

EVENTS AND CONFERENCES

Adelaide Duarte*

The 3rd Annual Conference of the TIAMSA – The International Art Market Studies Association Lisbon, 21-23 November 2019

The 3rd TIAMSA conference, “The Art Market and the Global South: New Perspectives, Plural Approaches”, held at Lisbon (Portugal) last November, was co-organized by the Institute of Art History, School of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universidade NOVA de Lisboa, TIAMSA – The International Art Market Studies Association, the TIAMSA Subcommittee “Art Market and Collecting: Portugal, Spain and Brazil”, and Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul.

The main purpose of this conference, hosted by the National Museum of Ancient Art, was to discuss the developments and the disruptions in the current art market as seen from the “Global South”, a term here used to refer to the emerging economies of the southern hemisphere. A corollary purpose was to find new models and new perspectives and to observe their contribution to the development of art markets worldwide.

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During the three working days, the following six topics were analyzed by circa 30 speakers, experts, and academics from different scientific backgrounds: 1) “The Global South, the Local Markets and the Dynamics of the Global Art Market”; 2) “Southern Markets, Plural Markets, New Markets”; 3) “The Collecting Process: Models, New Collectors and New Private Museums”; 4) “Agents in the Market: Circulation and Friction in the Art System”; 5) “The Legal Regime of the Purchase and Sale of Works of Arts, Due Diligence and the Right of the Artists”; and finally, 6) “The Crisis: Impact and Strategies”. The presentations on these topics were frequently followed by enthusiastic discussions.

The conference opened with Prof. Olav Velthuis, from the University of Amsterdam, who spoke about “How Contemporary Art Markets are Made in the Global South”, presenting some considerations about his ongoing research project on BRIC countries. He analyzed the re-emergence of the art market in those countries, mainly after the fall of the Berlin wall and the consequences of the globalization in those markets through four main phases, i.e., proto-marketization, legitimation, infrastructure, and commercialization. At the conference closing, Prof. Ana Letícia Fialho, from Universidade de São Paulo (Brazil), discussed the “Contemporary Art Market in Latin America: Internationalization in Disequilibrium”. In her presentation she pointed out the singularities and the diversity of the region and their interferences in the development and on the internationalization of the art markets.

One of the key ideas discussed was the need to reconsider categories, namely the meaning of the term “Global South”, due to the extreme diversity when it comes to its integration to the contemporary art scene and markets. Another idea discussed was the importance of the mechanisms for art validation, with the artists’ will of legitimation through curators’ promotion and their participation in recognized art circuits, such as the Venice Biennial, the Documenta, the art fairs (particularly Art Basel), or even their presence in the most referential art museums (like Modern Tate, MoMA, or the French Pompidou). Furthermore, the distinct players in the art system – collectors, auctions houses, dealers, and artists – weighed in on the debates and discussed their roles in promoting arts and aesthetics (for example, the “Arts of the Americas” by art dealer Clara Diament Sujo), and their strategies for overcoming crisis periods. Plus, the participants underlined the need for museum valorization and mentioned the mimesis of the art infrastructure by the “Global South” countries, and the adoption of the white cube model concerning the exhibitions system. Finally, the problematic restitutions to African countries of art objects with an unclear provenance preserved in European museums was analyzed in light of the Sarr-Savoy report, focusing on their implications for the local art markets as well as the importance of due diligence to respond to illicit trade in an increasingly global art market industry.

For further information, a book of abstracts is available for downloading at the conference website: <https://globalsouthconference.weebly.com/book-of-abstracts.html>.