

FREEPORTS, ELITES, AND LOOPHOLES: A SOCIO-SPATIAL EXPLORATION OF THE GLOBALIZED GEOGRAPHIES OF CONTEMPORARY ART TRADE USING THE TPSN-HEURISTIC

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With 1 figure and 1 table

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Summary: The globalized trade in artworks has undergone significant changes since the end of the Cold War: While its former Western centres, such as New York and London, continue to dominate the discourse on high price segments with well-attended art fairs and influential auction houses, new actors challenge these former major players, new customers push into the market, and inflationary price increases have been recorded in recent years. From the perspective of systematic geographical research, however, this field of economically globalized trade has been largely neglected so far. With the help of a systematic literature analysis, this article examines the existing knowledge on the globalized art market across disciplines and systematises it with the help of the so-called TPSN model along the spatial categories of territory, place, scale, and network. Based on this analysis, we developed five core findings of the globalized art market that can serve as a foundation for future geographical research projects.

Keywords: Globalization, art, art trade, art market, TPSN, systematic literature analysis

1 Introduction

On November 15, 2017, Christie's New York, an extension of the esteemed British auction house, hosted an evening auction that concluded a contentious chapter in art history. This chapter unfolded in 2005 with the unveiling of a deteriorated oil painting depicting Jesus Christ, which was initially sold for over one thousand dollars by American art dealers (CHRISTIE'S 2017). Through a series of restorations and assessments, the artwork began to be recognized as a potential original work by Leonardo Da Vinci, dated around 1500 and titled *Salvator Mundi*. Following expert verification, the painting sparked considerable excitement as the "Last Leonardo" (LEWIS 2019), and its presentation to the public in 2011 received extensive media coverage, celebrating it as one of the most extraordinary rediscoveries in the annals of art (CHRISTIE'S 2017). Prior to its public auction at Christie's, the *Salvator Mundi* underwent a global exhibition as part of an extensive promotional campaign (REYBURN 2022). Ultimately, on November 15, 2017, the artwork was acquired for \$450 million by Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman, setting the record for the highest price ever paid for an artwork despite ongoing debates over its authenticity (FRANK & FRANK 2021).

The acquisition of *Salvator Mundi* by Saudi Arabia carried significant geopolitical implications

(REYBURN 2022). It was considered a strategic act amidst an ongoing conflict with Qatar, which has political ties to Iran — Saudi Arabia's regional adversary. Qatar had been recognized as the leading actor from the Gulf region in the international art market, having aggressively established several prominent art museums (ADAM 2014: 38). Nonetheless, the purchase of *Salvator Mundi* catapulted Saudi Arabia into the global spotlight. Furthermore, the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia assured his allies in Dubai that the painting would be displayed in their national museum. This intended to bolster the United Arab Emirates (UAE)'s cultural prestige in its rivalry with Qatar for the distinction of being the most culturally influential state in the Gulf region (ibid.).

This incident highlights the dynamic nature of the art market, wherein an initially overlooked piece can ascend to global acclaim and command a transaction value in the hundreds of millions within a brief period. The valuation of art within this market stems from a complex interplay of prestige, current trends, and speculative hypes, rather than being tied to its production and material costs (VOGL 2013: 32f). Additionally, the art market serves as a confluence point for affluent individuals and the cultural avant-garde, attracting favourable media coverage and contributing to its mystification (ADAM 2014: 11). However, the narrative of *Salvator Mundi* also reflects the evolving dynamics of the art trade

in a progressively globalized context (VELTHUIS & BAIA CURIONI 2015: 2f). The influence within the globalized art market is increasingly decentralized, moving beyond traditional Western stakeholders to include participants from East Asia and the Gulf region, thereby driving up the prices (*ibid.*: 2).

This article identifies a significant oversight in geographic scholarship concerning the global art market. Despite the market's intrinsic connections to themes of scale, networks, and global disparities, it has largely been overlooked within human geography. Instead, the exploration of the global art market has predominantly resided within the realms of other disciplines, often with a focus on specialized segments. Fields such as contemporary economics, cultural studies, art history, and sociology have produced research on various aspects, including art as an investment, the interplay between art and economy, the mechanisms of value formation, and the profiles of art market participants (MCNULTY 2014: 5ff). Yet, contributions from economic or political geography remain rare. Existing studies in this area have focused on narrow topics, such as the influence of art markets on urban and regional marketing, spatial dynamics shaping artistic careers, the impact of place-making on emerging art styles, the spatial configurations of freeports, art fairs, and biennials, or the regional framings within the art market (e.g., CUDNY et al. 2020; BRONES & MOGHADAM 2016; ZHANG et al. 2022; PASQUINELLI & SJÖHOLM 2015; FASCHE 2017; DÖRRY & HESSE 2022; SCHWARZKOPF & BACKSELL 2021; ZAROBELL 2022; HAISCH & MENZEL 2022). However, there is a discernible absence of comprehensive studies that systematically examine the globalized art market as a whole from a geographical perspective.

This article aims to fill this gap by examining the global trade in art goods through a human geographical lens, integrating insights from three distinct bodies of literature: (a) interdisciplinary research on the art market, serving as the foundation for a systematic literature review, (b) contributions from economic and political geography, providing disciplinary context for this investigation and our findings, and (c) studies employing socio-spatial analyses, specifically utilizing the Territory, Place, Scale, and Network (TPSN) heuristic as proposed by JESSOP et al. (2008) as the conceptual and methodological inspiration. This approach will theoretically enrich our systematic review of the literature pertaining to the globalized art market, offering a comprehensive understanding of its complexities and dynamics. By implementing the TPSN heuristic, our study makes a

conceptual and methodological contribution to the field of geographical research on globalization.

Pursuant to our objective to elucidate the global trade in art goods through a human geographic lens, our analysis will be structured around the concepts of territory, place, scale, and network. We argue that this approach provides us with the conceptual tools to systematically investigate the socio-spatial structure of the global art market as a spatiotemporal nexus of interwoven practices and strategies shaping globalization in this specific empirical field. This examination will pay particular attention to the transformations that have occurred since the early 1990s, following the dissolution of the Iron Curtain, as outlined by VELTHUIS & BAIA CURIONI (2015: 2f). Through this lens, we aim to contribute to the discourse on globalization, the evolving political landscapes within the art world, and the ways in which elite consumption patterns are redefining places and scales of interaction in the 21st century with the help of the TPSN heuristic.

The structure of this article is as follows: We begin with an overview of the global trade in art goods (Section 2), followed by an exposition of our methodological and theoretical frameworks (Section 3). Subsequently, our analysis will be presented in both a unidimensional and multidimensional manner (Sections 4 & 5). The article will conclude with a summary and discussion of our research findings (Section 6).

2 Characterizing the globalized art market

The globalized art market encompasses fine and applied arts (BOLL 2005: 9); however, for the purposes of this study, any item traded within the art market is regarded as art (*ibid.*: 9). A defining characteristic of the art market is the unique nature of art as a commodity. Artworks are enduring, singular, deeply nuanced, and symbolic entities that satisfy multifaceted requirements (ZORLONI 2013: 26). They serve not only as repositories of value but also as symbolic items that convey social prestige and aesthetic discernment (*ibid.*). Consequently, art represents a type of commodity with “informative value [...] characterized by a significant emotional component” (*ibid.*: 26), rendering the objective valuation of art almost impossible. Prices are not tied to measurable standards but are profoundly influenced by the artist's reputation, established through the interplay of aesthetic and commercial expertise (*ibid.*: 26, 89). The market is characterised by a scarcity-driven price

elevation in its upper echelons and asymmetric misinformation, necessitating “highly specific [...] cultural knowledge” for the accurate appraisal of artwork value (ANGELINI et al. 2022: 962; CODIGNOLA 2006: 73). Moreover, it stands as one of the least legally regulated domains globally (VOGL 2013: 29), with the trade in art seldom falling under the purview of national or international regulatory bodies, despite its utilization by financial market participants as a speculative vehicle (*ibid.*: 29).

The concept of the globalized art market as a unified structure faces scepticism in scholarly discussions, given that the distribution of art commerce is notably uneven across the globe and largely occurs without the systematic formation of networks (BROWN 2022: 16). Influence within this market is instead concentrated among a select group of key actors and locations. Consequently, it may be more accurately depicted as an aggregate of numerous micro-markets, “each of which comes with its own set of rules” (BOLL 2011: 12). These micro-markets are identifiable by specific criteria, such as the nature of the art object (e.g., paintings, sculptures, photography) or historical periods (e.g., Contemporary, Post-War, Old Masters) (ZORLONI 2013: 37). However, the process of globalization has increasingly integrated these disparate segments, situating them within a larger, globalized market framework that encompasses elements of these sub-markets.

Within the scope of this analysis, globalization is conceptualized as “economic integration on a global scale, creating increasingly close connections between people and firms located in different places. It is manifested in terms of increased flows of goods, services, money, information, and people across national and continental borders” (MACKINNON & CUMBERS 2019: 6). Our examination adopts an economic viewpoint, informed by DICKEN (2015), and is underpinned by historical-geographical materialism. Consequently, globalization is interpreted as a shift in the global economy, propelled by neoliberal policies enacted since the latter half of the 20th century (*ibid.*: 3f., HARVEY 2007, BELINA 2020: 55f.). This shift has facilitated the deregulation and liberalization of markets worldwide, coupled with a dominant trend in state policies favouring global competition and integration (*ibid.*: 56).

This phenomenon has similarly impacted the global art market: Beginning in the 1980s, there has been a notable escalation in both the aggregate volume of the art market and the maximum prices achieved for individual artworks (BOLL 2011: 24f.). Projections for 2022 indicate that the global trade in

art goods reached an estimated volume of \$67 billion (MCANDREW 2023: 20), representing a surge of over 150% in comparison to 2003. Moreover, the period from 1991 to 2012 witnessed a 575% increase in the global market volume (VELTHUIS & BAIA CURIONI 2015: 2). Various factors have contributed to this expansion, including the prominence of contemporary art since the 1990s (ADAM 2014: 10), the influences of globalization, the introduction of new market participants (VELTHUIS & BAIA CURIONI 2015: 2), a rise in the population of affluent individuals (*ibid.*: 7f.), the evolution of art into a financial asset class, and the vigorous promotion of art as an emblem of luxury lifestyle (ADAM 2014: 10).

VOGL (2013) proposes a categorization of the art market into three primary segments: The initial segment, termed the primary market, encompasses direct sales from artists to galleries or consumers. The secondary market comprises transactions within galleries and through art dealers. The tertiary sector is proposed to include auction trading activities (*ibid.*: 36). Furthermore, VOGL introduces a pricing-based systematization: The lowest pricing tier includes flea markets and second-hand dealers, followed by more affordable art pieces available at regional art fairs or antique stores. The third pricing category — marking entry into the globalized art market — encompasses the conventional art trade, characterized by purchasers selecting from extensive inventories at elevated prices, galleries showcasing, and vending artists’ works, and national art fairs. The apex of this system is represented by auction houses (e.g., Sotheby’s, Christie’s), international art fairs (e.g., Art Basel), and premier international dealers, where art transactions frequently occur in the six- to nine-figure range. In this top tier, sales exceeding \$1 million constituted merely 1% of the total transaction volume in 2015 but accounted for 28% of the globalized art market’s total revenue (ADAM 2017: 14).

Segments within the art market can be distinguished by the characteristics of buyers and their purchasing motivations. In the lower market segment, art acquisitions are primarily for decoration or personal satisfaction, with buyers possessing limited financial resources (BOLL 2005: 94). Conversely, in the upper market segments, art functions as a symbol of status (VOGL 2013: 23), appealing to affluent purchasers (*ibid.*: 23ff.). Additionally, investment interest represents another motivation for buyers, where the objective is to secure a favourable financial return over time (BOLL 2011: 57f.). The inclination towards art as an investment has escalated post the 2007/8 financial crisis, with participants in the financial market in-

creasingly seeking alternative avenues for investment (CINEFRA et al. 2019: 376), thereby drawing in novel categories of buyers (ADAM 2017: 155ff).

A diverse array of participants plays critical roles:

- *Artists* are the foundational contributors to the market, yet often struggle to secure a livelihood. A minority achieve wealth, operating large-scale studios where employees materialize the artist's concepts. In such instances, contemporary artworks might be endorsed by investors even before completion (ADAM 2017: 33; ADAM 2014: 65ff).
- *Galleries* serve as market makers (ADAM 2014: 22), typically engaging in contracts with contemporary artists to exhibit and sell their latest works. Galleries vary widely, from small, locally owned establishments to global enterprises like Gagosian (ibid.: 17).
- *Art dealers* principally engage in the purchase and resale of art pieces (ZORLONI 2013: 60).
- *International art fairs* function as venues for showcasing and selling artworks (HAISCH & MENZEL 2022).
- *Auction houses* offer a platform for sales, levying fees on both buyers and sellers to fund their operations (ZORLONI 2013: 63ff). Artworks are auctioned to the highest bidder, often after being listed in catalogues. The auction sector is dominated by Sotheby's and Christie's, establishing a duopoly as the only auction houses with a global presence (BOLL 2011: 26).
- Additional key figures include *art advisors, experts, critics, journalists, curators, museums, and biennials*, who can sway market trends and valuations by showcasing or endorsing specific artists and their works (BOLL 2011: 33, 40f).

Markets are conventionally considered efficient when "market prices accurately reflect all available information" (ibid.: 31). Nonetheless, the globalized art market is characterized by significant uncertainties that remain underexplored in comprehensive geographic scrutiny. This phenomenon is not exclusive to the art market; many of its observed features could be relevant to various sectors across the globalized economy. Therefore, the global art market serves as one example of the impact of diverse socio-spatial strategies on the modern realm of global economic transactions. Our study aims to compile and organize the available information on the globalized art market, thereby laying the groundwork for future research within the discipline of human geography.

3 Methodology: A systematic literature review using the TPSN-heuristic

3.1 Systematic literature review: Method and application

Given the nascent stage of geographical research on the globalized art market, our investigation commenced without preconceived hypotheses related to our research interests. Therefore, our methodological approach was designed to encompass the widest possible scope within this under-explored domain. Primary research methods, such as content or document analysis of annually published art reports like the "Art Basel Report", were deemed unsuitable due to their limited scope and focus primarily on sales data. Consequently, we opted for conducting a systematic literature review (SLR) as outlined by HART (1998), aiming to cover the field comprehensively by including all relevant scholarly contributions across various disciplines. Our SLR sought to compile data on the socio-spatial dimensions of the art market, drawing largely from non-geographic sources, including economics, sociology, cultural studies, and international law, applying the TPSN framework (JESSOP et al. 2008). Our review strived not for quantitative synthesis but rather to contextualize existing knowledge within this geographic heuristic.

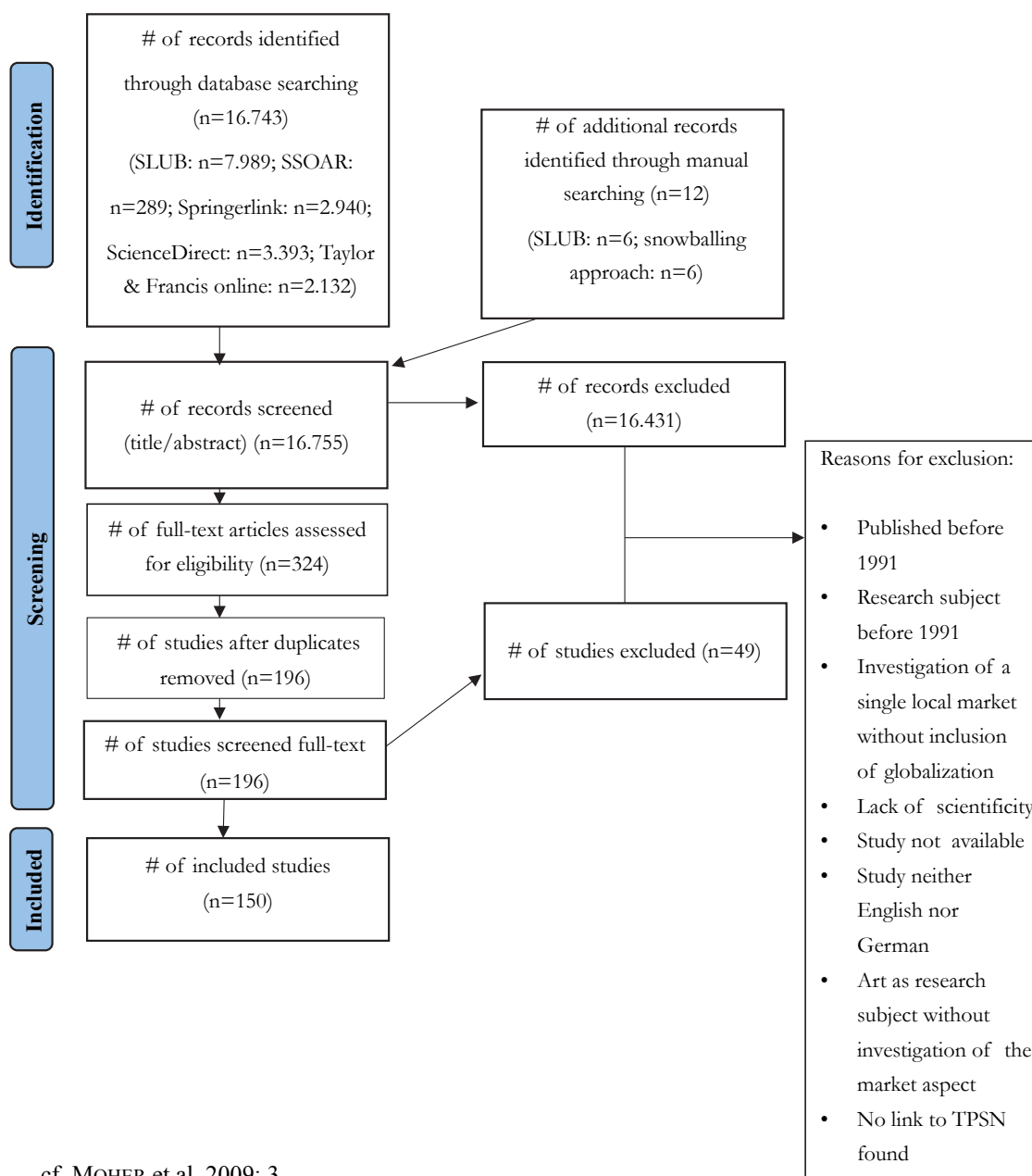
SLRs are instrumental in identifying research voids (OKOLI 2015: 880). However, they can be conducted without strict methodological frameworks, rendering them prone to biases in publication selection (e.g. selection bias or publication bias) (BOOTH et al. 2016: 19). The objective of a SLR is to distil pertinent insights from extant scholarly literature to foster new understandings (RESSING et al. 2009: 457). The process is initiated by a well-defined research question (NEWMAN & GOUGH 2020: 7), guiding a systematic and explicit methodology to identify, select, and critically evaluate relevant studies, and to collate and analyse data from the included research (MOHER et al. 2009: 1). This approach adheres to scientific rigor, ensuring the review's comprehensibility and reproducibility (OKOLI 2015: 880), with methodologies and criteria for literature inclusion or exclusion clearly documented in a review protocol (NEWMAN & GOUGH 2020: 8). This methodology entails meticulous documentation of all decision-making processes, utilizing tools like search logs, literature inclusion/exclusion lists, and PRISMA flow diagrams (MOHER et al. 2009: 3). Following the selection phase, data extraction is performed based on the studies' relevance to the research question and theoretical framework (OKOLI 2015: 884).

To explore the globalized art trade from a human geographic perspective, our search strategy was interdisciplinary, broadening the analysis without disciplinary constraints and adjusting search parameters as needed — a typical iterative approach in SLRs (MOHER et al. 2009: 2, see also Fig. 1). The research focus was operationalized with terms like “global”, “globalization”, and “art market” to filter literature pertinent to the glo-

balized art market or globalization processes within it. The following specific search terms were used:

‘global AND art AND market’, ‘globalization AND art AND market’, ‘art AND market’, ‘global AND Kunstmarkt’, ‘global AND Kunstmärkte’, ‘Globalisierung AND Kunstmarkt’, ‘Globalisierung AND Kunstmärkte’, ‘Kunstmarkt’, ‘Kunstmärkte’

Prisma Flow Diagram



cf. MOHER et al. 2009: 3

Fig. 1: Prisma Flow Diagram

This broad focus aimed to capture a comprehensive array of studies addressing the global art market, employing search terms in both German and English. The search utilized online catalogues from the Sächsische Landesbibliothek (SLUB) and databases like Wiley, Sage, CrossRef, Springer Link, ScienceDirect, Taylor & Francis online, and SSOAR, supplemented by a snowballing strategy.

Initially, titles and abstracts were screened to exclude duplicates. The screening of full texts focused on publications addressing globality, space, and trade within the time frame from 1991 to February 27, 2024, narrowing down to studies specifically relevant to our research focus. Inclusion criteria prioritized peer-reviewed journals, authors with a scientific background, and methodologies employing scientific approaches. Accessibility through Open Access or via the TU Dresden or the SLUB was also a consideration. Ultimately, 150 publications were included in the review.

3.2 The TPSN-heuristic: Foundations and application

A systematic literature review (SLR) is designed to synthesize the existing body of research comprehensively, employing systematic and transparent search methodologies to facilitate a structured analysis of the compiled data. In pursuit of elucidating the dynamics of the globalized art market through a human geographic lens, our methodology was chosen to aptly reflect the complex and multidimensional nature of socio-spatial practices. This approach involves the examination of several key dimensions: territory (T), place (P), scale (S), and network (N), as conceptualized by JESSOP et al. (2008) and is implemented as a methodological attempt to pave the way for future economic geographical research in adjacent empirical fields.

These dimensions are interpreted as distinct modes of spatial appropriation and production (ibid.: 86). Within the domain of human geography, the spatial constructs of territory, place, scale, and network are frequently discussed in conjunction with their corresponding processes: territorialization, place-making, scaling, and networking (JESSOP et al. 2008: 394). However, these constructs do not prescribe a rigid spatial framework for understanding the world. Instead, they serve as analytical tools for examining contemporary social practices (BELINA 2017: 113), providing a prism through which the intricacies of the globalized art market can be analysed and understood.

- *Territory* is conceptualized as the effort by individuals or groups “(x) to influence, affect, or control objects, people, and relationships (y) by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area” (SACK 1983: 56). The concept of territoriality involves the process of territorialization, culminating in the establishment of territory as a geographically bounded space where power is exerted by specific actors (BELINA 2017: 98). Territorialization encompasses socio-political and technological practices aimed at exercising control over objects, individuals, and interactions by various actors (ibid.: 88; PAINTER 2010).
- *Place* is regarded as a distinct entity, imbued with history and significance, where individuals ascribe emotions and ideas stemming from their experiences (TUAN 1974: 13, 108f.). This attribution can foster an emotional bond, often termed a sense of place, between people and a location (TURNER & TURNER 2006: 207). Place-making, the social construction of place, can be a strategic endeavour (BELINA 2017: 109). JESSOP et al. (2008: 390) describe places as outcomes of intertwined social, economic, political, and cultural relations that manifest locally, constituted relationally within wider social frameworks. Moreover, places can be arenas of power disputes, being contested and subject to transformations (MASSEY 1991).
- *Scale* refers to the spatial and hierarchical segmentation within the socio-political domain (BELINA 2020: 53). Research attentive to scale scrutinizes the hierarchical organization of social practices and their genesis (BELINA 2017: 98). Another research emphasis is on “spatial practices in which and by means of which they are produced and appropriated” (ibid.: 100; translation by the authors), with scales emerging from socio-spatial dynamics linked to power (SWYNGEDOUW 1997: 141). In this vein, JESSOP et al. (2008: 390) discuss the concepts of politics of scale, re-scaling, and scale-jumping. Politics of scale broadly refers to strategic efforts to shape scale structures to advance certain interests (SWYNGEDOUW 1997: 141), re-scaling pertains to scalar restructuring triggered by such politics (BELINA 2020: 53), and scale-jumping involves strategically relocating social interactions to different scales to promote interests (SMITH 1995: 62). The processes of (re-)scaling thus underpin and strategize socio-political and economic actions.
- *Networks* are seen both as mechanisms and as conditions for social practices and processes (BELINA 2017: 124). They are characterized as

comprising a minimum of three spatially fixed or semi-fixed entities and their interconnections (ibid.: 121), which could be corporations, cities, institutions, or individuals. Networks operate as self-organizing, non-hierarchical systems (LEITNER & SHEPPARD 2002: 496). They facilitate the formation of social relations and spatial configurations (BELINA 2017: 121). Within networks, places are interconnected, evolving through exchanges (CASTELLS 1999: 65), as “conjunctions between things, places and actors, and especially which connections between them are relevant, can only be determined in connection with the way networks and connections are produced and used in social practice” (BELINA 2017: 124; translation by the authors).

BRENNER (2019: 263) addresses the challenge of capturing the nuances of social processes through geography by asserting that “the geographies of any social process (...) cannot be adequately understood with reference to any singular principle or all-encompassing morphological pattern”. He describes the socio-spatial reality as consisting of “messy articulations among multiple patterns, layers, contours, lines, folds, points, clusters, and edges” (2019: 265), emphasizing the complexity and multifaceted nature of these phenomena. Similarly, JESSOP et al. (2008) critique the limitation of analysing social processes through a singular spatial dimension, labelling such approaches as overly simplistic and theoretically insufficient. This viewpoint is echoed by BRENNER (2019) and further supported by JONES & JESSOP (2010), who stress the inadequacy of one-dimensional explanations for the richly diverse socio-spatial phenomena.

Consequently, JESSOP et al. (2008: 392) highlight the interdependence of different spatial forms, noting that while each form may elucidate certain socio-spatial practices, none can singularly account for the comprehensive socio-spatial organization of human society, which they characterize as both polymorphic and multidimensional. They argue for the recognition of socio-spatial multidimensionality and polymorphism as a “pragmatic methodological basis on which to investigate the dynamic historical interplay between place-making, territorialization, scaling, and networking processes; their variegated socio-spatial consequences; and their ongoing political contestation” (BRENNER 2019: 259). This perspective underscores the complexity of socio-spatial phenomena and advocates for a multi-faceted approach in analysing them.

To address the complexity of socio-spatial phenomena, JESSOP et al. (2008) introduced the TPSN framework, incorporating territory, place, scale, and network (TPSN) as key analytical dimensions. These concepts are seen both as outcomes of historical processes that have shaped the social landscape, such as national borders between states (termed: structuring principle), and as strategies used to navigate and influence the socio-spatial environment, including territorialization, place-making, scaling, and networking (termed: field of operation) (ibid.: 394).

The application of the TPSN framework is likened to a movement from an abstract and simplistic starting point (e.g., the concept of place) towards complex and concrete outcomes (specific combinations of TPSN elements) (ibid.). This methodology underscores the significance of “contradictions, conflicts, dilemmas, marginalisation, exclusion, and volatility at once within and among each of these socio-spatial forms” in examining socio-spatial arrangements (ibid.). A pivotal aspect of utilizing this approach is the acknowledgment of multidimensionality in analysing social practices, by considering the interplay and combinatory potential of all spatial forms.

In this discourse, we initially provide separate descriptions of the four spatial dimensions. Subsequently, we will explore these phenomena from a multidimensional viewpoint, integrating the disparate dimensions to offer a comprehensive analysis of socio-spatial dynamics.

4 Exploring the globalized art market through the lens of territory, place, scale, and network

4.1 Dissecting the spatiality of the globalized art market: Territory

Firstly, several studies have explored shifts within traditional Western hegemony, with some stakeholders in the art sector viewing globalization as a phenomenon that diminishes the influence of nationality on perceived quality (VELTHUIS 2013, QUEMIN 2006). Contrary to this perspective, other authors have contested the notion of a fully de-territorialized global art market, where national affiliations cease to affect valuation. Instead, evidence suggests that economic and symbolic authority remains predominantly consolidated within a select group of Western nations (ibid.: 304), albeit facing growing challenges. This concentration of power

is evident in the propensity of galleries to primarily showcase artists of their own nationality — a trend identified as the home bias effect (QUEMIN 2006: 36f.). Moreover, analyses of prestigious rankings reveal that the majority of top-tier artists and influential experts come from Great Britain, the USA, or Germany (HEST & VERMEYLEN 2015: 182ff., PRINZ 2022), further underscoring the enduring significance of national origins in the globalized art market.

Secondly, the involvement of nation-states as pivotal actors within the art market can be categorized into three distinct roles: as regulators, stimulators, and active participants.

- As *regulators*, governments implement a variety of legal frameworks, including taxation, customs duties, censorship, market oversight, export restrictions, prohibitions on foreign dealers, and laws targeting corruption and money laundering (DAGIRMANJIAN 2019: 705f.), to exert control over art market operations. Notably, countries such as China and Italy have imposed export bans on specific art pieces deemed national treasures, effectively limiting their international trade (ARCHER 2022: 32, 287). In some cases, this has also been introduced regarding looted artworks (see KLERMAN & SHORTLAND 2022).
- In their capacity as *stimulators*, states endeavour to energize art market activities within their jurisdictions to attract foreign investments, secure a larger share of the market, or enhance their international prestige. This stimulation often involves reducing taxes and duties or relaxing regulations on money laundering. Hong Kong, for example, has ascended to a leading position in the global art market, partly due to its special administrative status which exempts it from the customs duties and sales taxes applicable in mainland China for the import, export, or sale of goods (ibid.: 21). Similarly, offshore jurisdictions like the Cayman Islands appeal to corporations and affluent individuals with favourable tax policies and financial confidentiality (KOLDEHOFF & TIMM 2020: 14), with the offshoring of art trade serving as a mechanism for tax evasion and the concealment of identities, including in the context of illicit art transactions (POST & CALVAO 2020: 2ff.).
- As *market participants*, certain governments take a more direct approach by engaging in the art market to strategically position their country as a cultural and economically significant hub. Since the mid-2000s, for instance, Qatari officials have

acquired art worth billions of dollars for their nascent museums, aiming to carve out a niche for Qatar as an influential player on the international art scene (ADAM 2014: 148ff.).

These actions by nation states significantly impact the geographical distribution of market shares, as variations in taxes, customs duties, national heritage protections, and anti-money laundering regulations across different countries affect the attractiveness of those locales to investors in the art market.

4.2 Dissecting the spatiality of the globalized art market: Place

The globalized art market is a field of various meaningful localities, each fulfilling distinct functions. Personal interactions in specific physical settings, such as galleries, auction houses, and art fairs, are pivotal to the market's operation, serving primarily as commercial intermediaries between the producers (artists) and consumers (BOLL 2011: 11). While the significance of online commerce is growing, particularly as a means of information acquisition, it remains a relatively minor component of overall market activity. This is especially true within the market's upper echelons, where online trading occurs on a limited basis or is almost non-existent (HEST & VERMEYLEN 2015: 177).

The art market's vibrancy largely stems from in-person negotiations of prices and styles, predominantly occurring within galleries and art fairs, where physical attendance underscores one's affiliation with an elite echelon of affluent and influential individuals (QUESENBERRY & SYKES 2008: 133). Art fairs, in particular, illustrate the critical role of physical proximity and direct interactions. These events act as ephemeral marketplaces, drawing participants from various global locales to form "temporary clusters" wherein "particular knowledge processes" related to pricing, consumer preferences, market demands, and trends are exchanged (HAISCH & MENZEL 2022: 238f.). This exchange fosters the development of a "global epistemic" community (ibid.). The arrangement of booths and artworks facilitates these physical interactions (ibid.: 247f.), playing an essential role in the value-creation ecosystem of the global art market by congregating commercial intermediaries for brief periods of trading and art promotion. Since the art market's value is generated through direct participant interactions, transient venues like art fairs become crucial for evaluating the worth of emerging trends and artists.

Conversely, auction houses transform their auctions into opulent gatherings for the affluent and celebrities, where art is sold in a manner designed to captivate public interest (ZORLONI 2013: 63ff). These events serve to legitimize art as a coveted status symbol among the wealthy, thereby enhancing the exclusivity of the auction houses and, consequently, leading to higher sales prices compared to less opulent venues (CINEFRA et al. 2019: 378). Ironically, despite their fame, these institutions are among the more accessible elements of the globalized art market, as auctions are open to the public. However, access within galleries or to more exclusive dealers often remains restricted to established clients (VELTHUIS 2012: 21).

The concept of place is further relevant regarding a de-facto delineation of the art world into centres and peripheries, a phenomenon that mirrors the fundamental dynamics of capitalist uneven development (BRENNER 2019: 270). In the globalized art market, only a select few locations emerge as dominant centres. Since the early 21st century, China has risen to become the second or third largest art market, with a market share of approximately 20%, positioning itself closely behind the USA, which holds about 40%, and on par with the UK (~20%) (MCANDREW 2023: 27). Despite the national significance of these markets, the art trade itself is highly concentrated in specific cities that act as pivotal hubs. Metropolises such as New York, London, and Hong Kong are preeminent due to their role as consumption centres for the international elite, particularly within the luxury and cultural sectors (ZHANG et al. 2022: 390). These cities host the majority of esteemed art market intermediaries, including auction houses and galleries, and account for 85% of global auction sales (ASSAF 2018: 346). While these actors maintain offices globally, strategic decisions are predominantly made in New York and London, with a few cities in Western Europe and China (e.g., Beijing) beginning to close the gap.

Conversely, the periphery encompasses vast regions of the world seemingly disconnected from profiteering of the global art market, including the entirety of Africa, South and Central America, Australia, and Central Asia (VELTHUIS 2013: 291ff). Art from these areas is often characterized by Western market actors as the *other*, employing mystification and exoticization for commercial advantage (SCHULTHEIS et al. 2016: 28). This dynamic ensures that interpretive authority over such art remains with the predominantly Western centres, perpetuating colonialist perspectives (BANKS 2018: 5).

In recent years, there has been a notable effort to create new competitive places with global significance (SCHULTHEIS et al. 2016: 240). These initiatives strive to lure affluent consumers, luxury sector actors, and corresponding corporations, while also aiming to position these locales as global, contemporary, trendy, or culturally significant. The goal is to secure a competitive edge in attracting highly skilled professionals or boosting tourism (CUDNY et al. 2020: 1f). For instance, in the lead-up to the 2008 Olympic Games, China undertook significant expansions of its art market to project an image of progressiveness, attractiveness, and liberalism (ARCHER 2020: 3). Such strategic manoeuvres by governments may also encompass nation-building elements, utilizing art to cultivate or bolster a national or nationalized culture. This, in turn, serves to legitimize current political figures, as observed in several Gulf states (BRONES & MOGHADAM 2016: 3).

4.3 Dissecting the spatiality of the globalized art market: Scale

Recent decades have witnessed a series of re-scaling processes within the global art market, precipitated by significant geopolitical and economic shifts. The dissolution of the communist bloc, alongside the economic liberalization initiatives in China and India at the start of the 1990s, catalysed profound changes in the global economic landscape. These transformations have subsequently influenced the scalar organization of the global art market, altering its structure and dynamics.

Firstly, since 1991, a notable shift has occurred among Western auction houses, galleries, and art fairs: Expanding their operations to a global scale helped them to maintain their powerful positions and establish themselves on the top end of the emerging hierarchies in this globalizing market (SCHULTHEIS et al. 2016: 33f). This global outreach involved establishing branches in burgeoning markets, which were identified as lucrative sources of new buyers and, consequently, greater profits (ibid.). Sotheby's and Christie's, in particular, played pivotal roles in this expansion by setting up branches in locations like Hong Kong, Dubai, and Singapore. Their efforts were instrumental in elevating these cities to the status of global art trade hubs (MACKAY 2022: 5; AERNE 2021: 3). These auction houses benefited from their sales model, which includes organizing a few major events annually that accommodate participation from any location via online streaming

and telephone bidding. This model has proven to be highly effective on a global scale (VELTHUIS 2012: 17), with enhanced technological and web-based capabilities playing a significant role in facilitating this transition (GRINSTEAD 2021).

Coinciding with the global orientation of trade, there has been, secondly, a significant broadening in the spectrum of buyers within the art market. Presently, this group predominantly comprises affluent individuals from across the world, with an increasing number emanating from emerging economies such as Russia, China, India, and countries in the Middle East (ADAM 2017: 62f.). This global diversification of potential buyers, moving beyond a national or macro-regional elite who can travel globally to key art market events at a moment's notice, has precipitated a marked surge in demand (CODIGNOLA 2006: 83). This expansion has also facilitated strategic endeavours by national actors aiming to augment their influence within the globalized art market, introducing several new players and challenging established hierarchies of the market as state and private actors especially from China, India, Russia, the Gulf Region, and Singapore have gained influence. Notably, China's establishment of the Poly auction house, which is affiliated with the Chinese military and expanded its operations internationally with the opening of its first overseas office in New York in 2012, exemplifies such strategic moves (ADAM 2014: 138).

The globalization of the art market, characterized by Western actors expanding into Eastern countries and new entrants establishing footholds in traditional art market centres, has, thirdly, led to a convergence of practices. This homogenization requires artists to cater to a broader, global audience, often at the expense of regional uniqueness for profitability (WHILE 2003: 255). A significant repercussion of this trend is the diminishing presence of indigenous art practices. Artists, even in the more remote areas of the global art market, face increasing pressure to align their creations with global aesthetics to ensure marketability (KHANDEKAR 2019). Consequently, judgments regarding the authenticity, value, and marketability of artworks from peripheral regions are predominantly made by actors from Western countries or China. This dynamic is perceived to perpetuate and reinforce existing postcolonial power hierarchies (BANKS 2018: 5ff.), further centralizing interpretive authority and market influence within the hands of a few dominant global players, thus exemplifying the dominance of market standards being established on a global scale over those on national or local scales.

4.4 Dissecting the spatiality of the globalized art market: Network

The elite echelon of the globalized art market is comprised by a literal network of select actors dispersed worldwide, wielding dominant authority to determine market participation (ARCHER 2022: 8f., 126). This exclusive network, detailed in Section 2, predominantly spans urban centres across North America, Western Europe, East and Southeast Asia, and increasingly, the Middle East. These regions host the permanent establishments or branches of art market actors and are the venues for auctions, fairs, or biennials (ZHANG et al. 2022: 397). Cities like London, New York, Paris, Hong Kong, Dubai, Beijing, and Singapore serve as pivotal nodes where key participants converge, conduct operations, and exert their influence over inclusion within or exclusion from the market (WHILE 2003: 252).

Art market actors have strategically formed a spatial network on a global scale, facilitated by their branches, agents, and partnerships across continents (YOGEV & GRUND 2012: 25f.). Galleries and auction houses targeting the global market essentially operate as transnational corporations, integrating into global production networks (GPN) as conceptualized by DICKEN (2015: 54ff.). These actors actively scout for new artists or artworks worldwide, incorporating them into the GPN as inputs. These artworks are then transformed into marketable commodities through valuation techniques such as exhibitions and media campaigns, eventually reaching consumers through gallery sales or auctions (ZORLONI 2013: 25).

In this context, globally oriented auction houses and galleries effectively establish global value chains (GVC) in the sense described by ANTRAS (2020). Value is incrementally added at each stage within their corporate networks, from the discovery of new artwork through to marketing strategies and specific auctioning or gallery presentations. This value-adding process encompasses multiple countries, illustrating the comprehensive and international scope of their operations.

The influence wielded by a relatively small cadre of powerful actors within the global art market is historically rooted in their role as gatekeepers (VELTHUIS 2013: 297ff.). Their authority is intricately linked to the art pricing process, characterized as a nuanced social negotiation within this network to determine the artistic and economic worth of artworks (VELTHUIS 2005: 188). Unlike conventional markets, buyers in the global art market navigate a realm of "fundamental uncertainty" leading to "limited rational purchasing

decisions” (BECKERT & RÖSSEL 2013: 178). The challenge lies in the subjective nature of art valuation, especially within the upper echelons of the market where the price of a piece is not easily attributed to tangible factors like materials or labour, as these elements are typically minimal in artworks traded for significant sums (VOGL 2013: 98ff). Instead, the commodification of art is a collective negotiation among transnational market experts — encompassing galleries, auction houses, art journalists, dealers, collectors, and curators — who negotiate value via specific social relations. These actors significantly influence the reputation of artists and artworks, which are crucial to price determination (BECKERT & RÖSSEL 2013: 191). Hence, the global art market is often regarded as a status market (ASPERS 2005), where the valuation of art stems from social standing and positioning.

For instance, BRANDELLERO (2022: 540) illustrates the efforts of Brazilian art market participants to elevate the profile of Brazilian contemporary art on the global stage through socio-spatial practices that extend its social networks. By strategically participating in reputable art fairs and positioning their art within key nodes of this international network, these Brazilian actors aim to integrate themselves into the global market’s value creation system (ibid.). Such participation enhances their reputation, facilitates the acquisition of market insights and trends, and fosters new connections with dealers, gallery owners, collectors, and other pivotal figures within the value creation network, effectively building relations to important actors and nodes of decision-making processes (ibid.). Consequently, the globalized art market is envisioned as a complex transnational network operating on principles of personal connection and trust (KURZ 2016: 547).

Technological advancements, notably the advent and proliferation of the World Wide Web, play a crucial role in reinforcing the networked nature of the globalized art market (HEST & VERMEYLEN 2015: 177). Digital infrastructure empowers affluent purchasers to engage in bidding activities from any global location, relying on agents to relay images of artworks and to execute purchase orders based on these visuals, thus allowing new relations to be established in the global art market network (VELTHUIS 2012: 17). Additionally, the internet significantly benefits auction houses by facilitating worldwide access to their catalogues online. The relevance and utilization of these digital tools were notably amplified during the Covid-19 pandemic, showcasing the internet’s critical role in maintaining and expanding the art market’s global network (GRINSTEAD 2021).

5 Integrating the spatiality of the globalized art market: A view from the TPSN-perspective

While our analysis has so far structured findings within the distinct frameworks of territory, place, scale, and network as delineated by JESSOP et al. (2008), it has become evident that certain phenomena within the globalized art market transcend these epistemological confines. In the subsequent discussion, we will concentrate on elements of the globalized art market that are influenced by multiple socio-spatial dimensions, highlighting the interconnectedness and complexity of these phenomena beyond the initially defined boundaries.

Consequently, we identified several phenomena where two of the stated socio spatial dimensions coincide as a structuring principle and a field of operation (JESSOP et al. 2008: 395) as described in chapter 3.2, in table 1.

Based on table 1, we summarise five multidimensional socio-spatial findings of our methodologically-guided systematization – having started from one-dimensional entry points to multidimensional phenomena of the global art market. These five key points stand out as the most relevant, dynamic, contradictory, and complex socio-spatial arrangement structuring the field of globalized art trade.

Finding 1: Territorially based place-making, re-scaling and networking are commonly utilised as competing spatio-centric strategies

Within the globalized art market, actors of diverse natures (both private and public) engage in strategic efforts to carve out advantageous positions through investments in high-value artworks, the development of new centres within the existing network, and leveraging scale-jumping to navigate regulatory disparities, as shown in row “Territory” of table 1, where multiple examples for territorially based place-making, re-scaling and networking are presented. For instance, territorial actors such as Azerbaijan, Saudi Arabia, China, and Singapore employ place-making strategies, including the enactment of tax incentives and the support of local art scenes, aiming to elevate their status to that of regional hubs and pivotal nodes within the global art market network. These manoeuvres often emerge in response to the historical dominance of Western actors, such as auction houses and major cities. Consequently, the globalized art market can be conceptualized as an arena of spatio-economic

Tab. 1: Two-dimensional aspects of the globalized art market, according to the TPSN-heuristic

STRUCTURING PRINCIPLE	FIELD OF OPERATION			
	Territory / Territorialization	Place / Place-Making	Scale / Re-Scaling	Network / Networking
Territory	Chapter 4.1	<p>Places in Western nation states, that persist to dominate the art market (e.g., New York/USA, London/UK).</p> <p>Place-Branding of nation-states with art goods declared as of national value through legislation/export bans.</p> <p>Place-Framing of specific territories in context of the art trade, e.g., exoticizing of art goods from African territories.</p> <p>Place-Making when national governments buy and display art goods to brand culturally important locations (e.g., Qatar).</p>	<p>Upwardly scale-jumping to the global scale to avoid the territorially organised legal framework.</p> <p>Art market participants use most favourable national legal frameworks on regional scale, e.g. in the US-states, to pay the least amount of taxes and duties.</p>	<p>Persistent importance of a few Western actors (despite new challengers).</p> <p>Globalized networking of non-state decision makers leads to loss of power of traditionally state funded actors like museums.</p>
Place	<p>Persistent globally uneven distribution of specific central/core places of importance (e.g. art dealers, auction house) vs. global art peripheries that do not participate in high-value transactions.</p> <p>Recent national initiatives to establish new places of importance that challenge establish centre-periphery-relations.</p> <p>Freeports established as extraterritorial places of storing and trading art.</p>	Chapter 4.2	<p>Specific cities as globally accepted signifiers for and places of fine arts (e.g., Paris, New York, London).</p> <p>Freeports established as global places disconnected from national regulations.</p> <p>Urban areas as hubs where most of the global art market takes place.</p>	<p>Globally spanning networks of actors on the art market that are based in few urban areas (e.g., New York, London, Hong Kong etc.).</p> <p>Freeports established as important nodes inside the global art market network.</p> <p>Networking at specific core art market places like fairs, etc.</p>
Scale	National Regulations, e.g. laws hindering the trading of looted artworks have been established by some important nation states like the US and exert influence on the global art trade.	Place-Making on different scales (nation-states, regions, cities) to attract art market activity.	Chapter 4.3	Networking of local/regional art market participants on the global scale in order to integrate in the globalized art market.

	<p>Nation state implement export bans of cultural relevant art goods to hinder their trade on the global scale.</p> <p>Nation states or supranational organizations, e.g. EU, attempt to build global legal frameworks to regulate aspects of the art market.</p>	<p>Attempts to place-frame specific artworks as having a “global” style is used as a marketing strategy.</p> <p>Place-Framing of artworks from “exotic” places of the art world’s peripheries may be labelled as “local” by important actors to separate them from the hegemonic “global” style.</p>		<p>Networking by important art market corporations on different scales to form GPNs.</p>
Network	<p>State actors try to position their territories as attractive sites for important nodes of the global art market network through favourable legislation.</p> <p>De-territorialization through networks of important market participants, e.g. big auction houses, span over multiple nation states.</p>	<p>Specific art market networks, e.g. network of “Young British Artists” has led to the branding of London as an artsy city in 1990s.</p>	<p>Re-Scaling in the form of branding western art market actors/ networks (e.g. auction houses) with a global appeal to increase the number of potential buyers and profits.</p> <p>Challenges to sub-national actors in the art market by national governments (e.g., Qatar, China) and their strategic attempts of establishing new places and actors.</p>	<p>Chapter 4.4</p>

manoeuvres, where attributes like quality, financial or artistic worth, and influence are not static measures but dynamic elements shaped through interactions among global market participants. Moreover, our analysis highlights that these actors deploy spatio-scalar tactics, including re-scaling, place-making, and networking, to circumvent regulatory obstacles, to influence the trade’s character, and exploit regulatory divergences for economic gain.

Finding 2: Territorially based re-scaling and networking re-negotiate, yet do not challenge patterns of post-colonial unevenness.

The globalization of the art market entails the widespread adoption of the Western art market model, a process significantly driven by the expansionary efforts of dominant Western art actors (MACKAY 2022: 9): Since the 1990s, key Western players, such as Sotheby’s and Christie’s, have strategically extended their operations through a network of international branches, thereby globalizing their business model and maintaining their market dominance as described

in columns “Scale/Re-Scaling” and “Networking” in table 1. The debate continues as to whether this expansion represents a postcolonial shift in hegemony or provides opportunities for previously marginal regions, like China or Brazil, to cultivate their own successful art market participants and, consequently, generate value (WHILE 2003). Nonetheless, it is evident that the upper echelons of the art market continue to be characterized by a model in which Western actors maintain predominant control and hold pivotal positions of power. This dominance is increasingly challenged by the emergence of China as a significant force within the global art market, suggesting a potential recalibration of existing power dynamics (SCHULTHEIS et al. 2016: 9f).

Finding 3: Territorially based scale-jumping is used by non-state actors to loophole the nation states’ regulatory hegemony.

Private actors within the globalized art market have adopted innovative strategies to navigate and exploit regulatory landscapes (see row “Territory” and

column “Scale/Re-Scaling” in table 1). For example, smugglers dealing with illegally exported artworks attempt to evade state oversight by circulating these items extensively across the globe (QUINONES VILA 2021: 52ff). This tactic involves taking advantage of lenient territorial import regulations in certain countries to obfuscate the origins of the artworks, thereby facilitating their eventual sale in Europe or the USA (ibid.). Additionally, some buyers circumvent national regulations by acquiring artworks from jurisdictions offering the most favourable tax conditions, often utilizing post office box companies as intermediaries (KOLDEHOFF & TIMM 2020: 183). Practices akin to money laundering have been identified, leveraging the fact that art transactions lack stringent international regulation. Artworks can be purchased in countries without extradition agreements, taxes paid at advantageous rates, and then sold internationally (ibid.: 241ff). In essence, various private actors employ scale-jumping tactics to bypass territorial regulations affecting the art market. These manoeuvres range from (semi) legal strategies used by affluent collectors, dealers, and art investment firms aiming to minimize tax liabilities or maximize profits, to illicit efforts to conceal the origins of counterfeit or stolen artworks.

Finding 4: Place-based territorialization, re-scaling and networking are employed as means of establishing nationally accepted extra-territorial sites of elite private art trade.

In the context of strategies employing territorial-based scale-jumping to circumvent regulations (see row “Territory” and column “Re-Scaling” in table 1), freeports emerge as significant enclaves. These are warehouses designated for storing art and luxury items, classified as special economic zones (DÖRRY & HESSE 2022: 171; POST & CALVAO 2020: 11), found in locations such as Geneva, Singapore, Luxembourg, Delaware, New York, Monaco, and Beijing (ibid.: 2). Within these facilities, the host country’s national tax, customs laws, and sometimes even anti-money laundering regulations are inapplicable (ibid.: 1ff). Despite often being situated near international airports or shipping ports for convenient global transfers of luxury goods (POST & CALVAO 2020: 2), freeports are conceptualized as “legal fictions” and “delocalized” entities, “dislodged from connections to [...] concrete socio-geographical spaces” (SCHWARZKOPF & BACKSELL 2021: 341). The management of these warehouses typically involves leasing space to subcontractors, who then offer it to private individuals

(POST & CALVAO 2020: 5). The facilities are designed to provide optimal conditions for art preservation, including climate control, on-site restoration specialists, and exhibition spaces (ibid.: 6; KOLDEHOFF & TIMM 2020: 159f). Security measures, such as barbed wire fencing and advanced surveillance systems, are implemented to limit access (WEEKS 2020: 3). Given the restricted entry, even for customs officials, it is speculated that freeports also serve as repositories for illicit art and other luxury commodities (KOLDEHOFF & TIMM 2020: 183).

Furthermore, freeports have increasingly become venues for transactions among affluent individuals, utilizing the freeports’ own showrooms for sales and thus circumventing regulatory oversight or associated fees due to their extraterritorial status (POST & CALVAO 2020: 12). From the perspective of the TPSN heuristic, freeports represent a form of place-based territorialization (see row “Place” and column “Territorialization” in table 1), functioning as distinct locales of inclusion and exclusion with their own set of regulations, separate from the host country’s national laws. Concurrently, they facilitate the globally re-scaled art trade by meeting the demands of a specific network of wealthy collectors and investors seeking to bypass national regulations and taxes (see row “Place” and column “Re-Scaling/Networking” in table 1). Artworks can be traded directly within a freeport, often negating the need for tax payments on transactions. Therefore, freeports exemplify a denationalized global art trade, serving as critical nodes within the network of international art transactions. There are instances where artworks sold at auctions in places like New York are physically stored in the Freeport of Singapore, illustrating freeports as “space-time arrangements” that operate as exceptions to national regulations, effectively reinstating elite privileges in a contemporary context and positioning them as a unique category of special economic zones (SEZs) focused on immobilization rather than fluidity (SCHWARZKOPF & BACKSELL 2021: 341).

However, to view freeports solely through the lens of regulatory evasion overlooks governmental strategies facilitating their existence. Legal frameworks, such as those in Luxembourg, enable the establishment of freeports, positioning them as strategic infrastructural alliances and zones designed to leverage benefits in the global competition for art trade hubs through foreign investment attraction. Thus, freeports can be understood as strategic place-based (extra)territorializations, instrumental in the functioning of the intricate mechanisms of financialized capitalism (ibid.: 11; DÖRRY & HESSE 2022: 165).

Finding 5: Re-scaled territorializations towards a globalised regulatory response to illegal trade remain hesitant and limited.

While our discussion has primarily focused on aspects of the globalized art trade that appear to circumvent or challenge nationally based regulations, QUINONES VILA (2021) provides insights into international efforts aimed at establishing uniform legislation to combat the trafficking of art goods. Building on an earlier UNESCO convention from 1970, the Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects (UNIDROIT 1995) was introduced as an international treaty and has since been ratified by over 50 countries (ibid.: 57f.). This treaty is designed to facilitate cooperation among national law enforcement agencies and is supported by bilateral agreements and measures. Through such efforts, state actors endeavour to implement territorially organized legislation on a global scale (see row “Scale” and column “Territorialization” in table 1), thereby making it more challenging for private participants in the art market to exploit national legislative discrepancies by scaling their operations globally.

6 Conclusion

Within both the art world and its scholarly examination, two distinct interpretations of the art market’s globalization process prevail. Firstly, globalization is often lauded as a unifying force that effectively de-territorializes the art world. This perspective posits that globalization diminishes the dominance of traditional Western centres, thereby elevating previously marginalized regions and fostering a genuinely global art sphere (VELTHUIS & BAIA CURIONI 2015: 4). Conversely, there is an argument suggesting that the art market has been internationally oriented for centuries, albeit to a lesser degree and with a pronounced Western emphasis (see ibid.: 5ff.). This viewpoint acknowledges the long-standing international nature of the art market, while recognizing its historically Western-centric orientation.

Contrary to such overarching narratives, our investigation aimed to parse out the socio-spatial dimensions of the globalized art market through the lens of the TPSN heuristic, using it as an approach to systematically investigate a specific globalized sector from a human geographical perspective. A systematic exploration of spatial relevance within this market unveils rich insights into the characteristics

of globalization processes both within the art market and broadly. This analysis reveals that the art world is neither entirely globalized and borderless nor simply a continuation of past international networking practices. Instead by using the TPSN heuristic as a conceptual framework, we were able to identify specific socio-spatial strategies structuring and influencing globalization processes in the art market. Nation-states retain significant influence through diverse territorially based practices, and disparities in development continue to mark the landscape. Yet, a novel dimension of global integration is evident, characterized by the re-scaled organization of market participants as transnational corporations operating within global production networks. Concurrently, new place-based centres and trading locales within the globalized art market have surfaced. Despite these developments, Western dominance persists, with actors like Sotheby’s and Christie’s maintaining a significant share of the global market as they were able to successfully use re-scaling and networking strategies. This situation underscores that globalization primarily benefits the dominant Western actors, facilitating their expansion and providing them with a competitive edge in new markets over local rivals (BELINA 2020: 55). This nuanced view acknowledges the complexity of globalization in the art market, conceptualizing it as a field of competitive interaction, oscillating between continuity and change.

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