

BUT, WHY COLLECT ART?

ART IS A
PROFITABLE
INVESTMENT

ART IS
MY PASSION

YOU CAN BE
A WEALTHY
ART COLLECTOR
IN THE
DIGITAL AGE

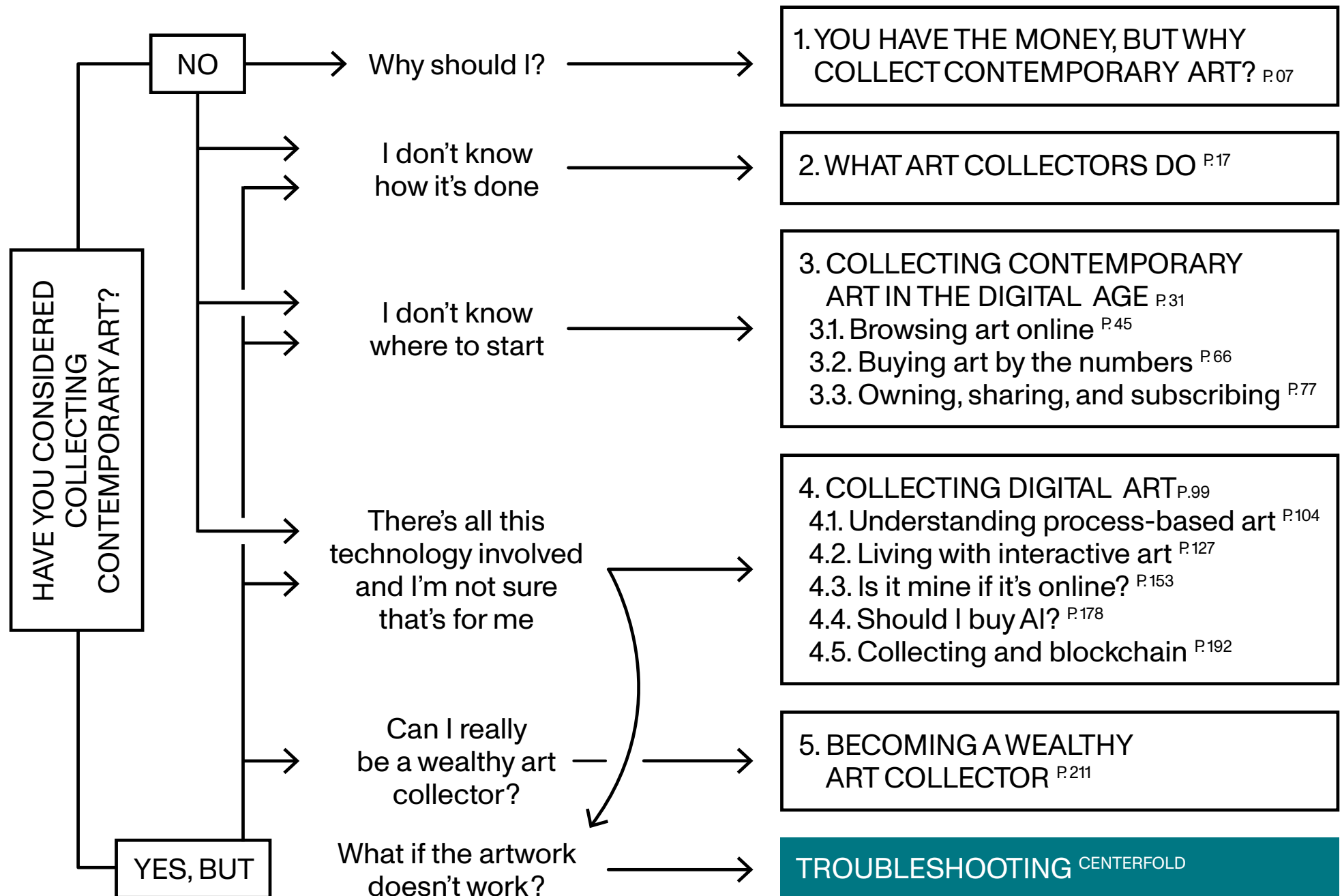
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Chapter 1

YOU HAVE THE MONEY, BUT WHY COLLECT CONTEMPORARY ART?

Let's assume that you have some money to spend, and also that you like contemporary art. You have a house with a generous number of walls and somewhat empty spaces (this will be useful to display your collection), and you don't need to buy a new car or a yacht either because you already have one or because you don't care much about such things. But, even if you have money and you like art, why become a collector? You can always see as much art as you like in museums, art galleries, art fairs, and biennials for free or for a fee, without any obligation of buying anything. You can also see a lot of art on the internet, and in the pages of art magazines. Contemporary art is everywhere, so you may as well be an art tourist, traveling around the world to visit spectacular private museums in remote locations, such as the island of Naoshima (Japan) where the Benesse Corporation displays its collection of modern and contemporary art; the exuberant gardens of Inhotim in Brumadinho (Brazil), where one can find the work of world famous artists in specifically designed pavilions; or, closer to the international art circuit, the elegant Punta della Dogana in Venice (Italy), restored by architect Tadao Ando for the Pinault Collection. You can also be an art consumer, buying books on art and merchandise at museum gift shops. Or, you can be an art influencer, posting images on Instagram of the art you see and

drawing attention to your favorite shows among your followers. Finally, you can be an art world socialite, the life of the party at openings and events, with friends and acquaintances all over the globe. You can be all of this, and also be an art collector. And conversely, because you collect art, you may find yourself traveling around the world to attend art fairs and biennials, visit museums, buy books and some cleverly designed objects, share your experiences on social media, and make friends.

All of this seems like a good way to spend your leisure time, but maybe you need a better reason to become a collector, something that traveling and social life alone do not provide. Collecting art can be part of a personal journey, a search for knowledge, the construction of something that reflects your taste and personality, a lasting contribution to your community, a legacy. What motivates your interest in collecting art can even go beyond any reasonable explanation, deeper into what you feel in front of an artwork, and the realization that it now belongs to you. According to collectors Ethan Wagner and Thea Westreich Wagner, there are strong emotions linked to the act of purchasing an artwork:

As art collectors have described it, buying art provides a rush, an adventure, a feeling of being alive and a chance to express individuality [...] [Collectors also experience] feelings of mastery, magical escape and states of transport and renewal. They may also gain a sense of control, potency and conquest. (Wagner and Westreich, 2013, p.8-15)

You may have also felt this “rush” at the moment of purchasing something important to you, for instance a car or a house, or just an object that you saw and fell in love with, particularly if you had to pay a considerable amount of money for it. Collectors often describe themselves as “passionate” and express their feelings towards the art they own as if they were talking about a loved one or a family member. (SEE CHAPTER 2) As pointed out by Russell W. Belk, a distinguished researcher on consumer culture, the passion that a collector feels can be compared to that of a romantic lover in the sense that emotions take over and sometimes lead to an obsessive and compulsive behavior (Belk, 1995, p.148). A sensible

explanation for the typically spontaneous act of purchasing an artwork, even when the price tag might be extravagant, or continuing to do so even when there is no more space to keep the art, can only be constructed as a rationalization after the fact. For this reason, most collectors tend to use terms such as “mania,” “madness,” or “addiction” to justify their need to buy art, as if it is something they cannot help doing. Belk compares this behavior to that of the compulsive shopper, who enjoys the act of purchasing more than the possession of the object she now owns (Belk, p.142). This momentary pleasure also brings with it feelings of guilt, commonly referred to as “buyer’s remorse” and often found among winning bidders at auctions, particularly those who end up spending hundreds of thousands, or even millions, of dollars in a bout of competitiveness and excitement. Passionate emotion is therefore closely linked to collecting, as is a lifelong commitment to buying art, prompted both by the rush that it provides and the mission of building a strong collection that will outlive its owner. Collectors, as mentioned above, enjoy an exciting lifestyle as they travel around the world, discover art and meet interesting people. However, they are expected to keep buying art, as this is their main role in the art world, and consequently the passion for acquiring artworks is partly fueled by the pressure of their peers and other professionals in the community to which they have chosen to belong.

So far we have briefly outlined some of the main reasons why people collect art. We will explore this further in the next chapter, but for now let’s look at some common motivations of art collectors.¹

¹ The statements below have been compiled from different sources, mainly Belk,1995; Kossenjans and Buttle, 2016; Wagner and Westreich, 2013; and Woodham, 2017.

You can use the following statements as a test to find out which may be your most convincing rationale (or excuse) to start buying art: do you agree to any, or all, of these propositions? Do they describe how you feel about collecting art?

- ◇ Collecting art is a passion and an addiction. I simply love art, and when I see an artwork that fascinates me, I have to buy it. I don’t care how much it costs, nor if I have a place to put it, I will worry about that later.

- ◇ I collect art to discover more about myself. My collection expresses who I am, how I see the world. The artworks I own are part of me, and I intend to develop a relationship with them, day after day, for a long period of time.
- ◇ Serious collectors don't simply buy art, they are experts. My expertise in art is the result of my dedication and close relationship with the artists, which materializes in the extraordinary quality of my collection. I am knowledgeable about contemporary art and have a good eye to identify talent.
- ◇ My collection will live on after I'm gone, it is my legacy. I am committed to building a strong collection that will be passed on to future generations. I intend to donate the art I own to an important museum or found a new museum that will host my collection.
- ◇ I collect to save an art form, an art historical period, or the work of a group of artists from oblivion. Some artistic practices have not received the attention they deserve. They will gain appreciation in the future, but if they are not collected, they may be lost. My collection is a testimony of this art, and in the future both the artworks and my vision will be recognized.
- ◇ As a collector, I enjoy being part of a community. I meet fascinating, like-minded people who value my commitment to supporting artists. I have friends all over the world and go to parties and exclusive events. I also like to invite friends to my home and show them my collection. It is part of my lifestyle, there is nothing else I would do in my spare time.
- ◇ I invest in art because it always increases its value. I put my money in artworks with a strong market value, which can be kept in storage and will generate a profit when I resell them in the future.

Collecting art can be part of a personal journey, a search for knowledge, the construction of something that reflects your taste and personality, a lasting contribution to your community, a legacy.

These sentences portray different approaches to collecting art, which may seem close or distant to your own views. Nevertheless, art collectors are not simply driven by a single motivation, but rather by a complex mixture of incentives, desires, ambitions, and also some unspoken rules. You will certainly find out what it is that drives you to collect art, and rest assured that you will meet other collectors who agree with you. The art world, and the market, have a place for all of these approaches to collecting, so you can be sure to find an environment where you will feel comfortable. In addition to this, let me add that you do not have to be wealthy to buy art, nor do you need to be an expert, and it is never too late (or too early) to start your collection.

What will come in handy, as you begin your path to becoming a wealthy art collector, is information: some useful tips and insights that will help you navigate the art market with your own (digital) devices and make the most out of the platforms and tools that are shaping how art is sold and collected in the twenty-first century. This is what this book aims to provide.

In Chapter 2, we will address the position of collectors in the art world and what is usually expected of them. Collecting contemporary art is increasingly popular, as the presence of international art fairs and biennials dominates the cultural landscape of large cities. Some artists are becoming public figures due to their involvement in political, social, or environmental issues, as well as because their artworks reach record prices at auction. Collectors too are enjoying more media attention and some have reached certain celebrity status, amassing numerous followers on social media. It is therefore not surprising that the number of collectors keeps growing, with many aiming for the extraordinary lifestyle that is associated with the most powerful and wealthy patrons of contemporary art. However, being an art collector is not simply about buying art: what is bought, and why, are important considerations that determine how a collector will be judged by her peers and other art professionals. This will, in turn, have an effect on her chances at building a great collection. Two well-known collector couples in the New York art scene of the 1960s, Herbert and Dorothy Vogel, and Robert and Ethel Scull, exemplify extremely opposite approaches to art collecting that have guided the predominant narrative on what it means to be a “good collector.” This narrative boils down to two main principles that serious collectors adhere to: 1) never sell, and 2) buy with your eyes and not with your ears. However, the current reality of collecting lends itself to more ambiguous and fluid positions, such as those exemplified by millennial collectors, who collect for instant gratification instead of patiently building their collection for the generations to come.

The relatively “impatient” attitude of young collectors is partly to be blamed on an acceleration of our consumer culture. As summarized by writer and design expert Deyan Sudjic: “We are a society that owns more things than any other in history, but never have they been discarded so quickly” (Sudjic, 2015, p.113). Artworks are now part of a society in which every other object has a dwindling lifespan, either due to planned obsolescence, cheap materials, or passing fads. Additionally, we are exposed to an unprecedented amount of information that contributes to the acceleration of the virality of every trend and constantly brings in new ideas, and approaches, to established ways of doing. The art market has

recently experienced a surge in online platforms and tools that aim to facilitate new forms of selling and collecting art. They will be discussed in Chapter 3, exploring the ways in which you can use these resources to build your art collection. Seasoned collectors always recommend learning as much as possible about contemporary art before buying, and this has become easier than ever. You can now start searching on online platforms and publications, sign up to newsletters, and have a continuous flow of information delivered to your inbox. This will help you become familiarized with the current trends and names in the contemporary art world. Besides learning about art on a screen, you should visit galleries, museums, art fairs and biennials. It’s fun and it also gives you a much more realistic view of the artworks you have seen on a website. The online art market currently offers information in many ways, among them quantified evaluations of the artists’ careers and auction price databases. These forms of analyzing art, paired with the popular top ten and blue-chip lists found in the media, contribute to understanding the position of artists and the future value of artworks in a way that can be misleading. This is because they operate with a small amount of data and frequently disregard the complexity of the art market—as well as the interconnected social and cultural factors that intervene in the appreciation of an artwork—which ultimately affects its economic value. It is therefore advisable to visit galleries as often as one signs in to online marketplaces and get to know other collectors and art professionals. In this chapter, you will also find some tips on how to purchase art from a gallery, and once you start building your collection, share your passion on social networks.

There are numerous online services, resources, tools and databases that can help you learn about art and buy it. Usually the artwork you will find will be a painting, sculpture, drawing, print, or photograph. As with most other products bought online, what you see on the screen is simply a reference to the real object. But the artwork could actually be what is on the screen, a piece that exists in the digital sphere and addresses its particularities and cultural implications. Digital art is typically much more than a static image: it is a visual composition continuously generated by a computer, a particular output of a flow of data on the internet, or an interaction between the artwork and the viewer—the latter

becoming an active agent in the creation of the piece. In Chapter 4, the main characteristics (or behaviors) of digital art will be discussed in terms of what it means for a collector to own software-based, interactive, and web-based artworks. The preservation of this type of artworks, the relationship that is established between the collector and the piece, and the ways in which the artwork can be shared, are discussed in detail. Furthermore, this chapter will address two technologies that have recently entered the art market and are of particular interest to collectors: artificial intelligence (AI) and blockchain. AI has become increasingly popular as the use of artificial neural networks has spread among artists, some of them achieving spectacular sales at auction. Blockchain technology has been adopted by a series of startups that offer collectors, galleries, and auction houses a range of services that include certification of authenticity and provenance of artworks, as well as fractional ownership. By analyzing the ways in which these technologies are marketed and how they actually work, you can learn to look beyond the hype and understand the risks and advantages in trusting a blockchain-based service or purchasing an AI-generated artwork.

Collecting contemporary art nowadays, whether you choose to buy paintings, sculptures, software-based generative pieces, or interactive installations, is a complex and exciting venture. You have more information and tools at your disposal than ever before, but this multiplicity of resources, in the fast-paced, always changing environment that is the art market today, can be overwhelming. I hope that this book will help you find your way, make your own meditated decisions, and become the art collector that you want to be.

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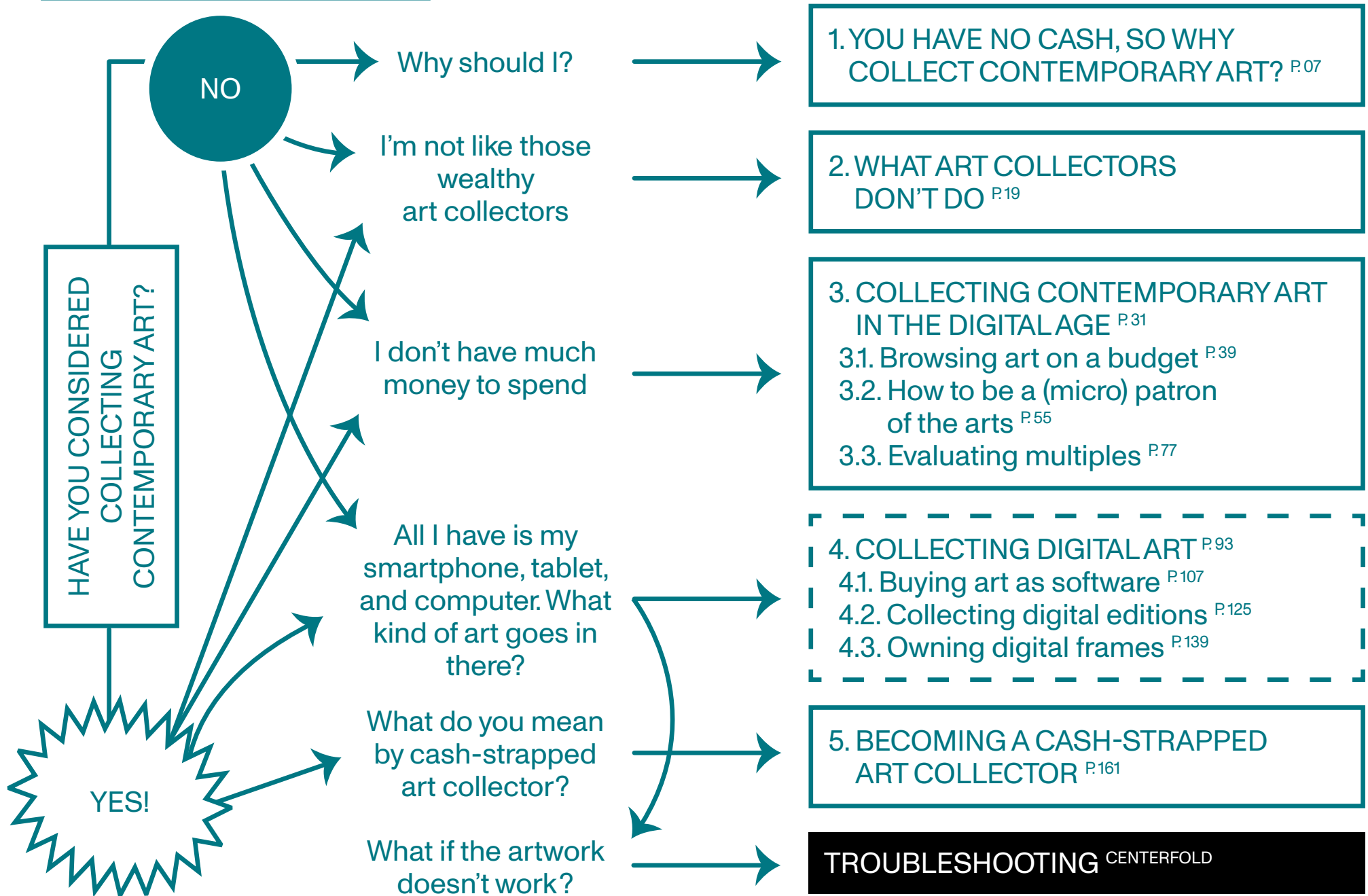
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Chapter 1

You have no cash, so why collect contemporary art?

You're not broke, but neither are you super-rich. You are like most people, part of a very wide spectrum that encompasses struggling students and young professionals who find it hard to make ends meet but still buy books (thank you, we love you), middle-aged professionals with certain stability and some savings for holidays and retirement, and finally everyone else who, for one reason or another, must be careful about the money they spend. And you like contemporary art: you go to museums to see shows, maybe also visit galleries sometimes, read about art in magazines, newspapers, and blogs. You have spent some holidays going to big art events, such as a biennale or visiting every contemporary art museum and foundation in a large city far from your home. You usually buy things related to art, such as books, posters, or merchandise. If you look around you, you'll notice that your coffee mug, a pencil, a tote bag, or a notebook on your desk feature the logo of a prominent museum and the image of an artwork—or a witty conceptual art sentence. Contemporary art is all around you, you live with it; it is part of who you are. Still, you don't buy artworks, maybe because you find them too expensive (the most affordable piece in a gallery costs at least as much as

¹ It must be said that Smart TVs have become quite cheap, but they are still considered a prominent possession in most households.

a 50-inch 4K Smart TV)¹ or because you consider that collecting art is for the super-rich. Another reason for you not to collect art is that, as I mentioned previously,

art is everywhere: you can see it in museums and galleries for free or for a reasonable fee; you can find it online and read about it in books and magazines. There is so much art to see that it is hard to decide on one artwork to take home and stare at it every day. Also, if you are a fan of Yayoi Kusama, Jeff Koons, Damien Hirst, or Takashi Murakami, you might think that you don't have enough cash to buy an artwork from these artists (or do you?—see below). So, you may be happy enjoying the vast amount of art that is produced all over the world, whether it is through the direct experience with an artwork for a brief moment at an exhibition, or through a reproduction in a book, on a poster or as merchandise. There is nothing wrong with that. Art is made to be experienced with our eyes, ears, and bodies, and when it causes enough of an impact, it lives in our minds as an image, a memory, or an idea. From this perspective, buying and keeping artworks seems less important. Governments, foundations, museums and super-rich collectors can take care of that. The rest of us, we'll see it when it is exhibited or published, and we will buy what we find at the bookstore or the gift shop.

It could seem, then, that only institutions and mega-collectors really contribute to the production and dissemination of contemporary art, but in fact everyone who is interested in it contributes in one way or another. Every exhibition and art event needs an audience, particularly in museums, foundations, and biennials, where success is measured by the number of visitors, and funding often depends on it, whether it comes from governments or private sponsors.² People attending museums are not only abstract numbers that justify, to some, the very existence of these cultural institutions, they also bring in revenue: in the admissions as well as in sales at the gift shop, the latter having become an considerable source of income.³ Buying merchandise in the museum store is often considered a purely consumerist activity, the kind that is mindlessly carried out by herds of tourists who are led on a guided tour to take pictures of the masterpieces and then inevitably pick up some souvenirs at the shop on their way out. However, this commercial space carries out an important task that is not only to bring in some extra cash for the much-needed funding

² It is interesting to see how museums rate among global attractions, such as theme parks and water parks, in the TEA/AECOM 2018 Theme Index and Museum Index. Among museums, the highest rated contemporary art museum is TATE Modern, in 7th place with 5,829,000 visitors. Among theme parks, the 7th most popular is EPCOT at the Walt Disney World Resort, with 12,444,000 visitors (TEA/AECOM, 2018).

³ According to the US Association of Art Museum Directors, among a museum's sources of revenue, store sales (8%) and individual and family membership (6%) are as important as admission tickets (7%). The main sources of revenue include patronage, government funding, and endowment (AAMD, 2018, p.6).

of art institutions, but also to spread their name and the relevance of their collections and activities. Cultural anthropologist Sharon Macdonald points out that, when we buy something from the museum shop, “we carry away a bit of the museum and some sense of obligation to the museum” (Macdonald, 2014). What is seen as simple consumerism can have a deeper symbolic meaning, and strengthen the relationship between the museum and its visitors. Most museums sell merchandise that only features their logo, signaling their importance as a brand. We buy these products because we want to take something from the museum with us, not only from the artworks in its collection, but from the institution itself as a symbol of commitment to art and culture. In this manner, the museum cements itself as an authoritative figure in our perception of the art world, as well as the sacred space where we go to see art and learn about it. The merchandise reminds us about this in our daily lives and acts as a sort of talisman, telling everybody else that we belong to the community of art lovers. (SEE CHAPTER 2)

The art crowds therefore contribute to the economy of the art world in an atomized form, with many people contributing small amounts of money, more or less frequently. The aggregation of all these tiny expenditures can be quite considerable: this is what is commonly known as the “long tail,” and it has been the target of different initiatives selling art to the masses over the last decades. (SEE CHAPTER 4) However, spending money on art (be it by paying for admission to exhibitions or buying books and merchandise) is never just a purely economic matter: it has, as outlined above, an important symbolic and social dimension. People who love contemporary art want to share their passion with everybody else, and in doing so they play a part in its popularity. This is particularly important for the art that has been created over the last 40+ years, since contemporary art has been notably unpopular, with a large part of the public opinion considering it elitist, absurd, or even a fraudulent. This perception has gradually changed over the last decade, with contemporary art becoming increasingly fashionable, while at the same time still being portrayed in the media in terms of its most extravagant or controversial manifestations. According to art historian Isabelle Graw, in the years 2004–2008 there was already an unprecedented surge of media attention on art world events, which focused mainly on the social aspect of opening night parties at exhibitions, art fairs and biennials,

Why limit yourself to seeing and talking about the art that other people possess? Why not get more involved and buy your own artworks, or contribute to an art project?

popularizing the glamorous lifestyle of successful collectors, gallerists, and artists (Graw, 2009, p. 108-112). This was also the time of the rise of blogs and social media, which introduced new ways of accessing the art world and sharing one's experiences at exhibitions. The information about contemporary art events was previously disseminated through the writings of journalists and art critics, as well as the press releases of organizers; now all sorts of voices have been added to the discussion, bringing in different perspectives and interests from gossip to fashion choices, power struggles, financial analyses, socio-political approaches, and even aesthetic concerns. The art world has embraced celebrity culture with artists, collectors and gallerists gaining celebrity status, while celebrities from the film and music industries have revealed themselves as contemporary art collectors. And, at the same time, contemporary art seems more intelligible, as it is being discussed outside the realm of highbrow art magazines and shared by art lovers on social media.

So here we are: contemporary art is now mainstream. You can experience it in a growing number of venues, as well as on online platforms and social media. It pops up in the news, on blogs, YouTube channels, Instagram posts, TikTok videos, in the streets and even on people's tote bags and T-shirts. At some level, the art world is still elitist and snooty, but the artworks are more accessible than ever in terms of experiencing them in public shows, through photographs, videos, or 3D models that one can view in augmented reality. It is rather easy to be a contemporary art lover, and you're likely to find many other people who share your passion, as well as many others who hate contemporary art, which makes it more fun. One of the wonderful things about contemporary art is that it is always challenging and debatable: there are no shortages of controversies and new developments to discuss with the people around you, particularly those who do not understand why people pay so much for an oversized balloon dog. But why limit yourself to seeing and talking about the art that other people possess? Why not get more involved and buy your own artworks, or contribute to an art project? The art you see in museum shows, the pieces that reach spectacular prices at auction or command the admiration of connoisseurs at the latest biennial are all very well, but they feel a bit distant. When you buy an artwork, even if it is a digital edition at a very affordable price, (SEE 4.2) you enter another level in your relationship with art. After you choose to spend your money on an artwork, you must tell yourself and others why you did so, and also decide what you are going to do with it. If buying something in the museum shop is carrying away a sense of obligation to the institution, buying an artwork with a certificate of authenticity is certainly a commitment to caring for, and supporting, the art you love.

Becoming an art collector (even a cash-strapped one) is an exciting journey that will make you learn a lot about yourself and your devotion to art. Buying art is quite different from buying something *about* art: first of all, because an artwork has no other purpose than to exist, it doesn't do anything practical, whereas a coffee mug, a tote bag, or a T-shirt featuring the image of an artwork all have specific uses in your daily life. Of course, an artwork can fill an empty space on your wall and tell your friends and relatives about your passion for art and your cultured taste (arguably, a nice tote bag on a hanger and a T-shirt worn consistently can also do the trick). But there is

something else: the second argument is that an artwork is, to a certain extent, unique. It is different from other things you can buy in that it is either one of a kind or one in a limited series; and even when it is sold in a large amount of copies, it can be identified as a single entity because it has a title and a creator. In this manner, it is different from a coffee mug, a tote bag, or a T-shirt, which would all be the same if they had nothing printed on them—and that’s why most people pay extra for objects and clothes with an original design that sets them apart from the rest. Thirdly, when you buy a useful object, such as a coffee mug, you spend money to solve a specific problem (how to drink coffee) and also to own that object, which may be aesthetically attractive or particularly useful (it’s foldable, for instance), whereas when you buy an artwork you pay for the object itself, nothing more. Therefore, the justification for the amount spent cannot be divided between the object and its use: if you need to drink coffee and the mug you had is broken, it is reasonable to buy a new one; also, if you already have a coffee mug but come across another one that can be folded, you will buy that one too. This does not happen with artworks, at least not in terms of their use. What will probably happen is that, once you start to buy art, you will want more and more, as long as you can afford it. Finally (fourth argument, if you keep count), when you buy an artwork there is a certain commitment to keeping it, ideally forever. You are not supposed to throw it away or even sell it, although many collectors do. ^(SEE CHAPTER 2) This is somewhat unusual in a time where we are used to throwing away our things in order to buy new ones all the time, and it can feel like a burden. But it can also lead you to consider your purchases more carefully, and find a new sense in owning things that matter to you.

This book aims to help you deal with those peculiar commodities that are works of art, and specifically those that do not cost a fortune. The reason for this is twofold: on the one hand, I intend to show you that collecting art is not for the mega-rich, but for everyone; on the other hand, artworks that sell for a few bucks often have a different purpose than those sold for five or six figures. It is worth discovering the different ways in which contemporary art is made affordable nowadays, particularly through digital media, and finding out how artists and entrepreneurs look for the interstices and uncharted territories in the rigid hierarchies of the art market. In doing so, you’ll see a lot of amazing artworks and feel the excitement

There are many ways in which you can further your involvement with contemporary art. It won’t cost a fortune; it will be enlightening, exciting, and enjoyable.

of owning some, or contributing to an artistic project. And who knows, you may find that you can build a bigger collection, little by little, and decide to follow the path of the mega-collectors. If you do, just turn this book upside down to read *You Can Be a Wealthy Art Collector In the Digital Age*.

The term “art collector” may sound a bit pretentious if you just want to enjoy art and are willing to pay for it, or if your aim is to find a way to support artists. In chapter 2, we will discuss the archetypal image of the art collector, and how you can be your own kind of collector, sometimes driven by the same motivations as a wealthy businessperson who owns an art foundation, and sometimes taking a completely different approach. There are many ways to collect art, care for it and share your passion with others: you do not need to own a big house, rent a warehouse to store the art that doesn’t fit in your home, and travel around the world from art fair to art fair fighting with other collectors for the most coveted pieces from the

rising stars in the international art scene. In fact, you do not need to buy what everyone else is buying; you can shape your collection in a way that reflects your personality and taste, no matter how atypical. Even a big collection from a well-funded art institution can be boring if it just features a number of artworks by the same highly popular artists that you find everywhere else and fails to bring in a particular vision to its selection. So, you can use the fact that you are not spending much, or keeping highly valuable objects, to collect art more freely—keeping an open mind and experimenting with types of artworks, visual languages or subjects you may have never considered otherwise. When you're free of expectations, you can be bold.

Whatever you choose to buy, you must know where to find it. In chapter 3, we will explore some of the main contemporary art marketplaces (those that wealthy collectors use), looking for affordable pieces, if only to show that art is not always as expensive as you may think. What can be considered “affordable” is also something that will be discussed, since it can mean different amounts to different people. You will learn how to use the tools available at each of these marketplaces to zoom in on the art that interests you and matches your budget. Additionally, we will consider other marketplaces where you can find artworks by lesser-known artists or in formats that make them less expensive. In these searches, the main underlying consideration is what makes these artworks affordable: as you know, there is a threshold to how much a price can fall without compromising quality, and in the art market the factors that determine the price of a piece are much more complex than in the case of, say, sneakers. These factors will be addressed to help you clearly understand what you are purchasing, in order to avoid the frustration of owning an artwork that fails to meet your expectations.

One of the main ways in which art is made accessible to a wider public is by creating multiple copies, commonly called editions. As I mentioned before, artworks are meant to be one-of-a-kind, and this uniqueness is usually what makes them quite expensive. In order to lower prices, editions are made in three, five, ten, or even hundreds and thousands of copies. Each of them is identical, all having the same attributes and therefore facilitating (in terms of their appearance) the same experience. They are just not that unique, a number of other people can also possess them. You may not care much about

that, but the art world does, and that is why the higher the number of editions, the lower the price. In some cases, the edition is a version of an original piece, created with different materials or at a different scale. It can also be a single instance or element from a larger project involving other pieces or processes. In any of these cases, it is important that you know what you are buying, so as to properly evaluate the piece that you own.

You may also decide not to own anything, or not to always purchase an artwork, but instead use your money to support an artistic project. Being a patron of the arts used to be an activity reserved for the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie, and while it is still popular among the wealthy to support artistic production (thank God!), now everyone can make a contribution through a series of online platforms. Crowdfunding has become extraordinarily successful over the last decade, although mostly for consumer products that have been launched on pre-sale, with backers betting their money on the prospect that the smartwatch, smart-cooler, travel gizmo, or Fidget Cube will actually be produced and work as advertised. This also applies to most artistic projects, which are aimed at the production of a (coloring) book, a film, a play, or some sort of object. However, there are also outstanding artistic projects that have received the support of thousands of backers in a much more philanthropic way (albeit, with some perks). These will be discussed, providing some tips on how to evaluate the project before deciding to back it, and what to expect from your contribution.

Most of the cultural products that have become widely available and increasingly affordable arrive to us in a digital format: ebooks, films, music, TV shows, video games, and comic books, to name a few, swiftly appear on our connected devices at the push of a button, either sold individually or as part of a subscription. Art is also created with digital tools, not only to produce prints or sculptures, but also to be experienced on a screen, a projection, or through a VR headset. Digital art can therefore be globally distributed, and since it can be copied endlessly, it allows for very large editions at the lowest prices. In chapter 4, the different forms of selling and collecting inexpensive digital art will be addressed. Over the last decade, artists have been increasingly interested in selling their artworks as apps for iOS and Android devices, or as executable files

that can be bought for a small fee and downloaded onto one's own computer. These experimental forms of commercialization have their upsides and downsides but, in any case, it can be interesting for you to explore them, support the artists, and have fun. At the same time, several companies have developed online marketplaces where you can buy art in digital editions that you can view on your computer, smartphone or tablet. Each platform establishes certain conditions on the artworks that you purchase from them: these will be reviewed in order to help you understand what you are buying, and decide what is most convenient for you.

Digital art is easily accessible and can adapt to different displays, but it may not be ideal to view an artwork on the same devices you use to work, chat, or entertain yourself. You will always want to do something else, and the art may end up relegated to a browser bookmark or an app you consistently forget to open. Having a dedicated display is crucial to enjoying your digital art collection. Several companies have worked to produce such devices, with uneven results, while electronic appliance manufacturers have become increasingly interested in developing TV sets that double as displays for digital art. These products will be evaluated by considering their cost, the robustness of their approach, and how they can be advantageous to you. While there is, at present, no single solution for collecting and displaying digital art at home, these initiatives set the path for what will come in the future.

There are many ways in which you can further your involvement with contemporary art beyond visiting exhibitions and buying merchandise. It won't cost a fortune; it will be enlightening, exciting, and enjoyable. Don't hesitate to start this journey. Besides, you already bought this book, so if you continue reading, it may be worth your money, and most of all, your time.