

The Global Power of Private Museums: Arts and Publics – States and Markets

International Symposium

Berlin, Germany
16–18 November 2017

Call for Papers

Deadline for submissions: 30 April 2017

The history of state or public museums has been the focus of numerous symposiums and publications. Yet astonishingly little research has considered private museums, even though the number of private art museums has risen dramatically over the past two decades. According to the International Council of Museums (ICOM), there are now more private museum spaces in the world than public ones. The majority of these museums are in China, South Korea, the US and Germany, though private museums have been established also in Benin, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Egypt, India, Japan, Cameroon, Lebanon, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Russia, South Africa, among other countries.

Alongside spectacularly designed venues that frequently draw international attention with their exhibition openings, events and acquisition politics, there are museum complexes that have a more regional focus, or operate with limited economic power. Others bridge regional and global concerns, needs or ambitions. At this year's international symposium of the Centre for Art Market Studies at TU Berlin – organized in cooperation with the Forum Transregionale Studien and its research program Art Histories and Aesthetic Practices – participants will be exploring the background, mechanisms and consequences of a phenomenon that may be referred to as the "global power of private museums":

- What are the reasons behind the current boom in private museums? Are there regional, national or country-specific differences? If so, are these rooted in historical, geographical, political, social, economic or cultural causes?
- Who are the key players (entrepreneurs, private collectors, museum directors, advisors, art dealers, artists, activists, etc.)? And who are the visitors (local public or communities, tourists, children, etc.)?
- What kind of art is acquired, collected, exhibited and, in some cases, resold on behalf of these museums?
- How are the artworks staged, displayed, contextualised and made publicly accessible?
- Do private museums cooperate with, compete with, or take the place of state/public institutions? Are they established for the long term (endowment capital, etc.) or – at least initially – only for the current generation?
- What role do the mechanisms of the contemporary art market play in the development of these collections? How much power do private collectors and their advisors have in this market? In which networks are they actively involved? How do art market institutions respond to this situation? And how does this affect the process of establishing artists and specific art forms?

- What impact do government subsidies such as tax breaks (e.g. on inheritance tax or value-added tax) have on collector's decisions to establish their own museum instead of supporting state/public museums with their own works/collections?
- What additional role is played by foreign cultural policy practices or cross-border incentives of international art exchange programs in this context?

The symposium will focus on privately-funded art museums which are run by individuals, private foundations, associations or companies, with publicly accessible collections in any country or region of the world. The artworks in these collections may range from ancient artefacts to contemporary art.

The conference language is English. Papers should be a maximum of 20 minutes in length, and preference will be given to proposals that stimulate dialogue and engage with broader topics. Please send proposals (max. 300 words) with a short academic CV to global.private.museums@gmail.com by 30 April 2017. Financial assistance with travel expenses for speakers may be available (subject to grant approval).

Convenors:

- Technische Universität Berlin: Bénédicte Savoy (Fachgebiet Kunstgeschichte der Moderne / Collège de France), Dorothee Wimmer (Centre for Art Market Studies)
- Julia Voss (2016/17 Fellow of the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin)
- Forum Transregionale Studien: Hannah Baader (Art Histories and Aesthetic Practices / Kunsthistorisches Institut Florenz), Georges Khalil