Insights on Artists in the Brazilian Contemporary Art Market

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Abstract

The Brazilian art market has been subject to limited economic or statistical analysis. Our aim was to gain insights into the career trajectories of Brazilian artists and identify factors that could influence their success. This study represents our initial endeavor to establish a database on Brazilian artists, and present fundamental statistics in this regard. Our data collection process involved compiling available information on Brazilian artists and galleries from both English and Portuguese language websites. The resulting database includes artists' demographic information such as their names, gender, birthplace, education, current art gallery and art gallery location. By analyzing data from 1,575 artists, represented by 81 Brazilian art galleries, this study confirmed the significance of São Paulo State as the main Brazilian hub for art galleries, artists, and educational institutions in the art market.

Keywords: Brazilian art market, contemporary art, contemporary artists, art economics

1. Introduction

The contemporary art market is a globalized market. However, the power is centralized in the United States and certain countries in Europe, where high-stakes businesses take place, and the main art institutions are located (Fraiberger, 2018).

Total global art market sales have fluctuated between 50 to 68 billion dollars since 2010. According to the UBS Art Market Report 2022 (McAndrew, 2022), global art sales ranged from a low of 50 billion dollars in 2020, the worst year of the Covid pandemic, to a high of 68 billion in 2014. In 2021, total sales reached 65 billion dollars, a value similar to 2011. Nonetheless, if we consider the dollar inflation during the period 2010-2021, the outline could be different and might even show a real market value decrease. The main markets in 2019 (McAndrew 2020), before the Covid pandemic, were the USA (44% of global sales), United Kingdom (20%), China (18%), France (7%), Switzerland (2%), Germany (2%), and Spain (1%), followed by the rest of the world, with 7% of global art sales. The Brazilian art market, included in the "rest of the world", is part of what is called the Global South, in contrast to the Global North, as per European art market scholars such as Olav Velthuis (2015), from Amsterdam University. Global South includes regions from Latin America, Asia, Africa, and Oceania, also known as the "Third

World" or "Periphery," terms that denote regions outside Europe and North America, mostly lower-income and often politically or culturally marginalized.

The Brazilian art market is small and, being correlated with the existing wealth (Menconi, 2021), most estimates agree that it represents less than 1% of the global art market (McAndrew, 2013; Earp & Kornis, 2019). Statistical studies on the Brazilian art market are scarce. One of the few sources is the 2018 Latitude Report (Latitude Brasil, 2018), which presents limited quantitative data on Brazilian contemporary art galleries operating in the primary sector, and, unfortunately, does not include information on sales revenues, artwork prices, or artists they represent. Another available data source is www.catalogodasartes.com.br, a Brazilian website that offers historical, albeit limited, auction prices in Brazil, for Brazilian works of art, antiques, and collectibles. This website provides price information for a user fee.

The purpose of this research was to gather new insights regarding the Brazilian art market, with a particular focus on Brazilian artists and their career trajectories. This approach was inspired by Fraiberger et al.'s (2018), which suggested that an artist's success may be related to the venues where his or her art is exhibited. The goals included compiling an extensive database of artists whose works are sold by the main galleries in the Brazilian art market., along with information about their educational backgrounds and the art galleries representing them. Additionally, this study involved analyzing the collected data, deriving conclusions, initiating discussions, and disseminating helpful information to the stakeholders in the Brazilian art market. This unprecedented initiative, in Brazil, was particularly designed to assist Brazilian artists and art galleries in making better decisions, there for enhancing their career and business prospects.

2. Method

We aimed to track the career paths of Brazilian artists to detect how different factors could influence their future success. This paper marks our initial step in that direction, which involves building a database on Brazilian artists.

To collect data, we used web scraping, a technique that involves extracting publicly available information from websites and saving it to a local file using a Python scraper. Our first task was to determine which art galleries' websites to search. We focused on the most prominent art galleries in the Brazilian art market, either those affiliated with the Brazilian primary sector art galleries' association, ABACT or those participating in one of the two main Brazilian art fairs, SP-Arte (in São Paulo) and ArtRio (in Rio de Janeiro). We identified a list of 81 art galleries for our study, based on the websites of ABACT (https://abact.com.br), SP-Arte (https://www.sp-arte.com) or ArtRio (https://artrio.com)in their 2022 editions. We then began building a database containing information about the Brazilian artists mentioned on the websites of the 81 selected art galleries, in both English and Portuguese. The artists database included each artist's name, sex, place and year of birth, year of death (if applicable), art college/school attended, current art gallery, and art gallery location. Since not all galleries' websites provided the information we needed about their artists, we also scraped the artists' websites, both in Portuguese and English.

3. Results

In this study, we identified 81 art galleries that were, in 2022, either members of ABACT (Brazilian Association of Contemporary Art Galleries, in the primary sector) or had participated

in the main international art fairs of Brazil (SP-Arte, in São Paulo, or ArtRio, in Rio de Janeiro). All the analyzed galleries have physical premises in Brazil.

As illustrated in Figure 1, most of these galleries were situated in the Southeast region: 60.5% in São Paulo state, 22.2% in Rio de Janeiro state, and 6.2% in Minas Gerais. The Northeast emerged as the second most important region, housing 3.7% of the galleries in Bahia and 2.5% in Pernambuco. The South ranked as the third significant region, with 2.5% of the galleries in Paraná and 1.2% in Rio Grande do Sul.
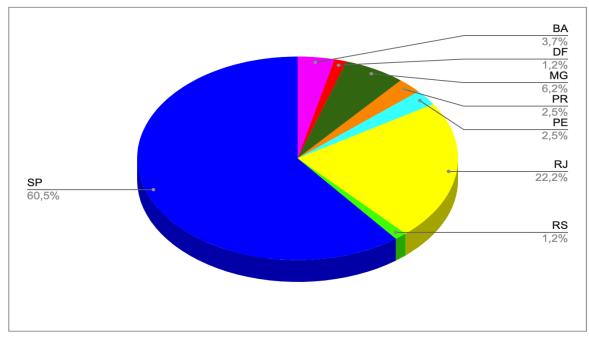

Figure 1. Location of art galleries by state

In this research we initially detected a total of 2,004 artist entries, who were represented by the 81 art galleries previously mentioned. However, it is important to note that 429 artists were represented by more than one gallery. After eliminating duplicate names across these galleries, we determined a final count of 1,575 unique artists for this study.

Figure 2 displays the distribution of the 1,575 artists, categorized by their decade of birth. The predominant group consists of artists born in the 70s, comprising 21.1% of the total. This is followed closely by artists born in both the 60s and 80s, each group making up 18.5%. Artists from the 50s represent 13.6%, while those from the 40s account for 9.0%, and the 90s for 5.5%. Artists born in the 20s and 30s contribute 5.0% and 3.3%, respectively, and finally, those born in the first two decades of the 20th century collectively represent 3.3%. 2.1% of the artists were born before 1900.

Out of the total number of artists represented by the selected art galleries, 385 of them are deceased, representing approximately 24.4% of the total.
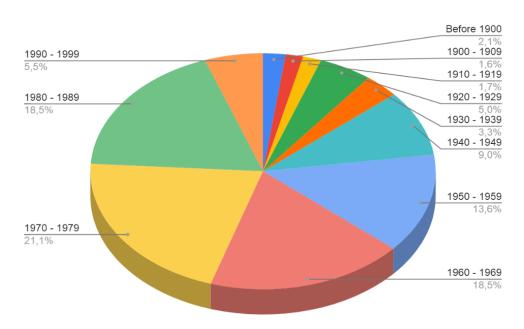
Figure 2. Artists by year of birth

As depicted in Figure 3, male artists predominated in most decades, accounting for 67.1% of the total, in contrast to the 32.9% representation of female artists. A notable exception was observed among artists born in the 90s, where the proportion of female artists (48%) nearly matched that of male artists (52%).
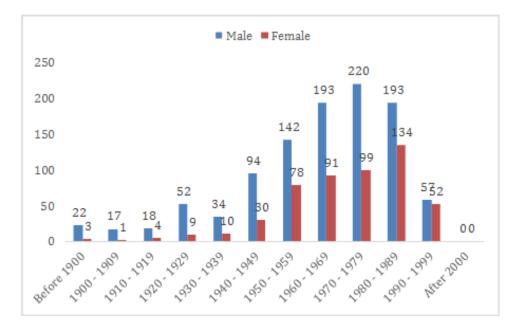

Figure 3. Number of artists, self-described gender, by decade of birth

In Figure 4 we can see the total number of artists categorized by their place of birth. The highest percentage of artists were born in the south-eastern region of Brazil, with the majority (30.9%) originating from the state of São Paulo, followed by the states of Rio de Janeiro (24.9%) and Minas Gerais (12%). The second largest share was attributed to the southern region of Brazil, with artists born in the states of Rio Grande do Sul (5.0%), Paraná (3.4%), and Santa Catarina (1.2%). The third most significant Brazilian region in terms of artists' birthplace was the northeast (14.4%).
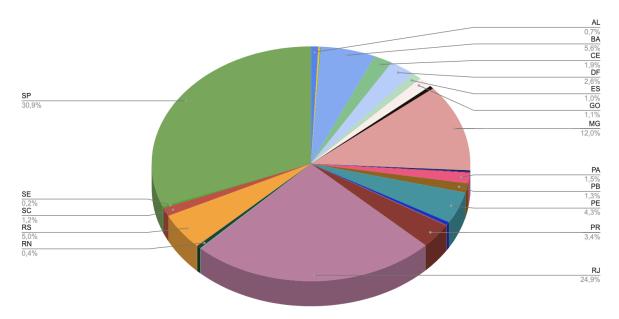

Figure 4. Brazilian artists by place of birth (state)

In Figure 5, we observe the main universities and schools attended by the artists included in this research. The most prominent schools, represented by their percentages of the total number of artists, are as follows:

1. FAAP (Fundação Armando Álvares Penteado), São Paulo (SP) - 10.5%
2. UFRJ (Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro), Rio de Janeiro (RJ) - 8.1%
3. University of São Paulo (SP) - 6.9%
4. EAV (Escola de Artes Visuais) Parque Lage, Rio de Janeiro (RJ) - 6.4%
5. UFMG (Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais), Belo Horizonte (MG) - 4.1%
6. UNB (Universidade Nacional de Brasília) - 4.0%
7. PUC-RJ (Pontifícia Universidade Católica), Rio de Janeiro (RJ) - 3.9%
8. UEMG (Universidade Estadual de Minas Gerais), Belo Horizonte (MG) - 2.8%

It is noteworthy that L'Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris, France, ranks in 20th place, surpassing 19 renowned Brazilian universities, with 1.2% of the artists having studied

there. Figure 6 illustrates that the top 20 educational institutions on the list were attended by 65% of the artists included in the study. Additionally, the top 5 educational institutions alone accounted for 35% of the artists. This fact highlights the concentration of artistic education in a handful of institutions within the dataset.
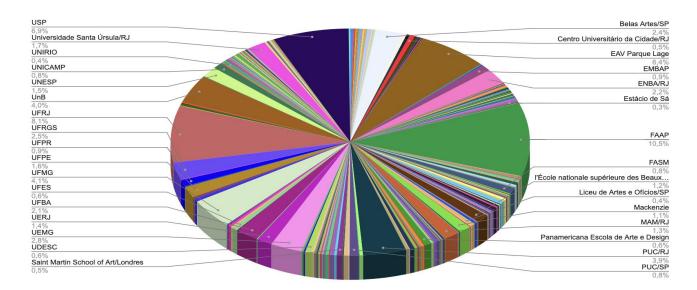

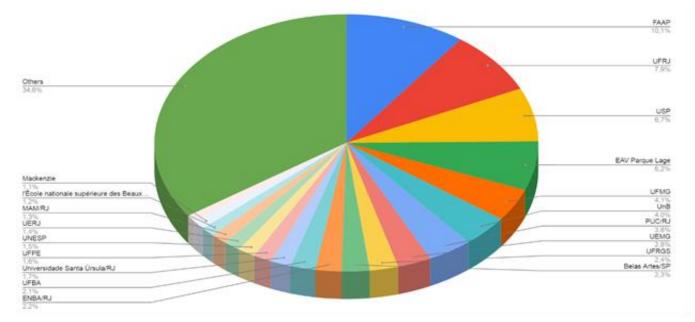Figure 5. Universities and schools attended by Brazilian artists

Figure 6. Main educational institutions attended by Brazilian artists

4. Discussion

This study aimed to gain insights into the profiles of Brazilian artists by building a comprehensive database, possibly identifying factors that could influence an artists' success. We analyzed data from the artists who were represented, in 2022, by 81 Brazilian art galleries. These galleries were either members of the Brazilian Association of Contemporary Art Galleries (ABACT) or participated in one of the two main Brazilian art fairs, SP-Arte and ArtRio. Representation by one of these galleries already places an artist in a somewhat privileged position within the Brazilian art market.

Most of the art galleries in the study were located in the south-eastern region of Brazil, with São Paulo being the most prominent state, accounting for 60.5% of the galleries. The southeast region of Brazil, particularly São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, was also the most common birthplace for the artists. Furthermore, the research identified the main art schools attended by the artists, with FAAP (SP), UFRJ (RJ), and the University of São Paulo (SP) being the most common. All these institutions are located in the south-eastern part of the country. Notably, EAV Parque Lage (RJ), an independent school of visual arts, and not a higher education institution like the other 19 in the list of the top 20, appears in fourth place in the statistics of this study, demonstrating that its role as an entry point for an artist in the Brazilian art market is exceptional. The importance of the Southeast region in the three aspects (number of galleries, place of artists' birth, and art schools) aligns with its contribution of more than 50% to Brazil's Gross Domestic Product and its relevance to the country's economy.

The investigation identified a total of 1,575 artists, with the largest portion born in the 1970s, currently between 44 and 53 years old. Male artists represented the majority across almost all decades, except for those born in the 1990s, where there was a balance of 48% female artists compared to 52% male artists. However, it is important to note that artists born in the 90s represent only 5.5% of the total artists. The study's finding that 24.4% of the observed artists were deceased is an important piece of information that demands further analysis in the future. The data raises questions into factors such as longevity of artistic careers, the impact of artists' legacies on the art market, and potential implications for the sustainability of the Brazilian art industry.

The research provides important insights for those interested in the Brazilian art market. The data confirms São Paulo's prominence as a Brazilian hub for art galleries and artists, emphasizing its significance in the Brazilian art world. Additionally, the predominance of male artists and the number of deceased artists identified suggest the need for further exploration of gender representation and sustainability in the Brazilian art market. Finally, the presence of artists who received education abroad highlights the importance of globalization in the Brazilian art world and the potential for international collaboration and exchange.

For future studies, it is recommended to compare the data gathered in this study with the market performance of the 1,575 Brazilian artists. Such a comparison could reveal potential correlations between an artist's market success, as indicated by artwork prices or quantities sold, and their career trajectory. Another factor to consider would be the venues where artworks exhibitions take place, as suggested by Fraiberger (2018), which were not part of this study. Analyzing how

these variables influence an artist's success in the market can provide researchers with valuable insights into the Brazilian art market's dynamics, potentially uncovering patterns or trends that contribute to an artist's commercial achievements.

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