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ART ON INSTAGRAM: THE IMPACT OF ART-RELATED
CONTENT ON FOLLOWERS' AND ARTISTS' SELF-
PERCEPTION OF CREATIVITY

Dissertation submitted to Universidade Católica
Portuguesa to obtain a Master's Degree in
Communication, Marketing & Advertising

By

Francisca Seabra

Universidade Católica Portuguesa

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ABSTRACT

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Author: Francisca Seabra

Because Instagram is such a visually oriented social media platform, it is vital to understand the influence that it may have on its users' perceptions of their own creative abilities and potential. In part because of its scale, many artists now consider that their presence on the platform is mandatory; yet, the network has also offered art enthusiasts an unparalleled opportunity to get closer to these artists and their work. The purpose of this dissertation is to investigate the impact of art-related accounts on Instagram on artists and other followers who are not professional artists, especially in terms of their creativity. During the research, semi-structured interviews with artists who use Instagram were conducted, as well as focus groups with individuals who follow art-related accounts on the social media platform. The findings revealed that both artists and the followers agree that consuming art-related content on Instagram has significant potential to aid in the creative and inspirational process. While the artists and non-artist followers' motivations differ in a few ways, which are primarily related to artists' views of the platform as a tool for promoting and improving their work, and followers' views of the platform as a source of entertainment or distraction, they also share some motivations for following art-related content. The results also concluded that there were possible negative consequences on creativity, such as comparison and anxiety, that eventually discouraged artists, even while many were able to get creative inspiration on Instagram.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 - INTRODUCTION.....	8
1.1 BACKGROUND.....	8
1.2 MOTIVATION AND PURPOSE.....	10
1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION	11
1.4 DISSERTATION OUTLINE	11
2 - LITERATURE REVIEW	12
2.1 WEB 2.0 AND SOCIAL MEDIA	12
2.1.1 WEB 2.0.....	12
2.1.2 DEFINITION OF SOCIAL MEDIA.....	14
2.1.3 SOCIAL NETWORKS AS ONLINE COMMUNITIES.....	16
2.1.4 MOTIVATIONS FOR USING SOCIAL MEDIA	17
2.1.5 EFFECTS OF USING SOCIAL MEDIA.....	20
2.1.6 SOCIAL MEDIA IN PORTUGAL	22
2.1.7 THE EMERGENCE OF INSTAGRAM	23
2.2 ART AND SOCIAL MEDIA.....	25
2.2.1 ART IN THE AGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA	25
2.2.2 THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON ART	28
2.2.3 ART ON INSTAGRAM	32
2.2.4 PARTICIPATORY CULTURE ON INSTAGRAM.....	36
2.2.5 PERCEPTION IN ART	38
2.3 CREATIVITY	41
2.3.1 DEFINITION OF CREATIVITY	41
2.3.2 THE SOURCE OF CREATIVITY	45
2.3.3 CREATIVITY AND ART	48
2.3.4 MEASURING CREATIVITY	51
2.3.5 CREATIVITY AND SOCIAL MEDIA	56
3 – METHODOLOGY.....	60
3.1 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHIES	60
3.2 EPISTEMOLOGY	61
3.3 SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM	61
3.4 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH	62
3.5 METHODOLOGY.....	63

3.6 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES	64
3.7 SAMPLE	65
3.8 DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES	66
4 – FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION	68
4.1 FINDINGS	68
4.1 DISCUSSION	80
5 - CONCLUSION	89
5.1 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS	90
APPENDICES	92
APPENDIX A: INTERVIEWS SCRIPT	92
APPENDIX B: INSPIRATION SCALE.....	94
REFERENCES.....	95

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1- The Ideation Process by Lingen (2017)..... 47

1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Social media plays a part in developing personal knowledge and personal creativity (Chai & Fan, 2017). But to what degree does this impact manifest itself? And can it be exclusively credited to a specific ability or the personality attributes of the creator? Are there other elements equally essential to this process? To many in the arts, the maximum degree of creative development is essentially a combined human response, including all aspects of a person's repertoire (Sternberg, 1988). However, according to Budge (2013), visual stimulation benefits artists by stimulating creative ideas and inspiration.

Given the proliferation of creative results within online communities and social networking sites, social media have taken a turn toward creative production (Greenhow et al., 2009; Barnes, 2006, as cited in Pepler & Solomou, 2011). Creativity is frequently a process on social media based on complex social dynamic behavior that includes both innovation and entrepreneurship (Ratten, 2017).

Digital technology has also been instrumental in expanding the bounds of art (Thomson et al., 2013), and social media has altered audience expectations by increasing cognitive interpretation and enhancing physical and emotional responses to artistic activities (Walmsley, 2016). It has also redefined the perception of art itself (Thomson et al., 2013) and the creation and curation of art (Sokolowsky, 2017). According to this point of view, while social media creates a free marketplace of ideas for anybody who has access to the Internet, it also allows anyone with fresh ideas to offer them at little or no cost, as well as access to others' ideas (Acar et al., 2019). Thus, anybody may view, share, and draw inspiration from the opinions of others; and then change them and share their version (Piller et al., 2012).

Amabile (1998) emphasized that a product or concept is innovative only to the degree that professional observers agree. However, creativity is something that everyone can recognize and usually agree on (Barron, 1965, cited by Sternberg, 1988), and the Internet provides access to an infinite number of online galleries. Nowadays, with a simple Google search, it is possible to instantly discover art from anonymous

artists to renowned masterpieces, providing an extraordinary amount of visual information from which we can draw inspiration (Runco, 2014).

Miller et al. (2016) stated that “it is the content rather than the platform that is most significant when it comes to why social media matters”, but Instagram offers opportunity, incentive, encouragement, legitimacy, and most importantly, an audience (Hicks, 2019). Indeed, Instagram has evolved to become one of the world’s most popular social media platforms since its launch in 2010 (Suess, 2020), with significant quantities of content published daily due to the platform’s ability to engage more people with art (Bremers, 2020). As emphasized by Pepler and Solomou (2011), as more of our world moves online, social media platforms serve as a focal point for scattered groups to communicate innovative ideas.

Martindale (1999) found that people seem to prioritize and pay attention to message rather than form when faced with a piece of art. As a result, meaning is often identified as the primary determinant of aesthetic enjoyment (Runco, 2014). However, could that conflict serve as a source of inspiration for creativity, manifesting as creative endeavors?

Viewers must understand artwork by linking it to themselves to feel inspired. Pelowski and colleagues support this view, arguing that self-related analysis during art admiration entails acknowledging the concept portrayed in the artwork and integrating their expectations for viewing art (Pelowski & Akiba, 2011; Pelowski et al., 2016; Pelowski et al., 2017). Consequently, spectators seeking inspiration to become more creative direct their attention to the artist’s creative process or successes (Pelowski & Akiba, 2011; Pelowski et al., 2016; Pelowski et al., 2017). However, viewers who are just interested in the aesthetics of a piece of art may be uninspired to create and may even harbor animosity against the creator (Ishiguro & Okada, 2020).

Over the past several decades, various theorists and researchers have attempted to understand the roots of individual creativity and invention (Adams, 2006). While these efforts have aided in expanding our knowledge of the subject, there remains a disconnect between theories and unverified assumptions (Adams, 2006). A portion of the difficulty stems from the expansive, complicated, and varied nature and definition of creativity itself, which may manifest in various ways and a variety of situations (Adams, 2006). Some recent studies have proven that inspiration from viewing art may

result in a range of creative outcomes, including motivation, ideas, and products (An & Youn, 2019; Ishiguro & Okada, 2018; Okada & Ishibashi, 2017). Various studies have also been undertaken to ascertain which qualities of artwork impact the aesthetic experience and which factors seem to contribute significantly to their being deemed aesthetically pleasing (Williams et al., 2020). However, it has been proposed that to understand the aesthetic experience of art better, studies should focus on the artist's motivations, choices, and actions (Dutton, 2009; Tinio, 2013; Williams et al., 2018).

The art experience on social media has evolved significantly, and it is vital to understand the kind of artworks that elicit participation (Kang & Chen, 2019). However, the relationship between artworks and social media engagement is a relatively new area of research, with few publications, especially for appraising visual artworks (Kang & Chen, 2019). According to certain research, one specific impact of social media use is related to human creativity. However, there are still doubts concerning how social media usage affects creativity and whether it aids or hinders creative thinking (Acar et al., 2019).

1.2 MOTIVATION AND PURPOSE

Regarding the purpose of this dissertation, the motivation for this research derives from my personal experience with Instagram art pages. I used to recreate some of the artwork I discovered on the platform during the pandemic, which made me feel tremendously creative at the time. However, upon reflection, I wondered if this stimulation was indeed increasing my creativity or whether it was having the opposite impact. After establishing that this was a relatively minor issue in my life, given that I am not a professional artist, but might have a significant impact on artists and professionals that work in the field, I recognized that this was a very relevant topic. If there is a potential that the art I consume on Instagram may influence me and my creativity, what impact will this have on professional artists and creative professionals?

Additionally, when I asked several individuals who worked in the art field and even artists about this subject, I discovered it was not well-discussed. Still, it was incredibly pertinent, considering the prominence of social media in our lives today. Hence, this research aims to raise awareness about the connection between art-related Instagram accounts and creativity and how its followers and artists perceive these pages'

impact on their creative processes. Additionally, this study intends to supplement previous work and to propose areas for future investigation.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION

To better understand the impact of art Instagram accounts on their followers, this research used a qualitative approach to ascertain how these social media accounts may affect their followers' self-perceptions of creativity. It is also vital to emphasize the exploratory character of this thesis. Given the lack of research on the issue, this research intends to provide descriptive information and a better understanding of the subject. To achieve this goal, the following research question is put forward: How does the consumption of art-related content on Instagram influence followers' and artists' self-perceptions of creativity?

1.4 DISSERTATION OUTLINE

In terms of the dissertation outline, the first chapter provides an overview of the issue, including the background, motivations, objectives, scope of the study, and research method. The second chapter presents a comprehensive literature review of concepts such as Web 2.0 and Social Media, as well as the link between Art and Social Media and, finally, Creativity. The third chapter establishes the methodology used in this study to acquire the data necessary to answer the research question. The fourth chapter evaluates the primary data, summarizes the major findings, and presents a preliminary analysis to ascertain the data's trustworthiness and applicability, followed by an in-depth examination. The final chapter summarizes the study's primary findings, as well as its limitations and suggestions for future research based on this subject.

2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 WEB 2.0 AND SOCIAL MEDIA

2.1.1 WEB 2.0

Since its invention in 1989 by Tim-Berners Lee, the Web has quickly grown and evolved into three distinct phases: Web 1.0, 2.0, and 3.0. Because Web 1.0 is all about one-way information, and Web 2.0 is a two-way communication paradigm, the shift from one to the other was a major step (Badiger et al., 2018). During this period, the advent of different social media sites such as Blogger, Twitter, and Facebook changed how content was shared and collaborated among many users (Badiger et al., 2018). Web 2.0, a term used to describe the second generation of online communities and services, centered on social networking and information technology (França et al., 2021), has enabled participatory, collaborative, and distributed behaviors in both formal and informal realms (Kujur & Chhetri, 2015). For Downes (2021), this new generation of “digital natives” appreciates learning, work, and leisure in a particular form. Moreover, their varied communication styles and ease of use of the Web have created new formal and informal learning opportunities (Coutinho & Bottentuit Junior, 2009).

According to O’Reilly (2005), Web 2.0 applications are those that can take full advantage of the inherent benefits of the platform: delivering software as a constantly updated and better service as people use it more. In addition, while providing its services, Web 2.0 uses data from several sources in a form that allows remixing and connecting by others, creating network effects through “participatory architecture”, but also an extremely flexible one (O’Reilly, 2005). According to Simão (2006), one of the main features of Web 2.0 is that users, who formerly had passive roles, can now easily make content. However, Jenkins (2010) distinguished between participatory cultures and Web 2.0, which the author referred to as a combination of commercial activities that aim to capture and exploit the creative energy and collective intelligence of its users.

As this platform facilitates the global collaboration of ideas, it is possible to participate in this technological explosion of production and creativity (Han, 2012). However, it has changed over the years (Fuchs, 2011). Empirical analysis shows that,

on the one hand, information provision is the most important function of Web 2.0; but on the other hand, the collaborative functions of the network (community building, data sharing, cooperative information production) have become more valuable (Fuchs, 2010).

These media-sharing services allow users to search for and present various kinds of content (Coutinho, 2008). Examples of this are document sharing, art sharing, podcasts, videocasts, and video sharing (VanHarmelen, 2007 as cited by Coutinho & Bottentuit Junior, 2009). For Simão (2006), the accessibility and simplicity of making content and putting it on the Internet provoked two changes: the capability and initiative of users, that now have new ways to connect with the world; and the fact that the ease of publishing allows communities around common interests to establish interpersonal relationships, thereby enhancing the sense of community. Undeniably, this access and use of online applications was a very important innovation, as it established an intimate atmosphere for the user that is now capable of easily updating their own content (Coutinho & Bottentuit Junior, 2009). An innovation that, as reported by Fuchs (2011), “shaped users’ Internet experiences in contemporary society.”

Thus, Web 2.0 improves pedagogical processes with tasks such as collective and synergetic creations, writing incentives, reciprocal and “multidirectional” communication, facility to work with data storage, development of networked pages, and the creation of communities (Coutinho & Bottentuit Junior, 2007). Moreover, “new information technologies allow for the formation of new forms of social organization and interaction within information networks” (Han, 2012, p. 3). In this way, the potential of conversation and contact are better, the relationship of the community is strengthened, and the purpose of the collaboration is expanded (Shank, 2007).

The emergence of Web 2.0 and social networks - sites supported by databases that permit information to be preserved and updated by someone and to create links between virtual or real friends (Coutinho & Bottentuit Junior, 2009) - created a new scene. These changes were extremely valuable, as they were not restricted to the technological domain only, having caused symbolic social changes (Albalá Ubiergo & Consul, 2011). Indeed, the development of platforms for production, communication, and involvement, as well as social networks, has resulted in the emergence of a society that is considerably more connected and communicative (Albalá Ubiergo & Consul,

2011). According to Han (2012), to characterize the connection of Web 2.0 and social media, we could attempt to alter Marshall McLuhan's maxim: social media is the substance of Web 2.0. The author intends to broaden its definition to include "the technologies or devices that hook up into this complex... to go beyond the hegemony of the Web-centered understanding of Web 2.0" (Han, 2012, p. 5).

2.1.2 DEFINITION OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) stated that "social media is a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content". It is built on social interaction and allows people to exchange views, thoughts, and information globally, regardless of time and location (Carlsson, 2010, as cited by McBride, 2011). These interactive digital spaces, that provide change and the adjustment of personal identities, have the goal to create and extend their user communities (Reis, 2015), but also to provide means to better communicate with other individuals by publishing content updates (Wright & Hinson, 2009).

Social media is likewise capable of permitting data-sharing across traditional barriers like geography (Murthy, 2018), and has transformed into a general media platform that links much of the world's population. According to eMarketer (2018), the total number of social media users in the world is predicted to grow to 3.29 billion in 2022, which will represent 42.3% of the world's population (Appel et al., 2020). Chaffey (2021) stated that, on a global scale, digital consumers are spending an average of 2 hours and 25 minutes per day on social networks and messaging. Appel (2020) claimed that it "has fast become one of the defining technologies of our time" (p. 79).

Eid & Al-Jabri (2016) stated that the biggest advancement of Web applications during the past decade is the rise and exhaustive use of social networking sites. However, since the definition of social media varies among researchers, it is important to clarify how the term has varied over time. Howard & Parks (2012) established three main points that form the basis of social networks: the ability to produce and observe information in user-created networks; the digital medium in which everything occurs; and, lastly, the agents engaged in these media.

For Power (2014), the term social media is used for online technologies and practices that include a mixture of technology, telecommunications, and social synergies in a diversity of formats, like text, pictures, audio and video, that “share content, opinions and information, promote discussion and build relationships” (p. 1). Correspondingly, according to Appel et al. (2020), social media software-based digital technologies enable users to share and receive digital material or information via an online social network. Boyd & Ellison (2007) and Henderson & Bowley (2010) also mention prevailing characteristics that persist in the different social networks such as, for example, online applications, platforms and technologies that allow users to create, share and modify content, as well as means that enable participation, collaboration, conversation, and identity creation.

Finally, Alalwan et al. (2017) argued that it is essential to differentiate between the terms social media and social networking. The authors defined the concept of social media as a tool of communication that “enables individuals to broadcast as well as to approach more people and more influence on them.” Accordingly, it was also acknowledged social networking is the use of social media means to directly interact with someone with whom we have a real relationship or with one we would like to have contact (Wells, 2011, as cited by Alalwan et al., 2017).

The platforms themselves have largely driven the rise of social media. Recently, we have seen social media platforms where images and videos substitute text (such as Instagram and Snapchat) increasing (Appel et al., 2020). However, despite the importance of understanding the development (and collapse) of various social media platforms, the current social media situation is more in “what the users do on these platforms than the technologies or services offered by these platforms” (Appel et al., 2020, p. 80). People utilize social media for different reasons now. Digitally interacting and socializing with people they know, doing the same with unknown others who have similar interests, and accessing and contributing to digital material (news, gossip, and user-generated product evaluations) are examples of these (Appel et al., 2020).

2.1.3 SOCIAL NETWORKS AS ONLINE COMMUNITIES

Over the years, technologies have become more user-friendly and accessible, enabling more users to participate. Consequently, users have become more active in online discussions, interacting and relating more with the people they communicate with (Ryan & Jones, 2014). Social networks occupy an unprecedented centrality in developed societies (Fialho et al., 2018). According to statistics from January 2021, 4.66 billion people are active internet users, encompassing 59.5% of the global population, 4.2 billion of which are active social media users worldwide (Statista, 2021).

Social networks are one of the most important components in the structure of social relations between people, organizations, and groups, through which values, expectations, and interests are shared at a complex level (Fialho et al., 2018). Our daily lives are made up of a tangle of social interactions that are supported by networks: communication networks, traffic networks, computer networks, virtual networks, transport networks, cable networks, among many others (Fialho et al., 2018). Furthermore, social media platforms have substantially reinvented how people decide to communicate and relate with each other (Kapoor et al., 2018). Through its interactive platform, social media allow users to communicate with other members to establish social relationships and share information and knowledge related to needs and activities in real life (McBride, 2011).

According to Ray et al. (2014), a sense of social identification promotes involvement, increasing pleasure in online communities. However, the social network concept encompasses the most varied scientific fields (anthropology, sociology, politics, psychology, mathematics, etc.), and its diverse forms persist in the most diverse quarters of society (Fialho et al., 2018). In this sense, Coe & Johns (2004) emphasized that certain market segments have even begun to organize themselves into a "dynamic network" that is flexible and professional. These networks are based on flexible agents (professional freelancers, artists, service companies) who form nodes around the production center (Lima & Souza, 2013).

Moreover, when discussing social networks and culture, one must refer to the work done by Castells (2012), who attempted to explain how new technologies provide the original basis for the diffusion of network logic in the entire social structure, which

creates a networked society. In this case, the development of individual and collective cultural projects promotes sharing information, knowledge, and content, building communities and affinity networks (Lima & Souza, 2013). Nevertheless, understanding the complexity of social networks and their intrinsic configuration diversity is one of today's biggest challenges (Fialho et al., 2018). In the dynamic process of social relationships, the participants are guided by various logics and action methods, requiring a multidisciplinary approach from social participants (Fialho et al., 2018).

2.1.4 MOTIVATIONS FOR USING SOCIAL MEDIA

As social platforms enable their users to share information about themselves and their lifestyle, interact with other users and create digital images of themselves (Adolpho, 2012), one can say that social networks are centered on people and not on content (Marques, 2016). As we have seen, the most shared content on these digital spaces is light and fun content, mainly related to music, technology, and education (Oliveira, 2018). In short, social media is a platform on which people want to have fun and escape a little from their everyday lives and search for sincerity (Oliveira, 2018).

Others authors highlighted the relevance for young people, who are especially attracted by these platforms because they find in these spaces an outlet to demonstrate who they are or who they want to be (Tuten & Solomon, 2014). Sharma & Shukla (2016) argued that young people are captivated by social media because our changing and the unavailable world does not permit them to stay in touch physically. However, one enters this world due to impulses of personal affinity, usefulness, comfort, immediacy, altruism, curiosity, and validation (Tuten & Solomon, 2014).

The need for integration and social interaction and the desire for social prosperity has also been determined as critical incentives for users to access the internet (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). This view is also supported by Muntinga et al. (2011), who claimed that motivations for social media usage include acquiring a sense of acceptance, connecting with friends, family, and society, searching for support, and replacing “real-life” partnership. Hence, users see the internet as a convenient outlet to declare their feelings, views, and experiences (Leung, 2009). Likewise, Park et al. (2009) asserted that socializing comprises motives such as improving peer support, encountering compelling individuals, being a part of a community, and remaining in touch with friends (Park et al., 2009).

A study by Jang et al. (2008) offered empirical analysis of social media users, outlining the factors that affect them: social relationships, social identification, social influence, social satisfaction, and social commitment. According to Zhao et al. (2012), people join social media sites to find new like-minded individuals, build friendships, and encounter social support. And as they get fulfillment through their social media interactions, they maintain those relationships and consequently incite social engagement (Chiang et al., 2019). Moreover, the aforementioned author noted that users with related characteristics and perspectives regularly cultivate “a sense of belonging and social identification” (p. 119). Hence, community members sense interconnection for sharing feelings and principles (Chiang et al., 2019).

Chiang et al. (2019) defined social commitment as the enduring desire to establish a long-term connection with a group that is important and useful since the members have similar traits or closeness. Regarding this topic, Jang et al. (2008) reported that social commitment means that social media users are prone to maintain these relationships. Raïes & Gavard-Perret (2011) stated that sustained and passionate participation in social media improves a member’s commitment to the platforms.

Kim et al. (2011) also identified several elements that motivate users to use social media such as convenience – the ease of communication with others, as well as the easy access to social networks; entertainment - which relates to the exchange of information, experiences, and discussion of subjects and tastes in common; interaction and social support - the expression of feelings with people close to you, venting personal problems and showing interest in others as a sign of affection; the search for information, which can be found through the interaction with other users as well as the reading of data created by others; and, finally, the search for friends, where there may be a search for new friends who have shared tastes.

In the same vein, Brandtzaeg & Heim (2011) also refer to the creation of new friendships and the opportunity to meet new people as attractive factors for the use of social media. Brandtzaeg and Heim (2011) also state that the search for information and debate of general topics is also a motivational factor to use social media. The use of these platforms as a means of information is essentially directed to topics such as music, cultural events, fashion, literature, news, and events related to the place of residence (Brandtzaeg & Heim, 2011). Similarly, Waterson (2006), Rheingold (1993), and Preece (2000) have argued that

the motivation for using different online communities depends on factors such as sharing of experiences and needs, gatherings of individuals with common interests, and the possibility of building strong bonds of friendship and mutual assistance through the sharing of interests (Couto, 2015).

This view is similar to the one presented by Jenkins (2010). The author claimed that fans had become some of the most active users and critics of Web 2.0 since they act as consumers and producers of creative media. While most fan cultures have elements of “participatory culture” – which concerns all varieties of cultural production and is susceptible to vast participation (Jenkins, 2010a) - media fandom promotes creative expression and artistic production by its members. Jenkins (2010) stated that understanding fandom might help to grasp new kinds of cultural creation and engagement, as well as the logic behind social networks. According to the author, this “participatory culture” consists of:

relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement; strong support for creating and sharing one’s creations with others; some type of informal mentorship in which the most experienced members pass along their knowledge to novices; members who believe their contributions matter; members who feel some degree of social connection with one another and care about other members’ opinions about their contributions. (Jenkins, 2010a).

A detailed examination by Appel et al. (2020) also showed that people work with social media in several ways for different purposes, categorizing them in places to:

(1) digitally communicating and socializing with known others, such as family and friends; (2) doing the same but with unknown others who share common interests; and (3) accessing and contributing to digital content such as news, gossip, and user-generated product reviews (p. 81).

However, regarding other behavioral studies, according to Kapoor et al. (2018), researchers must consider that users’ motivations for adopting social media are different and mostly depend on their culture. When analyzing behavior, it is important to note that there are circumstances in which people have interruptive intentions after having continuous intentions (Kapoor et al., 2018). Turel (2015) advised investigating the onset of discontinuation intentions, as well as the variables that contribute to actual discontinuance efforts.

2.1.5 EFFECTS OF USING SOCIAL MEDIA

A great deal of previous research into the effects of social media emerges from the results that are seen when individuals use media and new technologies (McBride, 2011). The interactive features of social media have converted its users from passive observers to active participants (Chu & Kim, 2011), but also transformed the ways in which insights and philosophies are passed on (Murthy, 2018). It is now well established from a variety of studies on the social influence that it is ambiguous whether the principles of conformity and compliance apply equally to social interactions in digital environments (Kiesler et al. 1984 as cited by Hildebrand et al., 2013). Nonetheless, several lines of evidence suggested that even in online contexts without physical interaction, people are knowledgeable and receptive of the presence and influence of others (Spears & Lea, 1992); are motivated to see their influence on others (Schlosser, 2009); demonstrate great levels of self-awareness (Matheson & Zanna, 1989) and are also affected by persuasion techniques (Guadagno & Cialdini, 2005).

Academics and marketers have investigated the benefits of using social media. Jang et al. (2008) reported that users communicating and connecting with each other encourages positive attitudes in online communities, that later increase their loyalty to the community (Chiang et al., 2019). Literature that approves of the use of social media has highlighted that social media stimulates effective communication allowing “real-time messaging, empowerment, sense of belongingness and sociability, enjoyment, quick information-sharing, and cost benefits” (Akakandelwa & Walubita, 2018). In addition, we must also acknowledge how it manages the “balance between visual display, increased access to information, the associated development of aspiration and in some cases the possibilities of the fulfillment of those aspirations” (Miller et al., 2016, p. 204).

Miller et al. (2016) claimed that internet access and social media generally offer us increased capabilities such as new skills, connecting opportunities with ideas and new people, or merely gaining a public voice. According to Bob Marcotte (2020), our interactions on social media could even promote different perspectives and new and creative ways of thinking. A recent study conducted at the University of Rochester suggested that participants chose to follow the most creative people on social media, however that creativity is jeopardized when too many people follow the same source of inspiration (Bob Marcotte,

2020). Nonetheless, McBride (2011) maintained that it entertains and promotes communication opportunities. Previous studies have also demonstrated that the regular use of social media benefits children and adolescents by promoting communication, social interaction, and technical skills (Itō et al., 2010).

As we have seen, social media has designed an extensive outlet where individuals “present and represent emotions” (Miller et al., 2016). However, it does not affect emotions in a specific and unequivocal way, even when it “plays symbolically different roles at different times” (Miller et al., 2016, p. 195). Similarly, according to Casaló et al. (2020), when users receive information on social media, it can foment positive feelings in them. Although social media can be a vehicle of nostalgia and sentimentality for the sense of community, it may also perform as a “funneling mechanism when the demands of the actual community are overwhelming” (Miller et al., 2016).

In addition, through the online content creation process, internet users express that they have the opportunity to be acknowledged, advertise their abilities, discover more of the world, communicate with friends, and be amused (Leung, 2009). However, while most studies on social media have demonstrated that social media activities enhance the user’s social development (Akakandelwa & Walubita, 2018), and debates regarding the linkage between social media and personal happiness are substantial (Miller et al., 2016), various research has shown the opposite.

In recent years, psychological research has indicated that social media “can create a climate of social comparison and preoccupation with appearance, which can pose risks for emotional problems, such as depression and social anxiety” (Hawes et al., 2020). The majority of these studies link negative feelings to various causes. In other cases, depression was mentioned due to the sense of lack of productivity while consuming social media (Miller et al., 2016). According to the American Psychological Association (2011),

daily overuse of media and technology has a negative effect on the health of all children, preteens, and teenagers by making them more prone to anxiety, depression, and other psychological disorders, as well as making them more susceptible to future health problems.

Accordingly, teenagers who use social media a lot are reportedly being less happy, more bored and likely to get into trouble.

Undoubtedly, a major determinant for most individuals in their sense of happiness is their relationships with others (Miller et al., 2016). Miller et al. (2016) stated that if social

media allows people to administer degrees of “scalable sociality”, it may help to maintain these balanced and under control. The author concluded that

we have moved from the idea that what matters to people is an abstract relationship with the values of the past to an observation that social media may actually have become an important component in how they deal with these traditional obligations in the present. (Miller et al., 2016, p. 200).

In conclusion, some research has highlighted the negative emotional effects of social media, while other studies have shown the possibility for good emotional support via social media. This may simply be due to the fact that individuals can do things that are fundamentally opposed to one another on social media. Users may, in fact, enjoy a variety of social media experiences every minute of the day (Miller et al., 2016).

2.1.6 SOCIAL MEDIA IN PORTUGAL

The social network scene in Portugal has developed rapidly. In 2008, 17.1% were users, and in 2019, 63.6% of the Portuguese population had social media accounts (Marktest, 2019). According to a study by Marktest (2019), a group made up of several companies specialized in the field of market research and information processing, and there are no differences between the two genders in the profile of Portuguese social network users. However, 66% of users are under 45 years old, 53% belong to the highest social classes, and 36% live in the regions of Greater Lisbon and Greater Porto (Marktest, 2019). While reporting about the data reported by Marktest, Meios & Publicidade (2020), an independent newspaper for communication and marketing professionals, also revealed that users spend an average of 93 minutes on social networks every day. On the weekend, most people (68%) said that they spend most of their time on social networks, using their activities on these platforms to send messages or use chat services (78%), to read news on information sites (67%) or comment on friends' posts (65%).

The Marktest 2020 edition of the "Portuguese and Social Networks" study also confirmed that Facebook is the most voluntarily cited network among respondents, with 99.6% of responses when asked which networks they're familiar with. The magazine focused on Portuguese distribution business Grande Consumo also reported about this study, reporting that Instagram (87.4%) and Twitter (60.1%) were next on the list, both with a growing user base in recent years (Grande Consumo, 2020). TikTok is also highly relevant, as the first time this network was analyzed by the Marktest study, it was fifth in terms of

spontaneous notoriety of social networks in Portugal (Grande Consumo, 2020). It can also be seen from the analysis mentioned above that, among Portuguese social network users, Facebook is the platform with the highest penetration, with 92.2% of profiles created. This is followed by WhatsApp, with 80.3%, 6.1 percentage points more than in 2019. Instagram records 73.3% penetration, which also translates to year-on-year growth of 5,4 percent (Grande Consumo, 2020).

In this sense, this study reaffirmed that social networks are already part of the daily routine of the Portuguese: 95% of social network users report that they visit a social network at least once a day (Meios & Publicidade, 2020). Furthermore, according to this report released at the end of 2019, although Facebook remains the dominant social network in Portugal, its popularity has shown a slight downward trend since 2017 (Meios & Publicidade, 2020). In contrast, Instagram showed a definite upward trend in the same period, doubling the volume of first references (Meios & Publicidade, 2020).

To conclude, although Facebook continues to be the dominant social network in Portugal, it is losing ground to networks like Instagram, WhatsApp, and TikTok, especially among the younger generations (Grande Consumo, 2020). Subsequently, the use of social networks by young people allows us to have some foresight of what the future may bring. Among the group of social users aged 15 to 24, Instagram has already become the most used social network, surpassing Facebook, which is in an apparent decline with this age group (Meios & Publicidade, 2020).

2.1.7 THE EMERGENCE OF INSTAGRAM

Over the last years, image-based networking platforms' popularity has increased exponentially (Choi & Sung, 2018). Instagram, a social media app that uses images as a means of communication (Huang & Su, 2018), is the platform that grew the most, having around 1 billion active users in 2018 (Statista, 2018). Instagram started as a site that allowed its users to take photos, edit them with exclusive filters and upload them in a "feed" where other users could "like" and comment on them (Kim et al., 2017).

However, to improve users' experiences on the app, over time new features have been integrated (Casaló et al., 2020; Buryan, 2018). In 2017, Instagram introduced the 'story' feature, which may be traced back to the Twitter-owned Vine app that enabled users to produce 6-second looping videos (Ahaskar, 2019), which is now extensively used by other

social media platforms (Becker, 2016). Later, it launched 'IGTV' to allow users to post longer videos. Another feature that originated on Twitter and was adopted on Instagram is the 'hashtag', "a symbol that has come to comprise an important expression in popular culture" (Van, 2014), which enables users to add meanings to their photographs or videos that can be linked to other user's posts (Lim & Yazdanifard, 2014). The online platform has various built-in photo filters to achieve quality visual effects (Huang & Su, 2018). Consequently, these improvements boosted the posts' performance and contributed to a greater rate of engagement compared to the other social media networks (Casaló et al., 2020; Buryan, 2018).

This free online platform that is the combination of the words "instant" and "telegram" (Huang & Su, 2018), and that was specifically created for users of smartphones to capture and share their pictures and videos (Alexander, 2018), was launched in October 2010 and later, in 2012, purchased by Facebook (Lavoie, 2015). The platform was founded by software engineer Michel Krieger and computer programmer Kevin Systrom. By June 2018, the platform had reached 1 billion monthly active users and is currently one of the world's most prominent and most influential social media platforms (Business of Apps, 2021).

Previous research has suggested that the increased use of Instagram is linked to self-centered traits, such as isolation, anxiety, and depression (Jackson & Luchner, 2016; Pittman & Reich, 2016; Stapleton et al., 2017 as cited by Verrastro et al., 2020). A contrary explanation by Huang & Su (2018) is that Instagram enables users to connect and interact with society and diminish anxiety and tension. Similarly, Alter (2017) stated that social media users usually feel good about themselves and Sedikides & Brewer (2001) argued that it gives users a rare sense of validation.

Whether Instagram users are aware of their actions and what motivates them to use the platform are subjects worth investigating (Alter, 2017). On the one hand, social media operates on likes and social recognition and validation, and its primary essence is the number of views and followers (Alter, 2017). On the other hand, measuring psychological effects on media users calls for the study of actual situations, and finding a joint statement is ambitious. For these reasons, researchers usually use media side factors to clarify these psychological effects (Perse & Dunn, 1998; Webster & Lin, 2002; Kaye & Johnson, 2002; Livingstone, 1999; as cited by Huang & Su, 2018).

Mull & Lee (2014) investigated the uses and gratifications theory with social media, linking it to the determinants for Pinterest usage, and recognized five primary stimuli: “fashion, creative projects, virtual exploration, entertainment, and organization”. At the same time, since Instagram emphasizes visual presentation as much as Pinterest does, it will likewise be very suitable for research correlating and characterizing usage motives (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016; Sheldon & Newman, 2019). In addition, considering that the leading reason for Facebook posts is to form relationships with others, Instagram is more for personal use (Kendall, 2015).

Moreover, studies on the relationship between internet searches and personal cognitive processes show that thinking style impacts internet search motives (Kao et al., 2008). Additionally, these patterns are connected to academic expertise. Humanities majors usually endorse nonlinear thinking styles. On the other hand, science and engineering majors tend to adopt linear thinking (Osterman, 2015). Furthermore, from the point of view of visual cognitive tendencies, women position themselves as having a preference for object imagery (prioritize the detailed appearances and colors of the images) while men characterize themselves as being prone towards spatial imagery (location and spatial conversion of images) (Kozhevnikov et al., 2005). Most likely, this also happens within Instagram, since it enables communication via visual images (Huang & Su, 2018). For these reasons, it is safe to assume that knowledge, gender, and interests determine the motives and behavior of internet use (Huang & Su, 2018).

2.2 ART AND SOCIAL MEDIA

2.2.1 ART IN THE AGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Blume (2017) brought attention to how we generally would characterize Web 2.0 as the prevailing state of evolution of the internet and how its major essence is participation and user-generated content. However, in the realm of the arts, the term “post-internet” has been proposed (Blume, 2017). According to the author, this expression does not affirm that the internet is finished. Instead, it proposes that the internet has achieved an omnipresence in every element of our lives and refers to everything that happened after it started. That being said, “digital art” and “post-internet art” are terms used to categorize distinct streams of ongoing artistic practice that are entrenched in online culture (Blume, 2017).

We live in a society of aesthetically refined consumer goods and services, where the creation of alluring images, interfaces, objects, and experiences are crucial to economic and social action (Manovich, 2019). Consequently, instead of being owned by art, “sophisticated aesthetics” becomes the essential property of commercial goods and services. Manovich (2019) claimed that this society needs designers, architects, photographers, models, stylists, media professionals, and people capable of using social media, in conjunction with producing appealing images and managing marketing and analytics tools.

Social media currently helps assemble a widely networked audience base that operates in two ways in the arts sphere. Firstly, artist websites and social media apps like Instagram have permitted artists to bypass the gallery “system” and be approached directly by buyers who notice their work on the platform (Blume, 2017). They will be able to sell the artwork directly to the public without paying a commission to a gallery. Aside from that, numerous artists have amassed such a significant following that they can sell their work only on Instagram. (Blume, 2017). Secondly, for many artists, Instagram allows access to the gallery “system” by presenting artists’ work to relevant actors in the system (Blume, 2017). Some artists report that curators and writers knew about their work by seeing it on this social media platform (Fleming, 2014).

Post-digital has also been related to an increase of “amateurization” in art, where everyone may be an artist with little tools (Jorge, 2021). The post-digital era also necessitates that artists become their own agents and use platforms like Instagram to showcase and make their work popular (Jorge, 2021). In this manner, we observe the increasing significance of user-generated content in a “transmedia ecology” that has been responsible for intensifying the affluence of data, images, videos and to establishing the philosophy of data sharing, both as a “creative practice” and as a “method to attribute cultural value” (Jorge, 2021).

For these reasons, although it remains the primary outlet for presenting work, for many contemporary artists, just having a website is not sufficient (Blume, 2017). Hence, promoting artwork on social media promotes audience crossover between platforms (Blume, 2017). In addition, even though form and content are immensely important to the creation of art, interaction, and discussion, which are a big part of social media, can also be integrated into the communication between the artwork and a person (Ritter, 1996).

Moreover, as social media becomes more omnipresent, we are seeing how the virtual lens influences how we understand culture. Razzaq (2020) claimed that participatory culture

encourages creative expression and public participation, as well as the production and sharing of works. In addition, the author stated that members of this “culture” also think their contribution matters and may help them connect. Thus, interactions on social media are the most prevalent and important levels of participation and occur at lightning speed, which can be understood as a “moment effect” (Razzaq, 2020). For this reason, as the online art trade grows, understanding what kind of artworks encourage participation is critical (Razzaq, 2020).

The popularity of social media also molded the modern experience of visiting museums and galleries (Sokolowsky, 2017). The tradition of the museum as the site of art encounter brought attention to how to accommodate the virtual experience into the physical exhibition location (Blume, 2017). Traditionally, art institutions have disapproved of the idea of visitors photographing the exhibitions. Currently, if a visitor visits an exhibition without taking any pictures on his or her phone, it is the exception rather than the rule (Sokolowsky, 2017).

Previously, art was only available in museums, galleries, or art fairs. With the accessibility of social media, anyone can visit these museums and galleries as well as works of independent artists online (Razzaq, 2020). However, Razzaq (2020) questioned if an online visit is as good as an in-person trip to a gallery or if viewing art online decreases or deepens the experience. Moreover, Instagram is undeniably a promoter for the art industry, but the increased access and visibility that Instagram provides artists might also dissuade users from attending art exhibits in favor of the phone art experience (Blattmann, 2019).

It should also be noted that this is not the first time that the availability of art has been changed. In the past, museums functioned as an equitable venue for the public to see art, which had initially evolved from private collections that had been established for the benefit of the ruling class (Razzaq, 2020). Nowadays, the internet provides everyone with access to art, following a revolutionary path that is defining a new age for the art world as well as for the artist himself (Razzaq, 2020)

Viral cultural moments have grown into a postmodern reality for a generation of art viewers (Kwun, 2018). And if one did not travel to New York, the Palm Desert, Milan, or Miami to see “Maurizio Cattelan’s “America” (2016), a fully functioning, 14-karat gold toilet; Doug Aitken’s “Mirage” (2017), a site-specific sculpture of a suburban ranch house, entirely clad in mirrors, in the desert; Studio Swine’s “New Spring” (2017), an architectural

fountain emitting misty, scented bubbles; or Es Devlin's Room 2022 (2017), an immersive installation involving a maze of mirrors"; there is a good chance they caught them on social media (Kwun, 2018).

In sum, digital technologies have been extremely important when it comes to the expansion of the boundaries of art (Thomson et al., 2013). Moreover, social media has not only transformed the expectations of audiences, encouraging cognitive interpretation and improving physical and emotional reactions to artistic activities (Walmsley, 2016). It has also redefined the perception of art itself (Thomson et al., 2013) and the creation and curation of art (Sokolowsky, 2017).

2.2.2 THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON ART

Many efforts have been made to understand the effects of web 2.0 on the production and distribution of visual art in light of recent advancements in the participatory Internet (Blume, 2017). Much of this debate treats digital art as if it were a brand-new phenomenon. However, creative activities that use computers as a means of creation predate the Internet, reaching back to the 1970s (Blume, 2017). Having said that, while the symbiosis between the artwork and computer technology is not a new occurrence, it was not until the introduction of computer networks that this relationship became attractive as a venue for mass creative engagement with the medium (Blume, 2017).

Kang & Chen (2019) argued that social media engagement has a significant influence on art institutions and viewers, and as media technology evolves, so will art experience and participatory culture. The authors even asked, "what cultural resources do the audiences need to feel that they are interpreters of the meaning and value of art?", and most importantly, "how does the collaboration of audience and experts relate to these resources and techniques in the hermeneutic process?" (Kang & Chen, 2019. p. 11). As a result, for them, a new social norm might arise.

In this sense, the hesitancy to completely commit to online commerce is probably because online galleries draw a different audience than physical galleries (Blume, 2017). Nevertheless, many online galleries consider it their duty to make art more available and cheap to a larger audience (Hurst, 2012). Even more, by bringing first-time purchasers to the market, the majority of freshly formed internet galleries are establishing a far larger base for the dissemination of inexpensive pieces by lesser-known artists (Blume, 2017). In addition,

according to Blume (2017), online galleries that operate with a strict selection of artists have greater credibility than their more "democratized" counterparts, who sell works on behalf of the artists' galleries. As a result, this allows them to attract collectors who are already well-established within the industry (Blume, 2017).

Furthermore, the horizontal structure of the Web, in contrast to the vertical structure of the art world, and the apparent financial transparency, makes it a far less frightening location to purchase art (Fleming, 2014; Rao et al., 2014). People who consider these to be determinant considerations in purchasing art are likely to be less familiar with the art industry and to have different motivations for purchasing (Blume, 2017). Moreover, the art on these sites appears to be selected based on its aesthetic attractiveness, as the image displayed on-screen is all a potential buyer has to go on to form a judgment (Blume, 2017). Hence, online purchasers differ from traditional art collectors because aesthetic attractiveness is their key consideration (Blume, 2017).

Interviews Blume (2017) conducted with artists and curators also support the hypothesis that, in a post-internet era, there is a trend toward creating artwork just for the camera. This issue is also discussed by Droitcour (2014), associate editor of *Art in America*, who claims that the artists' websites may be the best place to discover the work. In fact, given the possibilities of internet self-promotion, this propensity to create work for dissemination through photographs is understandable (Blume, 2017). Most artists, however, see virtual exhibitions as a first step towards reaching an audience. In this regard, individual and commercial virtual exhibits and online galleries are viewed as essential pre-stages to the "legitimate" art world (Blume, 2017).

According to Budge (2013), artists benefit from visual stimulation since it aids in provoking creative ideas and inspiration. The author and artist claimed that Instagram specifically has a significant visual component and inspires her work. However, according to Razzaq (2020), seeing art on a screen is difficult since it is hard to see the surface and identify whether it is glossy or matte, or if it has any blemishes. Because color is sensed via electromagnetic waves, humans tend to see things in grey when there isn't enough light (Razzaq, 2020). Consequently, the author argued that although technology might assist in spreading art, it can never replace the real and live experience, as the environment is as important as the work itself. However, because the Internet is primarily a visual medium, and most art is also visual, they may complement one other for some people (Razzaq, 2020).

Despite this, printmaker Budge (2013) also observed that “using social media tools to extend studio practice into the virtual realm broadens the possibility of understanding artists’ practices” (p. 20). Hence, artists may learn more about how other artists respond to their work by reading blogs, Twitter, and Instagram (Budge, 2013). As a result, artists using social media technologies as part of their studio process allows for a worldwide knowledge of artists’ *modus operandi* (Budge, 2013).

The approach mentioned above is similar to the one advocated by Razzaq (2020), who reported that as more artists embrace this online culture and begin to post their work online, they are not only reaching a global audience, but the online art market is also transforming their reach and providing them with new means to fulfill orders in boundless quantities. Thus, starting these accounts eliminates many of the fundamental drawbacks of conventional methods of selling artwork (Razzaq, 2020). However, the author raises a worrying issue of legitimacy, suggesting that artists should be concerned about their work being stolen because of the public nature of social media and that it may be risky to make their artwork easily accessible on the Internet. Moreover, individuals may copy, print, and plagiarize their work (Blattmann, 2019). Artists’ rights and work have long been a source of concern, but with the rise of internet publishing, such rights have become confused and ambiguous (Razzaq, 2020). Benjamin (1969) stated that works of art have always been reproducible and man-made objects have always been imitable by men, as copies were manufactured by learners practicing their skill, by masters to disseminate their works, and, lastly, by third parties seeking profit. However, the author argued that mechanical reproduction ushered in a whole new and innovative era of artwork experience. In fact, it allows for the circulation of millions of pictures of an original, all of which lack the "authentic" atmosphere of their source.

Artists may indeed use social media to manage how their narrative is conveyed and to locate individuals who want to hear it, making the audience feel as if they know the creator (Kang & Chen, 2019). However, some authors believe that social networking is eroding art: Sharlow (2015) claimed that social media destroys creativity and poses a threat to artists, and James (2014) argued that social media is decimating art and literature. Nonetheless, Whitehead (2017) claimed that social media is democratizing art rather than destroying it. On the other hand, according to Budge (2013), research shows that utilizing social media platforms like blogs, Twitter, and Instagram substantially enhances creativity. For this

reason, as a result of being inspired, being able to connect extensively and collaborate with others, as well as sharing work through the use of social media, artists' practice may be altered indirectly (Budge, 2013).

An equally significant aspect concerning the effects of social media on art is the relationship between artists and their followers. Kang & Chen (2019) conducted a study to provide new social media-driven insights about the nature of artwork interactions. Questions such as "to what extent does the content released by artists and the interaction with followers affect the likes of artworks?" and "do the likes and comments on the artwork have anything to do with the quality of the art?" were raised in a study that indicated that the most-liked and commented-on artworks are more participatory and based on human instinct (Kang & Chen, 2019). Because social media is all about people and knowing what motivates them individually, and in groups, it has incorporated six persuasion psychological forces: reciprocity, social proof like authority, scarcity, and commitment (Maharani & Sevriana, 2017). Not only do these interactions are necessary for receiving positive feedback and meeting others' expectations (Goffman, 1978), but they also help to improve skills and promote new opportunities (Zhu & Chen, 2015). Furthermore, Kang & Chen (2019) stated that everyone finds fulfillment from social media interactions and the act of creating.

Additionally, artists are susceptible to the baggage associated with social media, which may exacerbate anxieties and worries (Blattmann, 2019). As a result, artists may become overwhelmed when comparing their likes and followers to those of their peers (Blattmann, 2019). But is it truly meaningful if one artist has more fans than another? Do likes truly matter? According to Blattmann (2019), the pressure to stay active and feed followers can be intense. Having an account that is followed by a large number of people also has specific "obligations", as artists are readily assessed and must be careful not to upset anybody or be prepared to deal with critical comments (Blattmann, 2019).

In short, the art experience has become more democratized because of social media, which allows more individuals to view and experience art on their mobile phones (Kang & Chen, 2019). The artist evolves into a promoter of art experiences, and the "artwork" is transformed into a user-created and shared experience (Polaine, 2005). Thus, citizen curating has been made feasible by social media engagement, with citizen curators removing the traditional didactic relationship between museums and audiences and allowing for new partnerships between experts and the general public (Kang & Chen, 2019). Audiences have

traditionally been kept out of the art interpretative area by a series of gates and gatekeepers (Lewin, 1943). Today, audience gatekeepers send comments based on their own criteria to choose the most popular artworks (Kang & Chen, 2019).

2.2.3 ART ON INSTAGRAM

Instagram has grown to become one of the world's most popular social media platforms since its debut in 2010 (Suess, 2020). The increase in Instagram accounts and posts published each day correlates with the expansion and development of smart devices, combined with online access (Suess, 2020). According to several experts, there is currently a movement in social media communication away from text-based social media platforms and image-based sharing platforms like Instagram (Brake, 2018). Because Instagram has grown in popularity and activity over the past years, it is still a hot research topic (Budge, 2017).

Instagram content is created via the act of photography, and these photographs can be captured using a mobile smart device camera, a camera inside the smart device, or a traditional camera (Suess, 2020). Moreover, photography is more a means-to-an-end than a key motivator to use Instagram (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016b). Information about others, documentation, popularity, and creativity, are the four significant motivations for people to use Instagram, according to Sheldon & Bryant (2016). While photography is essential to Instagram use, it is also a technique used to achieve other goals, such as self-expression or communication through pictures (Suess, 2020). For this reason, because photography is such an essential aspect of Instagram usage, one should study it (Suess, 2020).

Despard (2015) claimed that Instagram introduces a new way of looking at photos. This happens not only because people engage more with a mobile smart device camera than they do with a classic camera but also due to the fact that using a smart device is a highly physical experience (Richardson, 2007). Hence, because Instagram is mainly utilized on mobile devices, the physical link is critical because it involves photos with temporal and spatial changes throughout the day (Hjorth & Burgess, 2014).

In addition, the promotion of art is one sector of marketing that has recently gained popularity on Instagram (Shahzadi, 2019). Indeed, this social media platform is rapidly being used by major auction houses, independent visual artists, and art dealers to help them sell their works (Shahzadi, 2019). Around 2014, Instagram was designated the “World’s Most

Talked-About New Art Dealer” by Vogue Magazine (Fleming, 2014). The platform gives young artists who aren’t represented by a gallery a place to show their work; hence, it can assist them in reaching a larger audience and allowing them to show and market their work in the manner they choose (Fleming, 2014). Curiously, as internet shopping has become more normalized, the practice of purchasing art online has gained popularity (Shahzadi, 2019). According to a study conducted by Blattmann (2019), about 45% of customers in the United States between the ages of 18 and 24 feel that social media platforms are the best method to locate and acquire art.

Undoubtedly, large volumes of material are shared every day on Instagram since it allows more individuals to be involved with art (Bremers, 2020). This abundance may lead to a devaluation of the artist and the art form, as it implies that their work is unimportant and readily replaceable (Hariman & Lucaites, 2016). While it appears to be fundamentally optimistic to develop individual power connected with art-making, oversaturation, or the concept that there is an excess of material, has negative consequences (Bremers, 2020). Instagram may be a fantastic medium for individuals to create art, but it can also result in an accumulation of work that goes unappreciated (Bremers, 2020). That being said, the large number of photos shared on the platform may reduce the visibility of the art and the artist (Bremers, 2020). Timelines and explore pages, for example, provide an infinite amount of images to examine, making individual posts less important and easy to forget (Bremers, 2020).

Because Instagram is so accessible and has such a broad user base, these problems are unique to it as an art medium (Bremers, 2020). Since this platform allows for limitless scrolling, competition for exposure is not as intense as it is on other platforms for art, such as at an art gallery or museum (Bremers, 2020). For this reason, artists must rely on viewers for validation more than ever before (Bremers, 2020). Indeed, Instagram users choose what they like and engage with, influencing what other people see and think of as art and, as a result, shape the discourse community’s ideals and, possibly, impact an artist’s recognition on Instagram (Bremers, 2020). This means that even people who aren’t part of the community dictate what constitutes art based on their attention and likes (Bremers, 2020).

Prior research has revealed that Instagrammers frequently use the term “aesthetics” or “aesthetic” (Manovich, 2017). For instance, in November 2016, a YouTube search for “Instagram aesthetic feed” yielded 7,200 results, and a Google search for the word

“Instagram aesthetic” returned 144,000 results (Manovich, 2017). According to Csikszentmihalyi & Hermanson (1999), aesthetic experience may also be self-satisfying, meaning that the act is worthy or valuable in and of itself, just like learning or discovering something new is intrinsically gratifying. Furthermore, learning and knowledge are inextricably linked components of aesthetic experience, and for some people, aesthetic experience may be defined as the “complex and multifaceted experience of knowledge” (Consoli, 2015, p. 2).

Manovich (2017) uses the word "Instagrammism" to refer to the aesthetic of the emerging global digital young classes in the early 2010s and modern art movements such as futurism, cubism, and surrealism. As with these “earlier–isms”, “Instagrammism” has its own worldview and visual language. However, unlike modernist art movements, it is molded by millions of writers linked via Instagram and other social media platforms and participating in them (Manovich, 2017). Another intriguing aspect is how users influence one another and exchange tips on utilizing mobile picture applications to produce, edit, and sequence Instagram photographs. For instance, in 2016, the popular picture editing app VSCO had 30 million active users among Instagram users at the start of the year (Manovich, 2017).

An equally significant element of art on Instagram is how artistic legitimacy is migrating away from established traditional institutions and toward social media followers, likes, retweets, views, and shares (Blattmann, 2019). Thus, having a strong internet presence is critical for establishing one’s brand and art. Moreover, it can be said that what matters nowadays is for art to be photogenic and to offer exclusive experiences, as it affects not only art promotion but also on artistic production and curation (Blattmann, 2019). Indeed, it is essentially all about finding a delicate balance, as this platform aids in the development of new audiences and the strengthening of ties between these players, but overstretched relationships or massive audiences may be counterproductive and damaging (Blattmann, 2019).

2.2.3.3 ART GALLERIES AND MUSEUMS ON INSTAGRAM

Instagram’s popularity has influenced and impacted the practices of several businesses and institutions, and art galleries are one institution that has been significantly affected by the increased usage of this social media platform (Suess, 2020). In addition, it

also helps galleries to connect with the community, educate, promote, interact, and improve visitor experience (Suess, 2020). Simultaneously, as well as extending the visual experience from a certain time and location inside the gallery, Instagram looks to enrich and extend it (Suess, 2020). For this reason, Instagram posts behave similarly to pictures, eliciting introspection and memories of a visit (Suess, 2020). However, users may also peruse Instagram for photos uploaded by people who have already visited an art museum. In addition to fostering anticipation, this pre-viewing may help construct and conceptualize one's visit (Suess, 2020).

Furthermore, defining photography and Instagram as a “moving phenomena” corresponds to Pink's (2011) observation that pictures are generated and consumed in motion. Often, images captured are not immediately shared to Instagram; instead, there is a period of post-production time (Vivienne & Burgess, 2013) during which the user reflects on their visit and chooses which image(s) to upload to a post (Suess, 2020). Additionally, this post-production occurs as individuals are moving through locations that serve as incubators for persons exchanging photos, and Pink & Hjorth (2014) referred to this as “creative incubation” (p. 53). For this reason, Suess (2020) claimed that Instagram amplifies creative incubation and add a new depth to old photographic processes.

Cultural institutions are also a major attraction for Instagram use, with some already having a thriving presence on the app (Suess, 2020). For instance, the New York Public Library garnered international notice when it posted classic literature as Instagram Stories on its account (New York Public Library, 2018). In 2017, the Musée du Louvre in Paris was the sixth-most Instagrammed place worldwide (Instagram, 2017, as cited by Suess, 2020). Moreover, art is a very popular subject on Instagram, where it was the ninth-most used hashtag (#art) on content posted in 2019 (Chacon, 2020).

Additionally, some researchers agreed that aesthetic pleasure and Instagramming while visiting an art gallery are related (Budge, 2017; Budge & Burness, 2018; Suess, 2015). As an aesthetic platform, Instagram is a photographic depiction of what we see in the actual world that is perceptual, eternal, and repeating (Pink & Hjorth, 2014). On the other hand, an art gallery is an aesthetic stimulant (Budge, 2017), and visitors are encouraged to engage in visual experiences (Consoli, 2015).

Furthermore, art galleries encourage their guests to have rich and meaningful interactions (Burnham, 1994). Instagram's photos feature enables visitors to enhance their

experience by viewing art pieces, and the progression from seeing to sharing has provided the public with a greater opportunity to have aesthetic experiences (Suess, 2020). For this reason, art galleries should explore how this experience evolves over time and how they might assist visitors in the future (Suess, 2020).

Museums have long recognized cellphones as an integral part of many visitors' bodies, and now photos captured on smartphones are attracting people to exhibits and collections, most notably via Instagram, the major platform for gallery visitors to share their art experiences (Luke, 2019). However, Luke (2019) suggests that some museums and galleries may not be prepared for this degree of involvement and social media buzz. Massimiliano Gioni, artistic director of the New Museum in New York, also affirmed that this is a phenomenon that will influence museums and their visitors for coming years (Luke, 2019).

Sara Snyder, the chief of external affairs and digital strategies at the Smithsonian American Art Museum (SAAM) and Renwick Gallery in Washington, DC, initially saw Instagram's significant viral impacts in 2015, following the Renwick Gallery's restoration with the exhibition *Wonder* (Luke, 2019). For Snyder, that show "ended up being this Instagram sensation. We hadn't fully anticipated the degree to which people would refer to it as an 'Instagram show'" (Luke, 2019). There are undoubtedly other cases of "Instagrammable" exhibitions, such as the Frye Museum's show titled #SocialMedium or Yayoi Kusama's *Infinity Mirror*, that have drawn record numbers to museums worldwide (Blattmann, 2019). JiaJia Fei discusses how these shows have grown in popularity since the social media platform launched in 2010 (Blattmann, 2019). Moreover, the director of digital at the Jewish Museum of New York highlights how these artists' works have taken on new significance as a result of social media (Blattmann, 2019).

2.2.4 PARTICIPATORY CULTURE ON INSTAGRAM

Instagram allows for only a brief, superficial contact between users and art accounts, and in many situations, individuals make judgments based on their intuition (Kang & Chen, 2019). This superficial information can only serve as a gateway to the "art experience", Kang & Chen (2019) asserted, and cannot replace the live experience of viewing the actual "painting". Thus, while Instagram is the most popular social media platform in the art world, we know little about the characteristics of the most-liked artworks and the significance of

artist-follower interaction in those (Kang & Chen, 2019). The findings indicate that interactions significantly impact likes and comments, with uncertainty and curiosity being a primary cause for engagement (Kang & Chen, 2019). However, the authors stated that interaction with followers has little effect on their artistic production, even though artists anticipate more likes (Kang & Chen, 2019).

With the growth of the online artwork trade, it is critical to determine what kind of artworks motivate interaction. However, limited study has been conducted on the connection between artworks and social media interactions (Kang & Chen, 2019). Kang and Chen (2019) claimed that we live in an era where the conventional physical art experience is transforming into a more web-based one. Consequently, the online art industry has grown significantly over the last decade (by 72%), with more than 71% of art consumers making an online purchase in 2018 (McAndrew, 2018). As art enters the social media era (Fei, 2014; Hiscox, 2017), Instagram has the greatest interaction rates of all social media platforms, with 48% of art purchasers utilizing the platform (Hiscox, 2017; Capriotti, 2010). Additionally, museums' discourse has been redefined (Capriotti, 2010; Crenn & Vidal, 2007), and the connection between museums and the public has shifted toward more collaborative and participatory forms (Capriotti, 2010; Sigala, 2005; Kent, 2008). Social networking is increasingly being utilized to directly produce or plan works of art (Kang & Chen, 2019).

Apart from expanding and democratizing creative interaction with audiences (Walmsley, 2016), digital engagement has altered the role of the audience and blurred the lines between notions such as "professional" and "public" (Fleming, 2005). Before the Internet, art critics determined the value of works of art. Nowadays, Instagram has become an amazing platform for discovering, promoting, and criticizing art (Fleming, 2014). Hence, online art experiences enable adjusting a wide variety of artworks via a highly participatory process (Kang & Chen, 2019). Additionally, several museums organize exhibits with the assistance of "citizen curators" and "user-generated material" (Proctor, 2010). For example, the Brooklyn Museum organized an exhibition named "Click!" in which visitors provided comments and online voters rated artworks (Hart, 2010).

McLuhan (1964) claimed that media is an extension of humans and that interaction is a defining characteristic of the Internet. Consequently, online platforms, computers, and cellphones deconstruct how material is generated and accessed, and online content is uploaded, combined, fused, and rebuilt, resulting in the formation of a "participatory culture"

(Valcanis, 2011). According to Kang & Chen (2019), this is a culture that encourages and supports creative expression and civic involvement, significant support for producing and sharing one's work, and where experts advise newcomers informally. Additionally, participatory culture is one in which individuals think their contributions are significant and have a sense of social connection with one another (Jenkins, 2009). Likes and comments are the most prevalent and basic forms of engagement (Manovich, 2009). However, these connections on social media occur rapidly, which may be explained by the novelty or moment effect, and the audience intuitively responds with a work of art in seconds or even less (Kang & Chen, 2019).

In short, the art experience on social media has changed dramatically, and it is critical to understand what kind of artworks inspire engagement (Kang & Chen, 2019). However, the connection between artworks and social media engagement is a relatively new study topic, with few publications in this field, particularly for evaluating visual artwork (Kang & Chen, 2019). As Instagram is redefining how the art world conducts business, this may be a good moment to look at online art interaction and explore social media users' interactive behaviors in the art market (Kang & Chen, 2019).

2.2.5 PERCEPTION IN ART

As art begins with perception, we are inspired by the sensations we encounter, we notice beauty or are somehow motivated to communicate our perceptions or feelings about them (Jacquette, 2014). However, aesthetic experience is not confined to art. Perception is central to aesthetics in general, and the eighteenth-century German term "asthetik" originally denoted any sense of expertise or "intuition" (Jacquette, 2014). Nonetheless, suppose we define aesthetic quality as a property of artworks. In that case, there may be an objective answer to the question regardless of whether an object in art or nature is beautiful, based on the standards established by the concept's originator's appreciation for artistic beauty (Jacquette, 2014). This can be considered an unfortunate challenge since these criteria have not only been lost to time but have almost certainly included a wide variety of divergent views on what constitutes positive aesthetic worth in art from the start (Jacquette, 2014).

Therefore, according to Jacquette (2014), art in its totality is a collaboration between its creators and consumers. For the author, significant moments in art's creation, usage, and pleasure must be included in a comprehensive narrative simply because they are components

of the creative process and the reason for which art is created. They represent critical factors in determining the success or failure of an artwork, both for and from the viewpoint of people who produce and consume artwork (Jacquette, 2014).

Numerous studies have been conducted to determine which characteristics of artworks influence the aesthetic experience and which elements seem to play a significant part in their being considered aesthetically appealing (Williams et al., 2020). However, it has been suggested that in order to get a greater understanding of the aesthetic experience of art, investigations must examine the artist's motives, choices, and actions (Dutton, 2009; Tinio, 2013; Williams et al., 2018). Thus, Tinio (2013) has established a connection between the artist's experience while creating art and the perceiver's aesthetic experience. The author shows a link between three broad phases shared by many models of aesthetic experience and stages recognized in the process of artistic creation and production. To begin, an initial survey of the work is conducted, guided mainly by low-level visual processes required by the piece's final touches. The result is then further explored when higher-level cognitive processes come into play. Finally, emotional responses and aesthetic judgments are elicited in response to the artist's underlying concept (Tinio, 2013).

Thus, aspects of the artistic process are suggested to affect the perceiver's aesthetic experience, and there is some evidence for the creator's influence (Williams et al., 2020). It has been discovered that the perceiver's knowledge of the artist behind the artwork, their insight into their creative process, and simulating such behaviors all influence the aesthetic experience (Chamberlain et al., 2018; Leder et al., 2012). Certain studies have demonstrated that the artist's actions can influence aesthetic judgments when observers create or become familiar with congruent and incongruent actions simultaneously (Leder et al., 2012; Ticini et al., 2014), while others have demonstrated an increase in aesthetic appreciation whenever the production process is openly presented (Chamberlain et al., 2018; McLean et al., 2015). Alvarez et al. (2015) also investigated how matching works of art that were dissimilar in terms of artist type impacted not only aesthetic judgments of quality and preference but also eye movement behavior. The authors found that, although participants were not explicitly told about the author, art pieces produced by artists received higher-quality evaluations, but there were no preferred differences (Williams et al., 2020)

Ishiguro et al. (2016) also discovered that giving information about the creative process impacted gaze and, more specifically, that images containing identifiable

characteristics elicited more investigation. According to the perceptual fluency hypothesis, increased fluency, defined as the ease with which a stimulus may be identified or related to, results in the stimulus being regarded as more pleasant (Reber et al., 2004).

Additionally, it has been discovered that details such as the title and description of the artwork, the artist's identity, or information about the artist's style affect aesthetic experiences (Millis, 2001; Temme, 1992). Furthermore, viewers who attended lectures on art styles (abstract paintings) and gained knowledge about these methods rated abstract paintings more favorably than those who participated in a lecture on Renaissance art or received no lecture at all (Stojilović & Marković, 2014). Sbriscia-Fioretta et al. (2013) discovered that participants perceived more movement in actual artwork when compared to modified computerized versions, with these works receiving higher aesthetic ratings. Hence, the author, along with other litterateurs, asserted that the dynamics of the works of art in which the artist's brushstrokes are visible influenced these findings, implying the importance of the artist's actions behind the artwork (Williams et al., 2020; Sbriscia-Fioretta et al., 2013; Umiltà et al., 2012)). Aesthetic evaluations have also been shown to connect favorably with perceptions of movement within works of art and subsequent eye movement behavior (Brinkmann et al., 2020; Cattaneo et al., 2017; Mastandrea & Umiltà, 2016).

Art is a sophisticated visual experience that possibly combines emotional and cognitive components (Silvia, 2005), and, in general, perceptual processing is faster than cognitive processing. In 2003, Russell presented a comprehensive framework that encompasses perception of stimuli's fundamental affect-altering characteristics, motivations, empathy, emotional meta-experience, and affect regulation versus emotion control. Hence, the neurological mechanism associated with beauty is triggered immediately by the inherent formal characteristics of the artwork, which the brain analyzes automatically and rapidly (Kang & Chen, 2019). However, if the gatekeeper decides which works of art we will view, it begs the question of whether the gatekeeper's authority will replace critical examination of the artwork with an unthinking and fashion-driven mentality (Kang & Chen, 2019). Hence, the authors argued that one should ask what role will citizen curators have in the future.

According to Kang & Chen (2019), social media has altered the experience of enjoying images, and it offers a multitude of filters and design tools to enhance images. Numerous works of art are quickly published on social media in a "design + photography"

format, and for that reason, the authors argued that interaction becomes critical. Furthermore, popular culture has developed around social media platforms, such as “Instagrammism” and snapshot aesthetics (Manovich, 2016). Not only can social media provide a forum for researching contemporary art, but also for examining the development and dynamics of art cultures (Kang & Chen, 2019). According to Elmansy (2015), social media’s massive quantity of shares and likes diverts designers’ and artists’ attention away from the true creative process. Hence, rather than concentrating on creating artwork, reading other people’s shares and artwork consumes the time and effort needed to create your own. For this reason, the author claimed that while social networking platforms provide a wealth of inspiring materials, they should be used responsibly (Elmansy, 2015).

2.3 CREATIVITY

2.3.1 DEFINITION OF CREATIVITY

Creativity is a valuable and fascinating subject of study but a difficult one to define. This challenge is due to its varied expression in fields such as technical innovation, education, business, and the arts and sciences, which is why it is a crucial topic for investigation (Runco, 2014). Additionally, creative ability plays a role in the process of learning, adaptation, problem-solving, coping, but it also is influenced by personality, culture, genetics, social and environmental scenarios (Runco, 2014). Unmistakably, it can be expressed in various forms, so the objective of this section is to examine how creative potential has been defined.

The term “creativity” can be traced back to the Platonic account, especially the belief that creativity is essentially indescribable and emerges from divine inspiration (Gaut, 2012; Kronfeldner, 2009; Stokes & Paul, 2016). Understanding creativity as an unexplainable and enigmatic property found fertile ground in the Romantic tradition (Bridy, 2011). In this perspective, creativity is the product of geniality, and an author is an exceptional person who has the mysterious aptitude of producing something that others cannot (Moruzzi, 2020). The view of creativity as an occurrence that cannot be characterized nor measured is shared by thinkers like Hausman (Kronfeldner, 2009), Nietzsche, Schopenhauer (Gaut, 2012), Kant (Pluhar, 1987), and Miller (1996).

According to Catterall & Runco (2014), creativity is a complex concept that makes it impossible to agree on a widely accepted definition. This is because the broadly important definitions are only a set of attributes that belong to the creative process (Stana, 2017). Moreover, its definitions can also include terms that are not easily defined (Rowles, 2017). Creativity is an ambiguous concept, and the debate about its nature echoes the various connotations that the word can take on (Moruzzi, 2020). Although this plurality of views enriches the discussions, it also makes it harder to find a consensus about what creativity really is (Moruzzi, 2020). Additionally, as this debate encourages researchers to ask new questions and find new answers, creativity has become necessary for academic research (Stana, 2017).

Regarding the several definitions of creativity, there is a union of two predominant conditions for something to be acknowledged as “creative” (Elgammal & Saleh, 2015). Compared to prior work, the product must be novel and valuable (Paul & Kaufman, 2014). These criteria resonate with Kant’s definition of artistic genius, which also emphasizes “originality” and being “exemplary” as the main conditions (Elgammal & Saleh, 2015).

This interpretation is shared by Weisberg (2015), who describes creativity as “producing, sharing, or preserving something imagined and unforeseen.” The author captures two important specifications: creativity demands motivation and attention, and its aspiration is to generate something unique (Brandt, 2021). Weisberg (2009, 2015) also suggests dropping “utility” and “value” from the definition. The author's association with these adjectives disqualifies research that studies living creatives since the products or the persons one generation assumes to be creative may not be considered as such by the next (Weisberg, 2009). Additionally, that possibility would represent the unacceptable circumstance of constant updating of the understanding of creativity (Weisberg, 2009).

Moreover, creativity does not prevail without the approval of culture (Brandt, 2021). Czikkzentmilhayi (2003) wrote that “Bach and Van Gogh were not creative in their lifetime, because no one thought so, nor did they mysteriously become creative in the grave—what changed was our perception” (p. 241). This view is present in a plurality of creativity studies (Brandt, 2021). However, some psychologists can disagree with this view, as they prefer linking creativity with the mental process that creates the product (Taylor, 1988; Nanay, 2014).

The standard definition of creativity has contributed to important empirical and theoretical progress; however, it includes philosophical questions about the nature of novelty and the role of recognition and values in defining creativity (Martin & Wilson, 2017). Indeed, these arguments have been controversial in the seven decades of research but have not yet been answered (Adarves-Yorno et al., 2008; Boden, 1997; Kasof, 1995; Kaufman & Baer, 2012; Runco & Jaeger, 2012; Stein, 1974).

In terms of novelty, the standard definition does not recognize whether a new product is creative beyond its recognition (Martin & Wilson, 2017). Csikszentmihalyi (1999) even asks, “if an idea is not afforded recognition, can it be considered creative in the first instance?” (p. 314). Additionally, various biases were found in multiple contexts across cultures, laboratories, and organizational scenarios (Kasof, 1995; Hong & Lee, 2015; Hoelscher & Schubert, 2015). Plus, the judgment of creative value can be affected by the cultural environment, personal prejudice, social groups, and personal background or status (Adarves-Yorno et al., 2008; Charyton et al., 2008; Kaufman et al., 2010; Lau et al., 2004; Rocavert, 2016; Sayer, 2005; Silvia, 2008). Given these issues, relying on judges to recognize creativity can be questionable as it increases the odds of a success bias in theory. This happens because there may be more approaches to accomplish creative outputs that can be acknowledged (Rocavert, 2016; Runco, 2003).

Nevertheless, although there have been important advances in the methods used that can assist issues of bias, they do not concern the philosophical issue, nor do they provide practical directions to support investigation (Martin & Wilson, 2017). As a result, outside of the capacities of the researcher, or the predominant cultural environment, the theory requires criteria to distinguish a creative product, person, or process from an uncreative one (Martin & Wilson, 2017).

2.3.1.1 PERCEPTIONS OF CREATIVITY

When engaging in a creative process, we typically think about what we created and attempt to improve according to the feedback that we receive from other people and the feedback we give ourselves (Boden, 1997). According to Nęcka (2011), perception is the process by which we obtain, define, and systematize information and determine each moment of creation because the way people perceive things represents their opinion about them. For the author, “in the narrow, technical sense, perception means construction of

mental representations based on sensory processes, mostly auditory and visual” (Nęcka, 2011, p.219).

Perception is relevant not only in creating innovative and relevant ideas but also in recognizing and understanding them. Furthermore, without responsive and prepared audiences, creativity would be fruitless, and the issue is especially relevant in the area of art education (Nęcka, 2011). Despite this, we must not neglect that knowledge affects how people appreciate art to a tremendous extent (Nęcka, 2011). Every act of perceiving requires both bottom-up processes (when our perception directs our cognitive awareness to an object) and top-down processes (when our background knowledge influences the perceived object), even though their magnitude may vary depending on the object of perception and the general context in which it is being perceived (Nęcka, 2011). Correspondingly, the top-down approach to perception accentuates the relevance of psychological attributes and mindsets as determinants to how objects are perceived (mental sets, expectations, feelings and emotions, values, skills, and personality traits) (Nęcka, 2011). However, formerly acquired knowledge may also be advantageous in art assimilation and admiration since it makes people sensitive to those elements of a piece of art that are not as noticeable as others but still very crucial (Nęcka, 2011).

In this way, Nęcka (2011) argues that perception is determined not only by specific knowledge gained with art education but also by implied knowledge entrenched in one’s own experience. Furthermore, “frequent exposure to a complex stimulus, such as a painting or musical composition, makes people more and more sensitive to many concealed aspects of this stimulus” (Nęcka, 2011, p. 219). Moreover, the process of evaluating one’s own work must be autonomous, and that evaluation ability should be retained by the performing agent and not a product of external feedback (Briot et al., 2019; D’Inverno & McCormack, 2012; D’Inverno & Luck, 2012; Gaut, 2018).

Everyday perception has also been defined as a natural information process that generates images through “sensory transduction, feature extraction, and figural synthesis” (Runco et al., 1999). In this matter, creativity, in the form of new representations, can emerge when a controlled process alters automatic ones. Thus, art promotes a dialectic between the natural observation of an object and the imposition of the canons developed by art schools (Runco et al., 1999). However, Kuhn (1962) and Goodman (1968) allege that perception of the world depends on how the perceiver understands the world. Two characters who observe

the same phenomenon from two distinct approaches see two disparate things (Ferretti, 2006). In this sense, it is how we decipher the world that dictates what we see (Ferretti, 2006).

2.3.2 THE SOURCE OF CREATIVITY

Over the last decades, an array of theorists and researchers have made an effort to comprehend the sources of creativity and innovation in individuals (Adams, 2006). Although these endeavors have helped expand our understanding of the matter, there is an inconsistency between theorists and unsubstantiated hypotheses (Adams, 2006). Part of the challenge lies in the extensive, complex, and multifaceted nature and definition of creativity itself, as it can take many forms and be found in various environments (Adams, 2006). In addition, it is embodied by individuals with an extensive range of personal characteristics and backgrounds (Adams, 2006). However, cognitive psychology has contributed with the most fruitful and mature perspective on the sources of individual creativity (Adams, 2006). These achievements have concentrated on the cognitive processes behind creativity, the attributes of creative people, the evolution of creativity throughout an individual's life span, and the most favorable social scenarios for creativity (Simonton, 2000).

This is exemplified in the work of Teresa Amabile (1998), the head of the Entrepreneurial Management Unit at the Harvard Business School and Ph.D. in Psychology. For Amabile (1998), creativity emerges through the assemblage of three elements. The first element is knowledge (all the relevant insights an individual resorts to bear on a creative endeavor); followed by creative thinking (how individuals access problems, which depends on personality and thinking/working patterns); and, finally, motivation (a key to creative production, and the most decisive motivators are inherent passion and interest in the work itself).

According to Bleakley (2004), the creativity developing techniques and the creativity dimensions could occasionally overlap. Thus, it is fundamental to mention that the methods used to cultivate creativity could be identified with some forms of manifesting creativity itself (Cioca & Nerişanu, 2020). Affective environments can also influence creativity. Bledow et al. (2013) and Hirt et al. (2008) demonstrated in their studies that a positive state alters cognitive flexibility and creativity by contributing to a sense of freedom, removing constraints, and allowing an absolute and exploratory style of acknowledging information.

Another significant aspect regarding the source of creativity is seen in a Stanford study. This research acknowledges that creativity originates in the nerve cells situated in the cerebellum under the big brain (Saggar et al., 2015). The survey demonstrates that analytical and critical thinking occurs in the frontal lobes and is constrained from working candidly with solutions, ideas, and associations (Saggar et al., 2015). Nonetheless, a collaboration may occur in the form of switching between the higher cognitive brain and the cerebellum (Saggar et al., 2015). Professor Allan Reiss, one of the study's authors, argues that creativity is relevant not only in productive work but is also highly pertinent in interpersonal relationships (Saggar et al., 2015). For this reason, it is essential to examine the link between developing creativity and interpersonal relationships (Stana, 2017).

On the other hand, in spite of recent findings of creative processes, Lingen (2017) focuses on the shared nature of these by any endeavor where creative solutions are necessary, such as the arts, science, politics, business, or invention. The elemental design of the creative process has been studied by writers and thinkers such as Arthur Koestler, Alex F. Osborn, Sigmund Freud, and Carl Jung. In his book *Applied Imagination*, Osborn (1953) specifies the moments in the ideation process found in the work of those mentioned above: orientation (acknowledging the problem); preparation (assembling relevant data and analyzing influences); analysis (interpreting the suitable matter); ideation (finding alternatives through ideas); incubation (letting the ideas “set”); synthesis (putting the pieces together); and evaluation (judging the results and showing the work). Osborn’s list addresses the areas of ideation found in just about every field of human activity. Still, those steps have been altered by Lingen (2017) to meet the aspirations of the working artist:

- 1) **Open Mind:** “The first requirement in the creative process is having an open mind. This means abandoning any preconceived ideas and forgetting the notion of making Art.” (p. 11)
- 2) **Background:** “Creative acts are enmeshed with the times in which they are generated. Because of this symbiotic relationship, an understanding of the emerging and prevailing historical, sociological, philosophical, scientific, financial, political, popular thinking, and artistic background of the period are of importance.” (p. 11)
- 3) **Research:** “Conscious research is important because it leads to understanding and awareness, adding to the knowledge that is already stored in the subconscious.” (p. 11)
- 4) **Analysis/Questioning:** “This period calls for the artist to analyze, think about, mull over, and play mental games with the different possibilities in relation to his or her background and research.” (p. 11)
- 5) **Searching for a Personal Vision:** “During the search for a personal vision there is a sifting through the clutter of external influences; an assessing and questioning of

the art world, and deciding on what to agree or disagree with; a defining of passions about, and a zeroing in on an area of interest; a playing of mental games with the possibilities presented by any preliminary ideas; an assessment of your talents.” (p. 11)

- 6) **Gestation:** “(...) it has been found to be helpful to forget about the problem and relax or work on some other projects. By doing this, the subconscious is allowed a period to gestate and extract ideas from the soup that is the sum of all the artist’s experiences.” (p. 12)
- 7) **Eureka:** If the idea has not been arrived at by conscious effort, it may surface at some unexpected moment, possibly after a period of gestation. (p. 12)

THE IDEATION PROCESS

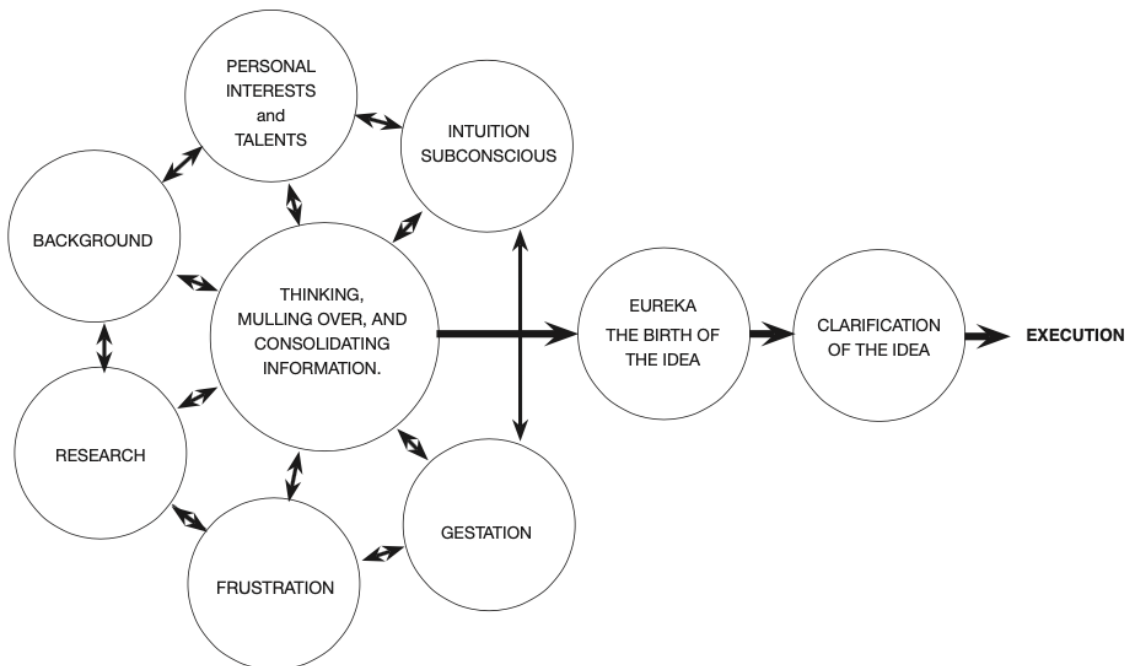


Figure 1- The Ideation Process by Lingen (2017)

This process demonstrates that ideas are the result of an association of conscious research, subjective considerations, and awareness being refined by the subconscious (Lingen, 2017). The author even states that “perception leads to conception” (p. 12). Moreover, the ideation process is not precise, and any combination of these elements may lead to an idea. For this reason, one’s background, intuition or research can be the center of how the other steps may be performed (Lingen, 2017).

2.3.3 CREATIVITY AND ART

Artists and the arts are closely connected to creativity, even if art is extensively or barely characterized as alluding to all forms or paintings alone (Martindale, 1999). They are specifically different exemplars of creativity, especially when their reputations linger for centuries (Lindauer, 2003). However, we have been living in an age where the photograph has largely substituted fine art, a period that has witnessed multiple movements in art provoked by artists moving from being craftsmen to intellectuals and who exploit artistic techniques as their instrument of expression (Colton, 2008).

According to Colton (2008), most of the time, the creativity of an artist is a primary consideration, and the beauty of their work is secondary. The author claims that artists are expected to create conceptually, and crafty, and art-lovers are expected to acknowledge both. Furthermore, Colton (2008) believes that it is not just creativity that the art enthusiast is looking for in the process, but also effort, technique, and perhaps other elements.

Several studies have postulated artistic creativity from a cognitive point of view by comparing the work of professional artists and learners. Wallas (1926) defined four phases in the creative process - preparation, incubation, illumination, and elaboration; and, according to Patrick (1937), these portray the self-reported methods of both professional and amateur illustrators. Some studies proposed that, when creating, an artist attempts to encounter a new problem and gradually generates mental images of an artwork to address this new idea (Okada & Ishibashi, 2017). However, when it comes to concept creation, Eindhoven & Vinacke (1952) discovered that artists altered plans regularly and practiced trial and error more often than non-artists.

When it comes to the source and process of creativity, together with the perception of the creating artist, Carl Jung was recognized for his awareness and interpretation of artistic creativity (Runco et al., 1999). The Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst who founded analytical psychology argued that psychology could never entirely comprehend the origin of any work of art, mainly because the creative desire is generated in the unconscious (Runco et al., 1999). Accordingly, in his work, Jung implemented a theoretical architecture of two kinds of art: a conscious type, controlled and in the personal sphere; and a collective unconscious type, that is limitless and the result of archetypes (symbolic images that appear

from the collective unconscious that the viewer relates to with great emotion) (Runco et al., 1999).

Having considered the work of Jung, it is also reasonable to look at the literature of psychology, creativity, and aesthetics. Indeed, these fields are necessary to comprehend the mechanisms of artistic activities, such as viewing and making art (Ishiguro & Okada, 2020). For Ishiguro & Okada (2020), these activities are even connected occasionally: art-making endorses aesthetic experiences in the course of art viewing, while aesthetic experiences foment creativity during art-making. Nevertheless, psychology researchers support contrasting approaches to the two activities. They focus on art-viewing behavior to analyze aesthetic experiences and art-making behavior to investigate creativity (Ishiguro & Okada, 2020).

Consequently, there is insufficient research on the connection between the two activities (Ishiguro & Okada, 2020). According to the authors, even though art-viewing truly inspires us to create work, the essential synergy between viewing and making art surpasses cultures and artistic fields (Ishiguro & Okada, 2020). Moreover, some distinguished artists have even taken inspiration from other artists' works. We can see Vincent van Gogh's example, which reportedly mimicked several artists such as Rembrandt, Eugene Delacroix, and Jean-Francois Millet (Homburg, 1996).

The concept of dual focus, initially used in social psychology, is also brought up in Ishiguro & Okada's work in 2018. The authors highlighted that the inspiration process included a dual focus, through which the spectators observed both their own and others' art-making. This hypothesis was experimentally tested through an online questionnaire survey with 400 adult participants that measured if, during the art viewing of four paintings, they evaluated and/or compared it with their art-making (Ishiguro & Okada, 2018). The results demonstrated that the participants who correlated their art with others' art during their art-viewing cultivated more intense inspiration for art-making (Ishiguro & Okada, 2018). Nevertheless, what kinds of creative results can be anticipated through such dual focus processes? Viewers may focus on the physical characteristics of a work of art, such as the colors and brush strokes (a process that can inspire the observers to implement these physical aspects in their own creations); in contrast, they can only focus on its psychological level features (the conceptual and imagined creative processes); and, finally, they may also direct

their attention at both the physical and psychological levels in their dual focus, that may endorse more complex creative results (Ishiguro & Okada, 2020). According to Ishiguro & Okada (2020), the level of creative outcomes depends upon the focus level of the dual focus.

For a feeling of inspiration, it is fundamental for viewers to interpret artwork by correlating it to themselves. This view is supported by Pelowski and his colleagues, who advocate that a self-related analysis during art admiration involves not only acknowledging the concept portrayed in the artwork but also combining their expectations in viewing art such as “understanding the artwork” or “deriving inferences from the artwork for their creative tasks” (Pelowski & Akiba, 2011; Pelowski et al., 2016); Pelowski et al., 2017). As a result, observers to become more creative focus their attention on the artist’s creative method or accomplishments and may feel inspired. However, viewers who only seek to appreciate the beauty of the work of art may not be inspired to create and may even instead feel antipathy towards the artist (Ishiguro & Okada, 2020).

It is now established from a variety of recent studies that inspiration from art viewing can contribute to multiple kinds of creative results, including motivation, ideas, and products (An & Youn, 2019; Ishiguro & Okada, 2018; Okada & Ishibashi, 2017). Nevertheless, people do not invariably find inspiration when they execute creative tasks after viewing art, even when experiencing a dual focus and making a social correlation (Ishiguro & Okada, 2020). Langer et al. (2010) stated that there is occasionally a negative effect on performance when experiencing social comparison. Smith (2000) also alleged that people also experience jealousy, embarrassment, or anger instead of inspiration, depending on the particular process of dual focus. Furthermore, an aspect deciding the consequent emotions and motivational experiences is whether the individual with whom the viewers compare themselves is superior (upward comparison) or inferior (downward comparison) (Ishiguro & Okada, 2020). Furthermore, social comparison research demonstrates that individuals may feel inspired during upward comparisons (Smith, 2000; Wood & Van der Zee, 1997).

In addition, existing research on the critical role played by creative cognition has found contradictory outcomes in terms of whether observing examples has a negative influence on creativity (e.g., Jansson & Smith, 1991; Smith et al., 1993) or a positive influence on creativity (e.g., (Sobel & Rothenberg, 1980; Yokochi & Okada, 2005). In 2017, Okada and Ishibashi investigated the effect of interaction with others’ artworks on individual creative output with three experiments, proving that “the relaxation of old constraints and

formation of new perspectives play an important role in creative drawing” (p. 1831). Experiment 1 showed that, while reproducing unfamiliar abstract drawings, participants could make creative drawings qualitatively divergent from the model drawings. In Experiment 2, results suggested that styles of artwork considered unfamiliar promote creativity in drawing, while styles considered familiar do not. In Experiment 3, where the type of interaction with the model works of art was manipulated, results demonstrated that copying and viewing artwork using an unfamiliar style enhances creativity in drawing, while simply thinking about different types of artistic representation does not do so (Okada & Ishibashi, 2017). According to these data, people may feel inspired when observing superior artwork if they have the intention to be creative and have “high self-efficacy in their creativity.” That is, they have the conviction that they can match the value of others’ works, which increases motivation in their own creative assignments (Ishiguro & Okada, 2020).

2.3.4 MEASURING CREATIVITY

Developing new ideas by any individual may be creative to that person; however, the results from personal creative endeavors are not generally appreciated by others (Edmonds & Candy, 2002). The remarkable results of creative work may be evaluated and valued by the domain experts, but they are not necessarily acknowledged as such outside that group (Edmonds & Candy, 2002). For this reason, according to Edmonds & Candy (2002), outstanding creativity is the one that has passed the test of time and is identified outside the specialist community.

Words such as “appropriateness, novelty, thoughtfulness, interestingness, and cleverness” are usually labeled as criteria for rating creativity (Diedrich et al., 2015). In addition, creativity is closely related to novelty and only associated with usefulness to some extent (Rowles, 2017). Researchers have designated models of creativity that illustrate why novelty isn’t enough to qualify as creative. In addition, other characteristics an idea or product must have, such as “usefulness, value, adaptiveness, task appropriateness, and fitness”, are also presented (Runco & Jaeger, 2012). According to Weisberg (2009), originality can also be quickly judged since it suggests a comparison with what already exists. Moreover, once identified and accepted, originality remains valid: “if we produce something that is new relative to some database, the product forever remains novel relative

to that database” (p. 119). Thus, the only scenario that could be altered is if new information were to come to light (Brandt, 2021).

As far as creativity tests are concerned, these experiments have scoped cognitive processes such as thinking differently, making associations, creating and assembling broad categories, or working on several ideas simultaneously (Cropley, 2000). In addition, these tests try to assess non-cognitive features of creativity such as motivation and personal characteristics such as flexibility, independence, or positive approaches to differentness (Cropley, 2000). Moreover, the multidimensional creativity approach they delineate demonstrates that this evaluation should be based on various tests rather than relying on a single score (Cropley, 2000).

Moruzzi (2020), after having recognized problem-solving, evaluation, and naivety as essential traits of creativity, proposed a model to measure it by examining the degree to which these components, together with efficiency, are acknowledged in the system under examination ($C \propto N + D + V + E$: Creativity is proportional to naivety (N), novelty and distance of connections (D), evaluative ability (V), and efficiency (E)). According to the author, this proposal contributes to achieving a deeper understanding of the elements responsible for the overall creativity of a system and avoids disciplinary compartmentalization and potential biases (Moruzzi, 2020). For example, the outcomes that would be characterized as non-creative, either because the output is not novel enough or is not impactful enough in the relevant historical context, can be judged in relation to the inner elements of the system itself (Moruzzi, 2020).

In a study that measured the creativity of higher education students, Thomas and Chan (2013) investigated creativity in multiple areas, such as art, aesthetics, creative industries, design, new media, engineering, and technology. The authors reported that some models could evaluate a creative product, individual, potential, and place. Nevertheless, the attention on the creative person requires the use of a model that captures occurrences as they arise in real-time, and Thomas and Chan (2013) acknowledged the social and cultural schemes within which novel ideas occur. By the same token, Kusuma (2010) asks for an evaluation model that adopts capable descriptors using examples, portfolio-based evaluations, self-evaluations, and peer evaluations combined with mixed methods research. Correspondingly, one of the models suggested by Parker (2013), former Director of Research at Creativity, Culture, and Education (CCE), is the assessment for learning (AfL).

This model is different from the common ones that adopt value tests via “pen-and-paper measurements”, and regardless of being a constructive approach to learning, it is supported by research and practice. Consequently, Lucas et al. (2012) preferred AfL when they created the trial tool applied in their tests to decide the most effective model for assessing creativity.

As far as rating procedures for rating products’ creativity, the Creative Product Inventory was developed, which measures generation, reformulation, originality, relevancy, hedonics, complexity, and condensation (Taylor, 1975). A few years later, Besemer & O’Quin (1987) created the Creative Product Semantic Scale based on three dimensions: novelty, resolution, and elaboration and synthesis. These dimensions are evaluated by raters using a semantic-differential rating scale (e.g., “surprising—unsurprising,” “logical—illogical,” or “elegant—inelegant”) with 43 items (Besemer & O’Quin, 1999).

Prior results from a study also demonstrated that variables could alter creative performance (Zhou, 1998). For example, individuals who receive positive feedback delivered in an informational style and individuals who worked in a high task autonomy work environment generated the most creative ideas (Zhou, 1998). A meta-analysis of 62 experimental and ten non-experimental studies was administered as well to judge creativity variables (Davis, 2009). While the results indicate that positive mood improves creativity, the intensity of that effect is conditional upon the referent mood state (Davis, 2009). In general, a circumstantial angle of mood creativity relations is supported (Davis, 2009).

Turning now to the experimental evidence from open-ended interviews, Sakamoto (2000) conducted interviews starting with the proposition “tell me about your experience with creativity in the way that you prefer.” The research conclusion focused on creative activity subjects: the concept, the origin, the facilitating factors, and the conditions that help creativity (Sakamoto, 2000). The developments highlight that the human being is gifted with creative potential, cultivating it and demonstrating it in the existence of social and personal stimuli (Sakamoto, 2000). According to Goldschmidt (2015),

“the artist is able to take advantage of stimuli it encounters, randomly or intentionally, in every environment. (...) The structure and activity of neural network patters in memory activation while attending to stimuli, and the artist’s sensitivity, expertise, visual literacy and flexibility to focus and defocus attention, are combined to enable creative idea generation.” (p. 1)

Creativity tests judge particular cognitive processes, such as thinking differently, formulating combinations, design and associate broad categories, or working on many ideas

at the same time (Cropley, 2000). Tests also measure noncognitive forms of creativity like ambition, and personal characteristics such as adaptability, patience, autonomy, or positive reactions to differentness (Cropley, 2000). Nonetheless, they are best thought of as portions of creative potential, as creative efforts rely upon further determinants not measured by creativity tests (Cropley, 2000). The multidimensional creativity concept demonstrates that evaluation should be established by various analyses, instead of relying on a single score (Cropley, 2000). Batey (2012) stated that

“the scientific study of creativity has proven a difficult undertaking. Researchers have employed a diversity of definitions and measurement methods. As a result, creativity research is underrepresented in the literature and the findings of different studies often prove difficult to draw into a coherent body of understanding.” (p. 55).

It can be seen from the above research that it is possible to measure creativity, and according to Stana (2017), that skepticism should not exist. Indeed, there is no preferred model for measuring creativity, and it is a reality that distinct models assess divergent aspects of a work. However, the previously mentioned author suggested that institutions adopt a mixture of models in their evaluation methods, as it is very achievable for institutions to produce precise and practical approaches to measure creativity within their established fields (Stana, 2017). Additionally, the author suggested that these combine goal setting and consideration as relevant elements in the teaching and assessing creativity. These contemplative and intellectual processes can boost the development of critical thinking abilities, and for that reason, should be promoted at each phase of the process (Stana, 2017).

In 2003, Thrash & Elliot created the Inspiration Scale (IS), a psychological scale of individuals' trait inspiration that consists of two subscales of inspiration: frequency and intensity. Each subscale includes four items, such as “I experience inspiration” and “I am inspired to do something.” Regardless of the possibility of this self-report scale being subjective, this measure empowered researchers to initiate empirical studies of inspiration (Oleynick et al., 2014). Applying this scale, it was discovered that the personal propensity to encounter a feeling of inspiration had positive linkages with personality characteristics associated with creativity, like receptivity to experience and inherent motivation (Thrash & Elliot, 2003; Milyavskaya et al., 2012; An & Youn, 2019). Later, Ishiguro & Okada (2016) developed a Japanese-language version of Thrash & Elliot's IS (2003) and evaluated a sample of undergraduates who were asked to respond to the psychological scale to evaluate the trait of inspiration from external stimuli. The results revealed that art majors feel

inspiration more commonly and intensively than non-art majors, also indicating that accomplishments and education experiences through artistic and creative tasks are connected to individuals' attributes of inspiration (Ishiguro & Okada, 2016).

Another study by An & Youn (2019) revealed that inspiration from artwork promoted participants' creativity in alternative creative spheres. In their experiment, the participants were challenged to admire works of art, respond to the IS, and produce creative ideas linked to a business context (e.g., designing a computer keyboard, naming a pasta brand, or thinking of ways to recycle) (An & Youn, 2019). The results showed that art-viewing boosted the recurrence of idea production and the originality of the ideas and that that applied across various creative areas (An & Youn, 2019).

Regarding creative assessment in the arts, the scene is questionable because, according to Brandt (2021), experts can hold different opinions, judgment can be imprecise or biased, and points of view can be diverse. As Kreitler & Kreitler (1983) stated,

“the situation is reminiscent of forecasting the weather or predicting a cosmic event. The applied formulae may be right but some of the needed information is not precise enough and other information is missing. Hence, the interpersonal agreement in regard to artistic value judgments will not be absolute or dramatically high” (p. 209).

Particularly in modernized and aesthetically pluralistic times, there is no assurance of a constant unanimity for controversial work. For these reasons, Brandt (2021) maintains that “relying on subjective external judgments in order for a work to clear a bar for creativity is perilous” (p. 16)

With some effectiveness, previous research in the field of creativity has also utilized self-reported accomplishment or interest in creative activities as markers of creativity (Hocevar, 1981; Runco et al., 1990). These metrics elicit responses from people about their level of interest or real creative accomplishments and seem to be less subject to inflation and social desirability (Carson et al., 2005). Additionally, some research indicated that self-assessed creativity correlates with some measures of creativity (Reiter-Palmon et al., 2012). Furnham and colleagues assessed students' creativity using the Barron Welsh Art Scale and a Five-Factor personality exam (Furnham, 1999; Furnham et al., 2006). The authors discovered a strong relationship between self-assessed creativity and creativity as evaluated by the Barron Welsh Art Scale, as well as a connection between self-assessed creativity and conscientiousness (although the correlation with Openness to Experience missed significance).

2.3.5 CREATIVITY AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Some literature has agreed that one particular implication of social media usage centers on human creativity. However, questions remain about how social media use influences creativity and whether it helps or inhibits creative thinking (Acar et al., 2019). Creativity and human development formed the central focus of a study by Runco (2015), in which the author cautioned about the negative impact of social media usage and explained that exaggerated engagement with those outlets might result in crucial decreases in creativity. Furthermore, the author argued that social media was potentially a risk for two reasons: firstly, it prevents users from engaging more in creative tasks due to the constant growth of users and the amount of time they spend online; secondly, social media may promote social pressure on people with creative ideas because of its interactive features, which permit them to see the reactions and expectations of the other users (Runco, 2015). As a result, social media users may be more extrinsically motivated to create because of the comments, likes, and shares, rather than intrinsically motivated to create, leading us to a real “creativity crisis” (Runco, 2015).

However, the association between creativity and social media use can be considered from a brighter perspective. From this point of view, while social media generates a free market of ideas for everyone who has access to the internet, anyone with new ideas can present them at little or no cost and access others' ideas without restrictions (Acar et al., 2019). Thus, anyone can view, share, and take inspiration from the ideas of others; and then adapt it and share their own version, which may later become highly valued by others (Piller et al., 2012). Moreover, feedback is so quickly available on social media that it lets users know if their new idea is recognized as valuable by others (Acar et al., 2019). This means that the value of ideas after they are shared on social media can substantially increase (Acar et al., 2019). Furthermore, social media contributes with a constantly active audience, and even though this may be a concern, as Runco (2015) argues, creative ideas may take advantage of social feedback and incentive. Plus, the presence of an audience can also encourage its users to be creative, a statement that is consistent with Rubenson & Runco's (1992) psycho-economic theory of creativity that claims that not only social settings serve as a marketplace for ideas but also as a consequence, the quality of the ideas or products will naturally increase (Runco, 2015).

Another nuance explored in Acar et al.'s (2019) work is how social media provides an egalitarian context for creative expression. In comparison with traditional media or artistic platforms, where creativity is articulated and acknowledged by a finite number of people for a restricted number of creators, social media promotes an accessible, free, diversified, and ample system of creators and judges who may value ideas that some experts might not (Acar et al., 2019). Consequently, the field is less exclusive and selective and allows for a closer relationship between the public and the creator (Acar et al., 2019). Plus, it contributes to an outlet for personal expression, which is crucial for creative thinking (Barron, 1968; Ekvall & Ryhammar, 1999). Therefore, some say that social media “democratizes” creativity (Allen et al., 2012).

The connection between creativity and social media can be likewise explored in terms of human motivations and needs. Regarding the uses and gratification theory of (Katz et al., 1973), individuals are attracted to social media because it can fulfill specific needs, and when these are met, they feel gratification. According to Whiting & Williams's research, some of these needs, such as social interaction and self-expression, can potentially influence the creation of new ideas (2013). However, as individuals become more dependent on these social networks, they may feel less inclined to find gratification through creative endeavors outside these platforms (van den Eijnden et al., 2016; Acar et al., 2019).

Similarly, according to Acar et al. (2019), it is also imaginable that the frequent use of social media for an extended period can determine its users' ideational behavior, meaning “actual behaviors that reflect an individual's use of, appreciation of, and skill with ideas” (Runco et al., 2001, p 393). From this point of view, social media can, on a worldwide scale, be considered a brainstorming place that influences the creative capacity of its users to cultivate ideas and receive consequent feedback (Wagner & Jiang, 2012). In addition, it is relevant to raise another topic in Runco's (2015) work that focuses on the fact that social media was intrinsically designed to evoke interaction. In light of the author's research, creativity profits more from social media when users create posts instead of only interacting. Moreover, a longitudinal study of creativity and social media by Kim et al. (2009) reports that dynamic and proactive people are likely creative actors; hence these users are most probably using social networks to their creative advantage as compared to reactive users (Acar et al., 2019).

Several lines of evidence also suggest that creativity blooms in appreciation and complementary atmospheres and in communities where there is the space to create, contemplate, share, investigate, assemble, dispute, and reflect on ideas (Corso & Robinson, 2013). In fact, individuals are usually engaged in what they do best when they are motivated and have the outlet to explore their skills and knowledge (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). Also, this brings relevance to Csikszentmihalyi's (1996) notion of social creativity and its emphasis that it is not the individual who should be analyzed when investigating how creativity is promoted, but the community he or she is in. This statement suggests a variety of shareholders where the ideas are valued (Corso & Robinson, 2013) .

One study by Sutanro et al. (2013) examined how using social media can enhance students' creative thinking. Detailed examination showed that creativity and cooperation within the digital community were enabled when incorporating social media into a geography class. The research found that social media increased the students' creative thinking as demonstrated by the growth of their ease of expression, adaptability, creativeness, and amplification in producing problems and solutions within the digital community (Sutanro et al., 2013). Similarly, Tapscott & Williams (2008) argue that technology and social media are linked effectively, permitting learners to generate creative thoughts, expertise, and capabilities to the formerly impossible extent.

Another critical aspect of how social media has been impacting its users is the consistent implementation and update of multiple formats and tools on Instagram to promote the creativity of posts, such as filters and stories (Casaló et al., 2020). Therefore, "content uploaded to Instagram is perceived as more creative than content uploaded onto other social networks" (Casaló et al., 2020, p. 417). Consequently, perceptions of creativity and positive emotions may be generated in users, which are crucial concepts to help us better understand the affective side of Instagram. These perceptions incite users' reactions, such as emotional engagement and interaction intentions (Casaló et al., 2020). Indeed, the aesthetical essence of Instagram makes it the most appropriate platform for spreading creativity (Buryan, 2018). The creativity in the photos and videos on Instagram is one of the main reasons for using the social platform (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016c), and the several content formats the platform permit its users to foster their creativity and to engage their follower community (Buryan, 2018).

Another significant factor about social media is how it plays a role in the evolution of a personal knowledge scheme and individual creativity (Chai & Fan, 2017). According to Chai & Fan (2017),

“a correlation is seen between the usability dimension of social media and the creative expression dimension, with an especially significant positive connection between perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness, as well as capturing and challenging” (p. 33).

For the authors, who attempted to evaluate social media and creative expression in design education,

“the adoption intention of social media is positively correlated with creative expression, while the usability dimension of social media has positive correlation with broadenings and negative correlation with surroundings” (Chai & Fan, 2017, p. 33).

However, the research concluded that neither is significant. In fact, it revealed that indiscriminately gathering knowledge through social media will not improve students' creativity. Alternatively, excessive use prevents us from comprehending our real surroundings and being inspired (Chai & Fan, 2017). Therefore, when extensively used, it develops into a crucial atmosphere in student learning and evolution, that may have a positive or negative influence on personal creativity (Chai & Fan, 2017). As a consequence, if users avoid the communication between social media and the real world, their awareness of their environment and consequent inspiration will be compromised. In this sense, social media users should balance the variety of the channels they use to foster creative inspiration (Chai & Fan, 2017).

According to the previously mentioned data about the linkage between social media and creativity, one can affirm that the influence on creativity is not homogeneous. On the one hand, social media offers a beneficial atmosphere for creative thinking, different ideas and exposes its users to several perspectives, helping creative ideation (Acar et al., 2019). On the other hand, an overuse of these platforms may represent a negative influence when it comes to time consumption, social pressure, and moderated obstruction of reality.

3 – METHODOLOGY

To better understand the effect of art Instagram accounts on their followers, this study used a qualitative method to determine how these social media accounts may influence their followers' self-perceptions of creativity. Participants – am who follow art accounts and professional artists – were invited to participate in focus groups and semi-structured interviews, which are meant to unfold conversationally and allow participants to explore topics they consider important (Longhurst, 2010).

Self-evaluation or self-perceptions of creativity were identified in several studies as an indicator for creativity (Shalley et al., 2009; Zhou et al., 2008). Two assumptions underpin the use of self-report measures: one need is that participants are aware of the question being addressed (personality trait, values, or creativity); the second is that participants are willing to provide accurate information about them (Bing et al., 2007). Concerns regarding score distortion owing to honesty and social desirability have been highlighted with regard to a variety of self-perception-based methods (Heidemeier & Moser, 2009). However, the problems associated with self-reports of creativity are also comparable to those related to self-reports of any other kind of performance (Reiter-Palmon et al., 2012).

It is necessary to emphasize that this thesis will be exploratory in nature. Since very little study has been done on the topic, this research sought to offer descriptive information and a more profound knowledge of the subject. This study does not necessarily attempt to provide definite answers or conclusions but rather provide paths and guidelines for further research into the topic. Accordingly, the research will examine the experiences that industry professionals have when using Instagram. It also aims to offer a creative overview of their followers' experiences and knowledge. The underlying topics are primarily focused on ideas aimed at comprehending personal, professional, and societal viewpoints. These concerns are best handled via qualitative research, which enables in-depth data exploration.

3.1 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHIES

According to Creswell (2013), there are four research philosophies: epistemological, ontological, axiological, and methodological. While the concepts are closely linked, they have distinct features. Nonetheless, the author mentioned above emphasizes the critical need to understand the “philosophical assumptions and interpretative frameworks that underpin

qualitative research” (p. 13). Adhering to one of the four philosophical assumptions (ontology, epistemology, axiology, or methodology) may serve as the primary driving element of all qualitative research while comprehending one’s worldview via interpretative frameworks can influence the course of this research (Creswell, 2013). Thus, the next section of this chapter will provide an outline of the philosophical assumptions and interpretative framework that inform this study, as well as the methodology used to conduct this thesis research.

3.2 EPISTEMOLOGY

According to Browaeys and Fisser (2012), epistemology is concerned with “the thoughts, the intelligence, the knowledge, the consciousness, the imagination, the perceptions, and the sensation” (p. 208). Also referred to as the “theory of knowledge,” epistemology is the process of a researcher trying to create a system that links ideas and frames a representation of the study topic in reference to the external world (Browaeys & Fisser, 2012). Thus, doing qualitative research with the epistemological premise in mind makes every effort to come as close to the study participants as possible. Hence, as knowledge is gained through the subjective experiences of participants (Creswell, 2013), I felt that this framework best suited the purpose of the research: to gain knowledge about how Instagram art accounts may affect artists’ and their followers’ self-perceptions of creativity through direct responses from participants. Additionally, a prevalent interpretative framework in epistemology is interpretivism (Creswell, 2013), which will influence the present study.

3.3 SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM

Social constructivism, often referred to as interpretivism (Denzin & Lincoln, 2007), maintains that no whole truth or singular reality can be discovered via study. In interpretivism, individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work via interpretivism. Additionally, they generate subjective meanings for their experiences that are varied and complicated, prompting the researcher to look for unpredictability rather than categorize or think about the implications (Creswell, 2013).

In practice, the questions used to collect data for a qualitative study using an interpretive method are broad and generic, allowing participants to create meaning for a

situation, often generated through discussions with others (Creswell, 2013). The social constructivism method is frequently used in qualitative research because it encourages academics to be inductive rather than seeking confirmation or denial (Johari, 2009). Thus, this research adopts an interpretivism perspective, which enables an understanding of how events and ideas, as well as categories, are appraised, conceptualized, and understood, as they are believed to affect individual behavior (Kaplan & Duchon, 1988). Thus, information about the impact of Instagram art accounts on artists and their followers is collected entirely from the views of participants, since the research objective is to record their experiences rather than to attempt to validate assumptions.

3.4 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Social constructivist specialists often use a qualitative approach, which may be described as “an interpretative, naturalistic approach to the world” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3). Additionally, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) remark that scientists who use a qualitative approach examine objects in their natural environments, attempting to make sense of or interpret occurrences regarding the meaning individuals assign to them. Others define qualitative research as “data that represent feelings, thoughts, ideas, understanding – non-numeric data” (Quinlan, 2011, p. 105). Social constructivist researchers examine data at many levels to ensure a comprehensive approach that elicits different perspectives from participants instead of a positivist strategy that acknowledges a single reality (Creswell, 2013).

Polkinghorne said in 2005 that the past 40 years had seen considerable development in a range of qualitative research techniques. As a result, the present variety of qualitative techniques is “a matrix of mixed methods developed in different disciplines and based on different ideas of science” (Polkinghorne, 2005, p. 137). Focus groups, in-depth interviews, ethnography, narrative research, and phenomenology are just a handful of the many approaches used to gather qualitative data (Creswell, 2013).

Regardless of the method or combination of methodologies used, the overarching goal of qualitative data researchers is to clarify collected information in a manner that captures the experience of the general population who provided the information or content, rather than relying on preset metrics (Creswell, 2013; Polkinghorne, 2005).

Qualitative research is frequently condemned for lack of scientific rigor. For this reason, with an inadequate explanation for the techniques used, a lack of openness in the analytical processes, and results that are simply a collection of researcher-biased personal views. As a result, qualitative investigations must be performed with well-defined objectives, a well-described organizational method, and a low level of personal bias. In this instance, it will be crucial in eliciting the disclosure of followers of art-related Instagram accounts' self-perceptions of creativity. Moreover, the direction of the findings and conclusions will be highly dependent on the interviewers' ability to conduct thorough and unbiased interviews.

3.5 METHODOLOGY

This study conducted semi-structured interviews with artists and focus groups with the art Instagram accounts followers. These techniques were chosen for data collecting because they are ideally suited for delving into respondents' views and opinions on complex topics and allow for the exploration of more information and clarification of responses. Thus, these interview styles are based on face-to-face contact and can be utilized to receive and transmit the information. An interview guide was created to organize the interview into topics, chronology, and suggested questions. This approach was adopted to ensure that each respondent gets the same questions throughout the interview, ensuring that I obtain comparable information from each one. It also aimed to ensure a more nuanced and comprehensive knowledge of the participants.

3.5.1 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

The primary method of data collection was semi-structured interviews. While the interviews were structured around a series of predetermined questions, this framework allowed for some flexibility since some extra questions were asked throughout the interview. Due to this flexibility, more information on subjects' life experiences, emotions, sentiments, values, and perceptions of the phenomena being researched may be gleaned via the study of respondents' words and behavior (Brennen, 2012; Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Additionally, to make sure that participants could provide honest descriptions of their views on the topic under consideration, questions were constructed in an open-ended manner.

3.5.2 FOCUS GROUPS

Focus groups are, according to Beck and colleagues (1986), “an informal discussion among selected individuals about specific topics”(p. 73). They are a well-organized sequence of conversations intended to elicit views on a particular subject in a permissive, non-threatening atmosphere (Krueger & Casey, 2015). They are qualitatively distinct from other techniques in which data may be gathered separately since they encourage spontaneous contact amongst participants (Gundumogula, 2020). The kind and breadth of data produced through group social contact are often more prosperous and more detailed than that acquired via one-on-one interviews (Thomas, et al., 1995). Furthermore, this approach delves deeply into how group members believe and feel about the subject (Gundumogula, 2020). Focus groups demonstrate a strong potential for broadening topic exploration to produce additional information about selected goals and hypotheses (Gundumogula, 2020). Due to their adaptability, richness, and variety of benefits in data collection, focus groups have become an essential technique for qualitative data collection (Gundumogula, 2020)

3.6 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

The interviews and focus groups were done via Zoom video conferences and lasted about half an hour for semi-structured interviews and approximately an hour and a half for focus groups. The first part of the discussion was devoted to developing empathic connections with the respondents and providing an overview of the study. Additionally, the participants were reassured of their identity’s confidentiality and that any information gathered would be utilized only for the purpose of the study. Participants’ ages, educational backgrounds, and occupations were also elicited.

Even though the interview script (see Appendix A) served as the basis for the interviews performed in this study, it is critical to note that not every semi-structured interview and focus group followed it exactly. The main focus was on responding to each research question that was performed in line with the study’s objective. Thus, throughout the interviews, I aimed to direct interviewees’ responses to the research questions without imposing my personal bias on them. I attempted to offer broad but straightforward questions in order to give respondents a more significant share of the talking time. As the interviews progressed and the respondents felt more comfortable, I also took the initiative to ask follow-

up questions whenever they had more information to disclose. To ensure the guide's efficacy, while ensuring that interviews did not exceed the time limit, the interview script was evaluated via the use of a pilot test.

The focus groups and interviews were inspired by Sakamondo's (2000), which began with the premise "tell me about your Instagram experience with creativity in the way that you prefer." Additionally, two aspects of the creative event were considered: the way of looking at an object and the manner in which creative activity is conducted (Sakamoto, 2000). Following that, followers of Instagram accounts were questioned about whether they felt inspired or motivated to start an artistic activity in the post-content-consumption phase, as well as how the stimuli received from the accounts influenced their self-perceptions of creativity and the artists' creative processes. Thrash & Elliot's incorporated their Inspiration Scale (IS) in the interviews (see Appendix B), since the personal propensity to encounter a feeling of inspiration had positive linkages with personality characteristics associated with creativity, like receptivity to experience and inherent motivation (Thrash & Elliot, 2003; Milyavskaya et al., 2012; An & Youn, 2019); and also that accomplishments and education experiences through artistic and creative tasks are connected to individuals' attributes of inspiration (Ishiguro & Okada, 2016). Participants were invited to complete the psychological scale at the start of the focus groups and interviews to assess the characteristic of inspiration from external stimuli.

3.7 SAMPLE

When conducting interviews for empirical research, it is critical to establish specific criteria to guarantee that respondents can adequately reply to the interview questions. A comprehensive assessment procedure was used to choose the best suitable volunteers for this study. The study sampled Portuguese professional artists who declared themselves as such on their Instagram profiles, as well as Instagram users who follow several art Instagram accounts. The convenience sample selection could be justified by the research population directly suiting the aim of the study, which aided in gaining insight into the phenomenon of Instagram art-related content's effect on perceptions of creativity.

Due to the study's qualitative character, limited sample size was used to better understand participants' ideas, emotions, and experiences about their exposure to Instagram art-related material and its impact on their self-perception of creativity. Following that, to

guarantee that the study wouldn't be prejudiced, the respondents were from various educational backgrounds and occupations. The sample selection process eliminated the potential of gender or age bias since respondents were from both genders and ranged from 22 to 55 years.

3.7.1 PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

The sample size for the focus groups and interviews was 13 male and female professional artists and people who follow art-related Instagram profiles, ranging from 22 to 55 years. The five artists interviewed included an oil painter, a plastics artist, a photographer, an illustrator, a sketch artist, and a painter and sketch artist with degrees in Design, Sculpture, Architecture, and Fine Arts. The remaining participants were an architect, a businesswoman, a copywriter and creative, a video producer, the digital design director at a social media agency, a social media manager, a digital designer, and an account manager at a marketing agency. Regarding these respondents, their educational backgrounds included design, art history and conservation, marketing and advertising, multimedia and audiovisuals, industrial design and architecture, political science, and public relations.

According to Thrash & Elliot's (2003), "inspiration is a positive emotion that consists of three components – evocation, motivation and transcendence." Regarding their Inspiration Scale (see Appendix B), when asked the extent to which the participants frequently feel inspiration, more than 50% answered that they experience and feel inspiration. Moreover, when asked how strongly their experiences with the emotion of inspiration were, approximately 50% also responded that they experience inspiration "somewhat strongly."

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

Data analysis is critical in inductive qualitative research because it establishes the point of saturation, or the point at which "no new codes or concepts emerge" (van Rijnsoever, 2017, p. 2). To do this, each interview was transcribed verbatim, the data was imported into the qualitative data analysis computer software Quirkos and then coded using three phases of coding: open, axial, and selective (Creswell, 2013). At the open coding stage, the interview transcripts were reviewed multiple times to discover similarities and

significant themes that arose from the data (Creswell, 2013). In the second coding stage, data were reorganized and linked categories found in each transcription (Creswell, 2013). Finally, the data analysis process was completed using selective coding, which unified all the categories and resulted in a discursive collection of theoretical propositions (Creswell, 2013). Furthermore, the data collection and analysis processes were repeated until no new codes emerged. Applying this technique, the major themes were classified and then integrated to create a theoretical proposal. The topics were categorized according to their relevance to answer the research question: **How does the consumption of art-related content on Instagram influence followers' and artists' self-perceptions of creativity?**

4 – FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 FINDINGS

4.1.1 THE FIRST IMPACT

Each respondent was first asked to “Tell me about your Instagram experience with creativity in the way that you prefer”. In response to this initial prompt, members in the focus groups immediately discussed the professional and personal motives behind it:

For me, there are the personal and the professional levels. On a personal level, I can see how people have discovered on Instagram a way to be creative, even those that don't use cameras. There are aesthetically interesting things being posted. On the other hand, for my work, I follow many pages of companies or studios, and can see it is very explored from a creative point of view. Not as an end in itself but as a way to show creative work (**Participant 5**).

I can say that Instagram is a work tool for me, I use it as a source for many things. I was initially reluctant and resisted joining for a while, but at the moment it is very useful, not only to follow other agencies that do similar work to mine, but there are a lot of people creating alternative, different and creative content, and scrolling through all of that helps me when I am faced with new projects at work. Images come up and they often come from what I see on Instagram. For me, the personal and the professional spheres merge together (**Participant 3**).

However, some stated that they used it exclusively for work purposes, like a “mood board” (**Participant 8**), or personal purposes, such as an “distraction” (**Participant 6**), to see “different forms of art” (**Participant 7**), or just for the aesthetic pleasure (**Participants 1 and 4**). In fact, the word “aesthetics” was often used in this initial discussion of the focus groups, and there was even a categorization of the many ways in which individuals handled aesthetics on their online profiles:

You can group people according to their aesthetics: the group that posts a lot of zoomed-in, detailed images; the group that only photographs in analog; the group that doesn't use any filters or effects. The categorization of these groups has an interesting social effect (**Participant 3**).

There are two kinds of people using Instagram: those who are focused on sharing experiences and those who have a concern for the aesthetics of it. This aesthetic work of building an identity for their profiles. I follow most accounts for aesthetic reasons, and avoid those that share content without having this concern (**Participant 2**).

As for the artists interviewed, when given the same first prompt, all of the creators confirmed that they utilized it as a means of showcasing their work. Apart from acknowledging its benefits, such as utility and inspiration, the majority of them also recognized certain negative points, such as comparison, anxiety and overwhelmingness:

I don't know about most people, but when I seek inspiration I most readily go on Instagram and see visual impactful things, such as pictures, drawings or paintings, to see if I can unblock something within me. And these can go either for really creative work. (...) The dark part, obviously, is feeling that everyone is doing more than you and better than you, and that you will never, ever get to the point that they're at. So that can be a bit diminishing. (...) So my Instagram experience with creativity is a bit 50/50. I think it depends on how I'm feeling (**Artist 1**).

My experience with Instagram is mixed because you can show a lot and become subject of a lot of criticism, that can reach you very easily. Showing my work easily is a very good thing about it. However, on the other side, you become very vulnerable to judgement of people, messages you receive (**Artist 2**).

I think more than creativity, it is a source of inspiration, more like a mood board. However, it is so much and so quickly, it can be damaging (**Artist 3**). On the flipside, it can cause a lot of anxiety, having to keep up and constantly have new content to show. (...) Comparison is also very present, seeing such great artists at all times, thinking they are so much better than us. It is important to learn how to keep a distance in order to focus on what you want to do. There is this duality of creativity and anxiety (**Artist 4**).

4.1.2 INSTAGRAM ALGORITHM AND FOLLOWERS

The follower community and their engagement with the platform were also assessed. As for the artists, some acknowledged that the formation of a new network between fans and other artists may be considered as beneficial not just for understanding “what the struggles are” (**Artist 1**) and exchanging comments and ideas about work, but also for receiving assistance and helping out younger artists who are starting out (**Artist 4**). On a different note, the “anxiety for fear of losing followers and having to post more” (**Artist 4**) was considered a negative trait of this network. Moreover, they mentioned the importance of the community's feedback on artists:

Artists live off feedback from people, it doesn't matter how much they insist that they do it for themselves, they need this feedback. (...) But I already know what kind of post pleases which crowd, family and friends or the industry people and artists I admire, a smaller portion of my following, but who I would normally rather please. But sometimes it takes time to get the kind of feedback we want. It is a process (...) I try not taking feedback too seriously, even when it's positive feedback. I try not to let it affect me too much. I let it influence me but not guide my work fully (**Artist 4**).

In addition, it was claimed that certain artists are really involved with their fans and responsive, while others are disgusted and do not want to utilize the platform because they believe it interferes with the authentic experience (**Artist 1**). However, one of the interviewed artists (**Artist 3**) said that the popularity of the artists' accounts was not a concern, while another stated for her to follow them, the accounts had to be “either similar

to mine or better, or more experienced, with more reach or followers” (**Artist 1**). The reason behind following some creators was also addressed in the interviews as a networking technique, which can also interfere with the artist’s creativity:

I think a lot of artists want to network as well, and follow the work of artists they like. It can enhance creativity, but it can also be destructive, depending on when and the circumstances in which you consume this stuff (**Artist 5**).

The way the art industry usually displays artwork on the platform was also condemned by two artists and addressed as a consequence of the Instagram “game” and usual approach:

No one in the industry really shares their process. Yes I guess it is a bit unfair, you only see the end result of a Da Vinci too, and you can’t ask them anything. But the posts being all perfect and finalized is like with any other things, brands, products... And that is what I find unfair. You have to play the Instagram game to get interaction like anyone else, and I don’t like this forced game (**Artist 5**).

On Instagram there isn’t much talking about the behind the scenes, the setting up of the exhibition, or the curation of exhibitions. There isn’t much contextual information because it is always about the final product, which doesn’t represent things well. Only the victories are shown because the rest is difficult to share. You aren’t only buying the painting but the artist’s story (**Artist 3**).

The focus group participants also recognized the impact of the number of followers and their engagement on the platform and its users. Besides seeing a major sense of utility of being “close to the creators”, where it is possible to “contact them directly to ask them how a certain effect or transition has been created” (**Participant 4**), some see following these accounts as an interesting way to also share content with others (**Participant 1**). Moreover, the recognition that comes from these numbers was also addressed:

Recognition as well is very different on these platforms. Equally as good artists, being from different generations, get different feedback and interactivity online. This puts your work as an artist into perspective. These numbers don’t carry much meaning for some, but for others it is complicated. Moreover, when you have to worry about numbers your creativity probably feels quite restricted, possibly damaging your creative outcomes (**Participant 3**).

In the world of pop music, the success of the artist is measured by these numbers today. Numbers of followers or likes on a photo have come to replace other kinds of records like number of CDs sold, for example. This has a big impact on their work because they need to show results (**Participant 2**).

The Instagram algorithm and the resulting filter bubble were also noted by artists and respondents in the focus groups as a mechanism to decide the content they consume. Some participants consider it to be a beneficial development:

But even when I don’t remember certain things, the algorithm reminds me of them as well, bringing them back to me (**Participant 8**).

Instagram is research. I am aware that I can benefit in terms of inspiration and other things by following some accounts, but I then let the algorithm decide what to show me (**Artist 5**).

However, according to the majority of respondents, the algorithm is a cause of concern, not only because “It can make us more resistant to things that we haven’t yet seen” (**Participant 7**) and “make us more and more non-tolerant to different views, because in our platform we only have people that think like us” (**Participant 3**), as well as part of a “forced game” (**Artist 5**), but also because it serves to restrict information that is not directly related to their own personal or professional interests:

My main concern is the algorithm as I don’t want to be in a bubble of any kind. I often try to find people’s work in alternative ways so not to feel so controlled by it (**Participant 8**).

The algorithm also gives you things that it knows you will like, boxing you in. This affects you on all levels, as you only encounter the things that you like and are not given the chance to see things that you don’t like now but you could potentially (**Artist 3**).

Seeing all this diversity of stuff from your own bubble can sometimes make you lazy in the sense that you think you are consuming everything there is to consume in the world, when it is actually picked by you. This can thwart your work because you can’t see beyond the bubble and are often not aware that you are in it. It can make us more resistant to things that we haven’t yet seen (**Participant 7**).

4.1.3 ART INSTAGRAM ACCOUNTS

Regarding the art Instagram accounts that artists follow, the artists expressed concern about following similar artistic work (**Artist 1, 2, and 3**) and ones that are easily identified with the artists’ interests (**Artist 2**), but also work from artists that operate in the same country and market as them (**Artist 1, 2, 3, and 5**). Different artist accounts whose content shows “not only their finished works but also their processes, studios, way of work, where they live, and what they do” (**Artist 4**) were also brought up. Carefully curated pages that result of compilation of “inspiring images” (**Artist 1 and 3**), “eye candy” content (**Artist 1**) and selections of new artists’ works (**Artist 4**) were also mentioned. Art magazines, museum accounts and galleries (**Artist 3, 4 and 5**), especially ones that “show the final work of many artists and, for example, how they organize their work of a year into a two-week exhibition” (**Artist 4**), as well as “art-related memes” (**Artist 5**) are types of accounts followed by some of the interviewed artists.

As for the respondents of the focus groups, it is possible to see some similarities to the artists when it comes to the art Instagram accounts they follow. Artists, such as painters,

photographers, designers, musicians, tattoo artists, street artists, ceramicists, or **actors (Participant 2, 3, 5, 6 and 8)**; creative magazines and museum pages (**Participant 3**); as well as aesthetically pleasing and innovative, with a “a strong visual message that can come through the aesthetics” (**Participant 7**), and curated art related pages (**Participant 6, 7, and 8**) were also accounts that interest some of the participants. However, one participant stated that he also follows “pages with products that I would consume myself. Sneakers and collectible accounts, that I approach as art as well.”. The participant added that this preference

“Comes with my pop culture baggage. I like more generic art, not necessarily fine arts but a type of art that is applied to more banal things, like toys or sneakers, stickers. I not only find them beautiful but these things carry a lot of meaning for my personal life, concepts and history.” (**Participant 8**)

4.1.4 MUSEUM/GALLERY

Some artists also made a connection between Instagram and museums/galleries, but a duality was evident. On the one hand, the platform was considered a “modern version of gallery going” (**Artist 1**) that provides access to art without having to go to an artist’s museum or having to buy a book about them (**Artist 3**). One artist stated that it inspires her to see the artworks in real live and be up-to-date with new exhibitions (**Artist 5**). Being able to approach galleries digitally (**Artist 4**) or speak to clients without a middleman (**Artist 1**) were positive views mentioned by some of the artists.

On the other hand, others argued that the platform is “taking away the magic” because there is no surprise element anymore and for that reason “when visiting new cities and museums, today’s experience is completely different” (**Participant 1**). Another artist said that it is important not to forget to go to exhibitions or buy good books or printed photos that “have nothing to do with Instagram” (**Artist 2**). Artist 5 stated that a visit to a museum or gallery is irreplaceable, since it is difficult to “truly see the technique of an artist online” and “there aren’t enough pixels on a photograph or the screen of a phone to transmit this.” The technique and the pace and intensity with which the artworks are consumed were also addressed, since Instagram has a lot of information and is consumed very quickly, as opposed to the real museum experience (**Artist 2**):

Sometimes there are too many illustrators and it makes the work average and banal, you can just scroll past it whereas in a museum you are forced with a painting and to feel everything (**Artist 1**).

4.1.5 MOTIVES FOR FOLLOWING ART INSTAGRAM ACCOUNTS

When asked about the motives that prompted them to follow art Instagram accounts, one theme that was transversal to all artists' answers was the possibility to learn on the platform. In fact, the term "tool" was even used multiple times to describe the social media app (**Artist 2, 3, and 5**). The respondents see the potential of the platform to keep informed about trends and other artists paths, as well as common struggles (**Artist 1 and 4**), to connect and network with creators, but also as a way to differentiate themselves:

My main motivation is to keep myself informed as to how things are done and what is trending. (...) To know what's up, to know what the trend is, what direction people are following, to see if I'm falling behind or not. And also to see if I can differentiate myself. (...) Our way to be in touch with artists and know what they are doing these days is online, keep up and differentiate ourselves (**Artist 1**).

Connecting with all kinds of artists from different backgrounds, people I'd normally never get to meet and sharing the struggles, including those who you did not necessarily think you would be interested in (**Artist 4**).

Networking is another reason, mostly a work tool. A business card exchanged with people that I have met in real life (**Artist 5**).

Learning techniques was also mentioned as a motivation for following certain accounts on Instagram:

I have a very specific taste, so it often has to do with technique, drawing... this is why I follow certain artists, to understand their process, what exhibitions they go to, their career development (**Artist 3**).

My professional approach to Instagram implies that I don't necessarily follow only things that I like but more things that I need and can use. (...) Learning using Instagram is great, through video, technical aspects of photography shown in reels, about lighting... It is very useful for me. (**Artist 2**)

I try to do most things on site, but when I need help expressing a feeling, how to represent it graphically, I remember that someone else did a similar scene that conveyed that emotion. Then I use their technique for the background of my illustration. (**Artist 1**)

Being able to see the work behind one of his shots. And also Q&As. I learned a lot about defining budgets and fees (**Artist 2**).

Others expressed an aspirational reason for following these pages, whether it is regarding some type of project, career or even future work opportunities or art exhibitions:

I like to see an artist's trajectory and career, it gives me hope that I will be able to reach this, what have they done to get here. Not so much the work itself. But accounts that relate to the themes of the projects I am working on, with the goal of improving my work. I often think I can do better than what I see, but obviously the opposite happens too (**Artist 2**).

I am interested in artists that are versatile but still have something that is their own throughout their work. Plus, I save a lot of stuff, especially for competitions and other opportunities (**Artist 4**).

I mostly follow galleries, museums, magazines, so as to be reminded of their existence and also know what they are up to (**Artist 5**).

The app is also used by the artists as a source of inspiration:

I most readily go on Instagram and see visual impactful things to see if I can unblock something within me. And these can go either for really creative work. Instagram is research. I am aware that I can benefit in terms of inspiration and other things by following some accounts (**Artist 1**)

It almost functions like a preview, giving me inspiration to go and actually see artworks live, I think “this is going to be incredible, definitely worth going to see it”. (**Artist 5**).

Only one artist mentioned pleasure and entertainment as a motivation for following art Instagram accounts (**Artist 1**). However, this was a major motivation of the focus group respondents. Thus, to have an “distraction” (**Participant 6**) or “pleasure” with “beautiful things” (**Participant 1**), to have a “lovely sensation” and find comfort (**Participant 3**) or relaxation (**Participant 4**), or even just to see “funny things that are enjoyable” (**Participant 2**) were some of the motives for following art Instagram accounts mentioned by the focus groups participants.

Inspiration and learning were also among the motives for focus group respondents to follow these accounts. Regarding inspiration, the color of the posts was mentioned (**Participant 7**), as well as the content itself that can serve as a “mood board” to inspire work (**Participant 8**) – as a way to have “references” (**Participant 3**) and “fuel” to make “beautiful things” (**Participant 5**), or the daily life in the way one dresses or does their make-up (**Participant 6**). As for the learning aspect, the motivation was not only driven by finding information regarding personal interests (**Participant 2**), but also about work, with the acknowledgment of new information about “art and artists” (**Participant 3**), trends and techniques (**Participant 2**):

Everything I learned about audio visuals was self-taught and by trial and error in my attempts to copy what other people did, trying to reach a certain goal and making mistakes on the way that lead me to new discoveries. and Instagram is behind this (**Participant 4**).

I like to be informed and not isolated from reality. As well as the possibility to follow a particular trend, as this allows for genuinely new things to come up, opening up the boundaries for me a bit, helping me to discover interesting things in architecture, design, interiors, or graphic design (**Participant 5**).

I use it to explore a certain technique, and learn with the help of tutorials (**Participant 8**).

I had the need to train my eye when it came to design, understand how shadows, colors, lights work and how images are made, for my work. To consume things on Instagram like a fuel that would keep me motivated to experiment and try new things (**Participant 7**).

4.1.6 CREATIVITY AND INSPIRATION

According to Thrash & Elliot (2003), “inspiration is a positive emotion that consists of three components – evocation, motivation and transcendence.” Regarding their Inspiration Scale (see Appendix B), when asked the extent to which the artists and participants frequently feel inspiration, more than 50% answered that they experience and feel inspiration. When asked how intense their experiences with the emotion of inspiration were, approximately 50% also responded that they experience inspiration “somewhat strongly.”

When asked about the effects the art Instagram accounts they followed had on their lives, work, and creativity, the artists’ answers were divided. However, there was a clear recognition of the influence they could have on artists, even if did not materialize in concrete work or even the whole process:

Some of them really influence my life because, with inspiration, nothing comes from nothing, everything you do is a gathering of all these inputs that you have from the outside, and you channel through you and that ‘me lens’ and it comes out as something that you made (**Artist 1**).

If I like them, they affect me and inspire me, but not in the way that I was affected by my ‘idols’ when I was younger, in the early stages of my practice. I would love them and copy them. Inspiration and creativity are different things for me. I am not always feeling creative, but I can easily feel inspired by a lot of what is around me. This inspiration doesn’t necessarily become concrete work, but it is constant. And these posts are a part of this (**Artist 4**).

Before the social media hype, I used Tumblr and other art websites, and it really helped me back then, gave me loads of creativity. It is this new format of social media that kind of has the opposite effect on me. I don’t get inspiration from my favorite artists’ presence on Instagram but rather by reading interviews, exhibition texts and going to their shows. (...) My inspiration doesn’t necessarily come from visual arts, at least on Instagram (**Artist 5**).

The impact of these posts was also mentioned regarding some artists’ creative processes, influencing not only color combinations but also technique (**Artist 3 and 5**). Besides believing that creativity comes mostly from within (**Artist 1**), the external impact

of art Instagram pages was also considered part of the artwork process. The terms “stimuli” and “mood board” were mentioned several times:

Every time I see a cool theme of illustrations on Instagram, I write it down. (...) So this step of creativity I take from Instagram. (...) Instagram posts are stimuli and you can interpret it however you like and make it into art. Artists absorb these things even more than most people (**Artist 1**).

The posts are mood boards and visual stimuli but not inspiration. You feel kind of accompanied by other artists, but not necessarily inspired. It might trigger your creativity though but for me inspiration comes from the things that I do in my life (**Artist 3**).

The algorithm and filter bubble were also considered by an artist as being the cause of limiting creativity:

The very idea that being creative is being innovative and coming up with something new is an illusion. That is almost impossible, a real battle. We are within the filter bubble and algorithm too, so we are limited within these boundaries. (...) We are all “chewing on the same gum” and the same ideas (**Artist 5**).

Some artists mentioned that the way artists get affected by these posts and accounts depends on what kind of professionals they are, and the same stimuli could represent a source a motivation to do better work or to cause some distress (**Artist 1**).

When it comes to the focus groups participants, they all agreed that they are influenced by the art pages they follow on Instagram, however they mentioned the difficulty to understand to what extent this influence occurred (**Participant 5**). Not only was this influence perceived as the cause for wanting to try new things (**Participant 7**), but also to “open doors” to think differently or in different contexts (**Participant 3**). This impact was also acknowledged on the personal sphere, being recognized as unconsciously affecting personal “aesthetics and tendencies” or even the way one writes, leaving a “trace”, no matter if that is the intention of the receiver or not (**Participant 6**), but also with influences on things such as home decor and photography (**Participant 1**), “creative thinking” (**Participant 2**) or color coordination (**Participant 7**). This influence was associated with the professional sphere too (**Participant 2**), as direct inspirational stimuli to create or to explore a “certain technique” (**Participant 8**), visual references for audiovisual material (**Participant 3**) or to cause introspection that directly influences work:

Rihanna’s viral show where she made an effort to have a great diversity of people with many identities. That influences me not necessarily copying it exactly but being more aware in my future work of this issue of diversity and inclusivity. New paths that stimulate creativity (**Participant 3**).

The idea of novelty in a platform as Instagram and its culture was also described. Besides believing that inspiration is a consequence of the consumption of certain art pages, the possibility of the result just being “a copy with some changes functioning as references” or even “direct copies” (**Participant 2**) that can be reproduced in “their own experiences, following certain models” (**Participant 2**), as well as the incentive for “creating identities that aren’t necessarily that original” (**Participant 3**), was also suggested. However, the creative and inspired feeling, even if later acknowledged as a “copy” with some personal touches, was raised:

I speak for myself and believe for many others when I say that, even if from the outside I am perceived by others as following a particular trend, in the moment when I am doing it I feel like the most creative person in the world. I was influenced but it got me thinking and I did what I wanted to do, I feel extremely creative. Later on I might realize “oh wait this a copy, thousands of people have done the same thing as me”, but my feeling is of immense creativity. I notice certain phases in which I am more creative and inspired. A person begins by copying but then moves forward and begins including their own inputs, and that’s creativity. Sometimes this is conscious, sometimes not. Sometimes we willing and consciously copy others because there are such cute things out there (**Participant 1**).

The negative effects of this influence on one’s creativity were also mentioned in one of the focus groups interviews:

The effects on your creativity can be catastrophic if you feel the pressure of having to constantly be producing and posting. If you haven’t posted anything for two days, you feel like you owe something to people (**Participant 7**).

As could be seen earlier in the artists’ responses, part of this impact is perceived as depending on the impacted person:

The level of maturity also has a big impact on how you deal with this, and the different kind of expectations you can have from the platform (**Participant 8**).

4.1.7 PLAGIARISM

Besides Instagram being acknowledged as an inspiring medium, the issue of plagiarism was mentioned by the artists and focus group respondents. Since there is a fine line between what is original and a copy on Instagram, and things “are being copied on a large scale” (**Participant 6**), they suggested to be “really careful when you take inspiration from others” (**Artist 1**):

You can copy but you have to give credit and say the source. This has never happened to me because a lot of my work is personalized, but if I made something and put a lot of work and inspiration and a lot of me is put into it that piece of work, and someone

doing the exact same thing after you and charge for it, claiming it's their own, can be very hurtful (**Artist 1**).

The only bad thing I believe can come up from following art-related Instagram pages is the risk of copying and plagiarizing, besides that I don't see what others (**Participant 3**).

4.1.8 COMPARISON

Comparison as a way to be motivated (**Artist 2**), humbled, inspired and learn current trends and behavioral patterns (**Artist 1**), but also to perform differently from other creators (**Artist 1**), were themes brought up by some of the artists during their interviews. However, the negative feeling that results from this comparison was very present throughout all the artists' discourse:

I think it depends on how I'm feeling but it's either very useful to show me how things are done, but it can also be a bit diminishing and make me feel a bit little. When it comes to comparing myself with others. (...) Everything is creative as long as it is an original interpretation of reality. However, there is a comparison aspect. I don't think you should compare yourself, you can only take what it's yours (...) So it's best to be not a comparison, but an inspiration (**Artist 1**).

Comparison is also very present, even with people whose work is completely different, seeing such great artists at all times, thinking they are so much better than us. It is important to learn how to keep a distance in order to focus on what you want to do. There is this duality of creativity and anxiety (**Artist 4**).

The tendency on the platform to only show the results and the "good stuff" (**Artist 3**) was also attributed to this negative feeling that results from comparison on Instagram:

Mixed feelings often come up of course, when you see amazing works. It isn't envy but you have to accept that people are coming up with new ideas, and it wasn't you. And because you are disconnected from the rest of the process, what comes before, and also from seeing the actual artwork in real life and interacting with it. (...) Patterns of comparison inevitably come up, and I am sure that I unconsciously get influenced by what other people are doing (**Artist 5**).

Comparison, like in all other aspects of life, can be a difficult part of it. What you see is only the good stuff, final results and the exhibitions. Artists don't share much of the struggle (**Artist 3**).

Regarding the participants, comparison on Instagram was also mentioned, but with a more optimistic tone and with a reverse of the medal showing up, humility being one of them:

Comparison and healthy competition keeps people moving, thinking more, and creating more, as long as you are not struggling. If you are this can be a lot of pressure and lot of intimidation. People often have to abandon social media as it becomes counterproductive (**participant 3**).

The approach of the platform itself has a big influence on the way we consume the content: “me and my everyday life” and “others and their lives”. This is how Instagram started, and this premise necessarily leads you to comparison and to an emphasis on our egos. On the flipside, it can also lead to humility (**Participant 7**).

I feel like it humbles us, makes us aware that none of our ideas or thoughts are completely original. Everything that we make or create is not being done for the first time. This can either throw us into a spiral of pessimism or give us motivation to try and combine and work on things that haven't already been done. Not sure about my creativity, but it helps me accept that I am not that creative in reality (**Participant 6**).

4.1.9 RECOLLECTION

When asked if they remembered certain posts from art Instagram pages in a post social media consumption phase, the response from the artists was affirmative. The “save” feature of the platform was mentioned often as a technique to retain posts that have work opportunities (Artist 4), could be useful later in the studio (**Artist 3**), and as material to paint, take the concept from or “do a twist” (**Artist 1**) and, especially, to not forget them. However, despite the “save” feature being utilized to remember things, some artists reported that they sometimes forget what was saved:

I save a lot of stuff, especially for competitions and other opportunities. I have a bunch of different folders, like mood boards. But to be honest I forget a lot of what I save (**Artist 4**).

I often save things that I like because of a detail or color combination that I want to try, mostly technical stuff, but never go there to see them. I never remember to go and check them. Maybe it's because I don't actually like the image itself, so I don't retain it (**Artist 5**).

When it comes to the focus group respondents, some participants mentioned how particular references were remembered during conversations (**Participant 2 and 7**), in the work context (**Participant 2**), but also occasionally in situations of the daily life (**Participant 3**). Some of these Instagram references were retained unconsciously:

When producing content, I remember a lot of concrete things, but a lot of them also register unconsciously and I am not aware of it (**Participant 2**).

For me it is more unconscious, like color combinations that I've seen somewhere and liked, and then when making decisions they come up. I often try to trace back so I can find my sources. But this is mostly unconscious (**Participant 6**).

The “save” feature was also addressed (**Participant 1**), as well as the smartphone feature “screenshot” and, once again, the algorithm:

Screenshots are one of the best things invented. saving things is not enough for me, the screenshot stays in my photo gallery and I later encounter it. My memory is quite weak

and I remember I've seen something but I don't remember when, and I can't find it. Saving things is essential so I can look back on them (**Participant 3**).

I save a lot of things as well... But even when I don't remember certain things, the algorithm reminds me of them as well, bringing them back to me (**Participant 8**).

4.1 DISCUSSION

This research attempted to investigate the impact art Instagram accounts have on their followers and aimed to understand what factors influence the followers' and artists' understanding of their creative process when exposed to art-related content on Instagram, as well as their motivations to follow those accounts. Unlike previous studies that aimed to quantitatively measure creativity or perception, this procedure involved in-depth interviews of followers and artists following Sakamoto's experimental open-ended question approach to elicit respondents to openly discuss themes regarding this topic. The self-report and interest in creative activities (Hocevar, 1981; Runco et al., 1990), as well as the willingness from the participants to self-assess creativity, were also considered as markers of creativity (Reiter-Palmon et al., 2012). This section will connect findings uncovered during data analysis to the literature review and goals of the study to highlight the most significant results.

The analysis of findings revealed that all of the participants, artists, and art-related Instagram followers, utilize the platform in distinct ways. This statement was suggested in Appel et al. (2020) and Kapoor et al.'s (2018) work that, respectively, claimed that people work with social media in several ways for different purposes, and users' motivations for adopting social media are different and mostly depend on their culture. Moreover, Sakamoto's technique prompted the respondents' first spontaneous views on the research topic. Most artists openly recognized Instagram's effect on their creativity and their usage of the platform for inspiration and to see visually compelling items as a technique to overcome creative barriers. This view can be seen in Piller et al.'s (2012) work, which suggested that anyone can view, share, and be inspired by the ideas of others on social media. Artists also reported that consuming this content on Instagram can result in a sense that they are doing less and worse than others and will never get "there"; in the vulnerability that can result from platform exposure and can result in criticism from followers (or lack of engagement), and, finally, in the overwhelming amount and speed of information that can

impact the artist's psyche, fostering anxiety about "keeping up." Contrary to the hypothesized association, Kang & Chen (2019) stated that interaction with followers has little effect on their artistic production.

These results are in line with the American Psychological Association (2011), which claimed that the daily use of social media could cause anxiety and other psychological disorders; and Miller et al. (2016), who argued that the community's demands could be overwhelming. However, this view contradicts the claims of Casaló et al. (2020), who stated that when users receive information on social media, it can incite positive feelings in them. Overall, this is a view that didn't align with the artists' ideas, which is probably because they use Instagram as a work tool, and there is more pressure associated with that activity. It is also interesting how this type of influence was one of the first things that artists mentioned when asked about their experience with Instagram, which can represent some of the struggles of artists who use this platform to work.

On the other hand, participants easily acknowledged that Instagram could influence their perceptions of creativity, but their motivations for using the platform varied from those of the artists. Some said they use it exclusively for work, while others use it for personal purposes. The individuals who use it for private purposes stated that they mostly seek enjoyment, comfort, relaxation, distraction, and to see visually beautiful art forms and stimulate creativity. These reasons are in line with the hypothesis of Oliveira (2018), which maintained that social media is a platform on which people want to have fun and escape a little from their everyday lives. Kim et al. (2011) also identified entertainment as an element that motivates users to use social media. Those that use Instagram as a professional tool claimed that do so to observe how businesses and studios showcase their creative work, to gain inspiration from diverse and creative content, and get inspiration for mood boards, which is aligned with Wagner & Jiang's work (2012), that suggested that social media can be used as a creative tool to help users generate ideas.

It was clear why the platform has such a distinct influence on these two groups, given that artists are under pressure to utilize the platform as a professional tool while consumers are there primarily for pleasurable moments. However, it is critical to recognize the type of art pages they consume and the motivations that drive them to do so when explicitly questioned. As evident in the previous section, the focus group participants mostly stated that they follow several artists in different markets, creative magazines, and museums,

content with strong visual messages that can come through the aesthetics, curated art-related pages, and product pages. As for the artists, they claimed that there is an inclination to carefully curated pages that result of a compilation of inspiring and aesthetically pleasing images, museums and galleries, art magazines; but also artists in the same market and/or country, artists that show their creative processes and behind the scenes, and similar artistic work and interests. According to Appel et al. (2020) and Couto (2015), respectively, digitally interacting with unknown others who have similar interests and gatherings of individuals with common interests are reasons for using social media.

Additionally, although artists may have an agenda for following the pages, participants may find that utility only after following pages related to their interests. The visual component was also a determining factor for the participants, and according to Buryan (2018), the aesthetic essence of Instagram makes it the most appropriate platform for spreading creativity. The accounts must be aesthetically pleasing, as was also suggested in Manovich's work (2017). Another interesting fact taken from the interviews was that participants discussed their own and others' aesthetics on Instagram, while visual artists discussed just the aesthetics of the accounts they followed.

When specifically asked about the motives that led both groups to follow these accounts, participants added new reasons not mentioned in the first stage of the interviews. The respondents reported that they also used the platform to learn information about art and artists, as well as trends and techniques. The artists reported they used it to keep informed about trends, exhibits, competitions, and opportunities too. These motives for using social media were identified by Kim et al. (2011), as well as Brandtzaeg & Heim (2011), who stated that the utilization of social media as a source of information is mostly geared toward topics such as cultural events, news, and local events. The artists also reported that they used Instagram as a work tool, not only as a "business card" and a way of networking but also as an inspiration for references and mood boards. This is a view that is aligned with Wagner & Jiang's work (2012), which suggested that social media can be considered a brainstorming place that influences the creative capacity of its users to cultivate ideas.

Besides those motivations, curiosity and validation to compare their work to others to later do it differently or to get the motivation to be a better professional and improve their work were also reasons mentioned by the artists. These were aligned with Tuten & Solomon's (2014) work, which suggested that one enters this world due to impulses of

usefulness, curiosity, and validation. This view is also supported by Muntinga et al. (2011), who claimed that motivations for social media usage include acquiring a sense of acceptance. Finally, learning, especially about technique and other artists' *modus operandi*, to feel accompanied in their struggles, is also a motivating factor for the artists, a process that, according to Budge (2013), is a fundamental part of identity development.

Apart from the artists wanting and following other artists to view these behind-the-scenes and hardships, some believe most other artists are averse to sharing. This is most likely due to the platform's nature and the fact that it rewards content with likes and more followers that often do not reflect the earlier stages of the final product, which are frequently times of distress. The platform tends to value the perfect aesthetic, and "Instagrammism" has its own worldview and visual language (Manovich, 2017), and artists are part of that tendency as well, possibly compromising their colleagues' creative processes.

Regarding the acknowledgment of the algorithm's impact on consumed content and thus on inspirational stimuli, some saw it as beneficial, as it represents what they already want to see. In contrast, others saw it as discouraging and a limiter of creativity. It prevents one from seeing beyond the interest bubble and open horizons, thus creating laziness and more resistance to things one has not seen yet. According to Bremers (2020), Instagram users choose and interact with content, affecting what others see and conceive of as art and, consequently, shaping the discursive community's ideas and, perhaps, impacting an artist's recognition on Instagram.

The participants in the focus groups, who are also followers, also mentioned that they found considerable value in establishing a stronger relationship with the creators and artists, having contact with them, and fostering mutual assistance. Similarly, Couto (2015) has suggested that the incentive for using online communities is based on mutual support and sharing of experiences and needs. This view is also supported by Muntinga et al. (2011), who claimed that motivations for social media usage include acquiring a sense of acceptance, connecting with society, and searching for support. Other participants also claimed that they see this connection as a means of disseminating new content, a statement that is in line with McBride (2011) and Adolpho (2012), who argued, respectively, that social media allows users to share information and knowledge related to needs and activities in real life and information about themselves and their lifestyle.

The participants noted, however, that the number of followers and interaction placed the artists' work into perspective, which may be difficult for some since worrying about numbers might hinder creative output. This is a view shared by Runco (2015), who stated that the interactive characteristics of social media might create social pressure on individuals with creative ideas, and as a consequence, users may be more extrinsically driven to produce than intrinsically motivated, leading to a "creativity crisis." Blattmann's (2019) work is also relevant regarding the relationship between artists and followers; the author reported that the pressure to stay active and provide content for followers could be intense and promote anxiety, and artists may feel overwhelmed when compared to their peers' likes and followers. As for the artists, they claimed that the platform was valuable in terms of establishing relationships with fans and other artists, as well as for soliciting and disseminating advice and assistance. This view was supported by Zhao et al. (2012), who stated that people join social media sites to find new like-minded individuals, build friendships, and encounter social support.

Besides the pressure of the followers, oversaturation and comparison that results from Instagram use were also acknowledged as causes of anxiety for the artists. A recent study by Hawes et al. (2020) showed that social media could foster social comparison that can lead to emotional issues, including depression and social anxiety. This view is also aligned with Miller et al.'s (2016) work, which suggested that the demands of a social media community can be overwhelming. Blume (2017) also pointed out that post-internet art is increasingly being made for the camera. For that reason, according to Bremers (2020), while Instagram can be a terrific platform for artists, it may also result in unappreciated work. Hariman & Lucaites (2016) also stated that this abundance might devalue the artist and the art form, implying that their work is insignificant and easily reproduced.

As the artists mentioned in the interviews, this comparison on social media is mostly harmful, as it can make one feel inferior and less talented than others. Regarding this topic, Smith (2000) argued that, depending on the process of dual focus, people feel jealousy, shame, or wrath instead of inspiration. Ishiguro & Okada (2020) also suggested that a factor affecting the viewers' emotions and motivation is whether the person they are comparing themselves to is superior (upward comparison) or inferior (downward comparison). In the interviews, the participants mentioned the platform's tendency to present only the finished product and not the process, nor its difficulties. We can conclude from this that the platform's

emphasis on “perfection”, which one of the artists described as a “forced game,” discourages some users from sharing more about their processes, further contributing to pressure and anxiety. This occurs because if an artist only views others’ completed work and compares it to their own unfinished work when he or she is in the midst of a challenging creative process, it can profoundly affect him or her and, subsequently, their work and creativity.

Apart from this being a viewpoint held by several artists, who expressed concern that the comparison could impair their creativity in the light of the conditions, both the creators and the focus group respondents mentioned positive aspects. For the artists, there may be value in this comparison process as a means of learning and motivation, a notion supported by a number of recent studies arguing that inspiration from viewing art can result in a variety of creative outcomes, including motivation and ideas (An & Youn, 2019; Ishiguro & Okada, 2018; Okada & Ishibashi, 2017). Participants also saw comparison mostly as a positive thing, as it can encourage people to think and create more – a point of view shared by Pelowski and his colleagues, who argued that observers with the intention of becoming more creative focus their attention on the artist’s creative method or accomplishments and may feel inspired (Pelowski & Akiba, 2011; Pelowski et al., 2016); Pelowski et al., 2017).

The artists also acknowledged the importance of receiving feedback, even if it is not what they want to hear. This is a view supported by Runco (2015) and Rubenson & Runco (1992), who believed that social feedback and incentives may spur creative ideas and that an audience may also inspire its users to be innovative. Corso & Robinson (2013) also implied that creativity flourishes in communities where people may develop, ponder, exchange, explore, gather, debate, and reflect on ideas. However, an artist mentioned in the interviews that it is vital to respond to feedback with caution and avoid allowing it to influence the artist’s work.

As was mentioned in the previous section, another point brought up during the interviews was the necessity of still visiting museums and galleries and how they should not be supplanted by social media. The fact that this was mentioned mainly by artists could be interpreted as a direct result of how non-art world professionals today perceive art. Razzaq (2020) claimed that anyone now can visit these museums and galleries online, as well as the works of independent artists, thanks to the accessibility of social media. However, an online visit is not the same as a visit to a gallery in person, and viewing art online may dilute or enhance the experience. Compared to the Instagram experience, one of the artists claimed

that we are “forced to look at a painting and feel everything” in the museum. Kang & Chen (2019) asserted that information on social media can only serve as a gateway to the “art experience” and cannot replace the live experience of viewing the actual “painting”. The artists also said that visiting a gallery or museum is irreplaceable because it is difficult to really appreciate an artist’s method via a smartphone, mainly because the screen lacks sufficient pixels to transmit it. This was also supported by Razzaq (2020), who noted that one of the difficulties with viewing art on a screen is that colors appear differently because of electromagnetic waves (Razzaq, 2020). Nonetheless, the artists highlighted the ease of access to art online, how it influenced their motivation to view artwork live and stay up-to-date with new shows, and the ability to communicate directly with clients, a requirement in the post-digital era, as argued by Jorge (2021), as advantages of these art-related Instagram accounts.

As discussed previously, both artists and focus group participants claimed to be influenced by Instagram art posts. This impact can then take one of three directions, which may or may not intersect. Firstly, it can serve as inspiration. As was seen on Thrash & Elliot's Inspiration Scale (IS) (see Appendix B), more than 50% of the participants answered that they experience and feel inspiration; and both the artists and the participants in the focus group acknowledged that they had experienced the inspiring influence from Instagram. Moreover, the artists clearly recognize how Instagram can inspire artists in general. This view is also supported by Piller et al. (2012), who argued that in social media it is possible to get inspiration from the ideas of others. According to Budge (2013), artists benefit from visual stimulation since it aids in inspiration; and Instagram has explicitly a significant visual component that plays a vital role in giving visual stimulation. However, the distinction between inspiration and creativity was suggested by one of the artists, as one can feel easily inspired often and not creative. Another artist claimed that she is not inspired necessarily from visual art content on Instagram but from concepts that she takes as stimuli for her work. However, the term dual focus, that is utilized in Ishiguro & Okada's (2018) work, emphasizes that the spectators can see both their own and others’ art during the inspiration process, and results showed that individuals who compared their art to other artists’ work experienced more intense inspiration or art-making.

That question of what kind of creative outcomes can be expected from the dual-focus process leads us to the second direction highlighted in this study, which is the promotion of

the creative process, as this influence supports the early stages of these activities. According to Ishiguro & Okada (2020), it is possible for viewers to focus on a work of art's physical characteristics (such as colors and brushstroke patterns) or on its psychological aspects (the conceptual and imagined creative processes); or they may focus on both physical and psychological elements simultaneously, resulting in more complex works of art. In the interviews, the artists mentioned the stimulus of art Instagram posts as part of their work processes, acknowledging that it can trigger creativity. Regarding the focus groups' participants, they all agreed that this influence promotes creativity in the way that it incentivizes them to try and create new things. Hence, insights for mood boards and new references, as well as information that has the potential to impact the technique, concept, or aesthetics of a creative act, are moments perceived as precursors of creative output. This approach is also supported by Piller et al. (2012), who claimed that the inventiveness of the ideas of others could be adapted and shared in a personalized version, that may later become highly valued by others. On the other hand, according to Budge (2013), social media platforms like Instagram substantially enhance creativity. As a result of being inspired, artists' practice may be altered indirectly.

Finally, and perhaps most directly related to the creative process, the third area in which art-related posts might exert an effect is on behavioral patterns about trends, new techniques, and creative thinking. According to the participants in the focus groups, this effect enhances creativity by incentivizing innovative thinking and affecting personal "aesthetics and tendencies." This point of view is aligned with the study conducted by An & Youn (2019), which revealed that inspiration from artwork promoted participants' creativity in alternative creative spheres - the results showed that viewing art boosted the recurrence of idea production and the originality of the ideas, across various creative areas (An & Youn, 2019) - as well as Bob Marcotte's (2020) study, which argued that our interactions on social media could promote new and creative ways of thinking.

According to Rowles (2017), creativity is closely related to novelty, and the newness and trends on Instagram were also mentioned in the interviews, as was the recognition that the creative outcomes of inspiration derived from Instagram may just be exact copies or camouflaged copies in various contexts or identities that are not original. This view was also suggested by Marcotte (2020), who mentioned a recent study that concluded that when too many people follow the exact source of inspiration on social media, creativity is

compromised. This issue is also relatable to Benjamin's (1969) work, which suggested that works of art have always been reproducible. For the author, besides allowing for the circulation of millions of pictures of an original, this reproduction causes a lack of the "authentic" atmosphere of their source. However, feeling creative and inspired was also expressed as positive by one of the participants, even though there were occasions when they realized that what they created was a copy with personal touches.

Respondents to focus groups and artists also noted that because there is a small line between what is original and what is copied on Instagram nowadays, and things are duplicated on a broad scale, it is critical to exercise extreme caution when drawing inspiration from others. Legitimacy is a concerning issue raised by Razzaq (2020), who suggested that artists should be concerned about their work being stolen because of the public nature of social media and that it may be risky to make their artwork easily accessible on the internet. Blattmann (2019) also argued that individuals might copy, print, and plagiarize others' work on the platform.

In summary, and as one of the interviewed artists stated, "it is critical to have an Instagram account as an artist today." As Buryan (2018) suggested, the aesthetics of the platform make it the most appropriate network for spreading creativity, and Instagram's numerous content formats enable its users to foster their inventiveness. However, it is crucial to recognize that this impact, which may be good or detrimental, does not occur homogeneously. Consumption of material is always subjective, dependent on the individual and artist consuming it, as well as their mood and psychological state at the time. Previous research has also indicated that variables can affect creative ability (Zhou, 1998). And while some findings suggested that positive mood enhances creativity, the magnitude of the impact is dependent on the referent mood state (Davis, 2009). In general, a contextual perspective on mood-creativity relationships is favored (Davis, 2009). Hence, it is critical to strike a balance between what one gains from the platform. Social media users should balance the variety of the channels they use to foster creative inspiration.

5 - CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to evaluate how followers' and artists' self-perceptions of creativity are influenced by their consumption of art-related content on Instagram. As noted in the methodology section, the study was based on five in-depth semi-structured interviews and two focus groups. Due to the exploratory character of the qualitative approach, a smaller sample size was used in this study. Nonetheless, once the interviews were completed, the sample size was sufficient to use deductive interpretation. Regardless of some limitations indicated below, this research has added to the body of knowledge about Instagram art-related accounts and creativity, as well as their impact on artists and followers.

Because Instagram is such a visually focused network, it is critical to understand the impact that it might have on its users' perceptions of their own creativity. As a result of its scale, many artists now believe that their presence on the platform is required; yet, the platform has also provided art enthusiasts with an unparalleled opportunity to get closer to these artists and their work.

Throughout the interviews, it was clear that artists and their followers saw the platform differently. The first group views Instagram as a tool for work, while the second group, in addition to perceiving its practical utility for work, mostly utilizes it to be entertained. Understandably, the impact of the platform's content on these two groups will be different. The former is under pressure to work on the platform while the latter does so primarily for leisure. However, it is necessary to consider how the platform and its algorithm work and how these two groups perceive their impact on their creativity.

While both groups acknowledged this influence, they also recognized that Instagram's inherent limitations limit its potential to drive creativity. On the one hand, its own algorithm prevents followers from discovering and exploring new and diverse avenues, potentially impacting or positively fostering creative behavior. On the other hand, the platform's tendency to promote "perfect," "aesthetically pleasing," and highly edited content to adhere to a widely accepted aesthetic, frequently concealing problems during the process preceding the final product or even during the creative process itself, can have the opposite effect and limit creative potential. Additionally, the psychological effects of the platform's "success" pattern, such as comparison, anxiety caused by the volume and speed with which

posts are made, and pressure to achieve results and followers, can have a negative and discouraging effect on the creative process.

To summarize, both artists and their followers agree that consuming art-related content on Instagram has significant potential to aid in the creative and inspirational process. However, the platform's structural factors and behavioral trends preclude it from being purely a medium for inspiration and creativity stimulation. It is also critical to note that this impact, which can be either beneficial or negative, is not uniform. It is always contingent on the individual and artist consuming the content and also on the emotional and psychological state of the viewer. For that reason, the receiver must balance what it takes from the platform.

Because this is an exploratory study, no definitive conclusions can be drawn from the findings. It is only an effort to examine a setting that needs to be more prominently highlighted. Even though the study does not reach a definite conclusion, it does offer a response to the research question, which was designed to better understand the influence of Instagram art-related material on users and artists in general.

5.1 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

5.1.1 LIMITATIONS

According to Creswell (2012), one of the constraints of qualitative research is the inability of the data to be generalized across different contexts. Given the lower sample size employed in qualitative studies, conclusions cannot be generalized to larger populations with the same degree of confidence as those obtained from quantitative analyses through applying a statistical significance test (as opposed to qualitative studies). In addition, due to constraints of the Covid-19 pandemic, the interviews were unable to be conducted in person. They had to be undertaken solely by video conferencing, which could have interfered with some of the respondents' contributions.

5.1.2 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Following the data analysis process, this research identified specific difficulties that should be kept in mind for future research initiatives. Many of my questions about the relationship between art-related Instagram accounts and creativity have been answered. However, there are a plethora of opportunities for additional investigation into the subject. As the sample size is relatively small, it can be concluded that a larger sample size would

likely result in a complete understanding of the subject. Photograph elicitation could also be beneficial for in-depth interviews since it would allow participants to express themselves in an interesting way, leading to more insights into the phenomena of Instagram art-related posts and their effects on artists and followers.

Furthermore, because the research primarily focuses on the Portuguese market, it is critical to perform additional analysis in other countries and regions to identify inconsistencies or parallels between markets. During this investigation, it became evident that there could be variations between each field and that it is critical to identify and understand these differences. Taking different approaches and focusing on specific markets, such as photography, street art, design, illustration, and so on, could also be advantageous for academics in order to obtain viewpoints from each unique field.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEWS SCRIPT

Introductory questions:

1. What is your name? What is your age? Which company do you work for, and what is your position? What is your educational background?

Interactive segment:

“Inspiration is a positive emotion that consists of three components – evocation, motivation, and transcendence.” How often does this happen? For these four items, state the extent to which you regularly/frequently feel inspiration. “

	Never	Very Rarely	Rarely	Neutral	Occasionally	Often	Very Often
1. I experience inspiration.							
2. Something I encounter or experience inspires me.							
3. I am inspired to do something.							
4. I feel inspired.							

How strongly do you feel inspiration? For these four items, state how strongly your experiences with the emotion of inspiration are.

	Not at All	Somewhat Slightly	Slightly	Neutral	Somewhat Strongly	Strongly	Very Strongly or Deeply
5. I experience inspiration.							
6. Something I encounter or experience inspires me.							
7. I am inspired to do something.							
8. I feel inspired.							

2. Tell me about your Instagram experience with creativity in the way that you prefer. What are your thoughts about it?

Transitory questions:

3. When you think of art Instagram accounts, what comes to you mind?
4. Which types of art Instagram accounts do you view/follow most? What are their main features?

5. Which factors/motivations prompted you to follow art Instagram accounts?
6. Do you often remember certain posts of those pages in a post social media consumption phase?

Key Questions:

7. Think back to some of the posts of those pages you liked. Do you think these affected you, your life or your (art)work?
8. In your experience, what kind of effects do you think Instagram art posts have on your creativity?
9. What do you think are the pros and cons of following art Instagram accounts?
10. As a follow-up: what kind of effects do you think Instagram art posts have on artists in terms of how they perceive their creativity?

Conclusion questions:

11. Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience with art Instagram accounts?

APPENDIX B: INSPIRATION SCALE

	Never	Very Rarely	Rarely	Neutral	Occasionally	Often	Very Often
1. I experience inspiration.							
2. Something I encounter or experience inspires me.							
3. I am inspired to do something.							
4. I feel inspired.							

	Not at All	Somewhat Slightly	Slightly	Neutral	Somewhat Strongly	Strongly	Very Strongly or Deeply
5. I experience inspiration.							
6. Something I encounter or experience inspires me.							
7. I am inspired to do something.							
8. I feel inspired.							

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