

The Image of the Art Market

Deadline: Feb 19, 2023

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The Image of the Art Market. Just What Is It that Makes the Art Trade Look so Different, so Alarming?

This call is for a peer-reviewed, English-language edited volume on the image of the art market and its wide-ranging mediality. This book, edited by Meike Hopp, Johannes Nathan and Iñigo Salto Santamaría, and to be published in the Brill series “Studies in the History of Collecting & Art Markets” will build on papers presented at the 5th annual conference of TIAMSA – The International Art Market Studies in September 2022: <https://www.artmarketstudies.org/tiamsa-conference-berlin-2022/>

Abstract:

The art trade has always been viewed with great fascination, but also with skepticism and even suspicion. Although its worldwide turnover is relatively modest in comparison with most other markets for luxury goods, the art market’s mechanisms, its peak prices and its scandals, attract a seemingly disproportionate amount of public attention. This attention comes not only from the press, broadcast services and (social) media, but also from film and fiction, where extravagant art trade settings speak of passion and money while dealers are variously cast as educated, smart, eccentric or untrustworthy.

The art trade’s flirtations with the limelight and dealers’ careful self-fashioning of their image have a long history. For time immemorial, collecting art has been an essential part of public and private representation and the trade’s role in this system becomes increasingly evident today. Again and again, art market players have operated with glamorous gatherings and media-rich appearances at fairs, auctions and special events. Art dealers have also promoted their business by polishing their expertise, networks and appearance, thus underscoring the social functions of art. Generations of dealers, even across dynasties, have maintained their position in the international marketplace by socializing with celebrities, politicians, museum professionals and scholars. Indeed some of them, such as Pierre Jean Mariette, John Smith, or Frits Lugt, were distinguished scholars themselves.

These activities, documented in countless images, texts, and other visual media, were and are observed with fascination but have also met with criticism. Thus, scientific expertise, connoisseurship and institutional clout sometimes appear as odd bedfellows of commercial acumen. Similarly, calls for transparency regularly clash with the players’ wish for discretion, while due diligence – also with regard to the origin of objects – sometimes assumes a secondary role when overshadowed by deft marketing strategies or even manipulative operations. Indeed, the often opposing

magnetic fields at work in this market may be fundamental to its public profile.

This publication aims to provide a comprehensive study of the image of the art market, its players, and their self-fashioning. Particular attention will be given to the broad range of media produced in this context. We welcome surveys and case studies that analyze artworks, scholarly publications, press articles, and other media – including fiction – relating to the art market and its visual appearance, representation, and reception.

Submission:

Please send your abstracts in English (max. 250 words), including a short biography with complete contact information as one PDF document by February 19, 2023. The selection of papers for publication will take place by mid-March. The submission date of the finished article of 6.000-8.000 words (and 6-8 illustrations) will be October 1st, 2023.

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Reference:

CFP: The Image of the Art Market. In: ArtHist.net, Jan 15, 2023 (accessed Apr 19, 2025),
<<https://arthist.net/archive/38326>>.