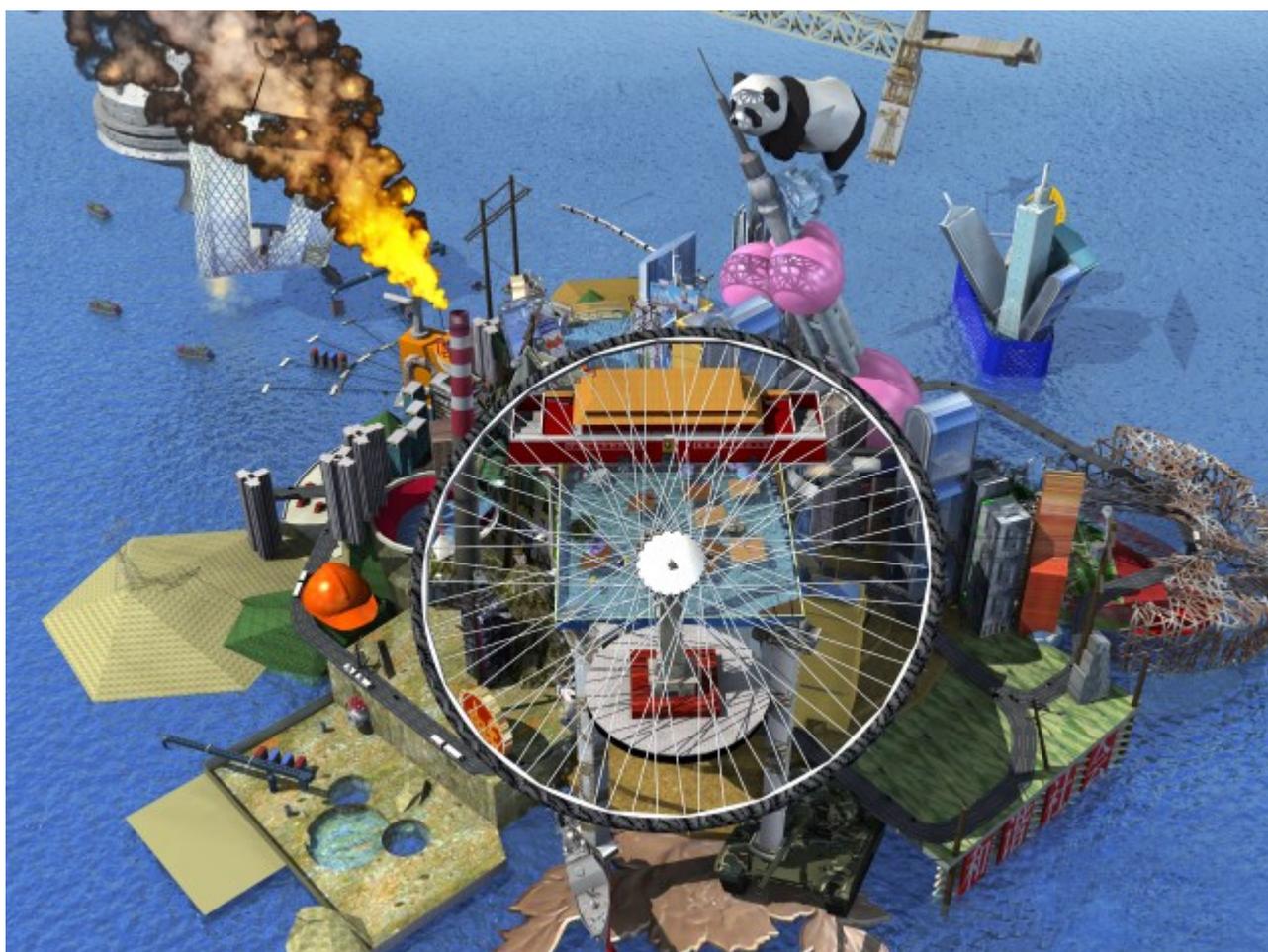


Art Agency, Partners

Art Agency, Partners is a bespoke art advisory firm founded in 2014, and built upon decades of combined experience, to provide counsel to many of the world's leading art collectors and institutions on collection assessment and development, estate planning, and innovative approaches to museum giving and growth.

A Period of Value Reinforcement

What happened to risk?



Much of the time, official censorship is less of a concern than self-censorship, by editors bowing to advertisers or writers to clients. Image credit: Cao Fei, *RMB City: A Second Life City Planning* (2008). Courtesy ICA Boston

By  Allan Schwartzman

co-founder of AAP & chairman of Sotheby's Global Fine Arts

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Challenging the status quo has long been the battle cry of Modern art though, nowadays, there doesn't seem to be much invention in innovation. Today, we tend to think more in terms of artworks than of artists and the number of collectors collecting for art's sake has dramatically dwindled.

The death of [Robert Ryman](#) in early February was, for me, a mark of a chapter closing. Ryman made paintings for more than

half a century using the same reductive language of paint, gesture and support, and yet he never lost the sense of wonderment while making work that continually explored painting from a fresh perspective. Almost all of his works were white, but he never repeated himself. Each painting was a new way of testing the language. I don't think he could have made paintings for the market if he tried.

We are now in a period of value reinforcement, of securing financial worth for those of already-proven success. This makes for a confident art market, but one with less space for the kind of risk that also yields invention and inspiration. Instead, an indexable market for art that performs consistently is defining more and more which art is shown and supported. This is setting large swathes of a previously well-supported part of the market adrift. Some days, it seems that art lives in a post-studio world.

The same goes for the curatorial work of museums. In this week's issue, [Jane Morris examines](#) the increasing focus by museums on solo exhibitions by proven masters and the decrease in thematic exhibitions that challenge our assumptions and open the door to fresh ways of thinking about history and looking at art. And so, in this and several upcoming issues, we focus on moving forward, on how this era of artisanal art-making and collecting may find ways to also support the messy laboratories of creative curiosity. Perhaps we should help push the market built on consensus to support the edges of experimentation by which it can expand and grow.