



ARTE E SUAS INSTITUIÇÕES

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Organização

Ana Cavalcanti

Emerson Dionisio Gomes de Oliveira


Maria de Fátima Morethy Couto

Marize Malta

Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro

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Sobre a imagem da capa: Trabalho de CARLOS ZÍLIO - "Rubens on the beach II, 2007, óleo e bastão de óleo sobre tela, 140x180cm".

Institutions for Art – Art for Institutions

G. Ulrich Großmann, Germanisches Nationalmuseum,
Nuremberg

The main issue of my lecture is a very general one: What kind of institutions concerned with art have existed and still exist and in which way have they dealt and deal with art?

When talking about “Institutions for art” we nowadays first and foremost think of art academies, museums and other public institutions educating artists or collecting, keeping and exhibiting art.

Seen in a broader historical perspective, however, the term “Institutions for art” encompasses other kinds of institutions, which occupied and still occupy themselves with art. For that reason, it is essential to first give a definition of the terms used.

Defining the term “art” is a precondition for dealing with the question of the institutions for art. The term commonly refers to what is known as “fine arts, e. g. mostly material objects such as paintings, graphic works, sculptures, art objects, architecture and different kinds of media art. A work of art is an object designed in a particular way, which is usually not utilized as an article of daily use and can be more than a mere object of decoration. The painting in a gallery, an altarpiece as well as an elaborately worked silver chalice all belong to this category. Basically the following applies: The aesthetic character outweighs the mere functional value.

In a broader view, the term “art” also covers all processes linked to artistic production which not necessarily result into a material product – from ephemeral forms such as early modern festival choreographies to the performances and social sculptures in modern and contemporary art. A well known example is Joseph Beuys’ solo performance called “How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare”, performed on 26 November 1965 at the Galerie Schmela in Dusseldorf.

For a more comprehensive and conclusive definition of art, I would like to point to the CIHA Congress 2016 taking place in Beijing and which will be dedicated to the term of “art”.

A second term needs to be explained now – that is the question **what is an institution?** The Oxford English Dictionary defines the noun “institution” as follows:

1 an organization founded for a religious, educational, professional, or social purpose: an academic institution [...] a certificate from a professional institution
an organization providing residential care for people with special needs: about 5 per cent of elderly people live in institutions
an established official organization having an important role in a society, such as the Church or parliament: the institutions of democratic government
a large company or other organization involved in financial trading: City institutions

2 an established law or practice: the institution of marriage informal a well-established and familiar person or custom: he soon became something of a national institution.

With regard to “institutions for art”, we have to distinguish between institutions exclusively serving the purpose of art and those institutions which are dedicated to other purposes, but which additionally are dedicated to art as well.

Functions

To fully understand our modern “institutions for art” and our actual, very diverse system of art institutions, it is necessary to look back in history and also consider earlier eras. In my opinion, the following main types of institutions related to art have to be distinguished:

A) Institutions with the main focus on having **works of art to be produced**, in order to support art itself or a certain artist. Here might belong trusts or foundations, which support artists or art projects.

In some countries, the “legislative power”, in other words the institution “state” also acts as an “institution for art”. In Germany, for instance, until some years ago there existed a law called “Art in Architecture Program” according to which 2% of the costs for public buildings had to be spent on art, enabling, among others, the German National Museum to commission the from the internationally renowned sculptor Dani Karawan (ill. 1).



ill. 1 - Nuremberg, German Nationalmuseum, "Way of human rights", detail (Dani Karavan, 1993)

B) Institutions collecting, preserving and exhibiting already existing works of art, chiefly museums, sculpture parks, castles or other kinds of historic houses.

In this context, institutions explicitly founded as art museums and which primarily have an aesthetic purpose have to be distinguished from other institutions where collecting and exhibiting works of art is also related to representative purposes. Among the first places of this kind is the Renaissance **Loggia di Lanzi** in Florence (ill. 2), a communal institution, which collected and exhibited ancient and Renaissance sculptures. Other examples include painting galleries in castles or historic houses, but also in parliament buildings.

C) Institutions solely exhibiting works of art, which by doing so can also initiate the production of works of art. In this



ill. 2 - Florence, Loggia dei Lanzi

context, major exhibition events such as the “documenta” in Kassel, the Biennale in Venice or the Biennale in Sao Paulo have to be mentioned in the first place. They have precursors in the French “Salons” of the eighteenth century or Academic art shows in the nineteenth century. Related phenomena are the art or arts and crafts shows organized as part of World Fairs.

Whereas these forms of shows and exhibitions are more or less governmental institutions, other institutions which exhibit and also initiate the production of art belong to the private sector, above all art galleries and commercial art fairs.

D) Finally, there are institutions not primarily focusing on collecting, selling or promoting art, but on commissioning works of art. Such institutions utilize works of art for representation, decoration or more or less political, religious

or didactic purposes. Here belong for example monasteries, congregations, town councils, public administrations etc.

The transition between these institutions and their fields of activities is, however, smooth. Other institutions related to art are:

Institutions educating artists like art schools and art academies.

Institutions distributing art. Here, especially the art trade has to be mentioned.

Institutions communicating or informing on art, such as the media.

Institutions protecting art, especially the preservation of monuments.

Institutions researching art among them universities and scientific associations.

Most of these institutions have a long history, often much longer than we might have expected when first looking at our topic, sometimes going back to the early Middle Ages.

Regarding the Middle Ages the most important “institution for art” was certainly the Church. A particularly well preserved example of early medieval art patronage can be admired in the church of St. George at Reichenau (ill. 3-4), a small island in the Lake Constance in southern Germany. In this church, which dates from the 10th century, the walls of the nave are decorated with a cycle of murals illustrating the miracles of Christ. The paintings were commissioned by the imperial abbey of Reichenau in order to promote, among others, the pilgrimage to St. George and its most precious relic, the newly acquired head of



ill. 3 - Reichenau (Lake Constance), St. Georg



ill. 4 - Reichenau (Lake Constance), St. Georg, paintings from the X. c.

the martyr. They had also representative functions as they added to the monastery's status as imperial abbey and its fame as one of the cultural centers of the medieval German empire.

Many churches erected by religious congregations had such kinds of fresco cycles, which were common throughout the Middle Ages and well into the Baroque period as you certainly know from the early convent churches here in Brazil. One may argue that these paintings were mainly commissioned for religious, not for artistic purposes. However, a good part of them were not essential for the exercise of faith. As a reaction, some congregations like for instance the Cistercians clearly rejected any works of art not essential for the divine service in their buildings. In the twelfth century, the Cistercian St. Bernard of Clairvaux blamed other abbots for spending too much money on

such “unnecessary” decorations which only distracted the eye of the beholders. His words clearly show that his contemporaries were not only interested in the religious, but also in the aesthetic dimension of paintings and sculptures. Bearing this in mind, it becomes even more evident that monastic and other ecclesiastical communities play a major role as “Institutions for art”.

Other important medieval “institutions for art” are the civil communities, which could, for instance, provide its town halls with fresco cycles, stained glass windows or sculptures. As a rule, the paintings mostly support the representative purposes of the city – in modern terms, its “image”, and usually, local artists are intentionally commissioned with the works. As an example I would like to show the town hall of Siena of the 15th century with its famous frescoes by Lorenzetti (ill. 5) and, as a modern counterpart, the former town hall of Cuernavaca in Mexico decorated around 1930 with murals by Diego Rivera (ill. 6).

A city could also commission artists to produce all kinds of objects to serve as precious diplomatic gifts. The city of Nuremberg, for instance, commissioned the goldsmith Wenzel Jamnitzer to make two golden goblets which the city of Nuremberg gave as a present to the Russian Tsar.¹ In the Renaissance, the city of Nuremberg is also an excellent example for the fact that the city council willingly awarded orders to artists with the purpose of tying the artists to the city.

¹ Ralf Schürer: Nürnbergs Goldschmiede und ihre Auftraggeber. In: Karin Tebbe (Bearb.): Nürnberger Goldschmiedekunst 1541-1868, Vol II, Begleitband zur Ausstellung. Nuernberg 2007, p. 70-119.



ill. 5 - Siena, town hall, XV.c.

In the case of monasteries, ecclesiastical congregations and local authorities we could speak of “client **communities**”, who under the aspect of representation and decoration commissioned works of art and thus became “institutions for art”.

In the Late Middle Ages, however, there were institutions purposefully founded for art or for the artists, known as “guilds”. They were organized according to the different professions. In most cities, there existed a guild for painters, which at the beginning did not differentiate between a mere house-painter and decorator and a painter with artistic ambitions. Many of these painter guilds were named after Saint Luke, the evangelist who according to the legend had painted a true portrait of the Madonna.



ill. 6 - Cuernavaca (Mexico), town hall, c. 1930, Paintings from Diego Rivera

The “Guilds of St. Luke” regulated the commissioning of orders, intervened in litigations and set regulations for the education of young artists. In places without such guilds, local authorities regulated with so-called “painter’s rules” the

aspects of education, organization of the artist's workshop as well as the pension and the funeral of the artists.²

In early modern times, more and more institutions came into being, whose main purpose was art, as they dedicated themselves to the education of artists. The most important new development is the creation of **Academies of arts** (ill. 7). The first academies were established in the 16th century following the example of Ancient Greek where in unorganized meetings scientific debates were held. One idea for the creation of art academies was to bring the artist, who at this time was primarily considered as a craftsman, to an more intellectual and theoretical level. The Italian artist



ill. 7 - Vienna, Academie of Art

² Andreas Tacke, *Malerordnungen in Dresden*, In: *Anzeiger des Germanischen Nationalmuseums* 2001 p. 29-47; Heidrun Ludwig, Andreas Tacke, Ursula Timann: „Der Mahler Ordnung und Gebräuch in Nuernberg“. *Die Nuernberger Malerzunftbuecher*. Muenchen/Berlin 2001.

and architect Leon Battista Alberti was one of the first who declared visual arts to be a science and to have a theory of its own.

The first academy with fixed rules (as an institution under the above-mentioned definition) was created in Florence under Giorgio Vasari not earlier than 1563 as the “Accademia del disegno”, which today is considered to be the first “real” academy of arts.³ There, young artists were educated and a strict distinction was made between the former kind of guilds and the new academies. A comparable institution was created in Rome in 1593 with the Accademia di San Luca. After these early beginnings, the institution of the academy asserted itself in the 17th century as the most important education facility such as the “Accademie royale de Peinture et de Sculpture” in Paris as well as the first German academy founded in Nuremberg in 1662. In the academies, however, students and other adherents had to follow strict rules, which meant the artists were now dictated by new regulations having been freed from the guilds. This “aesthetic dictatorship” of the academies was an aspect which became increasingly criticized by many avant-garde artists from the 19th century onwards.

As a reaction to the conservative art academies, self-managed art schools and artists unions free from academic constraints developed in the late 19th and early 20th century. Among the most important were the Werkbund in Vienna and the Bauhaus in Dessau and Weimar. The main purpose of the Werkbund established in 1907 was to improve the

³ David Greve: Status und Statue. Studien zum Leben und Werk des Florentiner Bildhauers Baccio Bandinelli. Berlin 2008, p. 334.

product design as to their functional and aesthetic qualities; consequently it is not a “classical” fine arts institution. To the contrary, the Bauhaus initiated in 1919 by Walter Gropius in Weimar tried to support all artistic genres from architecture to arts and crafts and fine arts. In both cases, the founders were artists and not state institutions, though at least the Bauhaus was largely funded by the government.

I would now like to turn to public museums and collections as institutions for art which were created in Europe from the middle of the 18th century onwards. Some evolved from princely collections, especially from the early modern “Kunstammer” and cabinets of curiosities, such as the ones founded by emperor Rudolph II in Prague (now in Vienna) or Archduke Ferdinand of Tyrol at Ambras Castle around 1600. Admission to their collections, however, was severely restricted and usually needed the personal permission of the ruler. As one of the first princely collections, the famous paintings and sculpture collection of the Medici was given to the Florentine public after the death of the last archduke in 1737. The gallery installed in the Uffizi is considered by many to be the oldest public art museum in the world.

As early as 1750 the collections of the French king were shown for the first time to the public – a permanent exhibition in the Louvre, however, came not into being before 1793 when the building and the collections were seized by the revolutionists. The first true public museum is the British Museum founded in 1753 (ill. 8). It was created after the British Parliament had acquired Hans Sloane’s



ill. 8 - London, British Museum

(1660-1753) important natural sciences and antiquities collection and wished to open it to the public. Its extension to art-historical collections, however, was only made in the decades from 1800 on. In Germany, the “Museum Fridericianum” in Kassel was the first museum especially built for the purpose of exhibiting art from 1769 on. Today it is mostly known as a major venue of the documenta (ill. 9).

In contrast to the “old masters”, contemporary art was first presented in salons and not in museums. **Salons** as places of public presentation and art criticism have existed from the 17th century on. In 1674 the Académie royale de Peinture et de Sculpture organized for the first time an exhibition in the “Salon Carré”, and from 1725 on exhibitions took place in the Louvre. Works of art students and other members of the royal academy were shown and



III. 9 - Documenta XII, Kassel, 2007

the inclusion of a work into the exhibition meant recognition for the artist.⁴

At the beginning, museums hardly ever bought or exhibited works of contemporary artists - this is mainly a development of the 20th century. **Art societies** started to support contemporary art such as the Albrecht-Dürer-Association in Nuremberg founded in 1792 or the Art Society in Cologne founded in 1839. In Germany today about 200 art clubs have been unified in the "Arbeitsgemeinschaft deutscher Kunstvereine". During the 19th and 20th centuries, similar art clubs were founded all around the globe, which are also major social venues. It is not their task to collect but to promote artists and present works of art and, if necessary, even to find a prospective buyer for a work of art.

⁴ J. J. Marquet de Vasselot: Répertoire des catalogues du musée du Louvre, 1793–1917 ; Thomas Crow: Painters and Public Life in 18th Century Paris. Yale University Press 1987.

Exhibition houses of private organizations came already into being in the late 19th century such as the exhibition house of the Vienna Secession in 1898. Modern and contemporary art have been shown in the Museum of Modern Art in New York since 1929. It was only in 1979, however, that the first museum exclusively exhibiting contemporary art was founded in Los Angeles (Museum of Contemp. Art/MOCA in LA 1979), the second one followed in 1980 in Basel (Museum of Contemporary Art/Museum für Gegenwartskunst).

In more recent times, major regular exhibitions of contemporary art have gained particular importance, such as the Biennale (especially in Venice, Biennale, since 1895; Sao Paulo, from 1951) or the documenta in Kassel. The first documenta in 1955 had the goal to exhibit modern art created between 1930 and 1955. During Third Reich most modern art trends were prohibited in Germany, and many artists were persecuted by the Nazis. From the second documenta on, contemporary art gained more importance and often works of art were especially created for the documenta. Thanks to the presentation of the works at the documenta and comparable exhibitions, their market value and the artists' standing generally rise; at some times the documenta even took over the marketing of works of art (documenta 3).⁵

Art trade is a separate profession in itself, though. Private galleries and the private **art trade** as a whole were

⁵ Dirk Boll: Der Kampf um die Kunst. Handel und Auktionen positionieren sich am Kunstmarkt. (Diss. Ludwigsburg 2004). Halle 2005 (http://opus.bsz-bw.de/phlb/volltexte/2006/2601/pdf/Boll_Diss.pdf).

created due to the fact that artists did not longer just produce commissioned works, but created art for the open market. Oskar Bätschmann found for this development the term “exhibition artist”.⁶ Already in the 16th century, specialized merchants and agents were looking for potential customers for works of art, being the forerunners of the modern art dealers.⁷ Even earlier, merchants dealing with graphic art and serially produced sculptures, are known to have existed in Antwerp where regular art fairs were held from the 15th century onwards.

In the 17th century the trade with contemporary works of art began to increase and especially in the Netherlands some art dealers specialized on the sale of specific genres of paintings. From these early beginnings of art trade, galleries and auction houses evolved. One of the earliest permanent auction houses is the Auktionsverket founded in Stockholm in 1674, followed by Sotheby’s in 1744 and Christie’s in 1766.⁸ In the late 16th century, already art traders owning shops⁹ existed, and their number considerably increased in the age of Baroque. It was not before the 19th century that art dealers of contemporary art, also known as “galleries”, separated from art dealers of older art.¹⁰ In our days, galleries are organized in associations organizing trade fairs for the better sale of works of art such as the

⁶ Oskar Bätschmann: *Ausstellungskünstler*. Köln 1997.

⁷ Anja Grebe: *Dürer. Die Geschichte seines Ruhms*. Petersberg 2013.

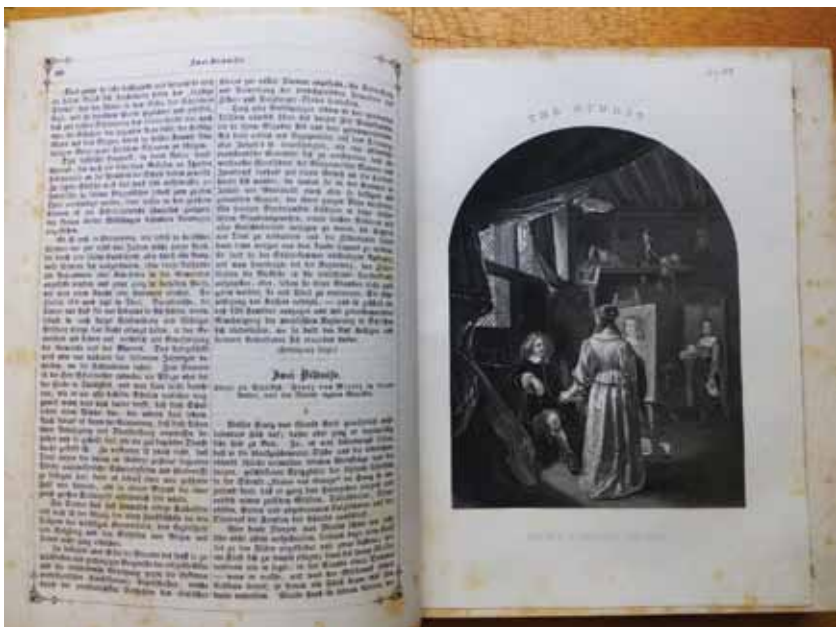
⁸ Boll 2005 (wie Fn. 5), S. 17.

⁹ Dealers with prints and drawings still existed already in the late XVI.c.: Barbara Mundt: *Der Pommersche Kunstschatz des Augsburger Unternehmers Philipp Hainhofer für den gelehrten Herzog Philipp II. von Pommern*. München 2009.

¹⁰ Boll 2005 (wie Fn. 5), S. 20, u.a. nach Silke Hartenstein: *Galeriewerk mit zeitgenössischer Kunst in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*. Kassel 1997, p. 9.

“Art Cologne” which has become a very popular event (from 1967 called “Kunstmarkt Köln”, renamed in 1984).

The **media** such as art magazines, radio or television reporting about art play in the broadest sense an important role in spreading art. In the 19th century magazines emerged containing illustrations of contemporary art (for example “Düsseldorfer Monats-Hefte mit Illustrationen” (ill. 10) of different artists; Paynes Universum und Buch der Kunst). Journals including original graphics spread from the early 20th century on, eg. “Kunst und Künstler” 1902-1933, or “derrière le miroir” 1946-1982. It was the intention of some of these periodicals to serve the spreading of art at affordable costs in order to also address collectors with a smaller budget.



ill. 10 - “Duesseldorfer Monatshefte“

In addition to the spreading of art by artists and publishers, the entire scientific and scholarly sector has to be mentioned. The first art historian chairs have been established in the late 19th century, above all in Germany, Austria, Italy and France. Most of them focused on older art, but since the installation of the professorship in Marburg in 1913 (Richard Hamann) these chairs also started to teach contemporary art.

Closely related to the beginnings of art history as an academic discipline, the preservation of monuments evolved in the first half of the 19th century with, for instance, Prosper Mérimée (author of the famous novel “Carmen”) in France or Ferdinand von Quast in Germany. Being in the competence of the state, the preservation of historical monuments is founded on a legal basis with the aim to prevent the destruction of historical monuments. Today, the world heritage list of the UNESCO is particularly well known and its purpose is to globally protect outstanding historical monuments. The deliberate destruction of the Buddha statues in Afghanistan was criticized worldwide, in contrast to the almost complete rebuilding of the Renaissance building of the former German trading house in Venice by the entrepreneur Benetton which went unmentioned.

Finally, scientific associations should also be mentioned which are dedicated to art and in this way promote art for example at congresses held regularly. Such associations exist on a regional, national or international level as the “CAA” in the United States of America. Many associations have specialized on the art of particular countries such as Dutch or

Italian art, of particular times such as Renaissance, Baroque or modern art or specific genres such as architecture or textiles. As “pars pro toto” I would like to mention the International Committee of Art History which in 1873 convened for the first time and then from 1893 on a regular basis. Since 1945 under the international “CIHA” also national committees of CIHA (ill. 11) such as CBHA in Brazil were created organizing conferences and events on a regular basis. All these are important institutions for art, not only promoting art but also the knowledge of art.



ill. 11 - CIHA 2012 in Nuremberg

Conclusion

Bearing all these aspects in mind it can be concluded that behind the title “Institutions for art” an extremely diverse

issue is hidden. In many fields we can find institutions producing, promoting, researching, protecting and dealing with art. When looking at these institutions we essentially look at the history of art itself without considering individual private persons unless these persons act as visitors of a museum, readers of a magazine, as buyers or collectors of works of art or as curators and researchers like us.