching upon commodification and value. However, due to the semi structured nature of the interviews, the order of the questions was influenced by the flow of the conversation in order to obtain the most constructive and coherent answers. More specific aspects discussed during the interviews were treating subjects like: motivation for collaboration, ways to achieve benefits for both parties, possible outcomes, audience feedback and the innovation aspect of the collaboration. The individuals from the two groups were so different, that the formulation of questions about the same topic might be slightly different in both interview guides. The issue that came across while formulating the questions was to make them approachable and understandable. The theoretical part can be overwhelming and not intuitive even for the professionals. The questions must have been based on academic theories, but then “translated” into more habitual tone and language, in order for the respondents to give an answer that would be later useful and applicable for the research question. For example the theory about the intricate and extrinsic motivation for the artists based on Bomnuter et al., (2022) was asked in a simpler manner firstly about their motivation and then developed through subquestions about the distinction. That is why the semi structured interview model worked very well. All of the respondents were asked to base their answers on their experience

as well as to express their honest opinions about the subject. That has highlighted another benefit of this approach, and that was the introduction of new concepts. By deviating from the main subjects, which was done by all interviewees during the meetings, another value has been created by adding new concepts that were not known or considered by the researcher before, and which enriched the study.

3.2 Sample

The sample for the data collection consisted of professionals and experts. The strategy that was used was purposive sampling, which stands for carefully selecting the participants under specific criteria to achieve the representativeness of the sample (Bryman, 2012). More specifically, the approach was criterion sampling (Bryman, 2012) where all the sampling units $N=11$ met a specific criterion, which was being involved in collaboration between commercial companies and artistic institutions or individuals.

Five out of eleven respondents were working in the business or industry not directly related to culture, therefore they were individuals that work in marketing departments of commercial firms, experts and consultants for strategy and marketing. The remaining six respondents were visual artists as well as museum employees working in partnership or fundraising departments. The criterion for choosing those was indeed depending on their experience with collaborations, the frequency of it and the overall status and recognition of a company or an artist. I wanted to reach artists that often collaborate with commercial companies. For that I researched cases of collaboration between artists and brands, however most of them were within the fashion world or the artist was very famous and therefore unapproachable like for example collaboration between Jeff Koons and BMW, where both sides are clearly unreachable. I decided to contact artists from a closer circle to mine, with whom at some point of my career I have collaborated. I also have asked if any of their acquaintances from the field have experience with collaborations. That method worked the best and facilitated contacts to some artists. Although, the number of possible respondents was still not enough, therefore I have decided to reach out to the museum employees that specialize in partnerships, since it's one of the forms of collaboration as well (Chailan, 2018). Therefore the sample of the artistic part consists of three visual artists and three museum representatives. I haven't reached out to art galleries or other cultural organizations as the collaboration with brands is not that frequent in that case. For the business side, I wanted to contact the marketing strategists of the companies that often collaborate with artists or

perhaps the partnership manager in the case if a company creates partnerships with cultural institutions like museums. Here again first I have research examples of collaborations, however it was difficult to contact people from very big and well-known companies. I have reached other marketing specialists and consultants through LinkedIn search that led me to professionals specialized in art branding, therefore were adequate for the study. Also talking to consultants, related to more than one brand and with a broad and more diverse experience was the right choice in order to get more insights on the subject. Besides, it was a crucial aspect of the sampling strategy to reach a group which is variable enough and aligned with the purpose of the study (Bryman, 2012) and which would bring relevant data for the research question.

Since its purposive sampling the search of individuals was very strategic so that they are relevant for the research question (Bryman, 2012), however all of them are high network individuals, their availability was very limited therefore the nationality of the sample is not taken into consideration as an important variable. All the respondents are European, proceeding from countries like: The Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Latvia and Slovakia. (See at the interviewee list Appendix 2).

3.3 Analysis

The interviews have been transcribed in the original languages and later analyzed in the Atlas.TI software. The program made it more convenient to operate on big amounts of data in terms of efficiency and clarity. The crucial part was to treat all the gathered data and put it through thematic analysis, in order to derive a certain amount of codes which will be helpful to answer the research question. Finally, summing up to the creation of 47 codes which later have been grouped into categories/code groups like: collaboration, future, benefits/outcomes etc. (see Appendix 3) Those thematic categories were based on the relation and proximity of the codes. The thematic analysis consisted of creating an index of central themes and subthemes which showed the recurring motifs in the texts (Bryman, 2012). This way, the thematic analysis allowed to make connections between different transcripts and see the central ideas (Bryman, 2012). The themes of the codes were directly related to the themes from the interview guide, although due to its open ended nature of semi structured interviews, some unexpected themes emerged like: humanism, employee branding, mediator ect. which were put into a new code group only with new concepts (see Appendix 3). The analysis

strategy was mainly focused on identifying similarities and comparing contrasts between the interviews from two different groups in order to arrive at constructive conclusions for the research question. Quantitative studies as well as personal interviews might raise some issues about the ethics and possible biases especially while talking about personal opinions and experiences. Therefore the analysis process was actually a tool to draw objective conclusions through different strategies. In this case the technique used was double coding (Bryman, 2012) to ensure the creation of objective conclusions that will be relevant for the research question. The process consisted in firstly identifying the codes in all the interviews and later organizing them into categories/code groups. After that I have repeated the same process, reviewing and finding some more codes and then updating with the changes applied to the categories and code groups. This process is called axial coding when the codes are regrouped and put back together to observe changes and connections in the categories (Bryman, 2012). Atlas.ti has facilitated an overview on the co-occurrences of categories and codes as well as it presented the frequency of occurrence of each one, which was also one of the reasons why this program was suitable for the research and has helped me draw constructive conclusions.

3.4 Value of research

The value of qualitative research can sometimes be doubted since the results might not always be replicable based on the specific ephemeral context of the matter. However, for this research, although the circumstances might vary as well as, the examples discussed by the respondents, the implications and findings should stay relevant to that particular circumstance of the research. The ethical issue concerns the biases of the interviewees and possible conflict of interest while revealing sensible data about their profession and other parties that they collaborate with. That is why all the names of interviewees as well as names of companies mentioned are hidden and the people anonymized. The biases might also affect the interviewer, although it was considered and intended at all times to stay unbiased and not influenced by personal interest or other's opinions.

3.4.1 Use of AI

Overall the research was conducted without the help of AI. Nevertheless two of the programmes used have AI-powered tools. First is the Atlas.ti which helps with analyzing qualitative data, and the second one was Translator Deepl. That AI-powered translator was used to translate into English parts of the interviews for citation purposes in the results

section. The programme was used to ensure that the translations were done correctly and later they were also reviewed by the researcher.

4. Results

The aim of this study is to answer the following research question and its sub-questions: *How do commercial companies collaborate with artistic partners like artists or museums? Is that collaboration beneficial for both parties? How to create more meaningful and successful collaborations?* The following chapter will present the findings and data collected during eleven interviews and will compare it with the previously presented theoretical framework. The sections consequently present the findings about: motivations and incentives, benefits and outcomes, contrast between artistic and business world and the steps that should be taken to create a successful collaboration. Last part of this chapter will be presenting new themes and ideas that emerged during the interviews, which have enriched the research. Each part presents the mentioned themes from perspectives of both groups of respondents, contrasting their answers on the same topic. Overall findings are consistent with the academic literature regarding this topic however, they bring up new issues. The contrast between the answers and points of view of both groups is visible; although, it is not explicitly harsh, nor are their answers contradictory.

4.1 Motivations and incentives

One of the essential topics about collaboration is the motivation and incentives of the parties involved. Among the artistic side, all of the six respondents highlighted the financial aspect as crucial but not essential. Which corresponds to theories presented previously from economists like Throsby (1992) and Bomnuter et al., (2022) who have emphasized commercial incentives in artists. This financial interest was mentioned and stressed by the whole artistic part, however it could also be delivered in other ways than just in cash transactions as one of the interviewees mentioned:

“Well, as a fundraiser, there's always a financial motivation, but it doesn't have to be cash per se. So, it can also be in man hours or another example (...) So, we're quite open to those kinds of collaborations” (Interviewee 2, Museum Representative)

Four of six “art world” respondents brought up the lack or instability of the governmental funds and subsidies for the culture, and therefore expressed their need to find other sources of income, in partnerships and collaborations. In order to maintain some sort of market power, be able to develop and follow its mission, and also to stay relevant and realize their goals. According to one of the respondents:

“So now (...) new target audiences and more revenue. And then you could also say like this specific revenue gets earmarked for these specific projects. And those can be different KPIs” (Interviewee 3, Museum Representative).

Also all of the artistic respondents mentioned the necessity of alignment of goals and values with the company. Some were calling it alignment of values and themes they represent, others were talking about ethics codes, mission alignment and the same goals they want to reach. According to Baumgarth (2018) that alignment of values may be a decisive factor due to the *spillover effect*. Therefore, the collaboration should happen on a common ground which doesn't go against ideology of any of the parties, and the association with the brand won't harm the image of the other party. According to the artists:

“It's also the question, whether I wanna be associated with this kind of brand because that also kind of communicates about my choices and it positions me in a certain light” (Interviewee 5, Artist).

“I mean, art is about politics, companies are too. So, for me, the selection of the product or the company is crucial and you have to stand by your statement, of course.” (Interviewee 6, Artist)

Four out of six interviewees agreed that artistic freedom and independence (Bomnuter, et al., 2022) must undeniably stay untouched and uninfluenced by the other party. Both in artistic practice or during creation of exhibition or discourse of an institution, there must be no intervention from the company side.

“I have to say that fear also exists among our colleagues from the curators, for example, who are involved with the exhibition, what it looks like, and what's selected within an exhibition. And we're quite strict that a corporate partner can't be involved,

so to say, in the team of an exhibition or the works that we submit.” (Interviewee 2, Museum Representative)

From the business respondents the motivations were certainly different. All five confirmed that the main incentive was to get upgraded and associated with art. Which aligns with ideas of Michel & Willing (2020 b) about the desire to be associated with the art scene. The transfer of art related notions to the brand was mentioned by all of them, as in the following example:

“We can say that it's a strategy (...) which precisely captures various qualities of art. So that these brands can bathe in the warmth of “art” and they can shine in this glow for a long time.” (Interviewee 7, Business Owner)¹

Another strong motivation was to upgrade their marketing strategy, bring it to the other level and therefore gain competitive advantage over the competitors. That motivation was mentioned by three respondents. Other goals concerned development of the image and public relations of the company, ideas also presented by Dell’era (2010). On the other hand, the motivation was based on fast returns and on gaining economic profit from the collaboration. To illustrate: “Well, it's 100% focused only on sales. And in second place is the image of public relations. Just to gain these qualities of art.” (Interviewee 7, Business Owner)².

Three of out five the respondents from the business side talked about the need to integrate with the artworld and to create a supportive relationship for them. Owing to the new paradigm of the company as a patron of the arts and its new position within the contemporary society. As it was presented by Gałązkiewicz (2023) and Dell’era (2010) brands nowadays want to take active part in the cultural scene and have a real influence. Also due to poor governmental policies on supporting arts, companies that invest in art might be a right solution to maintain the artistic activity growing. The following examples illustrate company’s point of view when it comes to their role in supporting the arts:

¹ Translated from Polish: “ można powiedzieć że jest strategią(...) Która właśnie przyjmuje różne przymioty sztuki bo po prostu po to żeby te marki się w tym ciepłku sztuki mogły kąpać i mogły w tym blasku świecić długo”

² Translated from Polish:”No to to jest nastawione w 100% tylko (...) na sprzedaż w drugim w drugiej kolejności na wizerunek na zasięg I na to właśnie żeby zyskać te przymioty sztuki (...)”

“All this we can see that artists' art environment is completely still, not taken care of by business. (...) For us, this is no longer just a one-time action. It's also a certain responsibility. A mission that we sort of noticed and would like to continue. And in fact our business goals, with all of this, are receding into the background a bit.” (Interviewee 11, Company Member)³

“Art has always been used to integrate people around an idea or to show the status of power, well that's what the church did in the sense and political leaders. Today, simply brands have such an importance after the industrial revolution, that they have huge budgets. They seduce, they run this world and current civilization so they also benefit from the potential of art so that's how it is, it's nothing new.” (Interviewee 8, Marketing Specialist)⁴

This section of results contributes to the main research question about how companies collaborate with the artistic worlds. It emphasizes the motivations behind each party and explains how they differ from each one. It is also interesting to see how the findings are balanced with the theoretical framework and reinforce each other.

4.2 Outcomes and benefits

The topic of the outcomes of the collaboration and possible benefits provoked many interesting discussions. The following part will present and contrast the opinions of both groups regarding that, which will help to answer the research sub-question: *Is collaboration between them beneficial for both parties?*

All six respondents from the artistic side mentioned the financial aspect as the main benefit from the collaboration, as well as being exposed to a bigger audience and new markets. As one of the artists has mentioned:

³ Translated from Polish: “To wszystko widzimy, że materia środowiska sztuki artystów jest zupełnie jeszcze nie zaopiekowana przez biznes. (...) Dla nas to jest już nie tylko jednorazowa akcja. To jest też pewna odpowiedzialność. Misja, którą my jakby w zauważyliśmy i chcielibyśmy ją kontynuować. I tak tak naprawdę nasze cele biznesowe, przy tym wszystkim trochę schodzą na drugi plan”

⁴ Translated from Polish: “Sztuka zawsze była zawsze służyła i do po to żeby integrować ludzi wokół jakiejś idei czy też pokazywać status siłę władzę i tak jak to robił kościół w sensie tutaj religijnym i władcy czy możnowładcy. Dzisiaj po prostu marki mają takie znaczenie po rewolucji przemysłowej, że no one mają ogromne budżety. One uwodzą, one sprzedają i nakręcają ten świat i obecną cywilizację więc korzystają też z potencjału sztuki no więc tak to nie jest nic nowego”

“These brands often have a huge following. I'm not only talking about sort of Instagram following (...)That's kind of a trade off basically that you get, because you're gonna be exposed to their markets, their audience.” (Interviewee 5, Artist)

On the other hand, all five respondents from the business world (and also one artist, Interviewee 6) talked about collaboration being a way to enable access to culture, to take art off the pedestal and bring it to people. Supposingly art would be more approachable thanks to the collaboration with a company. As Interviewees 9 and 10 have said: “I think it's amazing, such an importation of art into life, into everyday life.” (Interviewee 8, Business Owner)⁵

“People were completely closed off to art, art seemed totally unreal to us, to be able to think about it at all. And museums were run in such a way that was totally inaccessible to people. Because it was just like (...) so serious like that, it was hostile, and people just didn't want to experience it.” (Interviewee 10, Business Owner)⁶

The popularization of art was one of the aspects that was not treated in the theoretical framework, since it emerged during the interviews unexpectedly. It contrasts theories of Chailan (2018) and O'Reilly (2005) where they talk about the symbolic consumption of goods, and psychological satisfaction derived from it apart from the utility aspect. It is interesting how the subject was not brought up in any interview, however the consumption of co-created products actually opens the door to culture. Something indeed contrasting with the idea of *artification* (Joy & Belk, 2020) for example.

Also four out of five respondents from the business side have noticed that the collaboration with a brand can have a crucial influence on the career of the artist. Whenever it is a young artist or a well-established one for whom such collaboration just adds up more recognition and somehow validation. The collaboration can also open doors for new opportunities and potential clients. As it was mentioned by Interviewee 7:

⁵ Translated from Polish: “Myślę, że to jest niesamowite, takie sprowadzenie sztuki do życia, do takiego codziennego życia.”

⁶ Translated from Polish: “Ludzie byli kompletnie zamknięci na sztuce, sztuka się wydawała nam totalnie nierealna, żeby ją w ogóle, żeby móc w ogóle o niej myśleć. A a muzea były prowadzona w taki sposób totalnie nieprzystępny dla ludzi(...)tak poważny taki skostniały, że po prostu ludzie nie chcieli tego doświadczać”

“Well, when I think of Ewa Juszkiewicz, for example her collaboration with Louis Vuitton, actually right away all the headlines that we have were saying that it's an upgrade even though art should stand above Louis Vuitton handbags. (...) If Ewa Juszkiewicz were to list her portfolio of things then I think that this collaboration with Louis Vuitton would be somewhere really on top because it's some kind of an achievement.” (Interviewee 7, Business Owner)⁷

The perspective of the artists interviewed aligned with that vision, two out of three said that they could gain something more from the collaboration, and that being learning something new from the company and its people. For example one artist when asked if she had learned anything from the collaboration responded: “Of course. Another way of thinking about things. That communicating, communicating, and being seen to be seen is not always the strategy⁸.” (Interviewee 1, Artist). That can remind of the theory about artistic and economic logic of Eikhof & Haunschild (2007) where the two are ruled by a different set of values and rules, but according to the interviews the collaboration can be beneficial in terms of acquiring and learning new skills from the other party. Also the artists understood as image makers are not completely clueless then it comes to branding (Schroeder, 2005).

Similar positive impact have been noticed by three of the respondents on the business side. They have mentioned the collaboration with artistic partners had a positive influence on the company and especially on its culture. Some of the types of collaborations can be targeted to the employees of the company or to any other internal part of it, where both are very beneficial. According to the literature there are many ways of collaborating (Michel & Willing, 2020 a) the task is to pick the most suitable one for both partners. For example, through creative workshops or art education the empathy, sensibility and emotional intelligence can be trained and expanded. As Gałązkiewicz (2023) has made very clear, the contact with art or artist leads to greater sensibility. Something neglected in the typical business world, however very important according to the respondents:

⁷ Translated from Polish: “ No to jak sobie pomyślę teraz o Ewie Juszkiewicz no to na przykład jej współpraca z Louis Vuitton rzeczywiście od razu po prostu wszystkie nagłówki mówiły że to jest upgrade tak, mimo że sztuka powinna stać wyżej niż torebki Louis Vuitton No nie czyli to że najpierw oczywiście Chodziło o to że rekordowa sprzedaż polskiej artystki rekordowa sprzedaż za jej obrazy natomiast no to był to był duży News. Gdyby Ewa Juszkiewicz miała sobie wypisać portfolio rzeczy to myślę że ta współpraca z Louis Vuitton byłaby gdzieś rzeczywiście na topie bo jest to jakiś tam osiągnięciem”

⁸ Translated from Spanish: “ Claro. Otra manera de plantearme las cosas. Que no siempre el hecho de comunicar, comunicar, comunicar y que se vea que se vea “

“In general, training through art is a great thing because people also do not fully realize that many communication advertising strategies are like artistic strategies. In addition, thinking through art, thinking in these categories, such cultural sensitization that can very positively affect business.” (Interviewee 7, Business Owner)⁹

In terms of negative outcomes the artistic side has been asked about it directly and for the other side the topic has emerged in the natural flow of the interviews. Consequently the respondents from the art world have spotted more possible negative outcomes. Only two of them mentioned the fear of losing their identity and “selling out” themselves too much: “The problem is when you stop being yourself to cash a check for a brand.” (Interviewee 1, Artist)¹⁰

All three of the museum representatives have mentioned as the biggest negative outcome losing credibility due to a badly fitted collaboration, where the other partner is involved in suspicious behaviors, has a bad image, went bankrupt, or is intending to do some sort of art washing. As Interviewee 2 has stated:

“For example, a partner that is in the news in a very bad manner that puts a partnership under stress. For example, if a corporate partner is constantly affected by bad management, by bad employment, for example, or involved in a fraud. (...) And here also comes the art washing. It's adding to the play can also be a bit more dangerous” (Interviewee 2, Museum representative)

Moreover, the power in such collaboration is usually more on the brand side. As Interviewees 4 and 5 have expressed, the collaboration with a company is not always stable, it is normally just a small project for them, especially when it comes to a very big companies. The communication can be challenging as well as the division of roles might turn out to be problematic. According to one of the museum's representatives:

⁹ Translated from Polish: “Ogólnie rzecz biorąc, szkolenie poprzez sztukę jest świetną rzeczą, ponieważ ludzie również nie zdają sobie w pełni sprawy, że wiele strategii reklamy komunikacyjnej jest jak strategie artystyczne. Ponadto myślenie poprzez sztukę, myślenie w tych kategoriach, takie uwrażliwienie kulturowe, które może bardzo pozytywnie wpłynąć na biznes”

¹⁰ Translated from Spanish: “El problema es cuando dejas de ser tú misma por cobrar un cheque para una marca”

“They suddenly find themselves in some struggles. These things, like supporting a museum, are the first ones to drop, so they will be like, no, it doesn't fit in our yearly financial plan. Sorry.” (Interviewee 4, Museum representative)

Interesting issue that was treated differently by two groups was the commodification aspect. For the artistic side only one respondent expressed concern about it:

“That might devalue my work in that sense, like that context where I want to see it. It's a collectable piece as well. So that might devalue, that might hurt your market as well in that sense.” (Interviewee 5, Artist)

On the other hand for museum representative commodification was seen as something very positive:

“Suddenly they see this (merchandising product) in a store and they go: what's that? Oh, and it's 35 euros. That's crazy! But then you see the South Korean 28 year old coming into the museum for the first time, or maybe not even coming to the museum, but they're buying this. And she goes like, wow, this is great. I didn't know. Actually, it's from a museum in the Netherlands. Oh, I'm going to the Netherlands next year. Maybe I should visit. So there's a different thought pattern, but there's also a different customer journey there.”(Interviewee 3, Museum Representative)

Here the different views on the commodification aspect of art depend on the position and interest, an artist wants to protect their work so that it creates more value, since valuation of art is very context dependent (Van den Braembussche, 1996). However, for the museum the value can be found not only in the artwork but also in the numbers of visitors, which here makes a reference to the accessibility to culture mentioned by the business respondents.

In the business group, three out of five have actually mentioned commodification as a negative outcome of the collaboration. Emphasizing its closure to kitsch, saturation with mass production, and have commented on the fact that the connection with art only takes place through consumption of goods. That again contrasts with the theory of symbolic consumption (Dell'era, 2010) presenting it in a rather negative manner. They have also mentioned that many companies get involved with art just because of the trend, but without willingness to

create any lasting value, an issue that was also noticed by an artist, Interviewee 5. To illustrate:

“Now there is a trend for this type of collaboration and brands are very much taking advantage of it, so these are examples of this kind of mass art branding, which is a bit negative in the sense that art is starting to pop out of our refrigerators!” (Interviewee 7, Business Owner)¹¹

4.3 Contrasts between art and business

Both groups were asked about their opinion on the contrast between the artistic world and the business world. Especially in the case of art where there seems to be a clear division between “art for art's sake” and commercial art, how does collaboration contribute to that dynamic? Can it change it? These questions were directed toward the sample group and will help to approach the main research question: *How do commercial companies collaborate with artistic partners like artists or museums?*

According to the artistic part of the interviewees, all six of them agreed and emphasized that there should be always maintained a balance between the interests of both parties. The approach to the collaboration must be equivalent in order to meet on common ground, safe for both. As Interviewee 4 have said:

“I think you create a good partnership that can be successful and kind of overcome that traditional idea of like art for art, and there is no commercial aspect and the commercial art on the other side, so it needs to be balanced and carefully structured.” (Interviewee 4, Museums Representative)

Certainly all five respondents in from the business side agreed that the artist world is completely different from theirs. Ruled by other factors and forces, which confirms the literature written on the subject (Dell’era, 2010 ; Eikhof & Haunschild, 2007). For them the collaboration as any other project must generate profit, be calculated and fit financial plan, meanwhile the artistic matter is more ambiguous as Interviewee 11 has noticed:

¹¹ Translated from Polish: “Obecnie istnieje trend na tego typu współpracę i marki bardzo z niego korzystają, więc są to przykłady tego rodzaju masowego brandingu sztuki, co jest nieco negatywne w tym sensie, że sztuka zaczyna wyskakiwać z naszych lodówek!”

“Business is a dry calculation of purpose, utilitarian approach to what we do. But art, well, it is not always so understandable, it is more flexible, it's more indefinite.”
(Interviewee 11, Company employee)¹²

The contrast between the two worlds was also stressed by artists, as Interviewees 1 and 5 have stated, when they collaborate with a brand the project is just one specific aspect of their creation and it's normally not artistically interesting or challenging for them. Something again contrasting with the theory of *artification* (Joy & Belk, 2020), because it shows that collaboration requires less artistic merit therefore in the case of *artification* the value of a product perhaps shouldn't lead to turning it into an artwork.

“Commercial work is less for me personally, maybe it's less inspired because it's sort of, let's say maybe watered down for the mass to, to understand, to appeal. Where things I look for are maybe, more complicated in some way to understand something that, you know, raises my interest and maybe they're very specific” (Interviewee 5, Artist)

That has been also observed by three respondents from the business group and one artist (respondent 6), they pointed out that artists are not always willing to collaborate and are rather distrustful towards the collaboration. That might be because of a different set of values or that it will be transformed into a commodity and lose its initial purpose and “purity” (Conradie & Niekerk, 2016). That is why companies that want to collaborate should find a way to legitimize themselves in the eyes of the artist or give enough freedom for them to make the collaboration interesting not only from the financial point of view but also as an opportunity to grow in their artistic practice.

On the other hand what was also noticed by the business group is that thanks to the collaboration art can be brought up to people in a more pleasant or approachable form, as three out of five respondents have pointed out. According to Interviewee 9:

¹² Translated from Polish: “Biznes to jest suchy kalkulacja cel, zawsze podejście utylitarne do tego, co robimy, ale sztuka no nie zawsze jest taka zrozumiała, jest bardziej elastyczna, jest bardziej nieokreślona”

“This has to be given to people on a plate, (...) this is such a space that is very flexible and the idea is to be able to bring art into a wider circulation.” (Interviewee 9, Business Owner)¹³

Besides, two of them also mentioned the fact that commercial art and commissioned work have been indeed very present throughout art history. The collaboration between artists, institutions or partners have been present for a long time also according to Becker (1982). It is not something new, the collaboration and commercial interest has always been embedded in artistic production.

What should also be taken in consideration is the audience feedback, unfortunately according to the respondents there is normally very little feedback available.

For the business side the feedback can be noticeable in popularity and numbers of visits to their website or the increase in the numbers of followers on social media. However, attracting new clients was mentioned only by two respondents. According to Kim et al., (2018) collaboration should influence *cognitive flexibility* in the consumers and overall provoke a positive reaction from there which was not directly mentioned by any of the respondents from both groups. Although, the Interviewee 11 has mentioned the reaction of the other companies from the industry or business partners which according to him was where the most feedback actually came from. Which is reflected in the theory about branding strategies and gaining competitive advantages as well as positioning on the market (Karlsson et al., 2018).

From the artistic side, there was very little feedback given as well. From the museum employees, three of them have mentioned that the people don't bother until the collaboration is done in a bad manner or with a bad partner. Indeed it depends on the type of the visitor, as well as the differences in generations and taste play an important role in the reception of such collaborations. As Interviewee 3 has said:

¹³ Translated from Polish: To trzeba ludziom podać na talerzu, (...) to jest taka przestrzeń, która jest bardzo elastyczna i chodzi o to, żeby móc wprowadzać sztukę w szerszy obieg”

“When you're thinking about product partnerships, licensing partnerships, what people don't know... I think the biggest issue is that individual tastes can come into play.” (Interviewee 3, Museum Representative).

Literature suggests that the collaboration can lead to innovation since the artistic partner provides specialized knowledge and creativity and the other can provide a platform and financial support for the development of ideas (Potts, 2019). Innovation can also be understood on a symbolic level when a new social meaning can be associated with a final product due to the merger between two different industries (Dell’era, 2010). Therefore the innovation aspect can be crucial for the research sub-question *How to create more meaningful and successful collaborations?* However the respondents when asked about the innovation didn’t see it as an important ingredient for the collaboration.

For the artistic side, the innovation aspect behind the collaborations wasn’t that present, just two respondents (5 and 6) mentioned that in the case when it's about a co-created product, there might be an innovative outcome to that, but that always depends on the level of artistic freedom. On the other hand respondent 3 mentioned that for artistic institutions the innovative part of collaboration is finding a way to stay relevant for young generations and different audiences;

“I think connecting a respectable institution (...) to innovative brands that create new experiences will make sure that they discover what our collection has for them as well, to make it relevant for them.” (Interviewee 3, Museum Representative).

The opinions from the business side were very divided, the innovation was understood in different ways. That being; marketing itself as something that must be innovative in order to succeed (respondent 6) or art being innovative due to the limitless creativity of the artists (respondent 8). Only two respondents (10 and 7) had the same idea that the merge between art and other industries can result in innovation by creating contrast and new visions from bringing two separate worlds together (Fillis, 2006).

“I believe in the innovation of the very approach of ourselves. After all we are a construction brand, a production brand that creates something. It was also a certain

starting point to give to the artists who are also creating something.” (Interviewee 11, Company employee)¹⁴

The dualism between artistic and business worlds can't be neglected. The differences can lead to challenges but also can be enriching for both groups but in different ways.

4.4 How to create a successful collaboration, step by step?

To sum up the results, this part is dedicated to how a collaboration should be carried out. That gives a rich and complex overview on how they perceive the collaboration and again can give an answer to the research sub-question; *How to create more meaningful and successful collaborations?* The last part will be dedicated to themes that have emerged spontaneously during the interviews and were mentioned by more than one person. That has enriched the study and helped to approach the research question and sub-questions in a more holistic and complex way.

In the artistic group the main topic that was mentioned by all six respondents was the alignment of values with the company. Especially on a personal level, the mutual trust, shared target and mission were crucial aspects - it has been mentioned as the first thing when it comes to considering a collaboration. Something that has also been mentioned by Michel, & Willing, (2020 b). Another essential factor for three artists, equally important as the alignment of values, was the artistic freedom: “For me there has to be creative freedom” (Interviewee 1, Artist)¹⁵

From the business side the answers have varied due to slightly different specializations and experiences of each respondent. However four out of five also agreed that alignment of values and even personal chemistry is one of the first important steps to take into account. Next, three out of five of them mentioned that the essential part is to previously set a goal for such collaboration, whenever its sales or image creation. Getting involved with those strategies requires a lot of budget spending according to respondents 9 and 10, that is also why there should be a clear goal of such actions in order to not lose resources.

¹⁴ Translated from Polish:” Uważam, że innowacja samego podejścia naszego. My jesteśmy marką budowlaną, produkcyjną, która tworzy coś. To też było pewien punkt wyjścia do tego, że nadajmy artystom, którzy też coś tworzą.”

¹⁵ Translated from Spanish: “Pues para mí tiene que haber libertad creativa”

“One question you have to ask yourself, “what for?” (...) These days when you have an excess of everything in general the question “why”. You have to meet budgets, but this question on the one hand can seem limiting. On the other hand it can be liberating and stimulating to some extent because in my opinion it helps to understand what the brand is emblematic of and how are the people in the organization.” (Interviewee 8, Marketing Specialist)¹⁶

Other factors mentioned considered the time frame of the collaboration, the target group and the selection of the right format of the collaboration. Those aspects were also treated by Karlsson, et al., (2018) that depending on the format of the collaboration important adjustments must be made when it comes to the time frame and the intensity of involvement of each party. The timing of the collaboration was mentioned by four respondents, since it is a crucial factor in building trust and a strong image based on connection to art and culture (Chailan, 2018). As respondents 7, 9 and 10 have mentioned, a good collaboration should lead brands to take more responsibility for the art and to get fully involved with it. As respondent 10 has described it:

“There are many different possibilities and it doesn't have to be art, so if it's going to be art, let's know why and with what responsibility. (...) What does it give me and what can I give to this world of art, and here is where that decision is made; I want to have a role of patronage of the arts, for example.”(Interviewee 10, Business owner)¹⁷

The views on how to create a successful collaboration differ for both groups however the most important aspects like value alignment and the balance between interests of both parties seems to have the same importance. The findings illustrate the ideas presented previously in the theoretical framework chapter adding more depth to them.

¹⁶ Translated from Polish: “Jedno pytanie trzeba sobie zadać, "po co". W dzisiejszych czasach kiedy jest masz nadmiar wszystkiego w ogóle pytanie "po co". Wiadomo że trzeba realizować budżety ale to pytanie z jednej strony może wydawać się ograniczające z drugiej strony może być wyzwajające i stymulujące w jakimś stopniu bo tak zrozumiesz to czego Marka jest emblematem i jaka jest naprawdę organizacja tej firmy tych ludzi wewnątrz”

¹⁷ Translated from Polish: “Jest wiele różnych możliwości i to nie musi być sztuka, więc jeżeli to ma być sztuka, to wiedzmy dlaczego i z jaką odpowiedzialnością. (...) Co mi to daje i co ja temu światu sztuki mogę dać i tutaj jest właśnie podjęcie tej decyzji; chcę mieć rolę mecenatu sztuki na przykład”

Lastly, the themes that have emerged spontaneously from more than one interview consider topics like: accessibility to culture, the role of a mediator and the new function of the brands as contemporary patrons/mécène of the arts. Respondents from two groups mentioned the increased accessibility to culture thanks to collaboration and its exposure to a bigger audience, through education and bringing art to everyday life.

The new role of the brands being patrons of the arts was also mentioned by both groups (by respondents 1,7,9,10) Due to market power of the brands, they can finance artists and take on more responsibility if this relation is aimed to be long term. That also aligns with the theory presented about brands already being embedded in culture in order to reach their customers (Stolley & Glynne, 2022). It also brings up the ideas behind the *Art Branding* where companies take on new roles in contemporary society (Gałązkiewicz, 2023).

The last theme about the role of mediator was mentioned only by the business groups. The role of someone who could make sure that the collaboration is beneficial and balanced for both parties was mentioned by three respondents. As it was explained by one of them:

“I believe that in such collaborations there must be a mediator and a person who has experience both in this field and that, and understands both worlds, because these two worlds are so completely different. (...) I usually try to make both sides reach a point where we optimally achieve the goals of both the brand and the artist. It has to be a synergy.”(Interviewee 9, Business owner)¹⁸

The presented themes were not mentioned nor discussed directly in the theoretical framework, therefore they contribute to a richer understanding of the phenomena of collaboration both from business and artistic perspective. Due to the semi-structured nature of the interviews those new insights could come out and be analyzed in the light of the already discussed theories and concepts.

¹⁸ Translated from Polish: “Tak uważam, że w takich współpracach też jak najbardziej musi być mediator i osoba, która ma doświadczenie i w tej dziedzinie, i w tej, i rozumie oba światy, bo te dwa światy są tak zupełnie różne. (...) Ja zazwyczaj staram się, żeby obie strony doszły do takiego punktu, w którym optymalnie osiągamy cele i marki, i artyści. Musi to, musi być synergia.”

5. Conclusions

The aim of this research was to understand the points of view of both parties involved in the collaborations. To see the similarities and contrasts between them in order to arrive at a constructive and balanced conclusion that will explain and find a way to create collaborations that are well seen by both. The phenomena of collaboration has been already widely discussed in the academic literature, indeed it provides a basic framework to understand the phenomena, the motivations and outcomes for each party. The findings were consistent with the most part of the literature, however have outgrown it. Thanks to this empirical research and the methodology applied, new topics have emerged which have not been treated before and which could only show up thanks to the qualitative manner of the study.

The previous part of the results and the mini conclusion that were done at the end of each subchapter have led me to the conclusions presented in this chapter. The motivation for creating a collaboration for both artistic and business sides were consistent with the literature. The outcomes that have been discussed in the results section, weren't always aligned with the literature; they rather highlight the gaps that the theory hasn't still covered or not from that specific angle. Especially in such important subjects like commodification and the consumption of the results of these collaborations. The literature focuses more on the symbolic consumption aspect of that, meanwhile the interviews have always led to the conclusion about the accessibility to culture as the main outcome and product of the collaboration. Therefore this study has opened a space for new research to be carried out or focused on a different angle.

As it was stated before the aim is to answer the following research questions:

How do commercial companies collaborate with artistic partners like artists or museums? Is collaboration beneficial for both parties? How to create more meaningful and successful collaborations?

Companies collaborate with artistic partners in order to get associated with the art world and therefore gain competitive advantage. Due to the considerable market power of brands the collaboration can lead to assuming the role of patronage of the arts which would be favorable for the artist side, since their main motivation is about financial growth, however never at the

expense of losing their independence or artistic freedom. The collaboration is beneficial for both parties although in different ways. Also the contrast between two worlds, two different industries like art and the other partner, doesn't have to lead to conflict of values only, but can also leave a positive impact on each other, as it permits a transfer of knowledge between two specializations. Besides, as this research has shown it is also beneficial for the audience, since it can not only provide value and education about art, but also can help to increase the accessibility to culture and popularization of art. The last sub-question explains how it can be actually done to lead to these positive outcomes. The most important thing is balance and alignment. There must be a balance between values and desires of both parties, there can't be a lack of artistic merit but it also must be financially sustainable and generate profit. The alignment of overall values of the organizations is another basic and essential aspect to create a meaningful collaboration. Because this shows the way and the common ground where the two parties can actually meet each other. It must start with noticing similarities, not only differences. It's about reaching a balance between the contrasting partners, whose merger might also lead to innovative solutions and ideas.

Although collaboration is a popular phenomena, it is not being discussed in which direction it should go in the future and how it should be done. Therefore this thesis provides an overview and concrete implications for the parties involved. Both for the companies to know what is actually the position of the artist's side on the subject, and also for the artistic part it gives a clever view on what a company can get and is pursuing through the collaboration. The emergence of new concepts like the mediator is a concrete suggestion for the business side to take into account, its apparent crucial role in finding the right match. Other themes that appeared about accessibility to culture can again be an interesting topic to consider for the artistic part as well as for the audience of the collaboration. Actually by contrasting the points of view of the two groups, the potential consumers and audience of the collaboration can also become more mindful about their choices. Especially taking into account that this has become a trend and the presence of this sort of collaboration is likely to increase and invade different areas of everyday life of the customers. The inclusion of brands in the cultural sphere can provoke a subject for discussion not only for the audience but also policy makers as the new role of patrons of the arts indeed carry more implications for the society.

I am conscious about various limitations of this study, one of them being the difficulty to access the individuals both from the artistic and business side. Since the people involved are

professionals and apart from the incentive of afterwards receiving the results of the study, they are not very likely to participate in the research. Another limitation is the fact that the people participating are from different countries (due to the scarcity of possible interviews) and that the cultural differences and nuances depending on their cultural background haven't been taken into consideration. However, due the fact that many of those types of collaborations have been developed on the international level, therefore perhaps the cultural differences of the participants were not as relevant. Lastly, the richest field of collaborations with artists is the fashion industry both in high-end brands and fast fashion. Those collaborations have been omitted on purpose, due to the overlap of the cultural significance of fashion and art, as well as the artistic merit of both sides is overlapping and hard to differentiate. For that reason, for the clarity of the results, the study has been limited to collaboration with companies that are not directly connected to culture or art.

The possible future research could actually be dedicated to the collaboration with fashion, although there has already been a broad literature written on this particular aspect. Another possibility would be to update or refocus the literature written on collaboration and indeed include in it various aspects that didn't get that much attention like; accessibility to culture, brands as patrons of the arts and the role of mediator. It would be interesting to conduct the study and limit it to specific countries and nationalities which would highlight the cultural nuances that may be present in such collaborations. As well as when it comes to public subsidies and funds and the arts which depend on each country. Lastly, another direction that could be taken is to assess the impact of such collaboration on society. This study has shown how little feedback is actually received, which could be interesting to explore further using different research methodologies and tools.

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Appendix 1. Interview guide

Interview guide for the Brand side

INTRODUCTION

1. Can you present yourself and tell me what do you do?
2. Can you tell me about your experience with collaboration with artists or art institutions like galleries or museums?

COLLABORATION AND BRANDING

3. What are the company expectations about such collaborations?
4. What is the company's motivation to carry out such collaborations?
5. According to you, what are the crucial steps to create a successful collaboration between a brand and an artist?
6. When a brand collaborates with an artist, they're essentially co-creating the brand's image together. Could it potentially lead to changes in the brand's internal structure or philosophy after interacting with artists?
7. Collaboration with an artist is not a new phenomena, do you think collaboration with artists can be innovative ? If so, how? Did you find any of your projects innovative?
8. In your experience, what was the feedback from your audience/clients on the collaborations?
9. Collaboration with artists might influence that the brand will get some art related notions associated with it. Do you agree with that? What notions/associations would it be?

COMMODIFICATION AND VALUE

10. There has always been this discussion between the economic and aesthetic value of art. So one being the “commercial one” and the other “for the Art`s Sake”. Do you think that brand collaborations could somehow influence that dynamic? If so, how?
11. Is it crucial to maintain a balance between the artistic and economic value of the final output of the collaboration? How did you achieve it in your collaborations?
12. What value did you derive from collaborating with artists? Was there financial growth? Has it been popular among the clients?

13. According to you and your experience, what is the future for collaboration with artists and museums?

Interview guide for the Artistic side

INTRODUCTION

1. Can you present yourself and tell me what do you do?
2. Can you tell me about your experience with collaboration with brands and companies?

COLLABORATION AND BRANDING

3. What were your expectations about such collaborations? Do companies reach out to you?
4. What is your motivation to carry out such collaborations? How does it depend on the stage of your career¹⁹?
5. According to you, what are the crucial steps to create a successful collaboration between a brand and an artist?
6. How does your audience/collectors/visitors react to brand collaborations?
7. Collaboration with an artist is not a new phenomena, do you think collaboration with artists can be innovative ? If so, how? Did you find any of your projects innovative?
8. What do you think would be some negative outcomes of such collaboration?

COMMODIFICATION AND VALUE

9. There has always been this discussion between the economic and aesthetic value of art. So one being the “commercial one” and the other “for the Art’s Sake”. Do you think that brand collaborations could somehow influence that dynamic? If so, how?
10. Is it crucial to maintain a balance between the artistic and economic value of the final output of the collaboration? How did you achieve it in your collaborations?
11. Were you afraid that the collaboration with the brand would impact your artistic practice, and that art would become commodified? Treated more like a product?
12. What is the value that you take from those collaborations? Is there any other value apart from financial?
14. According to you and your experience, what is the future for collaboration/partnership with commercial companies?

¹⁹ Sub-question directed only to the artists

Appendix 2. List of interviewees

Artistic Side	Occupation	Nationality	Time of the interview	Date and the place	Language
Interviewee 1	Visual artist	Spanish	30 minutes	26.04.2024 Google Meet	Spanish
Interviewee 2	Corporate partnership manager at Museum A	Dutch	35 minutes	03.05.2024 Google Meet	English
Interviewee 3	previous Partnership Manager at Museum A and currently Strategic Partnership Developer at Museum B	Dutch	40 minutes	20.04.2024 Google Meet	English
Interviewee 4	Partnership and Fundraising Manager at Museum C	Dutch	40 minutes	01.05.2024 On site, Museum C	English
Interviewee 5	Visual artist	Latvian	50 minutes	01.06.2024 Google Meet	English
Interviewee 6	Visual artist	Slovak	30 minutes	10.06.2024 Google Meet	English

Business side	Occupation	Nationality	Time of the interview	Date and the place	Language
Interviewee 7	Owner of Company A, a marketing consultancy and training focused on brand art collaboration	Polish	60 minutes	17.05.2024 Google Meet	Polish
Interviewee 8	Marketing Specialist, author of books about <i>Art Branding</i>	Polish	40 minutes	14.05.2024 Google Meet	Polish
Interviewee 9	Owner of Company B, marketing agency dedicated to <i>Art Branding</i>	Polish	40 minutes	29.04.2024 Google Meet	Polish
Interviewee 10	Owner of Company C, offering <i>Art Branding</i> services	Polish	90 minutes	29.04.2024 Phone call	Polish
Interviewee 11	Manager of creative marketing department at Company D	Polish	50 minutes	30.04.2024 Google Meet	Polish

Appendix 3. Code book

Code category	Codes and subtopics
Collaboration (motivation/incentives/expectations)	balance branding budget chemistry commercial incentives identification partnerships commission identification partnership partner selection process shared values steps
Benefits/Outcomes	artificaiton artist benefits brand benefits branding brands as mecenas commodification effects on artists impact legitimacy marketing negative outcome notion transfer outcome target value

Steps to create a collaborations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> steps partner selection process shared values steps
Audience Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> popularization accessibility to culture audience feedback
Dualism (artistic/economic logic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> art for art's sake vs. commercial art as a tool art branding commodification humanism
Future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> future balance accessibility to culture
Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> brands as mecenat budget experiment humanism impact innovation types of collaboration value
Internal benefits (only for business group)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> employee branding brand benefit humanism
Finding the right fit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> balance

	<p>chemistry commission communication experiment artistic freedom identification mediator power relationship right fit role division steps time-frame types of collaboration</p>
<p>New concepts</p>	<p>accessibility to culture brands as mecenaz chemistry history mediator sustainability</p>