

→ select artists, and art institutions, define as art. The philosopher George Dickie expanded upon this idea by defining supplementary artworld roles such as critic, teacher, director and curator, among others. But, as Dr Sarah Hegenbart argues, Dickie and Danto failed to account for the massive influence that the art market, and wealth, was asserting on the art world. Increasingly, key artworks are being seen as investments, raising eye-watering prices in specialist sales and sitting in the homes and bank vaults of the super-rich. This view of “art as investment” has the potential to redefine what art is and what it is for.

How do we decide on the “value” of an artwork when art institutions and experts value it differently from the market? What would it mean to label those art institutions that are trying to resist higher valuations as “conservative”? What would it mean to describe the art market as “commodified”?

In economic theory, the free market, in the absence of state intervention and market failures, arrives at the “right” price for a given good. If the art market appears to be failing in

that function, why might this be, and what alternatives for valuing art exist? Some observers have cautioned, for example, that expensive art is used to transfer money out of countries without paying tax, a practice known as money laundering. This is greatly facilitated by the anonymity of art work transactions and the inherent difficulties of valuing art as opposed to, for example, a house. Follow the link for one analysis by the *New York Times*.



Search terms: Has art market  
unwitting partner in crime  
NYTimes



Hegenbart (2019) suggests that curators, being more removed from the “capitalist spectacle” of high art (as opposed to artists, dealers and art institutions), function as more neutral or objective gatekeepers, ensuring that works are displayed for artistic, rather than monetary, value. By virtue of their position as curators they may also be better placed to influence, rather than merely reflect, the financial and artistic values of their time.

### For reflection

#### The art world as a knowledge community

1. What are some of the tensions between different members in the art world (audiences, artists, art critics, curators, art historians, art teachers and students, art dealers, gallery owners, art magazines, digital art communities and so on) with regards to access to art?
2. Whose perspective has weight and should matter on the value of art? How would you decide?
3. What are the different responsibilities of different members of the art world with respect to knowledge?

#### II.3 Art as unspoken and unspeakable truths

Is art uniquely well placed to express the unspoken and unspeakable? Can it be thought of as a language that does what other languages cannot?

We have an abundance of artworks produced in the context of a problematic past. The painter and sculptor Titus Kaphar works at the intersection of art and history, reclaiming artworks into new narratives. In the linked TED talk, Kaphar paints over a replica of a 17th-century painting that invokes the racial

## For reflection and discussion

## Bitcoin art

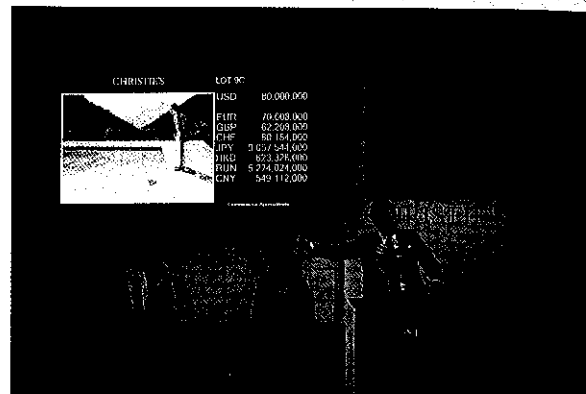


Search terms: CNN Business  
Innovate: Singapore Owing a  
Warhol



A Singapore-based start-up is using blockchain technology to enable individuals to buy “shares” in an artwork. This could allow artists to maintain partial ownership of their work, and enable smaller investors who would be unable to afford an entire work. The shares can be bought and sold by investors more easily, which may allow the market to realize the true value of a work more efficiently. Fractional ownership enables people to own parts of an artwork just like parts of corporations. While this opens up access to art ownership, it does not directly improve access to art in general. In fact, it may even reduce access to art, if the multiple owners cannot agree to display it publicly they may decide to store it in a secure, restricted area away from the public.

1. For the purpose of knowledge, what kind of access to art is more important—as an audience or as owners?
2. To whom should the benefits of the value of an artwork accrue?
3. Apart from using blockchains, how can artists retain partial ownership of their work?



↑ **Figure 10.7** *Portrait of an Artist (Pool with Two Figures)* by David Hockney broke records in 2018 when it sold for \$90 million. None of the money from that sale went to Hockney, as he had sold the original in 1972 for \$18,000.

We can access art in various ways, as an audience, as students, as owners and so on. A related concern is access to platforms for artists. Which art forms are considered art, and specifically good art, valued enough to be exhibited? Clues to the answer are found at

the complicated intersection between the art world and the art market. Below, we consider the role of art institutions in deciding art status and art value, in the context of our present cultural moment, described by some as late stage capitalism.

## Box 10.3: The artworld and the art market

How do you respond to the phenomenon of artwork that sells for millions of dollars? What criteria would you use to define the monetary value, and price tag, of art?

Arthur Danto, the philosopher and art critic, challenged aesthetics and art price valuations in his influential 1964 essay “The Artworld”, which suggested an answer to the eternal question of “what is art”. Andy Warhol had just created an exhibition of *Brillo Boxes*, which were replicas of ordinary

supermarket cartons of soap, stacked high as if in a warehouse. Interested readers can look up Warhol’s intentions and explanations of his exhibition. Here we are concerned with Danto’s interrogation of this phenomena, of ordinary objects that could be conceived of as art. He concluded that “what in the end makes the difference between a Brillo box and a work of art consisting of a Brillo box is a certain theory of art” (Danto 1964). More specifically, Danto argued that art is what

dynamics of the time, to draw attention to elements that it intentionally downplays. Kaphar's art is an amendment to history; he does not erase or replace problematic historical narratives and representations, but invites us to look at them anew, paying attention to the margins, the overlooked characters, as a way of coming to terms with the unspoken truths of a past of slavery and racism.



Search terms: Can art amend history? Kaphar TED



Think about how this reframing and shifting of attention in art could be done in your context. How should art speak to history, and what should it say? Below, we consider how art today is helping to lift the shadows cast by colonialism over centuries of African history, including art history.

The 2019 exhibition *Caravans of Gold, Fragments in Time: Art, Culture and Exchange Across*

Medieval Saharan Africa sought to reinstate West Africa's global legacy. West Africa was not "discovered" by colonists, as is frequently heard, but rather was a thriving, globally significant commercial centre in the medieval period, between the 8th and 16th centuries, connected through trade networks with other regions as far as China and the Alps.

This is a very different legacy from the one presented in most art and history museums even today. The arts of Africa are usually "positioned as having been discovered ... and folded into major Western art movements for the first time in the late 19th and early 20th centuries" (Sandy 2019). But the *Caravans of Gold* exhibition uses art history to shed light on "the story of the thriving African cities and empires that were foundational to the global medieval world" (Berzock quoted in Sandy 2019). Fragments of these ancient art works include Chinese porcelain found in Mali and a lost-wax cast made of Alpine copper found in Nigeria.



↑ **Figure 10.8a** Virgin and child, France, circa 1275–1300, made of African ivory



↑ **Figure 10.8b** Tada seated figure, Nigeria, late 13th–14th century, made of copper

## Making connections

### History, art and uplift

In Chapter 9 we see how history has been revised in film, songs and other artistic narratives as a form of uplift. Consider whether art is better suited for this purpose than other areas of knowledge.

In addition to its progressive role of illuminating unspoken truths about the past or present, art has also played subversive or transgressive roles, expressing the unspeakable loudly or hiding it in plain sight. From the French Decadent poets of the late 19th century, who rallied behind art to “épater la bourgeoisie”, that is, “shock the upper/middle classes”, to the 1990s obscenity charges against hip-hop artists that reached the US Supreme Court, subversive art has a long history with no shortage of controversies. These transgressions have been met with appeals to freedom of expression and freedom of speech, as well as calls for censorship, often simultaneously from opposing sides of the political spectrum.

We encounter tricky intersections when subversive art touches religious belief or widely accepted societal norms. It can be seen as liberatory or dangerously disruptive, depending on one’s perspective. Would you agree that we tend to celebrate subversive art in oppressive times, but condemn transgressive art in presumably progressive times? This is complicated by what may be a tendency to view the past, or geographically distant contexts—the elsewheres and elsewhens—as oppressive; whereas our present—our here and now, no matter where we are—is more frequently perceived as progressive.

## For discussion

### Labels in art

Before reading what the curators said about their collections, consider how a collective label such as “feminist art” may be similar to or different from “Renaissance art” or “Indigenous art”.

1. Did the artists think of themselves as producing work in a particular genre, for a particular purpose or a specific audience?
2. If you think the answer to question 1 is “no”, when do labels applied after a work is created meaningfully bring artists and artworks together

## II.4 Patrimony, repatriation and redistribution of art

All sorts of strange things happen when the artworks and artefacts of another culture are “taken and protected”, which could be a modern euphemism for “stolen and exhibited”. It is complex enough when this is done in the name of cultural and aesthetic exchange involving an open dialogue, but many cases involve artworks or artefacts that have been stolen, misappropriated, misunderstood and misrepresented.

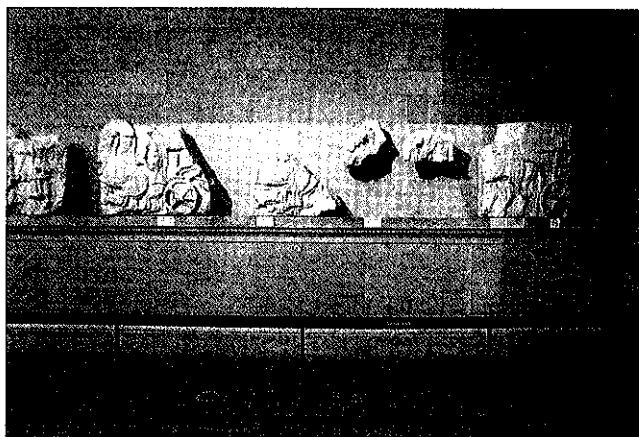
“Museums are home to millions of artworks and cultural artifacts. The Metropolitan Museum of Art alone holds two million objects. The Hermitage has three million. The British Museum eight million. Some of these objects have made their way to these institutions through unjust means. Some were stolen or plundered, others acquired through coerced or exploitative transactions. Should these injustices be rectified, and if so, how?

(Matthes 2017)

“All of these things that belong to our people in Australia—they don’t tell a story about the Queen of England, do they? No way. ... They tell stories about the people that made them and used them—that’s our people here in Australia. We don’t have the Queen’s crown jewels. And we don’t want them. But what we do want is to get our things back from the British Museum. We want them back.

(Murray quoted in Daly 2015)

Over the last few hundred years artwork from around the world, created by a multitude of cultures and peoples, has slowly been concentrated in a small number of primarily Western galleries, museums and private collections. The processes through which this has happened have been documented by cultural and art historians, and derive from major forces of the modern age such as colonialism and globalization.



#### Box 10.4: The Benin Bronzes

In 1897 the British Imperial Navy launched a punitive expedition against the Kingdom of Benin, completely destroying Benin City and looting the artwork of the Royal Palace. Among the loot were hundreds, and perhaps over a thousand, intricate bronze, brass and ivory sculptures that over the ensuing decades would become known as the Benin Bronzes. They were held in collections across Europe, raising the profile of African art. The resulting exposure of the Benin Bronzes tells us an interesting story, in the words of Professor Emmanuel Konde.

"Initially, the looted Benin art treasures were treated with some kind of curiosity. However, as the wonderful quality of the ivory carvings and bronzes became appreciated and this was reflected in ever-increasing prices they fetched in the art auction rooms of the world, the Foreign Office sold considerable quantities

The ethical issues relating to the appropriation, ownership and stewardship of artwork, as they relate to TOK, are discussed in section IV. Here we examine the implications of this concentration of artistic knowledge in the broader context of material cultural artefacts having been globally displaced. As knowledge is embedded in material culture and practice, our ability to stitch together coherent narratives in the arts (and in other AOKs) is improved by an understanding of the ownership, provenance and context of artwork, and much can be learned from placing and studying art in its historical and cultural context. The idea of ownership, transplanted onto art knowledge, feels like reducing cultural heritage to copyright. Yet, it deeply matters where art is from: let's consider the case of the Benin Bronzes.

to defray the costs of the expedition. ...

The presence of Benin Bronzes in Europe and the United States exposed the high quality of workmanship expended on them. Familiarity with these works would eventually revolutionize western views of African art, and transform the designation of these from 'primitive' to just simply 'art'." (Konde 2014)

However, it was not as simple as that. For at the time, following several hundred years of slavery, "the African people as well as their art were held in abject contempt by the Europeans who stole them" (Konde 2014). Ernst Grosse confidently asserted in 1894, for example, that "[t]he sentiments of [African] primitive art are narrower and cruder, its material poorer, its forms simpler" (Grosse quoted in Bodrogi 1968). About prevailing attitudes and judgments towards African art, Carl Einstein observed the following.

“There is hardly any art that is approached by Europeans with so much distrust as that of Africa. They are disinclined to recognize it as art and regard the contrast between its products and the accustomed continental concepts with a contempt and scorn that have actually created a special terminology of rebuttal.” (Einstein quoted in Bodrogi 1969)

It is quite easy to imagine the cognitive dissonance of European admirers of the Benin Bronzes. Konde offers two anecdotes as to how this dissonance was overcome. Initially the British soldiers, upon looting the bronzes and realizing their merit, “concocted the tale that the sculptures they had stolen must have been made by the Portuguese, the Egyptians, or the lost tribes of Israel” (Konde 2014). The changes brought on by the First World War, however, transformed (or coincided with)

#### II.4.1 Why has repatriation not happened?

There are hundreds of thousands of works of art such as the Benin Bronzes still held in colonial-era collections around the world, and their repatriation back to their “homeland” is an issue that has gathered momentum over the past five decades, with the independence of many formerly colonized nations. Apart from a few instances, particularly from museums based in the United States, this has not yet happened on any meaningful scale. One reason appears entirely practical—up to 85–90% of “classical and certain other types of artifacts on the market do not have a documented provenance” (Franzen 2013)—but museums and trustees may have a conflict of interest to investigate the provenance of works already in their collection. Even if the provenance can be traced, it may not be traceable to a contemporary national or cultural group.

Tess Davis, a lawyer with the Antiquities Coalition, praised the Cleveland Museum of Art for voluntarily returning the Hanuman statue, but argued that it should never have been allowed to enter the collection in the first place.

a reassessment of African art. By 1926, the ethnologist Ernst Vatter would write: “... primitive art as well as the hitherto similarly neglected prehistoric and medieval European art constitute nowadays an integral part of art as a whole” (Vatter 1926). Note his use of the term “prehistoric”, which, as outlined in Chapter 9, carries some problematic assumptions.

It only took 30 years for the Benin Bronzes to have a significant effect on the understanding of art in the European paradigm. Today the largest collection of Benin Bronzes is in London, with the vast majority held between England and Germany. Between 1951 and 1972, the British Museum sold over 30 “redundant” bronzes “back” to Nigeria, because they were duplicate specimens. In late 2018, the British Museum agreed to loan a selection of the bronzes temporarily to Nigeria.

“

The Hanuman first surfaced on the market while Cambodia was in the midst of a war and facing genocide. How could anyone not know this was stolen property? The only answer is that no one wanted to know.

[Davis quoted in Tharoor 2015]

”

Collectors have historically claimed that a work belongs to them because they “found” it, “saved” it or were the first to recognize its value. Indeed, some objects acquire artistic status in the process of being collected and exhibited, while in other cases, functional objects (such as a table) can become culturally displaced works of art in a museum halfway around the world. The fact remains that objects, artworks and artefacts that have been stolen, acquired, or found and later exhibited are identified as being of value, even if they originally did not have artistic status “back home”. Once this value is identified, if a claim to a work is made, why is it not honoured?

The United Nations convention of 1970 provides a framework for the legal export or repatriation of art and archeological materials

discovered after that date, but for anything acquired before that, no meaningful multilateral cooperation exists. Museums and collectors have avoided repatriation by appeals to the idea of stewardship: even if the provenance of an artwork can be clearly traced to a contemporary people, nation or culture, they claim to be the best custodians of the work, whether that is due to their technological apparatus (for example, temperature and humidity controlled preservation systems), security, or social and political stability. What do you think about these claims?

“The ongoing destruction of ancient sites in the Middle East by the Islamic State has galvanised the case for the universal museum, with advocates such as Gary Vikan, the former Director of the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, arguing that only institutions in the West can preserve the world’s cultural heritage.

[Tharoor 2015]

With growing and widespread recognition of the political, cultural and economic value of art, claimants to the ownership of an artwork, especially iconic art, have been very willing to make the required investments in protecting the work. Even where they cannot intervene, or choose not to, do other peoples, nations or organizations have a right to intervene?

Perhaps the most ideological argument against repatriation hinges on the idea of a universal collection, belonging to all of humankind, “that only by juxtaposition in global centres can we truly make sense of global art and the experience

of being human” (Joy 2019). The argument is that even if colonial-era collections are an accident of history, they are still the best place, now, for us to understand and appreciate art in a pluralistic, cosmopolitan sense.

“Works of art have not adhered to modern political borders. They have always sought connection elsewhere to strange and wonderful things.

[Tharoor 2015]

The sentiment is upheld by the headline “Museums have no borders, they have a network” on the website of the International Council of Museums, that seems to ignore issues of national and sovereign embeddedness. At any given time, the large museums display only a fraction of their collection, with the rest put in storage. As Charlotte Joy, lecturer of anthropology at Goldsmiths, University of London, puts it, “to date, the logic of the museum is not one of access and display but of acquisition and retention” (Joy 2019). It is possible to imagine an alternative: replicas could be sent to these global centres and the originals repatriated.

“The idea of the ‘universal museum’, for all its Enlightenment virtues and educational potential, is at its core a Western imperial project, and museums that acquired sacred objects in earlier times absolutely must rethink their display, their function and their narrative.

[Farago 2015]

### Box 10.5: What is cultural property? Who belongs to a culture?

Claims for repatriation can be difficult to reconcile if the ownership of the artwork or artefact in question is not traceable to a present-day owner. Is it possible for a work to belong to a culture? What would that mean in legal terms? Claims of cultural ownership have been used as the basis of nationalistic claims to artwork and artefacts.

However, “cultural property” refers to materials that, rather than belonging to a family, territory or state, belong instead to a cultural collectivity. This could be dispersed Indigenous Peoples for instance. As Janna Thompson puts it, cultural property can be understood as property that “plays an important role in the religious, cultural or



political life of people of the collectivity" (Thompson 2003).

When an item of cultural property is very closely linked to the identity of an existing collectivity, it may be referred to as "cultural patrimony". According to James Cuno, this "is not something owned by a people, but something of them, a part of their defining collective identity" (Cuno 2001). The more important the item, the more likely it is to pass beyond the category of property.

However, who counts as a member of a cultural group? It might be pointless to argue about a culture owning property if the members of that culture cannot be identified. But this should not be used as an easy excuse to dismiss claims to patrimony. Kwame Anthony Appiah points out the following.

"When Nigerians claim a Nok sculpture as part of their patrimony, they are claiming for a nation whose boundaries are less than a century old, the works of a civilization more than two millennia ago, created by a people that no longer exists, and whose descendants we know nothing about." (Appiah 2006)

The corollary of this problem is how we can know, for instance, that an artwork or artefact was taken (or given) unjustly in the first place: who is allowed to give something on behalf of a cultural group? Is it their kings, leaders or elders? Is consensus required?

Legal systems of property rights may be challenged by these concepts, but progress is required, especially given the many cases where cultural continuity to a contemporary group—the "moral descendents"—is traceable.

#### II.4.2 Appropriation

Ownership, as an issue, is much more tangible than the issue of appropriation, which can have implications for the authenticity of a work, and the rewards accruing to it. In its technically legitimate form, appropriation is recognized as a means of artistically recontextualizing something borrowed to create a new work. There are at least two categories of dubious appropriation: the most obvious is the appropriation of economic or material value, as many such artworks can be invaluable. The Koh-i-Noor, for example, one of the largest diamonds in the world, was taken from Punjab in 1849 and subsequently worn by Queen Victoria in a brooch. It is currently part of the British Crown Jewels. Less obvious is the appropriation of cultural, artistic and/or historical narratives.

First, we have the appropriation of narratives, as told without the participation of contemporary groups to whom an artwork's provenance and/or significance can be traced. Over the last century, Indigenous Peoples' art has been interpreted, studied, exhibited

and appropriated innumerable times without their participation. Painfully, cultural work by Indigenous People was often "treated as natural history, to be filed away with rocks and bird carcasses, rather than treated as a vital culture in its own right" (Farago 2015). This is simultaneously an ethical as well as knowledge issue: to what extent can we understand the artworks, and more broadly the material and immaterial culture, without the active participation of the subject group? In light of what we have encountered in this chapter so far, would you say that this art can speak for itself, or be spoken for by outsiders?

“

In Paris, for example, pre-Columbian sculptures have migrated over and over: from the Louvre and the Musée Guimet in the early-to-mid-19th Century, where they were exhibited as antiquities; to the ethnographic Trocadéro in the late 19th Century, where aesthetics were irrelevant; and now to the Musée du Quai Branly, which proudly calls itself an art museum.

(Farago 2015)

”



There have been examples of progress: in the United States, the Association of Art Museum Directors, the main authority for US museums, instructs its members to work with Indigenous groups on display and interpretation. The Australian Museum in Sydney has been acknowledged for collaborating “with indigenous communities to improve its interpretive displays” (Farago 2015).

Art and cultural artefacts are said to contain encoded knowledge, from the context and culture of their creation. Sometimes the work is artistically inseparable from that context—consider, for example, props and artwork used in ritualistic performance, such as masks and costumes used in ceremonial dance. To what


extent can these masks be comprehended by a foreign audience, without the context of the dance? How much context is enough for the transfer or sharing of knowledge to an artwork?

Some art forms are more prone to this predicament than others; film, for example, is perceived to be more readily transferable than religious iconography or fine art. It is the sharing or transfer of art across social, cultural or linguistic borders that generally causes this problem. Even in recent decades, attempts to understand or appreciate artwork out of its cultural context, for example art that has been geographically or temporally displaced, has carried the risk of trivializing, exoticizing or further othering the object and the subject culture to which it belongs.

### Box 10.6: “You have our soul”: Easter Island pleads with British for statue’s return

*Hoa Hakananai’a* (“lost or stolen friend”) is an eight-foot basalt statue that was taken from Easter Island in 1868, and has been kept at the British Museum ever since. In November 2018, the governor of Easter Island urged the museum to return it, saying its keepers have the “soul” of the Easter Island people.



 Search terms: You have our soul Easter Island



Tarita Alarcón Rapu, Governor of Easter Island, recently asked the British Museum to lend the statue back to Easter Island temporarily.

“And it is the right time to maybe send us back (the statue) for a while, so our sons can see it as I can see it. You have kept him for 150 years, just give us some months.” (Rapu quoted in Holland 2018)

The British Museum released a statement to CNN that described a “warm, friendly and open conversation” with the Easter Island delegation, adding the following.

“It was very helpful to gain a better understanding of Hoa Hakananani’a’s significance for the people of Rapa Nui today ... The museum is keen to work collaboratively with partners and communities across the globe and welcomes discussions around future joint projects with Rapa Nui ... We believe that there is great value in presenting objects from across the world, alongside the stories of other cultures at the British Museum. The museum is one of the world’s leading



lenders and the trustees will always consider loan requests subject to usual conditions." (Holland 2018)

Regarding the claim made by Tarita Rapu, that the statue is a part of her people's soul, consider the following questions.

- (a) To what extent are you able to comprehend this claim?
- (b) What factors affect your ability to do so?

#### 4.3 The role of museums: Does all culture belong to all humankind?

Museums especially have long embraced the idea that "cultural products are contributions to the culture of all humankind" (Matthes 2017). The Hague Convention of 1954 includes the following declaration.

"Damage to cultural property belonging to any people whatsoever means damage to the cultural heritage of all mankind, since each people makes its contribution to the culture of the world."

(UNESCO 1954)

The 1982 UNESCO Convention argues similarly for artefacts from World Heritage sites.

"Their value cannot be confined to one nation or to one people, but is there to be shared by every man, woman and child of the globe."

(UNESCO 1982)

In addition, a 2016 declaration by the United Nations Human Rights Council suggests that access to universal human heritage is a human right.

2. What do you make of the British Museum's response, that there is "great value in presenting objects from across the world alongside ... other cultures at the British Museum?"

- a. (a) Given your answers to questions 1 and 2, what would you suggest is the best place for the statue, in terms of knowledge and in terms of ethics?
- (b) What additional information would you need to more effectively answer this question?

"Convinced that damage to cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, of any people constitutes damage to the cultural heritage of humanity as a whole; Noting that the destruction of or damage to cultural heritage may have a detrimental and irreversible impact on the enjoyment of cultural rights, in particular the right of everyone to take part in cultural life, including the ability to access and enjoy cultural heritage."

(UNHRC 2016)

These ideas have been used to argue in favour of foreign intervention to "protect" culture, and to support universal collections, against repatriation of cultural property.

There may be an inherent tension between individual and collective interests when it comes to cultural property, such as art. Janna Thompson wrote the following.

“

If we think of art as being of value for individual development and to humankind as a whole, then distributional issues cannot be avoided.

(Thompson 2004)

”

Who would be best placed to navigate this tension: museums or national governments? If we accept that museums might be custodians for public goods that belong to all of humanity, what can we say about the fact that most of them are in Western nations?

In the “Declaration of the Importance and Value of Universal Museums”, the directors of leading museums including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Getty Museum, the Hermitage Museum and the British Museum write that “museums serve not just the citizens of one nation but the people of every nation” (quoted in Matthes 2017). Matthes writes that Western museums “have a long history of cultural marginalization” (Matthes 2017). For instance, he states that non-Western artworks have long been excluded to:

“

anthropology museums as opposed to art museums, their designation as ‘primitive’ within the artworld context, and, despite these aspersions on their artistic status, the colonialist acquisition of many such objects.

[Matthes 2017]

”

The mission and values of many leading museums—to serve for the collective good of humankind—seems at odds with their concentration in just one part of the world. A key consideration in the redistribution and repatriation of artistic works, argues Matthes, is how it can facilitate the recognition for marginalized groups.

Private collections also house vast quantities of knowledge away from public access. To what extent should governments intervene in private collections, and what would be some implications of this?

## III. METHODS AND TOOLS

In this section we explore the methods of becoming and being an artist, and how knowledge is acquired and produced in the process. We also look at the role of tools and materials.

### III.1 Method and art education

“Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once we grow up.” So goes the quote, often attributed to Pablo Picasso, but iterated on by many others to suggest that we all have an innate artistic ability, and that education is at best irrelevant to it.

And yet, going to art school and formally participating in the knowledge community of artists remains something of a stepping stone in the trajectory of many if not most artists. What is the purpose of an art education and the knowledge that is passed on and acquired through it?

Granted, an education in art looks different in the various disciplines—from theatre and literature, to film, dance and so on. And yet, these diverse art forms, studied in the context of modern university programmes, may perhaps be more similar than we recognize. What can we learn about how knowledge is transferred by looking at how art education has changed over time and the different forms it takes across cultures?

To explore this question we turn to Hindustani classical music from the northern regions of the Indian subcontinent. For close to 10 centuries, music knowledge was traditionally transferred in the context of the *guru-shishya parampara* system, where a student or disciple (*shishya*), acquires knowledge under the direct guidance of a trusted teacher or master (*guru*). The *guru-shishya* is defining as both a professional and personal relationship, marked by ceremony and an initiation into a community and lineage.