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A new generation of museum/hybrids in South and East Asia

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DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

The 1980s saw the emergence of art worlds outside the Western hemisphere. The so-called BRIC countries experienced a particularly dynamic development. New museums have been established, new biennales have proliferated, and the art market infrastructure has been constructed. In this complex process, there is a connection between the non-profit and the for-profit art institutions, which constitute together the so-called arts ecosystem. Many of the new institutions in these countries are hybrid in terms of their funding, as well as their operations. Large bodies of literature exist on postcolonial narratives and non-western museums, as well as corporate sponsorship of the arts and the global convergence of market-oriented corporations and non-profit public institutions. However, less attention has been paid to corporate/private art collections in South and East Asia. This dissertation asks the following questions: 1.) What are the most important forces at work that are shaping the museum landscape in the South and East Asian region? 2.) Are there any patterns that can be identified within the practices of corporate collecting (and displaying) in India and Greater China? Through case studies of the Piramal Museum of Art located in Mumbai's Piramal headquarters and RMZ Ecoworld's sculpture park in the business district of Bangalore; the Jaya He Museum located at Mumbai's international airport; K11 Group's art malls in Hong Kong and several locations throughout Mainland China; and Design Society, an institution in Shenzhen that is the result of a collaboration of London's Victoria and Albert Museum and the Chinese state-owned company China Merchants Shekou, the dissertation identifies best practices and critical points in the agency of such hybrid institutions.

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ABSZTRAKT

Az 1980-as évektől a nem nyugati régiókban megjelenő művészeti ökoszisztémák (beleértve a művészeket, kurátorokat, múzeumokat, galériákat, biennálékat, vásárokat, stb.), globálisan is egyre meghatározóbbá válnak. Az úgynevezett BRIC-országok különösen dinamikus fejlődésen mentek keresztül: Új múzeumok jöttek létre, elterjedt a biennálé-kultúra, valamint kiépült a művészeti piac infrastruktúrája is. Ebben az összetett folyamatban a nonprofit és a for-profit művészeti intézmények összekapcsolódnak, esetenként egymástól is függenek, és együttesen alkotják az úgynevezett művészeti ökoszisztémát. Ezekben az országokban számos új intézményre jellemző, hogy a finanszírozásuk és a működésük is hibrid jelleget mutat. A szakirodalom tekintetében a posztkoloniális narratívák és a nem-nyugati múzeumok témája gazdagabban feldolgozott, valamint a művészetek vállalati szponzorálásáról, illetve a vállalatok és non-profit intézmények konvergenciájáról is elérhető irodalom. A dél- és kelet-ázsiai vállalati vagy magán művészeti gyűjteményekre azonban eddig kevesebb figyelmet fordítottak. Munkámmal e hiányosság pótlásához szeretnék hozzájárulni. A disszertáció a következő kérdéseket járja körül: 1.) Melyek azok a legfontosabb erők, amelyek a dél- és kelet-ázsiai régió múzeumi látképét alakítják? 2.) Kirajzolódnak-e bizonyos mintázatok, amelyek az indiai és kínai vállalati gyűjtési (és bemutatásii) gyakorlatokra jellemzőek? A disszertáció néhány kiválasztott hibrid kulturális intézmény jó gyakorlatait és kritikus pontjait mutatja be – a mumbai Piramal vállalat székhelyén található Piramal Művészeti Múzeum; Bengaluru üzleti negyedében működő RMZ Ecoworld szoborpark; a Jaya He Múzeum Mumbai nemzetközi repülőterén; a K11 Group művészeti plázái Hongkongban és számos kínai nagyvárosban; a londoni Victoria és Albert Múzeum; valamint a kínai állami tulajdonú China Merchants Shekou cég együttműködésének eredményeként létrejött sencseni Design Society – esettanulmányán keresztül.

Szerző: Hamvai Kinga Rózsa

A disszertáció címe: Múzeumi hibridek a dél- és kelet-ázsiai régióban

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HIGHLIGHTED THESES

A. In China and India, there is a (re)emergence of the art markets and of the art world. Many of the newly established art institutions are seeking their potential roles within the society, articulating their mission statements and planning their directions, taking into consideration their reception by the local communities, as well as integrating institutional critique.
B. In India, the absence of state-level support of the contemporary art sector leads to the emergence of private and corporate art initiatives.
C. Most of the museums in India are already in operation, organizing exhibitions and extensive outreach programs, although they often do not have their own buildings.
D. One of the biggest challenge Indian museums face is that the public shows very limited interest in visiting their institutions. To engage new audiences, these newly established institutions need to find out-of-the-box methods to develop their audience and rethink the perception of the museum.
E. In China in the last 20 years there has been a centrally orchestrated museum boom, resulting in several hundreds of newly established institutions, which have been built in an unprecedented pace.
F. A typical metaphor used by professionals for China's situation is that the country lacks software that can operate the large number of new hardware well. Others compare Chinese museums to empty shells, referring to the fact that while museum buildings are spectacular, there has not been enough consideration about their management, curatorial programs or audiences.
G. To remedy the gap in curatorial expertise, many of these new institutions rent out their spaces, so that their funding and their programming is taken care of. Others turn to their Western counterparts for collaboration. This is done in many ways: one-off exhibitions, extensive training programmes or long-term partnerships.

KIEMELT TÉZISEK

A. Kínában és Indiában a művészeti piacok és a művészeti világ egyre nagyobb térnyerése tapasztalható. Napjainkban az újonnan létrejövő művészeti intézmények többsége a társadalomban betöltött szerepe megtalálásának, missziója megfogalmazásának folyamatánál tart. Mindezt a helyi közösségek reakcióinak tükrében teszi, az esetleges intézménykritikai észrevételeket is beépítve.

B. Indiában a kortárs művészeti szektor állami szintű támogatásának hiánya magán- és vállalati művészeti kezdeményezések megjelenéséhez, térnyeréséhez vezet.

C. A legtöbb indiai múzeum már működik, kiállításokat és a közönség széles rétegének megszólítására törekvő programokat szervez, annak ellenére, hogy gyakran nincs saját épülete.

D. Az egyik legnagyobb kihívás, amellyel az indiai múzeumok szembesülnek, hogy a társadalom nagyon szűk rétege érdeklődik az ilyen típusú intézmények iránt. A szélesebb társadalmi rétegek, új közönség megszólítása érdekében ezen újonnan alapított intézmények olykor szokatlan módszerekhez folyamodnak közönségük fejlesztése, illetve a múzeumok kedvezőbb megítélésének érdekében.

E. Kínában az elmúlt 20 évben központilag irányított múzeumépítési láz zajlott. Ennek eredményeként soha nem látott ütemben alapítottak több száz új intézményt.

F. A szakemberek által gyakran használt hasonlat Kína esetében, hogy az országból hiányoznak a nagyszámú új hardvert jól üzemeltetni képes szoftverek. Mások a kínai múzeumokat az üres kagylókhoz hasonlítják, utalva arra, hogy bár a múzeumi épületek látványosak, azok létrehozói nem fordítottak kellő figyelmet az új intézmények vezetésére, menedzsmentjére, kurátori programjaira vagy közönségére.

G. A kurátori szakértelem hiányának pótlására az új intézmények között elterjedt gyakorlat, hogy számosan bérbe adják tereiket, így gondoskodva egyfelől finanszírozásukról, másfelől a múzeum programjáról. Az is jellemző, hogy egyes múzeumok nyugati kollégákat vagy intézményeket kérnek fel együttműködésre, melynek módja sok féleképpen valósulhat meg: egyszeri kiállítások, kiterjedt képzési programok vagy hosszú távú partnerségek formájában.

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CONTENT

1. INTRODUCTION

The 1980's saw the 'emergence of art worlds around the globe' outside of Europe and the USA. The so-called BRIC countries experienced a particularly dynamic development. (Brazil, Russia, India, and China, 'alluded to as the BRIC countries, an acronym invented by Jim O'Neill, at the time an economist at Goldman Sachs, in 2001' (Velthuis and Baia Curioni, 2015, p. 9). Today, there is talk about BRICS, which also includes South Africa (Grincheva, 2019).)

Olav Velthius attributes the recent emergence of art markets in these regions to three developments: First, the rapid economic growth and the rise of new economic élites in these countries. Second, a widespread interest in Europe and the USA towards art produced outside the Western hemisphere. The latter is 'exemplified by the popularity of new scholarly and curatorial terms like "global art" and "world art history"' (Velthius, 2015). The symbolic starting date of these discourses is 1989, the year the Berlin Wall came down and the Soviet Union began to disintegrate. From the art- or curatorial historical point of view, it was also the year of the Paris Biennial exhibition Les Magiciens de la Terre at the Centre Pompidou and Parc de la Villette (Velthius, 2015). This exhibition 'functioned as a kind of 'gate opener' for non-Western art within the Western art field' (Marchart, 2020). Though it has been criticized by some (e.g. Marchart, 2020), it has been regarded 'as a ground-breaking and visionary attempt to transform the 'Western' art system into a global inclusive system' (Velthius, 2015) which 'was absolutely revolutionary' (Bishop, 2014). Third, market infrastructures (auction houses, galleries, and art fairs) have also been created in the these countries (Velthius, 2015). It is this third aspect that will be the subject of this research, in two of the BRIC countries, namely India and China, with a focus on institutions that house art collections, since, as I will argue there is connection between the rise of the for-profit and the non-profit institutions.

'But it changes. Things evolve so quickly in Hong Kong. We have to remember that 10 years ago we wouldn't even be having this conversation' says Adriana Alvarez-Nichol, founder of Hong Kong's Puerto Roja Gallery, in an interview I conducted with her about corporate art collections in the city state (Alvarez-Nichol, 2018). Her words could be the motto of this thesis, but they also mark one of the greatest challenges of the writing process. Note that here she is not referring to the pandemic, that brought lots of changes to the museum world (see Szántó, 2021), but to the general speed of change in Hong Kong and China.

This fear of running out of time, or losing the moment, is echoed by O'Connor and Gu (2020) who were trying to capture China's encounter with the creative industries: 'The speed of these developments, during the too-long gestation of this book, has threatened to overtake the object we were trying to frame. This is a sketch on the run, with no clear sense of where that run will end' (p. 10).

Interestingly, the case is quite different in India. The idea of 'things happening slow' in the country was echoed among many of the professionals I was talking to during my research. As Abhishek Poddar, founder of Bengaluru's Museum of Art and Photography remarks: 'It takes time. The Indian arts ecosystem is like a large animal to move and change and show progress. Multiple factors have to play together for that animal to start moving in a direction that it is needed to. I think that has begun' (Poddar, 2019).

As the above citations indicate, there are new arts ecosystems emerging in China and India. Large bodies of literature exist on postcolonial narratives and non-western museums, as well as corporate sponsorship of the arts and the global convergence of market-oriented corporations and non-profit public institutions. However, less attention has been paid to corporate/private art collections in South and East Asia.

The dissertation aims to address the following questions: What are the most important forces at work that are shaping the museum landscape in the South and East Asian region? Are there any patterns that can be identified within the practices of corporate collecting (and displaying) in India and Greater China?

Scope of the study

In my thesis I investigate the collecting institutions in the South and East Asian regions, institutions that display their collections and make it accessible to the public. I focus on the new generation of such institutions, those that have been established in the last 10-20 years. I have personally visited the institutions that I chose to analyze in depth, though my visits took place before the pandemic. In some cases, observing the institution onsite was the closest that I could get, in other cases I could even correspond with representatives, in person or via e-mail.

Thus, private collectors displaying their collections in their residencies, however influential they are, does not fall within the scope of the investigation. Neither are the biennales or curated art fairs, or other public art projects organized by nonprofits, as they are not

collections. However, visiting such places also contributed to a better understanding of the context, of the arts ecosystem in the regions discussed.

The funding of the analyzed institutions is best described as hybrid. Mostly some mixture of private or corporate money and in many cases some money from the government, often in the form of tax benefits or other financial incentives. In many cases it is not disclosed (or has not been made available to me during the course of this research) whether it is the corporate money or the private money of the owner of the corporation (who also owns the art collection) that is involved in funding the institution. This differentiation has significant consequences (for example, if the corporation is bought by another, with different management or brand values). On the other hand, in certain aspects, the ownership structure of the collection doesn't make a difference, as they function very similarly, e.g., for the branding purposes (and not regarded as financial assets or investment.) As Olav Velthuis once remarked (during an online conference while the pandemic was still at large) that from the perspective of the 'average museum visitor' (i.e., not a cultural policy or museum scholar) it doesn't really matter if the museum is funded by private or by corporate money.

On an abstract level, corporations aim to maximize their profit, so to raise people's 'willingness to pay.' Museums aim to accomplish their missions, so to raise people's 'willingness to contribute' (Klamer, 2017). A corporate art institution – which is in the focus of my research – is a hybrid institution bearing some characteristics of both and facing the challenge of answering the requirements of both.

Regarding funding, a general view is that museums are either private (Anglo-Saxon model) or publicly (European-Continental model) funded. However, Mark Schuster (1998), in his 'prophetic' (Rius-Ulldemolins, 2016) study on American museums, introduces the idea of hybridization of museums, that is, museums being funded neither entirely by public nor private money, but a combination of the two. In her essay *When is a Museum a Public Museum? Considerations from the Point of View of Public Finance*, Caroline Rosenstein (2010) examines policies in the American museum sector. She argues that 'the degree of directness through which government dollars are delivered to a museum tells us something important about the museum's public status' (p. 449). She points out that in some way 'every museum in the USA benefits from government support, whether in the form of direct allocations, indirect tax-expenditure garnered through non-profit status, or gifted in-kind resources such as rent-free property' (p. 451). In addition, she identifies four types of income sources available to

museums: private donations, earned income, institutional investments and government contributions. Thus, she also confirms the existence of such hybrid cultural institutions proposed by Schuster. In the emergence of hybrid museums, Rius-Ulldemolins (2016) recognizes a ‘new paradigm of cultural policy that does not fit in either the Anglo-Saxon model or European-Continental model’, but ‘combines characteristics of both models’ (p. 179).

1. India Art Fair, facade designed by graphic designer and street artist @thebigfatminimalist, courtesy India Art Fair

Challenges for the contemporary museum

Many ‘museums seem to be in a critical condition’ (German, 2017, p. 36) worldwide. Among others, on the one hand, they struggle with staying relevant for their visitors (Simon, 2010) finding new audiences, on the other hand they are often severely underfunded. Published in 2014, the book *Museum of the Future* (Bechtler et al., 2014) contains interviews with museum professionals, artists and collectors about the key issues relating to museums of contemporary art, including the question of where do they see the main challenges for museums today. To cite a few answers:

‘Securing funding while retaining autonomy in terms of programming’ (Kathryn Andrews, artist; p. 15).

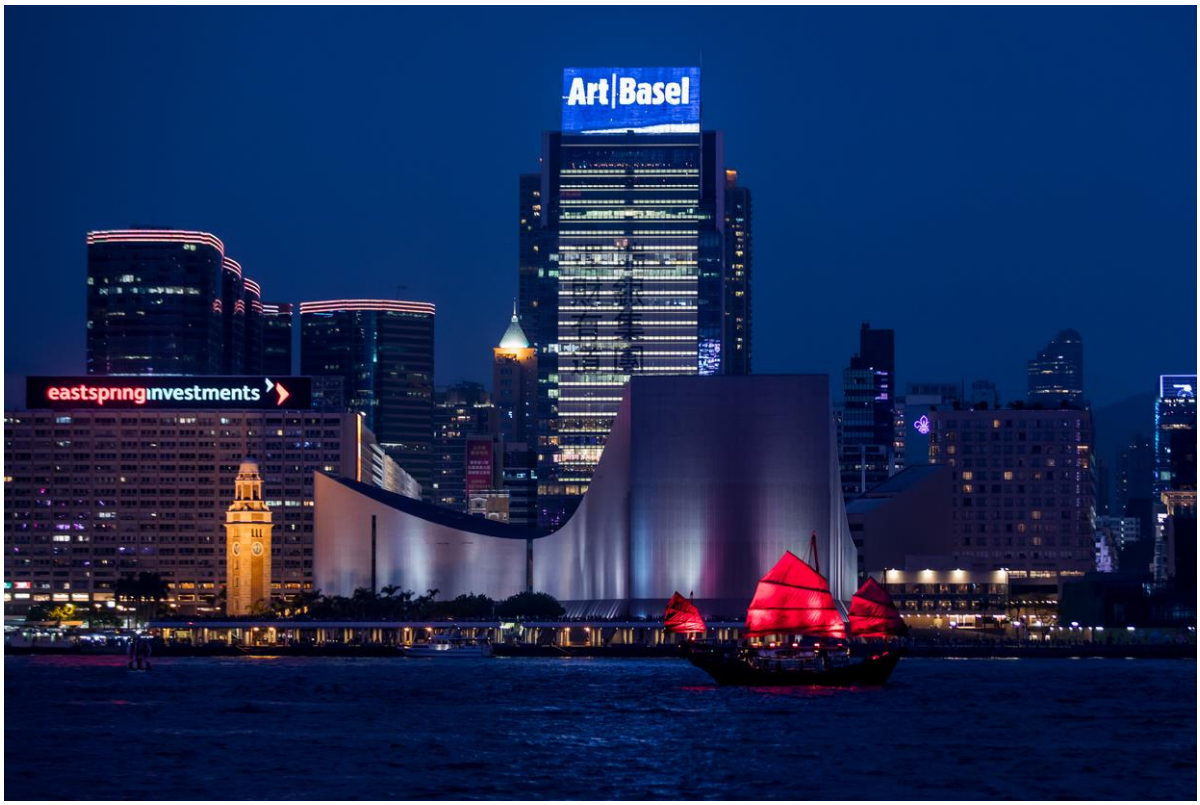
‘I think the main challenge is to be able to get a balance between a solid program of exhibitions and of entertainment: you want to have attendance, but not at the price of sacrificing your program’ (John Baldessari, artist; pp. 26-27).

‘They are under fire from different sides. The public, the cities and the politicians want them to be spectacular, educational and popular, while at the same time retaining their role as temples for conservation. Galleries outsmart them with bigger budgets and catalogues, private collectors with acquisition power. Just like America, museums are struggling with the fact that they aren’t the only leading force anymore. They both have to figure out what this means’ (Daniel Baumann, Director of Kunsthalle Zurich, p. 40).

Geographic focus

During the course of this research, I received a Visiting Scholar stipendium to City University of Hong Kong, School of Creative Media, thus I have spent one academic year (2017/2018) in Hong Kong. This gave me the chance also to travel in the nearby countries. I have made trips to study the arts ecosystems of Mainland China (Shenzhen and Shanghai), Macau and Taiwan, as well as Japan, South Korea, and Malaysia.

In addition to the travels, I also worked as a VIP assistant at Art Basel Hong Kong in 2018 as well as in its 2019 edition. I was working in the team dealing with the so-called VIP guests of the fair and attending the events organized for them. The VIP guests of such fairs are international museum directors, curators, recognized critics, and academics, as well as collectors and high-net-worth individuals (HNWI) that are considered potential collectors in the future. These fairs are not only venues where international galleries can introduce their artists to collectors from distant regions, they are also ‘important cultural events for local art worlds, with tens of thousands of visitors, side shows of contemporary art in public venues, series of talks and debates by well-known curators, collectors, intellectuals, and artists who are flown in from all over the world, book launches, and, for the art scene’s inner circle, a full agenda of parties and afterparties’ (Vermeylen, 2015). At Arts Basel Hong Kong, I was able to observe how the fair collaborates with its international corporate partners (e.g., UBS, BMW or Ruinart).



2. Art Basel in Hong Kong 2018, courtesy of Art Basel

The other geographic focus of this dissertation is India. I visited the country for a brief fieldtrip in 2016. Later, I went back for one semester to conduct fieldwork in 2018-2019. I was based in New Delhi for a brief internship at Siddhartha Das Studio (which offers expertise for museums). I have also worked in an internship position at the 2019 edition of India Art Fair. As in the case of Art Basel in Hong Kong, here I was working with the VIP guests of the fair and attended their programs.

During my travels, I wrote reviews of various contemporary art events, such as art fairs, biennials and museum openings, which were published in Hungarian art magazines and journals and which provide some of the research background throughout this dissertation.

General methods

I have used a combination of research methods. Apart from the literature review and desk research, I have employed an immersive ethnographic approach: a set of methods that 'involves the ethnographer participating, overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions – in fact, collecting

whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the focus of the research' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1989; cited in Choi, 2018).

I use mostly qualitative data gathered through participant observation, formal and informal interviews, (as well as quantitative data gathered from websites or reports provided by the investigated companies). As a considerable amount of data is primary, collected especially for the purpose of this study, the process of data gathering needs to be elaborated: I have applied theoretical sampling to select specific times, locations, and events to observe what is happening and engage in conversation with the actors of the field. I conducted semi-structured interviews to further develop my theoretical framework and the criteria to analyze and interpret specific cases. I had discussion with scholars, professionals working within corporate art collections, museums, as well as independent curators, advisors, artists, and gallerists.

One of the biggest challenges of the research process was to recruit interviewees. For selecting them, I used snowball sampling. I began with one case, and then identified other cases based on information about interrelationships acquired from the initial case and so on. This proved to be incredibly helpful and the only way to go. I was fortunate that I have met a French art collector living in Hong Kong, who was kind enough to introduce me to several gallerists and museum professionals. During the interviews, my respondents understood that they could introduce me to someone else, (and in one case, it turned out that one person received multiple e-mails about me and my research.) Another challenge was gaining trust, a tricky business, and some of my interviewees required to remain anonymous in my research regarding certain issues. However, as one of my interviewees suggested, if a corporate collection refuses to give an interview about their strategy, it frequently means that they don't have one.

As stated before, until recently, little research has been conducted on the art infrastructures of both discussed geographical regions. There are art market reports that document the changes in the regions, as well as ephemeral media. Thus, apart from these limited resources, my findings are based on direct observation, as well as on structured interviews and casual conversations with art professionals living in these regions. Interestingly, the commentators, and even the academic literature on India or China often mention 'anecdotic observations' (Sigg, 2021) 'anecdotic speculation', (Zhang and Courty, 2021) or so-called 'anecdotic evidence' (Velthuis and Baia Curioni, 2015).

‘To understand China [or India] in its own terms’

The concept of the ‘museum’ – with its aim of cultural heritage preservation – originates in the Western intellectual traditions, and is heavily charged with colonial legacies. Anthropologist Sidney Moko Mead, referring to indigenous heritage preservation practices in the Pacific region, raises the question: ‘why should the societies of Oceania follow the Western mode? […] To accept the Western model is to lose control over the culture itself and especially the indigenous philosophy and educational system’ (Mead 1983, 101; cited in Grincheva, 2020, pp. 44-45).

Along similar lines, museologist Sean Kingston (2008) observes that the concept of an ‘indigenous museum’ is quite contradictory and inappropriate, since ‘a western museum is based on the ‘object-oriented’ system of conservation, while indigenous societies in the Pacific appear to favour and celebrate cultural practices that play a vital role in keeping traditions and preserving memories’ (cited in Grincheva, 2020, p. 45). Interestingly, I have come across the same concern in December 2016, at a symposium on museums in India at Goa’s Serendipity Art Festival. Traditionally, Indian cultural workers focus ‘their attention to the live practices versus historical conservation of objects’, drawing a ‘clear separation line between the western and indigenous understanding of memory preservation’ (Grincheva, 2020, p. 45).

Major differences regarding these issues also exist between the Western and Chinese traditions. For example, instead of the linear concept of history in Western developmentalism (O’Connor and Gu, 2020), the Eastern conception of time is cyclical, breaking the chronological order between the past and the future (Grincheva, 2020). While this thesis is not focusing on indigenous museums, it is important to consider the (historical, geopolitical, socio-cultural, etc.) context of museums emerging outside the Western hemisphere. All in all, the intention of this research is to ‘try to understand [the discussed countries] in [their] own terms, at least as a first step’ (O’Connor and Gu, 2020, p. 10).

Limitations: The perspective of an outsider

Being an outsider provides the benefit of a fresh eye. However, my being an outsider to the contexts that are the subjects of this study are also partly responsible for the limitations of the research. I was, of course, not able to blend in perfectly, despite my immersion efforts. The travels were quite adventurous and posed many challenges. I do not speak the local languages, and on many occasions not being able to find a lingua franca made things difficult (to find

information online, to find my way around, or simply to talk with people). I am lucky that I had personal connections who were helping me with practical issues, such as the language barriers and accessing information on local issues.

For example, when I was in Shanghai, I wanted to visit Minsheng Art Museum founded by China Minsheng Banking Corporation. For this venture, I had no companion (unlike in other Mainland Chinese locations, which I have visited with friends). Instead, I had a piece of paper in my hand, written by a Chinese friend of mine with the name and address of the museum. When my friend put me in the taxi, the driver took me to a location that was a bit away from the museum. After some searching, I was able to find the museum by walking, having recognized the iconic building of the museum from afar. In China, due to the Great Firewall Google Maps is not working, and many other local applications would require knowing the language. When I finally arrived at the museum, I was not able to pay with cash (that I had previously changed from Hong Kong dollars to Chinese Yuan), neither to use my Hungarian credit card (that I used in Hong Kong and almost all other countries during my travels). I was required to use the WeChat application, but for access to the fintech function I would have needed a Chinese bank account, which I did not have. Finally, another museum visitor helped me out, whom I could pay the entrance free back in cash. Apparently, I was not the only foreign visitor to a Chinese museum who have experienced similar challenges of accessibility (Vandenberg, 2020).

In India, I could easily communicate in English in most cases. However, I needed to be alert for other reasons. For example, my phone (with my photos and audio recordings stored there) was once stolen in a small village near Ahmedabad, but fortunately, I was able to get it back. Also, the infrastructure for research caused challenges at certain occasions, for example due to the frequent power brakes.

On a more abstract level, not speaking the local languages, and not having a deep understanding of the country's histories, intellectual traditions, religions, and culture (in the broadest sense of the word) have imposed limitations on my understanding of certain phenomena, as well as on my ability to verify the before-mentioned anecdotical information (evidence).

Another limitation is that I was not able to return to the discussed regions after the pandemic, as mentioned previously. Some things have most probably changed since my visit, partly because of the pandemic. Some of the information in this thesis might be outdated,

however, it is the phenomena, construed more broadly, that my thesis is focusing on, rather than particularities.

In both the cases of India and China, I aim to shed light on the distinctive features of the arts ecosystems. In India, there is no government support for contemporary art, thus the corporate and private sector initiates platforms for the production and dissemination of art. There is also almost no interest for contemporary art, thus no audience for museums. The new art institutions try to reach out to new audiences by breaking down the walls, or more precisely, by not building walls. It is also characteristic that they take the reactions of the public into consideration, as a 'trial-and-error approach'. Many of the institutions that I have explored were in the process of formulating their mission statements and profiles.

In contrast, in China there has been a state-sanctioned boom in the museum industry. However, it is difficult for the brand-new museums to attract audiences. Of course, there are also very important and popular museums in the country, bearing historic relevance, such as the Beijing Royal Palace or the Shanghai Museum, in front of which I have also stood in line for a long time, that attract a huge audience, both Chinese and foreign. But these museums don't fall in the scope of this study.

To illustrate my points, I analyze institutions which are in some sense exemplary or representative of certain trends. Among my examples are local initiatives such as RMZ Ecoworld's sculpture park and major international collaborations such as Design Society.

Case study design: several questions

The case studies, which constitute the chapters in this thesis, are each structured according to a somewhat different logic. This is due to the fact that in every case I had access to different kinds of information and wanted to highlight different aspects of the collections.

During my interviews about certain collections, and later during my online searches, I sought answers to various questions. I have asked them about their motivation to establish the art collection and its history. Regarding the content, I inquired about the following issues: What is the focus of the collection?

Furthermore, I was curious about the collecting strategy and the acquisition process. I was interested in the dynamics of the body of the collection, e.g., whether the company has ever sold an item from its collection, and if so, why? Has it ever donated an item from the collection? Apart from building the collection, does it have any other art-supporting activities?

I have also asked questions relating to the company's relationship with public museums: Does the institution collaborate with public museums? Does the company ask for a fee for loaning artworks? Are any works of the collection out on long-term loan? How do other art institutions perceive the institution (Zorloni, 2012)?

In addition, I have investigated how the corporate takes into consideration the interests of its employees and stakeholders. Are there any educational events for the workers of the company (e.g., guided tours in the collection)? Where is the collection displayed? Is it accessible to the public? How does the company communicate about its collection? How do the public perceive this activity? Does the company have any publications or catalogues about the collection?

I also aimed to investigate the organizational structure. How is the collection related to the corporation? Who is responsible for what? Where are the assets held? (Corporate balance sheet? Separate trust?) How many people are working within the collection?

Of course, I was not able to find relevant/useful answers to all my questions in every case. But they were a starting point.

Organization of the thesis

The dissertation proceeds as follows: after the introduction, the second chapter provides an overview of relevant trends shaping the museum landscape, the art market, and the cultural policy in India. This is followed by two case studies, an analysis of the Piramal Museum of Art located in Mumbai's Piramal headquarters, and RMZ Ecoworld's sculpture park in the business district in Bangalore – both exemplifying a trend of 'art at the workplace'. The next part introduces Jaya He Museum, which is located at Mumbai's international airport, thus fitting the category of "art in a semi-public space". Subsequent chapters focus on China, which introduces the museum construction fever often referred to as the Chinese museum boom and highlights some tendencies within these new museums. The following section demonstrates one of the significant trends in Chinese institutions, namely the corporatization of the museum, with the extreme example of K11 art malls in Hong Kong and several locations throughout Mainland China. Afterwards another trend is analysed, namely that Chinese museums often collaborate with their Western counterparts, which in some accounts celebrated, in others received with critique, through the example of Design Society, an institution in Shenzhen that is the result of

a collaboration of London's Victoria and Albert Museum and a Chinese state-owned company. Finally, the two regions are compared, and future research directions are indicated.

The two main parts, describing the two regions, are each structured according to a different logic. I employ this freedom, as I believe this helps me demonstrate the distinctiveness of the two ecosystems. I emphasize one significant trend in India, with several examples, while in China, I have two trends and two examples.

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2. INDIA

2.1. THE INDIAN ARTS ECOSYSTEM

> ‘Earlier it was up to kings and queens, the nobles to promote art, but today it becomes the duty of us, individuals, or for corporates which have some amount of responsibility to take that first step forward. I see a great future for art in the country, it is a matter of time’ (Agarwal, 2019).

Private and corporate art initiatives

In India, there is a long-standing tradition of private philanthropy: a history of over 2000 years, ‘with much of its rich heritage and cultural past attributed largely to royal patronage’ accomplished by ‘Emperor Ashoka, the Rajputs, the five Deccan dynasties (Bijapur, Golkonda, Ahmadnagar, Bidar, and Berar), the former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir and the Mughal Dynasty.’ Later on, industrialists such as Jeejeebhoy or 'J J' (1783–1859), the founder of India's first art college (the J J School of Art), and Sir Jamshetji N Tata, who established the Tata Trust in 1892, also supported art. In the absence of state-level support, individuals – as representatives of private and corporate initiatives – take the responsibility to step into the role of the maharajas and local kings of bygone eras as the main supporters of art. These initiatives unfolded long before the first major foundations appeared in the United States (Sawhney, 2019, p. 6), where most of the literature would start the history of corporate collecting and philanthropy (e.g. with JP Morgan Chase Manhattan art collection, Appleyard and Salzmann, 2012).

After the establishment of the free and independent India in 1947, the country went through a major transformation and made huge efforts to build a new economy. The National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) was established by the state in 1954 in New Delhi, later with branches in Mumbai and Bangalore (Shivadas, 2015). Interestingly, the collection is based on the paintings of Amrita Sher-Gil, who was born in Budapest to a Hungarian mother and a Sikh father and is considered to be the pioneer of Indian modernism. Recently, on the 13th of July, 2021, at the Saffronart Auction in Mumbai, one of her works (*In the Ladies Enclosure*, 1938)

fetched $5.14 million, which made her the second most expensive Indian painter (Hamvai, 2021)).

Apart from the establishment of NGMA, there was a pause for several decades starting from the 1950s in corporate philanthropy due to higher taxes and less surplus profit. However, the 1990s economic reforms contributed ‘to higher growth in economy and the arts have been spurred on through many endeavours since.’ Currently, it is the private philanthropic initiatives that significantly support the infrastructure of the art scene (Sawhney, 2019).

According to the study by social anthropologist Manuela Ciotti ‘emerging art markets such as India can be divided between those whose governments support art and those that do not receive such support. Although the Indian pavilion at the Biennale has shown the presence of government support, overall, Indian art falls into the latter group, so that private museums and patrons are mainly fostering art and its market’ (Ciotti, 2012).

3. Túemsüyanger Longkumer: Catch a Rainbow II (2018), courtesy of Kochi-Muziris Biennale

When examining the globalisation of art markets and the cross-border flow of art, Dutch sociologist Olav Velthuis draws a similar conclusion: 'India lacks a developed art world with public museums and art centres where modern and contemporary art can be nurtured. In a country with more than 1 billion inhabitants, only a handful of institutions regularly exhibit modern and contemporary art. The government seems to disregard the sector' (Velthius, 2015), as the main goal is to preserve historical heritage (Hamvai, 2019a).

There is, however, also private capital in the country. As discussed in the previous chapter, economic growth is not necessarily followed by an art market boom, however, in India this was the case. Among my interviewees, the economic growth was frequently mentioned as one of the factors behind the growth of the art market, but not as a clean-cut consequence, rather as the economic welfare creating the possibility to purchase art. As India is becoming the world's fastest growing producer of wealth in 2017, it has the potential to foster its art market: India saw the highest growth in Ultra-HNWI (high net worth individuals), both in population and in wealth (ArtTactic, 2019, p.10).

The new economic elites – as Olga Kanzaki Sooudi explains it in her ethnographic study of the Mumbai contemporary art scene – are 'a burgeoning middle class with increased disposable income, ushered in an era of status consciousness'. They have chosen 'art, and contemporary art in particular, in order to construct new, often cosmopolitan, identities'. It allows them 'in a double process first analysed by Georg Simmel in his classic essay on fashion (Simmel, 1904) to construct identities which differentiate themselves from the lower social strata that they were' and 'enables them to confirm their membership of a new class of upwardly mobile compatriots, or even broader, of a new, global, cosmopolitan elite which engages in similar conspicuous consumption patterns as they do' (Kanzaki Sooudi, 2015).

Blurring the boundaries between private and corporate collections

Interestingly, the distinction between corporate and private art collecting is not always clearly defined. Except for the NGMA, state support for modern and contemporary art is very limited. As stated before, this lack is being substituted by the private and corporate sector.

When briefly sketching up the Indian museum landscape, one of the most important progressive private institutions is the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, the oldest and arguably the most established museum for contemporary art in India, founded in 2010 by art collector Kiran

Nadar (wife of billionaire industrialist and philanthropist Shiv Nadar). The museum currently operates in New Delhi in the absence of its own independent building in the DLF South Court Mall (which I have visited), as well as in the suburbs in Noida, on the campus of the HCL company, but in the meantime the new building, designed by the Ghanaian-British star architect Sir David Adjaye OBE, is being built (Hamvai, 2021). According to Delhi-based gallerist Peter Nagy "KNMA is the only one who is buying very experimental art, in various media" (Nagy, 2018). The KNMA is also a good example on the blurring boundaries of corporate and private art collecting (more precisely on communication and the misinformation concerning this). Many cultural workers in India recommended me to visit KNMA to see a good example of corporate art. It is branded as a private museum, and according to its website, it is sponsored by the Shiv Nadar Foundation, which was established by Shiv Nadar, 'Founder of HCL – a US$ 8.6 billion leading global enterprise' (KNMA, 2017). In fact, my interviewees provided conflicting information about its funding (whether KNMA is a private or corporate museum).

One could add to the list of corporate and privately funded institutions the Bengaluru Museum of Art and Photography (MAP), founded in 2016 by businessman and art collector Abishek Poddar. Selections from the collection has already been displayed at several venues for the public (e.g., at the non-profit section at India Art Fair 2019), and extensive programming such as talks, virtual tours and grants put MAP on the cultural map of India (Poddar, 2019). However, the museum building was completed only recently and set to open to the public in December 2022 (MAP, n.d.).

Another example, the Kasturbhai Lalbhai Museum in Ahmedabad, founded in 2017 and owned by a textile magnate family, which 'showcases over a thousand years of Indian art. The selection on display reflects the eclectic nature of the collection. It seeks to balance art-historical merit with personal favorites, while retaining the essence of the family home.' It also presents works by young contemporary artists. The family is currently working on a new museum project: the Arvind-Indigo Museum (ArtTactic, 2019, p. 27).

It is also important to mention the Kolkata Center for Creativity (KCC), which was established in 2018 by art collectors R S Agarwal and R S Goenka, founders of the Emami Group (Agarwal, 2019).

From the founding dates of the institutions, it can be concluded that this process has been going on for around 10 years in India. Interestingly, most of the museums are already running, although they often do not have their own buildings. Another interesting phenomenon

is, that there are a few institutions, who claim themselves to be museums, however operating ‘without walls’, i.e., a dedicated museum building: not as a temporary solution, but as an inherent aspect of their concept (Hamvai, 2021). In the following chapters, I will show a few examples.

The main reasons for corporate support of the arts are as follows: visibility; expressing a company’s values, brand ideals; giving back to the community and enrichment of brand associations. There seems to be a consensus in literature, that in many cases, corporations use their collection for branding (e.g., Rectanus, 2002; (Appleyard and Salzmann, 2012); (Culture Projects, 2019) as a very sophisticated communication tool. A classic example of this phenomenon is the German chocolate brand Ritter Sport: the company's collection is in line with the iconic square shape of the chocolate bar:

> The Sammlung Marli Hoppe-Ritter consists of nearly 1200 paintings, objects, sculptures and graphic works. It unites many artistic concepts that have the square as a point of departure or goal. It therefore contains an entire century of art history in a concentrated form. Beginning with Malevich, the square has finally become a paradigm of the moderns from constructivism to De Stijl, the Zurich Concrete Artists to Minimal Art. Countless artists have confronted the square as a form and as content, especially in Abstract and Concrete Art. (RITTER, n.d.)

So, the brand identity is closely related to the collection, which ultimately communicates about the brand. However, academic literature is mostly based on evidence in Western institutions. In India, according to local professionals this factor might play a less significant role, for example: ‘There might be many collections that we don’t know about because they don’t use it for branding’ (Nagy, 2018), or the statement that there is no branding value in art, since a significant number of Indian people do not care for art (Barthelemy, 2019). Thus, among the corporate-private museums ‘nobody goes so far to really express their brand identity or history’. (Nagy, 2018). These views, however, will be slightly complicated by the thoughts of Ashvin E. Rajagopalan, in the following chapter, and even contradicted in the case of the Jaya He Museum thereafter.

According to these professionals, there is no established tradition of corporate art collecting (as when a corporate art collection would be an integral part of the company’s identity). However, ‘with changes to corporate social responsibility (CSR) regulations in India, a recent article predicted that the Top 500 companies in India are likely to cross Rs 50,000 crore threshold in CSR contributions by March 2019’(Sawhney, 2019, p.6).

The entanglement of the art market and the museum sphere

In India there seems to be a stronger connection between the art market and the museum sector than in other countries with a longer history of art museums and where the majority of the museums are older and publicly funded. This can be partly attributed to the fact that new museums are so young that they are only currently building their core collections (i.e., they are in a more dynamic phase of acquiring). Additionally, the before-mentioned National Gallery of Modern Art (the publicly funded institution) doesn't seem to be actively acquiring new works for its collection; one of my interviewees has remarked that he/she hasn't 'seen anything enter the NGMA for a very long time.' Therefore, it is reasonable to discuss the arts ecosystem, as the interconnections and dependencies of artists, galleries, collectors, fairs and biennales, museums, other for- and non-profit institutions, etc. This is also why my experience working at the India Art Fair (IAF) provided me with valuable insights on the collecting institutions.

4. Song Dong: Water Temple (2018), courtesy of Kochi-Muziris Biennale

As Indian art historian Kanika Anand formulates it: 'in the absence of institutional structures, the gallery took the place of a museum'. She explains that 'a handful of patrons-turned-gallerists have expanded their roles beyond their conventional scope and become the

bedrock of the contemporary Indian art scene'. She cites an anecdote 'At the time, [the gallery] began to support artists with projects that were unremunerative and experimental for the time. These included Malani's *City of Desires* (1992), which converted the entire gallery into a site-specific installation that involved covering the floor with terracotta powder.' 'Such projects needed to have institutional support,' – the gallerist said, – 'Even if it was momentous and spontaneous to some extent, we were very aware that the gallery was really taking the place of a museum' (Anand, 2021).

5. Ravinder Reddy: Standing Radha in Blue, courtesy of Gallery Sumukha

The professionalization of the whole scene has started only recently. More and more students choose curatorial studies or art history, as legitimate masters, or postgraduate courses (Chatterjee, 2019). Today, there is 'a range of residencies, fellowships, and awards made possible by nonprofits' 'vitalizing the scene and emboldening artists to realize projects […] such as Khoj International Artists' Association, Mumbai Art Room, Indian Foundation for the Arts, and Inlaks Shivdasani Foundation, which has in recent years partnered with ISCP in New York, the Delfina Foundation in London, and Goldsmiths, University of London, among other organizations' (Anand, 2021).

Strong ‘home bias’

The recent emergence of a market for arts in India can be attributed to several factors, including the desire among Non-Resident Indians (NRI) living elsewhere, ‘to cultivate their identity by collecting modern art from their home country’, who were one of the first groups of buyers when the market emerged in the early 2000s. As mentioned before, this was followed by local buyers originating from India’s booming upper-middle classes, who ‘looked for art not only to decorate their new urban dwellings, but also for sources of status and identity as well as for alternative ways to invest their wealth’ (Velthius, 2015).

‘The global integration of the Indian art market is severely hindered by tax structures, import tariffs, and customs duties, which inhibit foreign galleries from entering the market’ – according to Velthius (2015), and supported by my findings. Some of the interviewees mentioned the ‘unhealthy economic and legal environment’: the lack of subsidy or tax benefits for collecting art, the high taxes on the import, and that it is not possible to export anything older than 100 years (Hamvai, 2019a).

Partly due to these factors, there seems to be a ‘home bias, i.e., a focus of organizations and individuals on local artists’ in Indian art institutions. To explain the expression: Alain Quemin found that ‘even the world’s most prestigious museums (e.g., Centre Pompidou, Tate Modern, and the Museum of Modern Art in New York) are more likely to exhibit the work of artists of their own country (France, the UK and the US respectively)’ (Quemin, 2006). According to cultural economists Lasse Steiner, Bruno Frey and Magnus Resch (Steiner et al., 2013), there is ‘a strong home bias in private art collections: 89 percent of South American art collections are composed of works made by South American artists. For Asian, North American, and European collections the figures are respectively 82, 76, and 43 percent,’ which they attribute in part to the strong export and import restrictions (both research is cited in Velthuis and Baia Curioni, 2015, pp.18-19), which seems to be the case in India, as well.

In Philip Dodd’s view: ‘Typically, people from recently emerged economic regions start by buying their own art, often 19th century; they then move to local contemporary art, and then on to international contemporary; fairs are crucial in this process’ (cited in Ciotti, 2012, p.637).

In the case of India, art market scholar and cultural economist Filip Vermeylen finds that at the India Art Fair, 60 percent of the galleries that participated and 60 percent of the exhibited artists were Indian. In the booths of Indian galleries at the fair, foreign artists are by and large absent because ‘international art continues to be a hard sell in India.’ A related

interesting finding of his study is that the Indian art market is in some respects becoming less global and more local: the Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) who were important in the emergence of the Indian art market, since they were among the first to develop an interest in modern and contemporary Indian art, are slowly being substituted by local, resident Indian art lovers (Vermeylen, 2015).

This was in line with my findings: most of the art professionals I talked to expressed their opinions that Indian art was not yet part of the international art market, as it was mostly bought by Indian collectors and vice versa Indian collectors are mostly buying Indian art (Hamvai, 2019a). As Mortimer Chatterjee, co-founder of Mumbai's Chatterjee & Lal – who since our discussion published a book on modern and contemporary art from the subcontinent (Chatterjee, 2022) – explained it:

> One of the most significant characteristics of the Indian art market is that it is still not plugged into the global art market. Both ways: Indians buy mostly Indian art and Indian art is mostly bought and appreciated by Indians or NRIs. This is both something to worry about as well as something that helps the market. It means there is a pre-established, functioning market for young artists that are trained in India. But the problem is that in a sense this presents a ceiling for young Indian artists, above which it is very difficult to break into, unless these artists get represented by non-Indian galleries (Chatterjee, 2019).

Although western actors have promoted Indian art in the global market, […] it is Indian-owned capital—at home and in diaspora – which has played a crucial role.' 'India'—as a feature shared by artists, art objects and buyers—has emerged both globally and locally as a desirable 'brand'. Where the correspondence between Indian art and Indian buyers points to the creation of a new layer of affect in addition to the consumption of other (Indian) commodities, buying local art' is a feature of emergent art markets cross-culturally (Ciotti, 2012). As we will see in the next chapters, the analysed collections all consist of (mostly) Indian art.

The audience of Indian institutions

One of the biggest challenge Indian museums face is that the public shows only a very limited interest in visiting their institutions. This opinion was echoed among my interviewees, and I have observed it as well during my time in India. For example, I went to visit the permanent exhibition at NGMA with a friend of mine: we were the only ones to show up on the daily guided tour provided by the museum and I had several such experiences during my travels.

Thus, these newly established institutions need to find out-of-the-box methods to develop their audience and rethink the perception of the museum. As Poddar puts it: “The situation, we are facing in India, presents both a big opportunity as well as a challenge. Where there are a hundred museums in the city, they must compete with each other to attract the visitors, however, here we face a different set of problems. Very few museums and too many people. But they are not interested. How do we get them interested’ (Poddar, 2019)?

Pioneer roles

As discussed earlier, in India the formation of the arts ecosystem is a current affair; the new museums and initiatives are seeking their potential roles within the society, articulate their mission statements and plan their directions considering the reception of the local communities (Hamvai, 2019a). For example as Richa Agarwal formulates it in an interview: ‘It is important that the Kolkata Centre of Creativity finds its own individual space within the cultural scene of the country’ and she hopes ‘to broaden how art institutions are defined’ (ArtTactic, 2019, p. 54). More importantly, Abishek Poddar told me, for example, when I asked if he had any institutional role models in mind:

> We are not basing MAP on the model of any other museum that I know. There could be certain similarities in terms of size, or the variety of objects in the collection, or what would appeal to the people in that city compared to ours. But we don’t have a model. I think there has to be a new Indian model which works for us. And which is relevant for where it is situated and who we are. We have different challenges here and we have different circumstances than any other place. We have different audiences, different sensibilities. So, we have to do something which caters to that. I think this model will emerge. I can’t yet give a definition beforehand, until we find it out through practice (Poddar, 2019).

These statements mark a significant paradigm shift from the museum model legacy of colonial times, for example described by Kulshreshtha: ‘The intellectual campaign initiated by the British government in India in the nineteenth century, found its logical fulfilment in the establishment of institutions and academic disciplines which systematised this knowledge pool and laid the foundations for the development of new disciplines such as, archaeology and art history. Museums in India emerged as one such type of institution’ (Kulshreshtha, 2018, p.58). In the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, the British ‘created a system of classification which determined what was valuable, that which would be preserved as monuments of the past, that which was collected and placed in museums, that which could be bought and sold, that which would be taken from India as mementoes and souvenirs. The display and nomenclature

used in museums were also reflected in the disciplines of archaeology, art history and iconography and established the scholarship around how religious sculptures were to be studied' (Cohn, 2015; cited in Kulshreshtha, 2018, p.80). Even though it presents a highly important set of questions, the postcolonial critique of existing institutions points beyond the focus of my current investigation.

In the following chapters I will examine three endeavours: the Piramal Museum of Art, the RMZ Ecoworld sculpture park in Bangalore, and the Jaya He Museum again, in Mumbai.

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2.2. ART AT THE WORKPLACE: Piramal Museum of Art

> ‘I am quite sure, that if you take a random
> selection of 100 adults in Mumbai and ask:
> how many times have you gone into any museum?
> I doubt that even 1 person would say that they
> have gone – let’s say – twice… During their entire life.
> And the one time they would have gone was
> most probably a school trip’
> (Rajagopalan, 2019).

In this chapter, I will be following up on the lead of the previous section, concerning some of the museums that are running in temporary locations until their buildings are finished. As stated previously, however, there are also institutions that not only do not currently have a building but are not planning to utilise a dedicated museum building in the future either. The concept of a ‘museum without walls’ is realized in the case of the Piramal Museum of Art (PMA), Mumbai's first private museum invested in the presentation of the art of India, which opened to the public in 2015. The museum’s collection is based on the collection of the Piramal family, located in Piramal Tower at the headquarters of the corporate conglomerate which bears the family's name.

I have visited the PMA in 2019 and had the chance to talk with its director Ashvin Rajagopalan. While I was there, they were working on the installation of an up-coming exhibition: it was clear that the museum was a functioning institution. At the moment, however, it is difficult to tell how the museum exactly operates. The website is not working, and the Facebook page was last updated in April 2021. My information, thus, might be outdated by now, but I think the discussion of the institution provides an excellent case study, revealing key structural issues of the art scene in India and the flow of various practices.

Funding

Regarding the funding of the institution, ‘it is not corporate or CSR money that is being used to buy art and build the museum. It is a personal philanthropic programme where they have made a conscious decision that they are doing this for the public’ (Rajagopalan, 2019). However, like in the case of the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, most people (even in the art world) seem to think that it is a corporate initiative. (In verbal communication, even their

employees referred to PMA as a corporate collection). Anyhow, in many cases the expression ‘corporate art’ is used to describe the situation when art is displayed in corporate offices, regardless of the ownership structure of the collection. This definition would still fit PMA.

Content and display

The collection is ‘considered a repository for important, historic and rare collection of Indian contemporary and modern art’ (DMello, 2019) which includes some of the best-known names in Indian art—from S.H. Raza […] to M.F. Husain (Sen, 2018). Exhibitions of the collection and of loans, are usually organized on the ground floor of the Piramal Tower: new, temporary walls and installation supports are built for each exhibition. For example, for the widely acclaimed S.H. Raza exhibition (*S.H. Raza: Traversing Terrains, A 50 Year Retrospective*, 24 June – October 2018) they ‘worked with the globally renowned exhibition and museum designers, Gallagher & Associates’ (LBB, 2018). Looking from above, the exhibition itself looked like a Raza painting, showing how important the mode of representation is in the design process of these exhibitions.

Apart from the unique approach to exhibition design and the enhancement of the workplace, there is one more important aspect of the corporate headquarter as the exhibition venue: spatial constraints. Mumbai has many art ‘collectors with the ambition of opening those collections to the public but have been hesitant because of a shortage of space and the high cost of real estate’ (Singh, n.d.). The foundation has opened similar spaces, with smaller branches in four Piramal Realty properties in Byculla, Mulund, Kurla and Thane.

Employees

As suggested in the previous chapter, corporations in India cannot really exploit the branding value in having an art collection. Another reason for corporate collecting, and in this case displaying, thus can be connected to the notion of ‘enhancing the workplace’ (e.g., Martorella, 1990; Kottasz et al., 2007; Lindenberg and Oosterlinck, 2011; Smiraglia, 2014 and others have reflected on this issue extensively). This specific arrangement means that every employee has to cross this space to enter the office, so they can interact with the artworks (or are ‘confronted’ with them, ‘whereas museum visits are voluntary’ (Rectanus, 2002)).

One famous historic example of a corporate collection – dedicated to the employees of an institution – is the Stuyvesant Collection, which displayed several pieces at the Turmac cigarette factory, as Witte describes:

> In 1960, Alexander Orlow (1918–2009), managing director of the Turmac cigarette factory in Zevenaar, a village in the eastern part of the Netherlands, had thirteen large format paintings hung on panels from the ceiling of the production hall. The following morning, the factory workers were astonished to find large, colourful works of art hanging above their heads but soon became accustomed to this novelty. Indeed, they started to appreciate the initiative to such an extent that Orlow decided to continue in this vein. He added more works of art to the collection, procured with the name of one of the company's cigarette brands, Peter Stuyvesant. Part of this collection was on view in the factory itself, while other works were displayed in the company's offices in Amsterdam. As such, the Stuyvesant Collection became famous as the first corporate art collection in the Netherlands, and soon after was internationally heralded as an exemplary instance of private intervention in the arts (Witte, 2020).

Orlow 'really believed that it had a positive influence on the happiness and productivity of his employees' (Alvarez-Nichol, 2018).

A more recent and very well-known example for artworks displayed in the corporate building is the UBS art collection, which I had the chance to visit in their Hong Kong Headquarters, and to have a discussion with Deborah Ehrlich, then regional manager APAC (Asia-Pacific Art Collection), at UBS Art Collection (Ehrlich, 2018). It struck me as an interesting aspect, that they even arranged guided tours for their own employees (as one of them told me), highlighting the educational aspect that was also an inherent aspect to the function dedicated to the collection by Orlow.

When analysing corporate collections, we refer to so-called 'stakeholder model' as a conceptual framework (Burlingame and Young, 1996), which emphasizes that the company has to take into consideration the interests of various actors: managers, customers, clients, policymakers, as well as employees. While I did not have a chance to engage in a deep conversation with the employees working at the Piramal Tower, nor to conduct systematic research, there are a few studies that analyse the reception of artworks among employees. For example, Bettina Becker studied the effects of 'Walter de Maria's *Five Continents* sculpture (1989), located in the main reception hall of the DaimlerChrysler (at that time Daimler-Benz) headquarters in Stuttgart-Mohringen' Based on her investigation of 'employee interaction with the sculpture and informal interviews, Becker concludes that most employees have either become so accustomed to the work that they disregard it, or they perceive it as an obstacle

blocking traffic patterns within the main entryway' (Becker, 1994, pp. 135–37; cited in Rectanus, 2002, p.48).

Contrary to this, in a more recent study by Christina Smiraglia, the author explored employee interaction in an Australian company, that displayed its art collection also in the own premises. Her results showed that employees 'believe there are five main ways they are impacted by the art in their workplace: the art promotes social interactions, elicits emotional responses, facilitates personal connection-making, generally enhances the workplace environment and fosters learning' (Smiraglia, 2014).

For the Piramal employees news of these exhibitions are circulated through office mailers, and art appreciation workshops are provided 'usually on the theme of the artist whose works will be displayed in the forthcoming exhibition' (Sen, 2018).

Accessibility for the public

Each show is accessible free of charge to the public, i.e., to everyone, not just those who work there. (In contrary, many corporate art collections, for example the previously mentioned UBS art collection is accessible only to its own employees and clients – due to security reasons, since the works are displayed at offices and corridors.) As Rajagopalan extrapolates:

> It's free. This is one of the advantages of a corporate collection. We can afford not to charge anything. There is no revenue model which pressures us to create a revenue from our collection.' However, there are other benefits for keeping the entrance free of charge: 'It prompts contribution. When we borrow artworks, we can ask the institutions to give us the artwork as we are not charging an entry fee, we are not making money off the exhibited pieces. 'So, don't charge us a fee!' – we can exclaim. Of course, we will take good care of the work, from the loan agreements to the insurance to shipping … whatever. But it keeps costs low, and – most importantly – it encourages collaboration.' This practice allows PMA to borrow from institutions that don't usually agree to loans (Rajagopalan, 2019).

Accessibility is also realised in various other ways. In 2016, the leadership of the museum realized that the public did not seem to be aware of the PMA, or believed it was only for the employees of Piramal. They started, thus, to collaborate with other companies who have their offices in the same corporate park and even asked the employees of these companies to submit their own artworks. In this participation-fostering endeavour staff members from the corporate park sent in their work, ranging from drawings, poems and sculptures to, for example, a series

of portraits depicting the museum visitors created by one of the security guards of the museum (Sen, 2018).

6. Piramal Tower, Piramal Museum of Art, Mumbai, photo by Kinga Hamvai

According to Art-X Company, which consulted PMA in their extensive audience engagement and outreach programming, they organise 'around 50 events each year, besides 15-25 educational initiatives and school group visits for each exhibition.' Engaging school groups is quite a challenge, as Rajagopalan told me:

> For the schoolteacher it is a challenging task to take the students to a museum. The schoolteacher has to bring them here after school starts and take them back before school ends. Some form of catering has to be organised. When there are, let's say, 100 kids, it's a lot of stress on the teacher. We are trying to change these fundamental circumstances that discourage teachers. We're saying, "come here as a school, sit here, we'll give you juice, we'll give you ice cream." We're spending money to hook the children, but it's not a sustainable program, I still invest into every kid that comes in here. You have to grab the attention of these kids (Rajagopalan, 2019).

Since its opening, PMA 'expanded the scope of visual programming from simple lectures and workshops to strategic partnerships with cultural organisations across India, masterclasses, film

screenings, music, dance performances and more' (Art-X, n.d.). Piramal Museum of Art has taken further steps in the direction of increasing inclusivity and accessibility with a 'disabled-friendly exhibition space and exhibitions utilising braille for the visually impaired (LBB, 2018). Accessibility was also strengthened through another channel: they have published a book on the collection. Interestingly, this – reaching the public through the publication of carefully curated volumes – was the answer to my question about public access when talking with Deborah Ehrlich from UBS collection.

2.3. ART AT THE WORKPLACE: RMZ Ecoworld

> ‘Most of them are probably not exposed to art. So, in this way, at least we're giving exposure to a lot of people who would never walk into a gallery to see’ (Baid, 2019).

Another corporation ‘attempting to fill the gap created by isolated and inadequate public art spaces’ (Shekhar, 2017) in India is RMZ, one of the leading owners and developers of commercial real estate in the country. RMZ Foundation’s Art Walk has a similar approach to Piramal Museum of Art. The company’s RMZ Ecoworld headquarters in Bangalore, located in the city's business district, includes a sculpture park featuring large-scale works by renowned Indian artists (Hamvai, 2021). I was lucky enough to visit the space after my discussion with Premilla Baid, curator and advisor of the project, who is a gallerist herself and founder of Bengaluru’s Sumukha Gallery.

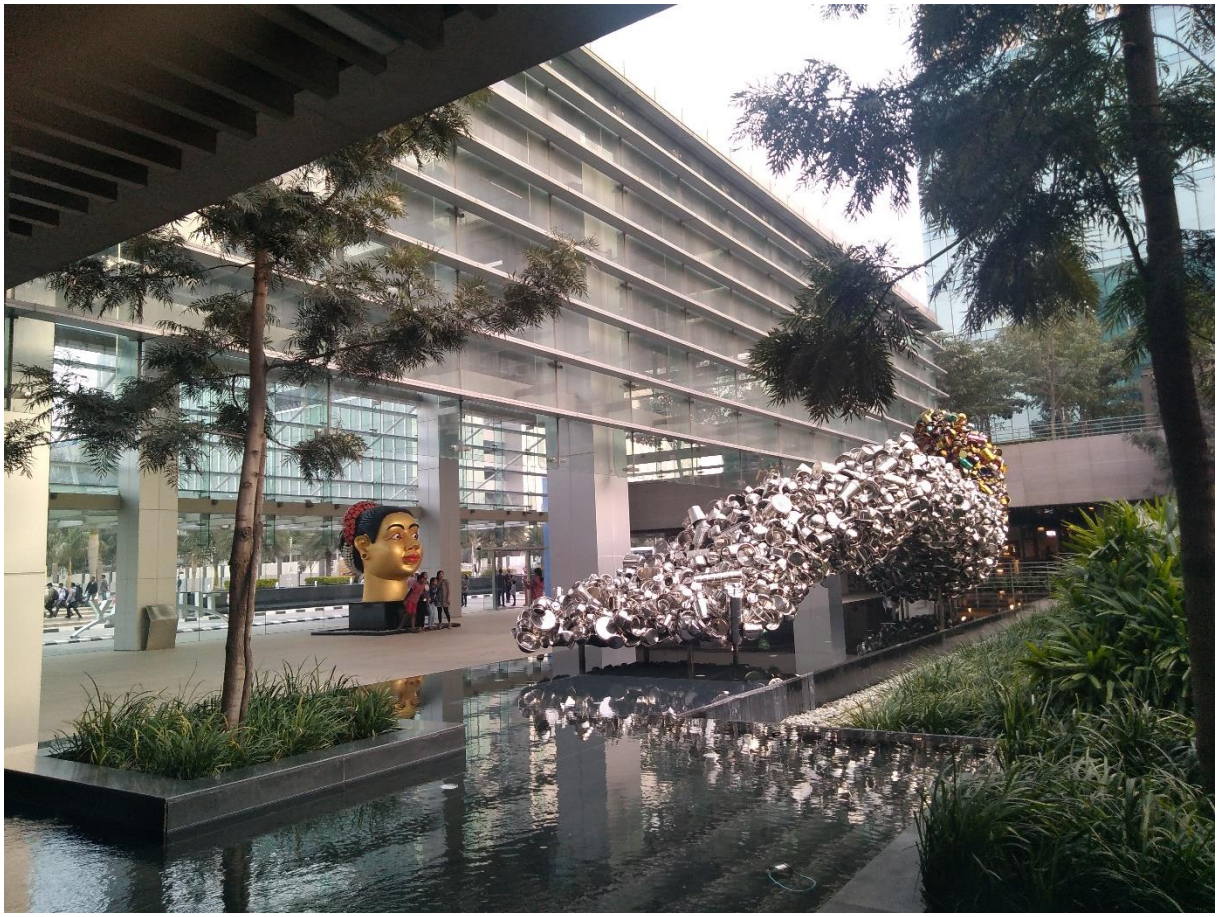
Content and display

The sculpture park unveiled in 2017 features a collection of works by contemporary artists, such as Subodh Gupta, Ravinder G Reddy, Dhurva Mistry, Paresh Maity, Arunkumar H G and Jayasri Burman. Currently, it showcases ‘45 sculptures from artists across the country and with different backgrounds’ (RMZ Foundation, n.d.). According to Baid, most of the artists are Indian, except for a few international ones, which is in line with the previously discussed ‘home bias’ thesis.

The works ‘are displayed in The Bay, a building with offices, an open-air deck and the business park’s main food and beverage area, with restaurants, pubs and cafes.’ The outdoor exhibition allowed the artists to create larger pieces (which are in many cases more accessible to audiences) and designing this art space ‘involved each artist visiting the site and choosing a spot for their work.’ However, ‘an outdoor gallery comes with its own challenges because of the impact of weather on the pieces.’ Ravinder Reddy, best known for his monumental female heads ‘chose to have his sculpture placed in the glassy foyer of the building, so it could be protected from natural elements’ (Venugopal, 2017). Further iconic pieces are Subodh Gupta’s *Dreams Overflowing* (n.d.), an installation composed of stainless-steel vessels, by one of the

country's most celebrated and internationally acclaimed artists, and Paresh Maity's bronze bull sculpture *Force* (n.d.).

Apart from sculptures, the park also includes a dedicated gallery space for temporary exhibitions (which opened with a semi-retrospective show of Reddy's) and a 'Sustainable Art Pavilion'.



7. RMZ Corporation headquarters in Bangalore, with sculptures by Ravinder Reddy and Subodh Gupta, photo by Kinga Hamvai

Employees

The business park 'has over 150,000 employees in companies including Infosys, KPMG, Sony, Capgemini and Shell' (Shekhar, 2017) 'opening out the possibility for thousands of office goers and general public to come in contact with art works' (Sunish, 2017). (Sources vary on the approximate number of employees.) Again, as in the case of the PMA I did not have a chance to interview them about their reception of the artworks. However, Anu Menda, Managing

Trustee, RMZ Foundation said that they ‘have observed that employees visit in groups during lunch breaks and have developed a curiosity about artworks’ (Shekhar, 2017), and Baid mentioned people taking selfies frequently, (Baid, 2019) which I have observed myself as well.

The temporary exhibitions and sculpture park are also open to the public; access is not limited to the employees at the RMZ offices. Importantly, beside the exhibited works educational texts are also displayed. In addition, different information boards help visitors find their way around the sculptures, the very same information, complemented with a guided tour can be reached through an application. ‘The opportunities to access such experiences in public, urban India are currently few’ (Sunish, 2017) and contemporary art is mostly collected and displayed in the Northern part (New Delhi and Mumbai) (Barthelemy, 2019). ‘Public sculptures, as much as they exist, are concentrated on state-sponsored statues of politically and historically important personages’ (Sunish, 2017).

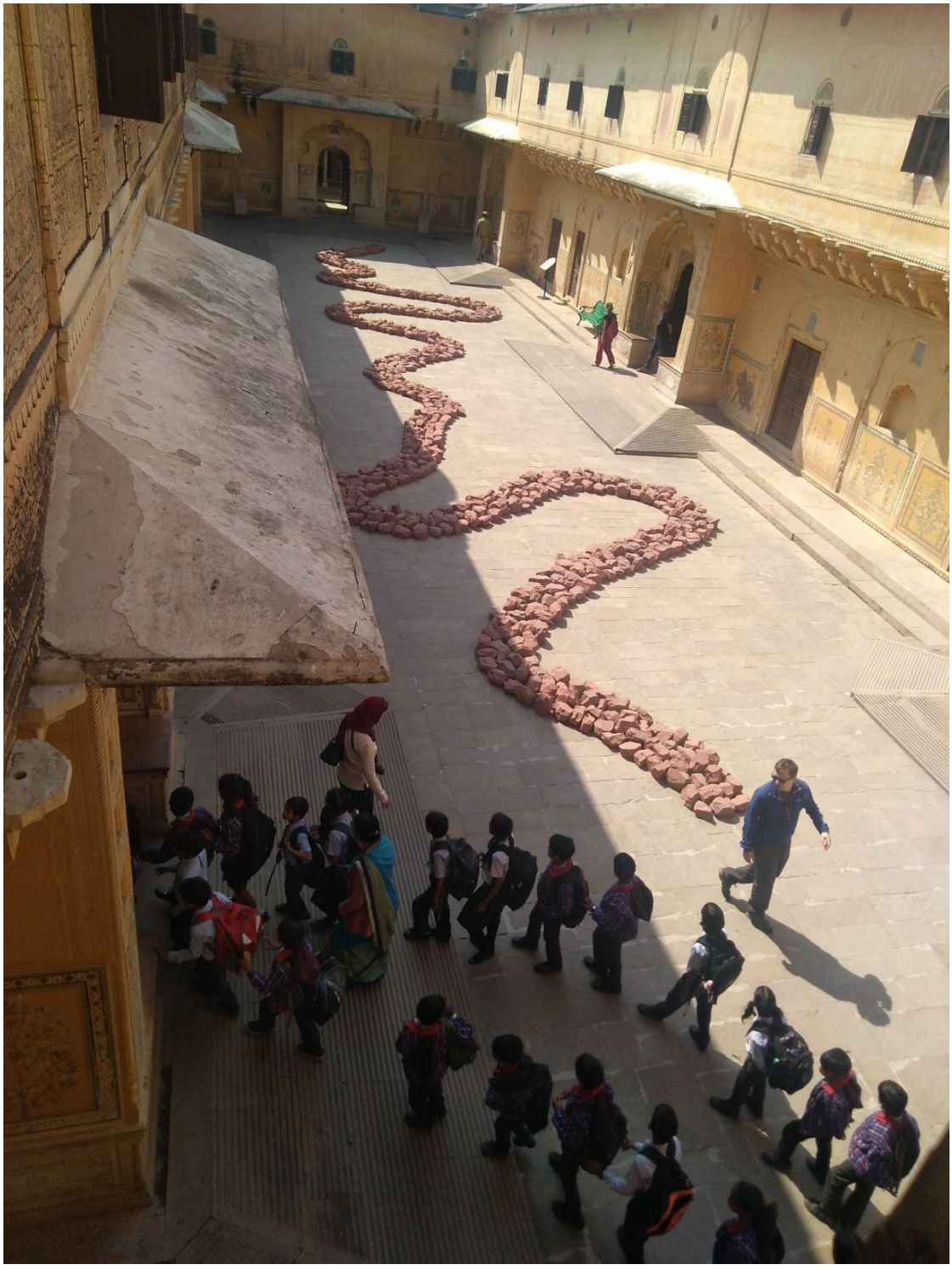
On the other hand, as discussed in the introductory chapter on the Indian art scene, it is a big challenge for art institutions to attract visitors. This way RMZ Foundation can contribute to breaking down those walls, and make art accessible with its large scale, and often ‘selfie inspiring’ outdoor works, that capture attention. As Baid explains it: ‘Most of them [IT professionals working in the area] are probably not exposed to art. So, in this way, at least we're giving exposure to a lot of people who would never walk into a gallery to see’ (Baid, 2019).

Future

RMZ Ecoworld’s Artwalk, as many of the new art initiatives were shaping their strategies in 2019, Baid formulated it as: ‘At the moment, they are still trying to find their own understanding as to how they want to move this forward. Eventually, that is the intent to collaborate with museums’ (Baid, 2019). Their most emphasized endeavour is to install sculptures in RMZ assets including cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Hyderabad, and Chennai. Future plans also include taking the initiative in the global art scene (Rao, 2018). More importantly, showcasing contemporary art in public space, might inspire ‘well-to-do corporate and IT professionals and attract the next generation of enthusiasts and buyers’ in the future (Shekhar, 2017).

This kind of public art initiatives appears also in other cities throughout India. For example, the art program presenting site-specific installations at the Palladium Plaza in Chennai (which I was not able to locate when I visited the plaza) or the XIX. century Madhavendra Palace in Jaipur, which is very popular among tourists as a cultural heritage site; its

contemporary sculpture park was created in cooperation and with the collaborative effort of several companies, via their CSR budgets (Hamvai, 2021).



8. Richard Long installation at the Sculpture Park in Jaipur, photo by Kinga Hamvai

9. Young generation taking selfies at The Sculpture Park, Jaipur, photo by Kinga Hamvai

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2.4. ART AT THE AIRPORT: The Jaya He Museum

> ‘Angelic figures perch above the elevators.
> Treelike sculptures stand sentinel over the
> luggage belts. A mural accompanies passengers
> up the escalator after they step off the
> arrivals bus’ (Goel, 2019).

Following the list of public or semi-public places that display art initiated by the private/corporate sector is an airport: The Jaya He Museum is located in Terminal 2 of Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIAL) – in a non-dedicated space (Hamvai, 2021). The museum was opened in 2014 under the name Jaya He GVK New Museum at the same time as the handing over of the CSMIAL terminal, in a public-private partnership (PPP) at the initiative of the head of the GVK Power and Infrastructure Ltd. a family-led conglomerate, Sanjay Reddy and his wife, Aparna Reddy. With its 5,500 exhibition pieces, India's most comprehensive collection of fine and applied arts, ranging from 11th-century objects to contemporary works, is spread over the four floors of the airport, covering nearly ten thousand square meters. Before the pandemic 48 million passengers passed through the airport every year (ArtTactic, 2019, pp. 58-61), ‘more numbers than all of the art establishments in India could put together’ (Sethi, 2016). I have been to the airport in 2017 and have been in e-mail correspondence with the museum afterwards (Mor, 2019).

Funding

The Jaya He Museum was realized in the framework of a public-private partnership: MIAL (Mumbai International Airport Ltd), then a subsidiary of GVK, was in a PPP agreement with Airport Authority of India to operate T2, Chhatrapti Shivaji Mumbai International Airport for a predetermined period. Jaya He GVK New Museum was a brand of MIAL, where the collection also belongs to. The museum during its construction and execution phase was funded by MIAL as a part of its CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) undertakings of the GVK conglomerate (Mor, 2019).

Content

The founders Mr. and Mrs. Reddy’s vision from the very beginning was to create an airport that ‘can compete with any global equivalent but retains a distinct sense of place and identity, an

airport that celebrates India' (Ganguly, 2016). Rajeev Sethi, 'one of Asia's leading design gurus', and the founder trustee of The Asian Heritage Foundation, the CSR wing of Rajeev Sethi Scenographers Pvt. Ltd (Vasudev, 2016) , translated this vision 'into an unprecedented interdisciplinary platform of original art treasures from various regions of the country, commissioned works by master-craftspeople as well as artists and designers exploring contemporary visual language' (Ganguly, 2016).

As a fortunate situation, the design and execution of the museum therefore coincided with that of the airports: A 40-member team of art conservators and restorers worked on damaged or distressed objects. The unpacking, measuring, weighing and photography documentation of each artefact was supervised by a collections management agency. Every piece was catalogued 'with information on its dating, provenance, history, stylistic and technical features; collated by trained art historians, anthropologists and ethnographers.' As Reddy explained it: 'A museum project team then coordinated with our design, engineering and construction teams tasked to build one of the largest terminals in the world. This programme was being put in place simultaneously with the construction of T2, which made it even more complex' (Vasudev, 2016).

The museum contains a total of 87 installations. Among them, 29 contemporary works commissioned for this purpose were placed on the arrivals side of Terminal 2. There are 4 installations in the baggage claim section, as well as another 54 curated exhibitions on the departure area of local and international flights. The art program occupies a total of nearly 20,000 square meters of wall space, reaching a height of 18 meters, 'like a scenography in which traditional artefacts, folk and tribal styles of paintings are presented in a contemporary way without losing its original essence' (Mor, 2019). In addition to the works of contemporary artists such as GR Iranna, who was also featured in the Indian pavilion of the 2019 Venice Biennale of Fine Arts, or Mithu Sen, one of the featured artists of the India Art Fair's performance programme (Hamvai, 2021), the collection includes 'sculptures of gods and goddesses, doors, doorways, arches, boats, boat heads, sculptures of icons of protection such as totem poles, masks, door guardians called and 'Dwarapalas', mythical carriers of Gods and goddesses called 'Vahanas', chariots, carts and other such objects.' In the course of curating the collection, it was important to represent all regions of the country, 'specifically from the regions which represents the origin of a particular Indian traditional art form' (Mor, 2019). The collection was aimed at the contemporary presentation of Indian art and craft traditions as well

as ‘breaking down the boundaries’ between ‘contemporary art and traditional skills of Indian villages’ and to celebrate ‘India’s plural cultural legacy’ (Sethi, 2016).

Here it is worth highlighting a tendency, that is specific to India, as one of my interviewees explained it to me, anonymously: The local intelligentsia aims to present Indian art in the international scene by emphasizing the folk and tribal crafts that are still (strongly present and) practiced in the country, by rethinking and combining them with new technologies. This intention can also be observed in the collections mentioned before. (In contrast to the process that took place in the West, where the industrial revolution relegated craft traditions to the background, and where continuous attempts to revive them have been ongoing ever since.)

In the case of the Jaya He Museum the curatorial approach encouraged folk artists and craftsmen to explore possibilities beyond their conventional practices. Art forms in the museum include Kerala Mural, Madhubani, Patachitra, Picchwai Miniature, Kalamkari, Kalighat painting, Bengal scroll painting, Shekhawati Miniature, Tanjore painting, Mewar school of miniature, Marwar school of miniature, Mughal, Warli (tribal), and Gond painting (tribal) (Mor, 2019).

Participatory efforts (German, 2017) can also be traced in the creation of the museum: among the installations, for example, there was one for which 100 cow milking figurines were made by more than 75 women living in the Mumbai slums near the airport (Goel, 2019).

The inclusion of ‘hundreds by unknown or lesser-known artists, both urban and rural’ next to the ‘famous painters like Manu Parekh, Gulammohammed Sheikh, Nilima Sheikh, Vivan Sundaram, B.M. Kamath, and textile installations by designers Ritu Kumar, Manish Arora and Sethi himself’ is a laudable action, since many of my interviewees expressed the concern on India ‘only having 10 big names’, who are promoted internationally. Those 10 names vary, but include modern – Husain, Raza, Mehta, Souza, Gaitonde, Ram Kumar, and Swaminathan – and contemporary artists like Subodh Gupta or Jitish Kallat) (Hamvai, 2019). This so-called ‘superstar effect’ (Halperin and Burns, 2019) is also characteristic to emerging art markets. This represents the immense diversity of Indian cultural industries ‘by merging class, caste, gender, disregarding hierarchies within art and doing away with stereotypical visual symbols’ (Vasudev, 2016).

The collecting aspect of the museum is no longer fulfilled in the case of Jaye He, the works have been incorporated, so everything found its place. As the museum representative explained it to me: ‘The museum was designed to be a in a form of a scenography such that the collected objects offer certain location and position in each installation which lends to its completeness. This kind of curatorial approach does not necessitate any change its collection and hence there is no program designed to add new artefacts’ (Mor, 2019). Returning travellers and visitors can find variety in the active programs.

Accessibility

People do not come here to visit the museum, but travel from or to Mumbai, or wait in transit for their plane to connect. Passengers may even find themselves in the museum involuntarily, as the airport is the museum itself. This way the accessibility agenda of contemporary museology (ICOM, 2022) is realized (to the extreme) (Hamvai, 2021). On the other hand, due to the strict security measures in India, it is not possible to even enter the airport building without a valid flight ticket and passport. From this point of view, the principle of accessibility is not fulfilled. However, we can even consider that the museum entrance ticket is very expensive, as Rajeev Sethi humorously refers to it (Sethi, 2016).

The museum itself is the airport in the financial centre of the country, so it is considered a particularly sensitive zone from the point of view of national security. Although, in exceptional cases, the museum does host pre-approved groups of students, underprivileged kids, educationalists approved by the security department. (Mor, 2019)

Another goal of the institution is to develop an online extension of their exhibition that provides a virtual experience accessible from anywhere; as well as for the museum to be physically present outside the airport in the form of various events and temporary shows. There has been discussion on erecting a section of the museum outside for visitors who accompany travellers, and future plans include carrying the work to bus stands or railway stations, as well (Vasudev, 2016).

Audience engagement

As established in the introductory chapter, it is a challenge for Indian museums to engage audiences. However, reaching out to serendipitous audiences is the biggest challenge for most airport museums, as visitors to these places are usually only looking around because their flight

is delayed. As Mr. Reddy views the issue of engaging serendipitous audiences: ‘Even if we are able to catch one out of 100 people, we have done our job. […] A lot of this is subconscious. When you go through any place, it becomes a part of you’ (Goel, 2019).

Those traveling through Mumbai can register in advance for a free guided tour on the Jaya He Museum website (though they need to book it at least two days in advance) and can even discover the exhibits on their own by downloading the museum application. In addition, the museum provides activities throughout the year, for example, it organizes its own events for International Philosophy Day, Women's Day, Museum Week, and traditional Indian festivals such as Diwali, the festival of light, or Onam, the harvest festival. ‘These events are curated, keeping the main vision of Jaya He in mind, the revival and conservation of traditional Indian art forms and make them relevant for today. This gives an opportunity and a platform to collaborate with various partners with a likeminded vision to exhibit their work and skills and to engage and sensitise the travellers to Indian culture through such activities’ (Mor, 2019).

This is a case next to airport museums versus dedicated museum spaces with a ticket offices operating from 10 am to 6 pm (Sethi, 2016). The question however emerges whether a museum exhibition at the airport will attract visitors to the other museums of the city, or it will have the opposite effect (Walhimer, 2009), and the tourists will feel that they have already taken in what Indian museums can offer.

Employees

The previous examples of corporate art initiatives could fit in to the category of art in public domain, as well as art in the workplace. The Jaya He staff also makes efforts to engage the more than 30,000 airport employees. They organize various events so they can get to know the collection and relax there in the breaks from their high-pressure jobs. According to the information provided by the museum, before the pandemic, more than 300 workers in various fields participated in the diverse programs, including CISF and Immigration officers, ‘housekeeping staff, terminal operations staff, baggage operations staff, Airside safety staff, customs staff etc.’ From time to time, the museum also organizes special training for its old and new employees who are in contact with the traveling public, so that they are aware of the institution's role, possibilities, and the collection itself (Mor, 2019), which they are - based on my personal observation - very proud of.

National branding by turning a ‘non-place’ into a place

The airport is a complex location: commercial space and transit zone, a ‘non-place’ (Auge, 2009) in the classical sense. It is universal, usually without an independent character: you often cannot tell whether you are passing through Buenos Aires or Melbourne. For many, however, the transfer is the only experience of a specific country or region, in other cases it is the first or last impression they get of the destination of their trip (Walhimer, 2009). This is a significant potential for cultural diplomacy, which is ignored by many airports, even though it is a great strategic location from the point of view of national image building or national branding (see Grincheva, 2019). The collaboration of a crucial transportation hub with a cultural institution can be a logical step if they want to add a ‘local flavor’ to the airport, since museums are an integral part of the city's identity. In the case of the Mumbai example, according to the statistics published in the report studying the economic impact of the airport, approximately one-third of the passengers are foreigners (Chadha et al., 2015), so it is an ideal place for cultural diplomacy. The goal of the enterprise is to put India on the map of global culture. This is also in line with the previously quoted citation by Sanjay and Aparna Reddy on creating an airport that ‘can compete with any global equivalent but retains a distinct sense of place and identity, an airport that celebrates India’ (Ganguly, 2016).

It also makes sense considering the previously introduced various motivations for corporate collecting. One of the most important incentives is the branding value, as the airport this way contributes to the branding of India. It acts on a larger scale, since branding the airport is almost equivalent with branding Mumbai or India itself. This is an intersection of cultural diplomacy and corporate diplomacy. Apart from the arts and crafts (Ciotti, 2012; Sawhney, 2019) one of the most important elements of India's soft-power apparatus is yoga as an integral and outstanding element of the national culture (Mazumdar, 2018). At Jaya He the museum educational events organized as part of the International Yoga Day are also the most popular ones, especially among foreigners.

During my correspondence with the museum, I have also asked about branding, Mor explained it to me:

> The public art program has added immense value to what GVK brand stands for. Its vision of sustaining and reviving the Indian traditional arts and crafts to showcase the world has shown GVK’s commitment to position India on a global platform. GVK’s determination to maintain highest standard of design and implementation with the latest technology, it has set a benchmark for all the future developments in the country to

> integrate art right from its planning stage. Jaya He Museum's presence in the airport space has added to the ambience of the airport making passengers feel 'happy', 'relaxed' and 'stress free' airport experience (Mor, 2019).

At this point I have to mention here a conference paper by Caroline Lillelund, which seems to arrive at the same conclusion in the matter. I have not been aware of that study; our research happened parallel. I have not been able to access the manuscript, which 'examines the ways that the exhibitions and discourses of the Jaya He GVK New Museum brands the nation as well as the GVK conglomerate as modern and culturally sophisticated in a fast-globalizing world' – I have only come across the abstract (Lillelund, 2018).

10. Guided tour at CSMIAL airport, courtesy of Jaya He Museum

Museums and airports

Museum exhibitions at airports around the world have become increasingly popular in recent years. A famous example of this trend is the dedicated and separate exhibition space 'designed for Art by the architects of the Musée d'Orsay', called Espace Musées in Terminal 2 of Charles de Gaulle Airport in Paris, which regularly organizes exhibitions in collaboration with an

important museum of the city (Espace Musées, n.d.). Another well-known example is the Rijksmuseum Schiphol in Amsterdam featuring a 'selection of works from The Rijksmuseum collection' ("Rijksmuseum Schiphol - Rijksmuseum," n.d.). It is also common for the satellite unit of the museum shop to be located at the airport. At Taipei Taoyuan Airport, for example, travellers can buy souvenirs from the Taipei National Palace Museum while waiting. The Jaya He Museum in Mumbai is unique because there the museum forms a unity with the airport, not just an isolated part of it: 'Angelic figures perch above the elevators. Treelike sculptures stand sentinel over the luggage belts. A mural accompanies passengers up the escalator after they step off the arrivals bus' (Goel, 2019).

11. Installation by Rajeev Sethi at the CSMIAL airport, courtesy of Jaya He Museum

However, isn't the airport the antithesis of the museum? – the question is raised by the American exhibition design expert Mark Walhimer (2009). Museums often encourage the contemplation of the objects, and the goal is for the visitor to spend as much time there as possible, to learn, relax, and be able to slow down. While airports are all about efficiency, we try to go through them as quickly as possible. In the case of Jaya He, 'the X-shaped, ultramodern terminal handles all international and many domestic flights [...] So it is foremost a working

airport." Resultingly, 'the art is tucked into the hallways, baggage carousels and check-in counters so as to avoid disrupting the movement of passengers and the nearly 30,000 people who work at the airport' (Goel, 2019).

'While airports, by including museums, are reaching out to the city, museums are doing much the same thing. By adding cafés, stores, social activities, and other amenities, they insert themselves [in the] city. The future will likely witness a greater convergence of airport and museum, where traveller and visitor can no longer be separated' (Walhimer, 2009). This observation is in line with Rectanus's thesis on the convergence of corporations and museums (Rectanus, 2002).

12. Guided tour at CSMIAL airport, courtesy of Jaya He Museum

At the time of writing this essay, not only did the pandemic rearrange the rules of the game, but the news was announced that in July 2021, a change of ownership took place in the life of the institution: the Mumbai airport was bought by Adani Group from the GVK. For now, this is signalled in the renaming of the museum (from Jaya He GVK New Museum to Jaya He

Adani New Museum), the staff seems to be unchanged. The thought process of the essay referred to the period before the acquisition.

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3. CHINA

3.1. THE CHINESE ARTS ECOSYSTEM

> ’In these fifteen hundred museums, there is certainly more than one that challenges the limits of what we had once thought a museum should be’ (Wong, 2015).

Museumification of China

China, one of the greatest ancient civilizations, has a rich historical and cultural heritage. ‘The private art collections that flourished among aristocratic and intellectual elites during the Song Dynasty (AD 960–1279) were mostly kept private, if not secret, reserved for the gaze of the collector himself and few others’ (Varutti, 2011). The earliest museums, collecting and researching the country's ancient artefacts – ‘at the time commonly called display houses’ – date back to the end of the 15th century and the beginning of the 16th century (Wenbin, 2008). Regarding the history of Chinese museums and their development throughout imperial, republican, and communist administrations, Varutti (2014) and Shelach-Lavi (2019) present insightful overviews. However, it is the new museums this research focuses on, which have proliferated in China over the past (two) decade(s).

In the 21st century, China experienced rapid economic, political, and military development. However, this growth was mostly interpreted as a threat by other countries. To renew the country's image, China regrouped significant resources to develop its soft power infrastructure (Clover and Sherry Fei Ju, 2018). At the international arena, it strives to create a more favourable image of an innovative, friendly, peaceful, and responsible country (Hartig, 2016) and ‘intends to catch up in the perceived global cultural competition for international visibility and attraction’ (Grincheva, 2019, p. 46). This large-scale objective included several government incentives supporting the rapid development of the museum industry (e.g., Varutti, 2014; Wong, 2015; Zhang and Courty, 2021) and the country’s share of world trade in cultural goods and services has risen ‘since the turn of the millennium, with the cultural industries firmly enshrined as one of its “pillar industries”’ (O’Connor and Gu, 2020,).

The term museumification was coined by Jeffrey Johnson, director of Columbia University's China Megacities Lab and refers to the Chinese museum construction fever that occurred in the last twenty years: 'We've seen museum building boom's elsewhere, but nothing of this sustained magnitude and pace' (Johnson, 2013). This phenomena is also known and referred to as the China Museum Boom (CMB) (Zhang and Courty, 2021). And what does this magnitude mean? In 1949, at the foundation of the People's Republic of China, the 'total number of museums left over from ancient China was only twenty-four' (Wenbin, 2008). The museum count was around 400 in 1980 'which is about when China joined the international museum scene by becoming a member of ICOM in 1982 and adopting the UNESCO convention on the protection of natural and cultural heritage in 1985' (Bollo and Zhang, 2017). As stated above, directives that fostered the development of a cultural economy were first set up in the 1980s and 'fuelled investment – both public and private – into the creative industries via two consecutive five-year plans, the latter of which ended [in 2015]. The aim was for China to have 3,500 museums by 2015 – a target it achieved three years early' (Howarth, 2015). And the state-sponsored boom continued, resulting in around 5,000 museums by 2015. On average, nearly 100 new museums were built annually across the country (other sources mention yearly 140 (Zhang and Courty, 2021, p. 6)). In 2011, 'that figure reached a staggering 386 – more than one per day' (Johnson, 2013). Just for the sake of comparison, it is worth mentioning that in the US 'only between twenty and forty were being built annually in the decade preceding the 2008 financial crash' (Wong, 2015).

Challenges of presenting a literature review

Discussions of the CMB largely rely on anecdotal speculations (e.g. museums as vanity projects or political statements) and most of them merely report on museum growth (Zhang and Courty, 2021). This is probably the reason for some inconsistency and contradictions in the literature. For example, the number of museums in different accounts is varying (probably due to the problems of classification, terminology, statistics, etc.). Another issue is the amount or percentage of private museums among all the museums. Ćirić states that 'the majority of the newly established art museums in China are privately funded' (Ćirić, 2019) while Zhang and Courty claim that 'private museums [did] not exist in 2005 and now represent about 10% of all museums' (Zhang and Courty, 2021, p.15). Some sources even question the existence of private museums. This is probably due to 'the often-paradoxical intermingling of public and private

that marks China's unique mode of state-sponsored capitalism' (Wong, 2015), widely referred to as 'capitalism with Chinese characteristics' (O'Connor and Gu, 2020).

Additionally, there are differences in the authors' valorisations of these new museums, as well as their attitude toward the idea of comparing Chinese museums to their Western counterparts. (However, unlike the numbers, this latter is not a question of facts.) For example, Varutti 'attempts to locate Chinese museums within the mainstream museum literature but has to concede that doing so "is neither obvious nor necessarily appropriate. Indeed, the Chinese case study eludes easy classification"' (cited in Zhang and Courty, 2021, p. 4). I have also experienced this problem in an online conference on Asian art collecting, organized by a Hong Kong university: A lively debate ensued in which Western researchers evaluated Eastern art institutions based on Western ideas. Eastern theorists, on the other hand, confronted their Western colleagues for excessively and biasedly putting forward their own perspectives to account for Eastern ecosystems. (Comparing the writings of Chinese and non-Chinese authors on the issues discussed, as well as the education and background of those authors can further refine a study on the small and recent literature in Chinese museums. Due to scope limitations, this research does not cover this.)

However, there seems to be a consensus regarding one issue: the CMB 'was largely orchestrated by the central government as part of a policy to support, develop and control culture' (Zhang and Courty, 2021, p. 2). In summary, 'the debate on Chinese museums, both in China and beyond, is still in its infancy', as concluded in Varutti's book in 2014 and reaffirmed 7 years later by Zhang and Courty, ˙(2021, p. 5); and as it is an emerging area of academic study, the statement is still valid today.

Zhang and Courty's work 'attempts to systematically quantify the changes in museum supply in China' (2021, p.1), so in my introductory account on the museum boom I will largely rely on their findings. They show that the boom has greatly affected not only the number of museums, but also their size, expenditure, accessibility, and affordability. They also 'document a major policy shift in 2007 that increased the growth rate of museum count and size, and dramatically reduced admission fees.' The latter has 'shifted the revenue source of most museums from a partially user-based to an almost entirely publicly subsidized model' (Zhang and Courty, 2021, p. 1).

Museums in China serve multiple objectives: They fall under the 'soft power approach that aims to reinterpret the past giving it a narrative of cultural pride, historical continuity and

aesthetic appreciation' (Varutti, 2014). They also 'classify, protect and conserve national art and treasures.' Another task of museums is to 'serve local economic development and tourism, encourage cultural consumption, and support cultural industries' (ibid.). China announced in 2010 that cultural industries would be 'pillars of the national economy and this would be expressed through the commercialization and commodification of cultural products' (Keane and Zhao, 2014). Finally, museums play a key role in 'ensuring the quality of life and fulfilment of every individual', which means that museums are viewed as important 'public facilities that are used to organize urban centres and city life, and coordinate people's access to cultural goods'(all cited in Zhang and Courty, 2021, p. 3).

Reduced admission fees and experimentation with free museum entrance started around 2003 in Hangzhou city, and Guangdong and Hubei provinces. Before that, 'spending a dozen Yuan or so to visit an exhibition' was 'an unaffordable luxury for the tens of millions of people who still live in poverty or just above the poverty line.' Compared with many countries, museum entrance fees in China took up a much larger proportion of people's income (Qin, 2008, p. 70). All museums were encouraged to offer free-admission since 2006 (Zhang and Courty, 2021). Even though this research does not focus on public museums, it is still important to note this intention. Of course, accessibility means more than just free admission.

Critique of the new museums

There are more critical voices among the commentators of the CMB, claiming that 'the modern museum industry in China developed quickly and without a systemic development of curatorial and managerial traditions', due to 'inefficient bureaucracy […] and a lack of inter-departmental cooperation between research, education, and exhibition departments" (Vandenberg, 2020). As Winnie Wong formulates in her influential essay:

> Indeed, many of the museums that have been constructed in China's twenty-first century are categorized as public ones, insofar as they are paid for by public funds and administered by the reenergized propaganda arms of local governments at the neighbourhood or district level. While often imposing in design, many simply sit empty and dark after their grand openings, lorded over by unassailable culture bureaucrats who open the museum up only for their leaders' VIP visits. When they do turn on the lights, these institutions tend to display exclusively the "clean" and "nonsensitive" art (i.e., no eroticism and no politics) that is produced mainly by culture bureaucrats themselves. As Chinese artists like to say, no one has less culture than culture officials. Even the highest-profile museums of Beijing often sit closed and empty for long stretches, suggesting that these gargantuan public projects are less about serving the public than about signifying official power (Wong, 2015).

This partly explains why ‘the new institutions that have attracted the most public attention are actually designated “private museums” because they are run by nongovernmental individuals’ (Wong, 2015). At the same time, the private museums are also widely criticized, and ‘questioned in terms of their artistic excellence and curatorial quality’ (Grincheva, 2019, p. 48), because the museum ecosystem (e.g. strategies and working methods, qualified staff, audiences, programmes) was not able to keep up with the pace of museum construction.

A typical metaphor used by professionals for this situation is that China lacks software that can operate the large number of new hardware well (See Howarth, 2015; Wong, 2015). Others compare Chinese museums to empty shells (Yang, 2021; Hamvai, 2021a). In addition, ‘within these institutions there are rarely any institutional experiments or innovative and radical approaches towards a reconsideration of what an art institution is or what an art institution should be and do’ (Ćirić, 2019). According to Aric Chen, former Lead Curator for Design and Architecture at Hong Kong’s M+, many of the museums are vast, sculptural structures that take up huge swathes of land in dense urban neighbourhoods and rural areas. However, not much thought is given to what goes inside these buildings once they are complete (quoted in Howarth, 2015). Or as Claire Hsu, founder of Asia Art Archive (an influental non-profit organisation that documents recent art history in the region) views the issue: ‘The majority of the art museums being built, while donning the latest architectural coats, are severely lacking in content, programming or qualified professionals, which often come as an after-thought’ (Hsu, 2014).

There is a lack of qualified labour for proper operation, since gaining expertise and experience requires a relatively long time, which also necessitates the development of education. An anecdotal note by Wong illustrates the situation well: ‘One contemporary art curator remembers vividly how he earned his title: In the early 2000s, while working at the Guangdong Museum of Art in Guangzhou, he was greeted in the elevator by a colleague who told him his position had been renamed and he was now a “curator.” At the time, he didn’t even know what the word meant’ (Wong, 2015). It is also important to note here, that in the Chinese language, the term ‘curator’ doesn’t have the ‘same etymological Latin root meaning “to take care”, which is an important legacy of the term in the West; rather, the literal Chinese translation is “exhibition planner”’ (Ćirić, 2019).

Many museums are empty in terms of visitors as well. In recent years, the Chinese government has been unsuccessful in its attempts to change public perceptions of art among national audiences as a ‘compulsory education’ (Grincheva, 2019).

Related to the above-mentioned shell analogy, it is also a problem that the museum is often only regarded as a landmark, and it is not deemed necessary for the institution to function. ‘Provincial cities quickly followed suit, eager to cash in on the so-called Bilbao effect [e.g., Ébli, 2011] – enticing tourists to visit an architectural spectacle and thereby putting themselves on the map, similar to the way Frank Gehry's Bilbao Guggenheim elevated the Basque city to international status’ (Howarth, 2015).

Most of the corporations that establish these new art museums are real estate or investment companies, or else private collectors with the desire to share their collections with the public (Ćirić, 2019). Some institutions were even built in the middle of nowhere, ‘used as a sweetener for land deals.’ As Chen explained it: ‘In China, it's often not so much about creating a museum, with well-defined content that will attract and engage the public; it's more about using a museum as a tool for real estate development’. At the same time, ‘regardless of their cultural impact, these giant projects have given international architects the opportunity to experiment while the rest of the world weathered an economic storm. […] China is still an incredible laboratory for architecture’ (quoted in Howarth, 2015).

Corporatization of museums

Commercialization of culture is an issue not specific to China but a very significant phenomenon globally. According to independent curator Biljana Ćirić, ‘Until the mid-1990s, there was almost no support for exhibitions [in China] – no markets, institutions, no platforms for critical discussion, no local collectors, and no connoisseurs to support and observe the experiments that were taking place.’ Resultingly, ‘the participating artists bore all the costs, while exhibition opportunities were made possible almost entirely through networks of established friendships, shows of solidarity, and a strong belief in the work being undertaken together’ (Ćirić, 2019, p. 195). The ‘white cube’ gallery was introduced after the millennium, at which point ‘it was strongly connected to the commercialization of the art scene,’ which remains true to this day. Ćirić compares the situation to the former West, where ‘the notion of the white cube space was introduced after World War II and was closely linked to the institutionalization of art’ (ibid). As such, artist-initiated exhibitions in China, rather than museums, acted as the sites to produce knowledge, which was in contrast to the situation in the West, where museums, the development of modern and contemporary art, and the study of art history were very much interconnected. The prominence of the white cube space was re-enforced through the interconnectivity of the private art museum sector and commercial

galleries, and has since exerted great influence on curatorial practice and its very rigid way of approaching exhibition-making (Ćirić, 2019). With the appearance and strengthening of the art market, artist run spaces fell into the background.

The development and blooming of art markets drew the attention of a group of economically powerful businessmen towards the development of private museums. Some corporations 'have used their museums as platforms from which to expand the sale of their business products. Yang Xiu, the director of the Tiandi Group in Nanjing, displayed calligraphy and art products from his personal collection in the group's offices. The Red Dragonfly group of Ningbo has set up a museum dedicated to the shoe culture in their offices' (Xiangguang, 2008, p. 47), which is in line with the previously discussed incentives for corporate art collecting.

According to Grincheva (2019) a new generation of Chinese museums is adapting the corporate model of the Guggenheim, which is considered a template. At the same time, unlike the museum in New York, as previously mentioned the new Chinese institutions are not able to attract a large audience. The K11 art plaza, as the culmination of the Chinese museum corporatization trend, seems to offer a solution to this. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

One aspect of the corporatization of museums is the space rental, which offers a solution to the previously discussed problem of lack of expertise and curatorial programs. As mentioned previously, the curators in many Chinese institutions are considered exhibition organizers, they view their position as a simple task; one that could be done by almost anyone, without consideration for the fact that exhibition-making is an intellectual and knowledge producing activity (Ćirić, 2019).

New museums often turn to commercial galleries to fill the curatorial gaps in their programs with exhibitions for their artists (Movius, 2021a; Yang, 2021). These young museums have often spent money on impressive architecture and acquisitions on blue-chip art. But they did not have the qualified staff, which leaves a 'gap in curatorial expertise that commercial galleries are eager to fill' (Movius, 2021a), and they 'present their artists to Chinese audience and collectors through such empty museum exhibitions.' On the other hand, 'many of these art museums are searching for a certain caliber of international artist to attract the attention of mainstream media and to have a visual impact' (Ćirić, 2019, p. 199). Top international galleries, with branches in Greater China, 'have imported Western models of sponsorship for museum exhibitions of their artists but the traditional boundaries between museums' curatorial control

and the market's commercial interests are far more blurred in China.' According to 'widespread rumours', certain museums in China 'operate on a rental or pay-to-play basis, demand donations of works or only show artists from galleries that join their fundraisers' (Movius, 2021a). As a result, 'there are few, if any, museums in China that do not rent out their exhibition spaces, thus allowing anyone with sufficient means to exhibit whatever they like—so long as it is not too politically sensitive' (Wong, 2015). This trend – filling the museums with artists represented by Western commercial galleries – takes us to another tendency within the new Chinese institutions.

Looking to the West: International partnerships

Many of these new art museums turn to Western institutions seeking collaboration 'despite challenges of communication and censorship'. This has many types: one-off exhibitions, extensive training programmes or long-term cooperations such as the new Centre Pompidou's X West Bund Museum in Shanghai. This partnership phenomena began in 2014, when K11 launched its three-year exhibition exchange with the Palais de Tokyo in Paris. Later the Victoria and Albert Museum in London signed a five-year renewable deal to collaborate in developing Shenzhen's Design Society that opened in December 2017 (Movius, 2019). Both institutions are analysed in the following chapters. Other examples of such collaborations are Tate's project with Museum of Art Pudong, or Uffizi's cooperation with the Bund One Art Museum, both in Shanghai. These partnerships are mutually beneficial: Chinese museums seek 'foreign expertise as a remedy for their soggy internal structures', which they regard also 'a fast track to global attention and legitimacy'; while Western museums, apart from 'reaching new audiences', are also 'eager for curation and loan fees, access to elusive Chinese art collections and a boost to Chinese tourist numbers' in their own countries/home institutions (Movius, 2019). From my personal experience, during my visits in Shanghai and Shenzhen (which may not be representative of the entire scene), exhibitions featured Western artists or collections at How Museum of Art, Power Station of Art, K11 and Design Society.

Another way of gaining Western expertise is the appointing of museum directors: Very recently, during the pandemic, four museums hired Western professionals to 'senior positions; strikingly, all are white men with minimal experience in Asia and three are working remotely from overseas.' The practice is more common now, but not new, for example Dutch-born Ole Bouman served as the founding director of Shenzhen's Design Society from 2015 until 2020 (Movius, 2021b), which will be described in the following chapters. Philip Tinari, American-

born director and CEO of Beijing's UCCA Center for Contemporary Art, remarks that due to COVID-19, the 'boom in teleworking has removed the traditional need […] for a foreign director to move across the world and adapt on the ground.' Another benefit of working with foreign professionals is their experience 'in museums with longer histories than UCCA's' that allows the institution to gain useful insight into other models (Tinari, quoted in Movius, 2021b). However, the practice is also problematic, as local professionals are overlooked for highly paid leading positions and many of the newly appointed directors are regarded as puppets for the media to show how international the museum is. Among the Western directors in Chinese museums there are of course some 'Mandarin-fluent sinologists who have for years worked within China's art infrastructure,' but this is the exception (Movius, 2021b).

Hiring Western directors might be attributed to the lack of self-confidence among Chinese museum workers. As artist Shi Yong says in a 2014 interview: 'Today, many institutions in China have a lot of funding. Even more than institutions formerly had in the West. But in essence this looking to the West did not change. Although China is probably equal on an economical level with many institutions around the world, they still think that they are inferior in terms of the cultural field. So, they try to do everything and anything to enter the power structure that is typified by the so-called West. So in essence, nothing has changed' (quoted in Ćirić, 2019, p. 198).

According to a Western-educated art manager, speaking anonymously, Chinese professionals 'feel unable to criticise the practice publicly, lest they get blacklisted', but there is frustration. 'In my opinion, China lacks cultural self-confidence, especially when it comes to [contemporary art]. Because the rules of the game have been set up by the Western world—China didn't have this type of cultural institution until the recent century' (quoted in Movius, 2021b).

Looking to the West with regards to museums is not a new tendency. In 1905, Zhang Jian, a 'local politician, reformist and entrepreneur' (Varutti, 2011), founded the Nantong Museum in Jiangsu Province (not far from Shanghai), 'financed by the profits of his cotton factory business in Dasheng and the Kenmu Company in the district of Xinghai' (Xiangguang, 2008, p. 41). 'This was the first well laid-out, truly modern museum to be directly founded by a Chinese specialist. It was both a result of the adoption of Western culture and a brave attempt to establish a museum system with distinct Chinese characteristics.' Its management scheme and 'integrative mode of operation/holistic approach' (with history, nature and art combined) had

‘a profound influence upon later museums founded throughout China’ (Wenbin, 2008, p. 6). During this period, several well-known academics and collectors began establishing museums to exhibit their personal collections (Xiangguang, 2008). Interestingly, as art dealer and consultant Sandra Walters explained it to me (2018), in the case of Hong Kong, corporate collecting was also heavily influenced by Western practices: “In the early years, the most significant corporations or businesses I worked here with were primarily American. That is because they already had a tradition of art collecting. And in the United States, they offer tax incentives, and often it’s part of the regulation of the building. So, amongst the corporations and companies there’s a mindset of starting a collection. Firstly, in the late 1970s and early 80s, there were some of the American banks, like Chase Manhattan, who had branches in Hong Kong that already had a collection, and many Hong Kong companies started to follow this path.”

At the same time, ‘China made the creative industries agenda work for them in the face of a Western discourse that saw its “despotic” polity as incompatible with the power of creativity’ (O’Connor and Gu, 2020): The mainstream supposition was that a communist country cannot be creative. ‘Indeed, the imitation culture associated with the “Made in China” slogan is often contrasted with the idea of the “genius” formulated by 16th-century writer Giorgio Vasari and the notion of creativity rooted in the anthropocentric approach of the Renaissance. While artistic autonomy and individualism are at the forefront of western modernity’s identity, these notions do not present the core foundation of creativity in the case of China’ (Hamvai, 2021b).

In the meantime, ‘the training of museum workers has received marked attention’, which, according to Chinese archaeologist and museum curator Zhang Wenbin, contributed to the overall professionalism and enabled the ‘development of both the theories and practice of museology in China’. Also, museology has been established as a subject at universities and museology textbooks have been produced (Wenbin, 2008, p.9).

Similarly to the case of India, as discussed in the previous chapters, ‘what these new art institutions do have, […] is flexibility and a different kind of dynamic, as a result of only being recently established.’ This is a great advantage, and perhaps also a disadvantage, since their working methods are not yet fully formed these institutions could be used as a testing ground for different institutional experiments, as this is what many institutions in the former West have

let slip away. It is a great regret, however, that such opportunities are usually not seized and the same old status quo persists (Ćirić, 2019, pp. 200-201).

The museum building boom seems to continue after COVID-19, though in a slower pace. The pandemic has not dampened the enthusiasm for construction. (On the other hand, in the USA, for example, many museums were closed, and we hear about layoffs and deaccession.) The trend is good: there is money, energy and curiosity. At the same time, in addition to these often voiced criticisms, there are also promising ones among the new museums, for example, right after the closures, in May 2020 Beijing's X Museum opened, which focuses on young and experimental artists (Yang, 2021).

Censorship

One of the most frequently voiced concerns regarding the partnerships between Chinese and Western museums is censorship. According to critical voices ‘museums have largely sidestepped the ethical dilemma of whether engaging with the country amounts to endorsing its increasingly restrictive policies—and whether it will impact on their ability to exhibit politically sensitive art back home’ (Movius, 2019).

Others view the issue differently (Marstine and Mintcheva, 2020). According to Cosmin Costinas, the former executive director of Para Site (a leading independent contemporary art centre in Hong Kong), ‘navigating censorship is an inevitable price of showing in China.’ He argues that ‘this is the reality of the context’ and ‘to a certain extent one has to adapt to every context, to the sensibilities of the audience and the authorities. It requires a nuanced response’ (quoted in Movius, 2019).

Regarding the censorship issue, one of the most recent and most debated examples is Hong Kong’s M+ museum. It was originally planned to open in 2017 and has in recent years been considered the most ambitious museum development project in Asia. It was previously known that the institution, was planning to present not only Chinese but pan-Asian material, ‘some of the world’s foremost collections of twentieth- and twenty-first-century visual culture’ (M+, n.d.), based on a 2012 donation of 1,400 works by Uli Sigg, a Swiss art collector and former Chinese diplomat whose collection is the most comprehensive one presenting contemporary Chinese art.

At the same time, the city is characterized by a completely different political climate now than when the idea of the museum first came up in 1996: at that time the city was still

under British rule; its art scene was emerging and only aspired to enter the international art world. In comparison, Hong Kong is currently one of Asia's contemporary art centers – at least in terms of the market – but the political situation has changed a lot. The national security law – which came into effect in June 2020, and which criminalizes separatism, subversion and terrorism, as well as collusion with other countries, strongly threatens both Hong Kong's decades of quasi-independence and the freedom of artistic expression.

Despite this, Suhanya Raffel, the Australian director of the museum, stated in April 2022 that in her opinion, it would not be a problem to present the works of critical or dissident Chinese artists, including Ai Wei Wei, or other political works in the Sigg collection. However, the director's optimism about freedom was met with skepticism by the industry; there was even a widespread rumor that one of the many works by Ai Wei Wei included in the Sigg donation (*Study of Perspective: Tienanmen*, 1997) was withdrawn from the opening exhibition.

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3.2. ART MALLS: The K11 Group

‘All department stores will become museums, and all museums will become department stores’(Andy Warhol quoted in Gomez, 2002)

‘All department stores will become museums, and all museums will become department stores’– Andy Warhol's utopian comment (quoted in Gomez, 2002) decades ago became a reality for the Chinese art mall franchise K11. Based in Hong Kong and with satellite units in many major cities in mainland China, K11 is the first museum/hybrid based on a commercial structure that was established outside the Western sphere.

13. K11 Musea Hong Kong, courtesy of K11 Foundation

McGuggenheim: the convergence of contemporary museums and commercial enterprises

The appearance of such an exhibition space is by no means surprising. ‘Perhaps, no development in the art museum of the last half-century has been more dramatic or controversial than the increase in commercialism’ – as McClellan stated in 2008 (a year before the opening of the first K11 plaza) following the spread of museum shops, blockbuster exhibitions and corporate sponsorships (McClellan, 2008, p. 221; cited in Grincheva, 2019, p. 33).

Museums have been employing methods borrowed from corporate logic for decades, since their survival depends on their ability to compete for sponsorships and audiences – locally, nationally, and globally. Of course, no museum went further with corporatization than the Guggenheim under Thomas Krens. Coming from Yale with an economics degree (Mathur, 2005, p. 698) he started his museum career by selling quite a few artefacts, then appointed large company managers and businessmen to the institution's governing committee. Cooperation with economic actors and multinational companies, such as the establishment of the Hugo Boss Prize, plays a prominent role in the museum’s work.

Furthermore, in addition to the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice (1951), Krens built an international network by creating satellite museums in Bilbao (1997), Berlin (1997-2013), and Las Vegas (2001-2008), which significantly expanded the Guggenheim's exhibition spaces. Thus, it can reach a cross-border, wider and more diverse audience, can circulate the collection, develop the global brand, and attract sponsorship (Grincheva, 2019, pp. 36-37). Krens created the formula for a successful museum: ‘great collections, great architecture, a great special exhibition, a great second exhibition, two shopping opportunities, two eating opportunities, a high-tech interface via the Internet, and economies of scale via a global network’ (Cuno, 2002, p. 45; cited by Grincheva, 2019, p. 37).

At the same time, the blockbuster exhibitions realized in the framework of collaborations with the BMW or Armani brands (*The Art of the Motorcycle*, 1998 and *Giorgio Armani*, 2000) were received critically. The Giorgio Armani retrospective is a classic example of a ‘case of conflict of interest between exhibition policies and corporate interests’ and ‘represents a historical marker in the convergence between museums’ and corporations’ interests. The terms of the sponsorship agreement were not disclosed, and neither the Guggenheim nor Armani confirmed ‘whether the exhibition was a quid pro quo for the sponsorship.’ For sure, this critical perspective was focusing on the fact that the ‘exhibition

weighted heavily to Armani's most recent designs, that is, those still being sold or promoted' (Rectanus, 2002, p. 14).

Another group of critics, on the other hand, draw attention to the fact that it is precisely these 'responsible populist' exhibitions that can attract many audiences - including people who have never entered a museum (Grincheva, 2019, p. 39-40). So, the previously mentioned accessibility agenda of contemporary museology is still realized here.

By the beginning of the 21st century, the role of corporate strategies in American museums became more and more powerful, their own revenues were constantly increasing, and their proportion became more and more dominant in the annual budget (Grincheva, 2016). However, 'cultural franchising and close partnerships with transnational corporations have been criticised in academia and the museum world for turning the Guggenheim into a modern boutique or place of consumption' (Grincheva, 2019).

The K11 formula

The K11 brand was founded in 2008 by art collector Adrian Cheng, a member of Hong Kong's third richest family, who is also the owner of the New World Development property and the Chow Tai Fook jewellery empire. The first mall associated with the brand was established in Hong Kong in 2009, followed by the second flagship in Shanghai in 2013. Hankou (2017), Senjang and Guangzhou (2018) followed. Most recently, in 2019, a mall opened in Tianjin, as well as Hong Kong's second mall called K11 Musea, and in 2020, another one was created in Wuhan (K11, n.d.). Now plans have been announced that K11 ECOAST cultural-retail complex will open in Shenzen in 2024 (Devi, 2022). Cheng plans to operate 38 K11 projects (including offices and residences) in 10 cities across Greater China by 2026 (K11 ECOAST, 2022).

14. View of K11 Art Mall Shanghai, courtesy of K11 Art Foundation

K11 – as other art institutions discussed in this thesis – was recommended to me, by several art professionals in the region, as a particularly interesting case for the intermingling of corporate and cultural spheres. I have visited the Hong Kong mall, as well as the one in Shanghai. I was in e-mail correspondence with the press office of the K11 Musea, however I was not able to interview Adrian Cheng. In this case, I rely on the many interviews and rich press coverage available online. I have to mention that museology and international cultural relations expert Natalia Grincheva also choose K11 as one of her case studies in her book on museum diplomacy (2019). I was aware of her research at the time. To my knowledge, she drew the parallel between the management methods of Guggenheim Museum and that of K11. (There

are many other authors who compare the two phenomena, e.g., the Bilbao effect is widely mentioned in relation to the newly established museums built by star architects.) I have also written an article about the K11 Group (Hamvai, 2021). In the introductory chapter on China, K11 was mentioned in relation to Western collaborations, as well as the commercialism trend.

According to Cheng, K11 is ‘not really a shopping mall […] it is a curated, immersive, cultural journey [where shopping] becomes part of the experience’ (quoted in Biondi, 2021). The plaza is centrally located in each city, and the iconic, signature building, designed by a different international star architect in each location, defines the surrounding urban space.

The malls house popular international high-end and luxury brands such as Dolce & Gabbana, Pandora and Calvin Klein, concept stores, destination restaurants, as well as contemporary sculptures, installations, and experimental exhibitions. K11 not only applies the Krensian business model to its extreme, but also extends it: in this situation, the art plaza can be interpreted as an extended museum, in which the gift shop and the gallery space are not separated. (Speaking of museum gift shops: the MoMA Design Store—one of the most famous examples of the genre—has brought a satellite store to Hong Kong's K11 Musea as part of its own franchise strategy.)

K11 art malls across China generate high profits and attract lots of customers. The largest locations, Hong Kong and Shanghai, had over 1 million monthly visitors before the pandemic. Regarding the post-pandemic situation in 2020, Cheng claimed that ‘its newly opened K11 Musea mall reported a 60 per cent sales increase in November and 21 per cent in December, while average monthly footfall was 1.4 million’. Other shopping malls have struggled; according to managing director Samy Redjeb, visitor numbers declined 50 per cent in Hong Kong malls in December 2020 (Biondi, 2021).

As discussed above, despite the development of the Chinese museum industry and government incentives, new institutions have difficulty attracting visitors and cultivating an audience. (However, a recent study found that visits to Chinese museums have grown eightfold between 1995 and 2016. (Zhang and Courty, 2022)). In this context, it is quite remarkable that the very first international exhibition at the Shanghai chi K11 art space attracted 400,000 people in just 3 months. The Monet exhibition (*Masters of Impressionism*, March 8-June 15, 2014) broke previous visitor numbers for Shanghai exhibitions (Lin, 2022).

15. Interior of K11 Art Mall Shanghai, photo by Kinga Hamvai

Since the opening of the K11 Art Mall in Hong Kong in 2009, 'the idea to integrate contemporary art into luxury retail spaces was, like most good ones in China, quickly copied by other developers to varying levels of success' (Forbes, 2018). Whereas the typical strategy of Chinese museums is to build the museum, acquire the collection, and only then think about the audience, K11 starts with the audience. Applying the logic of museum export (i.e., 'museum without walls'), if people are not yet willing to go to the museum, K11 takes the museum experience to where they can often be found, which is their comfort zone – to the space of commerce (Hamvai, 2021). Cheng considers this as a way of cultivating new audiences: 'Walking into a 'white cube' is not only intimidating; it is a foreign experience based on a concept that has not been ingrained in the psyches of most Chinese. So we bring the art to them in a setting they already know. With our local audiences, we are seeing that they often consume art much like they consume the 'goods' in the art mall. They take pictures and videos and share them on social media. But at the same time, they are also learning a great deal' (quoted in Adam, 2016). (Courty and Zhang (2018) studied the socioeconomic determinants of cultural

participation in Chinese cities. They find strong support for the 'elitism hypothesis: education and income increase participation in a broad range of cultural activities.)

This is also in line with Rectanus' views: 'The gradual redefinition of museums as cultural centers which merge community outreach and education with consumption and entertainment alerts us to its integral role as part of event culture.' He argues that 'While museums seem to retain a privileged status in the transmission and representation of culture, […] they also respond to increasingly diverse publics and communities who seem to redefine the museum's 'use-value' in terms of a differentiated spectrum of functions and museum experiences, which may simultaneously involve aesthetic engagement, entertainment, criticism, and material consumption (for example, shopping)' (Rectanus, 2006, p. 385).

For-profit and non-profit – a new business model

The situation is more complex: In 2010, Cheng also founded the K11 Art Foundation (KAF) – a non-profit contemporary art foundation funded entirely by revenue generated by the K11 art plazas. Its mission is to support the development of contemporary art in mainland China and bring it to the international stage. Among other things, he also runs an artist residency program in the K11 art village in Wuhan, and organizes international exhibitions, workshops, and art events in several locations in China. In addition, KAF sponsored residencies and exhibitions of Chinese artists abroad and supported the Chinese presence at the most significant international events such as the Venice Biennale or Art Basel. With its support, foreign museum directors and curators travel to China, they are taken on studio visits, and these initiatives later turn into exhibitions and research projects. In the meantime, KAF works with international curators: 'Many of the contemporary art world's most recognizable names, like Hans Ulrich Obrist, Lauren Cornell, and Klaus Biesenbach, began curating exhibitions at K11, in some cases with the double-billing of the Serpentine Galleries, New Museum, and MoMA PS1, respectively, lending weight to the still-fledgling foundation' (Forbes, 2018). Interestingly, an exhibition was recently created in cooperation with Budapest's newly established private museum Q Contemporary: the public could see the exhibition of Eastern European artists at the K11 Musea in Hong Kong (*Tracing the Fragments*, January 17-March 10, 2021).

As Ćirić observes, the emergence of such foundations has brought a slight change to the arts ecosystem. These foundations are also privately funded, by collectors, who 'aside from collecting and exhibiting their collections also attempt to support other institutional programs both locally and internationally, which is an important shift. This to a certain extent provides a

good example of a different way of thinking about one's contribution to the system.' (Ćirić mentions the 21st Century Art Foundation and Frank F. Yang Art and Education Foundation as noteworthy examples, and writes in a more critical tone about KAF (Ćirić, 2019, p. 197)).

Regarding the censorhip issue, Grincheva offers insights: 'In a private conversation, one of K11's curators said that all exhibitions developed by K11 go through censorship procedures. Artworks and curatorial conceptions need to be approved by the Chinese government before they are permitted to be presented in the public domain. While "there is still a lot of room for critical artistic scholarship," this criticism, as the K11 curator explained, cannot be addressed against the Chinese government' (Grincheva, 2019).

Critique

As mentioned in the previous chapter, there is a trend among Chinese art institutions to team up with their Western counterparts. This offers certain benefits and has its dangers as discussed before. In the case of KAF it means working with guest curators. On the one hand, K11's strategy led them to financially support several important Western institutions over the last few years, which raised the foundation's status abroad; however, as Ćirić remarks:

> On the other hand, [KAF's] in-house curatorial team, which occupy different venues from Shanghai to Hong Kong and Wuhan, are invisible most of the time or play more managerial roles. The foundation's very successful marketing strategy involves making the best of important alignments; for instance, during biennials or art fairs, they invite directors and curators from the institutions they have supported to curate exhibition within K11 venues (…). These kinds of strategies introduce very little to the local art scene, aside from promoting the activities of the foundation, benefitting only the artists within the foundation's collection. Each group stands to profit from this relationship as the artists are presented within the foundation's exhibitions, and as a result their work might end up in the collections of some of these other institutions. Recently, K11 donated works to the Centre Pompidou and MoMA, and it will be interesting to see how this plays out in the long term. How might these strategies influence the collecting practices within these larger scale institutions? Again, this opens up questions as to what corporate and public values are, and how they negotiate with each other in order to coexist (Ćirić, 2019).

However, as I discussed before, there is a great opportunity for newly established art institutions to develop their missions as well as their managerial methods. Cheng 'has come a long way since he opened his first K11 art mall in Hong Kong in 2008—brilliantly anticipating the way art and fashion would increasingly meld as global status symbols' (Chow, 2019). For example, KAF's artistic director now is Venus Lau, and the first exhibition curated by her, and without

an international partner, opened in 2018 (*Emerald City*, 28 March 2018 – 31 May 2018) (Forbes, 2018).

The collection

The works and site-specific installations exhibited in the most spectacular locations of the plazas are part of the K11 Kollection, which contains around 300 works of art, including works by Yoshitomo Nara, Olafur Eliasson, or Damien Hirst. The currently exhibited works at K11 Musea present a diverse picture. Among them are works that can be easily fit into the 'cute' aesthetic category and the context of the plaza (usually depicting creatures with big eyes and small mouths) such as *Asian Dope Boys* (Tianzhuo Chen, 2015), *Affogato* (Bao Ho, 2019) or the *Smiley Grin* (Ron English, 2019). In addition, there are several works related to science fiction or speculative design, such as *The Forecast, Shanghai Situation* (Dora Budor, 2017) or *United Nations of Happiness after Homosapiens leave the Earth* (Korakrit Arunanondchai, 2019). It is more surprising that some works direct attention to the omnipotence of consumer culture, e.g., Gabriel Kuri's giant receipt (*Untitled*, Cibanco, 2012). The presence of star artists in the K11 collection is counterbalanced/compensated by the fact that KAF's incubation activity concerns young, emerging Chinese artists (Hamvai, 2021).

16. Damien Hirst: Wretched War (2004), displayed at K11 Art Mall, Shanghai, photo by Kinga Hamvai

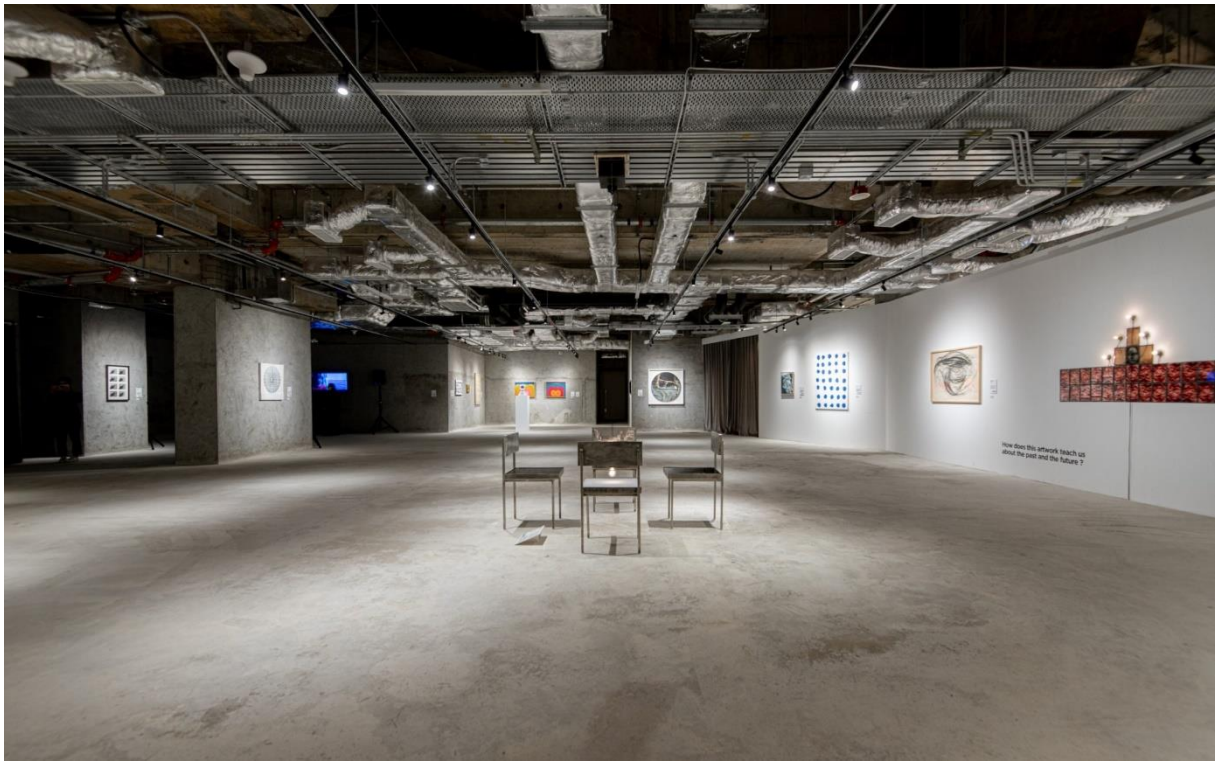
Guided tours of both the collection and the architecture are available in each plaza. As part of the mall franchise concept, the curated exhibitions (which take place in a truly separate gallery space) are rotated between the individual satellite units. This practice is also familiar from the Guggenheim Museum as well as from companies, for example, the previously introduced Swiss-based UBS Bank circulates its collection in its office buildings in various countries (although, unlike the malls of K11, access here is only available to the bank's employees and clients).

17. Untitled by Izumi Kato (n.d.), courtesy of K11 Foundation

Soft power and cultural diplomacy

As mentioned above, China is making significant efforts to create a more favourable image of itself on the global stage amid the museum boom. As a part of these efforts, China also delegated a leading role to museums in terms of practicing cultural diplomacy (Kong, 2021). The two main pillars of cultural diplomacy are national projection (building the country's image) and cultural relations. From the point of view of diplomacy literature, it seems that the former is more one-sided, which the outside world sometimes evaluates as a propaganda campaign. The latter, bilateral, dialogic collaborations are more effective, especially when they take place between private actors (e.g. museums) with unofficial management (Grincheva, 2016). K11 is an agency that projects the image of cultural China to the outside world, which can build strong bridges at the international level and help the cause of Chinese art by making it visible worldwide, having invested a huge amount of money in these projects since its foundation. K11 and KAF, previously unheard of, are now among the few celebrated Asian institutions that are noted globally (Grincheva, 2019). Their founder and owner, Adrian Cheng, occupies a

prominent place (24. in 2021) in ArtReview's annual ranking of the most influential people in art, having been included in the list since 2014 (ArtReview, 2022).



18. "Tracing the Fragments", installation view Q Contemporary Pop Up Gallery, at K11 MUSEA, Hong Kong, 2021. Image courtesy of K11 Art Foundation and Q Contemporary

Art and shopping malls

In the installation *Your Supermarket* (2002), the Belgian artist Guillaume Bijl builds a complete supermarket in the space of the museum (Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt). Among its many antecedents are Claes Oldenburg's *The Store project* (1961) or *The American Supermarket* (1964), created in collaboration with Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein, among others (Gomez, 2002). So why is it surprising to a Western observer when someone enters the K11 plaza and is confronted with the mirror image of this situation?

There is nothing new under the sun. It has long been a common practice to sell luxury products with the help of art. This method is increasingly used to attract people to shopping centres – as with many other corporate collections, the goal is to differentiate the brand from competitors. For example, the Stary Browar in Poznań - a plaza building that houses non-profit galleries and once functioned as a brewery – was founded in 2003 by the richest woman in Poland, Grazyna Kulczyk. Another large-scale example in Beirut is the Aïshti shopping center

opened in 2015 by the luxury magnate and contemporary collector Tony Salamé, which also presents pieces from Salamé's collection (Adam, 2016). However, due to its size, the most spectacular example of this phenomenon is K11.

As mentioned before, many of the Chinese museums adapting the Guggenheim corporatization model, including K11, are designed by famous star architects and occupy an iconic position in the urban fabric. They go well beyond the commercialization efforts of Krens, who claims that "two shopping opportunities, two eating opportunities" can increase the number of visits to the museum (Grincheva, 2019), which sounds quite modest in comparison to the Chinese model. The newly established Chinese museums are usually part of a larger complex that includes various restaurants, plazas, office buildings and hotels. In addition to the many critical comments regarding the results of rapid museum development (as described in the previous chapter), the question arises as to whether these hybrid-financed commercial institutions offer a more sustainable model while Western museums are constantly struggling to maintain themselves (Hsu, 2014).

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3.3. CHINESE-WESTERN PARTNERSHIPS:

Design Society

> Currently we are in an embryonic phase,
> and so we are still on the verge of establishing
> all the operating protocols for the museum.
> (Ole Bouman, quoted in Mitola, 2018)

Design Society opened its doors to the public in December 2017 in collaboration with London's Victoria and Albert Museum and China Merchants Shekou, a Chinese state-owned urban development company. The Design Society is ‘more than a museum’: the word ‘design’ can be interpreted as a noun – a location and a community; but also a verb – a call to action, as Ole Bouman, former director of the institution emphasized in a panel discussion a few weeks before the opening (Bouman, 2017). The institution's mission is to spread and enrich the design culture of the region, Shenzhen, and China, and to position design as a social catalyst and provide a platform for the actors of the scene. I have been lucky enough to visit Design Society in December 2017, just after its opening, and published a brief article reporting about the new institution (Hamvai, 2018).

Created in China

There is probably no other country that invests as much in design as China, as pointed out by curator Brendan Cormier explaining China's design revolution in the catalogue of the *Values of Design* exhibition (2 December 2017 - 4 August 2019). In 2004, General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Hu Jintao spoke about the need to promote the growth of the Chinese economy specifically through design and innovation. While China operated as the world's manufacturer, much of the profit from products made there migrated to the countries where they were designed. The idea is that if China itself starts to design and manufacture competitive products, the country can keep most of the profits. In addition, China faces demographic and socio-economic challenges: the workforce is aging and becoming more expensive. To keep production costs low, China became one of the biggest investors in robotics, another growing design field. Design education has also strengthened: with 2 million enrolled students, the Chinese education market is currently the largest in the world. Finally, as previously mentioned, both the public and private sectors have made significant investments in

cultural infrastructure and museums to nurture creativity, and educate an audience sensitive to art and design as a future consumer segment (Cormier, 2017, pp. 15-25).

Located in Southern China, Shenzhen was once a port city, later becoming a heavy industry and high-tech centre, and today it is one of the fastest growing and most progressive design cities, recognized by UNESCO in 2008 with the 'City of Design' designation. Design Society is in Sheoku, on the seafront in the western part of Shenzhen. The building complex of the Sea World Culture and Arts Center, which houses the institution, was designed by Japanese architect Fumihiko Maki: a structure made up of three large, cantilevered units, each one evoking a separate characteristic geographical feature of the region: the sea, the mountain, and the city. Additionally, a monumental, landscaped staircase allows access to the roof, which is very popular within the local community because of the magnificent view of the harbour, among other things. The building was critically received: 'While the architecture may not be quite good enough, Design Society is undeniably important: the physical expression of a shift in culture from manufacturing to creating and consuming. It is a heavy burden for a single building to bear. Perhaps when the shops finally open and culture melds with commerce, it will articulate China's contradictions more completely and more compellingly' (Heathcote, 2017).

According to the initial plans disclosed in 2017, the building would have housed commercial galleries, restaurants, and shops, which would have been operated by the Design Society with the aim of making the institution self-sustaining, although several units had not yet opened to the public in 2017 when I visited the institution. Again, as Heathcote frames the situation, 'it also brings to mind a struggling mall, its generous expanses mostly empty on opening day. […] Another gallery, the Shekou Museum of Reform and Opening, is, apparently without irony, closed. The rest of the space is occupied by still-empty design-led stores, which contributes to an air of too-much-space; most look to have been let, though, so matters should improve' (Heathcote, 2017).

However, three inaugural exhibitions welcomed the visitors. *Values of Design* exhibition at the V&A Gallery (the permanent gallery space of the V&A museum) explored 'how design is regarded across the globe and what principles influence in the industry' (Levy, 2017). The site-specific exhibition was designed by London-based Sam Jacob Studio and featured more than 250 pieces from the V&A's collection from 31 countries – including archaeological artefacts from 900 BC and contemporary design – aiming to generate a global discourse about how current values shape design. Seven thematic units emerged along the

curatorial concept: performance, cost, problem solving, materials, identity, communication, and wonder. The diverse geographical and historical selection enabled new associations, emphasizing these common design values that shape objects created in different parts of the world. This is how, for example, the court attire of the English aristocracy at the end of the 18th century and Nike's popular sports shoes are placed next to each other under the catchword of status (Hamvai, 2018).

At the same time, the collaboration between an international museum and a Chinese company (‘a state-owned enterprise under the direct supervision of the central government’ (Design Society, 2020)), means more than just an exhibition package and brand sharing. Using the expertise and experience of the V&A, it also contributes to the creation of the Design Society's program and exhibition strategy concept. (Incidentally, the V&A's relationship with the country dates to 1852, as the museum has been building its East Asian collection since then, the first Chinese artefacts of which were purchased in the year of its foundation (Reeve, 2017, p. 7)).

In addition to the V&A exhibition providing a historical narrative, the Main Gallery's large-scale exhibition *Minding the Digital* (2 December 2017 – 3 June 2018) which lists the projects of Chinese and international artists and creatives, acts as a refreshing counterpoint. Focusing ‘on the impact of digitalisation on the field of design’ (Mitola, 2018), the show was organized around three key issues: ‘the crossover of human and machine intelligence, consumers' relationship to design objects, and the influence of design on communities’ (Levy, 2017). The interactive data visualization installation by the Australian media artist Jeffrey Shaw, Sarah Kenderdine and Hing Chao stands out, which as an intangible heritage preservation project presents the performances of the Hakka Kung Fu masters who are still alive today. Ying Gao's clothes equipped with built-in sensors are spectacular, reacting differently to sound, breathing, and even eye movements. With performative and unpredictable clothing, the designer reflects on fast-responsive interfaces. The labyrinth-like layout of the exhibition, which included many additional immersive and experience-based installations, was designed by the Dutch architecture firm MVRDV. At the end of the exhibition, visitors could reflect on what they saw on a platform located above the exhibition space and create, so that they themselves could become shapers of their environment (Hamvai, 2018), co-creators in a sense, in line with the participatory endeavours of contemporary museums worldwide (German, 2017).

The third, smaller-scale exhibition organized in the Park View Gallery dealt with the work of Maki, the architect who designed the building.

The start seemed to be strong, the plans were ambitious. However, even though Design Society was celebrated internationally, there were also fears of censorship and ‘palpable scepticism in the coverage — especially the British press — as to whether a museum under the jurisdiction of the Chinese government could actually have an independent curatorial voice’ (Basu, 2020).

‘Will it be successful in its efforts to activate the local community and launch new projects? What will happen after 2020, when the V&A partnership ends, and will the foundation be able to become economically self-sustaining?’ (Hamvai, 2018) I have asked these questions in the end of my article in early 2018. I have not yet had the chance to go back to Design Society and see it for myself, thus I had to review the information and reports on its website, as well as the international (Western) press coverage.

19. Design Society, Sea World Culture and Arts Center. 2017, courtesy of Design Society

Developments

After the initial interest that was aroused with the opening of the museum and its being selected as one of Time magazine’s greatest places to visit (Time, 2018), the media attention

significantly decreased, however, it is still possible to reconstruct some exhibitions. According to critics, one of the most notable shows was the *Values of Design: China in the Making* (31 January 2019 – 30 December 2021), which demonstrated 'why this institution exists and where a design sector in China is heading' and at the same time unveiled 'the remaining tasks of the Chinese design sector' (Park, 2021). The follow-up exhibition of the inaugural *Values of Design* 'is more focused on the phenomena in China. To identify the values of design in the Chinese context, the exhibition explores various areas of the design that have been undergoing modernization, globalization, and digitalization for the last couple of decades' (Park, 2021). 'Lead curator Zhao Rong and her team found 138 of the most diverse objects to showcase, while weaving a cultural history of 100 years of design in China' (Basu, 2020). At the end of the exhibition there was a part – again – that asked for the participation of the audience: visitors could 'display their opinions about which value is the most important in design' (Park, 2021).

Tracing 'the arc from the parent show to its second chapter' (Basu, 2020), it is possible to observe a shift of focus since the opening of the institution. As criticized in the introductory chapter on China, the institution used to be heavily Western focused, whereas now it is more Chinese, having developed its own distinctive mission and profile. Regarding this question, Bouman said in an interview:

> As a Dutch director working in China since many years, this is a very important question for me. It is at the heart of my engagement here. Unlike many "enlightened" museums in the West, we don't have to express post-colonialism in the usual escalating sequence of awareness>>self-criticism>>restitutions>>reparations, with the massive hurdle half-way, when good intentions need to be substantiated by actions. I'm sure we are still only at the early stage of this process, and many painful moments are ahead of us. Meanwhile, from the perspective of a Chinese organization, being part of a larger company agenda for innovation and quality of life and being in the midst of a social and creative dynamic that drives the entire country to a next stage of modernity, our institution can leapfrog to an entirely new discourse that is rooted in self-confidence, curiosity and an orientation to the future. This is the fresh perspective that emerges from a creative energy, rather than a reckoning (quoted in Basu, 2020).

Audience engagement and outreach

According to its yearly reports, the institution does have a quite rich outreach programme, as well as a wide range of internship and volunteering opportunities, which people seem to be interested in participating. It also introduced Design Society Curating Design Plan, which is 'an effort to scout new curatorial talent in design selected by a distinguished international jury', the winner of which can exhibit their winning project in the Park View Gallery (Basu, 2020).

During the Covid-19 pandemic, 'Design Society has curated a series of digital programmes' to engage with its audiences online. It organized an 'online conference, in collaboration with the Shenzhen Design Week, featuring a broad roster of speakers from East and West, discussing how values of design can be found and implemented in times of corona' (Design Society, 2020). However, Bouman mentions that, with their opening so recent, 'a key objective is still to make sure the venue is seen as a place to be at, […] we won't want to give up being a visitor destination anytime soon. Fortunately, the time period we were closed due to the pandemic was relatively short and we have been back on track since long.' The institution's second major objective is to function as a platform for professional designers. Bouman notes that 'online exhibitions will not easily compete with what we can do on site, but online dialogue can be better than live, as was proven by the large turnout at our conferences.' By hosting these events, Bouman claims that they have contributed to 'creat[ing] a sense of a new intellectual community' (Basu, 2020).

20. Exhibition "Values of Design" at the Design Society V&A Galery, courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Ethical dilemma

However, Design Society has received media attention in a quite different context: There has been severe criticism about all European museums with branches in China. International media

has questioned why European museums are forging partnerships with the country, as exemplified by the words of Benedict Rogers, the co-founder of an advocacy group: ‘We are talking about a regime that has flagrantly broken an international treaty in regard to Hong Kong; that is accused of atrocious crimes with regards to the Uyghurs; and that has been accused of removing organs from Falun Gong prisoners while they are still alive. So I would urge all our public institutions and museums who have partnered with the Chinese state to rethink these relationships’ (quoted in Ruiz, 2020a). Campaigners have prompted Western museums to take a stand against the human rights violations: Yaqiu Wanghas argued that the Chinese government wants this European institution there because of ‘the prestige of the association with some of the best-known museums in the world’, and she called on to all museums to team up and speak out. China could expel one museum, but they wouldn’t want to expel everyone (Ruiz, 2021).

The Chinese dissident artist Ai Wei Wei has remarked that ‘any state or organisation, business or culture alike, involved with a state with such an extremely poor record on human rights, with divisive ideas about those most important values such as free speech, becomes a part of this power. If you do not question that power you become complicit with it,’ also dismissing Western museums’ claims to be promoting values of tolerance and free expression in China, noting that many of them are there only to make money. ‘Most of them are in China purely for strategies of self-development, attempting to get away from the struggles facing institutions in the West’ (Ruiz, 2020b).

On the other hand, some critics view the situation differently. They argue that European museums in the country benefit the Chinese people, as there is strong demand for shows drawn from European collections. For example, ‘an exhibition of landscape paintings on loan from Tate Britain to the Shanghai Museum in 2018 attracted a record 615,000 visitors in 14 weeks, more than 6,000 a day, making it Tate’s most visited exhibition to date in any venue’ (Ruiz, 2020a).

The V&A explains why it is crucial to continue working in China from a cultural diplomacy point of view: ‘Today our international strategy focuses on sharing the V&A’s collections, knowledge and expertise with the widest possible audience and is rooted in the belief that cultural exchange—particularly at museum to museum level—can be highly impactful as a means of generating greater understanding between global cultures and communities’ (The Art Newspaper, 2020). According to Mark Jones, a former director of the

V&A, during the Cold War cultural relations with the Soviet bloc were welcomed by the people of those countries and may have played a role in ‘raising aspirations for a different life. They did not imply, and were not taken to imply, approval of or indifference to the evils of Communist dictatorship’ (quoted in Ruiz, 2020a).

Referring to a different case, Hungarian-born author and cultural strategy advisor András Szántó frames the issue along similar lines, it:

> The fact that there are countries where the situation is complicated is a big challenge to one's conscience. From this point of view, the fact that I grew up in socialism is not a disadvantage. America was able to paint Hungary with only one color, dark red: everything that happened here is, in their eyes, was to be rejected. Those of us who grew up in it know very well that it meant a layered, segmented reality. There were those who led the country, and there were those who had to live and prosper here. This became clear to me when I visited China for the first-time, years ago on behalf of Art Newspaper to write an article about the world's largest museum, the National Museum of China, located in Beijing's Tiananmen Square. A building from the 1950s was renovated, and Germany played a decisive role in all of this: it was designed by a German architect, the museum was full of German technologies, the Goethe Institute organized the related educational program, and BMW supported it. The highlight was that the opening exhibition featured material from the Dresden museums, about the European Enlightenment. China's opening to Europe caused a great stir. There I met the people who built the museum and the curators who created the exhibition, and I had a long conversation with the CEO of the Dresden Art Gallery, Martin Roth, about how important this was as a gesture of cultural diplomacy. Then I wrote the article titled China's New Age of Enlightenment, [(Szántó, 2011)] claiming that enlightenment had come to China. But the next day they imprisoned Ai Wei Wei, one of the most important Chinese artists at the international level. During those weeks, I discussed a lot with Martin Roth, who is of East German origin, about what could be done. I didn't know what to do, the article was already published. However, he was attacked from Germany to close the exhibition immediately. Martin, on the other hand, did not close it for which he earned my respect forever. He knew very well that the sphere of China that created this exhibition and museum was not the same as the decision makers that shut down Ai Wei Wei. China – a country of about one and a half billion people – is a more complex reality than this (Szántó, 2021).

Regarding the other controversial issue, censorship, at the end of his 5-year directorship in 2020 Bouman claimed that he could ‘testify that the overarching goals we set ourselves, to cultivate creativity and position and demonstrate design as social catalyst, were never jeopardized by jurisdiction.’ He highlights as a more important challenge, namely ‘short-term thinking, manifest on various occasions – the wish to see success too quickly, the need to reach financial targets, the sudden process interventions for ceremonial purposes’ (Basu, 2020). This is in line with O’Connor and Gu's observation (2020), that ‘it is not primarily the issue of

‘censorship’ that matters (though it does matter) but the squeezing of the space of development and experimentation between the state and the market. On the one hand, a state-sanctioned space of production; on the other, a highly commercialized system of the rapid exploitation of ideas at scale’ (p. 15).

Funding

As mentioned previously, the institution aims to be self-sustaining, resilient in terms of funding. During the brand building process, getting to know the audience, and the market inspired the institution to diversify the sources of income between rental, tickets, consultancy and others. (Basu, 2020). The partnership was beneficial from the point of view of the V&A, as well. The museum receives approximately 40% of its income from the UK government. The rest of their operating budget is drawn from sponsorship, donations, membership, and commercial activities. In the current financial environment, they recognised an increased need for financial resilience, and the partnership with the Chinese institution play an important part in ensuring the V&A is financially sustainable (The Art Newspaper, 2020).

Regarding the current operations of Design Society, according to their website, the most recent exhibition held ended in February 2022. There has been no update since then. Their latest annual report refers to the year 2020, and the latest press releases announcing the retirement of Bouman are not accessible. Thus, I tried to contact both Design Society and Victoria and Albert Museum, but received information only from the latter: Considering the partnership of the two institutions, the next iteration is “currently being discussed and planned.” In the meantime, the V&A has presented *Fashioned from Nature* at Design Society’ (19 December 2020 – 6 June 2021). Considering the leadership, Ms Zhao Rong, who curated the second *Values of Design* exhibition with a focus on Chinese projects, is the current Director of Design Society. (Marchand, 2022)

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4. CONCLUSIONS

In this dissertation I investigated the following questions: What are the most important forces at work that are shaping the museum landscape in the South and East Asian region? Are there any patterns that can be identified within the practices of corporate collecting (and displaying) in India and Greater China? To find answers I have used various research methods, from traditional desk research to interviews and onsite visits of all the analyzed new institutions in India and China, that were established in the last 10-20 years. Of course, there are older, major and significant museums in both countries, but these museums don't fall in the scope of this study.

In the two main parts of the dissertation, I described the art ecosystems of both countries, and provided case studies exemplifying significant tendencies in these regions: Piramal Museum of Art located in Mumbai and RMZ Ecoworld in Bangalore illustrate a trend of 'art at the workplace'; Jaya He Museum, at Mumbai's international airport, represents 'art in a semi-public space'; The Chinese institutions include K11 Group's art malls in Hong Kong and Mainland China which constitute an example to the commercialization trend among newly established institutions, and Design Society presents a precedent of a partnership between a Western museum and a Chinese corporation.

As stated before, among the main reasons for corporate support for the arts are visibility; expressing a company's values and brand ideals, and enrichment of brand associations (Culture Projects, 2019). Thus, art might become a highly sophisticated communication tool. Accordingly, within the artistic community there is skepticism towards corporate art initiatives, which might be regarded as commercial exploitation of the arts. All the examples that I have analysed in this thesis are hybrid regarding their funding as well as their operations, meaning they have multiple objectives, and have to meet the expectations of multiple stakeholders: As corporate collections they contribute to the positive, sophisticated image or brand identity of the company, while transferring symbolic capital to it. In some cases, corporate art institutions also contribute to a more favorable image of their respected countries. In the meantime, as art collections, they reach out to wide ranges of audiences, even to people who don't usually visit museums, and make their programs accessible to them following the accessibility agenda of contemporary museology (ICOM, 2022).

Through the case studies, the dissertation identified best practices and critical points in the agency of such hybrid institutions. One of the main findings of the thesis is that institutions take up, and present us with, a wide variety of opportunities in terms of management. They are often experimenting with a trial-and-error mode while formulating their missions and distinctive profiles, occasionally integrating institutional critique as well as feedback from the local audience.

There are certain differences and similarities between India and China. In India, there is almost no government support for contemporary art, thus the corporate and private sector initiates platforms for the production and dissemination of art. In China, on the other hand, massive cultural policy incentives have sponsored the so-called Chinese museum boom, an unprecedented museum construction fever. Indian museums tend to collect and showcase art by Indian artists, while their Chinese counterparts often collect and display Western art in their spaces, along with the works of Chinese artists and creatives. The venue of the exhibitions in the discussed institutions are quite unconventional: the headquarters of a family-run corporate, a business park, an airport, and malls. In the case of Indian examples, the corporation offers guided tours and in some cases special workshops to their employees. Regarding access, the exhibitions of all the Indian institutions are free of charge and open to the public. In the case of K11 in China, going to the art malls to see the artworks displayed is free, but visiting the dedicated gallery space is not. Design Society also charges for entry.

According to my observations and interviews, there is almost no interest for contemporary art within Indian society at large, which is one of the biggest challenges for the institutions in the country. Thus, they try to reach out to new audiences by breaking down the walls, or more precisely, in the case of some, by not building walls. However, it is not enough to display art in public or semi-public spaces. Piramal Museum of Art and Jaya He Museum even organize a wide range of programs for employees, visitors, and airport passengers, this even includes giving out free ice cream to children who come to the museum, as in the case of the Piramal Museum of Art.

In China, there has been severe criticism about the quality of the thousands of new museums opening in the last 10-20 years. Some commentators argue that while many institutions that appeared during the Chinese museum boom are built by world-famous architects and function as landmarks, the curatorial programs offered by them are not on a par with the significance of the spectacular architecture. However, others highlight the fact that

these new museums are in a phase of experimentation and need time to formulate their distinctive profiles. Other institutions have developed since their establishment, and even integrated critique. For example, K11 employed the strategy of working with renowned guest curators from Western institutions. This way, the international curators got acquainted with artists from the K11 Collection; however, this strategy doesn't necessarily benefit the local actors. K11, in the meantime, appointed a local in-house artistic director. Also, in the case of Design Society there has been a shift from a Western-focused towards a more Chinese-focused means of operation.

Museums in the global contemporary

Quite interestingly, just recently, as I was in the process of concluding this research, the definition provided by the International Committee of Museums (ICOM) of what a museum is or should be also went through a change. For the past decades, ICOM's definition had remained basically the same except for minor adjustments (the old definition was created in the 1970s and last amended in 2007). Many professionals felt that the concept did not reflect the challenges of the 21st century and needed to be updated (Sandahl, 2019). Various international debates and consultations that accompanied the updating of the definition provided valuable insights on the most relevant issues museum professionals around the world are dealing with. The current definition, which was approved on 24 August 2022 in Prague at the Extraordinary General Assembly of ICOM, is as follows:

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

Notably, words like 'inclusivity', 'accessibility', 'sustainability' and 'ethics' have been included in the definition, which "will be assumed by Unesco, and will help to determine whether new private galleries and institutions around the world can describe themselves as an official recognised museum." Of course, the practicalities of how the definition will be implemented and adopted are still to be worked out (Seymour, 2022).

Many of the new institutions in the South and East Asian region bear (most of) the five functions of the museum (which remained from the old definition), and their agency often fall in line with the ideas reflected by the newly added phrases. However, the not-for-profit classification might be problematic, as the funding structure of some of the discussed institutions are hybrid (e.g., K11, Design Society, and their respective foundations). On the other hand, sustainability might be interpreted in several dimensions, e.g., in the financial – to which these institutions offer a model.

Commenting on the not-for-profit criteria in 2019 amid the debates on a proposed new definition, John Fraser, editor of *Curator: The Museum Journal*, (writes that he is "discomforted by the idea that a museum must be a not-for-profit", and argues that:

> Society will reap profits from the active work to promote an inclusive society or the work to restore the nature on which all life depends. The economics of how they do this work is irrelevant. More practically, what do we call a museum that meets all other criteria of the definition but also generates profit of a single Yen? What do we call a government museum whose revenues are redirected for non-museum purposes like the funding of road repair or the embellishment of a presidential palace? If a national museum generates funding to support democratic elections in a formerly totalitarian state, do we deny them the right to call their exhibitions and buildings a museum based only on their use of a cultural institution to fund non-museum work? (Fraser, 2019)

All in all, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to determine which institution can be classified as museum and which cannot be so classified. As András Szántó once remarked, 'We are used to quickly pass judgements in the art world, but we also need to look behind the stage walls' (Szántó, 2021) – and this is what I intended to do in this research.

Future directions of research include the analysis of employee interactions with artworks, for example in the 'art at the workplace' examples. It would also be interesting to systematically investigate the reaction of the public to art displayed in public or semi-public spaces, or the impact of art on by-walkers. It would also be worthwhile to design experiments or questionnaires to collect data that could help us gain a better understanding of the visitors' perception of these spaces, the institutions, and the artworks.

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5. LIST OF PICTURES

CURRICULUM VITAE

Education

From September 2016 to present
Design Culture Studies, Ph.D. Student
Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design, Budapest
Supervisor: Dr. Kinga German
From September 2017 to July 2018
Visiting Scholar
City University of Hong Kong, School of Creative Media,
Supervisor: Dr. Harald Kraemer
From January to July 2015
Curating, Managing and Mediating Art, Exchange Student
Aalto University, School of Art and Design, Helsinki
From September 2013 to June 2016
Design and Art Management MA
Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design, Budapest
From September 2010 to June 2014
Applied Economics BA
Eötvös Loránd University, Faculty of Social Sciences, Budapest
From September 2009 to June 2012
Art History BA
Eötvös Loránd University, Faculty of Humanities, Budapest

Work experience

Head of Art Division at MNB-Ingatlan Kft. (MNB Arts and Culture)

From November 2021
MNB-Ingatlan Kft.
Strategy, curating and management of the work

Guest Lecturer

From 2020 January
Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary
Museum management and Museum communication and pedagogy coourses
From September to December 2020
Comenius University, Bratislava
The International Arts Market course
From February to May 2020
Ecole EAC - Marché De L'art, Culture, Patrimoine, Luxe, Paris
Old Masters' Drawing Market course
From September 2019

Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design, Budapest
The institutional structure of the international art market and New Museology courses

Contemporary arts related experience

27 August – 15 October
Folded – Unfolded. Abstract painting by Hungarian artsists in the 1960-1970s
Sungkok Art Museum, Seoul
Idea, Strategy and Management
8 March 2022–14 March 2022
New Perspectives on Hungarian Abstract Art. Selected works from the MNB Collection
CHI-KA space, Alserkal Avenue, Dubai
Curator
September 2020
Műtárgyak Éjszakája
exhibition curator
De Hominis Dignitate – Selected Works from the Design Department of Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design (Válogatás a MOME Tárgyalkotó Tanszék munkáiból)
March 2018 and 2019
Art Basel Hong Kong
VIP Coordinator
January 2019
India Art Fair
VIP Coordinator
From November 2015 to October 2017
Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design Budapest
Communications and Brand Manager
From April to June 2015
Design Museum Helsinki
Curatorial Assistant
Wirkkala Revisited exhibition
From October 2014 to August 2015
Várfok Gallery
Intern

Conference presentations

November 2019
Willingness to Pay vs. Willingness to Contribute. A Theoretical Framework for Corporate Museums
Tools for the Future: Researching Art Market Practices from Past to Present
Accademia Nazionale di San Luca, Rome
November 2019
Art in Public Places: The Jaya He Museum
Twelfth International Conference on the Inclusive Museum
MUNTREF – Museum of Immigration, Buenos Aires
July 2019

On the Axis of Museums and Corporate Art Collections. The Case of Jaya He Museum
Association for Cultural Economics International, 5th Asian Workshop
RMIT University, Ho Chi Minh City

May 2019

Art in Emerging Markets: The Case of India
Tools for the Future: Researching Art Market Practices from Past to Present
Royal Academy London and School of the Arts, Kingston University

March 2019

On the axis of Museums and corporate art institutions. Hybrid institution models in Asia. (Múzeumok és vállalati művészeti intézmények tengelyén. Hibrid intézménymodellek Ázsiában)
Doktori Agora 8.0. Design Institúció
Corvinus University of Budapest

June 2018

Institutions Matter: Corporate Art Collections vs. Public Museums. Towards a new modus operandi
The 20th International Conference on Cultural Economics, Young Researchers Workshop
RMIT University, Melbourne

Academic activities

From September 2020

Hungarian Accreditation Committee
Art Committee, member

September 2020

Látkép 2020 Művészettörténeti Fesztivál
Poster section leader

From September 2019 to August 2020

Association of Hungarian PhD and DLA Candidates
Art, Theater and Film Studies Section, president TREND/Vonalak conference, organiser

From September 2017 August 2020

Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design
PhD and DLA Student Council, member of leadership
Academic poster workshop and exhibition, organizer

Language skills

Hungarian - native
English - TELC Certificate in English, C1
German - TELC Zertifikat Deutsch, B2

DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICITY

I, the undersigned Kinga Rózsa Hamvai (place of birth, date of birth: Budapest, 18 May 1990, mother's name: Ildikó Holocsy, ID number: 986612RA), a doctoral candidate at the Doctoral School of the Moholy-Nagy University of the Art and Design Budapest, declare that my doctoral thesis (title) *A new generation of museum/hybrids in South and East Asia* is my own work, and I have used the sources given in it.

All parts of this thesis, which I have taken verbatim or with the same content, but paraphrased from other sources, are clearly marked with the source.

I further declare that I am submitting this dissertation as my own intellectual work, exclusively to the above-mentioned university.

Date,

31. august 2022.

Signature,

PUBLICATION LIST

Kinga Rózsa Hamvai (művészettörténész)

1.

Hamvai, Kinga (eds.)
Folded – Unfolded: Abstract Painting by Hungarian Artists in the 1960–1970s
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ART IS BUSINESS 2021/11 Paper: https://www.artisbusiness.hu/hu/hireink/a-partnersegmuveszete-663/ (2021)
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ÚJ MŰVÉSZET 32 : 9 pp. 51-53. , 3 p. (2021)
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Hamvai, Kinga
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BALKON: KORTÁRS MŰVÉSZETI FOLYÓIRAT 23 : 6 pp. 37-39. , 3 p. (2016)
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Hamvai, Kinga (eds.)
Bója (2014)
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