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PATRONAGE, BUSINESS AND THE VALUE OF ART:

The Corporate Arts Sponsorship of Absa Bank and Hollard Insurance.

Jenni Verschoor

A research report submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in the fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters in History of Art.

Johannesburg, 2009

ABSTRACT

This report is a study into the corporate sponsorship of art as is evident in South Africa today. Starting with a history of patronage in the West, it leads to South Africa and the role currently being played by South African companies in the art world. Through an examination of South African patronage by the government and direct interviews with individuals involved in government and corporate sponsorship of the arts, this report endeavours to show how and why organisations such as Absa Bank and Hollard Insurance have chosen to involve themselves in the art world. I will then follow on to discuss the effect that this corporate sponsorship has on the value of art – financially, socially and culturally. The end result will be study on the relationship that exists between the benefactor and the beneficiary of corporate sponsorship in South Africa and the resulting impact this has on the perceived value of art.

(art; patronage; value; corporate sponsorship; investment art; corporate collections; Absa; Hollard)

DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Masters in History of Art in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

_____

Jenni Verschoor

Signed on this, the 31st day of August, 2009

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Jeanetta Blignaut, Curator of the Hollard art collection and Director of Coeo, whose inside perspective into the compilation of the Hollard collection and their various other art sponsorship activities provided great insight into the potential altruism of some of South Africa's corporations and the benefits that this can have on society as a whole.

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CHAPTER 1 - Introduction:

There is a growing trend amongst corporate organisations in South Africa today to become more involved in the arts. Through the gradual implementation of corporate art collections and other sponsorship activities related to the arts, South African companies are effectively creating new forms of patronage and, in doing so, are having a significant impact on how art is being valued in their market. It is the purpose of this research report therefore to examine corporate sponsorship as it currently stands in South Africa, through the use of two case studies – Absa Bank and Hollard Insurance. In a close examination of their individual relationship with the arts – the corporate collections, sponsorship activities and the reasons behind this involvement – I hope to show how a mutually beneficial relationship can be maintained between business and art, the investment potential that has arisen from such a relationship, and ultimately the effect that this has on how art is valued in the art market and the impact this can have on society as a whole.

Patronage and sponsorship of the arts has existed for as long as the arts have been acknowledged as a cultural activity. In almost every age artists have sought out patrons to support their endeavours and allow them the opportunity to create works that reflect their experiences of the world and their perceptions of what they see around them (Chagy, n.d.: 19). These patrons in turn, have associated themselves with such artists, to achieve greater visibility in society, increased status, and recognition amongst those they aspire towards. As the reader will come to understand throughout the course of this research report, it has ultimately become a relationship about value, the perception of value and how this is transferred from one partner to another. Historically, however, this exchange of values between the artist and the patron has not proven to be a balanced one. Rather, as I demonstrate in a brief analysis of the history of art and patronage in Chapter 2, from the Renaissance until the twentieth century, the power has tended one way or the other, usually in the direction of the patron, who holds the economic wherewithal required by the artist to successfully carry out his/her craft.

Chapter 2 covers the advancements of art in Europe and eventually America, as it transverses from the Renaissance to today, briefly covering changing aspects in the social order as it moves through the Enlightenment, to a growing sense of nationalism; from industrialisation, to the age of mechanical reproduction; commercialisation and the far-reaching arms of globalisation. In doing so, the chapter also introduces the theories of a number of sociologists, anthropologists and art historians, as it tracks the constantly evolving role of the artist in relation to the society in which he/she operates.

Giorgio Vasari, for one, in his theses of the great masters of the Renaissance, illustrates how the role of the artist has changed from that of craftsman to independent operator. He portrays the Renaissance artist as a genius in his/her field, wholly responsible for the multitude of masterpieces created throughout the age. His text, *Lives of the Artists: Biographies of the Most Eminent Architects, Painters and Sculptors of Italy* (1946), is a seminal text covering the histories and techniques of painting, sculpture and architecture in Italy from the Dark Ages to their pinnacle in the Renaissance. In this work he discusses art through its application by various artists, culminating in the work of Michelangelo, whom Vasari considered to be the prodigy of High Art in the Renaissance. Written by an artist, about other artist, the book provides us with a very in-depth and personal look into the growth and gradual independence of the artists over this particular period and their changing relationship with the patrons of the age. *Painting, Power and Patronage: The Rise of the Professional Artist in Renaissance Italy* (1992) by Bram Kempers; *Patronage in Renaissance Italy: From 1400 to the Early Sixteenth Century* (1994) and *Patronage in Sixteenth Century Italy* (1996) by Mary Hollingsworth then provides us with a more up-to-date, objective point of view of patronage during the Renaissance, branching out from the mostly Tuscan view provided by Vasari. Moreover, they pay particular attention to the gradual professionalisation of the artist during this period, providing the founding information on which we base our image of the artist in the current market. This is then further confirmed by Gideon Chagy, in *The New Patrons of the Arts* (n.d.), where he tracks the changes of patronage over the ages, creating an interesting comparison between modern day and Renaissance patrons.

From the Renaissance I then introduce the Enlightenment, where a growing market for global trade and a commoditisation of art becomes increasingly relevant in understanding the way people appear to value art in today's market. The Netherlands had become a world power, as Michael North explains in *Art and Commerce in the Dutch Golden Age* (1997), leading the way for what was to follow in Britain, and then later on in Europe and America. In the study of this book, I examine the birth of a new middle-class during this period; a middle-class comprised of businessmen and industrialists, whose persistent desires for more wealth opened the floodgates to capitalism and art came to be considered in line with currency. It was with this rise in the emergent bourgeoisie and their driving capitalist motivations in the nineteenth century that traditional forms of European patronage began to fall away, to be replaced by more the publicly supported systems of museums, theatres, mass audiences and mass consumption that are recognisable in the modern context.

It was also during this period that nationalism began to take root. As the search for commodities became wider and wider and new trade-routes were discovered, so people

began to see themselves as part of a greater whole. With the assistance of Benedict Anderson's book, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1991), I encourage the reader to examine this growing global awareness, specifically with regard to the impact that broadening perspectives have on creating closer communities between individuals of the same nation-states. Anderson's theories help to explain how individuals within a community feel connected to one another and how a sense of identity and belonging is formed, despite each person's distinct separation from one another. This association or sense of kinship is once again reflected in the art produced at the time, influenced by the type of patron, if any, and the social or political position of the artists, as art gradually becomes a medium of propaganda.

At the same time as this rise in nationalism, the Industrial Revolution took hold and society speeded up to an unprecedented pace. The Industrial Revolution also brought with it new means of production, most particularly with regard to the machine, which then changed the face of cultural production entirely. Walter Benjamin's seminal text *Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1936) is the foremost authority on changes in the art world as a result of the introduction of mechanical reproduction and his theories go a long way towards understanding the changes that took place in the art world at the time, as a result of the growing technological expansion of the age. Clement Greenberg's writings also cover this period, as he focuses on the impact that reproduction has on culture. In Greenberg's theories on class and the avant-garde and kitsch of 1939, he introduces the notion of the dissemination of culture as it becomes more and more available to the masses. Greenberg claims that a true reading of art can only be achieved by the cultivated or the ruling class, and that, while taste may have varied over the ages, a consensus can still be reached by the cultured and sophisticated of society over what constitutes 'good' art and by association, 'bad' art (Greenberg, 1973a: 13). However, in a society where the dividing line between the upper- and middle-classes is becoming more and more indistinct, so the lesser participants are mirroring the idiosyncrasies of the ruling class and establishing themselves as connoisseurs in their own right. Kitsch comes to prevail, for it does not require the intellectual sensibilities of the elite, nor the requisite complex understanding that a position in this class would entail. So then, according to Greenberg, comes the 'dumbing-down' of culture and the true value of art becomes diluted, through the mass consumption that gradually takes place.

The reader is then led into the twentieth century and the introduction of modernism, which was then followed closely by post-modernism. Within this fast-changing period, I attempt to convey, through references to T.J Clark's *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of*

Manet and his Followers (1985); Arthur Danto's *the wake of art: criticism, philosophy and the ends of taste* (1998); and Donald Kuspit's various essays, *Introduction - Twentieth Century Art: An Overview of Critical Opinion* (2005) and *Chapter 1, part 1 & 2: New Forms of Old Feelings: The First Decade* (2006) the growing independence of the artists as he/she revolts against the traditions of the past and the prescriptions of those in power (such as the *Académie* and the Salon), as they push the boundaries on what constitutes art and its position within the social context. This, in turn, presents an opportunity to introduce the writings of Pierre Bourdieu, whose theories underlie all areas of this research report.

Pierre Bourdieu,[1] in his influential text *The Field of Cultural Production* (1993), breaks down the concept of value into various carefully defined segments, such as cultural value, symbolic value and economic value and the capital associated with each. Each of these is determined through various factors and with varied results for the artist, the patron or sponsor, and society at large. As each choice is made by artists and patrons alike, each action taken, so they become further entrenched or removed from the social arena or field in which they associates themselves. For all intents and purposes, this is the underlying reason behind all partnerships between patrons and the arts, from the Renaissance to the present day. In their quest to establish themselves more firmly in their relevant field, both patrons and artists are searching for ways to feed off the values already accrued by the other. It is, in effect, an exchange of values, one that occurs when the artist gains economic value through the creation of works which hold symbolic and cultural value, while the patron achieves symbolic and cultural value through the distribution of economic value. It is also, as I will show in the course of this chapter and the ensuing text, the fundamental reason behind the increasing involvement between corporate organisations and the arts.

Chapter 2 covers a vast period of six centuries, all condensed into a few pages. As such, its purpose, though largely abridged, is to illustrate the changes that have occurred in the art world and the realm of patronage through the progress of time. The chapter is an illustration of the power that both the artist and the patron exert over the course of history and how this has constantly changed according to the social order of the time. However, it is to be seen that as patronage evolved over the years, so this balance of power between the artists and the patron has changed, with each steadily coming to play a more equal role in the relationship. And as this study shows, the evolution has finally reached a point that, if

[1] Pierre Bourdieu was a French philosopher, sociologist and cultural anthropologist, whose writings have greatly influenced the social sciences. He has written numerous texts on value and its construction within the cultural field, the most pertinent to this research report being *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1984) and *The Field of Cultural Production* (1993).

managed correctly, is mutually beneficial, through the establishment of a symbiotic relationship that increases opportunities for both parties.

Chapter 3 then brings this study into the more South African context, focusing on the role that patronage has played in South Africa over the past century, with particular emphasis on the last fifteen to twenty years. A valuable source of information is Jillian Carman's essay *Emerging Johannesburg: Perspectives on the post-apartheid city* (2003), which provides much insightful information into the gradual augmentation of the art collection of the Johannesburg Art Gallery according to changes in the political landscape in South African at the time. Moreover, as the Johannesburg Art Gallery was initially established by patrons of the arts, the gallery, as well as the art that it has collected over the years, provides an illustrated history of a distinctly South African form of patronage and the politics that runs parallel to this.

South Africa's recent history is rife with political transformations, each of which has had great impact on the art produced at the time, as well as on the patrons who supported those arts. Art was used by its South African patrons as propaganda, a visual representation of the ideologies that they backed and a reorganisation of culture and heritage that best entrenched these ideologies and the image that they presented to the world. During the apartheid government, this tended towards support of the 'elite' arts, for it best represented the image that the government hoped to portray to the world – that of legitimacy, culture and refinement. However, this support came at the expense of the more 'indigenous' art forms[2].

Since democracy in 1994, the South African government has gone to extensive lengths to rectify this situation, favouring for the most part the previously marginalised art forms. Moreover with education, housing, health and welfare, and various other pressing social needs competing for the same funds, investing in 'elite' arts tended to fall by the wayside. It is in this space that South African organisations have found themselves, picking up the slack of the government as they focus their attentions elsewhere and coming to see 'elite' art as an opportunity, a vehicle with which they can entrench themselves in the market, obtain brand exposure and make a return on investment at the same time.

[2] While terms such as 'elite' art and 'indigenous' art can be relatively problematic, in the course of this work they are used in juxtaposition to one another. 'Elite' art refer to the high arts, such as painting and sculpture, as well as orchestras, ballets and opera. 'Indigenous' art on the other hand is the art specific to a certain culture. In the case of this research report, this refers specifically to 'traditional' African art and practises such as beadwork, wood sculptures (such as footstools, masks, etc.), weaving. These are practises that usually create items that are useful, their purpose not necessarily to be art, but to be practical.

The government can then be seen to be supporting such involvement with the arts through institutions such as Business and Arts South Africa (BASA). Established in 1996, BASA is a joint initiative between the Department of Arts and Culture and the business sector, created to promote sustainable and mutually beneficial partnerships between business and the arts (Danby, 2008). The establishment of BASA was essentially a necessary means, implemented at a government level, of encouraging corporate entities in South Africa to take on the role that the state could no longer fulfil in its entirety. Nicola Danby, former CEO of BASA, is a valuable source of information regarding the establishment of BASA and the role that it has played in encouraging mutually beneficial relationships between business and the arts and providing well-picked opportunities for both parties to successfully leverage off one another. It is through her extensive knowledge and experience with BASA that one begins to see the overall picture and the motivating reasons for South African organisations involving themselves with the arts. Other worthwhile sources include the catalogues for corporate collections, such as Standard Bank's *The Standard Bank Corporate Art Collection* (1990) and Absa Bank's *Absa Group: Corporate Art Collection* (1997), both of which illustrate how collections have adapted according to the political climate. And, while these catalogues may provide a generalised, tailored overview, they assist in illustrating the role, political and otherwise, that corporate sponsorship of the arts plays within the South African context.

A number of South African companies are currently involved with the arts to some extent or another, including Standard Bank, MTN and First National Bank, to name but a few.[3] Unfortunately, not all of these can be included in the scope of this research report and so only two were chosen, a contrasting pair representing respectively, a well-established sponsor and a relatively new one – Absa Bank and Hollard Insurance – both of whom have taken on an active role in the art market of their own accord. As this report will show, while corporate collections may date back into the history of South Africa, corporate sponsorship of the arts is still a relatively new activity practised by South African organisations. As such, there is very little formal literature available on the subject, but rather a reasonably extensive

[3] Standard Bank has also been collecting art for almost 50 years. In addition to this, they currently have their own gallery in central Johannesburg, in which it brings out and displays the works of renowned international artists such as Picasso, Miro and Chagall. The Bank is the founding sponsor of the Grahamstown Arts Festival, which it continues to support, as well as the Standard Bank Awesome Africa Festival and the 'Joy of Jazz' performances and jazz festivals (Danby, 2001: 5-9). MTN is engaged in bringing art to the people, especially children, as is evident in their Art Institute and Education programme, which was launched approximately 10 years ago, as well as the MTN Artbus, which carried original works as well as copies to schools operating in the townships and outlying areas (Danby, 2001: 8). First National Bank is the headline sponsor of the FNB Dance Umbrella, which showcases up-and-coming dancers and choreographers; as well as the First National Bank Vita Awards programme, which is an open platform for original works in any medium, including dance, performing arts, craft and visual arts (Danby, 2001: 10).

range of articles in newspapers, magazines and online sites, which help to provide a very current perspective. What is interesting and what this report will come to show, is how these articles, journals, periodicals, etc. are not specifically founded in the art world. Rather much of the information obtained on art sponsorship and investment was obtained through financial or economic sources, such as *Business Times, Business Day, Journal of Economic Literature, Financial Mail, Mail and Guardian Online,* etc. And, when used in conjunction with more seemingly 'art-appropriate' sources such as *Art South Africa* and *Art Journal* and the theories of sociologists and art historians, such as Pierre Bourdieu, it is possible to construct quite a comprehensive view of the position we find ourselves in today.

In addition to the above, direct interviews with curators of the two collections, Cecile Loedolff and Jeanetta Blignaut, of Absa and Hollard respectively, in conjunction with Nicola Danby from BASA and other relevant authorities in the field of business and art sponsorship, give the reader a more personal insight into actual case studies and real life experiences in the business art relationship. Alex Dodd provides his take on the emerging Hollard collection, in his article *Hollard enters art world with a bang* (2005), published in the *Business Day*, while Lucille Davie and Yolandi Groenewald explore both the artworks on display at Absa's Head Office, as well as the bank's sponsorship activities at the Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees in their respective articles: *The bank that's an art gallery* (2003) and *Klein Karoo's groot success* (2007, October 25). Other information on Absa and the art sponsorship activities was gathered from their website.

Absa has been accumulating a collection of art, most particularly South African art, for many years. Its collection currently comprises approximately 20 000 pieces, which it displays in its own corporate gallery in the centre of Johannesburg, as well as in its branches and head office. It is a collection that was started, in the most part, by Volkskas Bank in the years when it was the dominant bank amongst the Afrikaans-speaking population, linked intrinsically the interests of the Afrikaner nationalist ideology, which has had a significant impact on the art incorporated into the collection. Dan O'Meara's book *Volkskapitalisme* (1983) provides an in-depth look into the political manifestations of this period, while the varying patterns of the collection provide interesting visual imagery into the changing aspects of South African culture in the advancement of the country from the nationalist state, in which the collection was formed, to the current contemporary position of a democratic South Africa. Cecile Loedolff, curator of the Absa Art Collection, has been with the bank for over fifteen years, moving with Volkskas as it merged with United Bank, Allied Bank and Trust Bank. Her experience with the collection is incomparable and her knowledge of its growth and implementation is highly valuable for the purposes of this report, for not only is Absa one of

the oldest art sponsors in South Africa, the company holds the title as the biggest corporate patron of the visual arts in South Africa, and for owning the second biggest financial corporate art collection in the world, after Deutsche Bank (Absa Bank, 2008).[4]

Hollard Insurance on the other hand is a relatively new entry to this market, having taken its first steps towards art investment/collection as recently as 2005, with the purchase of Paul Emmanuel's massive artwork, *after-image* (2004)[5] (Dodd, 2005: 6). Hollard is an interesting comparison to Absa in that its collection is newer; one established after the democracy of 1994 and yet still holds certain ties to the political past of this country, most particularly with regard to their chosen gallery space – Villa Arcadia – and the history that this invokes. However, Hollard has effectively started from scratch, building up a new reputation and creating a name for itself in art circles. Its curator, Jeanetta Blignaut, owner of the art consultancy Coeo Art Collaborative, provides an insider's perspective into the decisions of the organisation, the driving force behind the collection and the strategy going forward.

In understanding the similarities and differences between these two organisations one begins to see a clearer picture emerging around how companies in South Africa have become involved in the arts and have invested themselves in the cultural undercurrent of this country. The true motives behind this involvement however are as yet unclear, which is why, in Chapter 4, I begin to investigate the relative values inherent in the business-arts relationship and return once again to the theories of Bourdieu to do so.

Bourdieu's theories orientate themselves around an understanding of the cultural field and how each independent operator within that field constantly seeks to obtain capital – cultural, symbolic and economic – in order to entrench its position and achieve even higher status. This quest for the attainment of capital is intrinsically tied to the actions of both the artist and the business in this modern day patronage of the arts. Salim Kemal and Ivan Gaskell's compilation of essays in *Explanation and value in the arts* (1993), provides a further look into the relationship between value and cultural artefacts, how this value is constructed in an artwork, and the various explanations behind this. Bourdieu's essay in this book, *Principles of a sociology of cultural works* (1993a), subsequently relates these theories back to his personal perception of value in the cultural object. The trading of these cultural objects by

[4] Absa is also a headline sponsor of numerous arts initiatives in South Africa, including the annual L'Atelier Awards, in conjunction with the South African National Association of the Visual Arts, which has been in operation for 23 years; and the Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees (KKNK), an Afrikaner-orientated arts and culture festival in the Karoo town of Oudsthoorn, which has now reached its fifteenth year.

[5] Paul Emmanuel. *after image.* 2004. Incised exposed colour photographic paper. 200 x 480 cm.

individuals and organisations investing in the arts thus incurs an economic value, as referred to by Bourdieu, but one that is examined in more detail by Arjun Appadurai in *The social life of things* (1984). Relying on the theories of these social anthropologists, sociologists and historians, Chapter 4 analyses the reasons behind corporate involvement in the arts, drawing once again on the actions of the government in support of the arts in current day South Africa and the increasingly evident separation between 'indigenous' art and 'elite' art and the impact this may have on the culture and heritage of the country in the years ahead. Through the two case studies, I then examine the cultural, symbolic and economic viability of the support of culture and why companies today would choose this form of investment over other opportunities available to them.

In essence, the relationship between art and patronage is one of value and the perception of value. In the globalised, capitalist market that exists today companies constantly have to search for new ways of attracting their clients; for new ways of appealing to the ever-growing personal tastes of their client bases. To do this, each company first needs to hold a value that those clients can respect and which will engender their support. This is symbolic value and is currently being generated by organisations though works that best benefit the communities. By fostering the image of 'giving back' to their communities, companies are developing an inherent value in the eyes of the customer. This approach also gives their actions in other spheres more authority, for it comes from a base that already holds value. In the case of the corporate patron today, this is evidenced in companies supporting arts festivals within their communities, hosting art competitions and encouraging the young artists in the country today to participate, with the added possibility of having their works purchased by that organisation. In doing so, companies are engaging with their communities and creating an image for themselves as organisations that care; businesses that have a firm interest in the cultural activities of the country in which they operate. Their consistent support of these activities also provides them with a reputation in the art world, as significant patrons of the arts. This reputation is then further bolstered by these companies buying art of the young, contemporary and relatively unknown South African artists and adding it to their collection. And, in the very act of purchasing this art, they are then infusing their reputation, their symbolic capital, with the work of art, which then expands on the value already attributed to that work of art. Symbolic capital is then intrinsically linked to economic capital. So, as the symbolic capital of the organisation increases, so too does their propensity to earn more, and in turn, spend more in support of the arts.

However, there are drawbacks to this relationship, which are reminiscent of the relationship between the patron and the artist/craftsman from the early Renaissance. As this chapter will

show, in the artists' quest to be accepted by these organisations, they may be seduced to pander to the aesthetic judgements of these companies, tailoring their entries to the festivals and art competitions that would best garner the support of those patrons. Unlike museums and galleries who can push the boundaries of creativity in their collection of works, companies need to cater for the diverse tastes of their staff, customers and investors. Moreover, these collections also need to represent the image and brand of each company and so careful consideration needs to go into the selection of art pieces for a collection. Artists who are then creating works for the purposes of inclusion in such collections may tend towards the staid and acceptable, as they cease to be exploratory in their construction and composition and provide pieces adjudged more suitable to the tempered choices of the company in selecting works for its collection.

Furthermore, corporate sponsorship of the arts can also be viewed as a privatisation of culture which has the potential to limit the exposure of the greater population to the arts and in doing so, reduce the cultural impact of arts on society. As the new custodians of culture in South Africa, it is only a small step backwards before art in South Africa becomes the domain of the elite few, at the expense of the excluded majority.

The conclusion of this report then correlates all of the information provided in the preceding chapters, summarising it, so as to provide the reader with an general overview of the significant events that led patronage to the place that it occupies in South Africa today; how it is manifested in the current environment; and why companies that have elected to involve themselves in the arts have chosen this route. One can then deduce, from this information, how the benefits of corporate sponsorship of the arts outweigh the negatives; how, in order for culture and heritage to survive in South Africa it is necessary for these companies to become involved. Through the case studies of both Absa and Hollard, one gets a picture of how companies, both globally and locally are setting new standards for art sponsorship. Through their consistent involvement with the arts they are affirming that significant benefits exist in the business-art relationship, benefits that are evidently worth maintaining into the future. And, as this research report shows, it has become an important part of maintaining the culture of the country in the present environment, for it allows greater access to a broader portion of the population, encourages personal involvement through the passing on of cultural capital and by doing so, promotes sustainability within the art market.

CHAPTER 2 - Patronage and social history:

As a precursor to current day art investors and corporate sponsors, traditional forms of patronage play a vital role in understanding the nature of the art/sponsor relationship and the value associated with the arts over the years. While the action of patronage can be seen to have existed with the arts over the ages, from the start of the modern period to the present, it is the reason behind patronage that has varied, along with the effects that the relationship between the artist and the patron has on the creation of art. In this chapter I discuss in brief the history of patronage as it has evolved from the Renaissance to the present day in order to highlight how the benefits and consequences of such sponsorship or patronage can have a direct impact on the growth and establishment of the art world within the South African environment, and ultimately how this can affect the market in which such art holds value.

The Renaissance: The fourteenth to sixteenth centuries

Spanning roughly three centuries, the Renaissance was a time of cultural change that profoundly affected intellectual life in Europe. It was a period of significant intellectual growth in all areas, particularly those of religion, politics, arts, literature and philosophy. The Renaissance brought about the revival of the classics and classical learning, driven by the emergence of humanism in the early fifteenth century (Perry, Baker, & Hollinger, 2003: 1). Artistic advancements could be seen in the increased emphasis of the human form and the natural world through the discovery of linear perspective in painting and aerial perspective in architecture (Perry, Baker, & Hollinger, 2003: 1-2). It was a period of significant artistic production, resulting in many of the works considered to be masterpieces today and dominated almost entirely by various forms of patronage.

In the early ages of the Renaissance, approximately the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, (coinciding with the end of the Middle Ages), patronage was generally dominated by the Church, which controlled many areas of Italy at the time. Other cities were ruled by a monarchy or governed by an elite selection of wealthy merchants and bankers, but overall the Church and, more specifically Catholicism, prevailed.[6] The early Renaissance was a

[6] Italy, in the late fourteenth to early fifteenth centuries, did not exist as the unified country evident today. Rather, it was divided into smaller city-states and territories, ruled by an absolute ruler who dominated the cultural life of the city (Hollingsworth, 1994: 2-3). The type of ruler alternated between the acknowledged monarchy in the Kingdom of Naples, who controlled the south; the wealthy merchants and bankers who presided over the Republic of Florence in the centre and the Republic of Venice in the east; and the overwhelming rule of the Papal States, in and around Rome in the middle. The north and west on the other

period in artistic production that was ruled by the patrons – they were active consumers, considered to be the creators of the painting, sculpture and architecture of the period, with the artist acting merely as a craftsman, carrying out the instructions of the patron (Hollingsworth, 1994: 2-3). As craftsmen, artists were hired to supply their employer or patron with either a specific work or with a variety of different pieces over an extended period of time. A contract would have been drawn up stipulating the requirements set out by the patron and work would then proceed as directed. And, as a direct result of this, the cost of the artwork was determined according to the material and labour involved and the artists were paid for their skill as craftsmen. No allowances were made for those who excelled in their work and so "the creative genius of the artist had no recognizable financial value" (Hollingsworth, 1994: 4).

In these early stages of the fifteenth century, art was generally limited to specific subject matter, as determined by the patron, and very little creativity was given to the artist in terms of the content or what they produced. Effectively, one of the artist's only avenues for expression was through the physical construction of the piece: the composition and the medium, which ultimately became the focal point of the artwork (Greenberg, 1973a: 16). Some cases are more specific than others, whereby the patron would define quite clearly how the piece must look, what people or iconography to include (even the order in which these people must appear), pigments, sizes and delivery dates (Gilbert, 1998:393). In other case, the requirements were kept simple, giving the artists only a general title or a simple narrative, such as *The Adoration of the Magi* (Gilbert, 1998: 393). In such cases, the artist was then allowed to create the piece according to his own concept, though advisors may be consulted. It may be that such attentions were a leading reason for the exceptional quality of works that were created over the period. As the artists were not in command of the entire work, they were left to concentrate intently on those areas in which they did have control, focusing instead on new applications in perspective, experiments on light and proportion and the constant attempts at perfection in the portrayal of the human form.

More importantly, this was a period in Italy in which the Catholic Church ruled absolutely, which is evident in the domination of religious subject matter. The Church, in fact, was the majority patron of the time and supported many artists through its endeavours to decorate and so enrich the visual accompaniments to their labours: in the cathedrals, churches and chapels of their faith. For them, art was a means of celebrating their faith and the history that

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hand belonged to the Genoese and the Milanese (Kirschner, 2004: 89). Each existed independantly on one another, but in collaboration under the overarching rule of the Catholic Church.

had led them to this point. It was an instrument for inspiring all believers, giving imagery to the literal world on which they based their belief (Chagy, n.d.: 20-24).[7]

The nobility, as well as wealthy merchants, also used their power as patrons to create a positive perception of themselves in the public domain.[8] Art was used as a means of advertising and only those who were rich enough and powerful enough could compete. And, by operating in the realm of the elite, artistic productions began to take on many of the characteristics that this entailed, essentially becoming the luxury product that one would recognize around the world today. Unfortunately, however, Christian teaching spurned money and power and so the only ways to effectively display one's status was through contributions of a religious nature – burial chapels, altarpieces and frescoed panels, dedicated in the name of the patron – and commissions of religious symbolic works. Charitable giving, for one, was the only means recognized by the Church for justifying wealth and so played a part in expiating sin (Hollingsworth, 1994: 4). Art for commission, on the other hand, was arranged for a specific purpose and played a particular role in fifteenth century society. For the artists, removed from the efforts of determining subject matter, it was about the portrayal of the world in the most realistic way possible. Giorgio Vasari (1946: 42-43) uses the artist Giotto to describe this new exploit into realistic representation:

> The hard lines by which every figure was bound, the senseless eyes, the feet planted upright on their extremities, the sharp, formless hands, and the absence of shadow, and every other monstrosity of those Byzantine painters were done away with. The heads began to express vivacity and spirit; the draperies began to have natural folds. Human passions were, in some sort, expressed in the faces.

This was the direction in which the artists' efforts were directed, representation being the only element over which they had control. For the patron, on the other hand, art was about personal fulfilment and public acknowledgement; it was about gaining exposure and flaunting wealth and status – the arts that they commissioned needed to show their supposed

[7] Essentially, this was a means of using of art as propaganda, no different from how companies are using the arts today. These grand buildings and elaborately decorated churches were created as such with the intention of impressing the power of the Church on the ordinary citizenry, inspiring belief and calling in worshippers, as a company would reel in customers.

[8] As with other craftsmen existing in Renaissance Italy in the fourteenth and fifteenth century, artists had organised themselves into guilds and fraternities which then controlled the manner in which these artist-members could operate. Any artist looking to work was required to be a member of the guild, and follow the requisite codes of conduct set up by their guild with regard to the quality of the work produced according to requisite standards. These guilds then in turn provided a modest income in support of its members (Kempers, 1992: 302).

These and other guilds existent at the time were also significant patrons of the arts – employing artists in the construction and decoration of their chapels, town halls and communal buildings (Kempers, 1992: 183).

generosity and at the same time, be a lasting reflection of the impression that they made in their time. Suffice it to say that patronage in early Renaissance Italy was about the patron. They were effectively consumers who were looking to purchase a specific product to fulfil a certain function. The subject matter was carefully and meticulously specified to portray a religious infinity, and the work of art was considered to be nothing more than a product (Hollingsworth, 1994: 1). This manner of thinking is not dissimilar to that of corporate entities today in their sponsorship of the arts, though this is to be discussed in more detail further on in this research report.

Much of the change that one can see in patronage today began in the sixteenth to seventeenth century Renaissance, as a direct result of the social, economic and religious changes that gradually occurred throughout the period. The Italian states were becoming too self-obsessed, involved in their own status and the propagation of their current way of life. They thus continued to seek out more – more wealth, more power, more privilege, more esteem. The growing domination of French and Spanish dynasties outside of Italy, who in turn desired what the Italians already possessed, led to wars that altered the balance of power. Over and above this, the Church's power had become too great and an increasingly educated middle class were coming to query the excesses and unnecessary expenditures they constantly squandered. The Protestant Reformation then brought about a breakaway between Church and State, expedited by the growing popularity of the printing press which allowed for the swift and vast dissemination of Protestant ideology. This was an ideology that spurned the excessive spending of the Church and called for a more humble leadership (Hollingsworth, 1996: 1). It was a way of thinking that took off more quickly than anyone, including the Church, even anticipated, for it appealed to the lesser classes, those outside of religious leaders and the nobility, who worked for their money and who begrudgingly watched as more wealth was accumulated and spent by their spiritual and political guides. And out of the turmoil there emerged a growing aristocracy of independently wealthy merchants, a class level that existed outside of the pre-existing nobility and the Church.

Throughout the advancement of the Renaissance, the growing independent wealth of this merchant aristocracy began to take on a leading role in the patronage of the arts and, through the growing influence of Humanism, commissions began moving away from predominantly religious imagery to works that incorporated the mythological themes represented in the classics.[9] Moreover, these patrons were able to begin commissioning

[9] Some of the more famous examples of these works involving mythological subject matter include *The birth of Venus* (c. 1482 – 1486. Tempura on canvas. 172.5 x 278.5 cm) by Sandro Botticelli, which depicts the mythological birth of the Roman goddess of love, Venus, who arrived fully grown from the sea. And later on,

works that were not purely for the benefit of their image in the eyes of the Church, but could display their own personal power and wealth. This was particularly evident in the rise of portraiture at the time in both sculpture and painting, as well as the palaces and villas commissioned by wealthy merchants, bankers and other private individuals;[10] all personal idolatry created for the purposes of self glorification (Chagy, n.d.: 26).[11] Wealth and status was constantly on display, in the commission of self-portraits in expensive costume and opulent settings; to extravagant architecture and the beautification of residences. But this in itself was an insufficient means of publically portraying ones rank and importance, so wealthy merchants also made generous contributions to the construction and beautifying of public enterprises, such as churches, libraries and hospitals (Chagy, n.d.: 26-27). It was a means of improving public perception that would later be adopted by corporate sponsors.

And in the revival of classical forms of thinking, brought about by the growing interest in antiquity and the rise of Humanism, the artist emerged as an independent thinker and his work came to be appreciated as much for its craftsmanship, as for its aesthetic qualities (Hollingsworth, 1994: 8). The artist, as creator, was revered and his work heightened through reputation. According to Vasari (1946), the artist needed to encompass all areas of intelligence or 'high comprehension', being well versed in painting, architecture, sculpture, poetry and philosophy, all of which was then applied to his craft (Vasari, 1946:258).[12] Vasari believed that this was the age in which the artist as genius was born and so became, to him, the absolute pinnacle of 'High Art' (Vasari, 1946:186). Whilst Vasari's opinion may be overly enthusiastic, the point he is making is that the artist was coming into his own (becoming

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Venus of Urbino (1538. Oil on canvas. 119 x 165 cm) by Titian, who used the Roman goddess in a number of works at the time.

[10] Often, the individual's possessions would be included in the background of these portraits, as testimony to their wealth and prestige, e.g. Hans Holbein the Younger's *The French Ambassadors* (1533. Oil on oak. 207cm x 209cm) (Jardine, 2008: 7). The villas and palaces would also be designed and decorated in the most elaborate and costly ways, such as *Palazzo Rucellai*, a fifteenth century palace in Florence constructed (at least in part) by Bernardo Rossellino on the designs of Leon Battista Alberti in the mid-fifteenth century. The building was commissioned by Giovanni Rucellai (the Rucellai family were powerful bankers at the time) and incorporates pilasters and entablatures in proportional relationship to one another, design characteristics typical of the Renaissance architecture that was to follow (Norwich, 1975: 150).

[11] This is not to say that religious imagery lost popularity amongst patrons of the age, for it in fact remained a major and consistent theme in the art produced at the time, even more so as a result of the Counter-Revolution, which brought back traditional Catholic themes of piety, charity and conversion in an attempt to fight back against the growing onslaught brought about by Protestantism (Hollingsworth, 1996: 114-115).

[12] Vasari strongly felt that Michelangelo Buonarroti was the epitome of the artist as genius, for he seemed to embody all the characteristics represented by the High Renaissance, referring to him as a "divinely endowed spirit" (Vasari, 1946:258). That they were contemporaries and friends, however, may have had an impact on his opinion.

more like the artists that recognisable in society today), respected for his craft, abilities and creativity.

By adopting the classic ideology of the artist as creator, as genius, artists were no longer considered to be merely workmen and were given greater autonomy in their creations – though often still within the boundaries and specifications determined by the patron, who was financing the venture. In order to obtain this autonomy, however, the artist had to first prove himself, prove his skill and his ability to understand and interpret not just the requirements of the patron, but the subject matter at hand and the conceptual representation of this subject matter through innovations in paint texture, perspective, composition and draughtsmanship (Kempers, 1992: 3).[13] The artist himself was recognized as a symbol of status and power and his name alone could construe value (as in the case of Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raphael and Titian, who effectively established what was to become known as the High Renaissance and the expert quality that came to be expected of artists of the age). No longer was value attributable solely to the material cost of the work, but was now being accredited to the design of the work, the intellectual subject matter and the skill and prestige of the artist who created the composition.

And, the more famous they became, the more highly sought-out they were by wealthy patrons, who hoped to leverage off of their success. The circle completed itself, as the artists, in turn, became more renowned as a result of such an association. This is then evident in the relationship between corporate sponsorship and the arts today, where partnerships are being established to the benefit of both entities. Whilst each party can be seen to be in it for its own gain, there is the potential for this to have positive implications on both sides. This politicising of art is to be discussed in more detail in the later chapters; first however, it is necessary to examine how these changes in the ways of patronage continued to evolve into the seventeenth century and beyond.

[13] Whilst the autonomy granted to the artist was a significant development in early sixteenth century Italy and onwards, it was not something that was automatically the right of all artists. Rather, an artist operating at the time had to prove his worth and gain significant prestige, and the commissions that this entailed, before such a privilege was granted to him. The average artist on the other hand was still at the mercy of the patron and remained merely a craftsman for the duration of his career (Kempers, 1992: 4).

Nationalism, the Industrial Revolution and the commoditisation of art: The seventeenth to nineteenth centuries

Michael Foss in *The Age of Patronage* asserts, "The arts are naturally susceptible to changes in the social order and to changes in the ways of patronage" (Foss, 1971: unnumbered page). The years following the Renaissance were filled with vast changes in the way people viewed themselves, their surroundings and how they thought about the world. This was the commencement of the Age of Enlightenment, (otherwise known as the Age of Reason) which resulted from the weakening of the Catholic Church through religious reformation; rejecting the dogma imparted by the church, in favour a route of reason through rational inquiry (Daniels & Hyslop, 2003: 210). It was also a period that brought with it new players in the global market, with other countries outside of central Europe – Italy, Spain, Portugal – beginning to take on prominent roles. These beginnings, however, tended to vary across Europe. The Netherlands in particular stands out in the early seventeenth century as a world power, not only in the arts, but in economic stability and social infrastructure, as well as trade and industry (North, 1997: 1). Its history acts as a precursor for what would eventually come to pass in Britain and then the rest of Europe over the course of the next century.

The Enlightenment was a period that revolved almost entirely around the increasing utilization of the printing press and the dissemination of information on a growing scale to people of all languages and at all levels of society.[14] Book publishers were facing an untapped market, one that was eager to absorb as much information as possible, and the capitalist ideology that arose from this made universal literacy a possibility and allowed "rapidly growing numbers of people to think about themselves, and to relate themselves to others, in profoundly new ways" (Anderson, 1991: 36). Moreover, people were becoming more adventurous. The opening up of previously undiscovered trade routes around the world introduced Europeans to new and foreign people and environments, be it the East

[14] The printing press with movable type was invented during the Renaissance in the fifteenth century, but gained significant popularity as a result of the Enlightenment and the increasing levels of literacy amongst the population. The increasing ease with which books could be mass-produced opened up a new market to book publishers. Where initially books were printed in Latin, considered to be a sacred language, the market for such a commodity was limited only to those who could understand Latin as a second language. With the ultimate saturation of this market, book publishers were left with a largely untapped population. By printing books in the resident vernacular, publishers were not only creating a new reading public, but extending their realm of exposure as well. The Reformation then provided the impetus needed to create a demand in the marketplace, confirming the book as a much desired commodity and appealing to the capitalist mentality of the book publishers (Anderson, 1991: 37-40).

Indies, China or Africa.[15] This constant search for new opportunities, innovative ways of doing things, revealed unexplored avenues for people, growing their awareness of the world, as well as creating further opportunities for increased wealth at all levels. Society was changing and evolving and with it, new forms of art and patronage were being defined.

Commercialisation in Europe took over from traditional forms of patronage, as seen in the Renaissance, as artists began creating art directly to the market through art dealers – now amongst some of the most important buyers of art (North, 1997: 93). Commissions were still in place, but rather than being the sole domain of the aristocratic class, they were taken up by governments and departments of state to decorate town halls. Guilds, as well as business owners, such as tavern-keepers, wine dealers and craftsman, also began purchasing art, if not for decorative purposes than for their ability to be converted into cash without much difficulty, "pictures were goods which had a commodity value just like a pair of trousers or any other service" (North, 1997: 93).[16] Other avenues for selling works included auctions and lotteries. Individuals could also visit the artists directly, buying art from their studios. Art was no longer the sole domain of the upper classes and the more the demand increased amongst the growing middle class, the more opportunities there were for artists to become their own masters. In addition to this, subject matter was also changing according to the times and the increasing demand for work. Religious subject matter was fast becoming irrelevant and large mythological, allegorical masterpieces were proving too intellectual for the middle classes (North, 1997: 134). Rather, secular works were becoming more popular, landscapes and genre paintings appealing to the various social classes now with the purchasing power to buy art.[17] Painting was, to a certain extent, removed of sacred or

[15] Columbus' voyage to the America's opened up a whole new world for Europeans, encouraging new visions and explorations into previously unchartered territories. This was further intensified by the founding of routes to the spice markets of the East Indies by British and Portuguese sailors, which opened up huge commercial opportunities for European merchants (Hollingsworth, 1996: 2). Asides from creating new wealth, these voyages allowed the native people to envision a world outside of their own, one that was not governed by the same set of parameters as themselves and their immediate neighbours. By differentiating themselves from those inhabitants of India and China and other far-flung countries, these societies began to look internally to what tied them together and made them the same, acknowledging their similarities and finding the commonality that tied them together.

[16] Michael North (1997) explains that in the Netherlands in the early seventeenth century, painters considered their art to be equivalent to cash – trading certain pieces for goods and services rendered (North, 1997: 192). Those who then came into possession of the works would then on-sell them, becoming dealers in art, to a certain extent.

[17] This is particularly evident in the Netherlands in the seventeenth century, where Calvinism had driven out the excesses of the Catholic Church. Churches were bare and non-decorative and religious imagery was becoming less and less common in the works produced at the time (North, 1997: 82). According to Michael North (1997), in Holland at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the proportion of secular subject matter

spiritual meaning, targeting instead the more secular or basic interests of the 'common' man. This led to a distinct separation between artists who were producing art for the masses and those who remained inclined to produce art of a higher calibre, still entrenched with meaning and representation. It was the beginning of the separation between 'elite' art and 'public' art that is discussed in more details further on in this chapter.

One of the ensuing changes to arise as a result of these new changes in the social order was the emergence of a nationalist ideology in the late eighteenth century, where a growing consciousness based on common descent, language and religion, achieved through the increasing literacy of the population, emerged amongst similar groups of individuals. The rise of nationalism led to a distinct difference in the way individual societies considered themselves, adopting new ways of identifying with those of the same social order. People began to realise that they were part of a greater whole, members of communities that shared similar characteristics, different to those of neighbouring states. It was a sense of belonging that encouraged contribution on behalf of each member – each able person in the community was required to work in order to better the existing social structure. But unlike working for a master or feudal lord, the benefits of such labours could be seen in improvements to the community and in return benefits that increased wealth, status and general standards of living.

This sense of community, independent from the traditional religious and dynastic ties common to the Renaissance, allowed individuals to associate themselves with a chosen doctrine, brought into being by the growing enlightenment of the age (Anderson, 1991: 5-7). Rather, a sense of kinship emerged, an imagined connection with all incorporated in the same nation-state (no matter how extensive), which led to dual feelings of belonging and independence from a higher rule. Benedict Anderson (1991) refers to this as an 'imagined community'; limited in that it is confined by its boundaries and by the existence of other nations outside of its borders, but with a resultant sense of belonging that exists amongst members of the same communities in spite of their distinct separation from one another (Anderson, 1991: 7). No single person can know all of the members of their community, but their sense of kinship and belonging remains.[18] As individuals became more and more

in art stood at 65% (North, 1997: 137). By the end of the century, this had increased to as much as 90% (North, 1997: 137).

[18] This is can be seen today, in concepts such as Proudly South African, whereby the public are encouraged to use products that are made in South Africa, so as to better benefit the country. It is a way creating loyalty and patriotism to a country, making people feel like they belong to a unified whole. It is also a way of encouraging South African consumers to spend their money in South Africa and so boost the South African economy.

aware of their place in a multi-cultural world, so their ties to the pre-existing religious modes of thinking began to wane. As people's independence grew, so a greater number of choices became available to them. They either elected to be a part of the greater community in which they lived and worked, or they didn't. And this idea of having the choice, superficial as it may seem, made the sense of belonging all the more powerful. This combined with the growing literacy of the population and the increasing consciousness as a result, provided the opportunity needed for a nationalist ideology to be born and take shape, setting the stage for the modern nation (Anderson, 1991: 46).

One of the consequences of this rise of nationalism and the growing awareness amongst the people was an increase in political thought, particularly amongst the lower classes that had previously been excluded from any participation in political activities (Anderson, 1991: 47-48). As people began to gain greater understanding, to develop critical abilities, they began to demand more, particularly of those whom they perceived to be in positions of power. The growing middle-class of merchants, lawyers, doctors and other professionals, or bourgeoisie, also grew to be frustrated by the demands of the aristocracy. Educated as a result of the Enlightenment, they believed in equality and social justice and so came to resent the overt privileges of the aristocratic class, whose entitlement to such status was through birth, as opposed to those who had worked and earned their privileges (Daniels & Hyslop, 2003: 222-223). As a result, national struggles, social uprising and warfare were common and often reflected emotionally in the art produced over the period. Once again, art became propaganda, but acting in this instance on behalf of the nation and the people, as opposed to the Church. Art continued to reflect on the conditions of society and the artists' perceptions of what they saw around them, which effectively drummed up strong feelings of patriotism. One of the more famous examples of a nationalist art is Eugène Delacroix's *Liberty Leading the People* (1830),[19] in which Delacroix portrays the rising of the French people against Charles X, as led by Liberty, who holds in her hand the *Tricouleur* flag of the French Revolution. The French Revolution was the launching pad for nationalism in Europe (Daniels & Hyslop, 2003: 225).

This marks the beginning of an age of empowerment, in which the common man could stand up for himself and fight for what would be classified today as his basic human rights. Emotions were running high at all levels of society and art reflected this, feeding the feelings of frustration and resentment that the proletariat had towards the aristocracy. Traditional forms of private patronage continued to decline, as artists produced works directly for this

[19] Eugène Delacroix. *Liberty Leading the People.* 1830. Oil on canvas. 260 x 325 cm.

actively growing market, submitting pieces directly to galleries and museums without waiting for commissions. Works were now being valued according to their intrinsic worth, determined according to the skill of the artists, their reputation in the market place, as well as form, content and design. This was revolutionary art however, produced in large scale for maximum impact. It was not art available to the common man, though it appealed to his sense of outrage. Rather, it was directed at the growing bourgeoisie, who could afford to make such a public statement and whose increasing finances could pay for such a luxury product. Within this capitalist society, art was still a commodity, though its audience was becoming more refined.

Running concurrently with these social changes and inextricably tied to the rise of the nationalist ideology, was a growing industrialisation amongst the nation-states. The Industrial Revolution, which started in Europe in the late eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries and quickly spread throughout the world, impacted almost all areas of human society and established new defining categories for class divisions. As with nationalism, the Industrial Revolution witnessed the escalating decline of the traditional classes of elite – the nobility and gentry – in favour of a rise of a new middle class of businessmen and industrialists. This new bourgeoisie gradually rose to become the new ruling class in industrialised nation-states, opening the door for the rapid expansion of commerce and the establishment of a capitalist society. According to Nigel Blake and Francis Frascina (1993), these nineteenth century capitalists...

> ...controlled impressive new powers of production – new material technologies, new technologies of management and consequently new kinds of knowledge and abilities, all orientated to extracting value more exhaustively from an ever-wider range of sources. Both more wealth and more people come under the domination of capitalism, and the capitalist (the industrialist, financial speculator, the entrepreneur, dealer, etc.), especially after 1848 and the Second Empire of Napoleon III, eventually assumed the dominant role in politics and human relations (Blake & Frascina, 1993: 65-66).

And, as this new middle-class continued its ascent within the ever-expanding capitalist society, so there arose increased opportunities for employment for the lesser classes – doctors and lawyers, office workers, factory supervisors and highly skilled workers (with the distinct exception of the unskilled workers at the bottom of the hierarchy) – with a resultant escalation in general standards of living (Daniels & Hyslop, 2003: 239-240). This in turn provided a breeding ground for aspiration – the more one has, the more one wants – and as each class division seeks to emulate the behavioural characteristics of those above them, so there developed a wider interest in accumulating wealth through the possession of goods,

and in doing so, ultimately accumulating status. It was a new era in consumerism and one that affected the production of art to a great extent:

> ...the practices of consumption and production are interlinked. How artists paint will be affected by their own understanding of what they're doing and perhaps by their audience's understanding of what they are doing. All artists' productions are governed by consumption – either by some mental or unconscious notion of who the imagined viewer might be, or by having a particular patron in mind – and in many instances by both (Blake & Frascina, 1993: 57).

As art became available to a wider audience, so it had to mould itself to the requirements of that audience, to satisfy the needs and wants of those who could afford to make the capital outlay for the work. Where previously the patron would manage how a work was created, its composition and construction, with the final outcome being predetermined and agreed upon; now the artist was acting as an independent operator, creating works of his/her own volition. As a result, in order to sell works in the open market s/he had to speculate what these unnamed individuals would appreciate and be prepared to pay for. The artist also needed to determine whom s/he was creating works for – the general public or the higher earning elite. This distinction made a substantial difference to what was produced and the manner in which it was done. For the first time, art producers had to take account of economic issues such as supply and demand; they had to understand value, not just in the cost of materials, but the time taken to create the work; and they had to consider the varied likes and dislikes of a much broader audience. The most evident example of this in the mid- to late-nineteenth century can be seen in the works of the Romantics, who began experimenting with painterly techniques and textured surfaces. Once again, Delacroix is a prime example of an independent Romantic artist, who broke away from the traditional prescriptions of the *Académie* in France, with his expressive use of colour and visible brushstrokes, as seen previously in the works of Rubens and Rembrandt (Arnason, 1988: 17). Such 'emotional' techniques were considered to be rather 'feminine' by the intellectuals of the *Académie*, for they had no relation to the intellectual theory of the time. Atmosphere came to take on a physical role in these works, created through painterly colouristic effects, and depth in a painting was explored through asymmetry and diagonal recession (Arnason, 1988: 17). By critically examining conventional standards in art production and engaging with new subjects and themes, through new methods of production, the Romantics were able to create new forms of art that appealed to the public: works that were uncommissioned and openly available for sale.

In this growing capitalist society, where value and the constructs of value were being consistently redefined in economic terms, one can see a new market emerging, a market where art is no longer considered an object to own as a reflection solely of wealth and status, but as a commodity itself, available for sale on the open market. And, as value (in economic terms) is accrued through the exchange of objects, most particularly those that are hard to come by, so the limited nature and inherent originality of an art work works to its advantage (Appadurai, 1986: 4). It is largely for this reason, along with their mounting popularity amongst almost all classes of citizens at the time, that the Romantics can be accredited for their contribution to the establishment of the modern market in art dealing (Blake & Frascina, 1993: 66).

As is evident above, throughout the nineteenth century, one comes to see a continued influx of modern ideas propagating the art world and bringing with it the beginnings of modernism. This tendency towards the modern is most clearly evident in the break away from traditional forms of artistic construction towards a more tactile, exploratory creativity. Previously, the high standards of tradition, as dictated by institutions such as the *Académie des Beaux-Arts* and the Salon, prescribed specific manners of production, such as carefully planned composition, perspective and a high finish devoid of any brush marks or evidence of manual labour on behalf of the artist (Blake & Frascina, 1993: 62).[20] What was now developing in the course of this modernist phase was a movement towards the physicality of art – colour was emerging as a significant element in the construction of the piece, brushstrokes were becoming evident, creating texture and helping to more clearly define form – characteristics all evident in works produced first by the Romantics, then the Realists and subsequently perfected by the Impressionists in the 1870s[21] (Blake & Frascina, 1993: 62). Painting had,

[20] The *Académie des Beaux-Arts* (Academy for the Fine Arts) along with the *École des Beaux-Arts* (School for the Fine Arts) were primary institutions in France, patronised and sponsored by the French government. Together they aimed to preserve the idealised forms of classical antiquity in the arts for the benefit of future generations. The Salon, in turn, was a renowned annual exhibition of the time, linked specifically to both schools and exhibiting the most prestigious work of these prominent institutions. The Academy and the Salon played important roles at the time in increasing the perceived status of the artist in society, to rival that of the bourgeois patrons. The Academy nurtured art that reflected Classical learning, knowledge and intelligence on behalf of the artist, emphasizing intricate details, carefully constructed compositions and careful design (Blake & Frascina, 1993: 61-62). It was these characteristics and the expectations of the Academy and the Salon as working entities that led to the rising of the Romantics as an oppositional faction.

[21] According to Clement Greenberg, the Impressionists perfected the art of drawing the viewer's attention to the physical structure of an artwork – the physicality of paint on canvas was noticeable before the actual image of the work. By acknowledging the flatness of the work through the painterly construction, Impressionists were, in effect, exploring the act of painting altogether; emphasising the unique qualities that make painting what it is. The quality of the work came to be determined by its physicality, the 'pureness' of its expression first as a painting and then as a representation of actual life (Harrison, 1993: 162-164).

effectively, become more approachable, for it had to appeal to a much wider audience, as well as one with a far greater range of intellectual capabilities.

It was during this period too that art more commonly began to represent daily life, not just that of the nobility, but of the common man as well – merchants and peasants, each depicted in common every day environments, or in relation to those of a higher status.[22] This was an art form that appealed to an ever widening range of people, from the emergent intellectual bourgeoisie, to the more sentimental or emotional portion of the middle class[23] (Blake & Frascina, 1993: 62). It was art that appealed to the avant-garde. By introducing more palatable subject matter, rendered in a more comprehensive manner, artists were, in effect, bypassing the strict educational requirements previously needed both to read and understand art. Modern art was becoming a reflection of modern society and in doing so, becoming more readily available to the modern individual.

It was art that focused on sense and sensation. Whilst considered by some, such as Greenberg, to be representative of the ideal – that of pure art or art for art's sake – it was also an art that very specifically reflected the changes in society and the deconstruction of levels of class that were evident at the time. Through their painterly techniques and the flattening of the picture plane, the Impressionists, for example, were calling into question the realism of art, distancing the viewer immediately from becoming absorbed in the work. Rather, the viewer was stopped up front and expected to examine the work for what it was – a representation of society. There was a definite bluntness about it, demanding that the audience *look* at the work, see it first, then take it in bit by bit and consider it. The work was not just a picture and the artist merely a creator, rather each and every aspect was a point to consider, a sign carefully chosen to illustrate the specific point of the artist (Clark, 1985: 6-8).

Without the support of the *Académie* and the reputational status that this entailed, artists such as the Impressionists had to work to create pieces that were interesting to the larger market and that held their own value in that market. This was in direct contrast to the works

[22] As mentioned previously, this can be seen to have occurred much earlier in the seventeenth and eighteenth century in the Netherlands, as is evident in the surplus on landscapes and genre paintings that were popular at the time. Due to the notably successful economic state of Holland during these early years, more and more individuals were able to afford art pieces and artist were creating works that were easily readable and so appealed more readily to the various social classes (North, 1997: 135-136).

[23] In addition to these changes in style and content, paintings could also no longer be produced on the same scale as traditionally prescribed. Rather their size was reduced to accommodate the specific requirements of their clientele – middle-class individuals required smaller works to fill the smaller spaces of their homes (Lane, 1998: 1).

exhibited in the Salon which fell under the influence of not only the State, but the middle classes who patronised it and therefore demanded works that appealed to their very particular tastes. In light of this, both symbolic and economic value for academic pieces was guaranteed by the State; accredited to an artwork purely on the basis that it was acceptable for exhibition at the Salon (Bourdieu, 1984: 240-252). The Impressionists however, in rejecting the obligation imposed by the State, were rather creating works for themselves, works that pushed the boundaries of accepted taste and in doing so, establishing a new and modern market. This was most particularly evident in the conspicuous growth in the number of galleries and auction houses exhibiting works at the time, especially with regard to solo shows (Blake & Frascina, 1993: 110). Artists were being encouraged to produce works outside of direct commissions or for submission to the *Académie*. Art dealers in turn, were coming to influence the production of art and the type of art that was flooding the market (Blake & Frascina, 1993: 110-111). And artists were learning about the impact this market could have on their livelihood, and so devising ways of managing it to their best advantage. According to T.J. Clark (1984: 261):

> By the end of the 1880s, Impressionist painters depended for their livelihood on movements of the world art market, particularly the American part of it... Market conditions encouraged the dealer to speculate in the long-term "creativity" of those artists he favoured; and artists in turn learnt to market that particular commodity with some skill – nursing and refining it in a steady sequence of shows, interviews and promotional literature, trying to strike the right balance between innovation and product reliability, sniffing out the market's approximate wishes while maintaining (to the death) the protocols of individuality and artistic freedom.

This is art as one sees it today; it is art as business, where the artists has progressed from obedient craftsman to independent operator, and finally to entrepreneur. In the current climate around the world it is important for artists to appreciate that what they do is in fact work, despite the creative angle, and as such needs to be acted upon accordingly. This period in the history of art provided new avenues which allowed the art evident today to exist: subject matter was reconsidered; composition reconstituted; artistic freedom came to take a novel yet concrete meaning; and the patron of old was disregarded in favour of more modern patrons, in the form of art dealers, government organisations and corporations, as well as a new breed of private patrons. Global economies evolved and developed, industrialisation spread across Europe and much of the world and the art market was affected as a result, through a growing capitalism and commoditisation. Art was no longer valuable purely for a single purchase by a wealthy individual, but gained trading power and so incurred a value that could potentially increase. In the period from the seventeenth to the nineteenth

centuries, art had picked up the properties of an article available for investment, whose momentum could only increase into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Art in the twentieth century

As modernity progressed through the nineteenth century towards the twentieth century, it brought with it ever more sophisticated technological breakthroughs, the most significant of which being electricity. The machine, which had already made its appearance earlier on in the nineteenth century, was considerably improved as a result of electricity and soon came to rule almost all areas of industry in the Western world. As the capacity for the machine grew, and with it the ability to mass-produce on a decreasing scale of costs, so a workforce was required with the specialised skill necessary to operate such machinery. Labour therefore came to assume a monetary value, as more and more people began to rely on the salaries provided by organisations and so the number of wage earners increased exponentially (MacDonald, 1960: 3). But, the machine also allowed those in higher positions to create even greater wealth for themselves, resulting in an ever-expanding middle-class and an ever-wealthier bourgeoisie. And the more their supply increased through such automated means, the greater the demand in the marketplace for such goods, making them all the more affluent as a result. It was a period of great innovation, with escalating gaps between the rich and the poor. It was also a period of frenetic activity, where the original was supplanted by the reproduction, by mass production, and the essence of the unique seemed lost in the upheaval. This is a concept more clearly examine by Walter Benjamin in his seminal text *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1936), and is discussed in more detail further on. But once again, art was greatly affected by these changes and once more adapted to its socio-economic milieu.

This was also the epoch of the unencumbered rise of the avant-garde and, along with it, a whole new notion of the role of the artist and the value of the artwork. What had begun in the latter half of the nineteenth century as a breakaway from traditional modes of thought about content, composition and technique; gained momentum, racing towards an even more modern end. It was an age that brought with it such varied and diverse artistic styles and genres as Cubism, Futurism, Dada and Surrealism, and later on even more distinct styles such as Abstract Expressionism and Pop Art, each bringing with it unique and varied ways of looking at the world and interpreting what they saw around them. As such, it is difficult to place a timeline on such movements, for all seemed to coalesce, working in and around each other with no tidy sequence of events mapped out to provide order and structure.

Clement Greenberg (1965), for one, claimed that the Cubists were the first 'modern' artists of the twentieth century, for they were "the first to accept the modern industrialising world with enthusiasm" (Greenberg, 1965: 97). Their art seemed to go beyond the previous century's determination to change the very process of how a painting is viewed, by deconstructing not only form, but the very concept of art itself (Kuspit, 2005: 1). As an example of this emerging modernism, or avant-gardism, Cubism is an art that is self-critical, much like that of the Impressionists, but this art, by its very nature, is questioning the fact that it is art at all. Throughout the changes that had befallen art so far – the loss of illusion, of the mirror-like surface, the loss of the grandeur of subject matter and the ingrained self-importance – what had until now remained relatively consistent was the representative nature of art. The Cubists however, were calling even this into question, for their art was in destroying form and recreating something new from the fragments – a new perspective, a new objectivity. This is most particularly evident in the early or 'analytical' stage of Cubism, which occurred from 1907 to around 1912 and concentrated on highly facetted and geometric depictions in generally muted tones, most commonly seen in the earlier works by Picasso and Braque.[24] The imagery was industrial, technical in its construction and seemingly mechanical; art that represented the environment in which it was created (Kuspit, 2005:5).

This correlation to the industrialisation that was happening in the outside world can also be clearly seen in the works of the Futurists, who chose to depict the sound and unstoppable chaotic action of the nineteenth century through the "simultaneous views of many aspects of objects" (Arnason, 1988: 182). Their ultimate search to portray movement in painting can be seen in the frenzied brushstrokes and geometric, repetitive fragmentation. Art was visibly being created in response to the various breakthroughs that were occurring in society at the time. Despite moving even further away from traditional means of artistic creation, the historical relevance of art remained the same, for even in this nihilistic stage art continued to be a chronicle of its times.

While these changes were taking place in the art world, further advancements were being made in other areas of society. Photography was growing exponentially, moving from being simply a means of recording life, most particularly human life (as a substitute for traditional portraiture); towards an art form in its own right, and filmmaking was taking over mainstream culture in the West. Both media facilitated and provided momentum for replication and

[24] The second period of Cubism, or Synthetic Cubism, followed this, involving more vivid colours, stencilling and collage (Pioch, 200:1). Whilst this period also exhibits the constructiveness of the earlier analytical period, the works appear more organic and less industrialised and mechanical.

imitation in art. This in itself was not a novel concept, for reproduction in art has a long history as evidenced in the graphic arts, such as lithography and etching, as well as in the process of manually copying a work for various reasons. However, mechanical reproduction was a relatively new phenomenon (Benjamin, 1936: 2). According to Walter Benjamin (1936: 5), in his paper on *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,* this was a result of the nature of the new collective:

> ...the desire of the contemporary masses to bring things 'closer' spatially and humanly, which is just as ardent as their bent towards overcoming the uniqueness of every reality by accepting its reproduction. Every day the urge grows stronger to get hold of an object at very close range by way of its likeness, its reproduction.

Reproduction in the form of photography or film, as an example, called into question the unique experience behind an artwork and in doing so broke away from tradition entirely, becoming a wholly new and modern trend. Benjamin felt that a reproduction of a work of art was missing its soul or 'aura', for it lacked the positioning in time and space that gave the artwork its context, as well as the history that was built upon it over time (Benjamin, 1936: 2). Without this the reproduction was empty, a mere shadow of that which it was supposed to replicate. It also robs the original of its essence, the impact that it has on the viewer. With copies of Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa,*[25] for example, available on post cards and posters in gift shops, on t-shirts and billboards, in adverts and magazines, there is no need for the common man to travel all the way to the Paris to see it – he know what it looks like. Through reproduction, it has lost its drawing power, its majesty. It may also appear reduced as a result, not quite as detailed or as colourful in real life, when compared to the A1-sized poster and, in this case, certainly smaller. Thus, the cultural object is robbed of its symbolic capital.

The art of the reproduction also allows a work of art a much broader audience, appealing to the nature of mass consumer culture. Film, most particularly, allows for a significantly greater viewership than almost any other art form (with the possible exception of architecture, whose audience tends to be spread out over a more extended period of time). Film is designed for a collective experience; to be viewed by the public in a simultaneous mass encounter.[26] It is a product of its age. In addition to this, film also requires a distancing of the viewer from the artwork. As is the nature of a crowd, the physical experience of the work is spread out amongst the masses. No longer acutely felt by the single viewer,

[25] Leonardo da Vinci. *Mona Lisa* (also known as *La Gionconda*). c. 1503–1506. Oil on poplar. 77 x 53 cm.

[26] Whilst it is becoming more prevalent for a painting or a sculpture to be viewed by a variety of people simultaneously this is largely due to developments in reproduction. By replicating a work and publishing this image, for example, it is possible for a multitude of people to view and experience the work at the same time. However, still absent in this experience is the mass appreciation or the effect of the collective reception.

absorbed into his/her consciousness and processed according to his/her knowledge, experience and history; the film calls for a mass response; it skims the surface of human perception without delving deep enough into individual comprehension; distracts rather than focuses; and conjures up emotions that are not felt on an personal level, but as a result of the collective consumption of the material (Benjamin, 1936: 13).

This was a society in which nearly everything was becoming more accessible and as such, people's perceptions and their ways of viewing things were changing dramatically. Previously, when entering a gallery, one was doing so with the intention of viewing art, of considering it in all of its varieties. This was a conscious decision made by the viewer. In this age of reproduction, however, art could now be viewed in the random ordinariness of daily life, haphazardly glanced upon in a magazine, in an advert, or in the background scene of a movie. It came upon the viewer without introduction, without warning and so seemed to meld into everyday life. The weight of meaning, of context was removed from the work and it became empty, signifying nothing.

Art in this society was fast becoming commercial, an object designed for a market that was firmly entrenched in a capitalist ideology and in so doing, appealing more and more to the capitalist nature of the businessman and businesses in general. Working organisations could now see the value of art outside of its creative realm, perceive it as a means of reaching out further to their prospective audience and of attracting the interests of a larger consumer base. Reproduction and the churning out of current artistic trends became even more prevalent, entrenching even further the commercialisation of the art object. And with this commercialisation of art, came the kitsch, the artificially synthesized mass culture that had been produced by the constant drive of industrialisation, the very anti-thesis of the avant-garde.

Kitsch was the art designed for mainstream culture. Based on reproduction, it was considered, at least by the avant-garde of Greenberg's time, to be art without soul or purpose; art stripped of its very essence and laid bare for the easy consumption of the masses. In replication of the industrialised and capitalist society in which it was formed, kitsch was synthetic art, manufactured art, driven by mass production to obtain maximum profit. Included in this most basic of arts was advertising, magazines and other forms of commercial publishing, and the ever-expanding movie and music industries – all previously excluded from consideration within the stringent artistic realm. It was art without substance, pre-digested, effortless art that could be easily understood by the larger, less 'intellectually adept' population (Greenberg, 1973a: 12-15). And with the kitsch came new means for

valuing work based on profit, sales and ratings, and commercial values. "Like forgery, kitsch is an inevitable feature of a world in which money and desire are spread more widely than taste and knowledge" (Dutton, 2009: 2). In comparison to the more avant-garde art that was being created around the same time, whose theories, theses and manifestos laid great claim to the significance and implications behind the construction of a work (be it even the destruction of art itself), kitsch on the other hand was a form of art that was created without the necessity of meaning, of reason beyond that of satisfying the increasing demands of consumer culture. It was a replication of what the avant-garde created and held in the highest esteem. Except it was merely that, a replication, and so the values inherent in the work of the former was noticeably absent in the creations of the latter, to be replaced instead by new values, the most pertinent of which being economic value.

"Art exercised some restraint on the bourgeois as long as it cost money" (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1944: 18). With the cheapening costs of reproduction and the increasing purchasing power of the consumer, this restraint was significantly diluted and kitsch art came to represent the end of art as a luxury product. Having said this, however, through the competing relationship between the avant-garde and the kitsch, one can simultaneously see the emergence of a new ideology, one that combined these opposing forces, as is evident in the art of the Pop artists.[27] Where kitsch was the physical representation of art becoming entertainment, which would soon come to take over much of the cultural realm, moving out of the galleries and exhibition spaces and into the world in general, Pop Art acted (though unintentionally) to restrain this progress and return art to the traditional cultural centres. Where galleries and museums had taken over the traditional role of the patron earlier on in the nineteenth century, it was a role that they still maintained outside of the world of kitsch, but one distinctly separate from the overarching patron-less state of commercial culture. Pop Art was the catalyst, for it brought kitsch into the realm of the gallery, by combining it with the more acceptable representation of the fine arts. Though intended by the Pop Artists to be a farce, a parody of the theories and philosophies that had led to the complete abstraction of Abstract Expressionism, Pop Art was in fact a return to the more traditional modes of representation, though in an entirely new and unprecedented manner:

> The period began insidiously, under the sullen shadow of Abstract Expressionism, and ended sharply, when everyone became slick and expensive, and the art world became a precinct of the world of high fashion,

[27] Pop Art emerged out of the post-World War II period in reaction to Abstract Expressionism. It is considered by many theoreticians to have begun in Britain in the mid 1950's and in the United States towards the later end of that decade. Despite this, it is considered to be a largely American movement inspired by the extensive commercial environment evident in America in that period and illustrated in mediums such as motion pictures, movie icons, advertisements and cartoons (Arnason, 1988: 452), Many art historians consider Pop Art to be the pioneer of postmodernism.

> and the great dealers assumed the role of makeweights in the marketplace of taste (Danto, 1998: 60-61).

The irony of this situation, is that the works exhibited, such spectacular examples of 'high fashion', were not necessarily intended for this purpose, but rather to mock the clean, quiet contained space of the gallery (Danto, 1998: 61). It was incongruous, but it brought commercial art back from the brink of the commonplace, into the artistic and cultural fields where it belongs today.[28]

The period between the two World Wars was a poor time for patronage of art in the West. The Great Depression in America resulted in multiple job losses and support of the arts tended to fall by the wayside. To slow this decline in artistic creation the US Government, under President Franklin D. Roosevelt, initiated the Federal Arts Program (FAP), as part of a bigger relief programme (the Works Progress Administration (WPA)) to create jobs for the unemployed (St. Louis Mercantile Library, n.d.: 1).[29] The programme was successful not only in creating jobs and upholding the economy, but also in promoting American culture and heritage to a depressed society. Once again art produced was being used as propaganda, to motivate the public, encouraging feelings of patriotism and hope in the face of a declining economic situation. The project however, was short-lived, ending in 1942, in the middle stages of World War II (St. Louis Mercantile Library, n.d.: 2).

Well after the devastation of World War II, in the mid-1960s, corporate sponsorship of the arts began to grow in America (Chagy, n.d.: 15). Whether spurred by the returning wealth and growing interests in art amongst the growing population, the impact of the FAP on public life, or by advances made by the Pop Artists in their combination of commercial and 'high' art, businesses in America began to see that benefits could be gained in a joint collaboration with the arts. In a time of growing global capitalism and greater competition in the markets, it

[28] It is necessary to be aware that art during the later twentieth century was consistently being shown in galleries and exhibition houses, as is evident by Dada, the Surrealists and the Abstract Expressionists. Each of these movements was a response to the one preceding it, taking art to the very extremes of pure art. In the case of the Abstract Expressionists, this would entail the removal of the easel from the process of painting and the exploration into the very act of painting itself, of layering paint on canvas to the point of complete abstraction, where the art was in the making and not the final product. These works were considered to be exemplary examples of the heights that modernism had obtained, fervently discussed by critics and displayed in all art houses. As the constant mechanisation of art was growing in the outside world, the 'fine arts' retreated further into the protective realm of institutions, such as museums, universities, art galleries, etc., where they could remove themselves from the distractions of everyday life (Jagodzinski, 1997: 110). Where Pop Art can be considered to have brought art back to the galleries, was in regard to the kitsch art of mass culture, and the splinters that this entailed – advertising, design, iconography etc. It was, in effect, the reining in of consumer culture and the reintroduction of representation to the art world.

[29] In May of 1937 the WPA/FAP employed 37,250 people (Clarke, 1996: 1). Many artists renowned today were part of the FAP, including Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko (St. Louis Mercantile Library, n.d.: 1).

was essential for organisations to find new ways to differentiate themselves. Investing in the arts was one of these ways. According to the late Frank Stanton, former President and Vice-Chairman of Columbia Broadcasting Systems Inc. and Chairman for the Business Committee for the Arts in the United States:

> The survival and growth of business is the first function of management. This can no longer be achieved in a vacuum of internal corporate power. The respect of other institutions such as investment houses, banks, other corporations and government and non-profit bodies, as well as that of countless individuals – investors, customers, suppliers, employees – is essential; and respect is earned from an adoption of high standards of excellence, a devotion to distinction and an adherence to good taste. These cannot be proclaimed; they must be revealed.
>
> This cannot be done unless the corporation is in league with the arts, going to school with them constantly, recognizing and respecting that which pleases and elevates and rejecting out of hand that which offends and degrades (Chagy, n.d.: 3).

And so the truly modern corporate patron was born. The interest of this form of patron however leaned largely towards to commercial aspects of art sponsorship. It was a practical approach, encouraged in the most part for the purposes of enhancing profits and increasing market share. By investing in the arts, these businesses were finding new ways of attracting customer interest, which in turn brought in new streams of revenue. By sponsoring museums, galleries, exhibitions and artists, organisations were not only exposing their respective product brands to existing and potential clients, they were also building corporate brands for themselves, brands that were not only based on their business purposes, but on the positive factors aligned with social responsibility as well. However, the benefits of such a relationship could also be seen in the communities in which these businesses operated, through the vast improvements that were being made to cultural centres and activities.[30] Value – economic, social and cultural – could be viewed from all sides. And, the greater the improvements to the community, the higher the appreciation that the community has towards the contributor, and the greater the support and respect by that community and the other businesses operating in the same space. In order to profit in business one needs to not only attract new customer, but retain existing ones and to do that, it is necessary to engender support from all potential areas of the market.

[30] A modern day example of this would be Cell C's project in 2003 – *C for the City,* for which they won Business and Arts South Africa's 'Best Use of a Commission of New Art' (Ludman, 2003: 1).

Artists, alongside art, were becoming a commodity and they too had to market themselves in order to gain the attention required to keep at their craft.[31] In order to differentiate themselves, artists needed to increase their own respective personal worth and thereby improve their positions in the cultural realm. By re-confirming the notion of art as commodity, artists could then attach an inherent value to the work, based on reputation, skills and ability, and creative output, that far exceeded the purely physical value. By promoting themselves effectively, they could increase their visibility in the market and so attract the right patrons with which to advance even further. In the right instances, this new symbiotic relationship that was developing was proving beneficial to both parties. Where the patron was gaining increased reputation and social upliftment as a result of the partnership, the artist was becoming more business-minded, focused on the outcome of his/her work and freer to explore his/her creativity as a result of the financial assistance. However, not all artists felt the necessity for a patron or sponsor; rather they continued to create works for an open market, free of the commitments required by such relationships. And in turn, sponsoring businesses extended themselves much further than the individual artists and their artwork. More specifically, these organisations chose to sponsor galleries, museums, art fairs and exhibitions, which in turn attracted artists to show their work or view the work of their contemporaries. It also allowed these artists the opportunity to be viewed by an even larger public and so increase their reputational standing as a result. Alternatively, businesses purchased works to decorate their buildings or for the purposes of investment, once again supporting the artists as they endeavoured at their craft. It was an inescapable relationship and one that has continued to the present day.

Another feature of current-day society is that in order to obtain and continue to grow one's wealth, one needs to maintain gainful employment. Where previously leisure was the privilege of the upper-classes, present society features entrepreneurs, capitalists and business leaders at its pinnacle - business and commerce being the leading force behind economic power and success. According to Greenberg (1953), this shift in focus, away from leisure towards a convergence on work, may result in a culture being conjoined with work to create a new substructure (Greenberg, 1973b: 32). This is particularly evident in South Africa, where the levels of economic development and increasing levels of inflation have

[31] According to Arjun Appadurai (1986) in his article on commodities and the politics of value, "the commodity situation in the social life of any 'thing' be defined as the situation in which its exchangeability (past, present, or future) for some other thing is its socially relevant feature" (Appadurai, 1986: 13). Effectively, art has always been a commodity to some extent, as its existence appealed to the patrons and their internals wants. However, it was only when art itself, and not the service provided by the artist, was desired and acquired through the exchange of money (the ultimate equal for all exchange values) and inherited the characteristics of a social use value in the modern industrialised society, that it truly became the commodity that one can recognise today (Appadurai, 1986: 7-8).

created an industrialised culture, making it necessary for most individuals to work in order to live, and as such, work and culture are fast becoming interdependent. More so, as culture is not for profit, it falls to the communities that exist within that culture to provide for it through continued support and financial aid.

As the principal representative or figurehead of a country, especially a democratic one such as South Africa, it is the responsibility of the presiding government to provide for the basic human rights of its citizenry, to assist in the betterment of these lives and to firmly entrench the identity or culture of the country within the lives of the population. However, in a developing country such as South Africa, with pressing social needs, it is evident that the State is not in a position to be the sole beneficiary of culture and the arts in South Africa.[32] Acknowledging this, the State has then put measures in place to ensure that, while the arts may not necessarily be a priority, they are not forgotten. National museums and galleries have been delegated the role of keeping the arts alive, by maintaining the heritage that has made the country what it is today. Theirs is the responsibility of accumulating and exhibiting diverse works that represent the cultural heritage of South Africa. Furthermore, the State has set up agencies to encourage external sources of support, from private individuals to corporate entities. By introducing aspects of social responsibility into the requirements of any corporation, they are hoping to persuade South African businesses to involve themselves more with the communities in which they operate and so develop the societies around them. It is therefore in the best interests of businesses to uplift their communities through the support of cultural initiatives, such as museums, libraries, art galleries, and orchestras, as well as the individuals for whom these institutions exist – the writers, artist and musicians – and in so doing further entrench social order and cultural stability. The reasons motivating these actions are diverse and so will be discussed in more detail in the next two chapters.

In conclusion, this chapter has attempted to provide a brief synopsis into the socio-economic changes that have occurred over the past six centuries; the potential impact that this has had on the arts produced in the course of this period, and on patronage as a result. As art has changed over the course of history and the artist has become more independent, so the

[32] Culture, as it is applied here, refers to the 'elite' arts, in combination with those specific characteristics that are considered to define a certain social group, in this case, South Africans. Culture encapsulates the arts, specifically fine arts, theatre, ballet, literature and classical music, symbols of class and refinement. Within the South African context, however, the term also needs to take into account the various qualities that are specific to the country, the history, customs and social activities that represent the people of South Africa. As ambassadors of South African culture, it is the responsibility of the State to find the middle ground between these two ideologies and provide opportunities for the citizens of the country to access and assimilate these symbols.

value ascribed to an artwork has been altered. Initially this value revolved around the symbolic, whereby the artwork came to represent religious affinity, personal stature and great wealth. Art was used as propaganda, as a means of creating an image or a brand in the eye of the public that would stand the patron in good stead and attract the admiration of the masses. Ultimately, the patron was looking to elevate his/her perceived position in society through an association with art. This affiliation with the arts only increased, as the autonomy of the artists progressed, for now the artist was gaining not only a symbolic capital of his/her own, that could then be appropriated by the patron in his/her support of the arts, but was redefining the cultural field as well. Artists soon came to be regarded as the ambassadors of cultural life within their societies, for their art was a representation of the life they perceived around them. Consumerism and the creation of an open market then introduced art to economics and its inherent value increased as a result. The art market today owes a great deal to this available means of buying and selling art. As art continued to accrue symbolic, cultural and economic value, so it came to occupy a stronger position in society, but never really a self-sustaining one, for it was still dependent (though to a much lesser extent) on the support of patrons for its very survival.

It is at this point where the reader finds themselves today. The arts are an essential part of any culture or society and have survived for centuries based on the support and patronage of a number of individuals and groups. This support, however, is now proving to be insufficient in bolstering the art market and so new external means of support are required. It is into this position that corporate arts sponsorship has been placed.[33] By learning from the past and understanding the ways in which art patronage has been successfully implemented, and the benefits obtained by the patron in doing so, organisations today can justify an involvement with the arts – for its decorative purposes, or as a marketing or branding strategy, a means of creating positive public opinion, an investment opportunity or just purely a means of entrenching culture within a community. Each of these is a valid reason and each is broken down and discussed in more detail further on in this report. First, however, it is necessary to contextualise the information already provided, to localise it and examine it as it is currently happening in South Africa today.

[33] The introduction of corporate sponsorship has varied significantly across different nations and states, for it is largely dependent on the varying trajectories of global capitalism as it spreads across the world. Cultural dynamics also play a vital role in the rise of capitalism and therefore affect these developments accordingly.

CHAPTER 3 - Corporate sponsorship as it currently stands: Absa and Hollard – a case study:

State sponsorship of the arts in South Africa has historically been an important form of patronage – most specifically in the early twentieth century. With the exception of a few high-net-worth individual patrons and foreign investors,[34] widespread support of the arts fell solely on the shoulders of the government and with this, the responsibility to keep arts and culture alive.

In as culturally diverse a society as South Africa's, it is essential for the State to support the arts to ensure that vital characteristics of the culture are not lost in the steady advancement of the age. Within the South African context, this is evident in the establishment of galleries such as Iziko – the South African National Art Gallery in Cape Town – which was established as early as 1871; and the Johannesburg National Gallery (JAG) in 1910: both of which were initially created through the donation of art works from wealthy patrons.[35] However, public support of institutions such as JAG has declined steadily in recent years,[36] as indifference grows for collection-based museums. As such, funding for these organisations was hard to

[34] At the end of the nineteenth to the early twentieth century individual patrons tended to be European settlers, largely mining magnates and financiers attracted to South Africa by the booming gold and diamond mines. Classified by the term 'Randlords', these individuals made their fortunes in South Africa and sought to elevate their positions in society. One route was to invest their wealth in art collections for their personal homes and for public display. Notable amongst these Randlords was Maximillian Michaelis, patron of the Michaelis Collection, which was donated to the South African National Gallery in Cape Town in 1914 and consists of a world-renowned collection of seventeenth century art from the Netherlands (Iziko: Museums of Cape Town, n.d.). Another significant Randlord was Lionel Phillips, whose wife Florence Phillips initiated the process that would ultimately establish the Johannesburg Art Gallery in Joubert Park. The Phillips' resided in the Herbert Baker building, Villa Arcadia, now home to the Hollard Art Collection (Carman, 2003: 235)

[35] Ironically, the Johannesburg Art Gallery (JAG) was originally established as a British Gallery by mining magnates, for the English settlers populating Johannesburg in the early 1900s, at the exclusion of any South African content. Since then the various curators of JAG have slowly grown the 'Africanness' of the collection; initially through the incorporation of their first work by a black South African artist in 1940, namely Gerard Sekoto; later with the calculated integration of traditional forms of African art into the collection (such as stools, headdresses masks etc.), breaking down the traditional barriers between what was then considered 'fine' art and 'applied' art or craft (Carman, 2003: 240-245). Today the collection is predominantly South African and represents many of the cultures and traditions evident in South Africa's multi-cultural society. The gallery also holds the prestige of being one of the only cultural institutions in Johannesburg to have never discriminated on the basis of race, despite increasing pressures by government factions during the apartheid era (Carman, 2003: 245).

[36] JAG apportions this decrease in public attendance to a dramatic decline in the in the neighbourhood in which they are located. Joubert Park has become known in Johannesburg as a high crime area and the adjacent large taxi rank fosters the perception that the area is unsafe. Studies done in 2000 show an approximate 60% decrease in attendance figures to JAG between 1988/89 and 1998/99, with further decreases in 2000 (Carman, 2003: 252).

come by and they became limited in their reach and influence (Carman, 2003: 233). The less the public support an institution, the less likely it is to obtain state grants in order to continue operations, for these funds can be more usefully allocated elsewhere. Other important issues, such as housing, HIV/Aids, health and education, become higher priorities and as a result, arts and cultural organisations have been relegated to the bottom of a long list of institutions requiring funding.

More recently, organisations such as the National Arts Council and the South African National Association for the Visual Arts have provided avenues for Government to directly manage their relationship with the arts. As specialised bodies dealing primarily with the arts, each institution has its own mandate, which best enables it to follow the directives set by the State, as well as the interests of South African society in all its variances. The focus of these institutions however, has largely been on works of heritage,[37] particularly art forms that were sidelined during the Apartheid years. Theirs has been the responsibility of supporting arts initiatives and building up collections which are representative of all of the diverse cultures of this country, often at the expense of the 'elite' arts. These art forms, in the shape of formal painting, sculpture, photography and more modern techniques, such as film, then fell to the national galleries to support. But, as funding of these institutions, such as JAG and Iziko, became less available, a replacement needed to be found to supplement the waning involvement of the State. This resulted in self-sustaining, joint initiatives with Government, such as Business and Arts South Africa (BASA).

Business and Arts South Africa and the contemporary South African patron

BASA was established in late 1996 by the British Council (which at the time had very strong networks in South Africa) and what was then the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, to mirror what was happening very successfully in the United Kingdom through the Association of Business Sponsorship of the Arts (Danby, 2008). This was a period directly after the first democratic elections in South Africa, when the African National Congress (ANC) was elected to power. As such, it was an epoch in which great interventions took place to correct the injustices of the past and re-establish the cultural heritage of the country that had been lost during the apartheid years. Businesses and arts organisations were canvassed and in the end, according to Nicola Danby (2008), former CEO of BASA,

[37] Works of heritage, refer to the more 'traditional' African works, or 'indigenous' art.

> ...everyone agreed that the time was right, the socio-political landscape was changing, the cultural landscape was changing, government could no longer fund (or rather had this very narrow track of funding that went to forming arts councils), and all these changes were happening. So they felt that the time was right to try and encourage corporate sector involvement and BASA was set up very strategically (Danby, 2008).

And so it began, as a joint initiative of the Department of Arts and Culture and the business sector, mandated to develop and promote mutually beneficial and sustainable business-arts partnerships with the intention of uplifting all of the arts in South Africa.[38]

The South African government in its own capacity has also taken an initiative towards encouraging companies to assume this role, by incentivising corporate social investment programmes and providing state subsidies. However, such attempts have borne little fruit. For example, it has taken BASA eleven years to finally set up a meeting with Treasury to determine a more effective and encouraging way forward (Danby, 2008). Until this comes to fruition, however, the government still provides BASA with an annual grant, the major portion of which they have elected to put back into the Supporting Grant Scheme, a scheme designed purely for the purposes of leveraging a corporate organisation's involvement with an event or product, so as to create a mutually beneficial outcome for both parties. It is through this sort of support that BASA is hoping to encourage businesses to get involved in supporting the arts. And they seem to be having some success in doing so, for the corporate members of BASA have grown from the initial 49 at the onset, to approximately 135, in spite of natural attrition along the way (Danby, 2008).

Running concurrently with this government exercise, individual patrons were still playing their part in collecting art and supporting the arts. Thabo Mbeki for one, at the time Deputy President of South Africa, was asked to be the patron of BASA, as a result of his very genuine interest and involvement in culture and the arts (Danby, 2008). But it was noticeably successful businessmen who were coming to the fore; individuals who had created a name for themselves through establishment or management of multi-million rand corporations and who now found the time and the inclination to invest some of their excess funds into artistic endeavours. Individuals such as Steve Booysen, Dick Enthoven and the late Brett Kebble, are primarily business leaders, entrepreneurs and shareholders of various and different enterprises, and yet each is publically noted for a deep-seated involvement in the arts. All

[38] Subsequent to this, BASA has become South Africa's major resource for corporate funding of arts and culture (Mail & Guardian, 2008: 1).

three individuals are known for their support of up-and-coming talent and the promotion of existing artists locally and abroad.

Brett Kebble was a South African mining magnate and controversial patron of the Brett Kebble Art Awards. These awards were established in 2003 to provide a showcase for established artists and as a launching pad for those lesser-known artists.[39] Dick Enthoven, a major shareholder at Hollard and current owner of the Spier Wine Estate, is also one of South Africa's most inspired patrons of the arts. Steve Booysen was, until recently, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Absa Group Limited and has played a significant role in establishing the Absa Art Collection to the level it is today. Both Dick Enthoven and Steve Booysen continue to be collectors in their own right, as well as motivators behind their organisations own collections. And so it was through individuals such as these, and organisations like BASA, that businesses started becoming more and more interested in investing in the arts and supporting the culture of which they were a part.

Prior to the establishment of BASA there was very little corporate sponsorship of the arts in South Africa (Danby: 2008). As is evidenced above, while individual patronage was in place, with regard to business involvement, funding of the arts tended to fall to Corporate Social Investment (CSI). But this brought its own problems, giving to the arts was considered to be a charitable donation, a grudge transaction on behalf of the organisation. And, being constantly positioned as a charity, was not good or the arts either – artists like to consider themselves as professionals, not charity cases, and so resentment in the art sector was high (Danby, 2008). To remedy this situation, BASA looked to set up mutually beneficial partnerships between business and the arts, promoting situations in which money is given by an organisation, but something is gained as a result. In addition to this, they spent time talking to arts organisations across the country, teaching them about fund-raising, approaching sponsors, developing media partnerships and understanding what they had to offer a sponsor (Danby, 2008). These arts organisations needed to be able to perceive themselves not as charities or entities that purely absorb funding, but as businesses in their own right: businesses that can offer more than just a product or opportunity to a sponsor, but that can rather work symbiotically with other businesses to create opportunities for both

[39] In addition to this Brett Kebble also managed to accumulate in his lifetime an impressive collection of South African art and artists, with the help of Graham Britz, curator of Graham's Fine Art Gallery in Broadacres in Fourways, Johannesburg. Prior to the auction at Summer Place in Sandton, Johannesburg, this collection was temporarily on exhibition at Graham's Fine Art Gallery. The collection, which included 133 works by South African and international artists, including Irma Stern, Alexis Preller, Ernst Abraham Volschenk and Vladimir Tretchikoff to name a few, brought in just under R55 million which, at the time of writing, was intended to be used to settle the outstanding debts incurred by Brett Kebble during his lifetime and as a result of his business relations (SAPA, 2009: 1).

partners. They also needed to learn how to manage their business affairs more astutely, to work on making profits that can be reinvested in their businesses to sponsor growth and development even further (Danby, 2008). Very few arts organisations today are self-sufficient, but being partly self-funding is a potential significant strength.

For BASA, it was imperative that the relationship between business and the arts be mutually beneficial in order for it to be sustainable and so it was constantly looking for new ways to enhance this partnership. An inspired move was to develop a relationship with Empowerdex, a prominent rating agency whose role is to rate companies in terms of their contribution to the enhancement of Black Economic Empowerment (BEE), in line with the Black Economic Empowerment Act. Companies require sufficiently high BEE ratings to be able to supply and contract with government and other public sector organisations. High levels of such accreditation even assist client companies, as purchasers, to improve their own BEE ratings. The BEE rating criteria include scores for social investment and contributions towards development of Black-owned businesses. Therefore South African companies have both a political and an economic incentive to enhance their BEE status.

BASA and Empowerdex have explored ways in which art organisations could achieve BEE ratings that would make them more accessible to potential business sponsors.[40] In this way, organisations would be more amenable to partnering with accredited arts organisations that would boost heir BEE status.

All in all, BASA is opening up avenues for businesses to become involved in the arts, encouraging sustainable partnerships that would provide increasing benefits to both parties. And the more they have endeavoured, the greater the interest has been, with more and more organisations becoming involved with the arts and so encouraging others to do the same. Companies such as Absa and Sasol, for example, have paved the way for newer and smaller organisations, such as Hollard Insurance, in their support of various art initiatives and their ever-growing art collections. Other corporate sponsors worth mentioning include Standard Bank, whose corporate collection[41] first started 50 years ago, in 1969, with the commission of

[40] Many of the smaller arts organisations operating in South Africa at present were set up by middle-class white women, with a passion for art (Danby, 2008). BASA felt that it was unfair to discriminate against such institutions just purely based on the skin colour of their ownership. As such, Empowerdex had to relook at the way it traditionally rated organisations, taking into account instead the end beneficiaries of the arts organisation, the audience, or the people being trained, etc. (Danby, 2008). In this way, smaller single-owner arts organisations were able to fairly achieve a BEE status with which to attract business sponsorship.

[41] This corporate collection of art is not to be confused with their second collection of African art. The Standard Bank Foundation of African Art is a completely separate, public collection, housed at the University of the

three major canvasses by Walter Batiss, Louis Maqhubela and Nils Burwitz (Crump, 1990: 8). Standard Bank has also made significant advances as the headline sponsor of the Grahamstown Arts Festival. BHP Billiton is also a major corporate patron of the arts in South Africa. Their collection was started only in the 1990's by then CEO, Brian Gilbertson, with the intention to preserve the artistic impressions of artists influenced by the conflict-ridden tension that was occurring in South Africa's political life at the time (Alfred, 2003: 7). In 1993 the company had accumulated a collection of over 700 contemporary South African art works, valued at around R8 million. Other corporate sponsors in South Africa include MTN, Cell C, First National Bank, Nedbank.

One of the reasons for this growth in the art and collectors' market is a result of the change in perceived value of cultural objects in today's market and changing social aspect in the community. Furthermore, as the global economic crises continue to take hold throughout the world, companies continuously have to look for new ways of promoting their brands. In the advanced technological world in which the reader finds themselves, it is becoming easier and easier for individuals to tune out the extensive public marketing, much of it in the form of advertising, to which they are constantly exposed by the media. Existing sponsorship, such as that of sports, has become so overrun with sponsors that the public is overwhelmed just by the huge variety of it; PVR[42] is allowing people to skip adverts when watching television; and the Internet is expanding the population's horizons, whilst simultaneously allowing them to be selective in what they view. Previous modes of advertising have become outdated and so companies have to search for new ways to attract the attention of their target audience. The arts offer an experience and they appeal more directly to the varied characteristics of this vast population. Whilst still being niched, they are more accessible and less expensive than many other forms of sponsorship and provide an experiential aspect not available in many other forms of promotion (Danby, 2008).

In order to fully comprehend the opportunities offered by a joint partnership between business and the arts, it is necessary to examine organisations involving themselves in the arts in more detail. For the purposes of this research report, I focus on just two, that of Absa Bank and Hollard Insurance. The reason for the selection of these two is that they represent the old and the new; the conservative, established organisation deeply entrenched in the

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Witwatersrand art galleries (Crump, 1990: 8). The corporate collection referred to above, on the other hand, is a largely private collection, housed in the various offices of Standard Bank (Crump, 1990: 8).

[42] PVR stands for personal video recorder and refers to DSTV's new decoder which allows the viewer to record live TV, rewind and play back later. Data is stored in digital format (as opposed to the traditional analogue form).

cultures of old and the newer more contemporary organisation, progressive in its thinking: a company established in a democratic South Africa and so with few direct influences or ties that may anchor it to the past history of this country and the possible negative connotations that this may entail. Through a more in-depth examination of the actions and intentions of these two companies, I intend to show how these findings can be attributed to most other organisations operating within the same environment. By evaluating their current approaches to the arts, one can strive to understand their motives, whether particular strategies in supporting the arts may be applicable to other organisations around South Africa, and what affects a wider corporate initiative have on the South African cultural centre as a whole.

Absa Bank: Long-standing support

As one of the four leading banks of South Africa, Absa Bank Limited plays a significant and influential role in South African life.[43] It is an organisation listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, with a multitude of shareholders and stakeholders invested in its every decision. To show its competence as a bank, as well as its worthiness as an investor and financial advisor on behalf of its clients and shareholders, Absa needs to show positive returns on investment and consistent economic growth. Whilst one can be sure that Absa's investment portfolio is mostly orientated towards more regular or common investment opportunities for a company of its size, it is always important to ensure that wealth is spread evenly and diversity of investment is achieved. According to Cecile Loedolff (2008), curator of the Absa Art Gallery, one of the ways that Absa has chosen to do this is through investment in the arts (Loedolff, 2008).[44] This in itself is an interesting concept and the reason behind such a choice may be better understood by examining the cultural history of the bank.

[43] Absa has fought hard in recent times to maintain the reputation of being a bank that caters to all aspects of the South African population, regardless of race, religion, or economic standing. The reasons behind this drive can be seen to come from their inclusion of Volkskas Bank in the establishment of Absa. Volkskas was formed in the 1930s as a bank to support the economic empowerment of the Afrikaans-speaking people in South Africa. It was then promoted to a large extent by the Nationalist government as an icon of Afrikaner nationalism and grew significantly through the support of the Afrikaner population (O'Meara, 1983: 200). Much of the art that Volkskas contributed to the Absa art collection is influenced by this Afrikaner history.

[44] Although there is no conclusive evidence to confirm this, it is evident from superficial surveys (in the United States) that amongst those businesses most likely to sponsor the arts, banks tend to be most prominent. According to Gideon Chagy, in fact, "the banking community is the only sector of American business in which one finds an organised effort to persuade its members to contribute to the artistic or cultural life of their communities. Commercial banks have a more direct and pervasive relationship to the communities in which they function than most other business concerns...As a normal part of their business operations banks are concerned with ways in which they can make constructive contributions to a wide range of problems that impede human fulfilment and social progress in their own localities" (Chagy, n.d.: 110-111).

Absa was established by an amalgamation of four erstwhile banks, namely Allied, Trust Bank, United and Volkskas – each bringing to the table its own way of doing business and its own heritage within the culture of South Africa. But from the very start art investment was pivotal to each of their operations and specific to the clients that they served (Loedolff, 2008). Volkskas in particular, along with United and Trust Bank, came into the merger with collections of their own, bringing a variety of works and artists ranging from more traditional and established artists such as such as Willem Coetzer, J.H. Pierneef, Walter Battiss and Cecil Skotnes, to more recent works by Bettie Cilliers-Barnard. Each collective set of works was specific to the target market of the respective bank. The biggest contribution to the collection came from Volkskas, who had accumulated over the years a significant selection of art works, particularly those by Afrikaans-speaking artists, such as Pierneef and Coetzer, noted as being artists of Afrikaner nationalism. The bank was very much entrenched in the politics of the time and as such, the art accumulated reflected this. United and Trust Bank, on the other hand, had smaller collections, were far less politically active and therefore their artistic contributions had less of an impact on the group collection as a whole.

Once the works in each of the separate collections had been amalgamated, the group collection was then distributed into the various branches according to the nature of the clientele that frequented that branch. To use Volkskas as an example once again, it was considered to be the more grounded, established bank of the four and largely patronised by an Afrikaans-speaking clientele. It was understood by management at Absa that these clients prioritised quality over cost-effectiveness and so, if this was achieved to their satisfaction, then they would tend to remained loyal to the bank (Loedolff, 2008). Trust Bank, on the other hand, was patronized by younger, more modern clients, interested in saving time through technology and fast and efficient client services (Loedolff, 2008).

As a result, in order for the merged entity to maintain the support of the client bases that each component bank had so conscientiously accumulated prior to the merger and to avoid offending any sensibilities, the art had to be distributed suitably. The long-established, more conservative pieces, usually by Afrikaans-speaking artists, were sent to the branches that dealt with what were previously Volkskas clients. These works tended to be more subdued, more 'traditional' in concept, such as *Landscape* (undated)[45] by Willem Coetzer; while the

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This can also be seen on a similar level in South Africa, where many resident banks feature amongst some of the largest or most influential patrons of the arts. These include not only Absa, but Standard Bank, First National Bank and Rand Merchant Bank.

[45] Willem Coetzer. *Landscape*. Undated. Oil on board. 28.5 x 38.5 cm.

more modern, up-and-coming art was distributed to the branches that had dealt primarily with the Trust Bank clients. They were then further defined by the areas in which the branches operated. Branches in areas such as Katlehong, with its predominately black clientele, were allocated the works of largely black artists such as Solomon Malope and Helen Sebidi, to best appeal to their target audiences and show a common link between the bank and its clients (Loedolff, 2008). These more modern works tended to be brighter and more immediately engaging. However, there was also a supplementary effort to prevent stereotyping and encourage multiplicity. Complementary works were therefore also distributed, so as to provide a diverse perspective and a more interesting environment for both clients and staff (Loedolff, 2008).

What all of these works in the Absa collection have in common, however, is their inherent investment potential. The underlying reason for owning and accumulating such a collection was for investing funds; with the creation of a pleasing and creative environment in which to work coming in a close second. Curator Cecile Loedolff asserts that it was important for the bank to prove to its investors that it was capable of investing their money wisely and creating a return on investment that would justify the art aspect, as opposed to other investment opportunities which may equally provide increased profit share and shareholders' dividends (Loedolff, 2008). It was a reputation that they needed to uphold to prove their worthiness as a bank and so the reason for their choices for art investment was more specific.

Absa recognises that art is a stimulant for creative thinking. Particularly in an industry, such as banking, that does not have much space for creativity and is ruled by strict processes and procedures. It is necessary therefore to create an environment that encourages independent thought and art is the perfect conduit. As such, Absa encourages interaction with the art works, bringing staff together in informal discussions and company functions to consider the art on exhibition at the time. The curators also offer tours of the exhibitions, where they walk various departments through the gallery, telling them about the art and encouraging them to ask questions, offer opinions and interact with one another in the context of the gallery space (Loedolff, 2008). Many curators of corporate collections, like Cecile Loedolff, believe that this concern into the welfare of its staff has far-reaching effects on the company as whole.[46] And, while employee satisfaction may not be a direct result of corporate sponsorship of the arts, it certainly makes for an interesting and thought-provoking working environment.

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[46] Absa has consistently been voted into the top 10 of the Deloitte's Best Companies to Work For annual survey, taking first place in 2003 as the best company to work for in South Africa, as well as the industry winner for banking (Deloitte, n.d). Since 2003, they have appeared in the top 10 Large Category Winners in 2004, 2007 and 2008 (Deloitte, n.d.).

Artistic works are unique in their ability to elicit as assortment of reactions amongst those who view them, ranging between extreme dislike and profound appreciation and as such, create an environment for contemplation and debate. This is particularly evident in contemporary modern/postmodern works, which tend to vary extensively, as they are not limited by the prescriptions of earlier ages. Contemporary art is diverse; tackling a multiplicity of subjects in a countless number of ways, each with its own background, history and philosophical debate. Through such discussions, new perceptions and ways of thinking can be encouraged, which then open up avenues in other areas for creative thought.

Professor Nick Binedell (2008), director of the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS), claimed in a discussion about the structure of Master of Business Administration (MBA) programmes in South Africa and around the world that it is important to educate future business leaders on the value of understanding art: "business is not purely rational – it is a highly creative process that can be linked strongly to artistic creativity" (Peacock, 2008: 25). Such is the opinion at Absa, where the art is used as a backdrop for originating new ideas and innovative ways of changing and growing. By distributing their collection outside of the gallery and into the branches, they are promoting an environment of inventiveness and inspiration throughout all levels of the organisations, whilst at the same time, creating a pleasant environment in which to work. It is reminiscent of the merging of work and culture that Greenberg refers to, though in a distinctly South Africa way.

In South Africa, particularly in the middle classes, a person will spend the majority of his/her time at work (usually from his/her early twenties to the early- to mid sixties). Amongst the working classes, this timeline may extend even further. As a result, there is little opportunity to engage with artistic and cultural works outside of the workplace. By providing each of its branches and offices with original pieces, Absa is providing access to various artefacts, representative of the culture of South Africa, to a wider audience in a more commonplace setting; mainstreaming culture by introducing visitors, staff and clients to some of South Africa's most renowned artists and artworks, such as Irma Stern's *Amaryllis in a jar* (1936), Maggie Laubser's *Lowveld scene* (undated) or Edoardo Villa's *African Head* (undated).[47] Through the allocation of works around their branches and the presence of the gallery in the head office, the bank is encouraging divisions and departments to get involved and to ask

[47] Irma Stern. *Amaryllis in a jar.* 1936. Oil on board. 81.5 x 73.5 cm.
Maggie Laubser. *Lowveld scene.* Undated. Oil on board. 49 x 44 cm.
Edoardo Villa. *African Head.* Undated. Bronze. 66 x 36 x 33 cm.

questions, attempting to instil within its staff the requisite codes for understanding culture and appreciating the works at more than just face value.[48]

According to Pierre Bourdieu (1993), in order to fully comprehend a work of art, one needs to hold the requisite codes for deconstructing it, for understanding the meaning of the work outside of the obvious or purely visual (Bourdieu, 1993b: 216-217). To do this, one needs to be educated:

> There is no perception which does not involve an unconscious code and it is essential to dismiss the myth of the 'fresh eye', considered a virtue attributed to naïveté and innocence. One of the reasons why the less educated beholders in our societies are so strongly inclined to demand a realistic representation is that, being devoid of specific categories of perception, they cannot apply any other code to works of scholarly culture than that which enables them to apprehend as meaningful objects of their everyday environment (Bourdieu, 1993b: 217)

The employees at Absa come from a range of diverse backgrounds, from assorted levels of society, with vastly different levels of education. It cannot be guaranteed therefore that each of these employees will hold the cultural capital required to decipher the codes evident in a cultural object. It is Absa's intention therefore, to instil each interested employee within the organisation with the requisite 'education' needed to understand and appreciate the art around him/her. Unlike Bourdieu's concepts of building cultural capital, this is not done through a cultivated upbringing or a specialised education that comes earlier on in the individual's life, but through interactions in the working environment, constant contact with cultural artefacts and multiple opportunities to examine, explore and discuss them. And, in addition to all of this, Absa is creating an environment for its staff that is inviting; an interesting place in which to spend the larger portion of its day.

The art is also carefully selected and distributed to successfully represent the image of the bank; its corporate identity invested in each of the chosen pieces, so as to become a form of marketing and a recognizable recommendation both internally and to the public of what Absa stands for. It is also a means of keeping in touch with clients and potential clients in the larger market. Professor Nick Binedell explains further that,

> A country's arts constitute an important signal of its people's identity, because it shows their choices and patterns of consumption and saving. As business people, we need to be in tune with the art scene, especially right

[48] According to Cecile Loedolff, Absa has found that in the sale of works on exhibition, about 50% are being purchased by staff, with the remaining half being bought by the public (Loedolff, 2008). They have also noticed a discernible shift in the art being purchased, away from the more conservative works, toward the more contemporary pieces, as shown in the L'Atelier Art Competition (Loedolff, 2008).

> now, when South Africa is undergoing quite a significant cultural change (Peacock, 2008: 25).

In a country that has undergone as much cultural and social upheaval as experienced by South Africa over the past fifteen to twenty years, it is not unusual for the art created in that time to reflect that society. This can be evidenced in works within the Absa collection such as *Wish you were here* (1994) by Caroline Jones; *Peace* (1994) by Winston Churchill Masakeng Saoli; *Electrification of Soweto* (1996) by Eli Kobeli; and *Zulu Maiden* (1995) by Speelman Mahlangu, all of which quite literally represent a new period in South African history, with the potential to relate to those who can appreciate the work.[49] Moreover, art works such as these also reflect the attitudes of the people within the communities in which Absa operates, which can then be a useful tool, not only in understanding the minds of the community, but also in attracting people to the organisation through a medium that appeals to them and talks to them directly. It is a very specific means of advertising that approaches different aspects of consumers in a unique manner. Fran Connoway, director of Henley Management College concurs: "The art of leadership is very much about creativity." As a result of this, and the perceived qualities that creativity bring to mind, Master of Business Administration (MBA) programmes in South Africa are changing their offerings to include more of the 'soft skills':

> The reasoning behind this is that business is not purely rational — it is a highly creative process that can be linked strongly to artistic creativity (Peacock, 2008: 25).

These qualities are not necessarily business related, but rather make a person more 'well-rounded' (similar to the 'Renaissance Man' of Vasari's age) and provide students with the capabilities to deal with more complex situations in the work environment (Peacock, 2008: 25).

In the huge diversity evident in South Africa, in is becoming increasingly difficult to categorise individuals according to specific likes and dislikes. One can no longer assume that members of a specific race, religion or cultural group will have the same tastes or requirements of the organisation with which they do business. This in itself makes marketing to these individuals much more complex then it was in the past and so it is essential for organisations of today to look at novel ways of approaching and retaining clients. In 2001, around R6 billion was spent on various sponsorship activities in South Africa, of this only 4-6% went to the arts (Danby, 2001: 2). One of the biggest recipients of sponsorship is sports, which attracts a

[49] Caroline Jones. *Wish you were here.* 1994. Oil on canvas. 164cm x 185cm
Winston Churchill Masakeng Saoli. *Peace.* 1994. Pastel on paper. 58cm x 84.5cm
Eli Kobeli. *Electrification of Soweto. 1*996. Mixed media on paper. 65cm x 93.5cm
Speelman Mahlangu. *Zulu Maiden.* 1995. Mixed media. 104.5cm x 93.5cm

multitude of sponsors both big and small. Moreover, sport has a massive coverage and so sponsors' logos and slogans are seen not only by stadium attendees, but by the multitude of television viewers watching at home. It is an effective means of targeting particular sectors of people and promoting the brand of the company on a large scale. But it is also vastly expensive and seeing a logo on TV does not necessitate interaction on behalf of the target individuals. As a result, the direct connection between the individual and the organisation may be lost through distance. Art involvement and sponsorship, on the other hand, appeals to a niche market. It provides those interested parties with a different perspective, a new way of viewing the sponsor organisation and an experiential encounter that they are less likely to forget (Danby, 2008). In this respect, the collection is about attracting clients and improving the consumer's relationship with and opinions about the bank.

In addition to collecting art, Absa also sponsors the arts in South Africa, through initiatives such as the Absa L'Atelier Art Competition, an art competition held annually for artists between 21 and 35 years of age. The awards provide recognition to the artists, as well as financial rewards and opportunities to develop their talents abroad (Absa Bank, 2008: 1). The Absa L'Atelier Art Competition was started by Volkskas in 1986 in conjunction with the South African National Association for the Visual Arts (SANAVA) as a platform to allow young South African artists show their works (Absa Bank, 2008: 1). Together, the two organisations purchased a flat in Paris at the Cité des Arts, to allow winning artists of the competition opportunities to travel to this art-rich part of world and gain exposure to the various styles and influences of other artists in this congregation of international art (Loedolff, 2008).[50] At the time of its inception, South Africa was very much isolated from the rest of the world as a result of apartheid sanctions. Freedom of expression was curtailed, newspapers were forced on occasion to issue pages with blank spaces as a result of heavy censorship, and artists were closely watched, for anything resembling protest art was considered as an act of terrorism and punished accordingly (Van Wyk, 2004: 5). Artists, especially young artists starting out, were confined to the borders of South Africa and limited by what they were allowed to paint and the manner in which they could paint it. Furthermore, through their

[50] The selection of Paris as the prize-winning destination was based on a slightly romanticised image of Paris as the centre of the art world. Many of the artists included in the Absa collection had previously been to Paris as part of their art education and the experiences that they had there, influenced their work into the future. However, many art historians believe that Paris peaked in the 1920s and subsequently the 'centre of the art world' moved to New York and London. It was certainly a conservative decision on behalf of the competition sponsors, based more on what was historically accurate than what would provide the winners with an all-round experience in a much more modern, up-to-date art circle. It may be, that by sending these young competition winners to Paris, the competition sponsors were hoping to influence their work in a way that would be more suitable or appropriate to the organisation. London and New York at the time was filled with the most modern experiences available an artists, which may not have appealed to the conservative tastes of Absa and SANAVA.

isolation from the global art world, the spread of international influences and styles was limited. Through the L'Atelier Art Competition, however, these artists were given an opportunity to experience a much broader network on a much larger scale.

The competition still continues today, under the sponsorship of Absa, who provides further support to these artists by hosting exhibitions on their behalf and purchasing numerous works from the competition, which it then adds to its collection. This process then assists artists in creating a name for themselves, one that is significantly improved by their association with a known and respected corporate sponsor, such as Absa. Winners of this award include Ruth Sacks in 2006, for her video work *Don't Panic (2005);* and Stephen Rosin's group portrait *The devil makes his Christmas pie out of politicians' tongues and banker's fingers* (2008)[51] in 2009. Other renowned participants in the L'Atelier Awards include Penny Siopis, Dianne Victor, Isaac Khanyile and Paul Edmunds (Davie, 2003:1). For the relatively unknown artist, the value of their works is limited by their unstable positioning in the cultural field. The artists who submit works to the L'Atelier Art Competition are generally young and looking for a way 'in', an opportunity to position themselves more concretely in the cultural field. By having their works purchased and hung by Absa, the work is gaining value and the artist is gaining symbolic capital. By buying the art, Absa is, in effect, proclaiming the value of the work, using the prestige it has accumulated over the years to back its decision and in doing so, investing the symbolic capital gained by the organisation over the years in the purchased work (Bourdieu, 1993b: 76-77). And Absa in turn has the benefit of growing its collection with more modern and contemporary works, which push the boundaries of traditional belief and create further opportunities for creative thinking throughout the organisation, as well as providing a further link to the youth of South Africa in their position as potential clients.

However, to maintain its position in the cultural field, not only does the work have to prove its value, but the company cannot appear as if its actions are based primarily on the commercial aspects, such as overt publicity, but rather on 'pure conviction' in the inherent perceived value of the work (Bourdieu, 1993b: 76-77). Rather, the company has to use alternate and more discreet forms of gaining the publicity necessary to build up its own symbolic capital – less upfront public advertising, more inconspicuous, subtle public relations. And in light of such activities, one can see how the relationship between the corporate sponsor and the art

[51] Ruth Sacks. *Don't Panic.* 2005. Photographic documentation of skywrite.

Stephen Rosin. *The devil makes his Christmas pie out of politicians' tongues and banker's fingers.* 2008. Multi media. 58 x 80 cm

world is largely about the symbolic. For the artists the symbolic value of such a relationship allows them a broader audience and greater exposure within the market, it entails increased authority within their field and ascribes a value to their work that may not have previously been obtainable. The organisation, on the other hand, is seen by the public as contributing towards a greater good, giving back to the community and assisting with the education and establishment of the youth of this country. And in doing so, it is gaining exposure as a brand and recognition within its field as a company that knows and belongs.

In addition to the L'Atelier Art Competition, Absa is also the headline sponsor for the Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees (KKNK), for which it won the inaugural 'Investing in the Future's Company Partnership Award' (Groenewald, 2007: 1). The KKNK is ultimately an arts festival, whose main objective is to celebrate the arts as a medium for cultural expression unique to South Africa (Groenewald, 2007: 1-3). It is most specifically an Afrikaner-orientated festival, intended to appeal to the Afrikaans-speaking consumers in South Africa, who have experienced their ethnicity as being neglected in favour of an African culture. Through its Volkskas origins, Absa has always had close ties with the Afrikaner community. This relationship, however, was curtailed to some extent in the company's attempts to attract a wider audience and appear to be less stereotyped in its broader target market. As such, the KKNK is a way to win back the approval of the Afrikaans-speaking clients. It is a branding experience which allows Absa to associate its name with the Afrikaner culture and position itself more resiliently within the community. But in addition to this, the festival is a major employer of individuals, it provides people within those communities with jobs and opportunities within the art world that they may not previously had access to, once again introducing and entrenching them within the culture of South Africa. It is a good deed that (through effective public relations) is also good for the company, entrenching them ever more firmly in the cultural field.

Hollard Insurance: Newcomer to the market

Hollard Insurance is a relatively new corporate collector of art in South Africa. The main impetus behind their collection was the interests of an individual patron, Dick Enthoven, a major shareholder of Hollard, as well as Nando's, both of which have since developed into recognized investors within art circles around the world. Like Absa, Hollard displays its work throughout the company in buildings such as the Villa Arcadia, a Herbert Baker building and national heritage site. The building, set on sixteen acres of land in Parktown, is considered the inspiration behind the collection. Purchased in 2004, it is a work of art in itself, employing

the creative skills of both George Ness in the finely crafted brass work and Anton van Wouw's intricately "carved rococo fanlights about each double door" (Dodd, 2005: 6). It is a building with a long history, intended to represent a specifically South African style, but drawing on the influences of the Cape Dutch and the European settlers who came to South Africa in search of gold and diamonds. It is a landmark that represents the beginnings of Johannesburg and the capitalism that stemmed from the mining industry. For Hollard, the building acts as a symbol, anchoring it in the history of South Africa, but also providing it with a solid foundation in the cultural field. Villa Arcadia's accepted status as that of a cultural object, representative of the heritage of South Africa, gives status to Hollard and so provides the company with a grounding in symbolic capital on which to build a solid art collection. It is inherently a cultural object, one that, when filled with art, can only infuse that art with the same cultural and symbolic capital that it in turn possesses. It is primarily in this space that Hollard incorporates some of their most valuable assets and a collection that includes Paul Emmanuel, Conrad Botes, Mandla Vanyaza and Siphiwe Zulu (Dodd, 2005: 6).

For Hollard, like Absa, collecting art is also a means of decorating its office space. And whilst this could be done by using any art, it was through the influence of individuals within the organisation like Dick Enthoven, that the company felt it necessary to do this through collecting good investment art, which would then implant within the organisation an even great symbolic capital. It is also the basis around which the collection grew, providing the inspiration for the art that was collected and allowing for a distinct separation between the useful and the valuable. This can be most distinctly viewed in the separation between the works included in the decoration of the building and those carefully selected for inclusion in the permanent collection in the Villa Arcadia. According to Jeanetta Blignaut (2008), curator of the Hollard art collection and director of the art consultancy Coeo, the works selected for hanging on the walls of the company are carefully selected to best exemplify the operations of the organisation. As she puts it:

> In the offices at Hollard House I found that, for the style of architecture and what people do, working at a desk, it might be more interesting to focus on work on paper, specifically pen or ink, pencil on paper, because it relates more to office work. So we have an extensive or growing collection of work on paper there. And then Phase 2 is also where Etana, which is a subsidiary company or company underwritten by Hollard, is housed. They do commercial insurance, which is all about precision insurance, so the collection there is more about art and concepts that require precision as part of the process of making. So a simple example would be to have all the photographs there or prints like etching or silk-screens where registrations are important. But also in terms of the concept, the art there has a very specific punch it offers, so it is a little bit more challenging (Blignaut, 2008).

Each piece added to the collection of works hung in the offices is chosen to best impact the environment and the staff who work there. Once again, it is about creating a working environment that encourages questioning minds and creative thinkers. It is, however, also largely stereotyped, in that the employees within those divisions are expected to appreciate the same things, despite their differences in opinions and tastes that exist outside of their employment in the organisation. It is assumed that their jobs define their interests, which is a largely outdated mode of thinking and compartmentalises the employees to a large extent and devalues the works at the same time. This is not to say that the art hung on the office walls at Hollard is without value just that, by excluding it from the permanent collection, Hollard is undermining its symbolic value through dissociation. In spite of this, Hollard too has been a consistent winner of the Deloitte's Best Company to Work For Survey.[52] While it still cannot be determined what the impact of the collection or the company's art sponsorship activities have on this rating, it can be presumed that it does not have a negative impact. Rather, by creating a pleasant and inviting working environment, one that has the potential to motivate or inspire, an organisation can positively influence employee satisfaction – if not the entire workforce, than at least a select few. And so, through the ownership of the collection, Hollard have the potential to influence the staff, encourage their interests and provide an environment that encourages creative thought, while at the same time investing in something that holds value.

The art housed separately in the Villa Arcadia is then the more established and varied art, consisting of an arrangement of painting, print and ceramic that is more historically based, weighed down with meaning and elitist in nature. It is the cornerstone of the collection and a means of introducing staff to work that they may not have had the opportunity to view before. The collection is, in effect, bringing the traditional concept of the art gallery to the people, into their personal space and into their lives. By housing this collection in the Villa Arcadia, Hollard is endowing it with more meaning than the works hung in the offices; its distinct separation implying that it is more important or of greater value than those works that can be viewed daily. Further value is then accrued in the fact that it is a collection that has restricted access; it is endowed with the reputation of the elite and so becomes elitist in the process. Unlike the Absa collection, this is a private collection, not freely open to the public as yet. Whilst members of the public can choose to go and view the art on display, it requires effort on their behalf and specific arrangement with the staff at Villa Arcadia. First and foremost, the art is on display for all Hollard employees, allowing them access to a preferential

[52] Hollard has been listed every year since 2003 as either an industry winner, or within the Top 10 Medium Category Winners, winning the Industry Award for insurance in 2004 and 2005, as well at coming eighth in the overall Top 50 Companies to work for in South Africa (Deloitte, n.d).

collection of works that they would not usually come across day-to-day; a collection of works that holds a high degree of symbolic capital, endowed through association and exclusivity. Whether they choose to partake in this opportunity, is then up to them.

This focus on the engagement of employees is further evident in the interactive displays that they have available at Hollard. The *Creative Block* is an ideal intermingling of culture and work and allows individual employees the opportunity to purchase works of art for themselves at a reasonable price. Consisting of a series of 294 canvasses 18cm x 18cm, by various young artists, the *Creative Block* is displayed in the main offices at Hollard. These pieces are then available for purchase by the staff at a wholesale price of R580, which can be deducted directly from their salaries for the sake of convenience (Blignaut, 2008). As one piece is sold, another is brought in to replace it,[53] ensuring a continuous changing and shifting in the content of the works on display. All in all, the wall is comprised of the works of approximately 60 artists at any given time, all emerging artists in the process of establishing themselves in both the local and international markets (Business Day Survey, 200: 4). These contributing artists include Pamela Stretton, Norman O'Flynn, Sandile Anthony Mhlongo, Ernest Fulani, Nikoali Nawa, Peter van Straten and Neliswa Skiti (who is also a contributing beader in the Qalo project, discussed in more detail further on), to name but a few. The works are untitled and instead coded with a reference number comprised of the artists initials. As with Absa, this is inherently a process of developing cultural capital within the organisation. By making the artworks small, the selection diverse and, best of all, affordable, Hollard is encouraging its staff to participate, to buy art, and so build up an appreciation for the works and an informed opinion of taste. Moreover, by creating an environment that encourages discussion of and around the works, the company is developing the cultural competence of its staff and providing them with the code necessary for improving themselves and their ability to understand art.

Bourdieu (1993) would rationalise this by claiming that it is possible to pre-digest a work of art and provide this verbatim to an individual uninitiated in the ways of reading art (Bourdieu, 1993b: 225). This is effectively a means of lowering the "level of emission", as is used in museums and galleries alike, to increase the "readability of a work of art" amongst a larger portion of the uninitiated (Bourdieu, 1984: 225). However, unlike in a museum, the employees in both Absa and Hollard are being exposed to these artworks on a daily basis,

[53] As this is still a relatively new project, there is little statistical evidence to support the success of the *Creative Block*. However, according to Jeanetta Blignaut, the purchasing of art works by staff has remained relative constant, exceeding even the expectation of the company who expected purchases to taper down after the novelty of the project had worn off (Blignaut, 2008).

constantly bombarded with the requisite codes for deciphering cultural objects, and by doing this they are ultimately going to absorb some of the information, so that they can in future begin decoding works of art on their own, without the assistance of their organisations. This cultural capital can then be passed on to others, both in the office and in their personal environments, further increasing levels of appreciation and understanding, garnered purely through the employment by an organisation that supports the arts.

The blocks are also used by Hollard as corporate gifts, thereby becoming a marketing tool for its prominent clients and taking the brand of the organisation out of the offices and into the homes and work spaces of the public (Blignaut, 2008). It is a unique concept, becoming a talking point not only amongst staff, but outside of the organisation. Through word-of-mouth, publicity has been generated and has entrenched the Hollard name in the art world. Effectively, it has proven to be a highly successful and cost-effective means of below-the-line advertising[54] with both internal and external benefits. It also assigns Hollard a cultural and symbolic capital, which increases its perceived value in the market and its authenticity as an agent in the cultural field. Furthermore, by making a name for itself in art circles, Hollard is effectively building up a reputation, a reputation that would then allow it to pass value on to any future art purchases. As Bourdieu explains:

> ...the only legitimate accumulation consists in making a name for oneself, a known, recognised name, a capital of consecration implying a power to consecrate objects (with a trademark or signature) or persons (through publication, exhibition, etc.) and therefore to give value, and to appropriate the profits from this operation (Bourdieu, 1993b: 75).

In doing this, Hollard is in effect, coming to a point where it will (to some extent) manage the market in which its art holds value. By building a stable reputation as an art collector, Hollard is then able to use this reputation to its benefit, investing it in a carefully selected cultural object and thereby endowing that object with symbolic capital as a result. The works then become more valuable and Hollard's reputation is enhanced once again.

In addition to this, Hollard is being seen as an organisation that supports the cultural hub of the country, providing opportunities for young artists to show their works and make a name for themselves as a result, and improving the base in which these artists operate (Johnson,

[54] Above-the-line and below-the-line advertising initiatives refer to the degree of contact with the consumer. Above-the line refers to advertising using high profile media, such as television and newspapers, in which a direct response from the consumer is not required. Rather it aims at building awareness of goods or services. Below-the-line advertising refers to all advertising communications where no commission is payable, outside the five major media - the press, television, radio, cinema and outdoors; below-the-line includes direct mail, print (such as sales literature and catalogues), sponsorship, merchandising, exhibitions, etc. (Marketing Web, n.d.: 1)

1993: 7-9). It is the notion of 'giving back' that provides the prestige and ultimately encourages a positive impression of the company in the market place. Customers appreciate doing business with organisations that appear to be giving back, supporting initiatives which ultimately benefit the communities in which they operate. While this may not be the primary reason for partaking in art sponsorship, it is a benefit nonetheless and one that can only improve the company's image and its brand in the marketplace, thereby coming to the attentions of a greater audience.

Finally, the *Creative Block* is a means of supporting young artists and encouraging them to experiment, trying new things on a smaller scale. According to Carel Nolte (2008), Group Communications Manager for Hollard, the "project is an example of putting money into the pockets of artists. Many artists' sole income is derived from the sale of these works" (Business Day Survey, 2006: 4). It is an aspect of social responsibility that Hollard has taken upon itself, of its own accord. Like the Spier Contemporary,[55] which Hollard sponsors and through which it purchases much of its art, the main purpose is to support new South African artists and provide a platform on which they can grow and develop. Furthermore, Hollard's sponsorship of the arts includes not only financial aid and future earnings prospects to young artists, but also the external forces which assist in establishing credibility and long-term potential, such as printing catalogues, providing press coverage through the sponsorship of art competitions such as the Spier Contemporary, and creating opportunities for exhibitions in respected museums and art galleries. For Jeanetta Blignaut, it is about "creating an intellectual base for the artist to be able to function properly in the world" (Blignaut, 2008). And through such actions, Hollard is assisting South African artists in making a name for themselves, giving them opportunities to work and grow in this country and so entrenching the art market in South Africa. It is inherently an act of social responsibility in that Hollard is ultimately improving the communities in which it operates, increasing the cultural capital of those communities and investing the lives of those with whom they come into contact – be it their staff, the artists they choose to support, or the society in which they conduct themselves. And in doing this, Hollard is simultaneously creating brand consciousness both inside and outside of the company and gaining publicity in the public sphere that these sorts of events incur.

[55] The Spier Contemporary is a biennale exhibition and awards programme first launched in December 2007 at the Spier Wine Estate in Stellenbosch. The intention behind the exhibition is t provide a platform to young South African artists working in the visual arts to create and exhibit works of contemporary South African art (Africa Centre, n.d.: 1).

Investment potential

As is evident from the above examples, corporate sponsorship of the arts in South Africa is essentially about investment – investment in themselves, in the perception that the greater community has about them and the position that they hold within that community, as well as return on investment, investment in employees, clients and the community at large. But there are a multitude of ways is which organisations can make these investments: a pleasant working environment, for example, can be achieved through expensive furnishings, plush carpets and a neat and orderly floor plan; investment in staff can involve education programmes, bursaries and increased salaries; customers can be encouraged through improved customer service initiatives and retention programmes. Moreover, a company's available funds can be invested in a myriad of other ways, accruing an equal or greater return as a result. What this then goes on to imply is that the inherent reason behind investing in the arts needs to lie somewhere else, evidenced in the drive for symbolic capital. Companies, such as Absa and Hollard, are finding that through investment in the arts they are able to accrue a symbolic capital that may be less easily attainable in some of the options listed above. They are, in effect, staking their claim in the cultural field and establishing reputations for themselves, which then allow them to take even greater steps in obtaining and distributing value.

What may have initially have begun as a single-spoke initiative, to invest existing funds in an area that has consistently provided a return on investment, has become a multi-varianced and seemingly successful enterprise. And, the more benefits that this investment opportunity provides, the greater the influence it may have on other organisations, eventually creating a self-perpetuating cycle of financial, cultural and social upliftment. As encouraging as this may sound, however, the positive outcomes are not guaranteed, but rather dependant on a variety of different aspects. To all intents and purposes, the relationship between business and the arts is a very precarious one, for it is essentially based on human interactions and the fallibility that this entails. Each member involved has his/her own intentions, his/her own expectations, which may not always coincide, with the end result being negativity towards future dealings with either the business or art side of the relationship. As a result, it is important to find the right partnership, the right associations that benefit both parties and builds on the positive aspects to entrench a more lasting relationship. In order to do this, it is necessary to better understand the investment opportunities available to both parties in this situation and generate ways for these to coincide.

CHAPTER 4 - Art as investment:

There are various degrees of investment in the relationship between the business and the art worlds, each with its own impact and implications. These can generally be defined into three categories: – cultural, social and financial or economic. As the main prerogative of a corporation is to make money and increase profits margins, financial or economic investment has always been at the forefront of all decision-making when considering investments in the arts. All organisations have stakeholders to which they are responsible, usually financially, and so when making investment decisions they need to ensure that whatever option is taken, whether it be in art, equities, shares, property, etc., that a potential return is generated, bringing with it even greater financial gain.[56] However, while profit-making or wealth creation is the leading objective of any organisation, no business operates in a vacuum and so environmental factors need to be taken into account in the day-to-day and long-term running of the operation. Central to these external forces is the community in which the business operates, and by taking this into account, it also needs to consider the effects of social and cultural impact.

As discussed in the previous chapter, South Africans live in a country with a hugely diverse cultural heritage, incorporating a variety of languages, cultures and traditions which represent the people of this country. The turbulent history of South Africa during the apartheid years resulted in a marked lack of attention being paid to the cultural works by then marginalised groups. This included works not only by black artists, but by artists without formal training, as well as those who created works based on inherited customs in tribal history. More often than not, these works were relegated to the archives as crafts, considered to be irrelevant in the artistic heritage of this country. Subsequent to the inception of democracy in 1994, it became necessary to relook at the categorisation of marginalised art forms and reclaim

[56] Sponsorship Consulting is a company in the UK that has devised a mathematical model to determine the value of corporate sponsorship in the business sector (Corporate Responsibility Management, 2004: 1). This model takes into account not only the tangible returns related to corporate sponsorship, but assigns a number to intangible factors as well, so as to provide a more well-rounded perspective. The tangible aspects include: Impacts (was the company logo evident, how many people saw it and in what context); Purchasable Benefits (the amount of free or reduced cost benefits the company receives as a result of the event); Media Value (how many times was the company mentioned in the media as a result of its sponsorship activities and the respective weightings) (Corporate Responsibility Management, 2004: 2). Intangibles include the scale of the project, its reach, geographical coverage, does it meet the company's overall objectives, the value of the target audience, etc. (Corporate Responsibility Management, 2004: 2). The intangible benefits are then scored out of 10 and converted into a percentage; the combined value is used to calculate a traditional return on investment against the amount invested (Corporate Responsibility Management, 2004: 2). According to Wendy Stephenson, Managing Director of Sponsorship Consulting, a good return on investment is anything over 100 percent – the higher the percentage the greater the return (Corporate Responsibility Management, 2004: 3).

many into the cultural heritage of the country.[57] Moreover, as the national identity of the country was being redefined, it became important to ensure that all aspects of the various cultures of the nation were being taken into account, so as to provide a full and complete picture of the population. Technically, such an obligation of preserving and protecting the cultural aspects of a society would fall to the presiding government of the time, as the foremost patrons of artistic endeavours. Theirs would be the responsibility of ensuring that the culture of the country is not lost amongst the growing market of global capitalism that has taken over the world. The government is, for all intents and purposes, the guardian of all things South African. By electing them into power, the people of the country are bestowing upon them the responsibility of safe-guarding customs and beliefs, heritage and traditions, economy and growth, to name but a few. If the arts are considered to be a cultural activity, then it is the responsibility of the government to be the primary benefactor. Whilst support of the arts may be a decision made by individuals and businesses alike, it is the obligation of the government to stand first.

Unfortunately, however, South Africa is still considered to be a developing economy and, in light of this, the extent of government support of the arts in South Africa has the potential to fade significantly when faced with more immediately pressing issues such as unemployment, increasing demands for housing, water and electricity, increasing levels of crime and corruption, a possible recession and the decline of the global economy, and the impending FIFA Football World Cup, which is due to be held in South Africa in 2010. Moreover, in those instances where government support of the arts remains, it is largely directed away from the 'elite' arts – museums, national galleries and theatre ballet companies – towards those areas previously disregarded by the apartheid government. It is evident that the government's interest and ultimately its funding are being routed to other areas and the entrenchment of a solid artistic community that encompasses all forms of South African art is falling by the wayside. As a result, it is imperative that something or someone else steps into this void before too much is lost.

In order to fully understand the implications of South African corporations taking up this mantle it is necessary to examine in more detail the possible impact that both cultural and social investment can have on the organisation and the carefully considered reasons they may have for taking part in what is essentially the responsibility of the State. This is not to

[57] These art forms incorporate beadwork, sculpture and ceramics based on rural African traditions, but also works that combine traditional African methods with most recent western styles, works that may hold a traditional function in a rural African community, whilst simultaneously be commercial, worthy of the Western-dominated urban art market (Van Wyk, 2004: 6)

say that the South African government has relinquished its role in arts and culture in South Africa, but rather that it has assented to a joint collaboration with business in order to ensure that all aspects of South African cultural expression (incorporating art from the previously marginalised to the elite) are supported to some degree or another. In keeping with this, the following section discusses first the government's role in establishing the sub-structure that is currently in play and how this can then be taken and carried forward by organisations as they find themselves more firmly entrenched in the role. Subsequent to this, a more in-depth evaluation into the economic benefits of art patronage provides a complete overview into corporate sponsorship of the arts as it exists in South Africa today and helps to better explain the growing trend towards the compilation of corporate art collections and increasing activities in the arena of art sponsorship.

Cultural and social investment

Government-run organisations and non-profit institutions operating in South Africa have tended to value art according to its cultural impact. Their main intention, more so since the advent of democracy in South Africa in 1994, is to encourage works by South African artists that maintain and display the various cultural aspects of the nation and the traditions that they represent. Unfortunately the government cannot be all things to all people and so has always tended to prioritise certain forms of cultural representation over others. Where previously the apartheid government's focus leaned more towards the 'elite' arts, at the expense of other form of cultural expression, now the attention seems to have swung to the opposite extreme. Currently, support of the 'elite' arts has dwindled as the government tries to repair the discrepancies of the past and encourage various 'indigenous' forms of cultural expression. According to previous Deputy Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, Brigitte Mabandla (2006):

> We believe that indigenous South African art forms can and will reach a standard of excellence, and if anything, can set new and even higher standards of excellence because they grow out of the diversity which characterises our vibrant cultural inheritance (Mabandla, 2006: 2).

This can be considered to be a rather biased approach, for it shows how the current administration (in much the same vein as the previous one) is politicising art, attempting to firm up the cultural contributions that best reflect its own histories, so as to carry forward a impression to future generations and the world at large of what constitutes the culture of the country at this time. In doing so, it is also trying to override the actions of the previous government, which had attempted much the same thing.

In 1996, subsequent to the abolition of apartheid in South Africa and in the construction of a new democratic society, the Department of Arts and Culture issued a White Paper, to be used as the mandate for its associated institutions, most specifically the National Arts Council (NAC), with regard to the visual arts. In this paper the Department explains the importance of art, culture and heritage to South African society, how it results in the formation of a unified identity and how it needs to be maintained in order to cultivate this identity and the history and traditions that have led to this point (Department of Arts and Culture, 2006: 2). The White Paper then goes further to define how both the crafts and design of the diverse populace of South Africa need to be considered in the greater arena of the visual arts:

> The Ministry will ensure public institutions, such as museums, which have previously focused attention almost exclusively on a narrow definition of the visual arts, take cognisance of our craft and design heritage and acknowledge this in their acquisition and education policies (Department of Arts and Culture, 2006: 15)

The newly elected democratic government decreed that institutions such as JAG and Iziko (institutions that would previously have catered mainly to the 'elite' arts) were required to invest, to the best of their ability, in South African and African painters, ceramicists, sculptors, photographers, architects and all other creators whose works best represent the cultures, traditions, experiences and explorations that this entails, within the South African context. It was a requirement that was willingly taken up by such institutions, for it allowed them, as public institutions, to diversify their collections to better encompass the various cultures of this country and the traditions and histories that ultimately led to this point, and so appeal to a wider audience.[58] The incorporation has also led to a more complete picture of what can be considered to be distinctively South African art.

The inclusion of these works into the gallery environment has also allowed for redefinition of what constitutes a work of art and has led to new ways of looking at an artwork outside of the limitations laid down by it being either a cultural artefact or formal artwork. This has become evident in 'indigenous' crafts, such as beadwork or jewellery-making, for example, being included in formal artworks, either to complement the piece or as an integral part of the work

[58] The Johannesburg Art Gallery in Joubert Park, that can be seen to have implemented this through its inclusion of more traditional African pieces by contemporary South African artists (City of Johannesburg. 2002: 1). These works include beaded necklaces and bracelet, as well as "works made of rock, wood, tyre, cement, clay, ceramic and bronze and metal", included amongst the works of renowned South African artists, such as Gerard Sekoto, Sydney Khumalo and Alexis Preller, as well as international icons like Claude Monet, Edgar Degas and Pablo Picasso (City of Johannesburg. 2002: 1). It is, in effect, an investment in the culture that is specific to South Africa, and a means of entrenching this culture as one specific to this country, one that can then be adopted by future generations.

itself, modernised to suit the current artistic climate. As example of this is the eleven metre high wire sculpture by Walter Oltman, included in the Absa collection. Whilst designed and implemented by a white artist, this sculpture draws on the perceived 'indigenous' African cultural sense of creating something useful, for a practical purpose, and doing so in the form of a sculpture, more at home in the world of fine arts. In as much as it is an artwork, it also portrays the cultural heritage of the country (though this then comes with its own issues, in terms of the white artist appropriating the work and culture of the black artist, which is to be discussed further on). Aside from this, the artistic fusion holds both an historical and contemporary value, for it shows growth and exploration, a combining of modern concepts and ideas with older traditions. It also acts as a middle ground between the arts as supported by government and those supported by organisations.

Many organisations have taken up this 'hybrid' art form within their own collections, for its ties to the fine art side of artistic creation gives it a higher chance of providing a return on investment then the more purely 'indigenous' art forms, whilst still giving the appearance of being a cultural artefact . The symbolic capital perceived in the artwork is transferred to the organisation. Whilst this may not always be legitimate in its claim to a cultural history, it appears politically correct and it is this perception that counts. Hollard Insurance, however, is one company that appears to legitimately be trying to incorporate 'indigenous' works within its more contemporary collection. In its quest to incorporate the works of the younger generations, Hollard conceived of a project – Qalo – that pairs fine artists with skilled beaders to promote a coalescence of both styles under a single banner. In many cases, the 'fine artists' created the design, which was then implemented by beaders according to their interpretation and the specific variance of the medium. The resulting contemporary installation was included in their exhibition space in the entrance hall of Villa Arcadia (Dodd, 2005: 6). These collaborations created vibrant, colourful and textured works such as *Portraits (Diptych)* (2005) by Conrad Botes; *Segue* (2005) by Paul Edmunds; and *Interior* (2004) and *Kitchen* (2005) by Mandla Vanyaza.[59] The project was also an opportunity on

[59] Conrad Botes. *Portrait (Diptych).* 2005. Beaded by Andiswa Maxakata, Lindelwa Phillips, Luleka Damba, Mandisa Masina, Nolubabalu Kanku, Nolwando Mabasa, Nomawabo Ngwenya and Nopiniki Mhleli. Beadwork. 110 x 90 x 1 cm. Hollard Contemporary Bead Collection.

Paul Edmunds. *Segue.* 2005. Beaded by Babalwa Ntshewula, Ivy Beyile, Khanziswa Skiet, Lindelwa Phillips, Mandisa Masina, Neliswa Skiti, Nomawabo Ngwenya and Nopinki Mhleli. Beadwork. 111 x 72 x 1 cm. Hollard Contemporary Bead Collection.

Mandla Vanyaza. *Interior.* 2004. Beaded by Neliswa Skiti, Nopinki Mhleli, Ivy Beylie and Nolwando Mabasa. Beadwork. 150 x 100 x 4 cm. Private Bead Collection.

behalf of both parties to learn about new methods and mediums and to experiment with new means of representation and expression, colour, texture and imagery.

Absa has also incorporated traditional concepts into their collection, as is evident in Eli Kobeli's *Electrification of* Soweto (1996), which was also displayed at the Oriental Plaza as part of the Cell C, *C for the City* campaign. In addition to this, Absa includes in the vast collection massive panels and murals by Karel Nel; five six-story carpet banners by Norman Catherine, which were woven by rural men; a tapestry panel by Andrew Verster, woven by rural women; and the wire sculpture by Walter Oltman, as mentioned above (Davie, 2003:1). While not 'indigenous' in themselves, all of these works draw on the principles of 'ethnic' African crafts and the concept of the handmade, to draw on a specific African influence, and by doing so are investing in the cultural heritage of the country and preserving it in the contemporary art of today. While both organisations are to be commended for their attempts to bolster a 'new' art form, one that is more coherently representative of the various artistic traditions of South Africa, it does open up a variety of issues with regard to ownership of the work, with the 'elite' white artists appropriating the traditions of the black culture, and so needs to be carefully approached for it to be successful going forward. There still exist in South Africa very high tensions with regard to cultural representation, appropriation and issues of who is entitled to 'speak' on behalf of another. It is a highly charged, political issue and so to avoid references to colonialism, censorship and oppression, organisations incorporating such art works into their collections need to be careful in their selection or risk losing the symbolic capital they have achieved so far.

To return to cultural investment, it is not only represented in the renewing and reviving of older traditions, but may also take the form of giving back to the community; investment in the social order through financial aid, sponsorship programmes and the advancement of cultural experiences. Whilst this is a prerogative of organisations such as the NAC, it has also been implemented by many of the South African organisations currently involved in the arts today. Once again, this is particularly evident in the various projects and corporate collections of both Absa and Hollard Insurance.

Hollard, in particular, is more inclined towards this type of social investment, claiming it as the main driver behind the company's involvement in the arts. Through various arts initiatives, Hollard is bringing a deeper sense of cultural understanding to its staff. Over and above the *Creative Block*, other opportunities include the permanent art gallery housed in the

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Mandla Vanyaza. *Kitchen.* 2005. Beaded by Neliswa Skiti, Nopinki Mhleli, Ivy Beylie and Nolwando Mabasa. Beadwork. 53 x 40 x 4. Private Bead Collection.

Villa Arcadia, which features the works of many of South Africa's big names. Initially, the intention was for the gallery to be the home of a six week exhibition of the works of one of the artists housed in their permanent collection, the first of which being Paul Emmanuel. In addition to the showing of his work Paul Emmanuel was also invited into the offices to discuss the creative process around the exhibition (Business Day Survey, 2006: 4). In this way, Hollard was providing its staff with the chance to interact with the artist, to discuss his motives and *raison d'être* and so develop a better understanding of the work. According to Carel Nolte, "Art is often considered elite and we have made it accessible. And people realise that it is okay to dislike an artwork" (Business Day Survey, 2006: 4). In effect, what Hollard is doing (consciously or unconsciously), is educating its staff, encouraging them to form opinions about art works that are based on an inherent understanding of the works at hand. They are attempting to demystify art and in doing so, promoting a deeper involvement on a personal level with the art world. And in achieving this, Hollard is potentially increasing the art buying public.

Absa is also encouraging participation with the arts, by encouraging its staff to enter the in-house gallery, to arrange functions in which the art is discussed, the motivations and intentions behind the purchase explained by the curators from a first-hand perspective. And, in the process Absa is increasing the perceptions of its staff by getting them to look outside of themselves and their daily lives, to examine more intricately the works that stand before them. By encouraging its staff to get involved, to learn more and possibly become buyers in their own right (even if this is still on a small scale), Absa is effectively promoting further investment in the culture of South Africa. For in doing so, the company is increasing interest in all forms of art, giving employees the confidence to visit galleries and exhibitions outside of the work environment and potentially increasing the number of buyers in the market, thereby creating more viable opportunities for South African artists to stay and work in South Africa, within a sustainable market, as well as a more competitive one. These artists are then able to make a contribution to the societies that they represent as well. David Throsby (1994), in an analysis on the economics of culture, clarifies how this might work, by explaining that social gain is, in fact, a necessary by-product of cultural production. In his essay, *The Production and Consumption of the Arts: A View of Cultural Economics* (1994) he states that the arts, most specifically, can lead to urban renewal, can express regional or national identity, promote excellence and encourage regional growth (Throsby, 1994: 25-26).

One example of this was cellular telephony provider Cell C's, *C for the City* campaign in 2003. *C for the City* entailed the commission of 35 artists to create works with a 'C' for 'the City' included somewhere in the piece. These works were then enlarged and displayed on

buildings throughout Johannesburg city centre, including venues such as Gandhi Square; Queen Elizabeth Bridge; Investec Building, Harrison Street Bridge; Main Street; Market Street; and Commissioner Street. Not only did the works act as an advertisement for Cell C and gain them recognition as a company investing in the social environment, but also acted as a means of urban renewal, that "transformed the City of Johannesburg into a huge art gallery, attracting local, national and international attention…" (Ludman, 2003: 1). It was a project that acted to beautify a generally drab area, bringing colour to the city and taking "South African contemporary art into the public arena" (Ludman, 2003: 1). It is an example that clearly illustrates how companies today can impact the communities in which they operate, simply by supporting the arts.

In each of these ways both Absa and Hollard, like the many other organisations supporting the arts, are making a cultural investment in South Africa. They are looking beyond the purely financial reasons behind owning an art collection and are delving deeper into the cultural aspects that are inherent in any collection of works. Moreover, they are also investing in people, in terms of the individuals who work in their respective organisations, providing them with opportunities beyond merely being surrounded by the work. They are presenting them with the tools to internalise a work of art, to examine it for what it is and make a judgement based on understanding and appreciation. In doing all of this, these organisations are instilling within people an understanding of the value of culture and an appreciation of their roles within it. But, none of this would be conceivable if there were no financial aspect involved because, first and foremost, companies are interested in making money and art collecting is just another financial decision.

Economic Investment

Economic investment in any area refers to the financial gain associated with investing in quality items that will increase in value over the years and so provide a return on investment that rivals other investment opportunities. Unlike other forms of investment, such as cultural and social investment, economic investment implies that a tangible output will be gained equal to or in excess of any initial input. It is a vital part of all business and any other gains that may occur as a result are purely secondary. And so, whilst the corporate collection provides an opportunity for cultural exposure within an organisation, its first priority is that of economic sustainability – each and every work purchased for the purposes of investment needs to show the potential to maintain a sizable return. This line of thinking, however, is slightly more complicated, for it requires more than just an outflow of funds from the allocated

budget for interior design, sponsorship or social responsibility and the associated impact on the requisite market. Rather it requires a proven inflow of capital as well, whether through actual increased earnings from the sale of an artwork or through a sizable improvement in the company's assets on the balance sheet. Ultimately, for an organisation to consider investing in art, it needs to show a return that is comparable to other investment vehicles, such as equities, bonds or shares.[60] To do so, it needs to hold value, most particularly that of symbolic value.

Mark Roskill (1993) asserts that value in visual works is attributed through a varied combination of three explanations:

> First, a work becomes significant because it encapsulates its period and style; second, it may be the first of its kind, embodying the 'occasion and force' of a set of emergent interests; third, it may 'sum [ ] up and show [ ] forth certain social and political values, or ideals of the past' which, presumably, are seminal to the present and future character of a form of life (Kemal & Gaskell, 1993: 13).

When considered in conjunction with the historical popularity of the artist, rarity of the art works and latent desirability by the art-buying public, this then combines together to create the overall value inherent in the piece (Kemal & Gaskell, 1993: 13). This is the symbolic value of the work, evident prior to its purchase and contributing significantly to the reasons behind an individual or organisation acquiring it. What it does not take into account, however, is the value attributed to the work through previous ownership and the value that it immediately takes on as a result being bought by a 'reputable' entity. As mentioned previously, the symbolic capital of the organisation, achieved through reputation, is passed on to a work through its acquisition, thereby increasing its intrinsic value even further. This reputation has the potential to be relatively unstable and so, it is necessary for an organisation investing in the arts to be very specific about the art that it purchases, the reasons behind that purchase and whether it will be used to bolster that reputation even further. Even the strongest reputations can be brought down by the simplest wrong decision. As a direct result, when purchasing works for a corporate collection, a compromise needs to be reached, a subtle balance obtained between purchasing investment pieces and purchasing pieces for the pure enjoyment of it; work that will put forth the corporate image of the organisation, inspire the staff and create a pleasant environment in which to work. The value ascribed to the work by the organisation then differs according to the two scenarios and the capital outlay for the work is calculated accordingly – considerably more funding will

[60] A recent study of art auctions between 1955 and 2004, as quoted by an article in *The Flint Journal,* found that "art had an annual return of 10%" compared with "stocks on the S&P 500 [Standard & Poor 500] at 10.4%" (Louw, 2008: 2)

be put forward for the purchase of a work that has a high potential to increase in value over time, than for a piece that is purchased purely for the sake of enjoyment or for decorative purposes, without the intention of earning a significant return. More publicity, above-the-line and below-the-line, will also be generated around works that have the potential to reinforce the company's reputation even further.

In economic terms, to determine value one needs to consider the relationship between supply and demand – the more the public demand of an item, and the less of a supply there is, the greater the price, so more value is ascribed to it. Works of art hold value because, in effect, they are often one of a kind (with the exception of photography and printmaking, to a certain degree).[61] In light of this, they have the potential to grow in value exponentially, for in most cases, the pieces are unique in their production and composition. This concept is then extended even further for artists who have passed away for they are no longer producing works and as such, the supply is forever limited. Whilst this idea of economic value was previously disparaged by artists as being insignificant or in fact in opposition to the artist's position in cultural or symbolic fields, it is ultimately essential in determining value in today's market (Johnson, 1993:15). Randall Johnson (1993), in his deconstruction of Bourdieu's theories, explains that the intention of the artists may be more cultural or symbolic in nature, in that they wish to obtain celebrity, honour and prestige, acknowledged by those with the required cognisance and elevated status to make such decisions: "Economic profit is normally disavowed (at least by the artists themselves), and the hierarchy of authority is based on different forms of symbolic profit" (Johnson, 1993: 7). This is most certainly true to some extent, especially in the case of artists looking to prove themselves as professionals; serious in their desire to be accepted into and acknowledged by the cultural field. But symbolic value is intrinsically tied to economic value. In its disavowal of all things economic, it is effectively legitimising economic value and guaranteeing economic profits (Bourdieu, 1993b: 75). In today's market, in order for symbolic capital to be fully capitalised upon, it needs to be converted into economic value.

In the South African art market today, as in all markets around the world, in order for artists to achieve renown, to be considered serious contenders in the cultural field, they first need to have their works noticed and the most effective way of doing this is to first exhibit and then sell them. But selling alone is not the answer, rather they need to be purchased by the right

[61] Prints, even from the same edition, have the potential to differ from one another as a result of possible inconsistencies in the paint or ink used, slight misalignment in registration, etc., also the numbers of copies made in each edition are usually limited, with the template destroyed afterwards. As such, they hold in their own uniqueness in both their similarities and their differences.

people at the right time and for the most appropriate prices – and in order to do this, they need to hold a value outside of the purely economic. It becomes a multi-layered existence, where the artist has to prove his/her competence in order to be acknowledged by his/her peers, critics, and those members of the artistic field who hold the competence and knowledge to do so. Once acknowledged the artist may be fortunate enough to have his/her works subsequently sold to galleries, who then on-sell it to corporations and the art-buying public. It is through this process that the artist builds a reputation for him/herself within the fields of cultural production, on which further cultural and symbolic capital can be attained. And then the process starts again – cultural and symbolic value creating economic value, which in turn increases the inherent symbolic and cultural value and, in effect the economic value as a result, in a continually increasing cycle, with the artist's trajectory being clearly mapped (Johnson, 1993: 15-17).

This can be noticeably seen in the international market of late, where South African art is steadily making a name for itself as a progressively good earner. Having previously been undervalued world-wide, due to the political crisis, the devaluation of the currency and the difficultly for artists to exhibit overseas, South African art is now coming into its own. This is evident in the annual sales for renowned artists such as Jacob Pierneef achieving prices of $2.8-million, Irma Stern at $5.3-million, and Marlene Dumas reaching $5.4-million (Milazi, 2008: 1).[62] There is evidently a market for investing in such pieces. However, for a run-of-the-mill South African investor, the prices these works attain are considerably out of their budget. For your standard corporate investor, such as Hollard or Absa, who are not in the business of buying and selling art, specialising in insurance and financing instead, their interests tend to be more understated and as a result, they lie more in the contemporary, for its affordability as well as for its new energy. Immediately these organisations are at a disadvantage, because the works that they can afford hold less symbolic capital at the outset

[62] In an auction at Bonhams in London on the 30th January 2008, nine world records were achieved in a sale of South African art, including a still life by Irma Stern, *Still life with chrysanthemums and a pumpkin*, which achieved the top price at the sale of £378,400; a landscape painting by Maggie Laubser, *The Harvesters,* which was estimated between £25,000 to £35,000 and ultimately made £126,000 and a new record sales price for Helen Sebidi at £36,000 (up from her previous record of US$2,750). Other artists who hit the record books at this auction include Adolph Jentsch, Francois Krige, Frans Oerder, Frederick Hutchinson, Alexis Preller and Tinus de Jongh (The South African Art Times, 2008: 1). Since then prices have continued to increase at subsequent sales, achieving record prices consistently above the estimate, despite an economic downturn. According to the Bonhams website, "such record-breaking prices and worldwide bidding have propelled modern South African art into the frontlines of the global market" (Bonhams, 2009: 1).

This can then be further evidenced in the Bonhams sale of South African art, which took place in London on the 9th and 10th September 2008. This sale included not only the works of Irma Stern and Jacob Pierneef, but of Alexis Preller and Eleanor Esmonde-White, who achieve a new world record at R1,720,000 (Thorne, 2008: 2). The auction brought in R30 million more than the previous Bonhams sale of South African work in January 2008, closing with a total hammer price of R100 million (Thorne, 2008: 1).

than the more expensive works by the more established names. They are starting at a lower vantage point and so need to make amends in order to achieve a significant return on investment on the purchases that they do make. It is at this point that the benefits of their more culture-based operations come into effect. In the case of Absa and Hollard, for example, the cultural and symbolic capital that they managed to accrue through their community-driven endeavours, their well-publicised sponsorship of the arts, and their open commitment to supporting the arts in South Africa has provided them with a platform on which to build a reputation, one that holds significant value in the cultural field. And by doing so, they can then transfer this value onto the works that they purchase, investing themselves in the art works and so increasing the value of those works as a result.

Art expert and auctioneer, Stephan Welz (2008) argues that exceptional contemporary pieces will perform better in the long term than the non-exceptional works by renowned South African artists (Radebe, 2008: 14). That is to say that the works of the older generation, the established and consecrated artists of an earlier period in South African history have finally reached a point where they can be considered valuable on an international level. Excluding a few celebrated exceptions, works by artists such as notable South African artists such as Jacob Pierneef and Irma Stern are considered to be approaching fair-value and so significant increases short- to mid-term will be mostly reduced. This mounting interest on an international scale can largely be attributed to the growing numbers of South Africans living and working abroad. The works of these artists are sought out and purchased not only for their physical value, but because they remind these expatriates of their homeland, providing a nostalgic vision of where they come from. But South Africans are not the only people buying South African art, rather a marked increase in the number of High Net Worth Individuals globally (evidenced most particularly between 2004 and early 2008, prior to the continuing decrease of the global economy), but most particularly in emerging economies such as Brazil, Russia, India and China, have shown a decided interest in purchasing the works of well-known South African artists (Thorne, 2008: 1). The value of these works has been established in their consistent performance in the international markets, and so they are seen by buyers as reliable investment vehicles.

Contemporary works on the other hand, by up-and-coming new artists, have a new edge to them, a new creative spirit, and can be purchased at a significantly lower price. If purchased correctly, these works then have the ability to increase in value in a much steeper manner, in a shorter amount of time. However, for investment purposes, the risk associated with these contemporary pieces is far higher and the difficulty then lies in determining what is the 'right' art to be purchasing; intelligently differentiating between those that are have earning potential

versus those that do not. Unlike the more consecrated works by the more established artist of South Africa, who have shown a solid return on investment in the past few years (as is evidenced in the sales values of the artists listed above) art investment in contemporary works can often be no more than a guessing game, with any significant returns being a result of the efforts put in by the purchaser, as much as it lies in the art work itself. A company, with numerous decision-makers, is then far more able to achieve this than an individual investor acting on his/her own.

For the undiscovered contemporary artist, the purchasing of his/her work by an individual or organisation noted for its involvement in the arts is a significant step in establishing him/herself in those same acknowledged art circles. It is also a basic requirement if that artist requires funding in order to pursue his/her chosen career. It is necessary therefore to create a commodity, one that can be traded and exchanged in order to adhere to it an inherent reciprocal value (Appadurai, 1986: 3-9).

But being a commodity alone is not enough to gain the attentions of the potential buyer; first these works must hold some value of their own to start off with. To do this, they need to be acknowledged by those individuals in the cultural field with the authority to bestow value – the critics, curators, gallery owners and art journalists who hold their own symbolic capital. Once again, symbolic value is required in order to obtain economic value, which then imprints further symbolic value. Through art competitions such as the L'Atelier Art Competition and the Spier Contemporary (sponsored by Absa and Hollard respectively), new or lesser known contemporary artists are able to show their works and gain the attentions of the greater art market. The competitions attract a great deal of interests within art circles, bringing with it the attentions of curators, gallery owners, art journalists and critics alike. Whilst publicity may not be on a huge scale, both events are covered by relevant parties in the art world – journals, magazines and online sites all orientated towards the arts. Both Absa and Hollard then choose works selectively from these competitions to supplement their existing art collections. Works are chosen according to the value that has been attributed to them throughout the course of the competition, by those with the symbolic capital to do so and in purchasing them, both companies are confirming this value and ascribing them further value as a result.

It is effectively a means of setting up a situation in which value is attained and then absorbing that value back into the organisation, to create further value, with the added benefit being that the artist benefits as well. It is, in essence, an exchange of value – symbolic for economic – in that through the positive reception of a work by the art community, the

company perceives value in that work and so allocates a price that they are willing to pay for the work. The seller then accepts that economic value as replacement for the actual artwork. When both parties are in agreement as to this exchange, the ownership of the commodity transfers – money versus art – and the symbolic capital of both buyer and seller increases (Appadurai, 1986: 3-4).

As promising as this sounds, one needs to keep in mind that art, as an investment, is a long-term one. Robert Keip (2008), Investment CEO at First National Bank, asserts that the average collector will hold on to his/her work for approximately 27 years (Louw, 2008: 1). As such, in spite of the best intentions at the purchase of a work, it cannot be guaranteed that the artwork will ultimately maintain its initial value and provide a return on investment necessary to justify the preliminary spend. However, by managing the market, individual and corporate patrons are better able to ensure a financial or economic return. It may require a significant financial reserve, but it allows the benefactor to drive profitability and cultivate a market that is favourable to his/her particular requirements. This influence can then have an effect on the entire art domain, with knock-on effects on the type of art that is produced and the manner of its creation, which leads to a potential downside of corporate involvement in the arts.

Investing in the corporate art collection

"While all collectors acquire art, not all acquirers of art are collectors" (Djerassi, 1991: 51). To be classified as a genuine collector of art requires elements of aesthetic judgement and a knowledge of art that extends beyond the known and the familiar (Djerassi, 1991: 51). Having said this, however, the very act of acquiring, collecting and commissioning art is largely subjective and even more so than in the case of a corporate collection, where more than one opinion needs to be taken into account. For a personal or individual's art collection, it is only that one opinion that counts, for they are the only people upon whom it impacts. The corporate collection on the other hand brings with it the personal preferences of a plethora of decision-makers (from the curator or buyer, to the person who authorises the allocation of the funds, to the shareholder whose funds are being spent), and an even larger body of viewers. While this can provide for a much more diverse collection, it also has the potential to be rather limited, particularly with regard to the works that can be purchased: "when expenditure on commodities is made, they tend to revolve around traditionally acceptable commodity forms...where collectively shared values are incarnated" (Appadurai, 1986: 30).

Within a market at the moment, both locally and internationally, that is pushing the boundaries on what constitutes art, collections, by their nature, can only really incorporate works made in conventional media, such as painting, sculpture, printmaking, etc. The more technical or elaborate a work becomes, the less likely it is to be considered for inclusion in the corporate collection. This includes performances pieces, live art and video work to some extent. Due to the nature of the corporate environment, the exclusion of performance art is understandable, and with over 20 000 art pieces in their collection, the curators of the Absa collection cannot afford the time required to operate video equipment on a daily basis. The equipment required to show these works is also expensive, as each video work requires its own equipment, and the works generally need more space to be shown to their best advantage. Moreover, recordings can be lost, stolen or damaged, thus negating the investment potential of the piece (Loedolff, 2008).

Photography is also often excluded from these collections. In terms of the Absa collection, Cecile Loedolff explains that they do not consider photography to be investment art, in that it is not as durable a medium as other, more conventional forms of arts (Loedolff, 2008). Research done by Absa has shown that photographs should not be exposed to direct light for a period longer than three months (Loedolff, 2008). As the works in the Absa collection are intended for the various offices of their staff and the branches around the country, the curators have very little control over where the pieces are hung and what exposure they have to light. This becomes even more important when the chemicals used and various production techniques by the artist are taken into consideration. Finally, there is no guarantee of originality when considering photographic pieces – the artists can make numerous copies prior to sale and, with all of the technology available today, the works can be manipulated even further (Loedolff, 2008). Hollard Insurance, on the other hand, does purchase photography for its collection, but still hold some adverse feelings towards it. According to Jeanetta Blignaut, while Hollard is exploring photography at present, it tends to be more expensive than painting in general, especially when it comes in editions, which then require the purchase of a series. Finding good photography is also a lot more time consuming, due to the massive quantity available in the market – to find a quality piece worth purchasing for a collection therefore takes more effort and significantly more time (Blignaut, 2008).

Art that is in any way vulgar or slightly offensive would also be excluded from the corporate collection, as is evident in Sasol's refusal to purchase the winning work, *Familieportret II*

(2007)[63] by Richardt Strydom, from the Sasol New Signatures art competition in 2008, for its "controversial degree of nudity" (Buys, 2008: 30). The reasons behind this is that, within corporate organisations, the audience is too broad and too varied and the application, outside of a gallery or museum, requires works that appeal to a more general, subdued sensibility. The art collection also needs to represent the brand of the organisation and inspire confidence with the various stakeholders and art works that explore controversial subject matter can go a long way to negate this.

In light of these reasons, corporate collections and the sponsorship of art is often considered by many critics to be harmful to the emerging art market. Artists entering works for competitions such as the L'Atelier Art Competition and the Spier Contemporary may tame down their work to better appeal to the corporate sponsors involved. Less controversial work is submitted, in the hope of garnering a place amongst those works finally purchased by the companies and as a result there is an increased possibility that the works will fall short of being exceptional, i.e. less exploration is done into social and political subject matter, there is a less intense handling of the content of the work, works become tamer, less prying and as such, there are less exciting innovations in the creation of contemporary artistic pieces. In pandering to the corporate sponsor, there is the potential for a marked decrease in the quality of the works produced.

All of these reasons then go a long way towards diluting cultural expression, which then has lasting effects on the representation of the culture of the age. By taking on this role, as patrons of the arts (or at least the 'elite' arts), organisations, in effect, are privatising culture, diluting its effects to the best advantage of the company, at the possible expense of the country as a whole, repeating to some extent what the apartheid government did in their support of the 'elite' arts. While art may be reflection of society at the time of its creation, it can too easily be manipulated, thus coming to represent a distorted image. There is also the risk of cultural expression stagnating, as artists pander to the requirements of the sponsors and avoid tackling pertinent issues, experimenting with new styles and pushing the boundaries of perception and taste. There is a fine line between supporting the arts and dictating them, of rewriting culture and heritage according to what would make the most profit. And so it is essential for organisations involving themselves in the arts today to be aware of the pitfalls that face them and to constantly ensure that their involvements benefits not only themselves and the artists that they support, but the communities they serve and the culture and heritage of the country as a whole.

[63] Richardt Strydom. *Familieportret II.* 2007. Photographic print. 87 x 11 cm.

To all intents and purposes, "artists are human and so are business executives. Corporations must make a profit and artists must create, but both of these functions may be pursued in an infinite variety of ways" (Chagy, n.d.: 75). As this chapter has shown, there are significant benefits for both parties in the corporate-arts relationship. This is evident in the aspects of social and cultural investment which, amongst other things, help develop a conscious and educated understanding of the arts amongst those with whom they make contact, help grow the art-buying public, inspire young artists to produce works and to submit them to the competitions, and entrench the growing art market in South Africa, encouraging the exploration of South African talent. In doing this, organisations are simultaneously entrenching the art market within the South African environment, as well as creating a market in which the works they purchase will be become more valuable. They are, in effect, motivating competition through a broader and more inundated market and in doing so, creating opportunities for the value of their own works to increase as a result.[64] And the over-arching effect of all this is that the artist then benefits from increased sales and more competitive pricing. It has the potential to be a highly effective partnership, with increasing possibilities for society at large, but there are dangers which need to be acknowledged and perspective needs to be maintained should it continue to progress into the future.

[64] In addition to the symbolic capital accumulated by the organisation and attributed to a work through association, this ability to manage the market can also be attributed to political or social inferences related to the idea of demand. As is the case in both institutions, they are educating their staff in the arts and so providing them with the necessary codes required for understanding and appreciating a work of art. However, as both collections are limited according to the specific parameters set by the organisations respectively, they are effectively influencing the tastes of their staff, pre-determining the appropriateness of certain pieces of art. Moreover, by purchasing certain pieces, these organisations are sending a message out to the community at large, that they perceive value in such works or similar, thereby entrenching approval for their acquisitions. Arjun Appadurai refers to such entities as "taste makers", social agents who effectively generate and regulate demand in the external market (Appadurai, 1986: 32-33)

CHAPTER 5 - Conclusion:

As with the arts themselves, the various forms of artistic patronage prevalent over the ages have also come to represent the social transitions in the world around them.

> We cannot detach the abilities of painters from the circumstances in which they worked – in particular from the relationship among those involved in issuing and executing commissions and neither can artistic patronage be made intelligible in isolation from its broader social context. When art is considered in relation to power, with patronage as the vital link, each can illuminate the other; social context can provide insight into paintings, which in turn shed light on social history (Kempers, 1992:4).

As this research report has endeavoured to show, from the Renaissance to the present day, patronage has grown and developed according to the socio-political environment of the period, the nature of art being produced at the time, and the economic status of individuals within that period who have the inclination and wherewithal to involve themselves with the arts. It is never static, but constantly evolving with the times.

It is also a relationship that is based on value and as the way art is perceived has changed over the years, so the nature of patronage has changed. This was evident in the Renaissance, where a single patron held all of the power over the artwork, dictating many of the variables that made the piece what it was. The artist was considered to be merely an artisan or craftsman, selling his services to a higher authority, and art was a product/service much like any other. What the Renaissance also serves to illustrate is a largely Western shift in patronage, from the church and old aristocracy to a merchant aristocracy that is relatable to corporate patronage in South Africa today. From this starting point, however, one begins to see the value of art unfolding, gaining traction in the market, as the artist becomes 'genius', gaining autonomy from the patron and freedom of expression, acquiring value of his own accord. His creativity becomes a tool for gaining recognition and esteem, thereby earning him new commissions and greater financial stability as a result. And, as the artist began to find his feet, he began to look for new ways of capitalising on his product, new ways of getting his art out into a market that itself was becoming more independent. Art dealers became more predominant and art grew out of its singularly defined value, taking on a market value as well – it was the beginning of art as commodity.

From the eighteenth century Enlightenment onwards, art can be seen to have taken on a new role; that of an article available for trade. This commoditisation enabled a new market to develop, specialising in the buying and selling of artistic goods, and in so doing, ascribing a whole new attribution of value to the item. This value, financial and otherwise, ascribed to it

by the market, has shown the potential to increase exponentially, so increasing its commodity value. The emergence of capitalism in the nineteenth century then accelerated this commoditisation of art and ultimately led to the way art is valued today. And, as avenues for trade increased substantially into the twentieth century to the present and global commerce took a solid hold, exposure of the arts has increased and the market for artistic and cultural goods has become increasingly entrenched, appealing to art patrons on escalating levels.

The history of patronage is a broad one, but in a condensed form, it is, effectively, a timeline of creating and appropriating value. As is evident in this traversing history, art has consistently been a cultural artefact, a representation of the social order of the time, of the inclinations of mankind and its existence within this social context. And as artists have continued to create works, so patrons have consistently found value within these works, to varying degrees, from the patrons of the Renaissance, to merchants and tradesmen, art dealers, gallery owners, curators and finally to the corporate organisations of today.

There are many reasons why companies today are involving themselves with the arts, the most obvious being the investment value that has been attached to art as a result of its history. But as this report has progressively shown, economic investment is only a singular arm of corporate involvement, too temperamental to be the sole reason behind art investment. It is however about the overall value perceived in art and the extent to which this can be appropriated by the modern art patron. It is also about capital and the attainment of various forms of capital.

Within the globalised capitalist environment of today, companies need to find new ways to differentiate themselves, to appeal distinctively to a growing market of ever more discerning consumers. As illustrated by the Absa and Hollard case studies, one of the ways in which they are doing this is through corporate sponsorship of the arts. It is a multi-pronged approach of collecting art works, sponsoring art exhibitions and competitions, and gaining awareness of the arts both inside and outside of the company, all of which open up avenues for the attainment of cultural, symbolic and economic capital. Through sponsorship of the arts, companies such as Absa and Hollard are attaining economic capital by investing their shareholders funds in a vehicle that has shown a rate of return over the past 10 years comparable to that of shares. In addition to this, they are also investing in their staff, allowing them access to ways of thinking and perceiving the world that are not always so easily available, thereby accumulating cultural capital. This is then further enforced by both Absa and Hollard's status amongst the best companies to work for in South Africa, as voted for by

employees. Finally they are acknowledging the changing face of the public and rising to meet the standards set by an ever more demanding client base. As consumers continue to place higher and higher demands on the companies with which they do business, insisting on more transparency and increased standards of operating, so these companies need to rise to the challenge and meet the consumers head on. Many of these demands involve aspects of social responsibility: people want to see their companies giving back to the community, reducing their impact on the environment and improving the communities in which they do business, ultimately proving that they are working towards a better South Africa for all. This is the search for symbolic capital, which then has knock-on effects on various other areas.

The social responsibility, community-driven side to art sponsorship has created opportunities for these organisations to obtain symbolic capital, with a reputation in the market as being companies that care about art. In achieving this reputation, they are establishing their positions in the cultural field, which in turn gives them the authority to attribute capital on to others. One of the ways in which this is done, is through the sponsoring of art competitions. First and foremost, the company is respected for 'giving back' to the art community, creating a platform in which new, undiscovered artists can show their work. The competition then attracts the attention of journalists, art critics, gallery owners and curators, who come to see the work, and in doing so, articulate opinions about what they see. These opinions then generate publicity for the organisation, but also for the artists, as their works are discussed and deconstructed. Positive opinions infuse the works with symbolic capital, whilst negative ones have the opposite effect. As these 'recommended' pieces are purchased by the organisation, so this organisation absorbs the value that has been bestowed upon it; whilst at the same time, imparting some of its own symbolic capital into the work.

In this exchange of values, the capital for both the company and the art works increases. In interpreting Bourdieu, this then has a significant impact on the economic capital of both parties. In gaining recognition, the economic value of the artist's work increases; as his/her reputation is enhanced, so s/he can demand more for a work. For the organisation, on the other hand, in the promotion of the social responsibility aspect of these events and the cultural and symbolic value implicit in its various contributions to the art world, it holds the potential of incurring even greater financial gains. In fact, this strategy, based on the disavowal of the economy in favour of the cultural or symbolic, then allows organisations sponsoring the arts to take advantage of the economic returns of their investments more completely, without appearing as firms obsessed only with profit-making and subsequently distanced from the public which they serves (Bourdieu, 1993b: 102).

Finally, by focusing primarily on South African art, these organisations are then establishing a national identity, one that has greater support in the market, as it appeals to the national tastes of the consumer. By sponsoring the arts as they do, they are assuming a role that the current government has left vacated, providing additional support to an area of the cultural world that has, of late, been neglected in favour of other pressing social needs. Corporates for their part tend to be more reliable in their support of the arts and allow for much greater diversity in their choices than either government or individual patrons (Chagy, n.d.: 117). And, whilst this may be considered to be a privatisation of culture, an avenue that will ultimately result in decreasing levels of access of the general public to the 'elite' arts, it is also a means of diversifying the support of the arts, to enable a much more comprehensive and lasting history. The inherent benefit in the relationship between business and the arts is that few business decisions are made alone, but are rather collective decisions, made with the careful consideration of a variety of different issues in mind. According to the late Frank Stanton, this collective decision has a potentially higher impact than the decision of a single person, stating that it is better,

> ...for several officers or directors to be involved in the acquisition of a great picture, than one man accountable only to himself. It spreads the word and interests more people, directly or indirectly in the picture. The broader base that business brings to support the arts is perhaps also a more predictable and less whimsical one than [that of] the individual patron, because the commitment that the corporation of today makes in the arts is not apt to be made lightly, while the patron of yesterday could as easily be indulging some temporary personal oddity as a lasting thirst for the sublime (Chagy, n.d.: 118)

To conclude, I trust that in the course of this research report I have highlighted the full benefits of a continuing business-art relationship. Having shown its history in patronage over the ages, it is clear that this is not a novel phenomenon, but rather one that is built on centuries' worth of adaptation. It is a culmination of all that has come before and will continue to change and evolve into the future. But this is not its only motivating factor; rather corporate sponsorship of the arts makes good business sense. It is an investment at all levels of business and society, covering aspects from economic stability, to social responsibility and cultural entrenchment, with positive implications for all parties involved – investors, shareholders, stakeholders, employees, artists, gallery owners, as well as the community at large.

But, as I have enumerated, potential dangers exists in such a relationship – the threat of privatisation of culture, the possibilities of cultural production being limited, and the implications on the heritage of this country. By understanding and acknowledging these

pitfalls and ensuring effective cooperation between government, society's leaders and individual patrons; it is possible to circumvent the negative consequences and provide for a more complete, productive and all encompassing solution.

Culture is a vital component of any society and needs to be nurtured in order to preserve the heritage of that country, its history and its growth and development. Art is a representation of that culture at a moment in time; it is the visual record of a community, of a country, in context and in relation to all that has come before. Unfortunately, as yet, it is not a self-funding field of endeavour and so requires the assistance of patrons in order to survive. Corporate organisations around the world today are taking on this responsibility and, regardless of their motives are for this involvement, they are facilitating an environment in which the arts can survive and flourish. It is a fundamental role and they hold the resources necessary to manage it accordingly. And so, until new forms of patronage evolve, the answer for the arts lies in corporate sponsorship.

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