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**NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN**

Faculty of Fine Art, Painting

**A Critique of the Art Market:  
Saatchi and Sensation**

By

Eilis O'Toole

Submitted to the Faculty of Fine Art and Design  
and complementary studies,  
in candidacy for the Degree of:  
Bachelor of Arts and Fine Art Painting,  
1999.

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## INTRODUCTION

Does the act of purchasing itself contribute to a work's 'enduring' worth? How far are the collectors with a reputation for having a 'good eye' and 'flawless taste' in fact being commended for their ability to establish a good competitive price for that kind of piece at the same time as identifying its lasting aesthetic value and perhaps its relevance to an emerging school? (Jardine, Quoted in RA, 1997, p.44)

It is questions such as those asked by Lisa Jardine which I intend to discuss in this thesis. I shall argue how the value of the art object is determined by the market forces, the tastes of private collectors and dealers, as well as public art institutions. The art market doesn't simply sell the art object as a commodity but also, along with museums and galleries, helps to define and evaluate the artistic significance of the art object.

If it is the art market which evaluates the art object can it therefore be implied that it is the individual collector or dealer who defines and informs public taste? The question then arises as to why these individuals purchase art in the first place? The art object has no apparent function yet has always been symbolic of power, and a demonstration of wealth. For example, during the Renaissance Cosimo de Medici, an influential banker, acquired prestige and status in Florence through his support of the arts. Such is the case today with Charles Saatchi, a highly successful ad man who has also become an extremely powerful and influential collector in recent years.

The arts have always had to rely on patronage and economics for their existence. Traditionally the role of patronage has been carried out by the temporal and religious powers of the era. By the eighteenth century, the modern critic/dealer system began to take shape. This new system was one of private enterprise where the artist had to release his work into the galleries,

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museums, private collections, mass media and critics. It was in and through these new institutions that his work acquired meaning and value. The artist no longer acquired prestige through his royal court, academy or patron.

By the twentieth century the dealers arguably began to emerge as the principle arbiters of public taste, displacing the historically powerful taste of the patrons. Thus it could be argued that the values of the patronage system gradually gave away to a new criteria of taste viz. the monetary value and artistic taste of the dealer system.

Thus it can be said that the dealer who was primarily interested in commerce has replaced the 'aloof' patron as the primary determinant of public artistic sensibilities. In this system, artists gain notoriety through their affiliations with certain collectors and dealers and so it is the market profile of the artist which boosts the critical and public attention devoted to their work.

In the nineteenth century the foundation of the public museum enabled the public to gain access to collections which were once exclusive to private wealthy individuals. State owned collections were exhibited in museums with a view to educating the lower social classes. In chapter 1, I will discuss the transition from the state run public museum of the nineteenth century to the increasingly influential market system which we have to day. I will also discuss how commodification of the art object determines the currently incredible prices for some art; which in turn of course, has the effect that the purchasing of such art is well out of reach of the public institutions; consequently, its ownership is possible only for a handful of wealthy individuals.



By the nineteenth century the dealers' arguments began to emerge as the principle arbiters of public taste, displacing the historically powerful taste of the patrons. Thus it could be argued that the values of the patronage system gradually gave way to a new criteria of taste via the monetary value and artistic taste of the dealer system.

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In chapter 2 I will review in depth how these wealthy collectors have emerged as the principal informers of public taste and style in contemporary art. Concentrating on Charles Saatchi, I shall discuss how his power and dominance as a collector has influenced not only the careers of the artists in whom he has taken an interest, but also the media, secondary markets, and public's perception of these artists. My main concern here is with a group of relatively inexperienced young British artists of the 1980s and 1990s.

In Chapter 3, I will examine the role played by the yBa phenomenon within contemporary British culture, a position which culminated in 'Sensation: Young British Artists from the Saatchi Collection', held in the Royal Academy, London in the autumn of the 1997.

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## CHAPTER 1 THE PUBLIC MUSEUM

The foundation of the public museum in the nineteenth century was significant in that it transferred cultural and scientific objects from private ownership into the public domain. Prior to this development many collections of art, or cultural and scientific objects were inaccessible to the majority of people. Before the nineteenth century collections were demonstrations of royal power, symbols of aristocratic status, and instruments of learning, and so were essentially enclosed in socially restricted spaces. Gradually these collections began to be placed in contexts less enclosed than their predecessors. This transition occurred at different paces throughout Europe. In France it was more sudden and aggressive as a result of the French Revolution. Elsewhere the transition occurred gradually and progressed through a series of peaceful reforms. By the mid-nineteenth century the museum's doors were, in theory, open to all.

While the public museum's initial and primary functions were to display what was once held in private to the general public, and also to provide the setting in which these displays could be viewed by all sections of society, evolving new governmental relations to culture and to the education of the citizenry gave rise to a secondary role for the institution, (Bennett 1995). This secondary role was educational and social in nature and purpose, and was aimed at that section of society, 'the working class' or the so-called 'lower orders' of the nineteenth century. However, 'improvement' of the working classes was to be achieved not solely by provision of access to the museum but, further and more subtly by imposition of required standards of acceptable behaviour to attain this access. This of course meant that, while the museum theoretically provided open access to culture for all, access for the working



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class was restricted in practice. This restriction was based on acceptable ( to the middle classes) behavioural norms.

By contrast, the museum's new conception as an instrument of public instruction envisaged it as, in its new openness, an exemplary space in which the rough and raucous might learn to civilise themselves by modelling their conduct on middle-class codes of behaviour to which museum attendance would expose them. (Bennett, 1995, p.28)

The museum was seen as a space to incorporate the working classes into the preferred middle-class society, as it was envisaged as providing new and more appropriate cultural and moral standards for the working classes. By imitating middle-class conduct, the working classes could and would improve their social and cultural skills. This concept provided the government with the practical justification for the construction and operation of the new public museum.

...the conception of the museum as an institution in which the working classes - provided they dress nicely and curbed any tendency towards unseemly conduct - might be exposed to the improving influence of the middle classes was crucial to its construction as a new kind of social space. (Bennett, 1995, p.28)

Consequently the accessibility of the museum was restricted in practice insofar as the working class were willing to conform to the codes of conduct required of them. Unlike its predecessor, which served to distinguish the bourgeois public from the working classes, the nineteenth century public museum in contrast was conceived to create a space where the working and middle classes could coexist, but only on middle class conditions. The creation of this space brought with it, at least in theory, a new homogeneous society. It was hoped that with the guidance of their putative social superiors, the working class would learn how to conduct and compose themselves

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appropriately in public. By imitating their 'betters' and introducing the working class to high cultural practices, it was hoped that the working-class would acquire more civilised habits and lift their levels of popular taste and culture. The reformation of working-class culture was seen as an antidote to drunkenness and riots. Forms of high culture were being called upon to help shape the moral and behavioural practices of the public.

Viewed in this light the museum might be seen as issuing its visitors with both a prompt and an opportunity to civilise themselves and in doing so, by treating the exhibits as props for a social performance aimed at ascending through the ranks to help keep progress on path. (Bennett, 1995, p.47)

Consequently, however I would question the claim that the nineteenth century museum was available to all as a social and educational space. In practise, museums have always been appropriated by social elites. High culture has used popular culture as a means of distinguishing itself from the masses. Thus in order for the working classes to be accepted into the museum space they had first to learn how to exist within the system of high or elite culture i.e. conform to middle-class morals. So effectively, museums did not create a space where both classes could successfully mingle together. Furthermore, they have continued to differentiate the elite from the popular. In practise then, the nineteenth century museum seems to have failed in its stated objectives which were,:

(It is) in the main characterised by two principals: first, the principal of public rights sustaining the demand that the museums should be equally open and accessible to all; and second, the principle of representational adequacy sustaining the demand that museums should adequately represent the cultures and values of different sections of the public. (Bennett, 1995, p.89)

It may indeed be argued that the existence of elitism in human society



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It may indeed be argued that the existence of elitism in human society

inevitably means that the social and educational objectives of the nineteenth century museum could not be achieved. The basic tenet of elitism is that it holds the key to cultural truth and the arbitration of taste. The Oxford English Dictionary defines taste as being, "a mental perception of quality; judgement, discriminative faculty ... the sense of what is appropriate, harmonious, beautiful; aesthetic discernment in art, literature, fashion, etc." The consumption of high culture is seen as a means of distinguishing the elite from the masses; a demonstration of class and taste which the masses were believed to lack. Within the social hierarchical system of the nineteenth century it was assumed that elitist tastes were culturally superior and their values of judgment went unquestioned. Intellectuals were given the power to discriminate culturally. They were in a position to define what people should or should not like. Thus nineteenth century society epitomised the rigidly structured social organisation as described by Strinati.

Within a strictly defined social hierarchy the production and protection of taste are carried out by elite intellectuals; and their judgments apply both to those classes which share a position of domination and privilege, and to those in subordinate positions who participate in their in their own popular culture while respectfully deferring to elite culture. (Strinati, 1995, p.45)

The 1920s and 1930s were seen as a major turning point in the production and consumption of culture. The growth of mass culture from this time challenges the privileged elitist power in society to judge and arbitrate taste. Thus Dominic Strinati argued that the growth of mass culture means that there is less room for other cultures which cannot be produced and marketed for a mass market, (Strinati, 1995, p.10). Mass culture threatens the elitist hierarchy of the nineteenth century. It is seen as lowering the standards of aesthetic taste and is believed to pose a subversive threat to elite or high culture. Mass culture is popular culture mass produced; a commercial culture

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produced for a mass market sold according to the criteria of marketability and profitability. MacDonald defined mass culture as being,

... a dynamic, revolutionary force breaking down the old barriers of class tradition, and taste, and dissolving all cultural distinctions. It mixes and scrambles everything together producing what might be called homogenised culture ... It thus destroys all values since value judgments imply discrimination. Mass culture is very, very democratic; it absolutely refuses to discriminate against or between, anything or anybody. (Quoted in Strinati, 1995 p.16)

Today access to popular culture is unrestricted and so there is no longer a dependence on elite intellectuals for guidance in the appreciation of taste and culture. Hence, it can be argued that the traditional hierarchy dominant in the nineteenth century has now been disposed. With mass culture gradually breaking down the boundaries of the traditional hierarchical consumption of culture and the increasing commercialisation of culture the question of what or who now has the power to determine public taste and culture; and who sets down the guidelines for cultural discrimination then arises. In contemporary society the boundaries between high and popular culture are continuously being contested and redrawn. Consequently many forms of popular culture which were once condemned by elitist intellectuals are now considered to fall within high cultures boundaries. Examples of these changing attitudes are popular music such as jazz, or cinema such as the films of Eisenstein. As the boundaries between high and popular culture continuously fluctuate and alter, it is increasingly difficult to define what is or is not considered to be art.

As a consequence of the absence of any defined arbiter of culture or taste in the contemporary art world, the arbitration of taste seems to have been taken on board by the art market. Thus, economic or fiscal values determine cultural values: "Art is no longer appreciated for itself but for the

produced for a mass market sold according to the criteria of marketability and profitability. MacDonald defined mass culture as being

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As a consequence of the absence of any defined splitter of culture or taste in the contemporary art world the appreciation of taste seems to have been taken on board by the art market. Thus economic or fiscal values determine cultural values. Art is no longer appreciated for itself but for the

amount by which it will appreciate. The creation of the confidence that it will increase in monetary value is the cultural artifact of the twentieth century," (Hewison, 1998, p.53). Indeed in the United Kingdom, this role, arguably has recently been undertaken by one individual Charles Saatchi, who attained great status during the 1980s in the advertising industry.

This development sharply contrasts with the cultural climate of the eighteenth and nineteenth when centuries works of art were purchased for pleasure and as status symbols. The idea of purchasing art as an investment or a commodity was not fully realised until the late twentieth century. Economic and business factors such as a greater liquidity of cash, larger amounts of available credit and a belief that works of art could be considered as investments, gave rise to the commodification of art in the latter half of the twentieth century. Robert Hughes believes the end of the twentieth century is witnessing the environmental breakdown of the art world and that the cultural pressures this has generated have changed our views and relationships with art. (Hughes, 1984/85, p.9) Thus it seems that people today are becoming ever more interested, intrigued and impressed by the market value of an art object rather than the art itself. Consequently is it the art market and its major players who give the art object its authority? It would appear so because art has acquired the aura of money and has become a high powered capitalist game of marketing exclusive to very rich individuals or powerful commercial organisations. As Robert Hughes points out, "never before have the visual arts been the subject - beneficiary or victim, depending on your view of the matter - of such extreme inflation and fetishisation," (Hughes, 1984/85, p.9).

Today's art market is highly irrational and manipulable, and has



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Today's art market is highly irrational and manipulable, and has

become more vulnerable to fashion than ever before. If one 'respected' collector becomes interested in purchasing a Jackson Pollock for example, then many more collectors will follow this new 'taste', thus increasing the market value of other Pollock works. The act of purchasing a work of art automatically increases its value. The Australian government's purchase of Pollock's 'Blue Poles' in the early 1970s could be taken as an example of this. The Australian government paid the then astounding sum of \$2.2 million for this Pollock painting (after bargaining down Ben Heller's asking price of \$3 million). Before this no-one had ever considered spending so much money on a Pollock painting, and thus it attracted great attention in the art market. As a result the market value of Pollock paintings quintupled overnight and the Australian government was able to justify its outlay on the grounds that they acquired 'Blue Poles' at a very reasonable price. An even more extreme example is that of Alan Bond an Australian business man, who in 1987 paid £30.2 million for Van Gogh's 'Lilies'. This purchase was only made possible by a loan of £15.1 million from Sothebys, using the value of the painting as collateral. This action fuelled an artificial boom in the art market, with skyrocketing prices and thereby increasing and securing the high investment of individual, corporate or governmental purchases of desirable 'art commodities'.

Inevitably the extreme inflation of art prices has had a significant and undesirable impact bearing on museums and public collections. Museum funding is simply not sufficient to purchase works of art at current market prices. Consequently many corporate and private collections not only claim to be of the same quality as museum collections in terms of their holdings but are rapidly overtaking the traditional museums in quality and value of their art. With some private collectors, such as Saatchi, also owning independent



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galleries the museum now has come under severe pressure and has been forced into competition with private collections despite funding difficulties.

These trends have had substantial effects on the functioning and attitudes of the museum. Because art is seen as a marketable commodity in the world of business, and because the museum is also in competition with other forms of public consumption, the museum has had to adapt to a more consumer orientated market. The public museum has been forced into the market place, and was hit by a new 'managerial' agenda. With a growth in the areas of administration, marketing and fund raising, the museum could no longer simply consider itself to be solely the conservator, cataloguer, and purchaser of prime art works; it must compete in a powerful market place to improve its holdings. During the 1980s the purchasing power of the British museum was seriously behind that of its peers, with five hundred contemporary British art pieces being purchased, whereas in France there was seven thousand five hundred purchases, one thousand five hundred of which were British artists. To attain this required purchasing power, emphasis has had to be placed in attracting the public (elitist or not!), by promoting a greater awareness of what the museum has to offer.

The museum is no longer simply a cultural space desirable in and of itself, it must 'sell itself' in the market place in the face of severe competition for the public's attention. Thus, in 1988 the Victoria and Albert Museum London, began a rigorous advertising campaign. This campaign appears to have been aimed both at the traditional 'elite' middle classes and the 'sub elite' working classes. Thus, paintings were lent to Harrods, the traditional elitist London department store for promotion to its customers. Alongside, the renowned Saatchi and Saatchi Advertising Company were also engaged

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These trends have had substantial effects on the functioning and attitudes of the museum. Because art is seen as a marketable commodity in the world of business, and because the museum is also in competition with other forms of public consumption, the museum has had to adapt to a more consumer orientated market. The public museum has been forced into the market place, and was hit by a new 'managerial' agenda. With a growth in the stress of administration, marketing and fund raising, the museum could no longer simply consider itself to be solely the conservator, catalogue, and purchaser of prime art works, it must compete in a powerful market place to improve its holdings. During the 1980s the purchasing power of the British museum was seriously behind that of its peers, with five hundred contemporary British art pieces being purchased whereas in France there was seven thousand five hundred purchases, one thousand five hundred of which were British artists. To attain this required purchasing power, emphasis has had to be placed in attracting the public (either or not), by promoting a greater awareness of what the museum has to offer.

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to promote the museum to the general public. The advertising slogan 'an ace caff with quite a nice museum attached', would appear to have been aimed at the 'non-elite'. At last the non-elite had achieved open access to the museum, and indeed were seen highly desirable customers.

Museums began to take advantage of the marketability of art, and became composed of gift shops, bookstores, cafes as well as exhibition spaces. Art could be bought not only as prints but reproduced on t-shirts, postcards, etc. In short, the museum was now marketed as another consumer commodity. Time could now be spent eating, reading and socialising as well as contemplating art. A further development, probably inevitable, has been the blockbuster exhibitions which proved to be enormously popular and a great crowd puller. Museum facades were draped with big corporate sponsored billboards promoting the latest blockbuster show. They were also economically successful in that the participating museums would share in the running cost.

As well as the blockbuster show and new promotional tactics, the modern public museum has had to rely to an even greater extent on donations or gifts to the nation from private collectors, to boost their existing holdings as contemporary prices are well out of their reach. The public museum has always relied on the generosity of the collector indeed the Tate Gallery has benefited greatly from the donations of collectors in the past. In 1915, Sir Hugh Lane donated a collection of modern sculpture. While a gift of £50,000 by Samuel Courtland in 1924 enabled the gallery to increase its collection of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist works. In 1933, C. Frank Stoop, donated seventeen works by various artists including Matisse, Picasso, Cezanne, and Modigliani. These donations established a foundation

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for a comprehensive national collection of modern art.

The Collection of Modern Art at the Tate Gallery depends to a surprising degree, on the generosity of individuals who have given paintings and sculptures to the nation. Dedicated to the art they admired and willing to act on their convictions such patrons have enriched British cultural life by making their private passions part of the public domain. (Serota, quoted in Beudert, 1998, p.7)

The Tate has also been reliant on collector's gifts to increase its contemporary art collection. Between 1960 and 1996, E.Power donated thirty-one modern and contemporary works. The donation of fifty-nine, mainly British, contemporary sculptures by Lord Mc Alpine (1975), and nine works by British artists of the 1980s by Saatchi, have enlarged the Tate's collection so much that in the year 2000 a new 'Tate Gallery of Modern Art at Bankside' will be opened, which will hold the national collection of modern and contemporary art. The donation of sixty contemporary art works by Janet Wolfson de Botton in 1996 was also of great benefit to the Tate in its development of the new modern art gallery at Bankside. This donation arrived at a crucial point in its development, and Janet Wolfson de Botton allowed the Tate an almost free choice of works from her collection. This enabled the Tate to choose the works which they felt would most compliment the existing holdings. The 'Tate Gallery of British Art at Millbank' due to open in 2001 will contain the Tate's collection of British art from the sixteenth century to the present day.

In return the collectors and artists who donate their works also benefit greatly. The donators gain both in the prestige of having their collections associated with a national museum but also gain financially as the monetary value of their works is increased as a consequence as is their credibility and status as important and influential collectors.



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Thus the role of the museum has evolved dramatically in the course of the last century. The museums traditional role of cultural edification and education has transformed into a primarily economically-driven supplier of cultural or aesthetic diversion, competing with the other popular diversions of cinema, TV , music, etc..

In the late twentieth century economic activity has become the principle form of human expression. Cultural engagement is perceived as cultural consumption, and indeed culture is seen more and more as a commodity like any other. Sadly through the operation of the enterprise culture, the long front of culture has become a supermarket of styles, (Hewison, 1995, p.305.).



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## CHAPTER 2 : THE MYTH OF THE COLLECTOR

... there is in the life of a collector a dialectical tension between the poles of order and disorder... The most profound enchantment for the collector is the locking of individual items within a magical circle in which they are fixed as a final thrill, the thrill of acquisition passes over them, (Benjamin, quoted in Beudert, 1998, p.10).

The Oxford English Dictionary defines 'collections' as "a group of things collected or gathered together, e.g. literary items, specimens, works of art, or fashionable clothes", while a 'collectors item' is defined as "a thing of sufficient beauty, rarity, or interest to be placed in a collection". Being part of a prestigious collection clearly adds a unique mystique or value to an art work. But, if a collector's item is considered to be a thing of 'sufficient beauty' or 'rarity', does it therefore follow that a work of art belonging to a collection must also be considered an object of 'sufficient beauty'? With the breakdown of the hierarchical arbitration system of the nineteenth century as reviewed in chapter one, could it now be claimed that it is the collectors and their collections who inform the public taste and set a fashionable style?

More and more it seems to be the role of collectors and commercial galleries to take the lead in exposing up to the minute contemporary art. Museums are retrospective in nature and thus are taking second place to collectors and galleries in the arbitration of new tastes and appreciations for contemporary art. This would apparently follow on from the view that collectors are now being commended as having reputations for a 'good eye' in identifying artists and works with lasting aesthetic value. But, this view presupposes that the actual act of purchasing the work adds to its lasting aesthetic value. Wealthy private collectors and art dealers do have a direct influence over the formation of public taste, and they have greatly helped to

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launch the careers of many artists. As it is now a time when curators and critics are increasingly looking to dealers and collectors for guidance, we must be aware of the difficulty in separating the aesthetic value, or more appropriately today 'anti-aesthetic' value of an object from its economic value.

This implies that if artists' reputations have gained currency through their affiliations with a collector or dealer, then the off loading of their work by the collector, or the fall in its market value may seriously damage their careers, such was the case of Sandro Chia. In 1985 Charles Saatchi off loaded his bulk collection of Sandro Chia's work. Saatchi had invested heavily in the Italian painter, but when he decided to sell his Chia paintings other collectors became wary of investing in this artist's work, and therefore his market value fell steeply and hasn't recovered since. Saatchi explains himself simply by saying, "the market was overheated, and it was a good time to sell" (Quoted in Buck, 1997, p.128). The risk when art and the market come into such close contact is that the success of an artist's career may depend on market recessions and economic booms or even the financial or personal whim of the collector. Nonetheless art acquired by private collectors and dealers eventually makes its way into public territory in the exhibition spaces provided by private collectors and dealers in which they exhibit and promote the most up to date of contemporary art. As many public institutions are too under-funded, cautious in their response to contemporary art, or simply unable to house large scale works, thus a collector such as Charles Saatchi has been able to acquire a collection of contemporary British art which rivals the holdings of most other galleries in Britain. His gallery at St. John's Wood London, has become one of the centres in which contemporary British art is being presented to the wider audience. London dealer, Victoria Miro, describes Charles Saatchi as being, "[Charles is ] a commercial creature ... it



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does not detract from his passion of looking at art, but he is searching for a religious experience. He is more aware of the marketability of art. Other collectors want to hide that side of their activity," (Quoted in Bevan, 1997, p. 20).

Charles Saatchi is probably one of the greatest, single patrons to contemporary British art. A latter day Medici, he is to London what Medici was to quattrocento Florence. His collection, today of about one thousand five hundred works, is one of the largest private collections in the world. His continuing collection and support has been fundamental in raising the awareness of contemporary British art both in Britain and internationally. He is then an enormously powerful and influential collector. His influence as a taste maker is regarded by many as exceeding that of the critic or curator. "One of the few people displaying esthetic leadership is Charles Saatchi. It may be time for an entrepreneurial collector to really set the standard," (Walker, 1987, p. 120). Saatchi has been compared to many British collectors of the past, such as Samuel Courtauld, the Sainsburys, and Joseph Duveen. Although these collectors were admired for their taste, they were not seen as the sole arbiter of the art of an era. Saatchi is therefore unique in that his personal taste for the art of his day has formed a standard by which contemporary art practice has come to be judged.

Saatchi acquired his first piece of art, a Sol LeWitt drawing, in 1969, from his wife Doris. Initially during the early seventies his collection primarily consisted of American minimalist sculpture although he did start to collect works of contemporary American figurative artists such as Philip Guston, Eric Fischl, and Jennifer Bartlett, as well as European artists including Baselitz and Clemente. This happened at a time when his advertising company,

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Saatchi and Saatchi, jointly owned with his brother Maurice, dominated the advertising market, (e.g., share prices rose from 48p in 1972 to £14 in 1986). His rise to public prominence started in 1979, when he promoted Margaret Thatchers highly successful, 'Labour isn't Working' campaign; the company was subsequently and successfully employed for another three electoral campaigns by the Conservative government.

The collection grew rapidly in the late 1970s and early 1980s; indeed by 1985 the collection was large enough to compile a four volume catalogue titled 'Art of Our Time', and had expanded to new works by British sculptors such as Richard Deacon and Anish Kapoor. This rapid growth led to the founding of the Saatchi Gallery in St Johns Wood, London. Since it opened in 1985 many say the Saatchi gallery has gained the status of Britain's unofficial museum of contemporary art, and Saatchi has become the arbiter of the closest thing the British have to official taste. His gallery provided a new atmosphere in looking at contemporary art in Britain. With its 30,000 sq ft of exhibition space, it is a third the size of the newly expanded Museum of Modern Art New York. Its dazzling white walls, bounce lighting, and five separate gallery spaces devoted to a limited number of artists highly compliments the work being exhibited, unlike the cramped conditions and over crowding of many public galleries. With its large, uncramped exhibition space, Saatchi's gallery has been praised by many in the art world as a major asset to the art scene. The Tate curator, Richard Francis says, "it will make an enormous difference to London, and to the art public everywhere," (Quoted in Hawthorne, 1985, p. 74).

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LeWitts, and twenty-four Clementes. No museum collection could claim to possess as many individual pieces by any one single artist. During the early 1980s Saatchi began collecting in depth the fashionable contemporary American artists of the time such as Schnabel, Bickerton, and Koons, eventually owning twenty seven Schnabels. By 1985, Saatchi had acquired a very large collection - numbering more than five hundred paintings and sculptures, according to Waldemar Januszczak, the Saatchi's had assembled, "the largest and most impressive collection of contemporary art in Britain. Its holdings in the art of the 1970's and '80's make the Tate look silly,"(Quoted in Hawthorne, 1985, p. 72).

Arguably, the growing influence of the Saatchi Collection on the art world, and their singular devotion to artists such as Schnabel, may have prompted the Tate to hold an exhibition of eleven Schnabel paintings in 1982, nine of which had to actually be borrowed from Saatchi. Furthermore, the hope of the eventual donation of the Saatchi collection may have also stimulated the Tate to hold a Schnabel exhibition. Indeed the then Tate director Alan Bowness publicly acknowledged Saatchi influence in founding 'The Patrons of New Art', a new group whose first venture was the Schnabel exhibition, (Hawthorne, 1985,p. 80). Incidentally both the museum and curator were criticised on the grounds that they appeared to endorse Saatchi's collection and thereby increasing its monetary value.

In addition to his extensive collection and impressive gallery, during the 1980s Saatchi was also a member of the Patrons at the Tate Committee, as well as being a trustee for the publicly funded Whitechapel Gallery. His company Saatchi and Saatchi Advertising, one of the most powerful companies in the industry had many important British art institutions as

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clients, such as The Tate Gallery, The British Arts Council, The Royal Academy, The Victoria and Albert Museum and The Serpentine Gallery. An associate of Saatchi was quoted as saying that Charles Saatchi had an, "insatiable desire to own everything and dominate everything all the time," (Quoted in Hawthorne, 1985, p. 78). Were these simply his motivations in acquiring the immense collection which he holds today?

Many believe such dominance over the market to be a dangerous thing, and that such dominance could raise many ethical conflicts. When a powerful collector is also a renowned dealer, the ability to manipulate the market to one's own needs is much greater. Such players exert an influence over both the art market and public collections, "what collectors like the Saatchis do has a tremendous influence on what other people do, and also on the market," (Castelli quoted in Hawthorne, 1985, p.79). Saatchi tends to buy in bulk, cornering the market or establishing control. For example, in 1987, to mount his two part London show of New York art, Saatchi had to rapidly purchase as many as one hundred and fourteen works for the exhibition. Work by these artists - Koons, Bickerton, Steinbach, etc.- had never before been shown in Europe on such a scale. Giles Auty furthermore suggests that by buying artists in bulk Saatchi was doing little more than demonstrating a bottomless pocket. It is precisely his dominance over the market, and his refusal to discuss his collection in public which has created a high degree of cynical speculation surrounding him and his collection. "Should Charles Saatchi be taken seriously as a collector or is he merely a millionaire amusing himself at an expensive game?," (Auty, 1993, p.55).

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Ironically enough it is the art man himself who has become the greatest advertisement for contemporary art. His aggressive collecting of

young up and coming artists influences and guides other less decisive and less powerful collectors. Saatchi's 'seal of approval' helps to confirm to other collectors the importance of an artist's work. Saatchi's influence as a taste maker seems to have created a secondary group of collectors who follow Saatchi's every move. As Peter Nagy believes, "it makes sense that collectors who are insecure with their own tastes would link on to a few powerful collectors and dealers and stick to their tastes as a guiding principal," (Quoted in Walker, 1987, p. 118.).

The influence of collectors like Saatchi as taste makers can have both positive and negative effects on an artist's career. On the one hand the artist gains a higher profile and so their work reaches a wider audience; on the other hand, if the collector such as Saatchi decides to sell art work others may follow and if so this may harm the future of the artists career, as suggested above in the case of Chia.

Saatchi began to sell a great number of works from his collection at the end of the 1980s. His costly divorce from Doris, combined with the stock market crash, and a pruning of the collection in order for its growth to be self financing, forced Saatchi into this position. For example, in 1990, he privately sold one hundred pieces, many of them through the New York dealer Larry Gagosian. The eleven Sean Scullies which he bought for £250,000 were sold for a sum of £4 million; a further seventy works sold in 1991 realised £10 million. By 1992, he had sold two hundred works, bringing in £23 million against the £8 million he had invested. Ultimately by 1993, the collection had been reduced from eight hundred works in the late 1980s to four hundred works. By 1995, Saatchi and Saatchi was showing a loss of £64 million a year, whereas sales in art were gaining a profit of £2.5 million a year.

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Saatchi however claims he doesn't collect for profit, "90% of the art I buy will be worthless in ten years time to anyone but me. If I was buying art to make money I'd buy different art," (Quoted in Buck, 1997, p.128). None of his art dealings to date seem to concur with this statement.

As Saatchi was selling substantial quantities of his collection of 1970s and 1980s art, he began to take a great interest in younger, less well known and less expensive British artists. During the late 1980s and early 1990s a new entrepreneurial group of artists began to emerge on to the British art scene which attracted the attention of Saatchi and a few others such as Jay Jopling and Karsten Schubert. By visiting studio spaces, buying up entire shows and even commissioning their works, Saatchi was able to corner the market for these young British artists (yBa's). For example, in 1993 Saatchi paid a discounted price of £20,000 for Simon Callery's entire exhibition. These highly successful dealings in the art market to date have been viewed by many observers as an endorsement of Saatchi's aesthetic judgment, whereas it is precisely this aesthetic judgement which has come to define public taste in contemporary British art. Thus the parameters of the new yBa movement began to be defined in 1992 when Saatchi initiated the first of his four part show of 'Young British Artists' which culminated in the 1997 show: 'Sensation: Young British Artists from the Saatchi Collection' at the Royal Academy in London.

By 1997, his collection of work from the yBa's amounted to eight hundred and seventy-five pieces. He bought his first Hirst works, 'Medicine Cabinet', and '1000 Years' in 1990, and also commissioned Hirsts shark piece 'The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living'. As well as Hirst he began to acquire works from other artists such as Gary



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Hume, Mark Quinn, Racheal Whiteread, Sarah Lucas and Mark Wallinger. In this context, Wallinger has described Saatchi as "the perfect buyer, because inevitably within the work there is a critique of any kind of art as a radical presence ... it is supported and paid for by rich people with their own agendas and always has been," (Quoted in Mulholland, 1997, p.886). Jenny Saville is another young artist who has profited greatly from Saatchi's attention and devotion. She was spotted at her degree show from the Glasgow School of Art when Saatchi invited her to London to look at his gallery space. In effect, she began to work for Saatchi who provided her with studio space, materials and paid her a salary, in return for fifteen new canvases. This special attention devoted to Saville prevented other collectors from acquiring her work of this period, (unless of course Saatchi wished to sell) and also allowed Saatchi to acquire work without the need of a private dealer. According to an 'insider', "Charles made the arrangement because he adores her work, but he was anxious to prevent her from signing with the wrong gallery," (Quoted in Bevan, 1997, p. 211).

These developments have profoundly influenced the progress and interest in British art. This phenomenon surrounding the yBa's has led to a boom in British art while contemporary art and particularly the London art scene has become hip, trendy and fashionable, attracting a growing interest amongst the public in contemporary art. There is a mythology surrounding the yBa's as cool, knowing, entrepreneurs. They have been praised for professionalism, enterprise, and slick marketing. As John Harlow (Sunday Times, 17 December 1995), states, "they are all Margaret Thatcher's children, deeply motivated, multi skilled risk takers," (Ford, 1996, p.6).

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imprimaturs which has greatly helped the yBa's to attain such a prominent and saleable position in the contemporary art scene. With Saatchi's help the yBa's acquired publicity, interest amongst critics, media and investors, and maybe an easier access to the international art market.

Whether or not we agree with Saatchi's methods and motivations, there is no denying that he has benefited the contemporary art world. In December 1988, he opened a new company, M&C Saatchi Arts, targeting the arts and arts organisations. He considers this development to be the beginning of a new era of arts promotion. Maybe the commonly expressed scepticism surrounding Saatchi is a result of fear, a fear of the new. Rather, critics should begin to look on his methods as simply a new approach to the art market, an approach which up to now seems to be doing more good than harm to contemporary art practice. As Martin Maloney points out, when asked if New Neurotic Realism (NNR) really exists,

No not really: but then just about everything is marketed with a label these days. People just don't like to see it done with art because it denies the whole Romantic thing. But 'marketing' is just shorthand for 'movement' and 'product' is just shorthand for work, (Quoted in Darwent, 1998).

Now that the yBa's have ceased to be rebels, and have become slaves to capitalism and the establishment, the art world is asking - what's next? It is ironic that yet again, it is Saatchi who has brought the next big thing into the public arena - The New Neurotic Realists - consisting of thirty artists, some of whom exhibited in the 'Sensation' show, such as Martin Maloney and Ron Mueck, and many other lesser known artists. Like the 'Freeze' generation before, the majority of artists exhibiting in the Saatchi Gallery are young London-based artists, which seems to be one of the few things that they have got in common.



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Saatchi began to take an interest in the NNR's five years ago, and since then has compiled an exhibition and catalogue of thirty artists, (the first of the Saatchi NNR shows started in January 1999). As Saatchi's interest in this new group of artists is growing, it seems that the yBa's are beginning to fade from view. The Christie's auction of October 1998 witnessed the beginnings of the decline of the yBa's, with Hirst's, 'Alone Yet Together' 1993, and 'Loss Of Memory Is Worse Than Death' 1994, remaining unsold. As a result of poor performances of the yBa's on the secondary market, and the emergence of the NNR as the next contemporary British art 'movement', discussions around Saatchi and his influence are brewing up again. Critics and cynics of Saatchi are having a field day.

Finding new movements is the art world equivalent of coming up with a new scam for turning lead into gold. They make history. They launch careers. They result in exhibitions, discussion, purchases. They give the art world something to talk about, and to be on the lookout for. Everyone wants to be the discoverer of a new movement, which is why everyone else is so suspicious of those who claim to have done so,"(Januszczak,1999,p.32).

For some, NNR seems to be confirming all their suspicions about Saatchi and the fickle nature of his collections. They see NNR as an imaginative movement created entirely by Saatchi, produced in a book (fig. 1), in order to stay one step ahead of the rest. Up till now this approach seems to have worked for him, but with this new movement it is felt that he has made a great mistake. Only time will tell, but it is not so surprising that Saatchi's collection has taken another new direction. Whether we like it or not, the art world has become like the fashion world, continuously changing in style, with new trends emerging as old ones become established and tiresome. Possibly, the continuing progress of art is dependent on the 'market approach' in the value systems obtaining at the end of the twentieth century.

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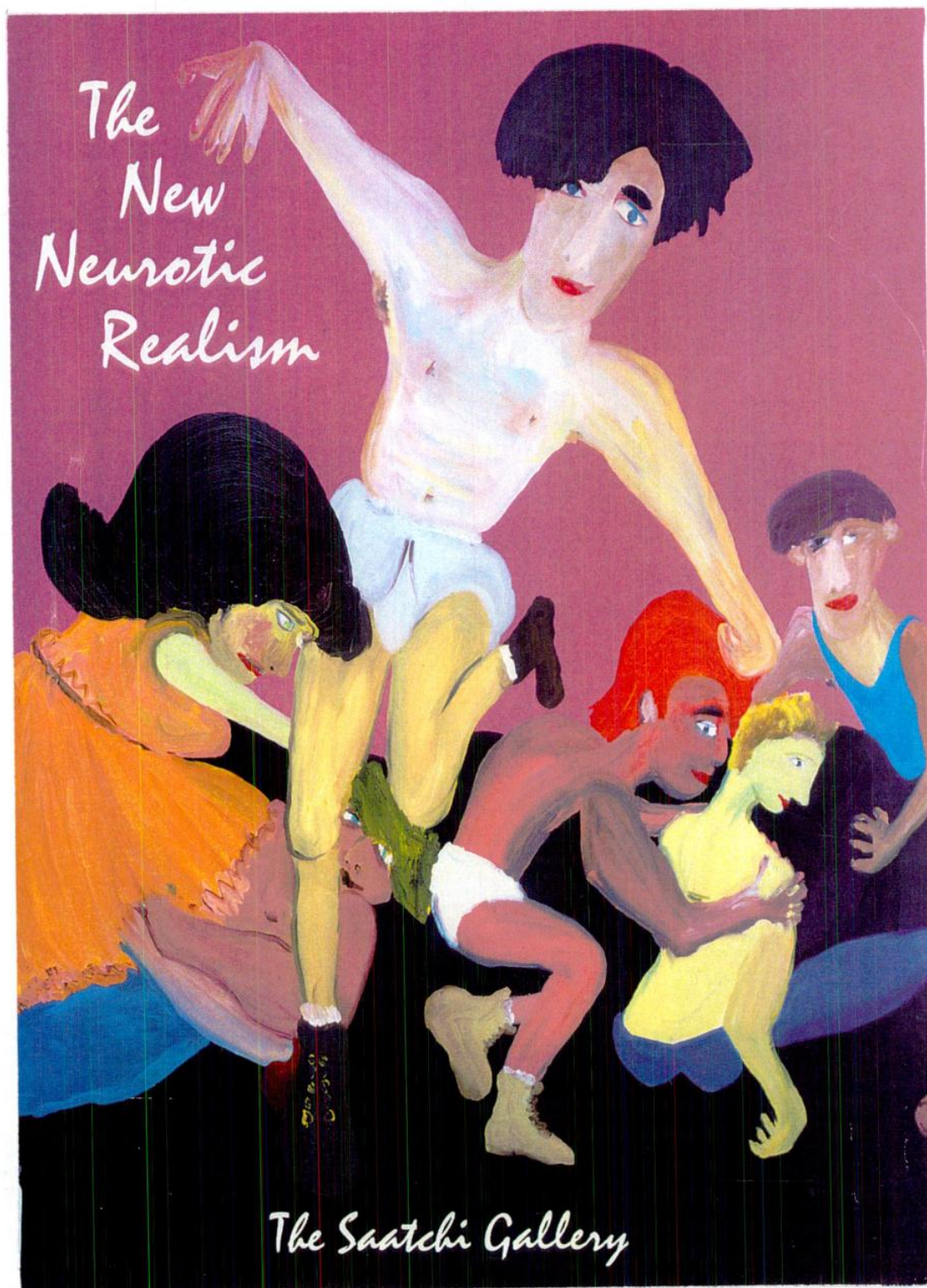


Figure 1: New Neurotic Realism Catalogue



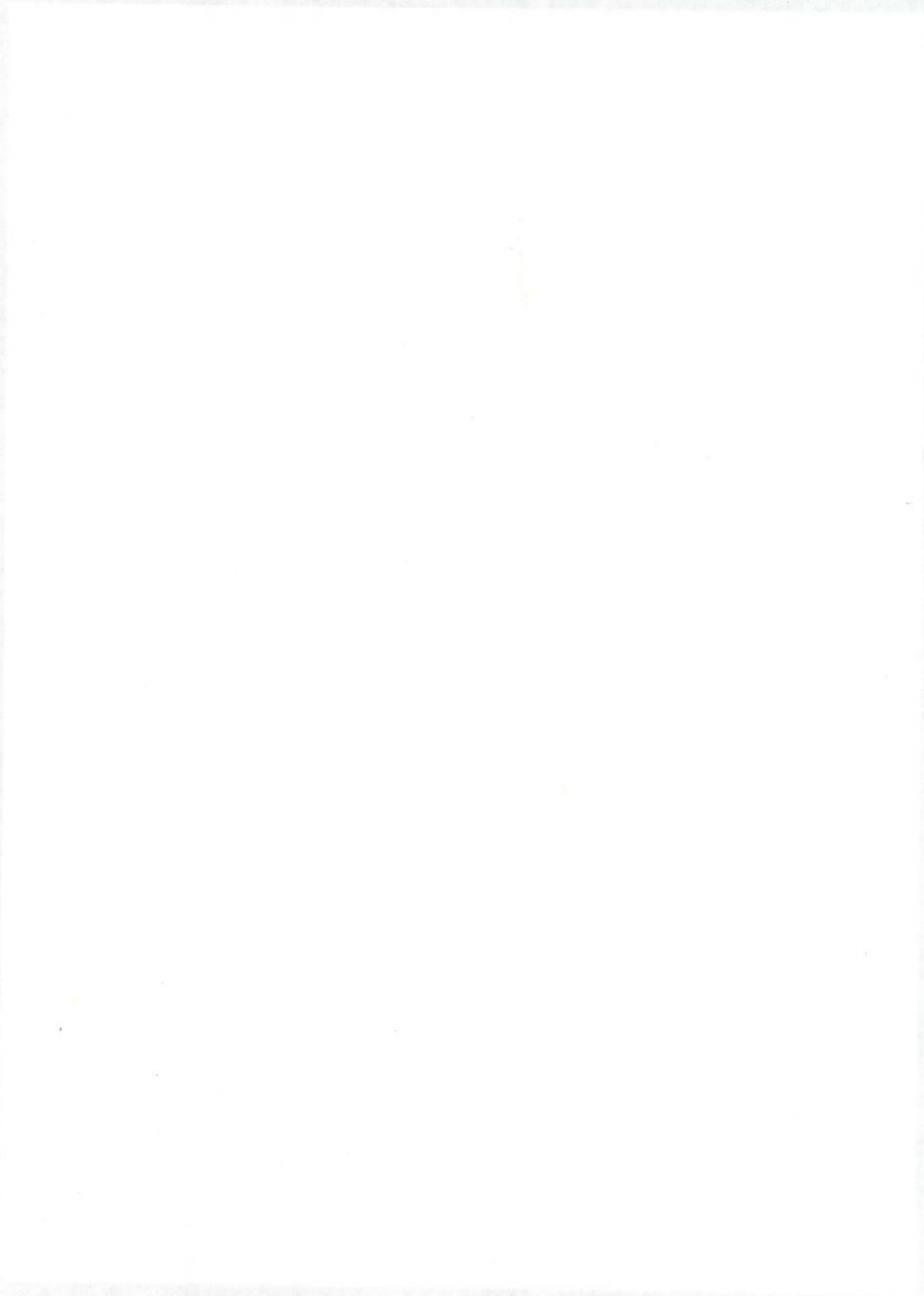


Figure 1: New Neurotic Realism Catalogue

### CHAPTER 3 "SENSATION"

A whole mythology has grown up around the phenomenon of the yBa's. In order to understand this phenomenon we must look at the infrastructure surrounding these artists. The artists have worked hard to get their work noticed in the art world. We must understand though that there have been many institutions, and individuals, who have supported them along the way. Their help has brought the yBa's to the forefront of contemporary art, and could this new group be as successful and influential without them? The schools, patrons, dealers, critics, and curators must all be recognised for their part in making the movement what it is today.

The origins of this phenomenon is identified Damien Hirst's show of 1988 - 'Freeze'. Hirst selected, curated, and installed an exhibition in an old warehouse in the London Docklands, of fellow art students from Goldsmiths. It enjoyed both critical and financial success, with many of the artists acquiring gallery deals - one painter was approached by a New York dealer, while Hirst and two others were taken on by London dealers. 'Freeze' is now regarded as the clinching moment in the birth of this new young fashionable group of artists, and occupies a place within the history of recent British art. "What ever happens next these artists can no more be written out of art-history books," (Rosenthal quoted in R.A., 1997, p.8). Hirst and his fellow college friends have worked hard to mobilise the gallery system, marketing system, press and public relations to make it all come together for them. The entrepreneurialism, slick marketing tactics, and general professionalism of the yBa's has impressed many critics and dealers from an early stage and commanded attention from the British and indeed the international art scene.

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The yBa's made a name for themselves at a time when London and Britain were rising again after two decades of decline. A whole new 'Cool Britannia' image has arisen not only in the art field but also in music, fashion, film and other forms of public culture. Britain embraced this new ambitious generation and indeed promoted them as being the new face of Britain.

"London is swinging again. Britain is at the cutting edge of contemporary art worldwide,"(Quoted in Ford, 1996, p.6). It is precisely this image that Britain is trying to promote in order to place London back on the map as a cultural and financial centre. As Hewison points out, " 'culture' has become another name for advertising", (Hewison, 1995, p. 304). London needs to reassert its claim as a cultural capital in order to remain a major financial centre. If this is so one could ask, are the yBa's and other sectors of the British culture industry, being promoted abroad as defining an image of a new modern, entrepreneurial, opportunistic, and confident British generation? We could say that the whole yBa and 'Cool Britannia' phenomena are one, not so much about art and culture, but about a nation which is struggling to become contemporary under the historical baggage of British heritage. The State needs the yBa's, they are seen as cultural ambassadors, defining and representing British culture abroad. Many promoters of the yBa's argue that London is now the centre for the practice and presentation of contemporary art world wide, over New York, Paris, and Dusseldorf. Indeed Norman Rosenthal, Exhibitions Secretary at the Royal Academy, believes that British art is now more influential and more talked about than the art of any other country. Can we therefore say that it is the increased publicity and promotion of British culture and Saatchi's patronage, as well as the art itself, which has bought the yBa's to such a prominent position within the contemporary art world and also influenced public taste?



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The yBa's have used the mass media and popular culture industries as means of self promotion, redefining the image of art as being elitist and isolated from mainstream culture. Incorporating material from everyday culture was seen as a means of escaping from the notion of high art. As a group of artists they actively courted the sensationalism of the mass media and tabloid presses. 'Sensationalism' is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as the, "use or exploitation of sensational material or style in journalism, political activism, the arts etc., to stimulate public interest or excitement". It is precisely the sensationalism of their work and media coverage which has given the yBa's and their art access into a public space which has traditionally been excluded from the socially confined art world.

Damien Hirst, one of the ring leaders of the yBa gang, notorious for his dissected animal sculptures (fig. 2), is rarely out of the public eye and as a result his works may now have been elevated to iconic stature. Cosmo Landesman (Sunday Times, 3 December 1995) believes, "Hirst's greatest creation of his career so far has been a walking talking installation that goes by the name of Damien Hirst", (Quoted in Ford, 1996, p.8). He enjoys the recognition he receives from the tabloid presses. He likes being recognised as, "the dirty trainers geezer, who sells dirty trainers and underpants for 10,000 quid". Yet a problem that Hirst admits to is that the media attention and commercial hype could override the work as an artistic piece. Art work may be corrupted by media hype. The value of the work may now be based solely on the visibility and recognition of the artists names. "It is really difficult to separate money and glamour out from the art world and to really work out what really good art is" , (Hirst quoted in Wilson, 1994, p.9). Only time will tell if Hirst's work will still command attention after the present yBa phenomenon is well gone; yet it is quite clear that his flirtation with the media has gained him

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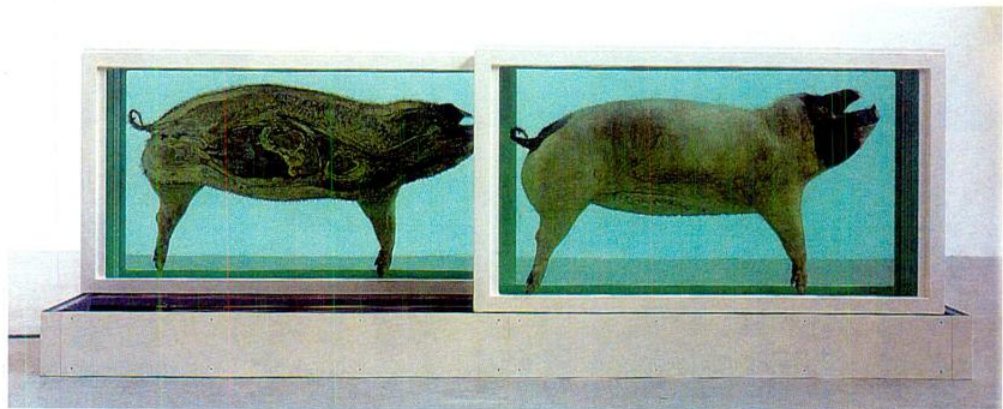
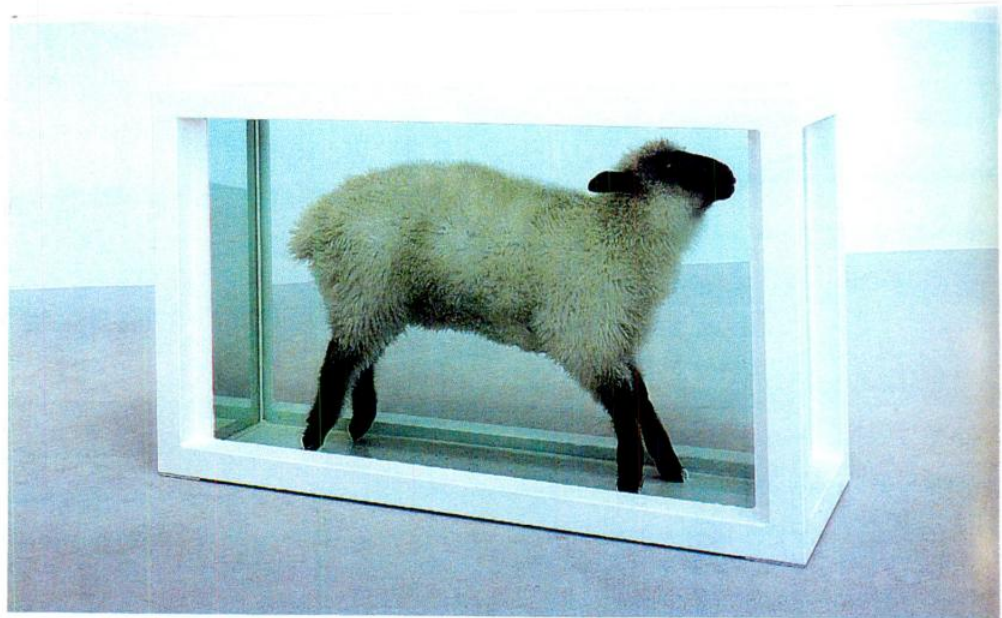


Figure 2 (a) Away from the flock: 1994, Damien Hirst.

(b) This little piggy went to the market, this little piggy stayed at home.

1996, Damien Hirst.



Figure 2 (a) Away from the flock, 1994, Damien Hirst.  
(b) This little piggy went to the market, this little piggy stayed at home.  
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and his work a wider audience.

The hype surrounding the yBa's culminated in a show held at the Royal Academy London, Autumn 1997 virtually a decade after 'Freeze' it succeeded in establishing the yBa generation safely within the confines of the museum, transforming them from being the 'alternative' to being the 'establishment'. The 'Sensation' show was described in the gallery guide as, "an attempt to define a generation and to present Charles Saatchi's singular vision in an established public forum," (Quoted in Tomas, 1998, p 32).

Norman Rosenthal, Exhibitions Secretary at the Royal Academy, curated the show yet it was Saatchi who collected and selected the works: essentially it was his exhibition from beginning to end. The Royal Academy came about acquiring the collection for exhibition through a last minute gap in the exhibition calendar. This slot had originally been assigned to the blockbuster show 'The Age of Modernism - Art in the 20th century'. This summer show, conceived by Rosenthal, was to continue on from the Gropius Bau, Berlin, to the Royal Academy, London, and finally end up at the Guggenheim, New York. Its cancellation meant that the Royal Academy had to devise a new and equally attractive show at short notice. What better way to do this than borrowing an already existing collection, and who better to borrow from than Saatchi - the man with the largest and most sensational private collection of contemporary British art.

Prevalent summer exhibitions in the Royal Academy have represented the last of the Salon-going public. They have consisted of landscape and still life paintings. By now these shows are considered, by the high cultured end of society, as the refuses, whereas 'Sensation' and the yBa's are the closest



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thing they have to official taste. The Royal Academy has often been accused of being suppressed under its two hundred year history.

Some will say that the media blitz surrounding 'Sensation', the R.A. anthology of recent British art, all of it from the collection of the advertising mogul Charles Saatchi, is nothing more than a case of the Academy trying to keep from sinking beneath the weight of its own two-hundred-year-plus history, (Perl, 1997, p.53).

The 'Sensation' show can be seen as a chance to update and modernise the Royal Academy, as it has been fading in grandeur over the past hundred years. A chance to place British art and the Royal Academy back in the history books.

An interesting point here is the illustration on the cover of the 'Sensation' catalogue (fig. 3). It has been described by Jed Perl, as a black and white negative photograph by W.P Frith's, 'Private View at the Royal Academy 1881'. It is a double page spread on the inside cover, depicting a well mannered and orderly Victorian public. On the front cover is an image of a large pink tongue which could be seen as wiping away the well mannered Victorian audience, (Perl, 1997, p.53). The catalogue cover could be symbolic of the modernising tendencies of Rosenthal, out with the old in with the new. With Damien Hirst's cows, fishes, sharks and flies situated in a room normally devoted to bronze figurines, the show became a bizarre combination of trendy exhibitors in a traditional space. Ironically it could be said that it is this precise image of the Royal Academy being stuffy and dated that helped give 'Sensation' its youthful appearance and success.

The publicity campaign began weeks before the opening with a debate over whether or not Marcus Harvey's 'Myra Hindley' (fig. 4) painting should be included. His depiction of the famous Yorkshire Moors murderess painted

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own two-hundred-year-plus history (Peh, 1997, p. 53). Some will say that the media blitz surrounding 'Sensation', the R.A. anthology of recent British art, all of it from the collection of the advising mogul Charles Saatchi, is nothing more than a case of the Academy trying to keep from sinking beneath the weight of its of being suppressed under its two hundred year history?

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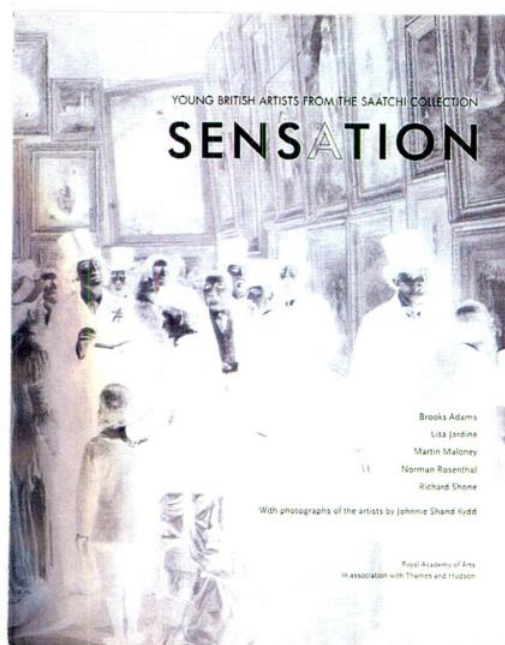
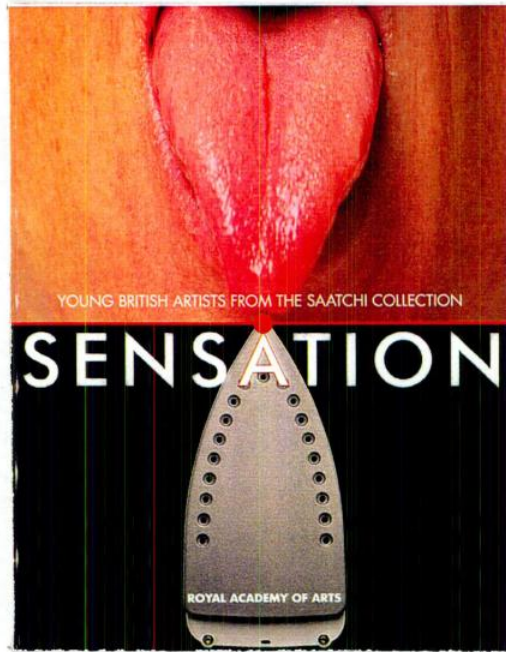


Figure 3: Sensation Catalogue.



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Figure 4: Myra Hindley, 1995, Marcus Harvey.





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from a mould of a child's hand, caused much scandal and disturbance within the Royal Academy and amongst the wider public audience. Within the Academy itself a few Academicians resigned from their membership refusing to be stooges of Rosenthal and of Charles Saatchi (Sandle, quoted in Perl, 1997, p.53), while others were quite determined in their intent to exhibit art of which they do not necessarily approve. Sir Philip Dowson, president of the Royal Academy states that, "it is our obligation to show art of all kinds", (Quoted in Perl, 1997, p.53). As a result of much hostile media coverage over the inclusion of this piece, Harvey's painting was vandalised on the opening day, pelted with ink and egg yolks. But as an art student visiting the show amusingly pointed out, its, "quite good now though, she looks like she has been punched and has a bloody face", (Quoted in Tomas, 1998, p.32). The Royal Academy knew in advance that the 'Myra Hindley' painting was going to cause much outrage amongst the public, yet they allowed its inclusion in the show. Was the publicity gained through Harvey's painting great enough to consider its inclusion even though it offended public taste? Did this art work simply become part of the political economy of the exhibition?

By the end of the exhibition the 'Sensation' show had become more of a media circus of controversy and scandal, than an art experience. With many different groups gaining different advantages from the staging of the exhibition, it became hard to define essentially what it was, yet it can definitely be described as an historical moment in contemporary British art. As Rosenthal himself points out in his essay, 'The Blood Must Continue to Flow', these artists can no longer be written out of the art history books.

Like previous Rosenthal Blockbusters such as 'A New Spirit In Painting' in the 1980s the 'Sensation' show proved to be an excellent vehicle

Painting' in the 1880s the 'Sensation' show proved to be an excellent vehicle. Like previous Rosenthal Blockbusters such as *A New Spirit in Art* these artists can no longer be written out of the art history books. Rosenthal himself points out in his essay, 'The Blood Must Continue to Flow', be described as an historical moment in contemporary British art. As exhibition, it became hard to define essentially what it was, yet it can definitely different groups gaining different advantages from the staging of the a media circus of controversy and scandal than an art experience. With many By the end of the exhibition the 'Sensation' show had become more of simply become part of the political economy of the exhibition?

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for the Royal Academy, to get its name back on the map as a major museum of art. The controversy and scandal surrounding the show attracted the audiences, which was hoped to help clear their £2 million debt. For Saatchi, it exhibited his collection to a wider audience. It helped confirm his position as the greatest single patron of the yBa movement, a movement whose parameters he helped to label and define. The exhibiting of his work in the Royal Academy added prestige to his collection and secured even more its monetary value. For the artist exhibiting, to be in a Saatchi collection and chosen to be exhibited in the Royal Academy greatly helped their position in the art world and market. It was Saatchi's help in forming the yBa movement which was essential in establishing the reputations as artists. 'Sensation' proved to be one of the first major surveys of the yBa's held in a national institution. It is now safe to say that their inclusion as young, relatively inexperienced artists in the Saatchi collection, has greatly assisted their careers as artists in becoming as successful as many of them have become today.

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## CONCLUSION

Being good in business is the most fascinating kind of art  
Andy Warhol

Traditionally the aesthetic values of art have been appropriated by elitist views and preferences. Today the task of evaluating both the aesthetic and monetary value of art is more difficult to define. When the art object enters the realm of the business world to the such a degree as it has today, we can conclude that the market value of the art object has an increasing influence over the aesthetic value of that piece.

With the commodification of the art object came a new generation of business men and corporations who began collecting art as a form of investment as the market value of an art piece is more often than not guaranteed to increase over time. It is precisely these wealthy collectors who have shaped the art world to their own advantages and in turn have a significant impact on public taste in art.

'Collectors are selfish heros' ... in pursuit of their own private passions, the money they spend and the work they acquire are linked in a virtuoso on-going process - bravely taking decisions for personal gratification, whose outcome is a 'tradition' however bizarrely shaped, (Jardine, Quoted in RA, 1997, p.46).

As the prices of established artists, such as Monet, Van Gogh, Picasso. etc., are well out of reach of the majority of collectors and dealers. The commercial market and its players began to take advantage of less established and therefore less expensive artists, as is the case of the yBa's and NNR's. Both of these 'movements' came to the fore in the contemporary art world through Charles Saatchi's imprimaturs. Using his influence as a



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powerful, and in many ways, controversial collector, Saatchi has been able to guarantee and increase the exposure of these young artists within the contemporary art scene, thus increasing his investment and the credibility of his collection. As a result of the staging of the 'Sensation' show, Charles Saatchi has been an integral part of the yBa phenomenon, which has now also become part of recent art history.

Along with Charles Saatchi's blessing the exposure of the yBa phenomenon can be linked to the increasing exposure and promotion of British culture in general. New British art, as well as other areas of cultural activity such as the music and fashion industries, has greatly benefited from exposure gained through the rejuvenated interest in contemporary culture. The 'Sensation' generations use of shock tactics and their flirtation with the tabloid presses have become an important means in which their art and contemporary art in general communicated with its audience.

The contrast between the yBa's and NNR's work couldn't be more apparent, while the yBa's had been about shock tactics, entrepreneurialism and laddishness, the NNR's on the other hand are concerned with the playfulness and deliberate amateurism of their art. Again it has been Charles Saatchi who has promoted the NNR's as the next big 'movement', while also beginning to dismantle his yBa collection. It has barely been a decade since Saatchi first took an interest in the yBa's and already he is beginning to lose interest for new group of artists who seem to be the complete opposite both in style and attitude.

What impact can Saatchi's change of interest have on the artists involved? Or is this development inevitable when an artist settles for and

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What impact can Satchi's change of interest have on the artists involved? Or is this development inevitable when an artist settles for and



embraces their fifteen minutes of fame. Yet it seems when the contemporary art scene is so wound up with the business of fashion and money that these developments are indeed inevitable and increasingly difficult to avoid. More and more it seems the art world is succumbing to the whims of the powerful collector. When Charles Saatchi was asked by Waldemar Januszczak why he had gone to so much effort to define and label his new movement (New Neurotic Realism) when Britain was still coming to terms with his earlier tastes for the yBa's, he replied with a resigned sigh,

Well, what else am I going to do?

(Januszczak, 1999, p.36).

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