


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.

From Quotas to Data



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By  Allan Schwartzman

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

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To what extent does knowledge equate to power in today's art market? The widespread use of *artnet* data about works of art previously sold at auction, for example, is both an empowering tool and a thief of courage and conviction. While more effectively equipping buyers to understand pricing, it can challenge and even paralyze the market potential of artists who do not perform well or consistently at auction. Favoring the safety of the pack, it can handicap the spirit of foresight and vision which have driven contemporary art collecting for more than a century.

For this issue, the AAP team gathered to do some intuitive forecasting for the new season. Top of my own list is the increasing importance of data and technology in shaping how we work and how the art market will evolve. With increased talk of blockchains and algorithms, it is increasingly obvious that data, advanced technologies and the programs which mobilize them could truly transform how the business of art is conducted and its capacity to sift and grow.

The Orwellian in me finds it frightening; it is not difficult to envision data becoming the enemy of art. I am already thinking about how to nurture the Resistance, to ensure space for true artistic innovation that sees fertility in failure and provides safe havens for moldy hunches and risky experiments—and in so doing, ultimately result in artistic penicillin, genius and

gold. At the same time, much of the innovation that data can make possible is thrilling, its potential only limited by our imagination in how to put it to use. “Knowledge is power” can take on a whole new meaning.

An Unprecedented Collaboration

But set aside the future for a moment. The data we have right in front of us provides a fascinating insight into the ambitions and actions of our field. We are in the midst of a remarkable moment in which an increasing number of museums (though by no means all) are setting as a primary goal to collect more diversely, filling in gaps in our collective culture. In seeking to examine progress through data—where we are and how far we have to go—*In Other Words* is collaborating with *artnet News* on a three-month investigation.

Working together, [Charlotte Burns](#) (senior editor, *In Other Words*) and [Julia Halperin](#) (executive editor, *artnet News*) have gathered and analyzed a decade of data from a cross-section of American museums about the acquisition and exhibition of works by African American artists. In our 20th September issue, they will analyze what those initiatives are thus far yielding, layering the museum data with market data and the insights of museums leaders, collectors, curators, dealers, and academics they have interviewed, all providing history and nuance. This collaboration is the first of several new projects we are developing for this new school year. But, more on that later. For now, our forecasts.