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Contextualizing the Artistic Repertoire in Museums

The Role of Nonartistic Factors

Liora Aldes and Tally Katz-Gerro

■ **ABSTRACT:** To remain financially sustainable while promoting cultural activity and operating within artistic, symbolic, and cultural norms, museums must consider a multitude of commercial and organizational elements. This article examines the impact of economic, organizational, and structural characteristics of art museums on the repertoire of art they exhibit. Using a mixed-methods approach, we draw on data pertaining to 11 art museums in Israel that are supported by the Ministry of Culture, analyzing administrative data collected yearly from the museums from 2000 to 2014. Next, we analyze 20 interviews with museum directors, curators, and artists to further explore the findings that emerge from the analysis of administrative data. Findings indicate three factors that influence a museum's artistic repertoire: revenue structure, museum location (center or periphery), and the museum director's preferences. We discuss these factors and explain the significant role that nonartistic factors play in shaping cultural outcomes.

■ **KEYWORDS:** art, artistic repertoire, artists, center, museums, periphery, public funding

Studies of cultural markets examine the social, economic, and organizational aspects that shape the content and form of art and culture in society (Frey 2019; Heilbrun and Gray 2001). This article seeks to contribute to this literature by analyzing the process by which museums select their artistic repertoire, while placing a particular emphasis on how a variety of nonartistic factors influence this process. We rely on three distinct approaches in our analysis, each of which sheds a different light on factors of cultural production.

The first approach is *cultural economics*, which focuses on the organizational and financial characteristics of cultural institutions as determinants of various cultural market outcomes. Studies have shown that, in museums specifically, financial structure (e.g., publicly vs. privately owned), museum size, and management strategies influence decision-making (Camarero et al. 2011; Frey and Pommerehne 1989).

The second approach is the *center-periphery power relations*. This approach views major cities as the major source of economic resources, authority, and legitimacy in the artistic field. The center is usually comprised of a significant portion of cultural institutions, and it is where stakeholders reside, knowledge is shared and accumulated, and large audiences can be found. On the other hand, the periphery tends to be associated with social and cultural marginalization (Yavo-Ayalon 2019; Yogevev 2004).



The third approach relates to the *sociology of art*, and specifically to the social dimensions of art evaluation. At the core of the sociological analysis of art lies the assumption that, aside from the inherent features of an artistic object (e.g., style, content, size, and technique), various social mechanisms are responsible for how artworks acquire artistic and financial value (Becker 1984; Greenfield 1989; Yogev 2010).

In this article, we integrate these three approaches to depict the complexity and intersectionality of the economic, organizational, and structural factors that shape the artistic repertoire exhibited in art museums. By doing that, we provide a framework with which to explain the role of nonartistic factors in museums' cultural production. The empirical case we draw from is publicly funded art museums in Israel.

Literature Review

Economic Aspects of the Operation of Museums

In cultural economics literature, a museum ownership structure (public versus private ownership) is recognized as a significant factor that affects how a museum operates. For example, scholars argue that public museums (primarily publicly funded) typically have noncommercial standards and strive for nonfinancial strategic goals because they are not dependent on their earned income. Public museums aspire to educate, be involved in the community, pass on knowledge, and promote aesthetic ideals (Frey 2019: 83; Frey and Pommerehne 1989). These goals do not directly produce income, but they produce various forms of legitimacy, each of which can be related to additional sources of funding (Sherer et al. 2019). Conversely, private museums are mostly measured by their ability to produce income and turn a profit. They do this by organizing "blockbuster" and temporary exhibitions, through trading activities such as events, and through investment in the museum's shops (gifts shops and restaurants). These activities make the museum an attraction for wider audiences (Camarero et al. 2011; Frey 2019: 83–84).

In recent decades, there has been a global trend of reduced government funding for the arts and culture sector and encouragement to strive for economic independence (Lindqvist 2012; O'Hagan 1998). Museums depend more on the success of massive "blockbuster" exhibitions, which can be exhibited with funding from sponsors. Donors have various incentives that affect how exhibitions are selected. Corporations and companies are primarily interested in public relations and thus tend to sponsor exhibitions that attract many visitors and provide an entertaining experience (Sherer et al. 2019). Frequently, the exhibitions also serve as publicity for their commercial and economic ventures (Rosenfeld-Cohen 2017). Donors such as individual patrons tend to favor exhibitions that align with their own taste or interests, thereby shaping the overall collection of exhibitions (Browar 2003). By donating art collections to prestigious museums or money toward acquiring a specific type of art, these elite donors may increase the symbolic and market value of art works that interest them or are in their private collections (Alexander 1996). The monetary value of tax incentives and the market value of art also play an essential role in donors' considerations (Frey 2019: 84).

The literature shows that decision-making in museums is associated with the type of ownership (along the range of completely privately or completely publicly funded). Within the category of public museums, we also see a blend of different funding sources, including state and municipal funds, earned income, donations, and investment income (Lindqvist 2012). Therefore, we can assume that cultural production in publicly funded museums will be impacted by the museum's predominant type of revenue. Our empirical case looks at art museums in Israel, which receive public funding but also rely on additional sources of income.

Structural Aspects: Between “Center” and “Periphery”

Art institutions in major cities enjoy many economic benefits over those in the periphery due to their proximity to other cultural centers and leisure facilities, and the mass commercialism of cities in general, which draws larger numbers of visitors and tourists (Maitland and Ritchie 2007; Van Aalst and Boogaarts 2002). Moreover, according to the theory of center-periphery relations (Shils 1975: 3), the center is where material, human, symbolic, and cultural resources are concentrated, and where the values, beliefs, and collective identity of society are determined; thus, the center becomes the source of authority and legitimacy.

In the Israeli context, the city of Tel Aviv is considered the economic and cultural epicenter (CBS 2008). Tel Aviv is where most of the museums, galleries, and art traders are concentrated and where most professional trainings and networking opportunities occur. Further, it is where most artists and museumgoers reside. Additionally, Tel Aviv has the largest concentration of leading actors in the art world (e.g., critics, curators, gallery owners, museum managers, collectors) (Littman-Cohen 2001; Yogev 2004). While this may create an impression that art in the geographic periphery is marginalized, some authors have challenged the perception that the periphery is fundamentally inferior; rather, they propose a view of the Israeli periphery as a boundless environment which enables one to create art without the pressures of the center's norms and affords greater opportunities for artists (Bar-Or 1998; Yavo-Ayalon 2019). Given these structural aspects, both economic and cultural, we may conclude that the location of art museums affects both the number of exhibitions and characteristics of the art on display.

The Social Aspect of Art Appreciation

The value of art works is characterized by ambiguity. There are no precise or objective measures for qualifying a particular piece of art as a high-quality product. The design, content, genre, technique, size, and materials of artworks generally determine their value, both artistically and financially. Other influencing factors include the rarity of the work, preferences of gatekeepers (collectors, critics, dealers, and curators), media coverage, power of the dealers, and past gallery and museum shows (Yogev 2010; Zorloni 2014). Additional factors that are used to evaluate the artistic canon relate to the artist's characteristics such as reputation, age, and gender.

The artist's *reputation* is an indicator of the artwork's quality as it is perceived in the market. Reputation in this context refers to the number of solo exhibitions in important art institutions, artistic prizes and awards, quantity and quality of critique, and frequency of exhibitions and exhibitions abroad (Greenfield 1989: 53; Zorloni 2014). The artist's *age* is relevant since an accumulation of professional experience is highly regarded, as is artistic maturity and professional networks, all of which take time to develop (Jeffri et. 2011; Lindauer et al. 1997). Noteworthy is that artists of all ages are granted legitimacy in the art world, and many artists continue to work after a typical age of retirement (Jeffri et al., 2011; Sohm 2007). Another pertinent factor is whether the artist is still alive, as the prestige of one's artwork often increases after the artist dies (Ursprung and Wiermann 2011).

An artist's *gender* has been discussed in the context of women having been systematically disadvantaged in the art world throughout history and still today. This source of inequality is rooted in historical contexts, such as cultural biases in the interpretation of women's artworks and institutional restrictions, which prevented women from attending schools for professional arts training and from participating in cultural clubs (Miller 2016; Nochlin 2015). Nowadays, there is a growing perception that the gender inequality gap in the art world is closing. However, recent statistics challenge this narrative, showing that, around the world, women's artworks comprise a small share of major permanent collections, acquisitions, and solo exhibitions in

prominent museums. At auctions, women's artworks are valued less than those of men (Halperin and Burns 2019). This gender bias exists in the Israeli art scene as well. Women artists in Israel are no different than their international counterparts when it comes to being excluded from the discourse on the history of canonical art, and from solo exhibitions (Dekel 2014; Markus 2015).

In considering the emphasis placed on social dimensions within the art world for evaluating the artistic canon, we aim to explore gender, age, and reputation aspects in museums' selection of artists for their repertoire. The main generalized research question is, how do the economic, organizational, and structural characteristics of art museums influence the repertoire of the art they exhibit and the characteristics of the artists that they choose to showcase?

Research Hypotheses

Based on the literature review, we constructed several hypotheses on the artistic repertoire displayed by museums. First, regarding economic characteristics, we hypothesized that a high level of self-generated income would be correlated with a greater number of new exhibitions due to the museums' aspiration to have repeat visitors, thus maximizing their self-produced income.

H1. Higher levels of self-generated income will be associated with a greater number of new exhibitions displayed.

Additionally, since internationally acclaimed art is highly valued in art markets, we hypothesized that:

H2. Higher levels of revenue will be associated with a greater number of internationally recognized artists.

We predict that museums located in the center will have greater economic resources, and as a result, will showcase a greater number of exhibitions in general:

H3. Museums that are located in the center will have a higher level of self-generated income and donations, and will receive a greater budget from the local authority as compared to museums in the periphery.

H4. Museums located in the center will have a greater number of new exhibitions as compared to museums in the periphery.

Museums that are centrally located are viewed as the "top" museums; therefore, we expect that:

H5. Museums located in the center will display more works by artists with an internationally recognized reputation as compared to museums in the periphery.

H6. Museums located in the center will display fewer exhibitions by women as compared to museums in the periphery.

Museums in the periphery are expected to display artists in the early stages of their careers, as they offer a more enabling environment for experimental art. Thus, we hypothesized that:

H7. Museums in the periphery will present more works of art by young artists than museums in the center.

Data and Method

This mixed-method study combined quantitative and qualitative research approaches. In the first stage, quantitative methods were used to analyze administrative data on art museums that receive public funding to examine the effect of economic factors, such as the level of income and sources of income, on the artistic repertoire of museums in Israel over a 15-year period.

The quantitative data came from annual reports published by Edusystems (Institute for Information and Cultural Studies) on behalf of Israel's Ministry of Culture from 2000 to 2014. This database provides overviews of the organizational traits and economic activity of publicly funded cultural organizations in Israel. The sample includes data for 11 art museums in Israel's central and peripheral regions, which make up a majority of the Israeli art museums recognized by the Ministry of Culture: the Israel Museum; the Tel Aviv Museum of Art; the Haifa Museums (a network of five art museums); the Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art; the Mishkan Museum of Art, Ein Harod; the Petah Tikva Museum of Art; the Ramat Gan Museum of Israeli Art; the Bar-David Museum of Art and Judaica; the Negev Museum of Art; the Wilfred Israel Museum; and the Janco Dada Museum. We used a mixed-model regression to test the research hypotheses. This model controls for repeated measurements of variables over the years for each museum by introducing a museum random effect. Table 1 presents the results of this analysis.

In the second stage of the study, 20 semi-structured interviews were conducted with museum managers and curators, as well as artists whose work was displayed in the sampled museums. The purpose of the interviews was to contextualize the quantitative findings and deepen the understanding of the phenomena studied. Museum managers and curators were recruited via email and phone, and artists were recruited via snowball sampling. Another component of the data included several relevant newspaper articles, taken from the Culture and Arts section of the local newspaper *Haaretz*, which provides information, news, and reviews of exhibitions, museums, galleries, and art events. We used these articles to support some of the interviewees' explanations, boost certain interpretations, or present a contradictory perspective. Qualitative data were analyzed in accordance with the "grounded theory" approach (Glaser and Strauss 1967).

Study Variables

Dependent Variables

The dependent variables in the quantitative study pertain to the *art repertoire* of the museums. These variables include the number of new exhibitions in each museum, as well as the gender, age, and reputation of the artists. The data structure necessitated reducing the artist-level variables ($N = 1274$) to one observation for each year in each museum ($N = 155$); therefore, the museum-level data is not multiplied by the number of artists who have been exhibited therein.¹ In other words, for each year, the distribution (in percentages) of artists in each category who had exhibitions in the museums was calculated, as explained for each category below.

Gender. A variable was constructed in which the percentage of women exhibiting (solo exhibitions) annually in each museum in the sample was calculated.

Age. The criterion used to categorize artists by age was the retirement age in Israel. We chose this cutoff since many artists continue to work past this age, and their work may be displayed in museums even after they have passed away. Furthermore, many artists only manage to gain visibility within museums years into their career. Accordingly, a dichotomous variable was

constructed indicating the percentage of relatively young artists (up to the age of 65) whose work was displayed annually at each museum.

Reputation was assessed by the artist's level of international recognition; information on exhibition location(s) was used as a proxy. This variable was calculated as the percentage per year of artists who had exhibitions only in one or more of the sampled museums in Israel versus artists whose work has been exhibited both in Israel and internationally.

Independent Variables

These variables include the economic characteristics of the museum and its geographical location.

Economic characteristics include the sum that the museum received from public funds (Ministry of Culture or the local authority),² revenue generated by visitors (i.e., from entrance fees, tours, activities, purchases from the museum shop/restaurant), revenue generated from private donations, and the total museum revenue.

Geographical location refers to whether the museum is in Israel's center or in the periphery (in terms of what is considered the cultural sphere). In Israel, the cultural centers are in Tel Aviv and in Jerusalem, the capital city (Greenfield 1989: 52). The centrality of Tel Aviv is noticeable in terms of both significant economic and cultural activities that occur there. One major museum is located outside Tel Aviv: the Israel Museum, the largest and most significant national museum. It is in Jerusalem, the capital city, and is considered a hot spot for tourists. As such, the Tel Aviv Museum of Art and the Israel Museum are the two museums in the sample that are categorized as centrally located museums. All the other art museums in the sample are categorized as in the periphery.

Quantitative Results

Descriptive Statistics: The Revenue Structure of the Museums

Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of revenue from private and public sources for each museum. It shows that, apart from the Israel Museum, public funding constitutes a significant portion of the total revenue for all museums in the sample; this finding highlights the fact that, without public support, Israeli art museums would likely not survive. The Israel Museum, on the other hand, is primarily funded by large private donations, which constitute approximately half its budget.

Figure 2 presents the percentage of public support from the Ministry of Culture or the local authority. As can be seen, the budget of the Tel Aviv Museum comes primarily from the municipality. The peripheral-urban museums (the Haifa Museums, the Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art, the Petah Tikva Museum, the Ramat Gan Museum for Israeli Art, and the Negev Museum in the city of Be'er Sheva) receive significantly more assistance from their local authority compared to governmental support. Municipal funding also accounts for most of their total revenue (see Figure 1). It is interesting that, in those peripheral-urban museums, the amount of privately generated revenue (from visitors and donors) is very low. In contrast, in other museums in the periphery, which do not receive a substantial budget from the local authority, privately generated revenue from entrance fees and donations is higher, even though they are more geographically remote. This finding corresponds with previous studies, which have suggested that museums that are primarily publicly funded are less oriented toward generating revenue from the private market and donations (Andreoni and Payne 2003; Frey 2019: 83–84).

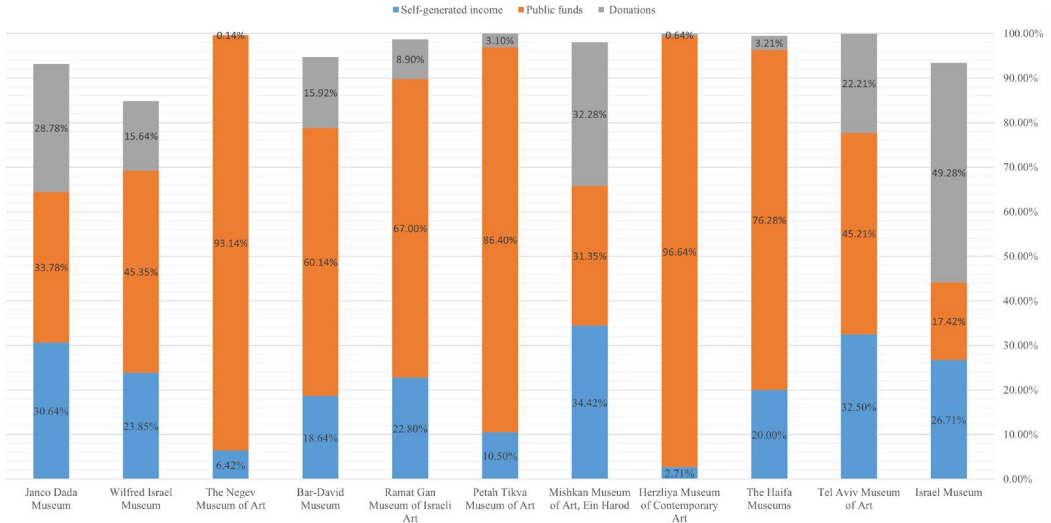


Figure 1. Percentage of revenue that comes from private versus public sources.

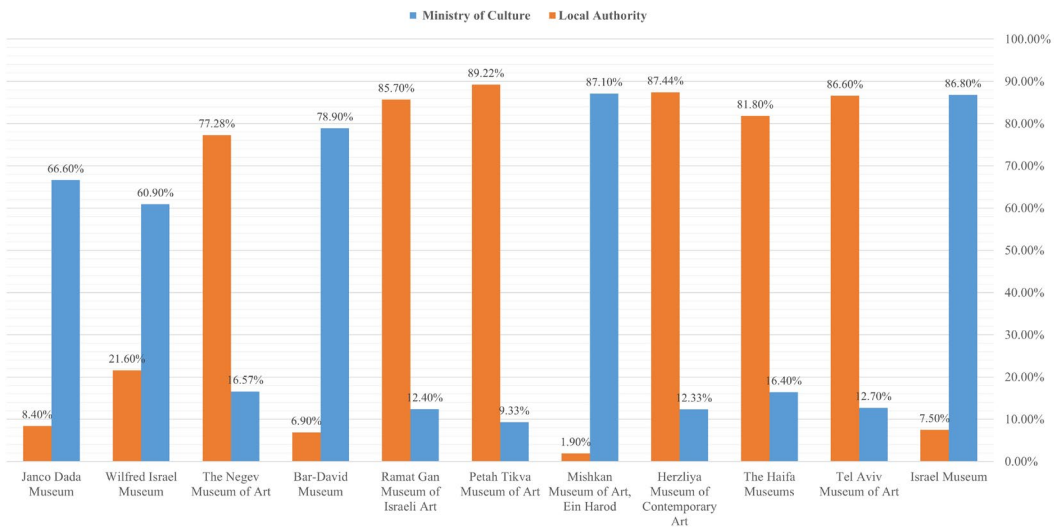


Figure 2. Percentage of support received from the Ministry of Culture and the local authority.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 1 presents the associations between the dependent and independent variables and shows that economic aspects and the geographic location of the museum significantly influence artistic activity. The data show that high-income (versus low-income) museums display a greater number of exhibitions by artists who are internationally recognized, and museums with more self-generated revenue display a greater number of new exhibitions. In terms of location, museums in the center have more self-generated revenue from visitors, greater financial support from donations, and higher financial allocations from the local authority than museums in the periphery.

Table 1. Mixed Linear Models for Predicting the Association Between Museum Revenue, Museum Location, and Art Repertoire

Dependent variables	Independent variables	b	SE	(n)
Percentage of internationally recognized artists	Total revenue	0.003**	0.001	141
Number of new exhibitions	Self-generated income	0.438**	0.131	147
Income from local authority	Location	10.285*	4.378	148
Self-generated income	Location	20.972***	1.306	148
Income from donations	Location	31.908***	7.152	148
Number of new exhibitions	Location	11.335*	5.248	152
Percentage of female artists	Location	-0.162*	0.071	142
Percentage of young artists	Location	-0.189	0.163	143
Percentage of internationally recognized artists	Location	0.249*	0.104	143

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$ *** $p < 0.001$

Museums in the center also have a greater number of new exhibitions and more exhibitions by international artists compared to museums in the periphery. As predicted, museums in the center have a lower number of solo exhibitions by women than those in the periphery. Unlike the findings of previous research, the current study finds no significant influence of the museum's location on the display of works by young artists. This issue is further considered in the second stage of the study, during which interviews were conducted with relevant stakeholders from the museums in the sample.

Qualitative Results

To further explore findings presented in the first stage, we present analysis of the interview data. We first discuss the effects of different sources of financial support on the art exhibited. We continue with a discussion of the characteristics of artists who have had their artwork on display at museums. Finally, we look at the link between the museum's location and features of the displayed art.

Economic Characteristics

Self-Generated Revenue

In light of the decline in government support, public museum directors have begun to pay attention to increasing the museum's self-generated revenue by adopting a variety of market strategies. Some of these strategies are reflected in the choice of exhibitions:

What usually brings people in is popular exhibitions. If we do an Agnes Martin exhibition, which is minimalist art, we know in advance that, although it is important to present Agnes Martin's art, we will not have a large audience for it. The museum must do both this and that, because of its reputation for being serious and relating to what is currently happening in the art world. In order to balance the budget, the museum has to offer popular exhibitions to

bring in a wide audience, a large audience. Otherwise, it will not meet its expenses and will not have enough self-generated revenue. (Interview 3, museum manager)

Israeli museums are not eligible for state funding if they fail to show an annual minimum of 7,500 paying visitors. Therefore, museum managers organize entertainment activities that attract visitors:

Most people arrive via festivals that I conduct during the holidays, collaborations with Bank Hapoalim [an Israeli bank], and through activities that I hold for parents and children. If I had to subsist only on the audience that likes what's on display here, I wouldn't be a recognized museum because I wouldn't pass the threshold of Seven thousand and five hundred visitors. (Interview 10, museum manager)

Public Allocations

Israel's Museums Law (5743-1983) defines a museum as "a nonprofit institute in which there is a collection of exhibits with cultural value, which places the collection or part of it on permanent display for the public, and the purpose of the display is education, learning or enjoyment." Accepting government funding also means some sort of government oversight and accountability:

Receiving a budget from the Cultural Administration is not just a financial matter, but a stamp of quality assurance. If we don't meet the museum criteria for the Cultural Administration, we won't receive the budget. (Interview 11, museum manager)

As far as the content and programming go, the law gives museums autonomy (Greenfield 1998: 159):

There's never been any interference by the state or the authority, in terms of the content of the exhibitions and activities. Thankfully, and maybe luckily, I've been given free rein. (Interview 6, museum manager)

Government funding in Israel is limited and usually insufficient to cover museums costs. Receiving significant funding from the local authority allows museum managers (particularly in small museums in the periphery) curatorial independence, namely, to work in accordance with their professional goals, without needing to compromise to meet the demands of the market:

We've had exhibitions that brought in smaller crowds, but it was very important to showcase them. I think the research done by the museum, the publications done by the museum, its contribution to the field of culture and art—that's what's important. (Interview 9, museum manager)

Private Donations

Donations are a serious business for museums: "Donations determine how many exhibitions we'll have per year and especially the quality of the exhibitions" (Interview 11, museum manager). Most museums in Israel do not have the luxury of significant donations. Exceptionally, the Israel Museum in Jerusalem raises large donations from abroad, which account for half of its revenues. According to the museum, the donations are "pure" philanthropy:

The donors give you money because they believe in you, in your vision, in your professionalism. Because this place is incredibly meaningful. If you're interested in the entire world's history, this is the source. Jerusalem is one of the places where the world's history began, and that's the narrative. (Interview 4, curator)

Contrarily, some critics argue that the Israel Museum's agenda is to satisfy the desires of donors. "The Israel Museum has a certain status as a national institution in terms of its role and mission, but not in terms of the budget allocated to it by the state," argues Shani Litman (2015). "This requires maintaining a very fine line in order to attract donors who enable its continued existence."

Another example is the *No Place Like Home* exhibition, which was sponsored by the Swedish design company IKEA. The curator of the exhibition hung famous artworks in the spirit of Dada art, the exhibition's catalog was a perfect imitation of the IKEA catalog, and the visitors walked through a "home" whose design was inspired by IKEA's. The curator explained that the exhibition's cultural and design value comes from the "Dada" style, in which everything can be considered an artwork—a house, a hat, furniture (Ben-Yehuda and Katz 2017).

Characteristics of the Artist

Women Displaying in Museums

The art world is characterized by long-standing gender inequality. Although in the Israeli context there is high awareness of gender-based discrimination, women do not receive equal representation in museums (see Table 2 in the Appendix). This phenomenon is particularly troubling because, in most museums, women occupy senior management and curatorial roles. A prominent artist expressed her frustration with the situation:

There are a lot of women in the system, but [curators] always favor men. The things I ask for are reasonable. If [the requests] came from a man, it would be different . . . There is something about the clichéd image of the male artist that he is a genius, whose eccentric mannerisms are appealing. For women, eccentric behavior is not appealing. They are not as persuasive as men. (Interview 18, artist)

Most of the museums were found to have a low percentage of exhibitions that were managed by women. These managers and curators have explained the gap as a professional consideration:

Although we are acutely aware of the subject, we feel that at this time, we should work not according to a desire to achieve a strict balance but rather in terms of quality considerations. (Interview 5, curator)

Further, the quantitative findings show that the "top" museums in the center have the lowest percent of solo exhibitions by women. The gap stems from the fact that large museums often exhibit canonical art, in which the total presence of women in general is low both internationally and locally: "We show more works by canonical and older artists, which brings with it the gender discrimination that existed three or four decades ago" (Interview 4, curator).

Some of the museums (in the periphery) have made sure to correct this problem. The Ein Harod Art Museum specializes in addressing aspects that have not been covered in the official history of Israeli art, and the importance of discussing women artists is part of the museum's mission, in their attempt to correct the historical injustice of their exclusion from the discourse (see Litman 2015). In the Negev Museum of Art, there is a high percentage of women artists compared to the other museums. The Museum's management explains that presenting women's work is a criterion for curatorial choices in the museum, a sort of affirmative action: "As with all kinds of subjects, I put this on the agenda, and when I choose exhibitions, this is part of it" (Interview 9, museum manager).

Young Artists versus Veteran Artists

The treatment of young artists, as compared to older artists, has been discussed in museums with regard to the division between canonical art and contemporary art. Young artists represent experimental, new, emerging, and formative art. Canonical art is represented by veteran artists who have a strong reputation, have presented at important exhibitions, and have been accepted into the core of the discourse, and therefore possess a “seal of approval.” The following quotes speak to this issue:

Veteran artists: I have to convince my target audience, in the best sense of the word, that what’s happening in the museum is worthy of their attention. If I take an artist who graduated yesterday from Bezalel [Academy of Art] and does experimental art, that won’t appeal to the audience. To bring it to the public, I have to convince them that there is good art here, and good art is usually associated with canonical art. (Interview 9, museum manager)

Young artists: It’s very important for me to give young artists exposure and, in recent years, there has also been a tendency for showcasing things that are unorthodox. I very much look for these things, the things that aren’t mainstream, and this also goes hand in hand with the topic of innovation. (Interview 10, museum manager)

The managers’ responses illustrate that the decision to display the work of young artists or veteran artists is very much influenced by the taste of a manager or director. For example, during the years considered in this study, all the artists whose work was exhibited in the Herzliya Museum were young (see Table 2 in the Appendix). This was due to the museum management’s strategy of displaying many exhibitions of young artists who had recently graduated from art school (Buganim 2013). However, the current manager notes that this trend is changing: “My style is less about first exposure, rather I am more concerned with the subject and what the artist presents.”

The quantitative data show that the Israel Museum showcases older artists (above the age of 65). This finding corresponds with the definition of a museum as an encyclopedic institution, intended to showcase retrospective exhibitions that summarize artists’ work, so it makes sense that the focus would be on older artists: “We show more works by canonical and older artists” (Interview 1, museum manager). This aim differs from the agenda of the previous museum director, who tended to provide more space to young artists and to local discourses (Litman 2015). A senior artist criticizes this artistic line:

There was a time when the Israel Museum presented contemporary Israeli art, groundbreaking artists. They were always going from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem . . . Today it has switched; the Tel Aviv Museum is fresh, diverse, full of activity, while the Israel Museum is stagnant. (Interview 15, artist)

International Art

Several interviewees emphasized the importance of reputation as influencing a variety of aspects in running a museum:

International art holds great importance since it brings the museum into the global art network, introduces contemporary trends from around the world, and is attractive to art lovers and visitors from abroad . . . This requires a lot more fundraising to make it possible, because we won’t get more support [public funding] if we want to present international art. (Interview 3, museum manager)

In the Israel Museum, the repertoire of exhibitions is mostly made up of artists with an international reputation. This finding correlates with the broad scope of donations that allows the museum to showcase expensive exhibitions. Legally, the museum has defined itself as a private nonprofit to allow for overseas donations and retain autonomy in its cultural activity:

The entire system of receiving donations and artworks from overseas is possible because we're not a national museum. Beyond the fact that the state of Israel cannot fund a museum at this level . . . international art is very important to us and a part of what we do. By the way, it hadn't been like that until 15 years ago. In the sense that our profile today is centered around contemporary art, which draws the crowds. (Interview 4, curator)

Nevertheless, art critics claim that the museum is lacking in the sense that it neglects the local discourse and is more inclined to showcase world renowned works in costly and conservative exhibitions:

It's true that the range of obligations is significant, and, within it, art is not what draws in tourists. But in striking a balance between the museum's desire to attract a crowd and its desire to say something meaningful, at least have it resonate with the local culture. Let them use their power not only to present expensive things, but also things that provoke. This is why they need to change direction. (Litman 2015)

In peripheral areas, all museums have expressed their aspiration to present international art (other than the Ramat Gan Museum which focuses on Israeli art). However, they often find this difficult to realize in light of the high costs of producing exhibitions from abroad:

We have a twofold problem regarding artists from abroad. One problem is our inability to meet the cost of putting on the exhibition. The second is that when I speak with artists from overseas, they are used to receiving a large expense account. (Interview 10, museum manager)

According to this museum manager, digital media has made it easier to present international artwork: "I do succeed, and it is easier for me to bring exhibitions using new media forms. There is no need for the artist [to come], the artist sends the specifications . . . Nowadays it's through Jumbo Mail."

Art in the Periphery

Tel Aviv is considered the main economic and cultural center of Israel, and other cities are ranked according to their distance from it (CBS 2008). Regarding cultural spaces, peripheral museums in Israel are geographically distant from the Tel Aviv, as well as those that are in satellite cities (i.e., cities near Tel Aviv). Museums in the periphery face difficult challenges being less accessible to visitors, and this affects their revenue and their cultural activities:

The museum is very centrally located, in a settlement in the center of the country. But clearly, in relation to the major museums like the Tel Aviv Museum and the Israel Museum, it is a peripheral museum . . . Being peripheral is connected to everything. For that reason, it is clear that we are working with a different budget level that allows for different activities. (Interview 7, museum manager)

Museums in the periphery strive to present various exhibits that are unique compared to those in the center to attract visitors to the remote museum. This is manifested in several ways. First, showcasing "pioneering" exhibitions:

Almost every one of my exhibitions is, in some way, something that can't be seen elsewhere. I try to have exhibitions of lesser-known works by famous artists, which are being presented for the first time to this audience. (Interview 9, museum manager)

Second, they offer different artistic norms than those found in the center. These norms are expressed through an alternative cultural discourse, presentation of exhibitions by artists who have been marginalized, and providing a platform to young artists at the beginning their career:

I try to do all kinds of experimental stuff, do my best to integrate international projects into the exhibitions. Also, to give young artists a chance, and to do justice to artists who have not been featured over the years, or who have been forgotten. (Interview 7, museum manager)

One of the most notable peripheral museums in Israel is the Ein Harod Art Museum, which chooses to exhibit local artists who have not entered the canon or have never had a major exhibition. This decision to showcase lesser-known local artists enables an examination of the quality of Israeli art that is outside the canon (Bar-Or 1998). In doing so, Ein Harod has become an important museum that is highly appreciated in various art circles in Israel:

Let's just say Ein Harod is a bit of a different story, with a different kind of agenda. An agenda that is corrective, as if to counter our canon, and it's wonderful. (Interview 4, curator)

A third strategy adopted by peripheral museums is that they tend to display a greater connection to the local surroundings. This connection can be demonstrated in several ways, one of which is to emphasize the physical environment surrounding the museum (north or south):

I have declared that this museum presents art that is "on the border" in both the physical and metaphorical sense. It is "on the border" of art, and I want people to remember that the museum is five hundred meters from the border [Israel's northern border]. (Interview 13, museum manager)

A second way is to establish a connection with artists from the surrounding area:

The way I relate to the environment is not simplistic. It can happen in various ways. I might show an artist who paints landscapes of the desert, or someone who lives here. (Interview 9, museum manager)

And a third way is socially, namely through initiatives focused on the relation between exhibitions and the local community:

It is important to me that artists exhibited here be those who not only engage in interdisciplinary discourse but also engage with the local social and cultural space. (Interview 7, museum manager)

As can be seen, this section deepens the understanding of the quantitative findings and expands the explanation to aspects like museum directors' considerations.

Discussion and Implications

This article adds to our understanding of how a variety of nonartistic factors shape art museums' artistic repertoire. We asked, how do the economic, organizational, and structural characteristics of art museums influence the art they exhibit and the characteristics of the artists that they

choose to showcase? The findings from this mixed-methods research indicate the existence of three distinct, intertwined factors that influence the exhibits on display in museums: the museum's financial structure, its location, and its management.

On the financial aspect, we found the total amount of the museum's revenue, as well as the proportion of each type of income within the budget, all affect the art exhibitions on display. For example, higher levels of self-generated income correlate with a greater number of new exhibitions. Additionally, higher levels of donations correlate with exhibiting more expensive collections such as international and canonical art. The link between donors and museums is prevalent, and its presence can also be felt in the content and objects showcased in exhibitions. In this context, the current study has found that the Israel Museum's repertoire of art is controversial. On the one hand, the museum excels as an art institution. On the other hand, as a prominent museum in Israel, its canon does not represent the full spectrum of "Israeli art" and is almost devoid of artwork by women. Receiving a high amount of fixed funding from the local authority provides museum managers with curatorial independence, allowing them to fulfill their intrinsic goals regarding the types of exhibitions showcased without submitting to the demands of the commercial market. In terms of location, the scope of economic and artistic activity in museums located in the cultural centers (Israel Museum and Tel Aviv Museum of Art) is significantly larger than in museums in the periphery. Although some of the other museums are not geographically far away, they are socially far from the cultural center.

We suggest that whereas the central museums tend to present the mainstream of the art world, peripheral museums seem to have a strong affinity to the local surroundings and pay more attention to artists who have been excluded from the mainstream. Additionally, they try to present various exhibits that are distinctive from those in the central museums to attract visitors to the remote location. These curatorial choices are a product of museum directors' worldviews, along with their motivation to present a unique repertoire in an environment that cannot compete economically with museums in the center.

A striking finding is the paucity of exhibitions by women in museums in the center. These findings shed light on the power dynamics in the art field and supports the long-standing claim of male hegemony and inequality in high art. It is particularly noteworthy with respect to the Tel Aviv Museum of Art; even though this museum is in the center of arguably the most liberal city in Israel, the percentage of women exhibited is much lower than in other museums.

A museum's artistic repertoire is strongly influenced by the director's subjective artistic taste and preferences at the time, as well as the museum's economic and structural circumstances. This is reflected in museum directors' decisions pertaining to the style of exhibitions, and the choice of whether to display younger or veteran artists and whether to strive to showcase more exhibits by women. This aspect was reflected in all the museums examined and is particularly noticeable in small museums in the periphery, where the museum director is also typically the chief curator. Further research can compare the characteristics of the repertoire displayed in small museums in the periphery depending on the director in charge, considering changes in leadership.

In summary, this article depicts the intersection of economic, organizational, and structural characteristics that shape the artistic repertoire exhibited in art museums in Israel. We contribute to the literature on cultural markets by providing a framework that integrates three distinct approaches to explore the effect of nonartistic factors on museums' cultural production. Understanding and highlighting these nonartistic factors in the composition of artistic repertoires has critical implications, since museums, especially well-known ones, are usually the "gatekeepers" of the canon, and what they exhibit and add to their collections largely determines the artistic canon. In other words, the art canon is the art showcased in the Israel Museum or the Tel Aviv Museum of Art. It is this particular art that will represent aesthetic knowledge and ideals, appear

in catalogs and articles, draw the largest donations, be purchased by prominent private collections, and be showcased abroad. Moreover, the public tends to trust nonprofit public institutions, more so than commercial bodies. Such biases may damage the credibility of these art institutions.

This article also puts the spotlight on museums in the periphery of Israel. It shows that center and periphery, in the cultural space, are terms that have a geographical, financial, and mental aspect. The study proposes that museums in the periphery have great value to the local art scene since they adopt different types of norms and introduce alternatives to the cultural canon. Additionally, their affinity to the local environment reinforces the local cultural infrastructure.

The study has its limitations. First, a museum's repertoire of art includes elements such as artistic styles, mediums, group exhibitions, and permanent exhibitions that were beyond the scope of this article and thus not considered. Second, the study focused on Israeli art, which is important on the international level too, but is small in scope and has particular local characteristics. A comparison, in this context, with countries whose population size and GDP are on a similar scale would serve as an important expansion of the study.

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■ NOTES

1. The gap between the final sample size ($N = 155$) and the number of years multiplied by the number of museums in the sample ($15 \times 11 = 165$) is due to missing data in Edusystems reports.
2. The variation in the Ministry of Culture's budget is regulated in accordance with the current budget of the government + projects / size of the museum per square meter.

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Appendix

Categories of Artists and Economic Characteristics of Museums

Table 2. Categories of Artists Whose Art Is Displayed and Number of Exhibitions in Each Museum

	Israel Museum	Tel Aviv Museum of Art	The Haifa Museums	Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art	Mishkan Museum of Art, Ein Harod	Petah Tikva Museum of Art	Ramat Gan Museum of Israeli Art	Bar David Museum	The Negev Museum of Art	Wilfred Israel Museum	Janco Dada Museum
Female artists	20%	26%	35%	34%	41%	30%	45%	24%	45%	44%	56%
N	14	15	15	15	15	9	11	14	5	14	15
Internationally recognized artists	68%	50%	36%	54%	34%	46%	8%	30%	47%	35%	21%
N	15	15	15	15	15	9	11	14	5	14	15
Young artists	33%	64%	82%	98%	47%	55%	83%	38%	50%	67%	85%
N	15	15	15	15	15	9	11	14	5	14	15
Number of new exhibitions	22.27	26.47	25	17.93	11.2	7.5	21.27	10	3.91	6.8	13.53
deviation Standard	6.63	4.31	7.32	11	3	1.27	6.2	2.51	2.12	1.78	3.42
N	15	15	15	15	15	10	11	15	11	15	15

Source: Edusystems, Center for Information and Cultural Studies 2000–2014

Table 3. Economic Characteristics of All Museums (Revenue in Millions of Shekels)

	Israel Museum	Tel Aviv Museum of Art	The Haifa Museums	Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art	Mishkan Museum of Art, Ein Harod	Petah Tikva Museum of Art	Ramat Gan Museum of Israeli Art	Bar David Museum	The Negev Museum of Art	Wilfred Israel Museum	Janco Dada Museum
Self-generated income	24.56	18.53	2.8	0.05	0.6	0.37	0.55	0.05	0.08	0.12	0.41
Standard deviation	8.41	3.33	1.36	0.02	0.28	0.06	0.14	0.02	0.05	0.02	0.08
N	15	15	15	15	15	10	10	15	8	15	15
Income from local authority	1.49	22.53	8.64	1.99	0.04	2.46	1.26	0.04	0.94	0.06	0.09
Standard deviation	0.82	6.54	1.78	0.58	0.17	1.34	0.54	0.14	0.71	0.06	0.14
N	15	15	15	15	15	11	11	15	9	15	15
Income from donations	51.5	12.74	0.44	0.01	0.59	0.11	0.2	0.04	0.01	0.09	0.38
Standard deviation	11.69	2.68	0.19	0.05	0.33	0.09	0.19	0.04	0.01	0.09	0.19
N	15	15	15	15	15	10	10	15	8	15	15
Total revenue	99.43	57.42	13.77	2.28	1.75	3.78	2.4	0.26	1.39	0.54	1.25
deviation Standard	19.1	10.52	2.35	0.59	0.35	0.9	0.43	0.12	1.2	0.21	0.21
N	15	15	15	15	15	10	10	15	8	15	15

Source: Edusystems, Center for Information and Cultural Studies 2000–2014