Collecting Contemporary Art: a visual analysis of a qualitative investigation into

patterns of collecting and production.

A thesis submitted

by

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Abstract

This dissertation presents a cultural analysis of contemporary art collecting and art production with an illustration of patterns that overlap in collecting and art production practices in contemporary art. The illustrated visual network shows how institutions, local context, social strategies and prestige overlap in their influences on art production as a cause for collecting contemporary art. Economic exchange, reputation, a perception of time, and the personal and emotional understanding of objects and material are four patterns that illustrate reasons for collecting contemporary art in conclusion.

This analysis is based on a visualisation of the structured field data that was generated in a participatory field study in the New York art world, consisting of semi-structured interviews between 2013 – 2015. Limitations in usability and interface design, and the need for a sufficient visualisation tool for qualitative data analysis, drew the focus of this study to the development of a new data visualisation software. After a peer-reviewed process, the software Entity Mapper was selected for use in this thesis to visually analyse the collected and structured data. The analysis takes location, size, hierarchy and movement of the structured data in the visual map into consideration for concluding theoretical statements.

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1. Chapter 1: Introduction

This dissertation presents a cultural analysis of contemporary art collecting and art production with an illustration of patterns that currently overlap in collecting and art production practices. Patterns refer to influences and/or acts that repeatedly occur as an effect on both collecting and art production. The patterns will show how collecting and production are currently interwoven with each other through the same mechanisms.

Throughout the entire study, one sentence repeatedly came up: 'But there are no rules in collecting or the art world.' The challenge of capturing a culture of collecting with the presupposition that the culture one wants to capture does not follow any fixed or structured rules and thus to reveal patterns became part of the methodology that was used to enter the field: the development of a software tool that would enable the visualisation of the field of study and consequently describe a collecting culture in contemporary art. The field of study is a western European and US-based contemporary art world, and the field study was based in New York. The term field is used in reference to Graw's[1] cultural study on the 'adoption and exception' of contemporary artists, in which she stresses that the western European and US 'Kunstbetrieb' [art apparatus] has a particular relevance as a 'horizon of artistic production and zone of approval.'[2] Graw expands the notion of the field with the term *art world*, with which she moves away from Bourdieu's notion of the 'artistic field' [künstlerisches Feld] in which production is always based on a perception of competition. The term art world, says Graw, signals a milieu-oriented field in which the individuals who belong to it all strive for the same basic interest—namely to secure its existence, which means that the competition in the field is real, but nevertheless also means that potential rivalry on one day can also mean a

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[1] Isabelle Graw. "Aneignung Und Ausnahme Zeitgenössische Künstlerinnen: Ihre Ästhetischen Verfahren Und Ihr Status Im Kunstsystem," PhD Diss., (Europa Universität Viadrina Frankfurt
[2] Isabelle Graw. "Aneignung Und Ausnahme Zeitgenössische Künstlerinnen: Ihre Ästhetischen Verfahren Und Ihr Status Im Kunstsystem," PhD Diss., (Europa Universität Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder), 2003), 6; In DNB Online Datenbank; available from http://d-nb.info/971590273 (urn: urn:nbn:de:kobv:521-opus-00028; accessed September 12, 2015).

potential collaboration another day.[3] Graw emphasizes furthermore that not only the production and therefore the existence of the field is what brings the individuals within it to collaborate; the legitimacy of the product 'contemporary art' is additionally at stake.[4] The recently published article 'The Professionals' underlines this theoretical approach to the term *art world* with a journalistic investigation into the awareness that the new art audience has (economic) interest in contemporary art that is closely related to their own professional gain and/or the development of a potential collaborative network. Most individuals who visit a gallery or an opening are in some sense related to the production of contemporary art.[5]

The aim to constantly construct, produce and legitimize the field of contemporary art shows that the individuals in the field are constantly moving, and constantly producing evidence that shows that art of the Now carries the surplus 'contemporary.' Contemporary does not only signify the Now; it also shows that the material, production or thought has been vetted by the field/the art world. This process, and the temporality of the Now, is the logic of the uncontrollable and constantly re-negotiated nature of the field of study. The product that the apparatus produces goes beyond the material object as a commodity because the art object is placed into the 'zone of approval.'[6] Expanding on Graw's notion of the 'field', contemporary art carries the surplus *contemporary* as soon as the object (expanding to thought, concept, performance or digital entity) has been placed in the context of

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[3] Isabelle Graw. "Aneignung Und Ausnahme Zeitgenössische Künstlerinnen: Ihre Ästhetischen Verfahren Und Ihr Status Im Kunstsystem," PhD Diss., (Europa Universität Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder), 2003), 7; In DNB Online Datenbank; available from http://d-nb.info/971590273 (urn: urn:nbn:de:kobv:521-opus-00028; accessed September 12, 2015).

[4] Isabelle Graw. "Aneignung Und Ausnahme Zeitgenössische Künstlerinnen: Ihre Ästhetischen Verfahren Und Ihr Status Im Kunstsystem," PhD Diss., (Europa Universität Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder), 2003), 7; In DNB Online Datenbank; available from http://d-nb.info/971590273 (urn: urn:nbn:de:kobv:521-opus-00028; accessed September 12, 2015).

[5] Elvia Wilk. "The Professionals." *Spike Art Quarterly*, July 21, 2015. Accessed August 08, 2015, http://www.spikeartmagazine.com/en/articles/professionals.

[6] Isabelle Graw. "Aneignung Und Ausnahme Zeitgenössische Künstlerinnen: Ihre Ästhetischen Verfahren Und Ihr Status Im Kunstsystem," PhD Diss., (Europa Universität Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder), 2003), 6; In DNB Online Datenbank; available from http://d-nb.info/971590273 (urn: urn:nbn:de:kobv:521-opus-00028; accessed September 12, 2015).

the *contemporary* art world. The art is not only contemporary because it was produced in the Now, it has been placed into a context that vetted and produced the *contemporary* in contemporary art. The distinction here to other art forms of the Now is based on the commonly used expression 'the contemporary art world,' as if it was a contained field that one can point towards. The slipperiness of the comprehension of the contemporary art world is embraced in this thesis, but nevertheless accounted for as an existing milieu. Again, the milieu is based on the individuals and will be extended to non-human entities in this thesis that constantly produce the existence of the field 'the contemporary art world.' The term 'art world' and how it has been defined in literary discourse will be expanded upon in Chapter 3. The openness of the milieu of investigation is part of the definition of the milieu – it is constantly in flux due to the temporality of the comprehension of the product the field produces, namely *contemporary* art. The entities that are part of this production are, for example, 'the professionals' (artists, writers, gallerists, academics, dealers, etc.), institutions (the art magazine, museums, universities, auction houses, galleries etc.) and other conditions that will be mentioned and visualised in the course of this thesis. These entities nevertheless have one thing in common: they are producing and legitimizing the *contemporary* in the art of Now. This gives a perimeter to the subtle field of the contemporary art world. The entities that are part of the contemporary art world must support the contemporary, and therefore the dealer considered here is not the dealer of a secondary market gallery that focuses on renaissance painting; the curator is not the curator of medieval art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art; and the universities considered here offer courses with a clear focus on contemporary art production (practice and theory), to name but a few examples. It is not to say that dealers of renaissance painting or curators of medieval art are not related to the contemporary art world, but they are not the focus of the study at this point.

What is contemporary? Contemporary is a time concept that carries the meaning 'with time,'[7] a flow and temporary quality. The concept is inexplicit in

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[7] David Joselit. "On Aggregators." *October* 146, Fall (2013), 3–18.

regards to contemporary art, as it carries more than just the relation to the concept of time, the present or of the Now. It is in this study regarded, as mentioned above, as a certain surplus quality that signifies connections to a milieu that creates and legitimatizes the 'contemporaneity' of art in the Now. It is disputable with an art historic perspective when this legitimation process started (or if it ever began), and in order to avoid the trap of trying to define (or structure) a term that signifies a negotiation and constant redefinition of the system it describes, it stands here as a watery signifier[8] that nevertheless can point towards living artists[9] and a break with modernity.[10] The interviewees in the field study were all related to living artists in their role in the art world – they collect the art of living artists, they represent living artists as a gallery, they advise collectors who collect the art of living artists, they write about living artists and other. To summarize, contemporary is a signifier that is constantly shifting with the milieu it titles – the entities that constitute the contemporary art world are constantly collaborating on upholding their existence with the temporary and moving nature of the product (contemporary art) they deal with. The study therefore does not put a time frame on the term contemporary for example, as the London edition of the art fair Frieze does by separating Frieze Master from Frieze by the restriction that the art shown at the contemporary art fair

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[8] 'So it is with the contemporary: a term we know well enough through its use as a de facto standard by museums, which denote their currency through an apparently modest temporal signifier: to be contemporary is to be savvy, reactive, dynamic, aware, timely, in constant motion, aware of fashion. The term has clearly replaced the use of "modern" to describe the art of the day. With this shift, out go the grand narratives and ideals of modernism, replaced by a default, soft consensus on the immanence of the present, the empiricism of *now*, of what we have directly in front of us, and what they have in front of them over there. But in its application as a de facto standard this watery signifier has through accumulation nevertheless assumed such a scale that it certainly *must* mean something.' Julieta Aranda, Kuan Brian Wood, and Anton Vidokle. "What Is Contemporary Art? Issue Two." *E-Flux Journal* 12, (January, 2010). Accessed February 28, 2013, http://www.e-flux.com/journal/what-is-contemporary-art-issue-two/.

[9] 'Strictly speaking, the term "contemporary art" refers to art made and produced by artists living today.' Getty. "About Contemporary Art." Accessed September 09, 2015, http://www.getty.edu/education/teachers/classroom_resources/curricula/contemporary_art/background1.html.

[10] Julieta Aranda, Kuan Brian Wood, and Anton Vidokle. "What Is Contemporary Art? Issue Two." *E-Flux Journal* 12, (January, 2010). Accessed February 28, 2013, http://www.e-flux.com/journal/what-is-contemporary-art-issue-two/.

has to be made after the year 2000).[11] Nevertheless, every entity in this study is linked to living artists and part of the contemporary art world.

The study focuses on a particular relationship in the contemporary art world, the relationship between collecting contemporary and art production. Although the contemporary art world is constantly renegotiating its existence, products and protocols, the study captured patterns that are tangible and influential in collecting processes and art production. The shifting nature of the field of study, the contemporary art world, is the quality that is expressed and accepted in the methodology and resulting visualisations. This written text is evidence of the patterns in the Now, shown with the date stamp and time frame of the thesis (from 2012 – 2015). The resulting content and analysis becomes part of the field itself and overcomes the temporality in part with the contribution to a field outside of the contemporary art world, that is, the field of qualitative data analysis with the creation of a software application for data visualisation in qualitative inquiry.

The study is an interdisciplinary approach that was built on the context and methodologies of cultural studies and ethnography, design and computer sciences, and art theory and practice. Chapter 2 gives the context for these disciplines and their current state relevant for the exploration to construct a new methodology in the field of qualitative data analysis. The chapter contextualizes the dilemma to find a beginning and an end for a study of culture that is constantly in flux. Introducing the field of study with the question of how we navigate through complexity shows two aspects that make the ground for this thesis, namely that complexity can be shown and analysed without ignoring the unstructured environment, and without quantifying it to an interpretive abstraction. Furthermore, the chapter brings this evidence exemplified with a theoretical approach to the question of how collectors

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[11] 'Frieze London is one of the only fairs to focus only on contemporary art whilst Frieze Masters will give a unique view of the relationship between old and new art. Frieze Masters will show work made before the year 2000 whereas Frieze London will show work mainly post year 2000.' Frieze Masters. "About Frieze Masters." Accessed July 07, 2013, http://friezemasters.com/about/.

make affirmative or critical decisions about choices of acquisition, interest in and support of an artist among others.

The interdisciplinary of this study demands that a language is defined, one which intrinsically to this thesis builds an understanding of the results and analysis. The language search and definition is a negotiation and is not meant to restrict other interpretations of this text any reader may have based on their own perceptions. Rather, the subchapter 2.3. Finding a Language, is describing a beautiful problem, namely that each discipline deploys a certain jargon that can lead to creative ways of constructing new methodologies as pursued in this study. One example of this language issue is the definition, theoretical approach and comprehension of networks.

The term network has been a tool to interpret complex systems as flat, non-hierarchical and as a new mode of distribution in the context of institutional critique in contemporary art.[12] [13] The subchapter 2.3.1. What is a network?, shows examples from art, philosophy and computational studies that clarify that the understanding of networks does not only differ strongly in the forms that networks can have, but also in the application of the term. A network can be a concept or reality. The difference in this instance is that the concept is a tool that allows a researcher to deductively absorb and trace the field of study, while understanding networks as reality brings the researcher to inductively develop traces of the patterns of this network. The contextualization of the understanding of networks from different approaches (art, computer sciences and ethnography) also required a definition of terms that are used throughout the entire thesis and which are based in network studies. Entity, node, link and network are defined in the chapter in the following clarified way: entity is anything that brings content to the network (it can be human and non-human, an attitude, act or apparatus). Entity is used often interchangeably with the word node in

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[12] Pascal Gielen. *Institutional Attitudes: Instituting Art in a Flat World*. Edited by Pascal Gielen. Amsterdam: Valiz/Antennae Series, 2013.

[13] Bruno Latour. *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.

this study and a link connects nodes or entities. A network is here a layered, complex reality that unfolds from an unstructuredness that incorporates everything (the whole) into filtered elevated substance, which is summarized with terms that code these filtered, more prominent contents. These codes are further abstracted into theoretical or interpretive concepts. The way the network unfolds in this study is a counter argument to the interpretation that networks are flat and non-hierarchical. In later chapters, this is made evident by showing that a horizontal network can also show hierarchies by location and size or colour of certain nodes. Understanding how location, size and colour can signify structure in a network shows that horizontal, flat layers are also hierarchical. The understanding of networks in such a visual way is contextualized in the subchapter 2.4. Data visualisation. In the introductory chapter on data visualisation, examples only lead to the understanding of language that is used in regards to data visualisation in later chapters. It also shows that the beginning of this research revealed a lack of user-friendly applications and an integration of data visualisation in qualitative inquiry that does not quantify research results. The discovery of this lack in one of the most prominent disciplines for this study became the base for developing a software tool (the Entity Mapper) that bridges current standards in data visualisation and qualitative research, which is described in PART II, Chapter 5.

The contextual literature review gives an overview of selected prominent texts that have described the art world as networks – social, human, and non-human and digital. The chapter illustrates the discourse on the divide between market and world in the early 2000s (Graw[14], Velthuis[15], Horowitz[16]), and the current conclusion that the divide is not justifiable anymore due to the interwoven roles on both the market and world sides of the networked art environment. The contextual review

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[14] Isabelle Graw. *High Price: Art Between the Market and Celebrity Culture*. Berlin, New York: Sternberg Press, 2010.

[15] Olav Velthuis. *Talking Prices: Symbolic Meanings of Prices on the Market for Contemporary Art*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005.

[16] Noah Horowitz. *Art of the Deal: Contemporary Art in a Global Financial Market*. Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011.

ends with a statement towards a mediated discussion differentiating between collectors of contemporary art and financial investors in contemporary art. Although every collector brings a certain investment to the contemporary art world, they are nevertheless also interested in 'establishing, preserving and documenting'[17] and are therefore comparable to institutions in their collecting attitudes. The investor wants to receive an economic gain from the apparatus that they invested into – the appreciation of art therefore occurs foremost on a monetary level for an investor. Reasons behind the economic appreciation of art and why this purely financial investment is not appreciated in the art world will be discussed in Chapter 6. The media attention focused on the investment strategies of mediated figures such as Stefan Simchowitz and Bert Kreuk will serve as extreme examples in contemporary art collecting in Chapter 6.

The thesis draws on a wide range of sources and resources from print and digital magazines, journals, books and online blogs and websites. The resources are mostly contemporary, and articles that are quoted were predominantly written between 2012 and 2015. The literature, sources and resources were chosen in such a varied contemporary and academic context because of the embeddedness of these resources in the field of study. In Chapter 2.3. Finding a Language, it becomes clear that the members of the field use some of the same contemporary resources, and the resources reflect some of the same topics that were mentioned in the interviews and visualised in the visual map. The academic literature is chosen based on the most recently available texts about related topics in this field, or the historic context of the matter the study refers to. The sources and resources are generally chosen with the closest relevance and contemporary accuracy that could be found up until now.

Contemporary art collecting and production is a huge diverse arena internationally, which is also interwoven with cultural understandings of economic strategies, art production and creative exchange. This study focuses therefore on the contemporary art field in New York between 2012-2015. The selected texts, the

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[17] MoMA. "Mission Statement." Accessed August 22, 2015. http://www.moma.org/about/index.

chosen interviewees and the participant observation in selected galleries and an art advisory during the field study were chosen specifically as a way to provide a focused resource for the analysis. Collecting contemporary art is a complex, diverse arena in New York and this thesis does not focus on specificities of the market. Rather, this thesis is an analysis of collecting contemporary art that uses New York as a field study in order to elevate the topic of this study to a theoretical understanding of collecting contemporary art and art production. Grounded Theory is the methodology for this thesis because of the premise to ground the theory development in data analysis and to elevate the collected field data to theory. The methodology has an inductive premise and theory development builds methods to collect, code and analyse field data. Chapter 4 describes these methods. The term 'Grounded Theory' describes the end result of the methodology, namely that the theory is grounded in field data. Therefore, this thesis is not a thesis that describes the art world in New York as a case study but rather uses the collected and structured data of the field 'New York art world' as the ground to develop a theoretical understanding about the collection and production of contemporary art.

I interviewed experts and participated for two years as a researcher in the field in order to bring the field study to a reflective and critical theoretical analysis about collecting contemporary art and art production. The boundaries of the field allow me to focus the field study and to bring the analysis to a tangible conclusion. The boundaries of the field are mainly structured around the criteria that the entities deal with currently practicing, living artists that belong to the *contemporary* art field, and therefore are part of an international art world that extends established gallery representation, institutional discourse (academic and cultural) and extended private investment. Setting boundaries for the field study by selecting interviewees, texts and locations of study was based on initial textual and field research in 2012 and 2013, which allowed the recognition of valuable, representable resources and recognised experts in the field.

The field study was structured around the methodology Grounded Theory (described in Chapter 4) and extended the data analysis with a visual software development that is described in Chapter 5. The research design is based on semi-structured interviews and a participant observation in the field between 2013-2015. I worked in an art advisory as a researcher assembling artist's portfolios, researching exhibition schedules and available work in galleries. An art advisory works with collectors to advise them on works, curatorial and financial decisions. The interviewees were selected for their status, connections in the contemporary art world and their expertise. They were initially selected through research I conducted online to detect their network and my knowledge of the field prior to this study. Individuals that declined to be interviewed were mostly individuals that I had not had contact with before. The further I entered the field as a researcher (see Chapter 4) the better I could reach interviewees who were well connected. Initial interviews that were recorded and reflected upon were not considered for this research due to the periphery of the interviewees in the field. The chosen interviews are the strongest and most insightful interviews and were made in a time when the research was more focused. Chapter 4 describes my role as an insider outsider in the field and the relationship to the structuring of the interviews. I transcribed the interviews and the raw text was coded according to coding methods in Grounded Theory research, which is described in Chapter 4.3.2. Data coding. In this thesis, quotations from the interviews are placed into the text in order to keep the informal voice of the field members. This was a particular decision to show the language used by the members of the field without the interpreting voice of the researcher. The interviews are available in the appendix as raw text, meaning that they are not structured or coded to show the material that I worked with in their raw form. They are anonymised and were used in an unidentifiable way to guarantee the anonymity of the interviewees. In Chapter 7, one of the findings will show how personality is a factor for access in the field. Due to the consent of the interviewees that based on their knowledge that the interviews will be anonymised and not published as a full text I am only

including the interviews in full length for examination. Experts in the field can identify my interviewees from the full interviews due to their style of language, information and personal anecdotes. The transcripts were transcribed manually with the software f5 and no speech recognition software was used for the transcription. Transcribing the interviews gave me another level of insight and I became an expert of the interviews that were conducted by myself before starting the coding process. The reason for transcribing the interviews is that they are the foundation of the data analysis and visual map of this thesis. They are used as raw data to come to the theory development from raw text data, to cleaning the data (anonymising), to structuring/coding the text data to visualising and analysing the data. This is described in Chapter 4 and 5.

Chapter 4 introduces the methods and methodology for the field study and gives context for the further development of these methods into a visual analysis tool. Understanding the methodology and research design of the study is important for the build up in Chapter 5, where the development of the new tool (Entity Mapper) in qualitative research is explained. Basing the development of a visual analysis on traditional research methods is a decision that comes from the set up of the research design described in Chapter 4. The insider/outsider position of the researcher in the field, the inductive data collection and the coding process of Grounded Theory are the main focus of this chapter, which leads to Chapter 5 and the development of a new software tool for a visual analysis in qualitative research.

Chapters and sections that are written in the first person are referring to my findings in the field, my field research and my role and ideas in the development of the software application. I tried other writing forms but there had to be consistency to authenticity of the content. The first person is related to the active and reflective researcher position described in Chapter 4.2 Positioning in the field. The use of the first person is reflective and descriptive rather than transporting opinions and experiences in this thesis.

Part I of the thesis elucidates the context in literature, methodology and theory for this study. The knowledge that is delivered in Part I about the social/human, non-human/digital network approaches, which the cited authors stress with their hermeneutic analysis of the field of study, shows clearly that the approach taken in Part II, as well as the application in Part III of a visualised network approach, is a new contribution in both the literary analysis of the field and further developing methodology in qualitative data analysis. The issue of finding a language in both the literary context of the field (the art world/market) and the network approach from within the disciplines that come together in this thesis shows that a visualisation of the analysis could also help this language issue. The idea of constructing a network that visualises the unstructured understanding of certain mechanisms (for example, gallery control over prices, the influence of the personality of an art buyer, etc.) and abstract descriptions of these unwritten protocols and comprehensions (for example prestige, love and reputation) offers a new contribution by unclustering the miscommunication and art world colloquialisms. Instead of approaching the unstructuredness of these patterns, deducted with theories from economics or the social sciences, the data uses the inductive design for the analysis.

Part II of the thesis is the description of the development of the software tool in collaboration with Parsons Institute for Information Mapping (PIIM) at The New School in New York, and the close correspondence with the programmer Noah Predrini at the Institute. The collaboration was based on the understanding, research and conceptualization of the chosen methodology for this thesis, which I developed during my fellowship at PIIM in 2013. The programmer, who had never worked with a qualitative researcher before and had no knowledge of methodology in qualitative research, developed the code for the Entity Mapper based on my instructions, research and creative translation of hierarchies and structures of the data coding and methodology that I developed in drawings, taxonomies and graphs. Understanding

code libraries (for example, D3[18]) and functionalities for the aesthetics and usability of the software was also part of my research at PIIM for the development of the software. The translation and conceptualization of Grounded Theory methodology into a visual software tool is an original contribution to knowledge in the field of qualitative research as researchers in various disciplines in qualitative inquiry can use the software tool. The peer-review process in published material, conference presentations and a lecture on data visualisation at the School for Social Research in New York was an integral part for the conceptualization and development of the software shows that the establishment of the software is based on my research process. I developed the concept and structure for the software from feedback and constructive criticism from the academic field and knowledge I gained in study groups (online and in real life) on coding with a focus on JavaScript. It becomes apparent in Chapter 5, that enhancing an understanding for programming language, structures and developments of databases and software development was also part of the research that I needed to invest in, in order to establish a translation of the methodology's structure into the develop a software tool for qualitative data visualisation. The coding of the software was therefore executed by the programmer Noah Pedrini based on the outsider perspective in his field that allowed me to think about the conceptualization of the software in a more creative way. The study into data visualisation, data structures, coding languages and databases was an essential part for elevating the conceptualization from a purely theoretical level to a concrete usability of a new software tool. Understanding languages and data structures in both disciplines, cultural studies with a focus on ethnographic research and computational studies, made it possible to create a new contribution in the field of data visualisation *and* qualitative inquiry. Chapter 5 gives an overview of the current use of data visualisation in qualitative research and how the use of infographics, data sculptures and database driven visualisations became building blocks for the development of the software application. It builds on the knowledge gained in Chapters 2, 3 and 4 in

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[18] D3js. "Data-Driven Documents," Accessed September 09, 2015, http://d3js.org.

regards to the visual qualities and features of the network (described in Chapter 2) that needs to be visualised to understand the nature of the field of study (described in Chapter 3) and the complexity of the collected and coded data (described in Chapter 4). Building the software with a strong connection to the presented study shows the consistency in the inductive approach to the thesis. The contextualization of the current state of data visualisation in qualitative data analysis and the research design and close relation to the field of study are the main units for the development of the software. Nevertheless, the peer-reviewed processes in publishing and conference presentation of the software application show that it is also built with the aim to contribute to a new understanding of visual data analysis in qualitative research.

Part III, with Chapters 6 and 7, shows the first application of a visual analysis with the software tool Entity Mapper. The analysis is introduced with the structure of the network in relationship to a paradigm model developed for Grounded Theory coding. The paradigm model is a flow of causes, context, intervening conditions and strategies, all of which make up the phenomenon that is the consequence of the study. The cause of the phenomenon studied here is Art Production; without the production of artworks by artists, there would not be any art collecting nor anything that leads to collecting as a consequence. The context and intervening conditions are mapped with the code families (nodes in the visual map) *Locality* and *Institutions*, and their influence on art production and collecting. Additionally, the strategies that are established are mapped with the code families *Social* and *Prestige*. The consequence collecting is mapped with the code families *Love* and *Investment*. *Locality* and *Institutions* show the local context and conditions for production and collecting – the influence of universities, rent and local social networks that lead to studio visits and recommendations to museum boards are a few examples that are illustrated in the visual map as context and intervening conditions. *Social* and *Prestige* are strategies that are linked to control mechanisms of galleries and consequences in exhibiting, selling and buying art. The analysis of the strategy patterns explains why the categories of social and prestige in the art world are not

only linked to status and showing access. It shows how the strategies are the only control mechanism that the galleries can force on the market in order to sustainably build an artist's career. The introduction of the structure of the visual map describes these seven patterns, and extends into the analysis of five overlapping patterns in art production and collecting. These overlapping patterns are results from the analysis of the visual map and they show that the same patterns have an influence on both art production and collecting. The conclusion of the analysis brings the thesis to a more theoretical understanding of the data. The reasons given for why individuals collect contemporary art in current culture, result from the visual analysis.

The visual analysis as described in text form in Chapter 6 is based on the interaction with the visual and textual data in the software application online. The login information for the account that holds the entire dataset is added in the Appendix. The thesis' main contents are text and a software application and the screen grab images are added in this thesis to assist the reader to interact with the data in the software application online and are merely low-res references in this thesis. The images are also provided in a folder on a CD in higher resolution in the back of the printed thesis.

The key points for this study are embedded in an academic discourse on contemporary art production and collecting and result from the understanding that there is no other detailed cultural study of collecting contemporary art in New York that is based on interviews, participant observation and a visual data analysis. The data analysis that is introduced in this thesis is a new contribution to the field of qualitative inquiry as there is currently no comparable data visualisation tool for Grounded Theory research, which resulted in the development of a new software tool for the field of qualitative data analysis. Both the field study and the development of a new software tool reveal the complexity of interwoven patterns in contemporary art collecting and art production in detail. The result of this study is an analysis of seven patterns in the network of collecting (Art Production, Social and Prestige, Locality and Institutions, Love and Investment). These seven patterns are

the concepts for a developed visual map that shows more complex overlapping patterns in art production and collecting. The patterns that are equally relevant and comparable in both art production and collecting are floating signifiers, institutional acts, economic signifiers, personality and reputation. Collecting and production are dependent on these patterns. The result of the analysis of these patterns is the conclusion on reasons for why individuals collect contemporary art in current culture.

Economic exchange, reputation, material and the personal/emotional understanding of objects and perception of time are the causes concluding from this study. The purpose of this thesis is to show the complex, shifting structures of the art world in New York that illustrate interwoven patterns of collecting and production in contemporary art. The theoretical understanding of this network was based on the aim to develop a software for data visualisation in qualitative inquiry for a unique cultural analysis of a detailed field study in New York's art world.

PART I: Context and methodology

2. Chapter 2: Constructing a methodology

Why do individuals collect? This question has been answered from many different

angles in various disciplines. In psychology, this question is answered through the

lenses of nostalgia, hoarding and obsession.[19] [20] [21] [22] In philosophy, the question

becomes relevant in discourses on mortality, desire and time.[23] [24] History answers

this question in regards to archiving and the ideology of capturing culture.[25] [26] Here,

the approach is a cultural studies analysis that asks specifically why individuals

collect contemporary art in contemporary culture and how collecting is related to art

production of contemporary art.[27] The culture of collecting is analysed as a series of

acts and performances that are intrinsic to mechanisms and protocols in the art

world. They are explained and unravelled in this thesis in order to understand the

logic of collecting in contemporary art and its relationship to contemporary art

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[19] Ruth Formanek. "Why They Collect: Collectors Reveal Their Motivations." *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality* 6, no. 6 (1991): 275–86.

[20] Peter Subkowski. "On the Psychodynamics of Collecting." *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 87, no. 2 (April 01, 2006): 384–401. doi:10.1516/4UMF-YF9G-FVFR-JM09.

[21] Steven Anderson, Hanna Damasio, and Antonio R Damasio. "A Neural Basis for Collecting Behaviour in Humans." *Brain : A Journal of Neurology* 128, no. Pt. 1 (January 2005): 201–12. doi:10.1093/brain/awh329.

[22] William D. McIntosh, and Brandon Schmeichel. "Collectors and Collecting: A Social Psychological Perspective." *Leisure Sciences* 26 (2004): 85–97.

[23] John Elsner. "A Collector's Model of Desire: The House and Museum of Sir John Soane." In *Cultures of Collecting*, edited by John Elsner and John Cardinal, 155–76. London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 1994.

[24] Jean Baudrillard. "A Marginal System: Collecting / Objects and Time: A Controlled Cycle." In *The System of Objects*, 85–98. London ; New York: Verso Books, 1996.

[25] Susan M. Pearce. *On Collecting: An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition*. New York: Routledge, 1995.

[26] Russell W. Belk,. "A Brief History of Collecting." In *Collecting in a Consumer Society*, edited by Russell W. Belk, 22-64. London: Routledge, 1995.

[27] The focus of the research presented in this book differs from this thesis because the book focuses on 'emerging markets', nevertheless it presents research on contemporary art world based on qualitative and quantitative research methods in the social sciences and is therefore worth mentioning for placing this thesis into an existing academic discourse: Olav Velthuis and Stefano Baia Curoni. *Cosmopolitan Canvases The Globalization of Markets for Contemporary Art*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

production. The argument of the thesis is built on the assumption that the understanding and creation of shifting network relations is what makes an artwork collectible and desirable. Everything that is created, communicated and performed in the context of collecting contemporary art is seen here as the active state for what makes an artwork collectible. The question is therefore not what makes an artwork an artwork, but rather what makes this artwork collectible. Everything is in this study described as everything: *economic resources*, and *spaces*, such as galleries, museums, living rooms and private museums; *personal preferences*, such as form and composition, medium, and genre; *media*, such as advertisement, articles, magazines and online references; *social environments*, which bring gossip, friendships and personal recommendation with them and also more trivial aspects such as weather, storage costs, and every person who is involved in the contemporary art production network (such as art handlers, insurance companies, lawyers, art advisors, front desk personnel and personal assistants). This list shows that individuals, acts (gossip), objects and conditions are all mentioned in reference to the context of collecting contemporary art.

  The art world is currently being analysed as a complex network from an art historical perspective by Maximilian Schich.[28] Schich places the artwork in the centre of his analysis and relates the network he constructs to the entities that are connected to the artwork in an art historic context with network theories that are embedded in the natural sciences and mathematics. The analysis is a quantitative analysis of relationships in typical databases that link 'objects, persons, periods,

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[28] Maximilian Schich. "Netzwerke Komplexer Netzwerke in Der (Kunst)Wissenschaft." In *Interdependenz Und Dynamik Sozialer Und Sprachlicher Netzwerke Zentrum Für Interdisziplinäre Forschung (ZIF)*. Universität Bielefeld, 2010.

events and other concepts'.[29] His approach is relevant to this study because it also

visualises entities that are related to the perception and knowledge about an artwork.

Nevertheless, the meta-data that brings the reader or researcher to the perception of

an artwork is meta-data that was already structured by a curator of the databases that

Schich used for his studies. Art history networks are analysed in a similar approach

at the University of Malaga by Professor Nuria Rodríguez Ortega,[30] who investigates

textual relationships of art history in topics, individuals, institutions and other

entities over time. She visualises networks and text clouds in her research, and

follows the approach of Actor-Network Theory. These approaches are leaning in the

same direction as this study, but differ with their strong focus on relationships within

the discipline of art history and the use of textual relationships of existing databases

and literature analysis. This study is a cultural analysis of contemporary art

collecting and uses field data as a source for the visualisation of the complex

network that makes a contemporary work of art desirable for collectors.

A simple example illustrates the approach at this point on a very simplified

level: a collector receives a recommendation from a friend to 'check out the new

show of artist x on the Lower East Side in Manhattan.' The collector researches the

exhibition and the artist online and downloads the artist's CV from the website,

looks at digital images of documentation of the past exhibitions and finds reviews of

their past exhibitions in online art publications. The collector lives on the Upper

West Side with a terrace surrounding the second floor of the apartment on the 21st

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[29] Maximilian Schich. "Netzwerke Komplexer Netzwerke in Der (Kunst)Wissenschaft." In
*Interdependenz Und Dynamik Sozialer Und Sprachlicher Netzwerke Zentrum Für
Interdisziplinäre Forschung (ZIF)*. Universität Bielefeld, 2010.

[30] Nuria Rodríguez-Ortega, and José Pino Díaz. "How can Knowledge Engineering (KE) open new
interpretations in the field of Art Theory? A case study based on 16th and 17th art-theoretical
production." Paper presented at 5th Global Conference Digital Memories. At Mansfield
College, Oxford, United Kingdom, 2014.

floor. She finds the time to go to the Lower East Side on a Saturday morning to see the sculptures of a young artist from New York. Her friend knows the director of the gallery and is meeting her at the gallery. She likes the sculptures and puts one on reserve. At home the collector starts doing online research and has a conversation with her husband and a few friends who are board members of two museums in New York.

This scenario is a very brief example of a few indicators that are relevant in the context of the desired artwork. The mentioned factors in this scenario that would lead the collector to a decision of buying or not buying can be highlighted in the text and interpreted as a network. The red social network in Figure 1 is conditioned (connected) by the black art production network: the collector is introduced to the director who represents the artist who made available work for the new exhibition. The circled words are identified in this brief example of something that potentially influences the collector's decision process.

The following text works on this basic principle: what are the entities that influence collecting processes, and how can they be described and understood? What makes these entities specific to the context of collecting contemporary art, and do they carry different weights in their influence? What is the intrinsic understanding of these entities in relation to the network that they are part of, and what are the shifting patterns of understanding? Every circle is an entity that expresses more than just 'what it is.' It also communicates factors that are related to the decision making process. Here Lower East Side indicates a neighbourhood in New York that has lower rent for commercial spaces than, for example, Chelsea or the Upper East Side (two locations in New York where a lot of galleries can be found). Younger, smaller galleries open locations in the Lower East Side – which also indicates possible prices

of artworks.

      The thesis describes the process of how collectors come to the understanding of these entities as signs, indicators or influences for the collecting process. In Chapter 6.4. Overlapping patterns in art production and collecting, five patterns were developed from the visual analysis that show which entities in collecting are influencing the artist's making and career opportunities. Chapter 7, 'Why do individuals collect contemporary art in current culture?' will give a summary of four theoretical patterns that describe the understanding of collecting processes in contemporary culture. The analysis is based on participating in the field as an expert on many levels, which is described in detail in Chapter 4.2, Positioning as a researcher in the field.
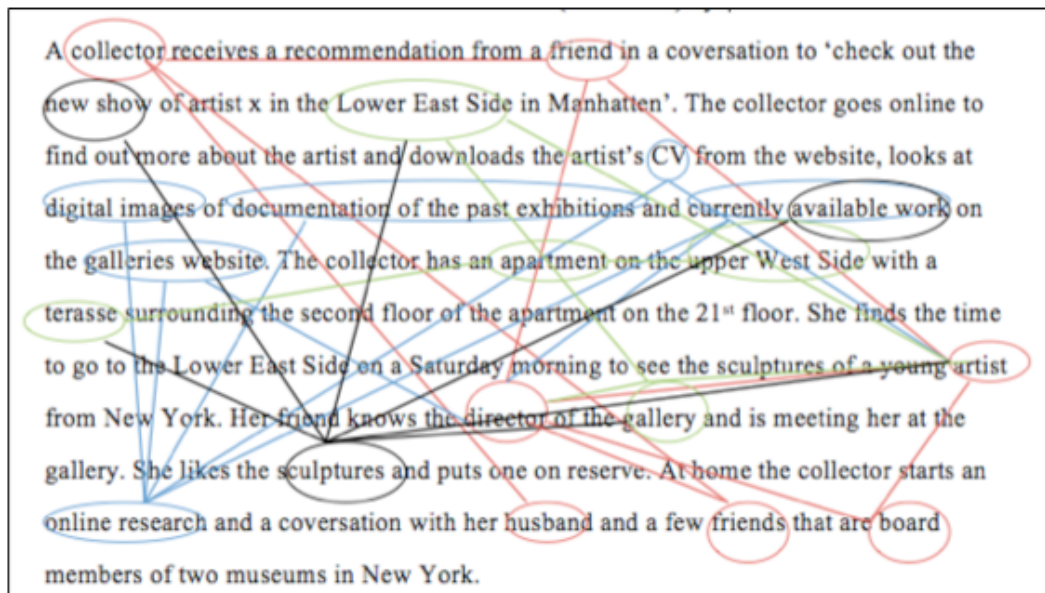
Figure 1. Anne Luther, *Text network,* 2015, digital drawing.

2.1. The way we navigate through complexity

This research has two main challenges: namely, the sheer complexity of entities that are connected to the collecting processes, and their ever-shifting understanding. The a priori argument in this study for the development of the research design is that knowledge acquisition in a complex world is a process of contributing and conceiving: *'Human life can be described as a prolonged dialogue with the world. Man interrogates the world and is interrogated by the world.'*[31] The way we search for knowledge and navigate through complex streams of information has shifted in a post-modernist tradition from approaching knowledge through the meaning of a full text that is embedded in religious belief or moral philosophy to a quantitative Google Search approach, or as Boris Groys names it, precisely to *words beyond grammar*. Terms such as *contemporary art* are typed into the Google search tab and the *word's symbolic capital*,[32] the links, images, videos that are connected to the search word, are instantly available. The word's symbolic capital is changing constantly in time, due to the algorithmic nature of a Google search. The 274,000,000 search results that are a possibility for us to follow when searching for an understanding of the term *contemporary art* are multiplied by any word, link, or image that we can follow. Once we make a decision to open a link, the possibilities of other nodes in this web are infinite. We do nevertheless make affirmative (yes) and critical (no) decisions, and also set a beginning (for example, the Wikipedia article instead of the advertisement of an art framing company) and an end (to the second search link page

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[31] Boris Groys. *Google: Words beyond Grammar*. Berlin: dOCUMENTA (13): 100 Notizen - 100 Gedanken; (Hatje Cantz, 2011), 1.

[32] Boris Groys. *Google: Words beyond Grammar*. Berlin: dOCUMENTA (13): 100 Notizen - 100 Gedanken; (Hatje Cantz, 2011), 1.

and not further)*,* The literal meaning of *con-temporary* […] is 'with time,'[33] a time concept that is moving and in constant change. The search term by itself becomes part of the ever-changing nature of the word's symbolic capital.

The question asked here is therefore, how do collectors move through the complexity of a global, constantly changing art world, and how do they make affirmative and critical decisions in their collecting processes?

In the contemporary art world today, collecting processes are built towards the aim to make an affirmative or critical decision about choices of acquisition, interest in and support of an artist among others. Aesthetic and formal decisions are not interpreted with a Bourdieusian *habitus* concept and as a result of an alien[34] that lives inside us and was born in early childhood experiences. The argument doesn't follow a strict Marxist tradition of bringing structures of class and economy as a solution for decision-making processes. Rather, it follows the logic that actors in contemporary culture access certain complex networks and learn how to navigate (yes/no) through this complexity through to a learning process[35] of knowledgeable terms, filtered evidence, and unstructured sources or realities. The Google algorithm is used here as an illustrative example to answer the question of how to write and comprehend shifting complexity and knowledge acquisition in the context of contemporary art collecting.

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[33] David Joselit. "On Aggregators." *October* 146, Fall (2013): 3–18.

[34] Evan Kindley. "Creature of habitus: Latour on Bourdieu Pt. 1" *We Have Never Been Blogging* January 12, 2010. Accessed March 23, 2013, http://wehaveneverbeenblogging.blogspot.com/2009/12/creature-of-habitus-latour-on-bourdieu.html.

[35] See Latour's description of learning processes with the metaphor of plug-ins in cyberspace as an example in Bruno Latour. *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 207.

A Google search has a certain linearity we follow: single words (contemporary art), filtered evidence (link, image, video) and the possibility to get to the unstructured source of the evidence (the complete website). This linearity leads to the knowledge the user wants to gain: what is contemporary art? The user types 'contemporary art' into the Google search tab, and the next page that opens shows headlines and the website where the word is found with a brief quotation from the website. In this search the first website shows an ad for a Frame Company, the Wikipedia entry for contemporary art, three museum websites, an online gallery-shop and a few in-depth articles. The user can open this 'web search' as an 'image search' and various visual answers to a search of the word *contemporary art* can be seen on the following page. The same possibility opens for other media like books and videos. The next choice is whether to click through the 274,000,000 search result pages or to decide to click on a link which presents the word or images in the context of a website (unstructured source).

The collection of answers is what Boris Groys refers to as a *word's symbolic capital*.[36] In a Peircian tradition this concept can be compared to the semiotic object: it can be factual or fictual (partial object) and entail the entire *universe of discourses* (total object).[37] The comparable linearity of a Google search has a long tradition (from Peirce to Derrida), but now we have a visual, tangible analogy of the signifier and signified.[38]

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[36] Boris Groys. *Google: Words beyond Grammar*. Berlin: dOCUMENTA (13): 100 Notizen - 100 Gedanken; (Hatje Cantz, 2011), 1.

[37] Charles S. Peirce. *The Essential Peirce, Volume 2: Selected Philosophical Writings, 1893-1913*. Edited by Project Peirce Edition. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 492-498.

[38] 'The sign that refers to other signs is struck with a strange impotence and uncertainty, but mighty is the signifier that constitutes the chain. The paranoiac shares this impotence of the deterritorialized sign assailing him from every direction in the gliding atmosphere, but that only gives him better access to the superpower of the signifier, through the royal feeling of wrath, as master of the network spreading through the atmosphere.' Gilles Deleuze, and Felix Guattari. *A

The argument that an object or word has a structural truth embedded is obviously false in this instant. A Google search is not an infinite differentiation to other terms, such as 'contemporary art is this, because modern art is that.' At the same time, chronological differences are flattened and shown without any chronological order on screen. The multiplicity of choices, links and semiotic contexts of the search term constructs the gained knowledge and the knowledge the user constructively feeds back to the algorithmic nature of a Google search. The user believes the quantitative nature of any possible combination that they can find in the vastness of the Internet. The more the user sees, the clearer the picture gets. This process is an exchange of one word for many keywords until one decides to open the search word in the context of the website: the unstructuredness of a text.

Unstructuredness in this context refers to the approach of computer sciences to deal with text as data. It refers to the 'information that either does not have a pre-defined data model or is not organized in a pre-defined manner.'[39] One of the factors that manipulates the decision to open a certain link is based on search engine *optimization* of the website. The appearance as a search result depends on both the algorithmic quality of the Google filter and the optimization of the website for these filters. The only measurable qualitative attribute is originality of the content, although this filter already vanishes in appropriations of content and form.

The qualitative attributes to the question 'what is contemporary art,' – attributes like chronological logic, history and context, materiality, critical theoretical discourses and impact of contemporary art in society and academia – can only be

Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 112.

[39] DataRPN. "Big Data and Content Analytics: AIIM Survey Report." Accessed September 09, 2015, http://datarpm.com/blog/big-data-and-content-analytics-aiim-survey-report/632.

understood by studying the context on the unstructured level of a *text,* in a website or an image in the context of other *images* and texts, or by watching *videos*, such as documentation of artists, art history and institutions. Time is the main difference on a qualitative level to the instantly available answer on a quantitative level. It takes time to read, watch, listen and compare, to understand the context of the search word and its qualitative attributes. Knowledge generated through Google's algorithms – which detect where we search from, in which language we search, how other people have searched for that word, which context or 'answer' received the most clicks, and so on – determines the word's *symbolic capital*. The construction of that algorithmic development grows into both ends of its multiplicity: the user feeds the algorithm by making choices (clicks), and the algorithm feeds the user by the choices it gives us. The linearity of a simple Google search seems obvious and trivial, but the analogy for the linearity of the search for knowledge and understanding goes beyond a Google search. The Google search can exemplify the navigation through the complex unstructured nature of 'real world' environments.

2.2. The global art market

Today, the global art market seems infinite, with a growing number of new MFA

programs, ever-younger 'emerging' artists, endless possibilities of art production in

the real and digital, more private museums, more private funding sources, endless art

spaces and a generation of artists that is constantly in flux in professional and living

environments.[40] Information about practices, works and the personal life of artists is

exchanged in endless channels including social media, blogs, gossip, social events,

magazines, online journals, previews, press kits and documentation. The network of

unstructured information expands the real, digital and mythical communication in a

constantly-changing manner. Nevertheless, it is possible for people who work in this

art-related network to navigate through these worlds and to make affirmative and

critical decisions.

The contemporary art collector constantly makes affirmative (yes) and

critical (no) decisions when buying (yes), selling (no), passing on (no) or observing

(yes) works of art. The process that leads to these decisions works on a similar level

as the mentioned Google search linearity: word – filtered evidence – empirical

reality - filtered evidence – new word – empirical reality – filtered evidence –

empirical reality – new word.

The first encounter with a work of art can be a digital image in a preview to

an exhibition or art fair, a recommendation of a friend, the cover or index of a

favourite art magazine or an image on a blog such as contemporaryartdaily.com. The

Google algorithm here is everything that happened before the work even became a

digital image in a specific context, or before a friend recommended it. These filters

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[40] See a description of the new generation of international young artists in: Hannes Grassegger.
"Tobias Madison." *Das Magazin*, no. 24 (June 2013): 1-13.

that a collector might have in their empirical experiences are determined by factors

of physical location (in which local art scene do they 'search'), what they have

searched for before (a friend says, 'What you talked about the other day reminded

me of the show I saw last week'), the language they use (feminist, performative,

Marxist interest) or simply the filter of a quantitative mass that MoMA invited to

their last opening.

These first 'words' that get to a collector through these various filters are

usually accompanied by further filtered evidence, such as a CV that comes with the

preview, the collection/gallery context, the brief review in a magazine or a press

review on the blog[41]. The evidence is filtered because, for example, the information

provided has almost always the same form - the artist's CV lists name, b. year,

works and lives in, education, solo exhibitions, group exhibitions, collections,

publications; the digital image shows the white gallery wall and grey floor. The

standardization of an artist's CV or the digital image that represents a work on a

website or preview PDF is comparable with the filter bubble[42] created through the

optimization of websites. The choices that follow for the collector are either to stay

on the level these filters provide on first glance, or to engage in the unstructured,

empirical reality of the art world, namely viewing the work itself in a gallery space,

contextualizing the images in critical reviews, listening to private opinions about the

personal and institutional affiliations of the artist and observing how the work

changes in time and spatial contexts. The information that the second stage of

engagement delivers seems to have infinite possibilities of contexts connected to the

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[41] The example in this chapter arrives from the experiential learning in this study. The process exemplified in this chapter arrives from experiences and observations in the field and processes that interviewees revealed about their research, decision-making process and interaction with peers and friends.

[42] Eli Pariser. *The Filter Bubble: What the Internet Is Hiding from You*. London: Penguin Press, 2011.

individual evidence: on the CV, the educational institutions contain a year of

graduation, which means one can detect the influences of peer artists that graduated

in the same year, the teacher's and lecturer's academic profiles (Marxist, liberal,

structural, crafty, free cultured), the galleries that represent the lecturers, prestige,

location, and politics of the institution. The collector can follow any detail of

evidence in infinite directions. The way the network of information develops is

undetermined – some topic and interests might grow, some might vanish, some

connect to other interests and information. The process of making a decision has in

that sense no end and no beginning. It is a moving, constantly newly-distributed

network of emerging and vanishing nodes and links: individuals as their own filter

bubbles.[43]

Only by being in the social or literary unstructured level of the art world does

the collector come to understand why a solo-exhibition at MoMA is more prestigious

than a solo-exhibition in a local gallery. The term/name MoMA might not contain

any *symbolic capital* for anyone who has no interest in the arts or does not live in

New York. The obvious assumptions about audience numbers, curatorial power

structures and publications MoMA can provide are not necessarily the truth a

collector is searching for. The capital a single word provides on the CV of an artist

is, in this instant, not only quantitative (how often I read about Cooper Union doesn't

make it a better or worse art school than Columbia or the Städelschule). The

qualitative knowledge about the institution, knowing who the curator of the

exhibition is, why the material of the works changed for this exhibition, is the

empirical evidence a collector gains by participating in their art world network. This

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[43] Evgeny Morozov. "Your Own Facts." Book Review of The Filter Bubble What The Internet Is
  Hiding From You. By Elise Pariser, *York Times*. June 11, 2011. Accessed September 22, 2013,
  http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/12/books/review/book-review-the-filter-bubble-by-eli-
  pariser.html?_r=0&pagewanted=print.

participation brings the collector to a level of understanding words without the syntax on an analytical level that leads her to affirmative or critical decisions: 'I am interested in the way the artist works with the question about artistic labour. She graduated at Cooper Union.'

The Google search linearity is an analogy to understand the way words without syntax can lead to decision-making processes. It explains the way we approach knowledge, taste and prestige – mentioning single words in conversations as filtered evidence. "He is in the 89plus generation, graduated from SVA and works with Dis Magazine" carries a capital with it that explains the social and material network, and even form and content, of an artist.

The complexity of global art worlds becomes local on the qualitative level – understanding the *word's capital* of terms that determine the understanding depends on every individual's decisions of the 'links' they open. Real life filters that lead to this decision – which magazine to read, which opening to go to or whether to understand the persona that gives a strong opinion about a university or an artist – are connected to other complex networks and links.

Decision-making processes are interpreted in this argument by comparing the navigation through complexity in cultural environments to a Google Search. Here, decisions are the result of the ability to navigate through complexity on the level of understanding terms that carry a certain qualitative capital with them. The understanding of this capital is constructed on an individual level by experiences on a participatory (gossip, exhibition visits, social events, etc.) and private research (newspapers, magazine, blogs etc.) level. To stay in this analogy, this thesis is looking at the algorithm and not specifically at the content of the search results,

which are in constant flux. The question is what the pattern or the structure is that leads the collector to the result to make an affirmative or critical decision.

2.3. Finding a language

The introduction already shows that this thesis is placed linguistically and analytically in more than one discipline. Literature and references for content and field analysis are mostly embedded into Art and Critical Theory, Social Sciences, and Linguistics. The language used to develop the visual analysis of the forthcoming field data is referring to concepts and terms used in Computation and Data visualisation (Programming and Design). Languages from these disciplines inform each other in the forthcoming text and will be used interchangeably. As will be described in Chapter 4.1, the research design of this study has a repetitive and circular structure. Establishing a language for the analysis and also the methodological approach was constructed in the same manner. The technical literature from the fields of computer sciences and data visualisation informed the way networks were visualised while reading theoretical descriptions in social sciences, most influentially here *Reassembling the Social* by Bruno Latour, who describes connected entities in a network: '[…] to explain is not a mysterious cognitive feat, but a very practical world-building enterprise that consists in connecting entities with other entities, that is, in tracing a network.'[44] In order to give the reader a better understanding of the research process prior to this written text, the term *Network* is defined below to clarify the technical and theoretical meanings of some of the concepts borrowed from the disciplines Social Sciences, Linguistics, Data visualisation and Computation.

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[44] Bruno Latour. *Reassembling the Social : An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 103

2.3.1. What is a network?

'Network is a concept, not a thing out there. It is a tool to help describe something, not what is being described.'[45] To understand a network as a concept and not as the described object allows the research to borrow concepts from diverse disciplines that point into the same approach to think about the object that is analysed and described. *Network* is a key term in this study, and yet it is a term that brings a lot of weight and associations with it, especially when thinking about the contemporary art world. One could assume that a 'network analysis' is an untangling of the social connections between individuals in one local and global art world. Sophie Richards published her PhD thesis in 2009 with the title *Unconcealed: The International Network of Conceptual Artists 1967-1977 - Dealers, Exhibitions and Public Collections.* The book shows in great detail how a social network of artists, dealers, collectors and curators established an art form or movement in the 1970s. Here, the approach towards a network analysis extends the question, 'who was connected to whom through which sale and exhibition?'[46] With the same question in mind, the artist Burak Arikan visualised a network of artists and collectors in various countries.[47] [Figure 2 *Artist Collector Network Beirut* (2014)] Both investigations are based on data that the researchers collected and structured into a database.[48] As Latour stated in the quotation above, the researchers conceptualized the object they are investigating. In these examples they use a method or structure that is predetermined by software tools such as a simple Excel sheet or CSV databases. We usually have a distance between the way we conceptualize networks and the way we structure data

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[45] Bruno Latour. *Reassembling the Social : An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 131.

[46] Publisher's statement in Sophie Richard. *Unconcealed : The International Network of Conceptual Artists 1967 - 77; Dealers, Exhibitions and Public Collections*. Edited by Lynda Morris. London: Ridinghouse, 2009.

[47] The interactive map of this network is available at Arikan, Burak. "Artist Collector Network." Accessed July 07, 2014, *http://burak-Arikan.com*, 2011. http://burak-arikan.com/artist-collector-network#.

[48] Sophie Richard. *Unconcealed : The International Network of Conceptual Artists 1967 - 77; Dealers, Exhibitions and Public Collections*. Edited by Lynda Morris. London: Ridinghouse, 2009.

on a practical level in order to conceptualize a network. The circle described in this sentence shows how both, conceptualising and structuring a network inform each other on an intrinsic, circular level for this study.

The approach for this study is on a micro level and inductive, meaning that the study is structured to trace a network (see below) from an unstructured level to a structured analysis. Popular approaches in the realm of social studies and network theory are often based on a macro analysis; for example, in Manuel Castells' *The Rise of the Network Society* (1996), Castells 'conceptualized as the network society the social structure resulting from the interaction between the new technological paradigm and social organization at large.'[49]

Here social influence creates technological progress, which leads to the possibility for certain societies to 'overcome their historical limits' through 'digital communication networks.'[50] Arguments related to art world specific discourses that are based on this macro level analysis of today's global society can be found in Mike Pepi's investigation *Is a Museum a Database?: Institutional Conditions in Net Utopia* (2014). He argues, 'we are confronted with networked capitalism that runs at digital speed, where questions of solidarity and sustainability transform into questions of algorithmic regulation. Meanwhile digital natives and administrators hector institutions towards "innovation" by pointing to their own inevitable cultural irrelevance. A market logic arises in which institutional relevance is modelled after corporate risk.'[51]

To enter queries in regards to the art world structures from a macro analytical level differs from the approach towards the stated research inquiry in this thesis. As mentioned above, the approach here is an inductive one that leads to a theoretical

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[49] Manuel Castells, and Gustavo Cardoso. *The Network Society From Knowledge to Policy*. (Washington: Johns Hopkins Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2005), 3.

[50] Manuel Castells, and Gustavo Cardoso. *The Network Society From Knowledge to Policy*. (Washington: Johns Hopkins Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2005), 3.

[51] Mike Pepi. "Is a Museum a Database ?: Institutional Conditions in Net Utopia." *E-Flux Journal* 60, December (2014). Accessed January 05, 2015, http://www.e-flux.com/journal/is-a-museum-a-database-institutional-conditions-in-net-utopia/.

analysis of a *traced*[52] network. Entering the field, collecting data and designing the inductive development of the research is described in detail in Chapter 4.

The *absolute network,* in which every node is connected to every other node, is Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the rhizome, as described in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980).[53] The rhizome exists only as lines - 'this feature is doubtful: intersecting lines make points'[54] - without an inside or outside nor beginning and end. It changes over time and can always be broken and reconnected.[55] It can only be described from the inside as everything always potentially being part of the rhizome, and an outside description would follow the logic of meta-physics.[56] This ever-changing, multidimensional network is a concept that connects all the elements that make life possible and therefore illustrates infinite complexity. The impossibility of using this concept to analyse cultural acts comes with the decision to start and end somewhere and to position a researcher on the *reflective outside* and the *active inside* of a network. Following the logic of the rhizome, this would be impossible, and writing this thesis is already part of everything inside of the rhizome. A visual example for the rhizome in the character of lines and infinite connectivity is Tomás Saraceno's *14 billions (working title)* [Figure 3 *14 billions (working title)*]. The work as a physical object is not a rhizome in a Deleuzian sense, as it ends in the limit of the physical space and with the limit of 14 billion nodes; the viewer also becomes an outsider who can describe the work, and the structure does not change in time. It can nevertheless visually describe the character of a rhizome.

One main conceptual question of a network is, does it have a determined structure, or is it configured randomly? Eco's description of the labyrinth and the

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[52] Bruno Latour. *Reassembling the Social : An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory.* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 103

[53] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987.

[54] Umberto Eco. "The Encyclopaedia as Labyrinth." In *Networks*, edited by Lars Bang Larsen (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2014), 31.

[55] Umberto Eco. "The Encyclopaedia as Labyrinth." In *Networks*, edited by Lars Bang Larsen (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2014), 31.

[56] Umberto Eco. "The Encyclopaedia as Labyrinth." In *Networks*, edited by Lars Bang Larsen (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2014), 31.

maze makes this difference clear.[57] The symbolic power of these two images for the argument of the dissertation is as follows: a labyrinth has a clear structure in which one cannot get lost. One starts in the beginning and follows a path until the gatekeeper to the way out, the Minotaur, is met in the middle of the labyrinth. The path is determined. In a maze, 'Irrgarten,' says Eco, 'you can make mistakes.'[58] It is 'a trial-and-error process'[59] in which you follow your own choices, alternatives and detours. Eco draws on another example that completes the difference between these two structures: the Ariadne thread, a red thread that the Greek goddess Ariadne gave Theseus in order to not lose orientation when entering the maze. '[T]he labyrinth itself is the Ariadne thread,'[60] as the structure does not allow endless possibilities and change. Alternatives are limited and choices countable. [Figure 4 Ariadne Thread]

Another conceptual question is if and in which way a network can be movable or change over time. The work *Esfera N° 5*, 1977, by the Venezuelan artist Gego [Figure 5 *Esfera N° 5*, 1977] gives a visual example for different possibilities. The networks are clasps that are connected through metal wire. The work can collapse, unfold and rotate, but the links do not change. It is also possible to remove the clasps and reconnect them at another point, to remove links and clasps, and to add to the existing structure. The difference between collapsing and unfolding and removing and adding is that the network structure (nodes and links or clasps and wire) does not change in the former, and in the latter the network is not only moving, but its intrinsic structure also changes. Mentioning a shifting, movable structure of a network can therefore mean two very different things. In this thesis, when talking about these two forms of change, the form in question will be indicated with the term

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[57] Umberto Eco. "The Encyclopaedia as Labyrinth." In *Networks*, edited by Lars Bang Larsen (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2014), 30.

[58] Umberto Eco. "The Encyclopaedia as Labyrinth." In *Networks*, edited by Lars Bang Larsen (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2014), 30.

[59] Umberto Eco. "The Encyclopaedia as Labyrinth." In *Networks*, edited by Lars Bang Larsen (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2014), 30.

[60] Umberto Eco. "The Encyclopaedia as Labyrinth." In *Networks*, edited by Lars Bang Larsen (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2014), 30.

constructive (structure can change by adding and removing or disappearing) or *structural* (the structure remains the same although the shape changes). These concepts - the absolute network, the determined network, the random configuration, the constructed and structured network - are points of entry into the defining language for the comprehension of the term *network* in this thesis.

The process of collecting is not a determined matter. The choices presented to a collector are in many ways part of a trial and error process. Aesthetically options can change; the material of an acquired work can change over time; installation conditions can change with a simple move; economic conditions, friendships and so on can change the way a collector moves: 'You just try something and suddenly it works and it is not even something that you thought you want to do,' said a gallery manager in an interview for the study. A collection curator noted that 'We don't do anything in a set way or are always trying to work out what the best way of doing things,' and a collector stated, 'It's not all that structured, I mean, the questions suggest that there are rules and there aren't.' The collector is not just lost in a maze an Irrgarten, where she walks intuitively in all directions, but collecting is also not a determined, lawfully structured labyrinth. The concept of the structured network, where elements are connected with each other but have the possibility of changing the shape of the network, has a lot in common with the algorithm concept described in 1.1, *The way we navigate through complexity.* A few commonalities in collecting structures are here the nodes in the network; the way these commonalities are used are nevertheless the different content that travels through the network. An example: The collectors usually have the possibility of acquiring (buy, trade, loan etc.) work from a gallery (in the gallery or a fair), a private person, a dealer, the artist's studio or the auction house. Each of these locations have rules that can change over time or with each locality. Some artists might not want to sell work from their studios. Some artists do sell out of their studios. The artist's studio is a space that offers the possibility to acquire work, which is the node, the content, but whether or not a collector can buy work nevertheless can change. To better explain this concept, the

Google algorithm structure comes handy. The algorithm does not change. It has a certain structure that allows variables in the content it produces. The algorithm stays the same with every Google search but the content it produces changes every second.

The network concept that will be used in this thesis is the constructed network concept. It allows for detecting patterns in a way of tracing repetition: 'Action is not done under the full control of consciousness; action should rather be felt as a node, a knot, and a conglomerate of many surprising sets of agencies that have to be slowly disentangled.'[61] It allows furthermore that the detected patterns dissolve, disappear or are created.

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[61] Bruno Latour. *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 44.
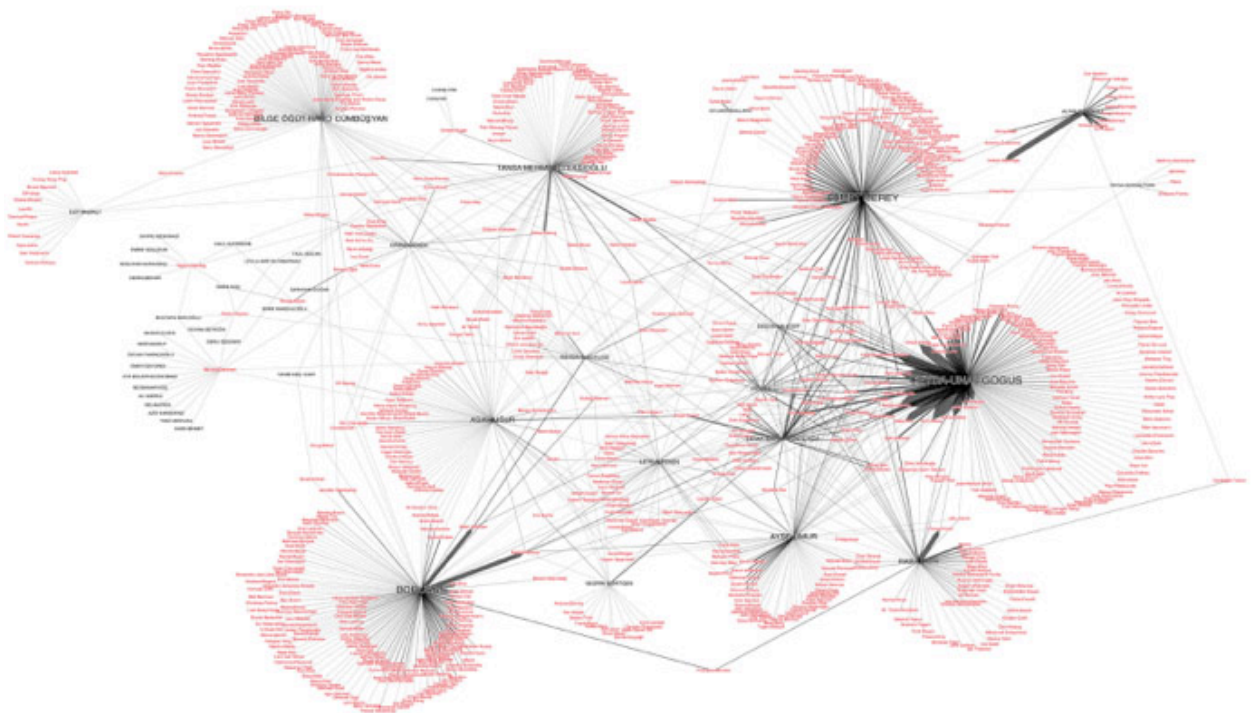
Figure 2. Burak Arikan, *Artist Collector Network*, 2011, network view.
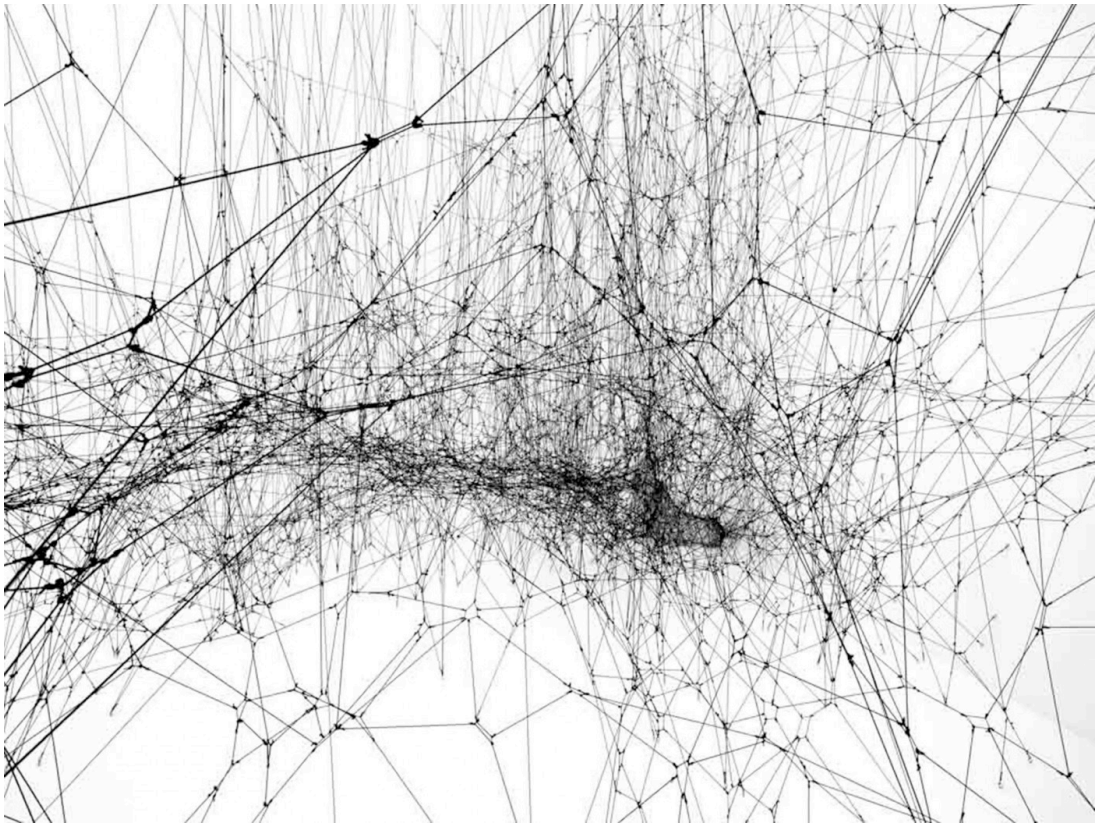
Figure 3. Tomás Saraceno, *14 Billions* at Bonniers Konsthall, 2010. Courtesy the artist and Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York.
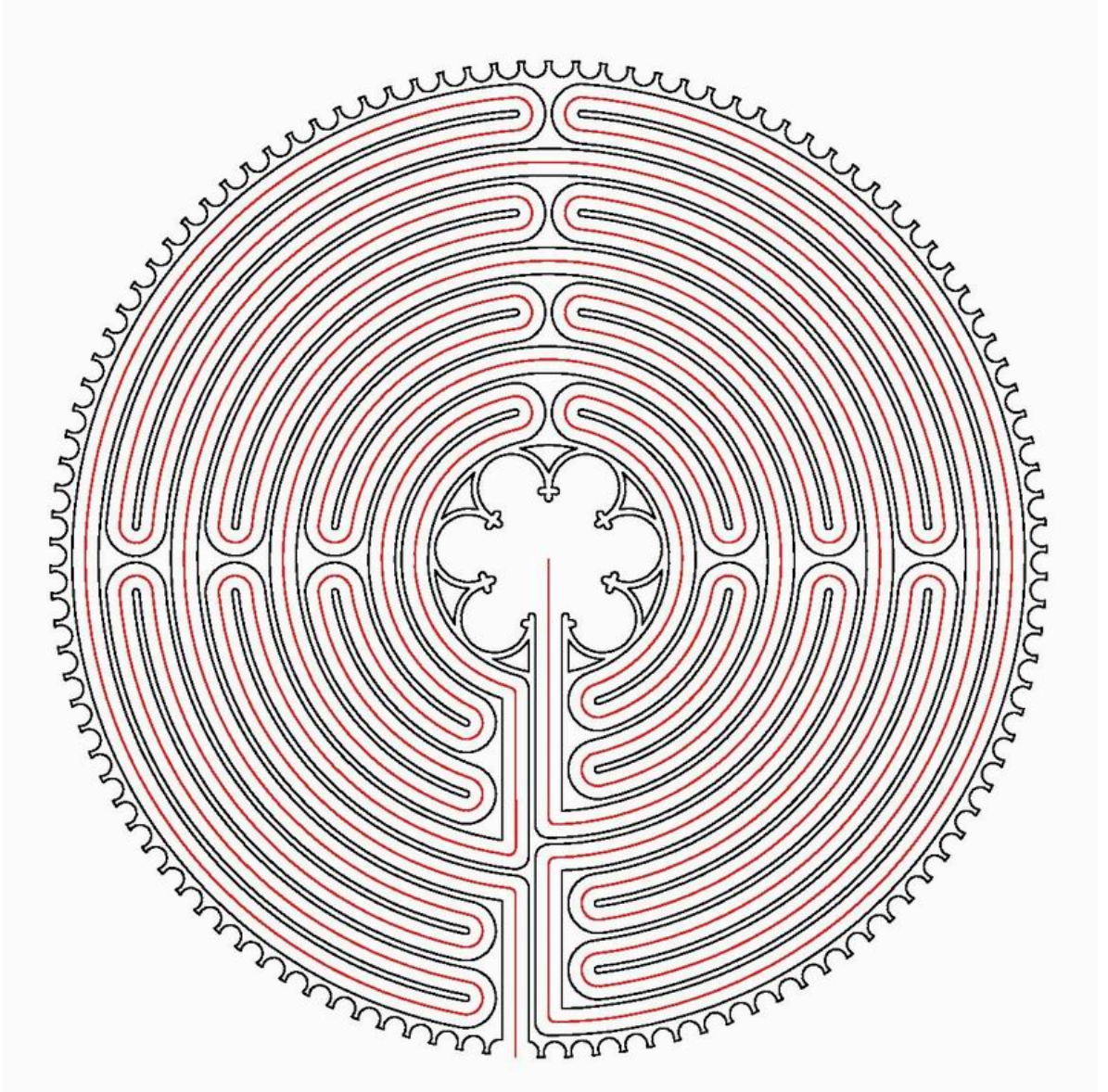
Figure 4. Erwin Reißmann, *Ariadne's Thread inside the Chartres Labyrinth*, 2008, digital drawing.
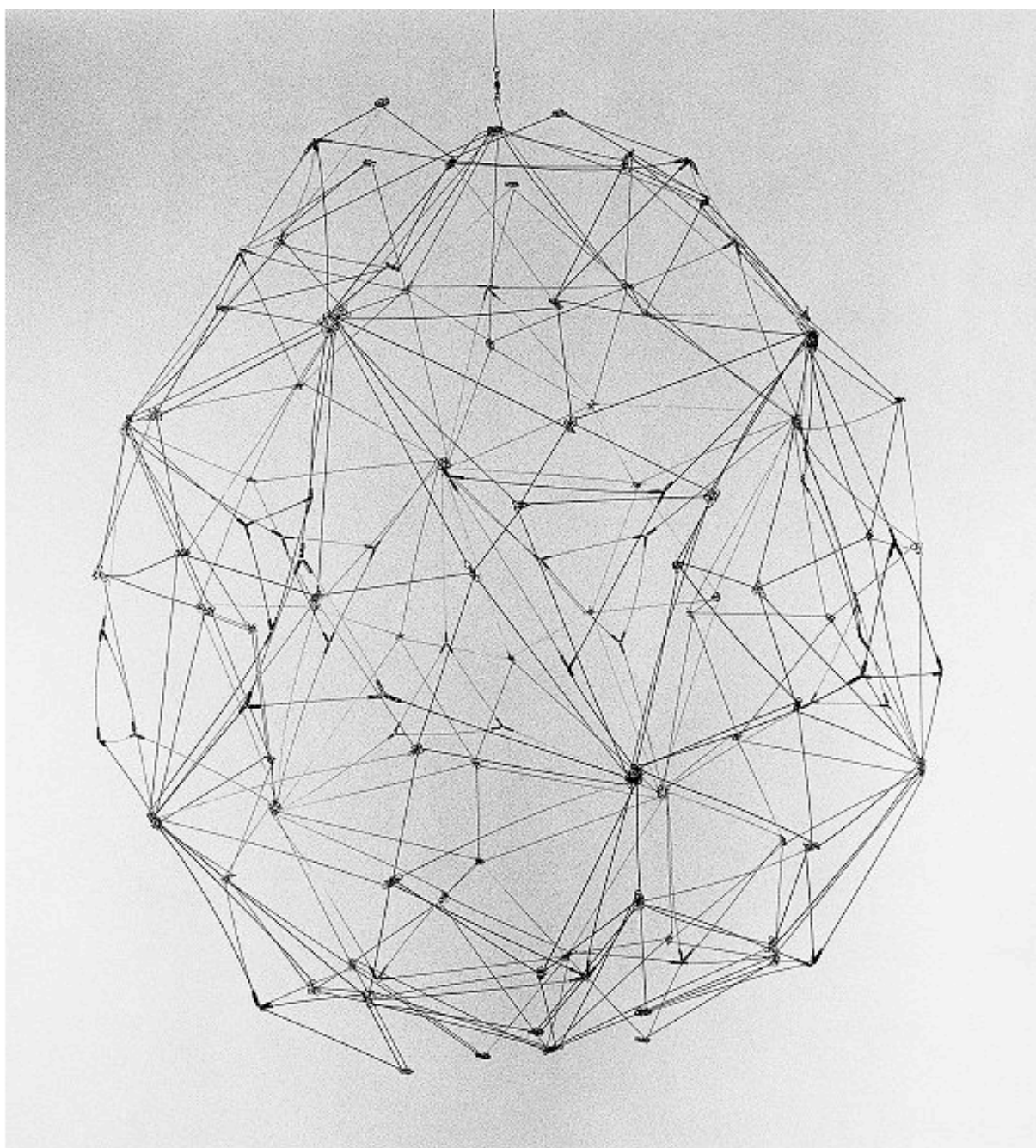
Figure 5. Gego, *Esfera N° 5*, 1977, Steel wire with metal clasps, 35 7/16 x 31 1/2 inches.

2.3.2. What is a node?

Relating the stated question to the definition of a network, nodes are human and non-human entities, which are able to create a network.[62] They are linked through their relationships, influences, acts and other modifying operations that relate them to one another. In the network that is analysed in Chapter 6, the link between the nodes is distinguishable by their relationship. Therefore, the network that is constructed in this thesis differs strongly from a Lacanian network in which every node is linked to every other node by virtue of the fact that they are in the same world:

> [I]n the domain that I have called that of the geometral, it seems at first that it is light that gives us, as it were, the thread. In effect, you saw this thread last time linking us to each point of the object and, in the place where it crosses the network in the form of a screen on which we are going to map the image, functioning quite definitely as a thread. Now, the light is propagated, as one says, in a straight line, this much is certain. It would seem, then, that it is light that gives us the thread.[63]

In his lectures, Lacan ties light and touch into the concept of the gaze, which makes it possible to describe a network where everything is connected on the same level to everything else because the light 'touches' everything in the same way. It doesn't differentiate between a can in the water[64] [non-human] and the humans who see it with their eye. In this network, every node [or entity] is connected to every other node in the network without the distinction of their relationship and with the same amount of links (if we were to illustrate this Lacanian network as a node-link network).

A node-link network is the network structure that the visual map (see Chapter 5) is developed with. As described in Chapter 2.3.1, the labyrinth can also be described as a network and networks can have many forms as concepts or real objects. To answer the question *What is a node?* in a practical way that is related to

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[62] Bruno Latour. *Reassembling the Social : An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 64.

[63] Jacques Lacan. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book XI The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1981), 93.

[64] Jacques Lacan. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book XI The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1981), 94.

the network (visual map) that is constructed in this study, a node is an entity that is linked to other entities [see Figure 6 Node-Link].

Node is used interchangeably with the words entity or pattern in later chapters. Entity refers to the node as an object in and of itself in the network, whereas pattern is more closely related to the methodology of this paper, allowing a determination of repetitious patterns in the interviews. In each interview, quotations were isolated that indicated a certain influence or activity in the network of collecting and producing contemporary art. When these quotation or code entities of the visual network become patterns, it indicates the repetitious nature of the content of these entities. Patterns refer to an overlap of codes or a repetitious use of codes in more than one code family. How the raw text interviews are structured into nodes will be described in Chapter 4.3.2.

A node in the context of this thesis is identified by the words of those interviewed for this study. On a methodological level, the network is therefore not just 'everything that is around us.' A node in the network that is constructed during this study in the coding process is the transcript – each quotation that is summarized as a code (also a node) and a concept (also a node). They are linked by their summarizing relationship [see Figure 7 Hierarchy Network].

The coding process will be described in detail in Chapter 4.3.2. With the description of three levels of existence of a node in the network that is created for this study, the thesis distances itself from the Actor-Network approach due to the described flatness and non-hierarchical nature of the materialist ANT-approach. ANT 'has tried to render the social world as flat as possible in order to ensure that the establishment of any new link is clearly visible.'[65] A node can be described as a repetitive crossing of two lines, or entities that are connected to other entities (in the example in Fig. 4., *Esfera N° 5*, 1977, an entity is a clasp that is linked to other clasps). The analysis shows patterns that evolve from data that was collected in a

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[65] Bruno Latour. *Reassembling the Social : An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 16.

field study. The first step in the analysis of the collected data was to mark the unstructured text (transcript) and extract quotations that seemed relevant for the formulated research query. The node here is pure spoken and transcribed word. This spoken word is structured into codes that summarize repetition in spoken word. It is comparable to the repetitive crossing of two lines that extract a pattern. The same repetition in the metadata is summarized to a theoretical concept (the code family). The network has three node levels: the spoken word (quotations), the abstracted summary (code) and the interpreted theoretical concept (code family). All three node levels are connected to the unstructured text, the transcript. The network described here is not flat. It has, on a purely methodological level, three levels. It is, on one hand, intrinsic for this study and closed in the context of the thesis in the sense that the visible network that the data analysis will show is based on the textual data that the interviewees of this study produced. Nevertheless, the interviewees are, on the other hand, part of the network they are describing and chosen *because* they are part of the traced[66] network.

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[66] Bruno Latour. *Reassembling the Social : An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 103.
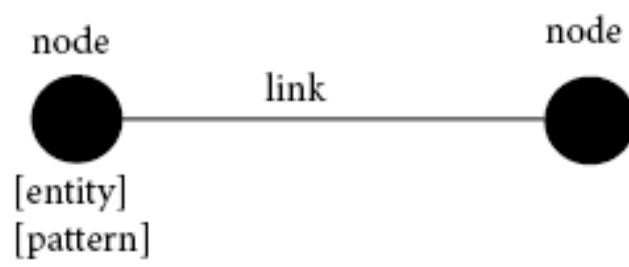
Figure 6. Anne Luther, *Node-Link*, 2015, digital drawing.

transcript   quotation   code   code family (concept)
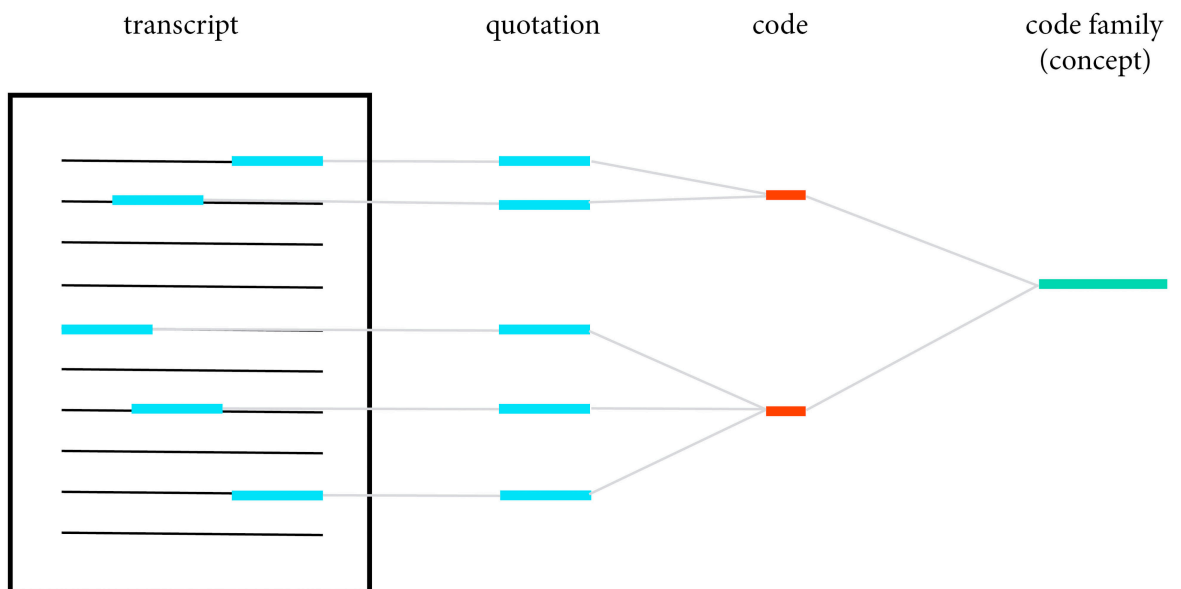
Figure 7. Anne Luther, *Hierarchy Network*. 2015, digital drawing.

2.4. Data visualisation: State of the art and defining a language for analysis

The inductive approach of this thesis produces a lot of qualitative textual data, with 17 in-depth interviews and over 20 partially transcribed research notebooks of participant observation and conversations. The conceptualization of networks brought a visual sense into the study, and Latour's remark that it is impossible to create a visual representation of a network[67] that shows flowing agents was the initial inspiration for taking the challenge to create a tool that allows the visualisation of a shifting complex network:

> […] a network is not made of nylon thread, words or any durable substance but is the trace left behind by some moving agent. You can hang your fish nets to dry, but you can't hang an actor-network: it has to be traced anew by the passage of another vehicle, another circulating entity. The weakness of the notion derives partly from the dissemination of rather simple-minded visual representations. At first, the graph representation of networks, seen as star-like embranchments out of which lines leave to connect other points that have nothing but new connections, provided a rough but faithful equivalent to those associations. It had the advantage of defining specificity not by any substantial content, but by a list of associations: the more connected, the more individualized a point was. But those visual graphs have the drawback of not capturing movements and of being visually poor.[68]

In agreement with the notion that current network visualisation in qualitative research represents very limited parts of the actual methodology, the following paragraphs will give an overview of these limitations and an explanation of the necessity of defining a new language in data visualisation for qualitative research.

The technical language in this chapter is related to descriptions of data visualisation methods in disciplines such as computer sciences, design and technology. 'Data' in this thesis includes the unstructured interviews, notes from participant observation and research diaries. Qualitative data is the raw material the

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[67] Bruno Latour, Bruno. *Reassembling the Social : An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory.* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 132 – 133.

[68] Bruno Latour, Bruno. *Reassembling the Social : An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory.* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 132 – 133.

researcher collects for the resulting analysis. In qualitative research, data sources include 'open-ended survey responses, interview and focus group transcripts, observational notes, secondary data from organizations (e.g., reports, strategic plans, and policy documents), photographs, videos, and more recently social media communication, such as Twitter feeds and e-mail correspondence.' [69] The term *data* has recently become a media buzzword; it vaguely implies that everything is data – every concrete object, text or bit is a data point. Words such as *information* or *content* seem to have been exchanged with *data*. As Christine Borgman writes 'Data are not pure or natural objects with an essence of their own. They exist in a context, taking on meaning from that context and from the perspective of the beholder. […] Data are forms of information, a larger concept that is even more difficult to define.'[70]

In this study data refers to the information that was collected during the field study in the form of interviews and reflective reports that were not yet structured. The data that is used for the visualisation are the raw text files of the transcribed interviews. The codes and code families that structured the interviews into a linked hierarchy and a relational network are technically the metadata in the analysis.

Is a researcher in qualitative inquiries only collecting meta-data? Interviews and research diaries reflect on the real world interactions that the researcher is investigating. Data as the object that the interviewees and researchers are reflecting upon is therefore the real world, the unstructuredness and tangibility of everything around us. As soon as researchers ask interview questions or make observations, the

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[69] Stuart Henderson, and Eden H. Segal. "Visualizing Qualitative Data in Evaluation Research." *New Directions for Evaluation* 2013, no. 139 (September 2013): 55. doi:10.1002/ev.20067.

[70] Christine L. Borgman. *Big Data, Little Data, No Data: Scholarship in the Networked World.* *(*Cambridge: MIT Press, 2015),18.

collected data becomes data *about* the object/culture/field of interest, and should

therefore be regarded as metadata. In this thesis, data refers nevertheless to the

collected interviews and transcriptions, and the thesis becomes in its entirety the

metadata for the collected data in various forms. Chapter 4 is the descriptive

metadata that allows the reader to understand the methodological progress of this

study. Chapter 5 is descriptive metadata for the structuring metadata (the metadata

that gives information about the structure, colour coding and readability about the

database [xml code] and visualisation).[71]

The aim of visualising data is to show something that is not comprehensible

by solely looking at raw or structured textual data. The visualisation in this thesis

illustrates the hierarchy of the methodology Grounded Theory,[72] which is used to

structure the collected data and the relational network that the structuring of the data

coding constructs. The coding of the raw texts (interviews) is executed in a

computer-aided qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS).[73] The software used

in the coding process for this study is Atlas.Ti. The visualisation that was developed

for the computer-aided coding process of the data for this study is based in and

aimed at the digital, software- supported visualisation realm. Nevertheless, data

visualisation is not limited to computer-generated visualisations. Data visualisation

has no limits in form, content or tools (digital or non-digital). A number of artists

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[71] 'Metadata, most simply defined as "data about data," are a means to name things, to represent data, and to represent relationships. […] The multiplicity of definitions for metadata is a manifestation of the many uses to which it can be put. A general definition from the standards community is that "metadata is structured information that describes, explains, locates, or otherwise makes it easier to retrieve, use, or manage an information resource" (National Information Standards Organization 2004, 1). NISO distinguishes three main types of metadata: descriptive, structural, and administrative.' Christine L. Borgman. *Big Data, Little Data, No Data: Scholarship in the Networked World*. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2015), 66.

[72] A detailed description of the methodology is Chapter 4 Research design and methods

[73] Uwe Flick. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. (London: Sage Publications, 2010), 359.

are exploring its use in contemporary artistic practice, which illustrates selected examples for the visual understanding of data sorting [Figure 12, 13, 14 and 15], visualisation of network structures arriving from social research [Figure 8 and 9], visualisation of hidden data [Figure 11] and the visualisation of textual data [Figure 10]. The examples show the variety of data visualisation in artistic practice on one hand and demonstrate on the other themes that served as an inspiration for the conceptualization of the software tool Entity Mapper. The visual understanding of data sorting, visualisation of network structures arriving from social research and of hidden data as well as textual data are all themes that are integrated in the conceptualization of the developed visualisation software for grounded theory research.

The examples in Figures 12 and 13 are of a visualisation of a sorting process by Mario Klingemann, a visual representation of a data sorting process and not necessarily a data visualisation per se. Looking at the field in its messy original form makes it almost impossible to detect the elements that are part of the field. The identification of the features (shape, material, colour etc.) makes a comparison of elements possible, and with their comparability, each entity is categorized in a mini-database. The problem with that form of sorting is that the collected data, or the elements on the beach, are almost impossible to recreate in their original position. The only trace of their original location in the field is the 'before' image [Figure 12].

Visualisation of network structures arriving from research
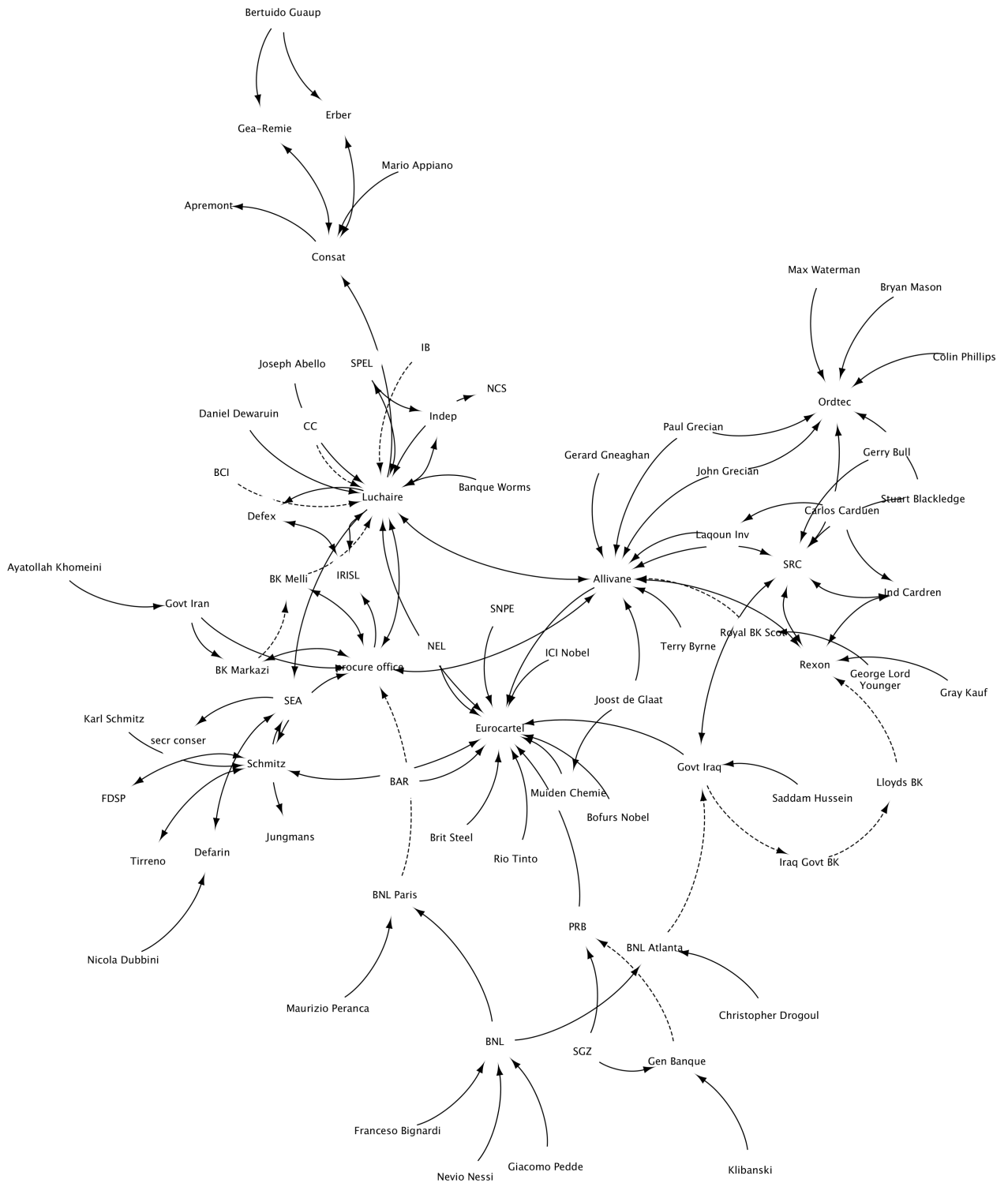
Figure 8. Robert Tolksdorf, *Lombardi Network Luchaire*, 2015, Cytospace visualisation.
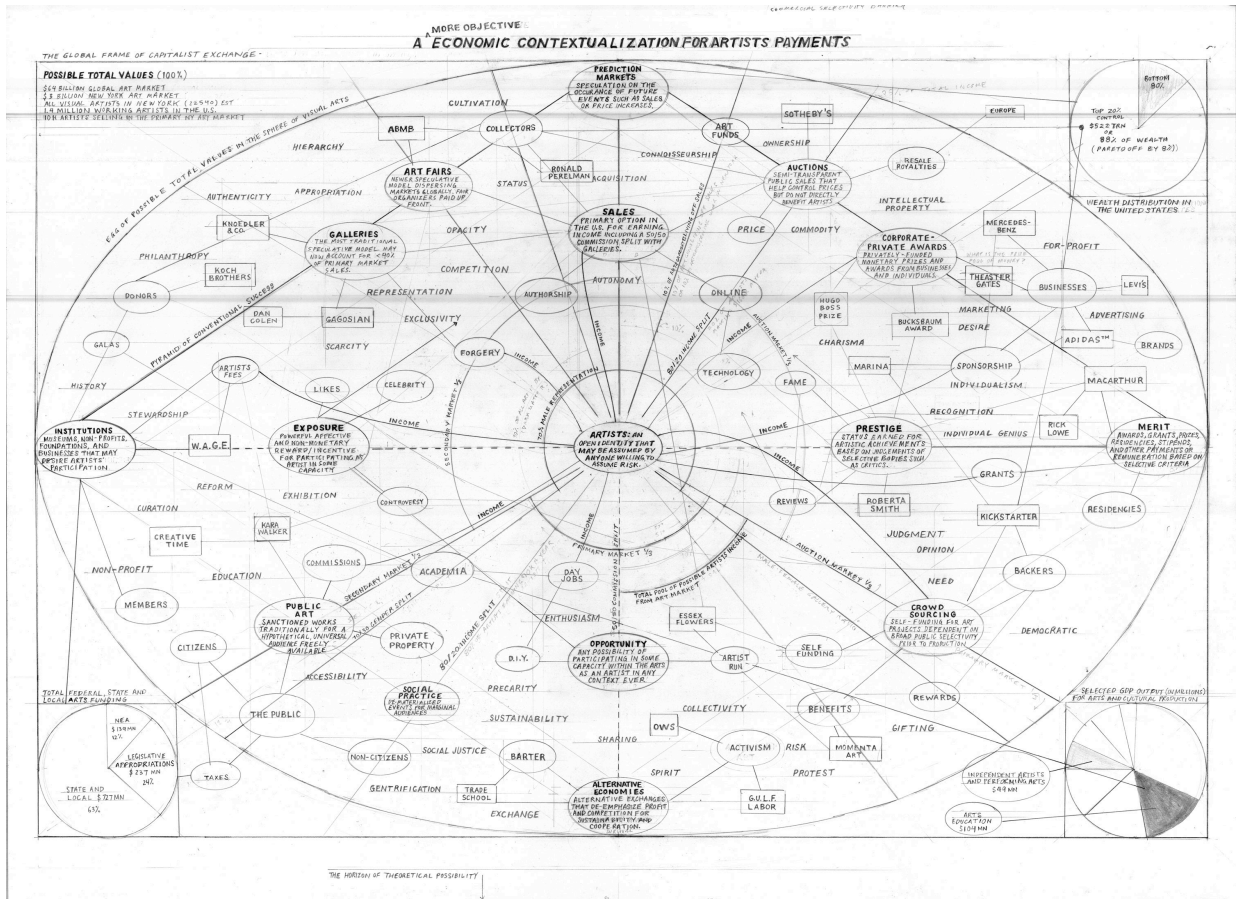
Figure 9. William Powhida, *A More Objective Economic Contextualization for Artists Payments*, *State I*, 2015, archival pigment on paper, 24 x 32 inches.

Visualisation of textual data

Figure 10. Ben Rubin, *A Sort of Joy (Thousands of Exhausted Things),* 2015, a performance of the MoMA's 123,951 object collections database.

Visualisation of hidden data
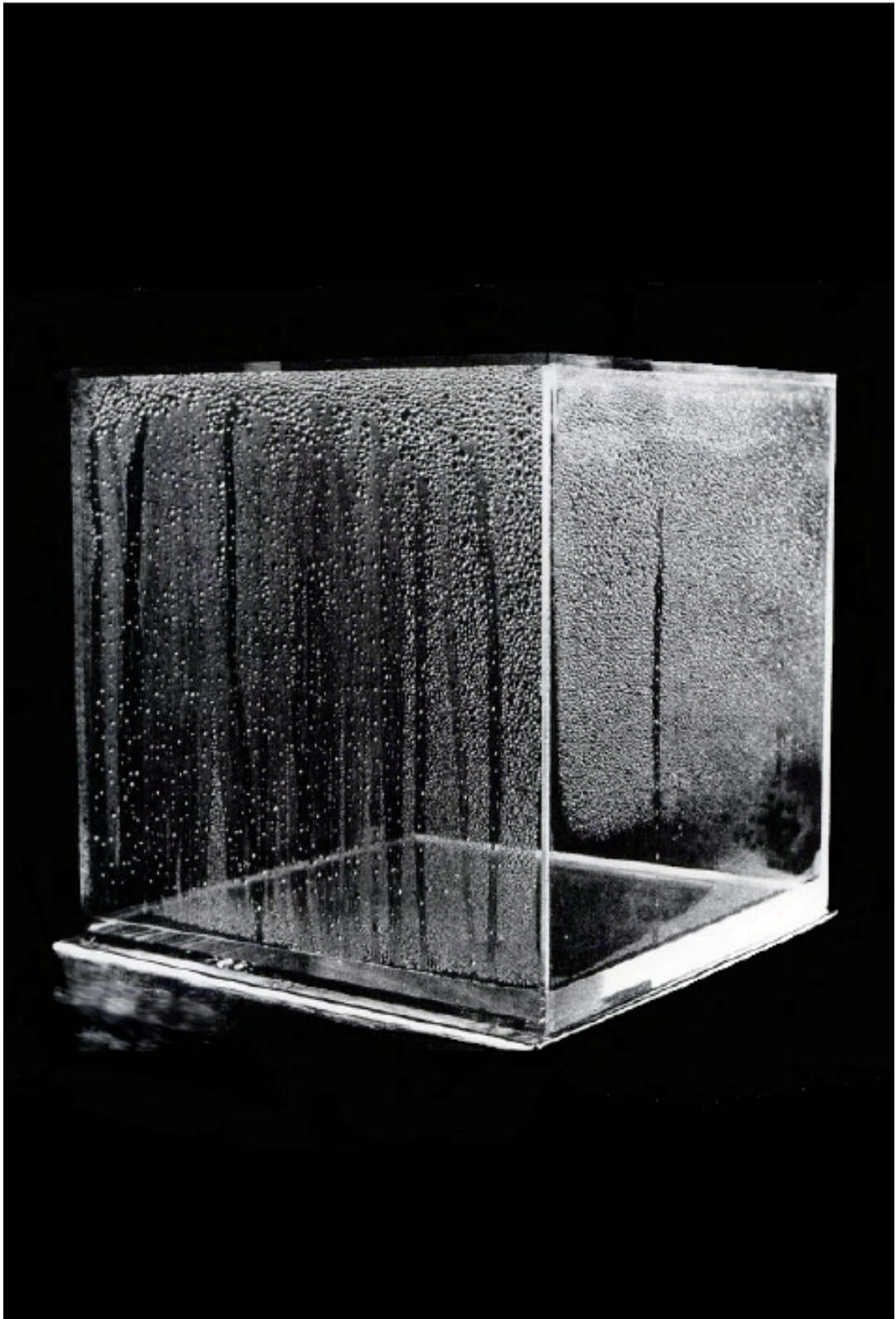
Figure 11. Hans Haacke. *Condensation Cube,* 1963–5, Perspex, steel and water, 12 x 12 x 12 inches.

Data sorting

Figure 12. Mario Klingemann, *Sorting out the Beach – Before*, 2009, digital image.

Figure 13. Marion Klingemann, *Sorting out the Beach – After*, 2009, digital image.

Figure 14. Jennifer and Kevin McCoy. *Every Anvil*, 2002, installation with electronic sculpture and discs.

Considering that everything can be considered as data and the structuring or descriptive metadata can be collected in various forms (as text, audio, digital surrogate or digital image), and that the visualisation of data as shown above has no limits in form and content, it is important to focus on forms in data visualisation that are relevant for the methodology and field study of this thesis. In the context of this study and the process of developing a data visualisation tool for qualitative data, data visualisation methods in their current state refer to digital data such as text, digital images, and numeric data after this data has been sorted, structured and cleaned in relevant way for quantitative or qualitative research.

I wrote in a recent article[74] that in the most up-to-date approaches in data visualisation methods, three possibilities occur to create visualisations with software tools: 'a) manual data entry ('draw'), b) generators for static graphics and word clouds ('use') or c) dynamic visualisation ('code'). Dynamic visualisations are based on code that is relational to the syntax of databases in a diverse range of data formats.'[75] Manual data entry refers to a spectrum from drawing with a pen tool in Photoshop to creating a graph through 'drag and drop,'[76] and generators include, for example, Excel sheet graph tools that create an instant, static graph from the structure data.[77] 'Current visualisation methods can be summarized in three categories: static visualisation (graphs, infographics etc.), interactive visualisation (network views, relational data displays) and dynamic visualisations (time lines, animations etc.).'[78] Figure 15 shows taxonomy in current visualisations for digital data, but this is only to say that there is no limit in form when visualising data.

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[74] Anne Luther. "The Entity Mapper: A Data Visualization Tool for Qualitative Research Methods." *Leonardo MIT Press*, June 29, 2015. doi:10.1162/LEON_a_01148.

[75] Bret Victor. *"Drawing Dynamic Visualizations"* Presentation for Stanford HCI Seminar. Last modified February 1, 2013. Accessed June 11, 2013, http://vimeo.com/66085662.

[76] Atlas.ti. "Tutorial: Network Building (2/3) - Network Nodes." Last modified Jun 5, 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0umfcNTZqHc.

[77] Bret Victor. *"Drawing Dynamic Visualizations"* Presentation for Stanford HCI Seminar. Last modified February 1, 2013. Accessed June 11, 2013, http://vimeo.com/66085662.

[78] Fabian Beck, Michael Burch, Stephan Diehl, and Daniel Weiskopf. "The State of the Art in Visualizing Dynamic Graphs." In *EuroVis STAR*, 2014. doi:10.2312/eurovisstar.20141174.

Figure 15. David McCandless, *Visual Miscellaneum,* 2009.

When examining current possibilities that software tools in qualitative data analysis provide for researchers, it is important to measure how helpful the visualisation is for the user. In academic research, the users of data visualisation are typically the researcher and their audience (academic peers), the latter of which views data visualisation to understand research results or analysis. User experience and interface design are the key to measurement in this study for the judgment of current data visualisation methods in qualitative research and their limitations as such. Atlas.Ti, NVivo and MaxQDA are the most prominent software tools in qualitative data analysis.[79] The tools provide a very limited possibility in visualising data – they only allow static graphs ('use') and manual data entry ('draw'). All three software tools are desktop applications, functioning as programs that run on a desktop computer rather then in a web browser or mobile device.

One prominent example in the visualisation of digital data is the open-source JavaScript library Data-Driven Documents (D3[80]) for dynamic visualisations. D3 has currently a very strong community, which pushes trends in dynamic data visualisation. Among the prominent users of D3 is the graphic department of the New York Times,[81] not only because the creator of the D3 library, Mike Bostock, is currently employed at the New York Times.[82] Dynamic visualisations allow the user to explore the data by interacting with it.[83]

Figure 16 shows a visualisation of a network view of quotations in Atlas.Ti; understanding and interacting with the visualisation requires a high understanding of the data. The visualisation does not give a lot of insight to an outsider and does not

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[79] Uwe Flick. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. (London: Sage Publications, 2010), 366 – 367

[80] D3js. "Data-Driven Documents," Accessed September 09, 2015, http://d3js.org.

[81] Here is a selection of visualisations from the year 2012: New York Times Graphics. "2012: The Year in Graphics." *New York Times*. December 30, 2012. Accessed December 30, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2012/12/30/multimedia/2012-the-year-in-graphics.html?_r=0.

[82] 'My employer, The New York Times, generously sponsors my open-source work. Most of my recent projects are listed on my GitHub profile.' Mike Bostock. "Projects." Accessed September 12, 2015, http://bost.ocks.org/mike/.

[83] Scott Murray. *Interactive Data Visualization for the Web An Introduction to Designing with D3*. (Cambridge: O'Reilly, 2013), 2-3.

reveal any comprehensible research results. It does not provide the researcher with easily accessible and visually summarizing information about the data set. This lack of visually comprehensive information, as well as the problem of a static representation of the current state in qualitative data analysis tools, became a reason to explore and create a new data visualisation method for qualitative research. The process of developing a tangible, usable software application will be described in Chapter 5. The new data visualisation method developed in this study is based on the same principle. It shows both the data structure and hierarchy, but makes the data used accessible for a visual analysis. The use of current usability (interactive graphs) and interface (clean, understandable colour coding, forms and layout) standards in data visualisation was a necessity in making a tool that reveals easily accessible results without losing the complexity of the dataset. Part II of this thesis will show how the current possibilities that Atlas.Ti offers in transforming the data coding into a visualisation became a springboard for developing a tool that offers a more advanced approach to data visualisation in qualitative data. Moving away from a desktop application and into the use of web browsers allowed the researchers to develop a tool that uses the current open-source code of the D3 library (and others).
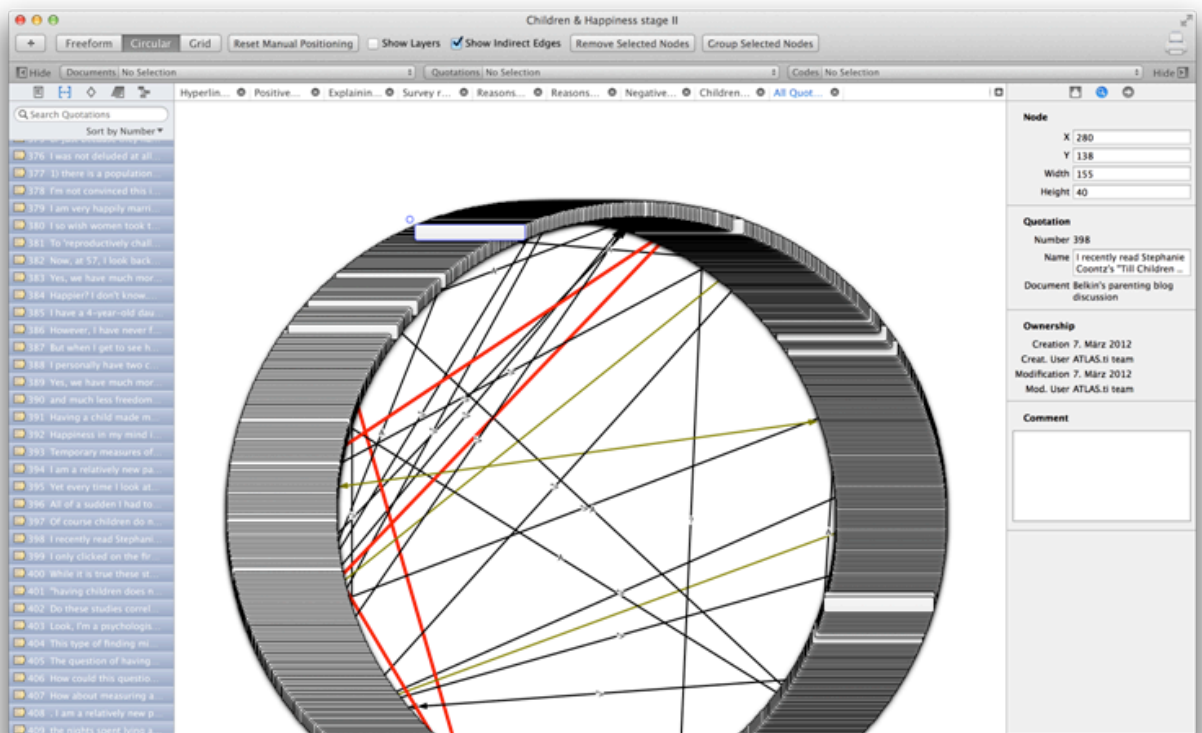
Figure 16. Atlas.ti. *Visualisation Tool*, 2015, screenshot.

3. **Chapter 3: Contextual literature review**

   3.1. **A contextual review of the term 'art world'**

In the following chapter the context and first approach to current literature on

collecting contemporary art will unfold. Understanding how current literature

formulates an interpretation of the art world helps to make sense of current

discourses in contemporary art that will play a role in later chapters. Here, the main

differentiation in interest, discourse and understanding of art is the economic value

and the symbolic or personal value of an artwork. Reviewing secondary art market

prices from 2013 and 2014 and especially with a newly attributed trend in these

years in contemporary art collecting termed 'art flipping,' it seems that collecting is

mostly described in the realm of terms like 'investment', 'new asset group' and as

the interviewees mentioned 'financial appreciation,' 'financial self interest.' The

review of the contextual literature will not only describe the economic discourse on

art but will furthermore embed the current discourses into an academic literary

context. Terms such as *art world*, *value* and *price* and *Collecting versus Investing* are

investigated in the following chapter in order to understand where current terms

arrive from. The language that is used in this thesis, and especially in the analysis, is

sourced from the literature that is reviewed in this chapter. The contextual literature

is a part of the field and the interviewees and actors in the field of study are familiar

with the literature reviewed in this chapter. The contextual review is therefore an

introduction to some of the terms and art world colloquialisms that are used in this

thesis, but it also describes a few principles on which collectors and other art world

members build certain protocols, acts and opinions. The differentiation of value in

the mentioned literature below in particular is a tool that is often used in the field of

collecting to explain, contextualize and make certain restrictive protocols. Researchers such as Horowitz and Velthuis wrote their analysis as a reflective observation. During the study, interviewees often asked before or after our conversations if I was familiar with some of the authors mentioned below, most of the time referring to Velthuis and Graw. Their reflexive research became a tool that the field is now working with. It is not possible to say to what degree the reflective analysis is still the primary source and how it was modified, meaning that it would be too much to say that the authors mentioned in this chapter are responsible for certain activities and their influence is concretely measurable. But it has become clear that the concepts parsed below in the literature review are known and accepted in the field of study.

3.1.1. The art world is networked

Arthur Danto theorized the art world in the 1960s when he described Andy Warhol's Brillo Boxes and the dislocation of daily objects into the gallery space. This historic perspective is relevant for this study because Danto tried to answer the general and embedded historical question of *What is art?* with a consideration of the social network that surrounds the art objects and the actions that the social network constructs in order to make art become art.

`The art world is a set of discourses on theories and histories[84] of art that are produced by several entities such as 'museums, connoisseurs and others,'[85] says Danto in his 1964 essay *The Art World*. Anything that is lifted into these discourses from the real world, a world outside of these discourses, can be called art. The art world makes artworks; it defines what art is and what is not, and what is part of the art world and what is not.'[86] The art world consists, for Danto, of positions[87] about art that are in constant flux due to the 'retroactive enrichment of the entities in the art world that makes it possible to discuss Raphael and De Kooning together.'[88]

Howard S. Becker described artistic work as a 'joint activity of a number […] of people'[89] in his 1982 book *Art Worlds*. The premise of any work of art (fine art, music, text), says Becker, is a collective activity that might be ephemeral, temporary and routine, but nevertheless necessary in order for 'us' to experience a work of art.[90] His 'understanding of the complexity of the cooperative networks through which art happens'[91] has shaped the understanding of 'a sociological approach to the arts.'[92]

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[84] Arthur Danto. "The Art World." *The Journal of Philosophy* 61, no. 19 (1964), 584.

[85] Arthur Danto. "The Art World." *The Journal of Philosophy* 61, no. 19 (1964), 584.

[86] Arthur Danto. "The Art World." *The Journal of Philosophy* 61, no. 19 (1964), 582.

[87] Arthur Danto. "The Art World." *The Journal of Philosophy* 61, no. 19 (1964), 584.

[88] Arthur Danto. "The Art World." *The Journal of Philosophy* 61, no. 19 (1964), 583.

[89] Howard S. Becker. *Art Worlds*. (Ewing: University of California Press, 1982), 1.

[90] Howard S. Becker. *Art Worlds*. (Ewing: University of California Press, 1982), 1-2.

[91] Howard S. Becker. *Art Worlds*. (Ewing: University of California Press, 1982), 1.

Becker's art worlds are social accumulations of activities (distribution, performance, consumption, production). He does not analyse any aesthetic choices in this collective process.

Similarly Nicolas Bourriaud defines the term *relational aesthetics* (2002) as 'collective activity'. He specifies (t)his term as a 'set of artistic practices which take as their theoretical and practical point of departure the whole of human relations and their social context, rather than an independent and private space.'[93] The term relates to a set of artistic practices, rather than the analysis or description of the art world at large. Artworks are 'to consist of learning how "to scatter, to arrange, to repair, to discard, to pair, to distribute, to surfeit" groups of people.'[94]

Noah Horowitz's investigation into the perception of the art world as a network that forms and directs artworks can be found in his chapter on video art and its market in *The Art of the Deal*.[95] Grounded in the theoretical approach of Actor-Network Theory and intellectual property laws, Horowitz examines how the experimental work of art is "often *completed* by its audiences."[96]. His distinction between the *art market* and the *art world* is simply defined by the roles of a diverse group of people. The art market refers to 'the makers, buyers, and sellers of art (artists, dealers, auctioneers, collectors, art financial services firms, etc.),'[97] whereas the art world refers 'to the marketplace as well as the expansive web of stakeholders involved in the producing, exhibiting, viewing, and discussing of art (from studio assistants and museum curators to gallery goers, critics, and art historians).'[98]

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[92] Howard S. Becker. *Art Worlds*. (Ewing: University of California Press, 1982), 1.

[93] Nicolas Bourriaud. *Relational Aesthetics*. (Dijon-Quetigny: les presses du réel, 2002), 113.

[94] David Joselit. "What to Do with Pictures." *October* 138, Fall (2011): 81–94.

[95] Noah Horowitz. *Art of the Deal: Contemporary Art in a Global Financial Market*. Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011.

[96] Noah Horowitz. *Art of the Deal: Contemporary Art in a Global Financial Market*. (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011), 24.

[97] Noah Horowitz. *Art of the Deal: Contemporary Art in a Global Financial Market*. (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011), 18.

[98] Noah Horowitz. *Art of the Deal: Contemporary Art in a Global Financial Market*. (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011), 18.

The authors mentioned above describe the art world as a social environment that is determined and categorisable by a common interest in and investment into the art object. The main difference in their definition of the nature of this world is the interpretation of the role of art in the art world they are describing.

The embeddedness of the perception of art and art making (production and the legitimacy of understanding and interpreting certain objects as art objects) into a social network or social interaction is a crucial point for the authors mentioned above. A work of art is activated[99] or completed[100] by individuals who are related to art in their roles as audience, artist, critic or gallerist, etc. The social network that surrounds art makes art that has not previously been inscribed into a historical or conceptual framework in the context of the mentioned literature.

Sarah Thornton[101] and Adam Lindemann[102] describe the members and entities that 'create' the art world. Neither author reduces the entities to human actors like the dealer, consultant, collector, auction house expert and museum curator/director[103], they also include 'rituals' such as 'the crit';[104] and institutions (the biennale, the fair) and locations (the studio visit, exhibitions and the auction) as entities that make the art world. The 'art-world infrastructure'[105] creates 'mixed-economic support'[106] between several entities of the network. As Relyea describes in his essay *Your Art World: Or, The Limits of Connectivity* (2006), even if an

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[99] Howard S. Becker. *Art Worlds*. Ewing: University of California Press, 1982.

[100] Noah Horowitz. *Art of the Deal: Contemporary Art in a Global Financial Market*. (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011), 24.

[101] Sarah Thornton. *Seven Days in the Art World*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2009.

[102] Adam Lindemann. *Collecting Contemporary*. New York: Taschen, 2006.

[103] Adam Lindemann. *Collecting Contemporary*. New York: Taschen, 2006.

[104] 'Crits can also be painful rituals that resemble cross-examinations in which artists are forced to rationalize their work and defend themselves from a flurry of half-baked opinions that leave them feeling torn apart.' Sarah Thornton. *Seven Days in the Art World*. (New York: W.W. Norton, 2009), 47.

[105] Lane Relyea. "Your Art World: Or, The Limits of Connectivity." *Afterall: A Journal of Art, Context, and Enquiry*, no. 14 (2006): 71.

[106] Lane Relyea. "Your Art World: Or, The Limits of Connectivity." *Afterall: A Journal of Art, Context, and Enquiry*, no. 14 (2006): 71.

institution such as a biennale is curated against pure art market structures (such as the 2006 Whitney Biennial), it nevertheless feeds the market: works by artists who are represented in biennales are purchased and exhibited more during that time.[107] The biennale as such, as a venue, a reputation, an exhibition space in the context of a particular urban environment and the curatorial choices that are attached to this exhibition, are attached to non-human entities in a complex non-tangible way. The understanding of these non-tangible comprehensions of such spaces and institutions are art world intrinsic (how to distinguish the status of a biennale from a group show in the same museum is based on an insider knowledge that is constructed by other entities in the network, such as the art critic, the institutional reputation and the artists that are involved in the process of exhibition making). To untangle the complex understanding of the non-human and human entities in the art world network is one of the main focuses of this thesis.

In *Seven Days in the Art World,* Thornton describes the contemporary art world as a 'loose network of overlapping subcultures held together by a belief in art.'[108] This definition is very broad, as it is unclear if these subcultures are regarded as networks in and of themselves and what the element is that defines these subcultures (is it the content of the works of art, or is it an institutional context regarded as a subculture in the art world – museum subculture versus gallery subculture?). Still, the interesting part of this perception of the art world is that Thornton does not refer to singular actors but rather to subcultures, a formation that already represents an accumulation of interests or actors that are linked together. The links of subcultures for Thornton are urban space ('art capitals such as New York, London, Los Angeles and Berlin'), professional roles ('artist, dealer, curator, critic, collector, or auction-house expert') and perception ('hierarchies of fame, credibility,

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[107] Lane Relyea. "Your Art World: Or, The Limits of Connectivity." *Afterall: A Journal of Art, Context, and Enquiry*, no. 14 (2006): 70.

[108] Sarah Thornton. *Seven Days in the Art World*. (New York: W.W. Norton, 2009), 11.

imagined historical importance, institutional affiliation, education, perceived intelligence, wealth, and attributes such as the size of one's collection').[109] The difference between *art world* and *art market* is, for Thornton, that the art market refers to any commercial activity, in contrast to the broader term art world, which she relates to 'a symbolic economy,' an exchange of ideas and thoughts.[110] Symbolic economy theory was firstly introduced by Marcel Mauss[111] and further referenced by authors such as Jean Baudrillard[112] and Jacques Derrida.[113] Thornton's distinction between art world and art market with the object that is exchanged (economic exchange vs. intellectual exchange) can lead to the assumption that both economies are interrelated. This distinction is discussed in further detail in Chapter 3.1.2. The distinction between the terms art world and art market, or more precisely, the question of whether art exists without a 'market,' has been asked since 'the early modernism' as Anton Vidokle, artist and founder of e-flux, writes in his essay on *Art without Market, Art without Education: Political Economy of Art* (2013). He states 'art can clearly exist without a market, but artists fundamentally rely upon a certain economy in order to live and make art in the first place.'[114] The distribution of works of art, whether it is through patrons, middlemen, state organizations, institutions, or the network of people that surrounds an artist, is therefore the core part of the definition of the term *art world*.

Today, the distribution of works of art is also digital. Social interaction can expand the global spread of information within seconds and without any interaction with a physical subject/object. Claire Bishop asks, 'Does work premised on a dialogic, prosumer model, seeking real-world impact, need to assume representation

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[109] Sarah Thornton. *Seven Days in the Art World*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2009.

[110] Sarah Thornton. *Seven Days in the Art World*. (New York: W.W. Norton, 2009), 12.

[111] Marcel Mauss. *The Gift*. New York: Norton, 1990.

[112] Jean Baudrillard. *Symbolic Exchange and Death*. New York: Sage Publications, Inc., 1993.

[113] Jacques Derrida. *Given Time: 1. Counterfeit Money*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992.

[114] Anton Vidokle. "Art without Market, Art without Education: Political Economy of Art." *E-Flux Journal* 43, March 2013 (2013). Accessed September 07, 2014, http://www.e-flux.com/journal/art-without-market-art-without-education-political-economy-of-art/.

or an object form in order to be recognized as art?'[115] Considering the social definition of the art world, this question captures complex debates in current media discourses about the digital image, including the representation of the work and the need of an object form. At the same time, this question contains problematic presumptions such as the divide or point of convergence between the real world and the digital environment. The digital distribution of information and the sheer quantity of communication tools and forms are possibilities that emerging artists use to network and transmit without physical local border. Brad Troemel (b. 1987) writes about 'art's new mediated environment, wherein creators must compete for online attention in the midst of an overwhelming amount of information.'[116] The Serpentine Galleries launched a 'marathon' of young artists who were born into the 'age of non-hierarchical, "horizontal" practice' (after 1989 – the end of the Cold War and the first generation to grow up in the rise of new technologies)[117]. Pascal Gielen proposes a similar approach of a *Flat World* (2013), in which "anyone can have an opinion about the quality of a work of art."[118] These opinions, as well as anything else that is flowing through the network of global society, are measured in 'numbers, capital, or quantities, which effectively makes every quality relative.'[119] The success of digital images and information is quantified through clicks, shares and comments in the realm of a 'participatory culture.'[120].

The art world became more complex, unstructured, and accessible through the recent new developments in the transmission of art, as Michael Sanchez argues in his opening statement in the essay *Contemporary Art, Daily* (CAD). 'The

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[115] Claire Bishop. "Digital Divide." *Artforum* (September 2012): 434–442.

[116] Brad Troemel. "Athletic Aesthetics" *The New Inquiry* May 10, 2013. Accessed May 14, 2013, http://thenewinquiry.com/essays/athletic-aesthetics/.

[117] Serpentine Galleries. "89 Plus Marathon" Accessed August 8, 2015. http://www.serpentinegalleries.org/exhibitions-events/89plus-marathon.

[118] Pascal Gielen. *Institutional Attitudes: Instituting Art in a Flat World*. Edited by Pascal Gielen. (Amsterdam: Valiz/Antennae Series, 2013), 2.

[119] Pascal Gielen. *Institutional Attitudes: Instituting Art in a Flat World*. Edited by Pascal Gielen. (Amsterdam: Valiz/Antennae Series, 2013), 2.

[120] Limore Shifman. *Memes: In Digital Culture*. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2013), 4.

significance for art of the year 2008 is not limited to the market crash in October, but includes the founding of the blog Contemporary Art Daily in November, and the concurrent mushrooming of social media.'[121] Forrest Nash, founder and curator of Contemporary Art Daily, a blog that posts unedited press releases of contemporary art exhibitions that are curated or chosen in that sense by Nash and his team, was added to the 2013 Power 100 List in *Artreview*, a 'ranked list of the contemporary art world's most powerful figures.'[122] The popularity of this website and the discussion about the standardization of digital images and works of art in this context are an on going debate in current media.

Authors have been defining the term art world since the 1960s. and the common understanding is that the art world is an interactive group of people and entities that circle their activities around a diverse range of art. However, positions on the interpretation of the term *art world* differ when it comes to the question of what the art world does with works of art. The positions elaborated above range from the interpretation that works of art are solely objects of interest for the art world, to being constituted and distinguished by the art world from objects of the real world, to the argument that some works of art are completed only by the activities of the art world (distribution, consumption, etc.). Even taking into account this new complexity, the question that is discussed in this context remains the same: what does this interaction do with the works of arts in the realm of new, complex contemporary art worlds? Beatrix Ruf, the recently-appointed director of the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, describes the notion of digital interactions in the art world as a new generation of artists that network 'in real life' and online: 'a generation which can participate in many things, thanks to social media, and they can also travel a lot. [...] They live in freedom, especially artistically.' The boundlessness reaches even further, says Ruf, giving the practice of the artist Tobias

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[121] Michael Sanchez. "Contemporary Art, Daily." In *Art and Subjecthood : The Return of the Human Figure in Semiocapitalism*, edited by Isabelle Graw, Daniel Birnbaum, and Nikolaus Hirsch, 52–60. (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2011), 52.

[122] Artreview. "Power 100." Accessed August 03 2015. http://artreview.com/power_100/.

Madison as an example: 'Madison is a new type of human in Art.' [...] he is working alone as well as in globally funnelled collaborations; he is an artist, publisher of magazines and curator of his own art spaces.'[123] The online art market where one can buy and sell art at, for example, online auctions with Paddle8,[124] or as an online bidder for the big auction houses like Christies, Sotheby's and Phillips, and in which galleries and collectors distribute information about artists and offers works to buyers (to name but a few examples), is currently a part of the art world that can not be separated from the material world.

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[123] Hannes Grassegger. "Tobias Madison." *Das Magazin*, no. 24 (June 2013), 6. (translated for this thesis by Anne Luther)

[124] 'Paddle8 is the auction house for the 21st-century collector. We give a global community of passionate collectors unprecedented access to online auctions of high-caliber inventory.' Paddle 8. "About Paddle 8 - Overview" Accessed July 22, 2014, http://paddle8.com/about.

3.1.2. Art market and art world

Both terms are used in different literary contexts with varying theoretical references that bring an understanding to both terms. As shown above, the art world is a term, that vaguely describes interactions in the material and digital world between humans, or between humans and non-humans, that are based in an involvement with art. The art market is regarded as the commercial interaction between actors that are involved with art. The distinction of both terms functions on the understanding that the art market is part of the art world, that both are separate spheres that one can distance oneself from/be involved in, or that both are separate but nevertheless have an influential interaction on both sides.

The distinction between the art market and the art world was a discourse that was very strong around between 2003 – 2011 (see references below). Isabelle Graw argued in her 2009 book *High Price* that gallerists and artists were still making a distinction between the market and the art world and even wanted to distance themselves from the market as such.[125] With her contribution, the distinction between art world and art market blurred, and a new discourse was initiated that lead to a voice in current literature that criticises the distinction between the art world and the art market or claims that the separation is now non-existent. As Gavin Brown states in a 2014 interview: 'We all take part in that market to some extent. We are all in a market of some kind. To pretend otherwise is denial and snobbery. […] We are all in this together. There are many different places or situations where the interests of the museums, artists, and the market coincide. Museums have boards of trustees who – given their wealth and the returns on their wealth, are very much in favour of the current situation which is encouraging this boom. The museums have joined the arms race and are all expanding. As for the artists, if they said no, none of this would

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[125] Dubai Art. *High Price: Art Between the Market and Celebrity Culture, Global Art Forum_5 from Art Dubai*. Last modified December 11, 2011. Accessed August 03, 2014, https://vimeo.com/33472517.

be able to happen.'[126] It is nevertheless important to contextualize the separation between the art market and the art world, and to review how terms such as *price* and *value* were defined in influential literature in recent years. These terms are still referenced in journalism and academic and popular literature and sometimes used as tools: for example, Isabella Bortolozzi wrote in a statement against the collector Bert Kreuk, who sued the artist Danh Vō for failing to produce a commissioned work of art for his collection (and won the court case), that he is 'a man who understands everything about money, but has no understanding of value.'[127]

The distinction between art market and art world comes from a broader distinction between economy and culture.[128] The dichotomy is practically measurable in the primary market price, the secondary market value and symbolic value (which is less practical to measure but is nevertheless a factor that is used to define primary market prices). The influences on price-making will be discussed in Chapter 6.

Olav Velthuis, Isabelle Graw and Noah Horowitz have written influential books about value and price in regards to the art market and world. The books were all written in recent years, between 2003 and 2011, before and after the financial crisis in 2008, which is often marked as concurrent with the origins of an ever-growing art market. Graw states that 'market value is easier to define. It is calculated on the basis of price, fittingly defined by Marx as the "expression in money of the magnitude of value." The price is thus an index of the market value, a magnitude of value that should not, however, be confused with the value of the artwork.'[129] Graw bases her definition of market value on economic principles that were developed by Marx in

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[126] Daniel Baumann. "The Demise of the future. Gavin Brown & Daniel Baumann in a Conversation about the Art Market." *Spike Art Quarterly*, no. 40 (Summer 2014). Accessed July 08 2015, http://www.spikeartmagazine.com/en/articles/demise-future.

[127] Artnet. "Bert Kreuk Replies to Danh Vō, Suggests Charity to Cure Artist's 'Frustration' over Contentious Court Ruling." Last modified July 20, 2015, https://news.artnet.com/people/bert-kreuk-replies-to-danh-vo-318163.

[128] Olav Velthuis. "Symbolic Meanings of Prices: Constructing the Value of Contemporary Art in Amsterdam and New York Galleries." *Theory and Society* 32, no. 2 (2003): 183. doi:10.1023/A:1023995520369.

[129] Isabelle Graw. *High Price: Art Between the Market and Celebrity Culture*. Berlin, New York: Sternberg Press, 2010), 29.

the 19th century. Her deductive approach of defining art market related terms with references to historic economic theories is different from the inductive research approach of this thesis. It becomes clear that definitions of the terms *price* and *value* are based on differing research approaches. The following diagram gives an overview of some of the most prominent positions:

	Velthuis, 2003	Graw, 2009	Horowizt, 2011
(market) price	price mechanism = communication system *'The price mechanism is, in other words, not just an allocated system, but also a semiotic, communicative system akin to language.'* (p. 184)	price = not objective *'In terms of its symbolic value, the artwork is priceless but has a price nonetheless. In other words, its symbolic value is not identical to its market value, and this in spite of the fact with reference to a symbolic value that cannot be accounted for in financial terms.* (p. .27) *[...] the price of art must be viewed as something arbitrary insofar as it refers to a symbolic value that cannot be measured in objective terms.* (p.28)	two main variables: static, and dynamic *'The former refers to the universe of essentially inalterable features of a work: the name of the artist, the year it was made, whether the work was unique or editioned, as well as its size, weight, shape, color, and content. The latter, which include its provenance, sales history, and critical reception, changes over time. '* (pp. 20-21)
market value	Market value is different from acquisition price (pp. 164-165)	'market value is justified purely by its symbolic value' *'which in turn is an expression of the manner in which it is loaded with idealistic concepts.'* (p.27)	*economic* values— they can be bought and sold for profit (or loss) (p. 21)
symbolic value	'Symbolic meanings of prices constitute,[..], an intimate connection between price and cultural value.' p.184 *'[...]my argument builds on literature in the sociology of the arts, which states that aesthetic, artistic, or cultural values are socially constructed, and that the appreciation of an artwork is dependent on the social context in which it is seen. In particular, the value of an artwork does not reside in the work itself, but is produced and constantly reproduced by the artist, intermediaries, and the audience. [...]* (p..184)	'range of factors' p.26 *'It is the expression of an elusive charge derived from a range of factors: singularity, art historical verdict, artist's reputation, promise of originality, prospect of duration, claim to autonomy, intellectual acumen." (Graw 2009, p.26) "The peculiarity of symbolic value is that it cannot be measured in terms of money, that it won't translate smoothly into economic categories.'* (p. 27)	*Symbolic value:* social status, prestige of ownership // *Critical value*: differentiability *'But artworks also have important symbolic values, linked to the social status and prestige of ownership, that distinguish the art economy from other markets.' (Horowitz 2011, p.20) '[...]critical values that works possess-those features that differentiate one piece of art from the next.' (Horowitz 2011, p.21) 'Two major factors, alongside provenance, that affect an artwork's value are its availability and differentiability. [...] the uniqueness of artworks.'* (p.20)
cultural value	Cultural values = socially constructed, 'webs of meaning' p. 191	-	-

Figure 17. Anne Luther, *Price and value in Velthuis, Graw, Horowitz*, 2015, table.

Participating in the field of study allows me to bring the following understanding of market value and price to this thesis, based on observations of practical field research in an established art advisory in New York in 2013 – 2015. In this environment, *market value* refers to an average of all comparable prices of a work of art with the same or comparable material, production process, size, year (or period), and edition size. On the primary market, the market value is usually generated by comparing currently available works in the representing galleries of an artist. The market value on the secondary market is generated by taking all estimates of upcoming auctions and all realized auction results into account alongside comparable works by the same artist.

The *market price* refers to the listed price of an artwork in a gallery on the primary market. The market price and value on the primary market can change because the gallery can make decisions about increasing the prices of an artist's work in response to the reputation and stage of career of the artist.

The retail or *acquisitions price*[130] is usually the price an individual paid on the primary market, unless they received a *discounted price,* which is the retail price of a work minus the discount the gallery or artist gives the buyer. Velthuis writes, 'They vary their magnitude and furthermore make distinctions between different types of discounts. The size of the discount is not just the out-come of bargaining power; it also symbolizes the tie that is at stake in the transaction.'[131] Bargaining or negotiating about a price is not a common practice and can even lead to the understanding that the buyer just wants to buy a work of art as cheaply as possible (this is also discussed in Chapter 6). Discounts are offered by the gallerists and are often between 10 – 15% depending on the gallery, the status of the artist, the availability of work, the relationship between the buyer and the seller or quantity of work that is bought with the intention to support the gallery and the artist in a

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[130] Olav Velthuis. *Talking Prices: Symbolic Meanings of Prices on the Market for Contemporary Art.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 4.

[131] Olav Velthuis. *Talking Prices: Symbolic Meanings of Prices on the Market for Contemporary Art.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 78.

continuing relationship. The distinction between retail price and discounted price is important if, for example, an art dealer or consultant buys the work and charges her client commission for the retail price rather than the discounted price.

The primary market price is usually generated in a conversation between the artist, who generally has an understanding of the production costs of their works, and the gallerist, who takes into account comparable artists and other market factors.[132] Velthuis refers to these factors as pricing scripts which 'are based on criteria such as the reputation of an artist and the size of her work.'[133] He notes that decisions on the price of an artwork are not based on the quality of a work but rather on size, material, and reputation at a certain point in time of the artist's career.[134] The reputation of the artist is measured by biographical facts, such as exhibitions in notable institutions and museums, other artists they have exhibited with, biennale attendance, reviews in notable newspapers or magazines written by known critics, and publications. These factors can be quantified in that the more of these references the artist accumulates, the more their reputation rises. Nevertheless, in order to be able to identify these factors, one has to be a member of the previously described art world, and understand the form of discourse/s. The form of knowledge that one needs in order to understand an artist's reputation rests on the edge between economic value and symbolic value, the 'je ne sais quoi,' of this polarity.[135] *Symbolic value* refers to the logic that an artwork cannot be measured by its pure 'use value.'[136] Symbolic value is nothing that is unique to a work of art; designer items,

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[132] Olav Velthuis. *Talking Prices: Symbolic Meanings of Prices on the Market for Contemporary Art.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 117.

[133] Olav Velthuis. Talking Prices: Symbolic Meanings of Prices on the Market for Contemporary Art. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 118

[134] Olav Velthuis. *Talking Prices: Symbolic Meanings of Prices on the Market for Contemporary Art.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 118

[135] Isabelle Graw. *High Price: Art Between the Market and Celebrity Culture.* (Berlin, New York: Sternberg Press, 2010), 29.

[136] Julian Stallabrass. *Ground Control.* (London: Black Dog Pub Ltd, 1997), 1.

for example, are 'loaded with idealistic concepts.'[137] The difference in these objects is

that they are not "expected to produce 'truth' or 'epistemological insight' as does a

work of art.[138] The symbolic value of a work of art therefore has no measurable

limits because the variables by which this symbolic value is measured differs in

various contexts. As mentioned in the overview table above, the quantification of

symbolic value of an artwork is routed in a complex "semiotic system"[139] that only

the members of this communication system can understand.

A value that is not only applicable to works of art, *cultural value* is a term that

is used in a much broader context. Velthuis and Thornton refer to an ethnographic

approach when describing culture (e.g. by describing a belief in art that holds

subcultures together). These understandings of an ethnographic approach can be

compared to the work of the ethnographer Clifford Geertz, who refers to cultural

value as 'cultural products'[140] manufactured amongst individuals or groups of

individuals[141] through various behaviours, communications, acts and events. 'Our

ideas, our values, our acts, even our emotions, are, like our nervous system itself,

cultural products—products manufactured, indeed, out of tendencies, capacities, and

dispositions with which we were born, but manufactured nonetheless.'[142]

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[137] Isabelle Graw. *High Price: Art Between the Market and Celebrity Culture*. (Berlin, New York: Sternberg Press, 2010), 27.

[138] Isabelle Graw. *High Price: Art Between the Market and Celebrity Culture*. (Berlin, New York: Sternberg Press, 2010), 27.

[139] Olav Velthuis. "Symbolic Meanings of Prices: Constructing the Value of Contemporary Art in Amsterdam and New York Galleries." *Theory and Society* 32, no. 2 (2003): 184. doi:10.1023/A:1023995520369.

[140] Clifford Geertz. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 50.

[141] Clifford Geertz. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 11.

[142] Clifford Geertz. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 50.

3.2. State of play: collecting or investing

With regard to the definitions and interpretations of the terms above, one can ask where collecting contemporary art stands in the art world and art market and cultural and economic value of art distribution. Three extreme recent examples that will reoccur throughout this thesis show that the separation between the art world and the art market is discussed when it comes to the distinction between buyers of art as collectors or investors. The example that shows this mediated understanding is the 'Art Flipper.'[143] Cases cited include Stefan Simchowitz, the collector Bert Kreuk (who sued the artist Danh Vō to make an artwork for him[144]) and the actions of artist Wade Guyton in regards to an appearance of his works with the highest estimates at auction thus far in 2014.[145]

It seems as though the investment into art is separated from collecting when it comes to individuals who sell acquired works on the secondary market in private sales or in auctions for profit, which means that they resell the work for more than they bought it for from the galleries on the primary market. Flipping became a popular art world colloquialism between 2013 – 2014, when artworks, that were produced one year prior to the sale appeared in large quantities at auction. "Art-Flippers" refers to collectors that bought work for immediate resale on the secondary market (private and at auction).[146] Investment strategies that are applied to the art market seem like a mimicry[147] or simulation[148] of a system that functions in the

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[143] Jerry Saltz. "Saltz on Stefan Simchowitz, the Greatest Art-Flipper of Them All." *Vulture* March 31, 2014. Accessed April 27, 2014, http://www.vulture.com/2014/03/saltz-on-the-great-and-powerful-simchowitz.html.

[144] Ann Binlot. "Artist Danh Vo To Collector Who Sued Him: Shove It Up Your A*s, You Faggot." *Forbes*, July 17, 201. Accessed August 09, 2015, http://www.forbes.com/sites/abinlot/2015/07/17/artist-danh-vo-to-collector-who-sued-him-shove-it-up-your-as-you-faggot/

[145] Carol Vogel. "At Art Basel, Works With a Museum Presence." *New York Times* June 19 2014. Accessed August 04, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/20/arts/design/at-art-basel-works-with-a-museum-presence.html.

[146] Olav Velthuis. "Artrank and the Flippers: Apocalypse Now?" *Texte Zur Kunst* 96, December (2014): 34–49.

[147] Roger Caillois, and John Shepley. "Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia." *October* 31 (January 1984): 16. doi:10.2307/778354.

financial world or stock market environment. Comparing it to mimicry, by referencing the word and concept by Callois who has used it to criticise the surrealist and avant-garde movement, the 'investors' mimic the art collector in the environment of buying works of art (often with the help of a middle man such as an art advisor or dealer) and simulate the interest in works that are high in demand and cheap in cost with the intent to sell them for profit as soon as possible. One of the main differences from the financial market of today is this mimicry that the 'investor' has to bring to the investment, in that the gallery is selling work to an individual directly. '70 percent of total trade volume'[149] is based on algorithmic trading, algorithms competing against other algorithms with the only human control over these mechanisms being a 'red stop button'[150] in today's financial market. The comparison of the art market with stock market mechanisms might only metaphorically refer to the market makers and hedge fund principles before high speed trading and the power of algorithms on the financial market. Nevertheless, it could also mean that the slowness and the one-to-one idea of a tangible and observable profit-making of an art object at auction is what makes the art market so attractive for investors (who often come from a financial background). The simulation of a natural habit in an environment where stocks or shares as objects have the function of generating profit with the support (or investment) into a company is regarded in a negative way in the art world, the environment that the investors are mimicking. Examples of artists that have simulated habits from the financial world for their own means include, famously, Damien Hirst, with a hedge-fund model that he created at an auction in 2008 through an investment of the artist himself and his gallery, buying his famous diamond skull, a work that was

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[148] Jean Baudrillard. *Simulacra and Simulation*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995.

[149] Felix Salmon and John Stokes. "Algorithms Take Control of Wall Street." *Wired Magazine* December 27, 2010. Accessed July 23, 2014, http://www.wired.com/magazine/2010/12/ff_ai_flashtrading/.

[150] Felix Salmon and John Stokes. "Algorithms Take Control of Wall Street." *Wired Magazine* December 27, 2010. Accessed July 23, 2014, http://www.wired.com/magazine/2010/12/ff_ai_flashtrading/.

impossible to sell for the asking price for $100 million.[151] In a July 2015 at Artists

Space in New York discussing 'The Artist's Resale Right' and questions regarding

percentages of secondary market sales for artists and the right to withdraw works of

arts from the secondary market, Jenny Jaskey, curator and director of the Artist's

Institute, asked the contemporary art dealer Maxwell Graham why artists do not hold

back works of their own that they can sell at auction with their gallerists. The answer

was that this proved unsuccessful with the hedge fund experiment of Damien Hirst,

and the consequent crash of his market and interest in the artist's career after this

financial market strategy simulation. The topic of investment in the contemporary art

market is nevertheless a topic that is covered frequently in current art related media.

Reasons for and influences that this interest in art for the means of profit can have on

the career and art market of a young emerging artist are analysed in Chapter 6.

The field study for this thesis excludes any cooperative collecting processes,

or any hedge-fund cooperative collecting processes of companies and investment

banks. This study also excludes institutional collecting practices and focuses on

individual, private collecting of contemporary art.

In order to understand collecting processes in this context, the focus of the

following is the contextualization of the term *collecting*. Pearce defines a collection

as 'a group of objects, brought together with intention and sharing a common identity

of some kind, which is regarded by its owner as, in some sense, special or set

apart.'[152] Strategies of collecting - the way collectors approach this activity – is for

Pearce a personal and individual decision. As Pearce writes, 'post-modernist late

capitalism has, from its own entrails, produced a world in which the multiplicity of

objects float free in a cultural landscape in which boundaries seem to have

dissolved.'[153] The acceptance that meaning is linked naturally to its objects and

actions has been dismissed in the post-modernist tradition: 'Meaning is what

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[151] Hari Kunzru. "Damien Hirst and the Great Art Market Heist." *The Guardian*, March 16, 2012. Accessed October, 11, 2013, http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2012/mar/16/damien-hirst-art-market.

[152] Susan M Pearce. *On Collecting: An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition*. (New York: Routledge, 1995), 159.

[153] Susan M Pearce. *On Collecting: An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition*. (New York: Routledge, 1995), 140.

anybody cares to make it.'[154] Collecting contemporary art becomes, therefore, a manifestation of the 'extended self.'[155] The individual meaning that the collector finds in her own collection has been described in various ways in the interview book *Collecting Contemporary Art.*[156] Their interviewees describe the following approaches:

The historic approach is to collect works of art from a particular period – for example, conceptual art from 1967-1977,[157] or Dadaist works. Often described as patronage, another approach is the interest in one particular artist. A third, primarily thematic approach to a collection could, for example, take an interest in works about feminism or themes such as the body. Some of the interviewees reference their personal life experiences as an approach to collecting, the collection becoming a personal diary.

Access to knowledge of qualitative attributes that make a work of art quantifiable on the level of price and status were mentioned above in the context of an artist's reputation. The meaning of these specific attributes is constructed in various discourses of the art world. A collector who can apply these quantifiers shows a social affiliation to a particular group that also understands these quantifiers.

Pearce divides values of an object between the social and the individual.[158] The social value of a work of art in the narrow context of art world discourses is the ability to decode the 'inherent historical content,'[159] or the qualitative attributes

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[154] Susan M Pearce. *On Collecting: An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition.* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 141.

[155] Susan M Pearce. *On Collecting: An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition.* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 176.

[156] Andrea Bellini and Lillian Davies. *Collecting Contemporary Art.* Zurich; New York: JRP/Ringier, 2008.

[157] Sophie Richard. *Unconcealed : The International Network of Conceptual Artists 1967 - 77; Dealers, Exhibitions and Public Collections.* Edited by Lynda Morris. London: Ridinghouse, 2009.

[158] Susan M. Pearce. *On Collecting: An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition.* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 172.

[159] Susan M Pearce. *On Collecting: An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition.* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 172.

attached to this content. The individual value is the intrinsic, emotional attachment, the 'special qualities that only the owner can perceive in them.'[160]

A recurring question in current literature about contemporary art collecting is the interpretation of 'the wrong and right acquisition motives.'[161] The right reason to collect is linked to the collectors' 'love for art,'[162] which is characterized in the devotion a collector shows for a particular artist or body of work. The collector integrates herself into the social life of the gallery, attending openings, dinners and other 'art events.'[163] The wrong reasons to collect are linked to 'investment, speculation, status, or, to a lesser degree, decoration.'[164]

One of the interviewees for this study repeatedly said that 'learning and looking' is the essence of collecting contemporary art. Besides social and economic reasons for the purchase of a work of art, the intellectual engagement with a work is also of particular interest for collectors. 'Dialogues with the work'[165] and the artist result from research in critical reviews, conversations, referencing works in art historic contexts and other media.

One emerging topic about the way private collectors collect contemporary art is the rise of private museums in the US. Collectors blur the boundaries between institutional (museum) and private/individual (home) collecting by structuring the collecting process with hired curators, administrators and their own art handling and installation teams. Public engagement and the storing and preservation of contemporary art is only one aspect of their impact on the career of emerging

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[160] Susan M Pearce. *On Collecting: An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition*. (New York: Routledge, 1995), 172.

[161] Olav Velthuis. *Talking Prices: Symbolic Meanings of Prices on the Market for Contemporary Art*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 42-45.

[162] Olav Velthuis. *Talking Prices: Symbolic Meanings of Prices on the Market for Contemporary Art*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 42.

[163] Olav Velthuis. *Talking Prices: Symbolic Meanings of Prices on the Market for Contemporary Art*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 43

[164] Olav Velthuis. *Talking Prices: Symbolic Meanings of Prices on the Market for Contemporary Art*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 44.

[165] Olav Velthuis. *Talking Prices: Symbolic Meanings of Prices on the Market for Contemporary Art*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 43.

contemporary artists. The institutional influence of the so-called mega collectors is also discussed with scepticism, for example in the case of Bert Kreuk's use of 'the Hague's Gemeentemuseum (Municipal Museum),'[166] which exhibited his collection and influenced his lawsuit against the artist Danh Vō. The institutional collection differs from the private collection in the way that acquisition decisions are made. The Rubell Family Collection is one example: Mera and Donell Rubell made it their mission to create a privately funded 'public institution.' 'The Foundation has been recognized as a pioneer in what has been referred to as the "Miami model," whereby private collectors create a new, independent form of public institution.'[167] The collection model aims to serve the artist and the public through a personal approach:

> As collectors we might have more freedom than a museum to make decisions based on our personal opinions. However, whether you are a museum or private collection, we all have to remember that it is a privilege to serve the artist and the public. [...] Thousands of local public school students in Miami visit the Collection every year, and we love learning from their perceptions of contemporary art. Also, we host internships and a public library. That said, we do not purchase art with an eye to educational value. We buy art to which we respond personally and viscerally, although we do hope that the works will inspire young people. [...] Your own ethics are always at work, because your history and personal opinions are involved. For us, we focus on the quality of the art itself as well as our connection to it. But as collectors, you have to be open-minded and base your decisions on good will. Art has the power to enrich and improve our realities and move the world to a better place.[168]

On the one hand the collectors follow the model of a museum as an institution with an educational mission (internships, library, public tours), a collection and the possibility of exhibiting contemporary artists. Therefore, they follow the mission of

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[166] Hili Perlson. "Collector Bert Kreuk Wins Lawsuit Against Artist Danh Vō and Will Get New Artwork." *Artnet News*, June 24, 2015. Accessed July 13, 2015, https://news.artnet.com/people/bert-kreuk-wins-lawsuit-against-artist-danh-vo-311160.

[167] Rfc Museum. "Rubell Family Collection / Contemporary Arts Foundation." Accessed July 22, 2014, http://rfc.museum/about-us.

[168] Collectortribune. "Don and Mera Rubell: Collecting Masterpieces." Accessed January 29, 2013, http://www.collectortribune.com/2012/03/29/don-and-mera-rubell-collecting-masterpieces/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=don-and-mera-rubell-collecting-masterpieces.

public museums by 'establishing, preserving, and documenting.'[169] 'The Museum of Modern Art manifests this commitment by establishing, preserving, and documenting a permanent collection of the highest order that reflects the vitality, complexity and unfolding patterns of modern and contemporary art; by presenting exhibitions and educational programs of unparalleled significance; by sustaining a library, archives, and conservation laboratory that are recognized as international centres of research; and by supporting scholarship and publications of preeminent intellectual merit.'[170] On the other hand, they distance themselves from public institutions because they argue that their decisions for establishing, preserving and documenting are solely based on private interest.

The main difference between collectors and financial investors seems to be apparent in the longevity of the investment both roles display in their engagement with acquired artworks and the intellectual discourse with the 'world' around the acquired artwork. The personal investment of a collector seems to be measured on the purpose of the acquirement. Collectors invest with emotional interest, love and intellectual engagement, they are establishing, preserving and documenting their acquisitions. The financial investor shows a mimicry strategy[171] of the financial world in the sense that the appreciation and investment for art is based on the notion that an acquisition can, when preserved and established, return a higher financial appreciation.

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[169] MoMA. "Mission Statement." Accessed August 22, 2015. http://www.moma.org/about/index.

[170] MoMA. "Mission Statement." Accessed August 22, 2015. http://www.moma.org/about/index.

[171] Roger Caillois and John Shepley. "Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia." *October* 31 (January 1984): 16. doi:10.2307/778354.

4. Chapter 4: Research design and methods

4.1. Research design

As described in Chapter 3, various positions in current literature interpret the art

world as a social field in theory and practice. By structuring research processes for

qualitative research, it becomes clear that the methodology for the research project is

the foundation for any theoretical conclusion. The research is embedded in earlier

empirical experiences,[172] and assumptions about the field were based on the

literature review and practical work as a curator, art advisor and studio manager

prior to this study. Before entering the field and structuring the research design,

simple assumptions were formulated as the basis for the study.

The research problems are formulated in the following way:

• Explore possibilities for theorizing networks to analyse and conceptualize networks

of collecting and art production in contemporary art (theoretical and methodological

literature)

• Investigate a diverse range of entities in collecting and art production networks

(who and what are human and non-human influences in these networks?)

• Examine which entities in collecting and art production networks overlap, and

compare and contrast these entities in both realities

This research reflects on both artists and collectors who engage in constant

decision-making processes about the formulation of ideas, conceptualization of

materials and the affirmative (yes) or critical (no) discussion about these decisions.

The experience of engagement with the field and embeddedness in qualitative, social

scientific research brought about the choice of methods that allowed collecting the

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[172] Uwe Flick. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. (London: Sage Publications, 2010), 98.

field data that would later serve as the foundation for data visualisation and visual analysis. Semi-structured interviews and participant observation (attending exhibition openings, fairs, gallery shows, museum exhibitions, visiting artist's studios and private collections) were chosen as data collection methods because, on one hand, the expert knowledge of individuals can be captured in in-depth interviews and the social access to the field is opened by a participation over a longer period. The researcher switches between insider and outsider roles in the data collection at all times.

The inductive premise of this research and the use of qualitative analysis are two reasons to structure the research as Grounded Theory research. Grounded Theory is a methodology Glaser and Strauss developed in the late 1960s. Their first publication on the methodology, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (1967), derived from a study on the process of dying in hospitals.[173] Glaser's research background was based in quantitative methods and approaches in natural sciences, whereas Strauss 'understood people as actors in the social world and saw social life as a process: the outcome of interactions between people in given contexts.'[174] Their joint approaches produced a methodology that has the premise of conducting qualitative research that nevertheless meets the demands of scientific objectivity.[175] Theories that are developed about their field of interest are grounded in the perception and understanding of the actors of these life worlds. The theories are grounded in data and developed through qualitative (and quantitative) data of their ethnographic field study. Therefore Grounded Theory is an inductive methodological approach based in philosophical principles of realism. 'They believed in a world that exists

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[173] Karen O'Reilly. "Key Concepts in Ethnography." Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2011.

[174] Karen O'Reilly. "Key Concepts in Ethnography." (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2011), 98.

[175] Karen O'Reilly. "Key Concepts in Ethnography." Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2011.

independently of how it is perceived or understood […], and that this pure reality is
what social science should capture. […] Codes, concepts, and categories to sort the
data come from the data, not from hypotheses.'[176]

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[176] Karen O'Reilly. "Key Concepts in Ethnography." (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2011), 93.
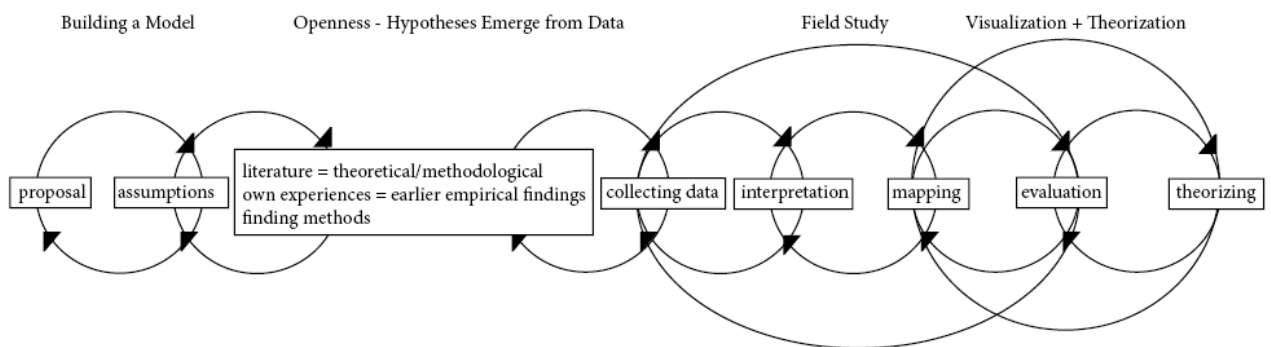
Figure 18. Anne Luther, *Research design*, 2015, digital drawing.

4.2. Positioning in the field

One particular feature of Grounded Theory is that the researcher enters the field with an openness that is not based on 'theoretical assumptions'[177] but rather with the aim to discover theories by 'working with the field.'[178] The research is not structured along the linear path of finding a theory and testing it in the field.[179] Fig. 18 shows a research model designed in a circular way. Flick describes the research process as a circularity in which the researcher is reflecting on the collected data as well as the chosen methods at all times.[180] 'The aim is not to reduce complexity by breaking it down into variables but rather to increase complexity by including context.'[181] One of the central goals in the initial proposal is to visualise the complexity of a networked art world. The expert knowledge that the interviewees could bring to this study, untangling some of the aforementioned concepts like price making, reputation, the belief in writing art history and so on, are examples that support choosing an inductive approach to the field. The review in Chapter 3 shows that every researcher approached the field with their own methods, and the results, the key concepts of the art world, were reinterpreted and used by the interviewees and actors that were observed in this field study. The inductive approach to the field allows for an untangling of the principles that are at stake in the collecting and production of contemporary art.

The narrow inductive Classic Grounded Theory approach Glaser progressed with the Grounded Theory Institute parted with Strauss' approach to Grounded

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[177] Uwe Flick. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. (London: Sage Publications, 2010), 91.

[178] Uwe Flick. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. (London: Sage Publications, 2010), 91.

[179] Uwe Flick. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. (London: Sage Publications, 2010), 91.

[180] Uwe Flick. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. (London: Sage Publications, 2010), 98.

[181] Uwe Flick. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. (London: Sage Publications, 2010), 91.

Theory. Strauss and Corbin opened 'sources of [...] research problem[s]'[182] to

'personal and professional experience'[183] and 'technical literature'[184] of the field. This

openness is used in this study because of prior knowledge of the field and my

involvement as an assistant in an art advisory in New York.

The following introduction to the data collection in the field research

describes my role as researcher in the field, the construction of data coding methods,

and forms of accessibility to the interviewees and the participation in the field. In

this study, '[t]he general term "field" may mean a certain institution, a subculture, a

family, a specific group of persons with a special biography, decision makers in

administration or enterprises, and so on.'[185] As mentioned in the introduction, the

field of contemporary art that is investigated in this study is the western European

and US 'Kunstbetrieb' [art apparatus] – as Graw described it, a 'horizon of artistic

production and zone of approval' in which all the individuals belonging to this field

strive for the same basic interest, namely to secure the existence of this field[186] by

legitimizing the product 'contemporary art'[187] with its actions (for example

exhibiting, collecting, writing about it and so on). The field is the 'contemporary art

world' and contemporaneity is the crucial characteristic used to set the boundaries of

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[182] Anselm L. Strauss and Juliet Corbin. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. (New York: Sage Publications, 1998), 34.

[183] Anselm L. Strauss and Juliet Corbin. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. (New York: Sage Publications, 1998), 35.

[184] Anselm L. Strauss and Juliet Corbin. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. (New York: Sage Publications, 1998), 35.

[185] Uwe Flick. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. (London: Sage Publications, 2010), 106.

[186] Isabelle Graw. "Aneignung Und Ausnahme Zeitgenössische Künstlerinnen: Ihre Ästhetischen Verfahren Und Ihr Status Im Kunstsystem," PhD Diss., (Europa Universität Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder), 2003), 7; In DNB Online Datenbank; available from http://d-nb.info/971590273 (urn: urn:nbn:de:kobv:521-opus-00028; accessed September 12, 2015).

[187] Isabelle Graw. "Aneignung Und Ausnahme Zeitgenössische Künstlerinnen: Ihre Ästhetischen Verfahren Und Ihr Status Im Kunstsystem," PhD Diss., (Europa Universität Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder), 2003), 7; In DNB Online Datenbank; available from http://d-nb.info/971590273 (urn: urn:nbn:de:kobv:521-opus-00028; accessed September 12, 2015).

the field. Living artists and collectors who are collecting or are involved and related in their collecting with living artists were considered to belong to the field of interest. The field study was conducted in New York between 2013 – 2015. The focus on painting and painters in this field study and in the examples mentioned in the following chapters is not by choice, but rather developed with the quantitative appearance in the collection of the interviewees. The interviewed artists work in the medium of painting, sculpture, photography, drawing, performance and video; the interviewed collectors expand their collection of these art forms with installations that were acquired from exhibitions in a private collection, written text/books as artistic practice, to digital files that galleries provided for video works; and the gallerist interviewed for this study represents artists working in the mentioned art forms. Therefore the study was not focused on collecting contemporary painting but draws from prominent examples that are part of the popularity of painting as a medium in contemporary art. Current secondary market auctions indicate the popularity of the medium over sculpture, performance and video in current collecting trends in New York. In the years 2013 – 2015, the three big auction houses Christies, Sotheby's and Phillips sold mostly painting with prices that were incomparably larger than prior auction results, and the three known most expensive paintings that were ever sold were sold in 2011, 2014 and 2015 in private sales.[188] The prominent place and popularity of painting in the art market has on one hand to do with practical issues that a private collector faces for examples storage costs (which are calculated by volume not by number of works and therefore it is often more cost effective to store paintings), space in a private apartment (where wall

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[188] Wikipedia. "List of Most Expensive Paintings." Accessed March 23, 2015, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_most_expensive_paintings#cite_note-5.

space is often dedicated to painting and photography). The popularity of painting has

also been theorized by authors such as Isabelle Graw[189], Jan Verwoert[190] and David

Joselit.[191] Graw writes,

> 'There are many indications of painting's lasting popularity: it keeps fetching
> the highest prices on the art market *and* it survived the manifold historical
> attempts to declare it finished, dead, obsolete etc. […] as an art form it seems
> particularly disposed to support the expectation – widespread in the art world
> – that by acquiring a work of art, you get a hold on the artist's labour
> capacity and therefore own a slice of her life. Buying artworks indeed comes
> close to buying people – and this is especially true for painting.'[192]

Nevertheless, the study does not solely focus on painting in art production

and collecting. The examples on painting as practice in the upcoming chapters is

selected due to the prominence of the medium in the field of contemporary art

collecting and criticism.

The social interaction in the art world often seems controlled by

'gatekeepers', including economic fluidity, social connections or prestige. Uwe Flick

asks, 'How can you secure the collaboration of the potential participants in your

study? How do you achieve not only that people express their willingness, but that

this also leads to concrete interviews or other data?'[193] My roles as a researcher in

the field of the study that is described in the following paragraphs gives an insight

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[189] Isabelle Graw. "The Value of Painting. Notes on Unspecificity, Indexicality and Highly Valuable Quasi- Persons." In *Joy Forever: The Political Economy of Social Creativity*, edited by Michał Kozłowski, Agnieszka Kurant, Jan Sowa, Krystian Szadkowski, and Jakub Szreder, 65–74. London: MayFlyBooks, 2014.

[190] Jan Verwoert. "Why Are Conceptual Artists Painting Again? Because They Think It's a Good Idea." *Afterall: A Journal of Art, Context, and Enquiry* 12, no. Autumn/Winter (2005). Accessed March 11, 2015 http://www.afterall.org/journal/issue.12/why.are.conceptual.artists.painting.again.because.

[191] David Joselit. "Painting Beside Itself." *October* 130, Fall (2009): 125–34.

[192] Isabelle Graw. "The Value of Painting. Notes on Unspecificity, Indexicality and Highly Valuable Quasi- Persons." In *Joy Forever: The Political Economy of Social Creativity*, edited by Michał Kozłowski, Agnieszka Kurant, Jan Sowa, Krystian Szadkowski, and Jakub Szreder, 65–74. (London: MayFlyBooks, 2014), 66.

[193] Uwe Flick. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. (London: Sage Publications, 2010), 106.

into access to the data, and the perspective that a researcher might not be able to completely lose during the coding and analysis of the collected data.

My position as a researcher at the time of entering the field research in early 2013 can be described as a *new insider,* due to prior practice in the art world as a curator, art advisor and studio manager (and several other roles in museums, cultural institutions and independent project spaces). My professional contacts were mostly based in New York, London and Berlin. The research began in 2012 in London as a *visitor*[194] with previously obtained knowledge about the roles in the field but nevertheless in an outsider position within the local art scene (galleries, artists, writers, curators). The intention in the beginning of the research project was to construct a comparison between collecting networks in the local art worlds in New York and London. The proposal was quickly dismissed because it seemed that differences in local knowledge, access and policy (public vs. private funding) between London and New York could potentially be an independent research project, but did not suit the focus of the research in collecting networks in the given time frame and scope of this PhD thesis.

Familiarity with the local art scene in New York was based on a fellowship I obtained in 2010 at MoMA PS1 as an assistant to the director, and in the development office for six months during the Greater New York exhibition, which comprised 'highlights' in the local art scene of the previous five years. The knowledge that I brought to the study in the beginning made it possible to enter the field as a *new insider:* new because the local art scene had changed between 2010 and 2013, and insider because some contacts from prior working experiences could quickly introduce new contacts. Re-entering the local art scene with a research

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[194] Uwe Flick. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. (London: Sage Publications, 2010), 111.

approach in 2013 showed that new art world members were established, new roles

had been created (e.g. in new media and communication), and former positions in

institutions and galleries had changed. As Flick writes, the researcher is interested in

more than just the 'the exterior presentation of social groups. Rather, [she] want[s] to

become involved in a different world or subculture and first to understand it as far as

possible from inside and from its own logic."[195] The aim was to establish an *insider*

position but at the same time keep a *distance from the field* to retain the ability to

reflect, evaluate and critique the observation, interviews and analysis. These

antagonistic positions are based on two roles, the researcher and the professional

role, but nevertheless incorporate both the same time. 'Strangeness and familiarity'[196]

are two key words in this coherence. Corbin Dwyer and Buckle discuss this *Insider-*

Outsider role of researchers in qualitative research[197] as the 'insider researcher shares

an identity, language, and experiential base with the study participants,'[198] and at the

same time constant reflection on research processes, interactions with participants,

topic developments in interviews, and change in access and position show the

outsider perspective in the data collection. The insider/outsider identities are

inseparable[199] because of the impossibility of separating the professional role (past

and present) from the research field of this study. The role in an art advisory with a

strong focus in emerging and established international contemporary art in New

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[195] Uwe Flick. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. (London: Sage Publications, 2010), 111.

[196] Uwe Flick. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. (London: Sage Publications, 2010), 112.

[197] Sonya Corbin Dwyer and Jennifer L Buckle. "The Space between: On Being an Insider-Outsider in Qualitative Research." *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 8, no. 1 (2009): 54–63.

[198] Sonya Corbin Dwyer and Jennifer L Buckle. "The Space between: On Being an Insider-Outsider in Qualitative Research." *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 8, no. 1 (2009): 58.

[199] Amanda L. Couture, Arshia U. Zaidi and Eleonor Maticka-Tyndale. 2012. "Reflexive Accounts: An Intersectional Approach to Exploring the Fluidity of Insider/Outsider Status and the Researcher's Impact on Culturally Sensitive Post-Positivist Qualitative Research." *Qualitative Sociology Review* 8, no.1 (2012), 87.

York became a major part of the participant observation and made it possible to have an insight perspective on primary market prices and interests of collectors. It also made reflecting on some of the positions mentioned in the interviews possible.

> 'As Devine and Heath argue, researchers "cannot be divorced from their autobiographies and will bring their own values to the research" [...]. How participants interact with the researcher is contingent on how the participants perceive the researcher or the role they assign to the researcher [...]. Thus, who the researcher is, as a person, and the identities that person has, are relevant in the research process [...], and the data collection process in particular. This is especially so when using interviews as a data collection method because they are social encounters or 'socially situated' activities [...].'[200]

The role as an active insider and reflective outsider researcher in the field developed over the course of the 2 years in the field through an expert knowledge that was embedded in the participation in art world activities, building a reputation as a researcher in the field and active participation in literate discourses. The prior contacts that I had in New York were a start for the entering of the field, but are not comparable to the network that the researcher established with institutions, collectors, artists, curators and dealers with very strong and intimate connections. The insider knowledge was separated from art world gossip and anecdotes – the identifiable (not anonymised) examples used in this thesis are all taken from articles, rather than 'stories,' that are part of the everyday work of participation in the local art world in New York. The choice was made to keep a distance from my network and to use the insider knowledge to explain the mediated examples in a way that is most relevant for this research.

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[200] Amanda L. Couture, Arshia U. Zaidi and Eleonor Maticka-Tyndale. 2012. "Reflexive Accounts: An Intersectional Approach to Exploring the Fluidity of Insider/Outsider Status and the Researcher's Impact on Culturally Sensitive Post-Positivist Qualitative Research." *Qualitative Sociology Review* 8, no.1 (2012), 87-88.

insider
active

outsider
reflective

Figure 19. Anne Luther, *Insider - Outsider*, 2015, digital image.

4.3. Methods

The field research for this thesis started in June 2013 with the intention of collecting qualitative data in form of semi-structured interviews and participating in the field as an observing and reflecting researcher and an active researcher in an art advisory. The participation in the field was structured around the activities of collectors and artists and meant that the social world of the local art scene became the focus of the participant observation. In the field study between 2013 – 2015, far over 400 exhibition openings, mainly in the Lower East Side, Chelsea, Upper East and West Side and Brooklyn, were attended in museums, project spaces and galleries. Dinners, after-parties and private receptions at galleries and in the private home of artists and collectors were sites that became part of the research, and offered chance to informally interview actors in the art world who were not available for a formal hour-long interview on record. Often the events showed the overlapping relationships between institutional and private roles, as well as the access that private collectors have to museum curators, artists and art critics. Understanding the who's-who in these after-places (after-exhibition opening, after-benefit gala, after-gallery opening etc.) was part of the understanding of the field and some of the vouching and time-consuming reputation-building circumstances some galleries and artists demand for the sale of particular projects. The attendance of the VIP viewings of the art fairs Frieze New York (2013, 2014 and 2015), Nada (2015), The Armory Show (2013 and 2014) and Independent Art Fair (2013, 2014 and 2015) gave a chance to interact with the international art scene in a very intensified time, as during the art fairs in New York the amount of gallery openings, parties and dinners is multiplied. In 2015 I 'followed' an art collector for two days to the art fairs Frieze and Nada. The intense visits were possible in a very reflective way because of the attendance and established knowledge of the art fairs and exhibitors of prior years. The access to the 'after life' was mostly established through the relationship to the art advisory and to artists, writers, collectors and individuals working in various gallery roles that I

established during my research. The change of the intensity of access to these events is one aspect that was thoroughly reflected on in the research diaries.

The interviews were mostly initiated with an email contact to the participating interviewees. The positive response to my interview requests were partly influenced by the *acceptance*[201] that I am a part of the field of study, which was supported by the language that was used in the initial contact and the affiliation with an academic institution. The openness about the research and the guarantee to anonymise the interviews, secured with a consent form that every interviewee signed before the interview, made it possible to gain the trust of the interviewees[202] on a very initial level.

The first interviews were conducted with two artists and two collectors in 2013. The interviews helped me to understand how the collectors and artists referred to certain topics that were discussed in the literature reviewed before the interviews. Reflecting on these initial interviews brought the structure for the following interviews to a more focused level. The structure for the interviews that followed remained the same, although every interview was designed for the specific person who was interviewed, and only loosely followed the structure that the guide that was constructed offered.

Some 'aspects of reality remain hidden and are not disclosed to you as a researcher, even if you are integrated in the field and the group as a person.'[203] Although the participation was not only in the public field but also in more private spaces, such as the apartment of a collector or studios of artists, the position in an

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[201] Sonya Corbin Dwyer and Jennifer L Buckle. "The Space between: On Being an Insider-Outsider in Qualitative Research." *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 8, no. 1 (2009), 58.

[202] Sonya Corbin Dwyer and Jennifer L Buckle. "The Space between: On Being an Insider-Outsider in Qualitative Research." *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 8, no. 1 (2009), 60.

[203] Uwe Flick. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. (London: Sage Publications, 2010), 111.

influential and well-connected art advisory in Manhattan in late 2013 opened access to certain hidden aspects. The advisory is a company that advises influential collectors with a focus on contemporary art in their decisions about the strategy and curation of their collections, and about acquisitions and deaccessions of works of art on the primary and secondary market. The access, relationships and analytical insider knowledge that the advisory has is in large part what their clients are interested in. Basic research on upcoming exhibitions, new works by the artists in their collections, market evaluation and prices are daily aspects of the job in the art advisory. The advisory also organizes exhibitions for some of their clients in their private art foundations, makes exhibition books of their projects, curates exhibitions in their project space on the Upper East Side and works on web design for galleries and other advisories in New York. The network of the advisory expands internationally, with a focus on Western Europe and the Americas.

The time before and during art fairs internationally, which here means March/April, September/October and December, was when galleries sent over previews of their program at each respective fair with current work available at the gallery, and primary market prices for these works. The auctions, taking place internationally around the same times, gave an overview of some of the same artists with comparable works of their secondary market values. This gave an overview of the market in a more general sense, of trends in material and media and the rise of prices for artists that were observed during the field study. The accumulation of an exhibition schedule of over 500 galleries, project spaces and museums internationally that was for the advisory during the spring, summer and fall of this research made it possible to expand a general overview of exhibitions and to compare that with the market values of artists presented over the years on the

exhibition schedules of various galleries. The intense research and overview of the international art world that was collected in digital documents was one of the positive aspects of the position in the advisory. The general overview of art world programming and market values of works of contemporary art was accompanied by in-depth research about individual artists that the clients of the advisory are interested in. Knowledge about contemporary practices, materials and content was researched for the advisory's clients (collectors). The general overview and focused research of the field of study gave access to information that galleries, auction houses and also sometimes artists would provide to the art advisory. The volume of primary market price and value data was gained through the work at the advisory and in this thesis only used as secondary expert knowledge, making the reflection of the primary data sources (the interview data) possible through the gained independent expert knowledge. The advisory is aware of my research and the focus of the research on collecting and art production. It was always an open conversation that the research for the thesis would be partly based on the knowledge that was gained from the position in the art advisory, and it was also clear that the data from the art advisory and any confidential information of the company would not be used for this thesis, and the anonymity of the clients would be secured.

The evaluation of questions such as 'why does the artist, collector or gallerist reveal certain information in the interviews?' or 'is this information useful for the research or does it fall into the category of gossip, strategizing access or an opinionated guess?' was also part of my insider/outsider role as researcher in the field. The role of the researcher in the field was nevertheless always respectfully maintained with a certain distance from the knowledge and friendships that were developed during the research. In a field in which private relationships are such a big

part of professional progress, it became very important to maintain a reflective

distance from the collected data, and to remain professional by not including friends

in the interview phase. Fellow academics included their research contacts in their

publications[204] in order to show the access to famous art world individuals. Access

and restriction of access became a large portion of the reflection in the research

diaries, which made it possible to critically evaluate the data that was collected as the

primary source for the data visualisation and analysis.

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[204] 'He gets an early start here, noting in the acknowledgments that as a result of the interviews conducted for the book, he is pleased to be able to call Hans Ulrich Obrist and Daniel Birnbaum friends.' Adam Jasper. "Bad Deal: Contemporary Art in a Global Financial Market." Book review on Art of the Deal: Contemporary Art in a Global Financial Market by Noah Horowitz in *Idiom Magazine*, May 19, 2011. Accessed September 09, 2015, http://idiommag.com/, 2011. http://idiommag.com/2011/05/bad-deal-contemporary-art-in-a-global-market/.

4.3.1. Data collection

The decision to place the data collection and research into the local art scene of New York was made partially because of the sheer quantity of galleries, living and working artists, museums, art fairs and art magazines in the city that are part of the centre of the international art world. A recent co-authored research article[205] showed that the three art world centres in Western Europe and the USA are New York, Berlin and London. The time that is spent in the field of study is crucial to understanding certain roles and the who's-who at the events (and after-events) that were part of the participant observation.

The data collection was therefore based 'in the social life of those'[206] individuals that were part of the field of study through participant observation: taking part in gallery openings, readings, member events in museums and assorted other art events in a 'public setting,'[207] and in events and situations 'that are not public,'[208] such as the parties of established artists in the house of an influential collector, studio visits or social 'drinks' with collectors, artists and other art world participants.

The participant observation in these very social environments were kept in research diaries, often in form of notes, questions, drawings and in full written text without any anonymising aspects. The reflections are not used directly in the analysis as text data, but they served as evaluation of the primary data (the interviews, locations, travels, social issues and discourses that were encountered

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[205] Cooper Francis and Anne Luther. "Contemporary Art, Remembered: Constructing Form from the Data of Digital Experience." Manuscript under peer review for *Network Ecologies Digital Scalar Publication*, Durham: Duke University, 2015.

[206] Alan Bryman. *Social Research Methods*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 431.

[207] Alan Bryman. *Social Research Methods*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 436.

[208] Alan Bryman. *Social Research Methods*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 436.

during the field research). The diaries were a constant process of 'intuiting, emphasizing and evaluating'[209] of the research process.

'By definition, participant observers deliberately place themselves in a series of awkward social spaces, some of which are more difficult to inhabit than others.'[210] The documentation of events that often feel private, although they inhabit a public space, was often an awkward situation; the roles in these events can be blurred between private interactions and the role of the professional circumstances of the individuals that are introduced at the opening. This means that although in New York it is protocol (but not a rule) to serve free alcohol (often beer, wine or mixed well drinks) at openings, and the opening is supposedly a get-together with the intention of 'celebrating' the artist's new work presented at these openings or the exhibition in an institution, it is nevertheless the professional environment of the participating individuals in this celebration. Leaving the opening for drinks with the people one meets continues the social on a very different level, and often without the constant impulse to look over one's shoulder during conversations to see who just entered the gallery space. The public/private environment of the opening can result in awkward interactions. The choice to go to a certain opening was in this research never random and, as recently spelled out in an article in *Spike Art Quarterly*, mostly everyone who attends an opening is in one way or another invested in the art with a professional interest.[211] Observations in these environments were often made through the knowledge of the people that were attending the events and by the

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[209] Johnny Saldaña. *Fundamentals of Qualitative Research*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 32.

[210] Lynne Hume and Jane Mulcock. *Anthropologists in the Field : Cases in Participant Observation*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 11.

[211] Elvia Wilk. "The Professionals." *Spike Art Quarterly*, July 21, 2015. Accessed August 08, 2015, http://www.spikeartmagazine.com/en/articles/professionals.

conversations that were provoked in order to reflect with certain individuals on topics that were recently published in articles on the art market, collecting or reviews of shows. The information from these discourses as reflected upon, and the findings made it possible to understand the perception of certain discourses from within the field.

The participant observation in private/public art events and the work in the art advisory allowed for structuring the in-depth interviews with an expert knowledge and asking questions that reflected on recent discourses and art production practices and collecting processes in a very informed way. The level of insight was sometimes revealed in interviews in which the interviewee seemed to 'test' that knowledge, seeking confirmation that the level of research that had been done for the interviews was on a sufficient level. Often interviewees would ask about the research books that were mentioned in the literature review in Chapter 3 (Graw, Horowitz, Velthuis, Thornton and Lindemann).

The interviews were always conducted with a one-hour time frame and were based on a semi-structured method[212] that allowed to ask concrete and theoretical questions. The guide that was constructed before hand focused on specific topic areas but also allowed the interview to be open and conversational. The role-play between the interviewer and interviewee was often reflected upon after the interviews, as in a highly intellectual environment, the level of interaction the testing of the research and insider knowledge of the interviewer that was mentioned above was often part of the first 10 minutes of the conversation before and after the interview. The interviews were conducted in familiar locations to the interviewee: in their studio, a gallery office, the home of the collector or in two cases a quiet café.

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[212] Uwe Flick. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. (London: Sage Publications, 2010): 156.

The interviews are recorded and transcribed with the software f5.[213] The interviewees were chosen for their involvement with contemporary collecting practices and/or living artists themselves. The level of expertise that they brought to the field of collecting contemporary art and art production was either based on their practice, on recommendations of individuals that connected me to them or on the knowledge that I gained in my participant observation regarding their role and involvement in collecting and art production.[214] The individuals who were not artists or collectors were mostly chosen with the goal of understanding their role in the network of collecting and art production from the insider perspective that they could provide.

The experts that were participating in the interview process have the following attributes in their art world roles:

Artist_1: established a new art genre in the 1960s; established career; solo museum exhibitions amongst them MoMA, Guggenheim, Whitney, the work appeared at auction since the 1990s, the artist has a particular control over sales and collectors as part of the artistic practice.

Artist_2: part of a collective that is represented by international established commercial galleries, prices of the collective range from $20.000 – $200.000, works are on the secondary market in auction since 2010.

Artist_3: represented by major commercial galleries, primary market prices of works range from $40.000 to $250.000, museum shows, international biennales, same age and network as Artist 1, the work has not appeared at auction up to this point.

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[213] Audiotranskription. "F5." Accessed January 11, 2013, http://www.audiotranskription.de/english.

[214] Johnny Saldaña. *Fundamentals of Qualitative Research*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 32.

Artist_4: gallery representation for only one year in young but well-connected commercial gallery at the time of the first interview, primary market prices for work ranged during the first interview from $3.000 to $15.000 and during the second follow up interview one year later between $10.000 and $20.000. During the first interview the assumption that his prices will rise in the next 3 years was among the interview topics. The artist is well connected in local and international contemporary art world networks.

Artist 5: gallery representation in two galleries in New York, primary market prices between $5.000 – $20.000, works as an art handler in one of the largest galleries internationally.

Artist 6: gallery representation internationally, prices from $20.000 - $120.000, works were shown in institutions, and has not been on the secondary market at auction. The interview was not recorded but artist 6 consented that the notes can be used anonymously for this study.

Collector_1: collecting since 1960s, committee member in two museums, collects work from emerging and established contemporary artists internationally, private collection in prestigious address, connected well in local networks.

Collector_2: collector, well connected to emerging artists and established galleries internationally, advises friends and peers on art collecting, sells work privately and at auction.

*Collector_3***:** collector and dealer/advisor, well-connected to emerging and established artists and galleries internationally, buys and sells work at auction, privately and from galleries and artists studios. The private connection to artists is also very important for this collector.

Collector_4: philanthropist for the arts in New York, advised since the 1980s in Impressionism, American, Modern and Contemporary Art, author, collecting work since the 1970s. Stopped advising during this research.

Collector_5: collects internationally from a large network of galleries and is married to a curator of an independent project space. Has never sold at auction, often knows the artists personally and supports the career of an artist intentionally long-term. This collector invited me to spend two days together at art fairs in New York. Short interviews with me, the participant observation of interactions at the fair and introductions of his network was off the record.

Gallerist: Lower East Side, represents emerging artists, works closely with collectors to pre-fund work/exhibitions, artists included in biennales and museum exhibitions, price of works of artists represented in the gallery range between $5.000 - $250.000.

Curator in private collection: role as a curator in a large private collection with a public museum connected to the collection, advises on acquisitions and exhibition projects for artists in the collection.

Editor/critic: senior editor for one of the most internationally renowned art magazines.

Author: writes for international newspapers, banks and websites, published influential book on contemporary art and art writing.

The quotations from the interviews are marked in the following chapters with a corresponding system to the introduction of the interviewees, namely role_number.rtf. Rtf refers to the raw text file, the document the quotations were taken from. The methods that were chosen for the collection of the data that is directly used for the visual analysis, the coding process of the transcriptions and the

research diaries that informed the data collection (and, indirectly, the analysis) show

that the research design was constructed in a constantly circular, reflective and active

way, as shown in Figure 18.

4.3.2. Data coding

The question of how to make the complexity of the data and its unstructured character (spoken word, transcripts and notes) accessible became an important aspect of structuring the research design. One of the main points for the methodology was to develop a new visualisation that illustrates the methodology and the coding process without losing the complexity and content of the collected data. The steps that lead to the possibility of viewing qualitative data analysis in a network view will be explained in detail in the following paragraphs. Grounded Theory, as it was constructed and used since the 1970s as a research method for inductive theory development, is described in this subchapter in order to understand the conceptualization of the visualisation tool. Strauss and Corbin summarize the coding process as a highly creative one: 'Its procedures force the researcher to break through assumptions and to create new order out of the field. Creativity manifests itself in the ability of the researcher to aptly name categories; and also to let the mind wander and make the free associations that are necessary for generating stimulating questions, and for coming up with the comparison that led to discovery.'[215] The development of a generally applicable theoretical understanding of the field of study is embedded in the final analysis, which follows the coding process of Grounded Theory. The balance between 'creativity and science'[216] is described by Glaser as *theoretical sensitivity*: 'It enables the analyst to see the research situations and its

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[215] Anselm L. Strauss and Juliet Corbin. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. (New York: Sage Publications, 1998), 27.

[216] Anselm L. Strauss and Juliet Corbin. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. (New York: Sage Publications, 1998), 44.

associated data in new ways, and to explore the data's potential for developing theory.'[217]

The theoretical understanding of the field of study and the new contribution of a theoretical understanding is developed from a process of coding the raw textual data that was collected in the interviews. The transcribed interviews, research diaries and notes are described as 'raw'[218] because they have not been structured into a certain summarizing or describing categorization and are just viewed as a full and unfiltered text. To bring a structure to that complexity, the data can be coded with three different methods: '(a) open coding; (b) axial coding; and (c) selective coding.'[219] The coding process that was used to bring a structure to the raw, textual data is similar to Grounded Theory research, but only uses certain aspects of this methodology. The coding process itself is here also not regarded as the data analysis but rather as the cleaning and structuring of the data. The analysis of the data, closely related to the axial coding of Grounded Theory research, is the comprehension and analysis of the relationships that are made visible in the visual map.

The first interaction or structuring of the data in this thesis was open coding. Open coding refers to the first step of labelling the raw data. The main questions asked in order to arrive at the labels and categories are 'What does this seem to be about?' and 'What class of phenomenon does it seem to pertain?'[220] The categories can be found in vivo, taken directly from the words of the interviewees, or they can

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[217] Anselm L. Strauss and Juliet Corbin. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. (New York: Sage Publications, 1998), 44.

[218] Anselm L. Strauss and Juliet Corbin. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. (New York: Sage Publications, 1998), 63.

[219] Anselm L. Strauss and Juliet Corbin. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. (New York: Sage Publications, 1998), 58.

[220] Anselm L. Strauss and Juliet Corbin. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. (New York: Sage Publications, 1998), 66.

be a summarizing label, such as *'collector_financial self interest.'* The initial coding

is established after detecting quotations that seem to be important in the context of

the research. These quotations are highlighted and then labelled according to their

content. The codes that were established show the role that is described in the

quotation, such as artist, collector, gallerist and then after an underscore [_] the

summary or label of what the quotation is describing. The coding process and the

establishment of codes was a process that was developed in this thesis with the

understanding of an aim to construct a visual map that makes the entities of

collecting and art production visible. After a useable version of the software

application Entity Mapper was released, and it became clear how the entities can be

displayed, the coding and labelling was influenced by the way the labels were

displayed in the visual map. This shows that Grounded Theory served as a first

conceptualization of the hierarchy in the visual map (or better, for the writing of the

code of the software application that displayed the hierarchy of the coding process),

but was also altered by the outcome of the development of the software application.

A reflective and circular influence is also here recognizable.

Selective coding took place after working with the data and in the field for a

longer period and after codes and the concept of the software application was

developed. At this state the *core category was identified*, that is, the 'central

phenomenon around which all the other categories are integrated.'[221] Strauss and

Corbin recommend that the researcher starts with a story line, something that tells

the main issue of the research interest in a few sentences or words. The core category

that everything else is dependent on in this thesis and in the visual map is Art

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[221] Anselm L. Strauss and Juliet Corbin. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. (New York: Sage Publications, 1998), 116.

Production, which is labelled as code family in Figure 56 and 56. Without the phenomenon of young, living artists in the field producing art in specific contexts and relationships, all of the other categories that were developed in the coding process would not exist. 'The way to handle this problem is to choose one phenomenon, relate the other category to it as a subsidiary category, then write it as a single theory.'[222] Furthermore, while the core category (code family) is brought in relation with other detected categories, the ordering and validation of categories[223] is done on a 'higher more abstract level of analysis.'[224]

The analysis that happens after the selective coding is closely related to Axial Coding, a process in which the researcher is making connections between categories and sub-categories. The Paradigm Model is a way to systematically relate sub-categories in the following set of relationships:[225]

Causal Conditions → Phenomenon → Context → Intervening Conditions → Action/Interaction Strategies → Consequences[226]

> '*Phenomenon*: What is the data referring to? What is the action/interaction all about? *Causal Conditions*: This term refers to the events or incidents that lead to the occurrence or development of a phenomenon.
>
> *Context*: A context represents the specific set of properties that pertain to phenomenon; […] Context […] is also the particular set of conditions within which the action/interaction strategies are taken to manage, handle, carry out, and respond to a specific phenomenon.

[222] Anselm L. Strauss, and Juliet Corbin. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. (New York: Sage Publications, 1998), 122.

[223] Anselm L. Strauss and Juliet Corbin. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. (New York: Sage Publications, 1998), 129.

[224] Anselm L. Strauss and Juliet Corbin. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. (New York: Sage Publications, 1998), 117.

[225] Anselm L. Strauss and Juliet Corbin. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. (New York: Sage Publications, 1998), 99.

[226] Anselm L. Strauss and Juliet Corbin. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. (New York: Sage Publications, 1998), 99.

Action/Interaction: Whether one is studying individuals, groups, or collectives, there is action/interaction, which is directed at managing, handling, carrying out, responding to a phenomenon as it exists in a context or under a specific set of perceived conditions.

Consequences: Action and Interaction taken in response to, or to manage, a phenomenon have certain outcomes or consequences.'[227]

The paradigm model served in this thesis as the model for the visual map. Part II of the thesis described the development of the visualisation tool that is based on the methods that were described in this chapter. The analysis of the data is based on the aim of detecting relationships between the codes that were developed in the coding process and the main concepts (code families) that the codes are linked to. The concepts that were developed in the coding process were then, in the visual map, pinned according to the paradigm model that Strauss and Corbin conceptualised in Grounded Theory research.

The data collection, coding process and analysis is based on the premises of Grounded Theory research, but has been altered with the development of a visual map of the field and phenomenon of this study. The methodology informed the development of a new method for data analysis in qualitative research that can nevertheless be used by researchers who are embedded into Grounded Theory research and its structures and methods. The revision of the application of some of the processes, and the different hierarchy of the coding process that was developed for this thesis, is based on the goal that the coding process and the analysis can be illustrated in their full complexity with an intuitive and user-friendly software application.

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[227] Anselm L. Strauss and Juliet Corbin. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. (New York: Sage Publications, 1998), 99 – 106.

spoken word   transcript   quotation   code   code family
                                                                            (concept)
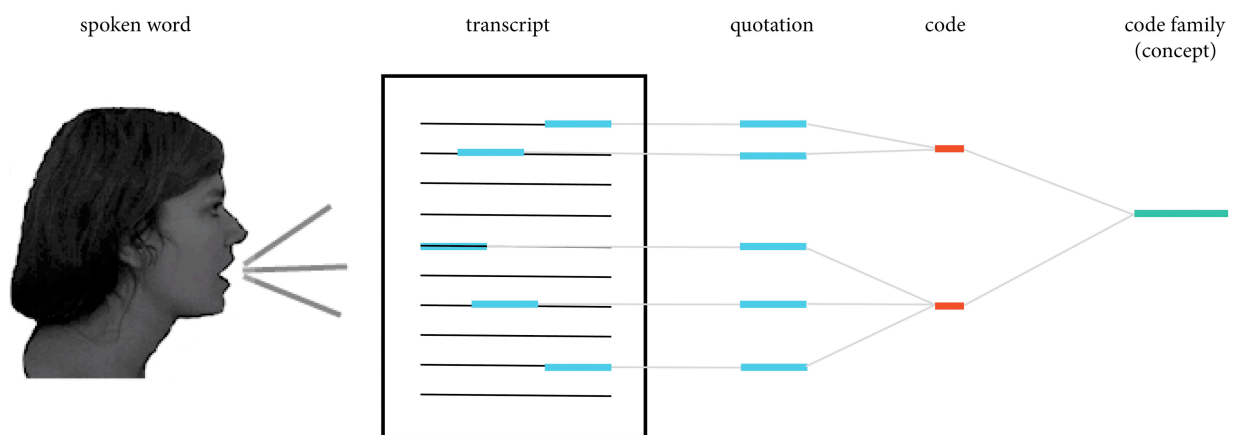
Figure 20. Anne Luther, *First node-link concept for Grounded Theory coding process*. 2013, digital drawing.

PART II: Data visualisation for qualitative data analysis

5. Chapter 5: Data visualisation in the context of qualitative research

The methodology and network theory of the field study carried with it the suggestion to try to make the data analysis visible in a way that allows the researcher and reader of this study to understand the quality of the network structure on two levels:

- The visualisation of the field data as a tangible network (rather than represented through theoretical description) illustrates the relationships between the non-human and human actors in a concrete demonstrated way. The theoretical approach becomes visually comprehensible, which adds another layer of accessibility to the analysis. The network emphasizes that the complexity of the network exists in a hierarchy of unstructured, coded and theoretical knowledge. It supports the argument of Chapter 2.1., that we navigate through complexity with a sense of these three layers in our desire to make complexity comprehensible by sorting and abstracting unstructured experiences.

Orienting the research design on a visual approach to theory development generated the search for a representative structure of the network, originating in the coding of the data with the Grounded Theory methodology. The search was based on the assumption that the network that needs to be represented does not follow the visual form of a sorting database that structures data in a fixed or non-organic representation. The character of the network is supposed to suggest that the network is constantly in flux and does not follow fixed or inscribed rules. The assumption that everything is constantly shifting and the representation of that flux in data visualisation is a challenge that does not 'pretend that there is [a static or stable condition of the world] – just for simplification.'[228]

The premise of the development of a new software tool was therefore to visualise the character of a network that can grow and shrink in an organic way and

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[228] Fabian Beck, Michael Burch, Stephan Diehl, and Daniel Weiskopf. 2014. "The State of the Art in Visualizing Dynamic Graphs." In *EuroVis STAR*. http://www.visus.uni-stuttgart.de/uploads/tx_vispublications/eurovis14-star.pdf.

that allows the methological approach taken in this thesis to manifest visually. This visual representation of the methodology should furthermore lead to the development of a theoretical visual map and the representation of the art world as an organic network at large. The visual map that was developed with the new software tool demonstrates both theoretical levels: theory development from the content analysis (coding and structuring the code families into an argument structure) and theory development about the context (art world) of the culture of collecting.

This chapter clarifies the need for the development of the software tool Entity Mapper by contextualizing data visualisation in qualitative research, the relevance of the visualisation for the study and the contribution to the field of qualitative research that the software tool gives.

In recent years, researchers in qualitative inquiry started to develop and use software tools that allowed them to visualise their data structuring and integrate the visualisation in their analysis. Two prominent examples of research projects that are going beyond using static graphs or infographics to communicate analysis results are the médialab at Sciences Po, founded by Bruno Latour in 2009, with a focus on digital social sciences, controversy mapping, text analysis and visual network analysis,[229] and the software Discourse Network Analyzer[230] by Philip Leifeld at the University of Konstanz.

Data visualisation in the context of qualitative research nevertheless often follows the trend of basing the visualisation on data that has been structured in a database system and then visualised in graphs or networks, or constructing a visual narrative in the form of infographics, ultimately focussing on quantified results rather than the process of the analysis. The quantification and abstraction of qualitative research results in the form of network graphs, charts or word clouds is

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[229] Médialab at Sciences Po "About" Accessed August 22, 2015, http://www.medialab.sciences-po.fr/about/.

[230] Phillip Leifeld. *Discourse Network Analyzer*. Accessed May 24, 2014, http://www.philipleifeld.com/software/discourse-network-analyzer/discourse-network-analyzer.html.

also part of the software application Atlas.Ti. used in this study to code the field data based on Grounded Theory approaches.[231] The restrictions in these features lead back to the conclusions one can draw from them – the meta-analysis of the data analysis (how many words were used in the interviews, how often they were used, which codes were used how often, etc.) only gives quantified information about the coding process itself. The tool is not flexible and user-friendly enough in its design to give the researcher the possibility of developing further reaching visual analysis. Visual analysis here refers to an analysis of the data that leads to theory development, which is based on the visual comprehension of the data. In Entity Mapper, this visual comprehension is based on colour, which shows the hierarchy of the entities (nodes); size, which shows the quantity of the links connected to the code; and the placement of the nodes in the web browser or screen. Before these features are described in detail, a few examples of trends in data visualisation in qualitative research will help explain the quantification of qualitative research through data visualisation.

These examples again showcase the distinction between database visualisations and the visualisation of research narration.

The infographic is a visual storytelling tool that leads the eyes of the reader or viewer over an arrangement of the narrative with visual comparisons in colour coding, size and placement of information (left to right or top to bottom). Colours can describe argument sections, and the size of fonts, images and icons suggest the importance of the information displayed, while its placement follows the logic of the narrative. Infographics are not solely based on structured datasets, but can have elements of database-driven visualisations like graphs and charts. Infographics in qualitative research are instead based on the narration of the argument structure of a paper, article or study, or results from structured datasets. The visual narrative is created manually with software tools such as Adobe Illustrator. Figure 21 shows the most-used feature in these illustrations.

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[231] Atlas.ti. "Feature List." Accessed September 03 2015, http://atlasti.com/product/features/.

As stated in Chapter 2.4, data visualisation has no restriction in form or content. The examples here are used to show the difference between recent trends in manually created digital data visualisation and database-driven visualisations. Quantifying art world data in simple charts has been exemplified by Artsy's analysis of the Venice Biennale and Art Basel Miami [Figure 22].[232] The infographic illustrates the data in text, using colour coding to differentiate artists' birthplace and current location and displaying the quantity of artists in circle and square shapes. The artists' geographic data is displayed on a map of the earth. The key to the visualisation is displayed on the top of the map and in the headline.

The concept of infographics, to illustrate visual comparisons and to move the eyes of the researcher or reader into the narrative structure, was also an inspiration for the development of a software tool that has the same qualities. The software tool that was developed (as described in Chapter 5.2) also allows the researcher to construct a narrative by moving the visual elements into an argument structure. This process will be described in later chapters.

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[232] Artsy, *The 2015 Venice Biennale in numbers,* 2015. Last modified May 04, 2015. Accessed May 11, 2015, https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-the-2015-venice-biennale-in-numbers.
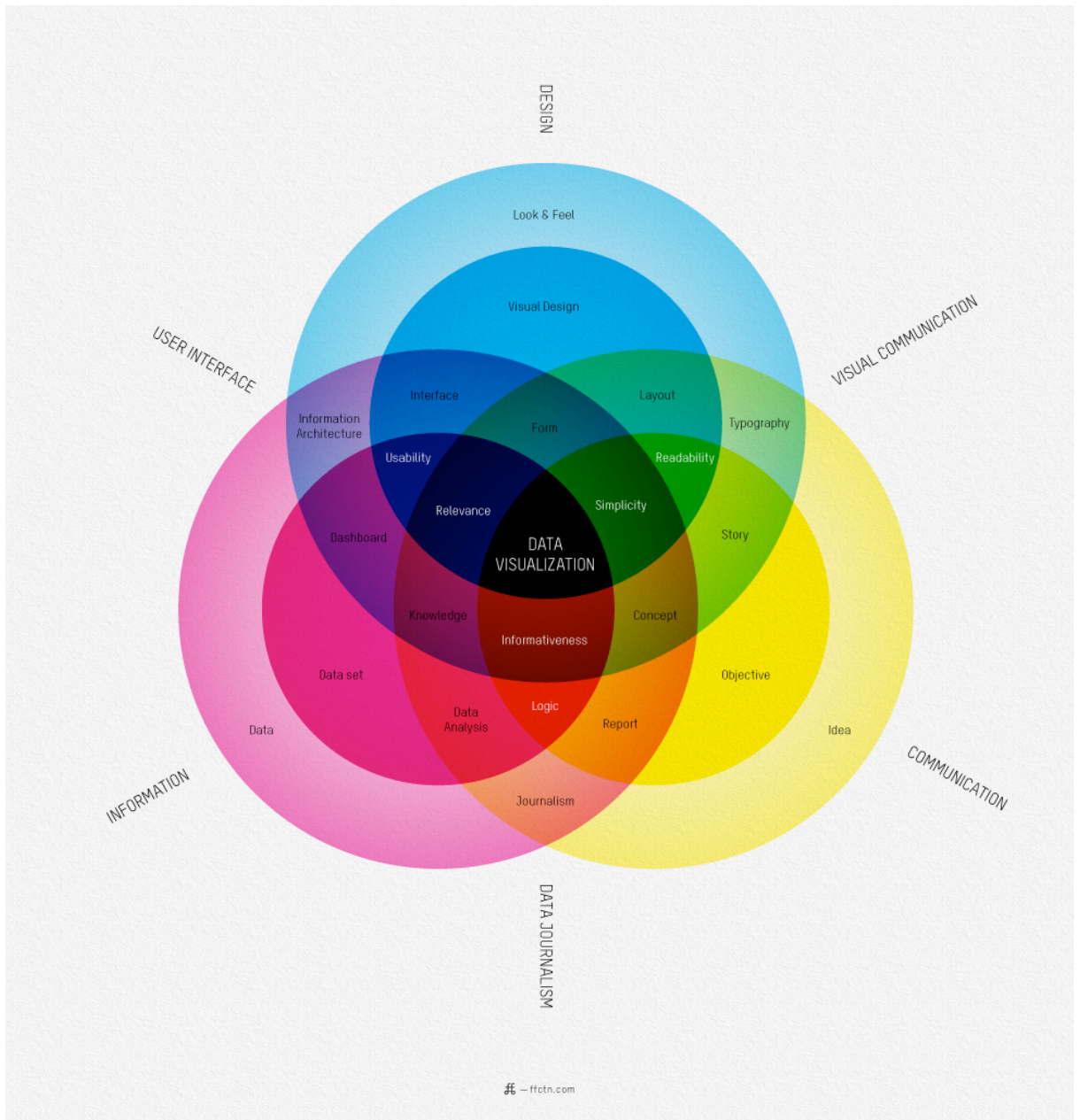
Figure 21. ffctn, *What is data visualisation?,* 2011, visualisation rainbow.

The 2015 Venice Biennale in Numbers

A data breakdown of Okwui Enwezor's 138-artist exhibition "All the World's Futures"

Artist Birthplace vs. Home Base

Where an artist was born   Where an artist lives and works

The exhibition includes artists hailing from 17 countries that are not represented in the Biennale's national pavilions this year.

Western Europe

Northern America

Eastern Europe

Asia

North Africa   Middle East

Central America

Sub-Saharan Africa

Southeast Asia

South America

Oceania

Artists born in Europe and North America dominated the Biennale's main exhibition in 2013, representing over 80% of those on view.

This year, that figure has dropped by some 30%, with more artists coming from the Asian continent than from North America, and major increases in the representation of Africa, Latin America, and Oceania.

Figure 22. Artsy, *The 2015 Venice Biennale in Numbers,* 2015, infographic.

5.1. Selected visual examples

The visual examples in this chapter show important inspiration for the development of the software Entity Mapper. I looked for inspiration and found how other artists have worked with these topics. Showing these examples illustrates a selection of features I conceptualized for the development of the Entity Mapper.

The data sculpture points visually and formally directly to the character of the object or topic it is describing. The organic form of the visual map developed with the Entity Mapper also points to the in-flux character of the field it is describing.

'Database-driven visualisations' describes how structured data can be visualised. This example shows where I found inspiration for the conceptualisation of data structures, data hierarchies and a visual structure. 'Manual coding and visualisation' describes the process to translate the conceptualisation of data hierarchies into visualisations.

5.1.1. Data sculpture

The data sculpture[233] displays results from data (quantitative data or analysis results) with a reference to the physical object that it uses to create the narrative. The data sculpture can be found in art practices visually displaying results from artistic research, as in Chris Burden's *All the Submarines of the United States of America*, 1987 [Figure 23]. The data displayed in this sculpture is listed on the gallery wall as titles of the submarines.

Data sculptures are seldom used in qualitative research but research institutes like the MIT Center for Civic Media[234] often use objects to visualise study results for a specific community that can relate the object to the information it displays [see Figure 24]. Data Sculptures are often used in a design context to creatively narrate a message that reflects on the object of the research – for example, creating awareness about the amount of sugar in a bottle of Coca-Cola by displaying the quantitative result of sugar in grams as sugar inside an otherwise empty bottle, rather then displaying it as a number.

Taking the concept of an object that can represent data and the nature of the study itself in a physical form also brings up the nature of the visualisation in the context of this study. Developing a tool that can visualise the data coding, and at the same time can serve as a visualisation of the nature of the analysed subject matter, is comparable to the data sculpture, the main difference being that the object in the constructed visualisation is digital. The visual map presented in Chapter 6 illustrates a network that can move, grow and shrink, change over time, and show its entire complexity and its abstract level. It displays the hierarchy of the data coding process visually, and at the same time represents the theoretical nature of the field of study in its in-flux nature. One conclusion drawn from the visual representation of the network content can be that the environment or field of study is not based on fixed

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[233] Rahul Bhargava. *Lasers, food & data (Telling a story about food security),* 2014. Accessed September 10, 2015, https://civic.mit.edu/users/rahulb.

[234] Rahul Bhargava. *Lasers, food & data (Telling a story about food security),* 2014. Accessed September 10, 2015, https://civic.mit.edu/users/rahulb.

structures that provide entities with rules about the acts of collecting and art production. The negotiation of acts with each entity in the network is displayed with the organic visualisation that Entity Mapper allows. The conscious decision to construct the software around these assumptions will be described in Chapter 5.2.

Figure 23. Chris Burden, *All the Submarines of the United States of America*, 1987, 625 miniature cardboard submarines, 96 × 240 × 144 inches.

Figure 24. Rahul Bhargava, *Lasers, food & data (Telling a story about food security),* 2014, laser-cut information onto a cucumber.

5.1.2. Database-driven visualisations

Database-driven visualisations are visualisations that illustrate data that was structured into database 'cells referenced as (row, column).'[235] A row stores data, and the column [or table] define the structure of a database.[236] A database is here only referred to as records stored in a computer/server, rather then a conceptual understanding of physical spaces that store and structure objects into data (the object) and metadata (data about the object), such as the 'Museum as a Database'.[237] The data type that is stored in a database depends on the database management system, and the data type this system allows to be stored.[238] Every column needs to have a definition of the data type it stores.[239] The data is stored on physical servers in physical spaces.[240] The data is usually structured in a system that provides the client (who enters data into the database) with a user interface that makes it easier for humans to interact with the database. The sorting and structuring of large quantities of data without manual data entry is often performed through algorithmic queries. The referenced data types in the algorithm sorts the data into the linked database fields. The sorted data can be exported from the database management system into documents that are written in programming languages that allow visualisation libraries such as D3.js [a library based on JavaScript language] to translate into colour, size, and shapes and display relationships that were created in the structure of the database. The […] *Carefully Selected List of Recommended Tools* by

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[235] Google Developers. "DataTables and DataViews." Accessed September 12, 2015, https://developers.google.com/chart/interactive/docs/datatables_dataviews.

[236] Vertabelo. "What Is a Database." Accessed September 12, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=45w9UraAsmQ.

[237] Pepi, Mike. 2014. "Is a Museum a Database ?: Institutional Conditions in Net Utopia." *E-Flux Journal* December (#60).

[238] Vertabelo. "What Is a Database." Accessed September 12, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=45w9UraAsmQ.

[239] Vertabelo. "What Is a Database." Accessed September 12, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=45w9UraAsmQ.

[240] For a more comprehensive reading on databases, storage and systems read Hellerstein, Joseph M., and Michael Stonebraker. 2005. *Readings in Database Systems*. 4th ed. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press. Ramakrishnan, Raghu, and Johannes Gehrke. 2002. *Database Management Systems*. 3rd ed. McGraw-Hill.

Datavisualisation.ch shows a living overview of current trends and possibilities in data visualisation.[241]

The main difference in the development of Entity Mapper from database driven examples above is that the development of Entity Mapper was based on a methodology in qualitative research analysis. The logic of the data sorting is not comparable to algorithmic queries because it does not follow the logic of an algorithm, in the sense that an algorithm never changes and is machine-based (an automated process that can be applied to various data sets). Rather, the sorting, coding and understanding of the data is dependent on the researcher's role, a human actor who sorts the data manually with the computer assisted software tool Atlas.Ti. The structure for the manual sorting is based on the coding chronology of the methodology Grounded Theory.

The Discourse Network Analyzer (DNA) by Phillip Leifeld[242] follows a similar development in establishing a visualisation tool that is usable by researchers in qualitative research. The tool was developed on the grounds of the methodology Discourse Analysis.

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[241] Datavisualization. "Carefully Selected List of Recommended Tools," Accessed 09, 2015, http://selection.datavisualization.ch.

[242] Phillip Leifeld. *Discourse Network Analyzer*. Accessed May 24, 2014, http://www.philipleifeld.com/software/discourse-network-analyzer/discourse-network-analyzer.html.

5.1.3. Manual coding and visualisation

The translation of manual coding processes into visualisations, made by human researchers based on qualitative research methodologies, was established for this study from a comparison of the methodological processes that the field study follows in this thesis with algorithmic non-human interactions with data (data mining, cleaning and sorting). One of the big challenges in the development of the data visualisation tool Entity Mapper was to find the processes of automated data analysis and to compare them to the processes a qualitative researcher has in the handling of their data. The main difference between the algorithmic data sorting and the human researcher's sorting in Grounded Theory is that the algorithm works with a certain structure that finds words (strings) or numbers; the researcher creates this structure while coding the data for the first time. In Grounded Theory, the researcher is elevating the codes to a theoretical level while coding and sorting. The inductive method for data coding in Grounded Theory is one of the main differences in the deductive (working with a structure to find commonalities in unstructured data or the raw text) algorithmic data sorting. The visual language of the tool also suggests an algorithmic, computer aggregated, automatic handling of the data. Therefore, the next challenge was to find a language that shows the link between manual methodological coding and data visualisation that is based in the realm of algorithmic analysis.

The structure and hierarchy of the visualisation is based on the structure and hierarchy of the coding strategies in Grounded Theory (described in Chapter 4.3.) that the desktop application Atlas.Ti supports. The relationships between the raw data (raw text files of the interviews) that is saved in Atlas.Ti and the manually structured data (coding process of the researcher) is related to the hierarchies and chronology of the coding process based on Grounded Theory research. The hierarchy is illustrated in Figure 7. The hierarchy of the coding process was comparable with the structure of a database:

Raw Text File	Quotation	Code	Concept
artist_1.rtf	On the one hand there are many more young artists than there ever were.	artist_competition	art production
<primDoc name	<q name	<code name	<codeFamilies

This structure can be exported in Atlas.Ti into an xml document that tags the content of the rows with the tags of the columns. The xml tags that refer to the content is shown in the third column in the data base example above. The xml document has the following structure:

Nodes

#transcript

<primDoc name="artist_1.rtf" id="pd_1" loc="doc_1" au="Anne Luther" cDate="2015-02-12T15:13:17" mDate="2015-02-12T15:13:32" qIndex="">

2<quotations size="29">

#quote

<q name="On the one hand there are many more young artists then there ever were. So there is tremendous compe..." id="q1_1" au="Anne Luther" cDate="2015-02-12T15:15:55" mDate="2015-02-12T15:15:55" loc="location=92 length=194">

<content size="194">

<p>On the one hand there are many more young artists then there ever were. So there is tremendous competition, so to speak. And probably they're, judging by what I hear, observed from the outside.</p>

</content>

</q>

</quotations>

#code

<code name="Artist_competition" id="co_1" au="Anne Luther" cDate="2015-02-21T14:12:42" mDate="2015-02-21T14:12:42" color="" cCount="0" qCount="2" />

  </codes>

#code families

<families>

<codeFamilies size="7">

<codeFamily name="Art Production" id="cf_1" au="Anne Luther" cDate="2015-02-12T17:24:01" mDate="2015-02-12T17:24:07">

  </codeFamily>

</codeFamilies>

</families>

Links

#links

<links>

<objectSegmentLinks>

<codings size="486">

<iLink obj="co_1" qRef="q7_4" />

</codings>

  </links>

</storedHU>

The GitHub profile[243] [see Appendix] shows the elements that were created to bring the hierarchy of the xml document to the hierarchy that the JavaScript codes provide

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[243] PIIM. "GitHub for Entity Mapper." Accessed September 02, 2015, https://github.com/piim/entity-mapper

for Circle Packing and Force-Directed Graph visualisations.[244][245] The process of the collaboration between myself and the programmer Noah Pedrini, which resulted in the development of a visualisation tool that offers a new contribution to the field of qualitative data analysis and data visualisation in qualitative inquiries, is described in the next chapter.

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[244] Mbostock. "Circle Packing," Last modified November 13, 2012. Accessed April 13, 2013, http://bl.ocks.org/mbostock/4063530.

[245] Mbostock. "Force-Directed Graph," Last modified November 12, 2012. Accessed April 13, 2013, http://bl.ocks.org/mbostock/4062045.

5.2. Developing a data visualisation tool for qualitative research

Why is data visualisation relevant for this study? The starting point for the need to visualise the field data and the coding as a map or network came from the initial research in methodology and literature on the field. On a methodological level, the tracing of a network, as Bruno Latour formulates it in his attempt to 'reassemble the social,' underscores that a 'network is a concept, not a thing out there. It is a tool to help describe something, not what is being described.'[246] This notion was challenged by the theoretical approach in a few examples from the literature context for the field. As described in Chapter 3.1.1, the art world has been described as social networks that make art to become art,[247] [248] as networks that consist of human (artist, collector, dealer, curator etc.) and non-human (museum, art magazine, studio etc.) entities[249] that make the art world a subculture in reality at large,[250] and as networks that span into the digital with full social and technical capacity, acting not only as a medium for distribution and documentation. The methodological description used by Latour to define networks as tools or concepts rather than objects or reality was challenged in this study by making a network visible and elevating this visual network to a theoretical analysis. At the same time, it follows Latour's methodological approach in using the network as a concept to understand relationships between human and non-human entities that are related to art production and collecting processes. Nevertheless the main premise was to link the conceptual tool (network) to a tangible visual map without losing qualities that the network itself has. The qualities are being in flux, complex, abstract, and continuously moving, and having an unstructured base that is elevated to theoretical agreements, which are nevertheless constantly negotiated. The challenge in

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[246] Bruno Latour. *Reassembling the Social : An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005): 131.

[247] Arthur, Danto. "The Art World." *The Journal of Philosophy* 61, no. 19 (1964): 571–84.

[248] Howard S. Becker. *Art Worlds*. Ewing: University of California Press, 1982.

[249] Adam Lindemann. *Collecting Contemporary*. New York: Taschen, 2006.

[250] Sarah Thornton. *Seven Days in the Art World*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2009.

developing the software was crafting a map that considers these qualities as a tool
that is usable for researchers to make sense of the field of study without reducing the
network to a static representation.

5.2.1. Sketches and ideas

In the beginning of the process to develop a visualisation of a network of the field of study, texts were the basis for the visualisation. Reading about the field of study, analyses that showed the actors of the art world and described the roles of dealers, artists and curators and how they interact with each other showed a network that could be traced even on one page [see Figure 25]. The nodes in Figure 25 are humans and non-humans, and the links that are drawn on the page are interactions, consequences, relations (artist representation in a gallery, for example) and acts. Texts and strings of words showed networks and the contextual literature research became the base for detecting networks the texts were describing on an indirect level. Visual tracing with a pencil on text pages of the contextual literature became a practice that resulted in flat networks. The entities circled in were all on one page, all on one level, flat and directly traceable with a finger that followed the lines. The pages that were stacked on top of each other in book logic were not transparent, which made it only conceptually possible to think of the entire book (such as *High Price*,[251] shown in Figure 25) as a layered network. Every chapter becomes its own network with relationships or links to the pages in front and below. The book becomes a three-dimensional, complex network that consists of miniature, closed networks on each page. The overlapping of the pages bind the individual networks together as one bigger networked entity that is closed or ends with the physical conclusion of the book itself.

Each page is a contained network, meaning the book itself becomes a contained network of layered networks; when stacked on a library shelf, these self-contained book networks are by the same logic contextualized into larger networks. The library becomes a meta-network that links books as nodes in the library network (each book has its own pages, which show small textual entities as nodes on each page.)

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[251] Isabelle Graw. 2010. *High Price: Art Between the Market and Celebrity Culture*. Berlin New York: Sternberg Press.

The layer of the networks and relationships that the book(s) visualised with the traced networks on each page became a visual anti-thesis to Actor-Network Theory, which 'has tried to render the social world as flat as possible in order to ensure that the establishment of any new link is clearly visible.'[252] It's useful also to look at Gielen's Flat Worlds,[253] in which mediocrity becomes an indicator that 'hierarchies, elites and canons' are flattened with the possibility of freely moving and distributing anything. Describing the art world as a flat, non-hierarchical network in which roles, attitudes and objects are all on one flat 'page' became very hard to justify after reading the contextual literature and mapping the roles in the art world with their mandatory relationships, shown in Figure 27.

Figure 27 is a Graph Commons map, a software tool created by Burak Arikan, that can be interactively moved and viewed on this web link: https://graphcommons.com/graphs/44a858fb-4b4b-4960-8b72-17211067e0ec

The sketch created in 2013 shows a force-directed graph with 17 human roles (Person) in the art world and their mandatory interactions. The force directs the node with the most links further to the middle of the network and creates a hierarchy through the location and the size (which also indicates the quantity of links) of the nodes in the network.

These two examples, the book and the force-directed graph, show different visualisation networks that are not flat due to their relationships to either other

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[252] Bruno Latour. *Reassembling the Social : An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005): 16.

[253] Pascal Gielen. *Institutional Attitudes: Instituting Art in a Flat World*. Edited by Pascal Gielen. Amsterdam: Valiz/Antennae Series, 2013): 2. 'Today's networked society offers us many wondrous possibilities of information, communication, mobility, and flexibility. It also has a special latent side effect: it makes the world flat. Time-honored hierarchies, traditions, elites, canons, and forms of 'grandeur' are subject to eroding movements that have a tendency to always gravitate towards mediocrity. A rhizome is not a root, so it can hardly take root. In short, today's networked society has a problem with verticality. It hurts to look up, and those who turn their gaze to- wards the sky are finding it difficult to estimate differences in height. The democratization of art, for instance, suggests that any- one can have an opinion about the quality of a work of art; and the popularization of democracy assures that the same value is attached to all statements about society. Neoliberalism, flowing freely through the veins of the global network, uses evidence-based policy, audits, modulation, and neo-management to guarantee the dominance of only one hierarchy: that of numbers, capital, or quantities, which effectively makes every quality relative. All qualities are expressed in terms of quantity, making any quality inter- changeable with, or at least comparable to, any other quality. This belief in a measurable society is constantly transmuting qualities into quantities.'

networks on other pages, or the location of nodes in the network. These sketched lead to further drawings to visualise and conceptualize a layered network on the level of physical layering and the creation of visual hierarchies [Figure 28].

Figure 28 shows pages of transparent paper layered on top of each other. Each page shows a different node character (acts, objects, people, and so on). The nodes are distributed from nodes on the first page that shows actions such as exhibit, pay, read, buy, etc. The network is not legible, and the order is manually drawn without analysis or taking into account the weight of the nodes. The problematic of manually visualising a network that transports the characteristics described above (displaying complexity, constantly in flux) brought the research in the direction of working with specialists who have worked with tools that make a constant feed and change of data possible, and that also show meta-data that lead the visualisation to a computer-assisted analysis. These specialists were based at Parsons Institute for Information Mapping (PIIM) at the New School in New York. The location of the institute in an academic environment and its focus on visualisations of real world data were the reasons to chose PIIM as the collaborating partner for moving the described research focus in a computer assisted direction. The aim became to create a tool that is relevant specifically for the research of this study but is nevertheless usable for researchers in the broader field of qualitative inquiry. The research became the first research project at PIIM in the area of qualitative data analysis with a focus on Grounded Theory research.

painting, if not before, as a source of insight unavailable elsewhere. Hirst appears to refuse the intellectual claim traditionally made for art. But he took no real risk in doing so, as the market value of his skull was in no way threatened by this emptying on the symbolic level.[46] The "Hirst brand" was simply too established, essentially guaranteeing symbolic relevance.

The creation of the Hirst brand, however, must be credited less to critics in the art press than to lifestyle publications, popular media, and the auction trade. At this stage in the process of institutional recognition, the critic is clearly no longer required. This means that *on this level* of marketing and auctioneering, those responsible for the production of meaning are dispensable, if not actually superfluous—and thus obsolete. It is highly improbable that a big collector like the French entrepreneur François Pinault would consult a critical treatise on a particular work by Hirst before acquiring it at auction. But while criticism plays little part in this so-called "secondary market" (the selling-on by dealers and auction houses), there is much to suggest that in a knowledge-based economy it is an increasingly coveted good. Even art fairs like the Frieze Art Fair or Art Basel Miami Beach try to involve critical discussion via symposia integrated into their program.[47] Here, critics serve as purveyors of credibility, which is good for business because they produce the kind of significance that underpins market value. Another indication of the increased importance of knowledge is the fact that more and more galleries are beginning to employ in-house art historians to endow their wares with art-historical noblesse. Throughout the art boom, while many such theorists were hired, others were invited to appear at symposia or write catalog essays. Even if they take no part in auction culture, demand for them as producers of significance has risen massively. They profited from a mood akin to gold fever, which compelled private gallerists to offer adequate pay for such texts. Just as the secondary market can do without them, they are roped in elsewhere via lucrative commissions.

Figure 25. Anne Luther, *Text network,* 2015, pencil drawing on page 38 of *High Price* by Isabelle Graw.

Figure 26. Anne Luther, *Book network*, 2015, digital image.
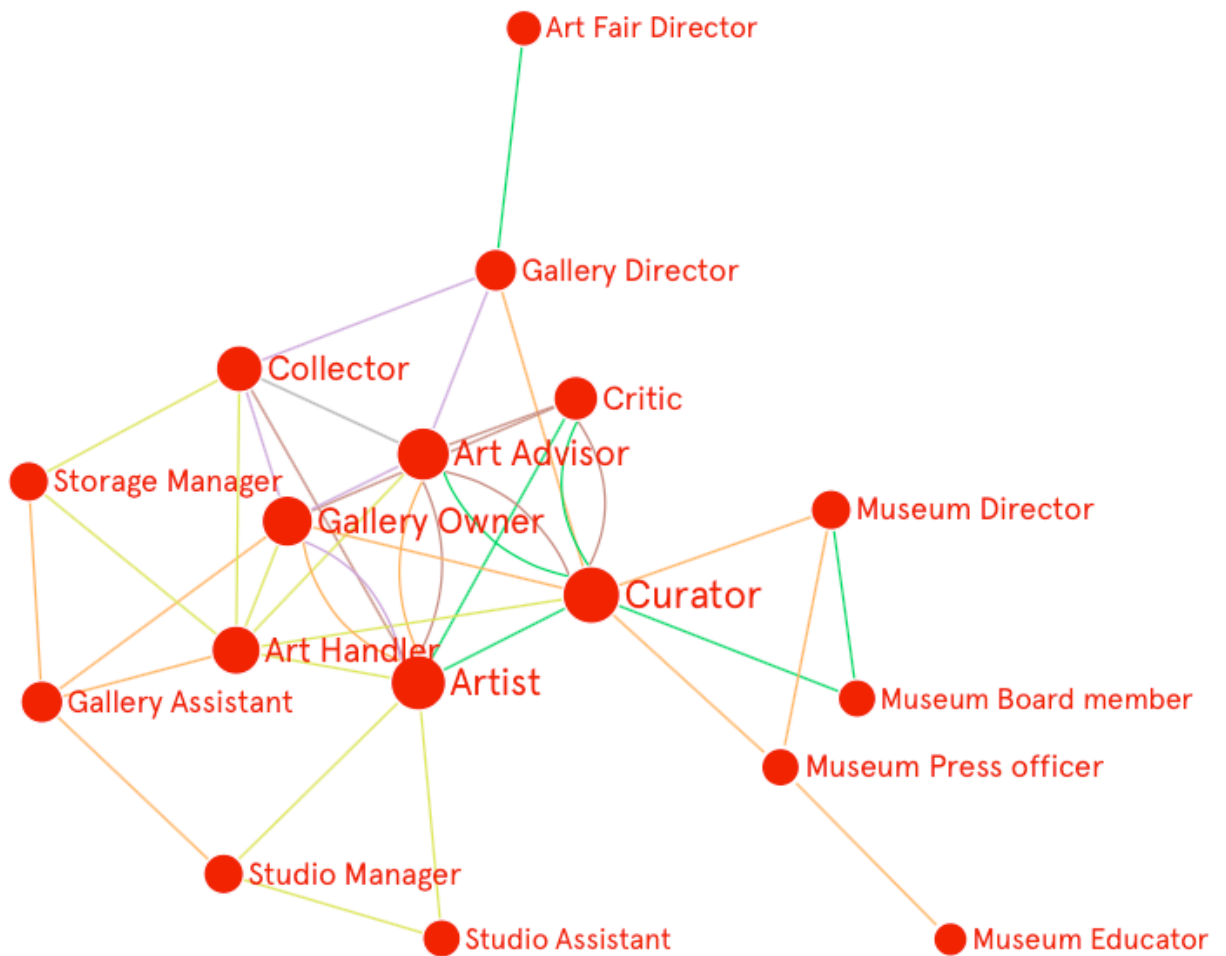
Figure 27. Anne Luther, *Prominent roles in the art world with their mandatory relationships,* 2015, interactive force-directed network created in Graph-Commons.
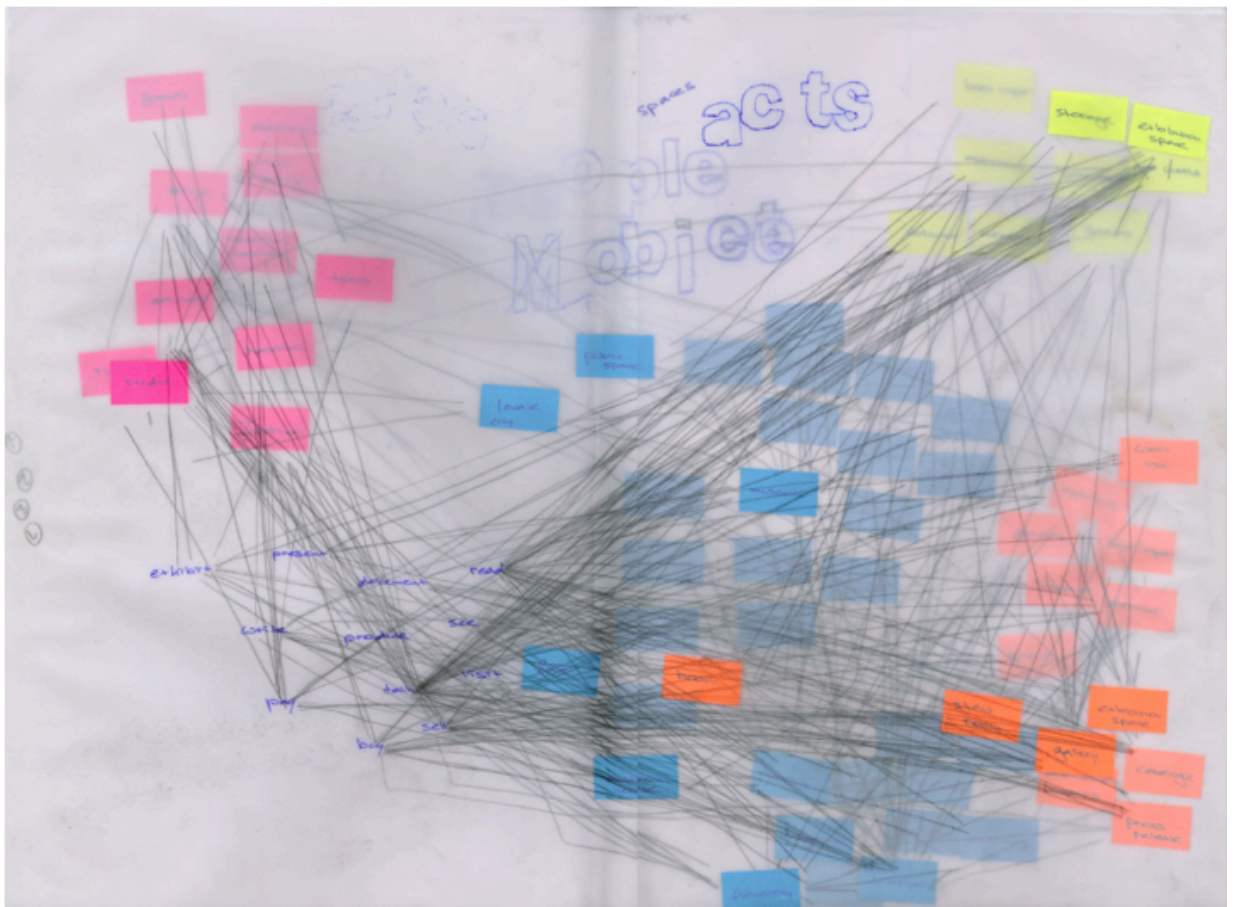
Figure 28. Anne Luther, *Physical layering and the creation of visual hierarchies*, 2013, drawing on transparent paper.

5.3. A new contribution to knowledge: The Entity Mapper

The shift in this research towards building a software application that is usable for researchers in the field of qualitative research beyond the specific focus of this thesis occurred after an initial six weeks research phase at Parsons Institute for Information Mapping (PIIM) at the New School in New York. In the first six weeks, my main goal was to find a common language between the disciplines at play in this study, on a methodological level (for example, what is a code in qualitative coding processes) and within disciplines that PIIM offered (what is 'code' in programming). PIIM had, up to this point, focused on the visual representation of quantitative data and data analysis. The strong focus on design, typology and taxonomies in their visualisation was not bound to static visualisations that show data results, but rather extended into the work of software engineering that helps to structure, clean and visually analyse data through computer-assisted algorithmic processes. The roles in the development of the software Entity Mapper were separated between me and Noah Pedrini in a way that I brought the concept and theoretical development of the software, based on my abstraction and understanding of the hierarchies in the methodology Grounded Theory, my research into data visualisation and my sketches and Noah Pedrini wrote the code, he developed the software as a programmer based on my instructions. He has never worked with qualitative research methods before and it was the first time for him to develop a code for a software based on academic research methods. I explained the hierarchies in the coding process, that we could find in the xml export of the HU from Atlas.Ti (as shown in chapter 5.1.3.) He then wrote the code for the software based on the data structure in the xml document. I conceptualized the software based on hierarchies, research design and the inductive approach that I detected in Grounded Theory research. I would then find appropriate models in the D3.js library, after research on the latest trends and possibilities dynamic data visualisation. I chose the Circle Pack and Force-Directed graph from the library due to the organic nature of the network I want to represent. The software was conceptualised, tested in usability and interface design by myself based on

abstracting the chosen methodology with an understanding of database structures and coding processes. Noah Pedrini wrote the code for the software and developed the technical programming on my recommendations. His critical input was based in fixing code and a technical expertise on software development for data visualisation. A first prototype of the software was built and presented to potential research funding bodies after the initial six weeks at PIIM. The development of the prototype lead to the invitation from PIIM to extend the research and to build an open-source application that can be used by qualitative researchers who work with data analysis that is supported by coding processes in Atlas.Ti.

After presenting the coding process of Grounded Theory to a designer and a programmer at PIIM, the node-link concept was applied to the methodological design. The research team at PIIM had worked with 'natural language processing'[254] (like AlechemyAPI, and similar to the concept of International Art English)[255] before. Natural language processing uses algorithmic structuring from the same data that was generated for this study, namely unstructured, transcribed raw text files (here derived from semi-structured interviews). Comparing the automated processing of natural language with Grounded Theory methodology was the first step in understanding how node-link relationships could be built in the Grounded Theory coding process . Figure 29 below shows a sketch from one session with the designer and the programmer at PIIM that became a visual example of the components of the

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[254] Stanford NLP Group. "The Stanford Natural Language Processing Group." Accessed June 27, 2013, http://nlp.stanford.edu. 'The Natural Language Processing Group at Stanford University is a team of faculty, research scientists, postdoctoral researchers, programmers and students who work together on algorithms that allow computers to process and understand human languages. Our work ranges from basic research in computational linguistics to key applications in human language technology, and covers areas such as sentence understanding, machine translation, probabilistic parsing and tagging, biomedical information extraction, grammar induction, word sense disambiguation, and automatic question answering.' (The Stanford Natural Language Processing Group)

[255] Alix Rule and David Levine. "International Art English. On the Rise—and the Space—of the Art-World Press Release." *Triple Canopy*, no. 16 (2012). Accessed April 26, 2013, http://canopycanopycanopy.com/issues/16/contents/international_art_english.

methodology, and demonstrates a clear node link relationship between the raw text, codes and concepts. The initial idea, as shown in Figure 29, was to link words or raw data to ideas and to link these to themes such as trust. The nodes in a node-link network visualisation would therefore be word, context, and theme [see Figure 30].

These sketches were until then based on assumptions that were formulated in the registration process of this PhD study. The field data (interviews, notes and memos) had not been fully generated and the analysis or coding process of the data had not been started at the time when the sketches for the software were made. The knowledge that was used to bring the disciplines together was based on earlier studies that used the same methodological approach. The development of a node-link relationship in the methodology was a contribution to the conceptualization of characteristics of networks; at the same time, it helped to understand the sketches from the described page networks [Figure 25] and to structure them into Node-Link Networks that followed a certain hierarchy rather then the unstructured link relationships shown in Figure 25 (book) and Figure 28 (transparent pages). The logic that was first developed was word, context, theme.

In one hermeneutic unit (HU), which is one project that accumulates all the data (raw text files) as one unit in Atlas.Ti, the node-link relationship can be established in spoken words (audio files) as nodes, which are linked to transcripts (raw text files) as nodes, which are linked to quotations as nodes, which are linked to codes as nodes, which are finally linked to concepts (Atlas.Ti uses the term code families) [Figure 17]. Understanding the analytical elements of Grounded Theory Research in this node-link relationship was crucial to any visualisation that followed.
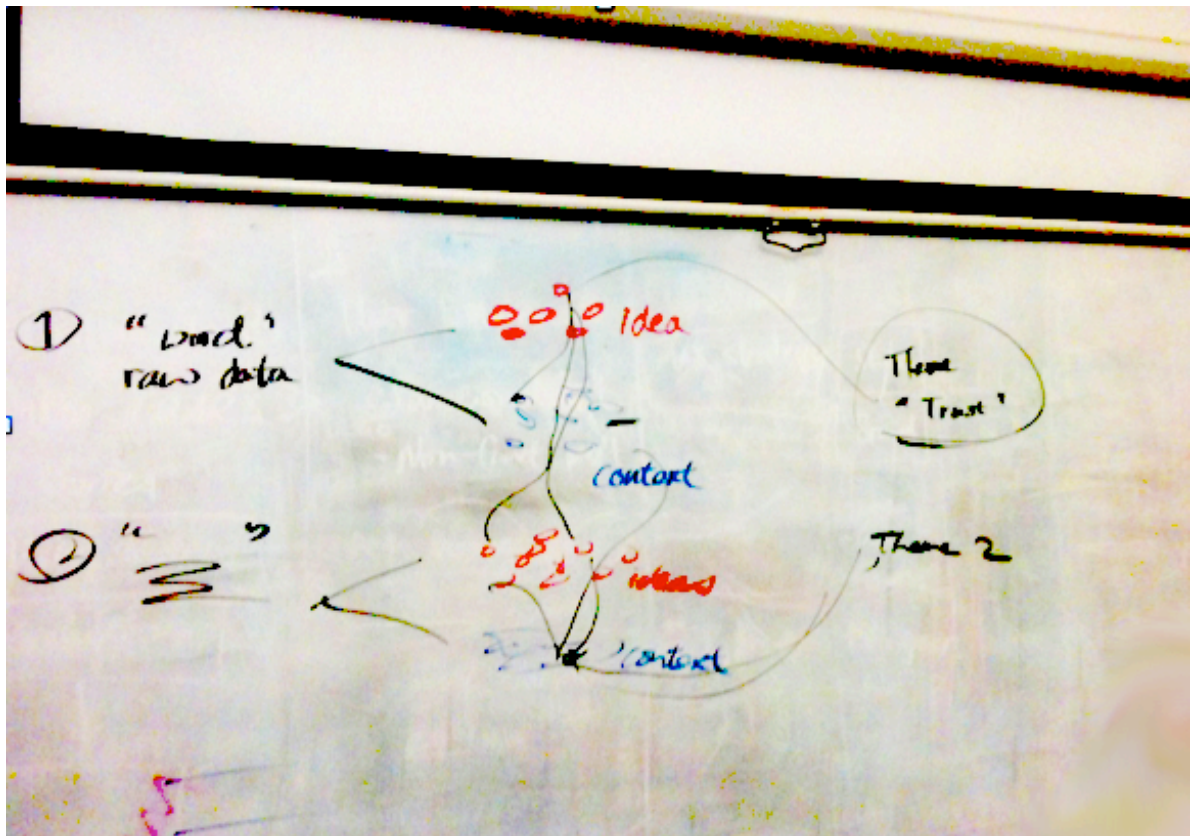
Figure 29. Anne Luther, *White Board*, 2013, digital image.

word   context   theme

money

investment   artist research

gallery representation

price

collector

certificate of authenticity

Trust

artist
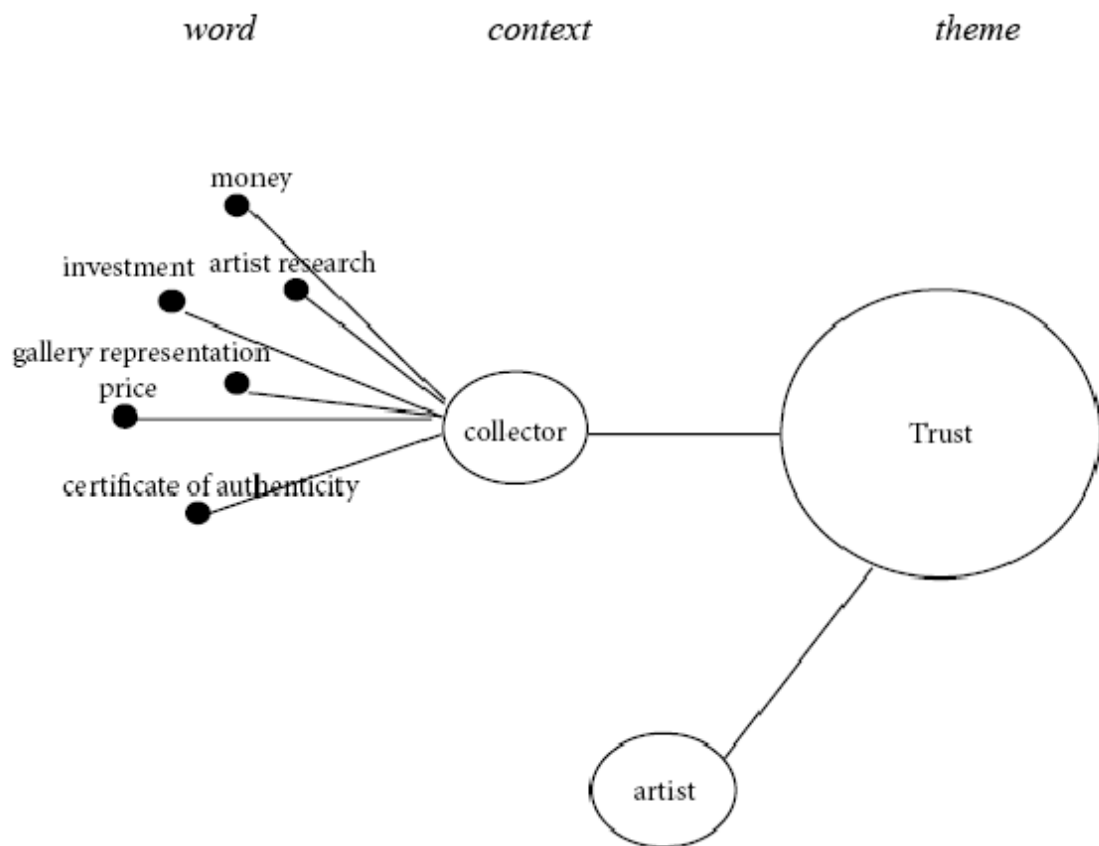
Figure 30. Anne Luther, *Node-Link Network Word, Context, Theme*, 2013.

For the conceptualization and theorization of the methodology I created a sample dataset in Atlas.Ti with manual coding processes. The sample data was a transcript taken from CNN.com of a TV show during New Years in 2001 which asked, in a series of interviews, *What is the 21st century?*[256] This coded sample data set of 10 transcribed CNN Interviews of the millennium show was exported as an xml file which, as described in chapter 5.1.3, made it possible to detect the node-link relationship between the raw text file (.rtf), quotation, code and code family in a format that is readable for humans and machines (computers). After explaining the hierarchy in the coding process of this sample data set and detecting the nodes in the xml files I chose the appropriate libraries from D3.js that would show the organic, changeable and in-flux state of the network I wanted to visualise for this study. The conceptualization of this network was drawn from my research into network structures explained in earlier chapters and the Circle Pack and Force Directed Graph showed the most similarities to my manually drawn sketches. Pedrini developed a code (HTML5, CSS, JavaScript, PHP [languages] and jQuery, D3, Bootstrap, AngularJS [libraries]) based on my recommendations for the network view and my abstracting explanation of the coding hierarchy in the methodology.

The first visualisation of the node-link relationships of the sample data generated a messy image that was comparable to the sketches leading to the computer-assisted visualisation tool, which were developed manually. Figure 31 shows that the different node types were colour coded yellow for transcript, grey for quotations, green for codes and pink for concepts/family. This first visualisation makes it impossible to gain any further insight than that a complex network was

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[256] CNN. "CNN Transcripts Millennium Show." Accessed April 10, 2013, http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0001/02/se.10.html.

created and that the network has different elements that show quantitative

differences of links that are connected to them (the more links an entity has, the

bigger it becomes).
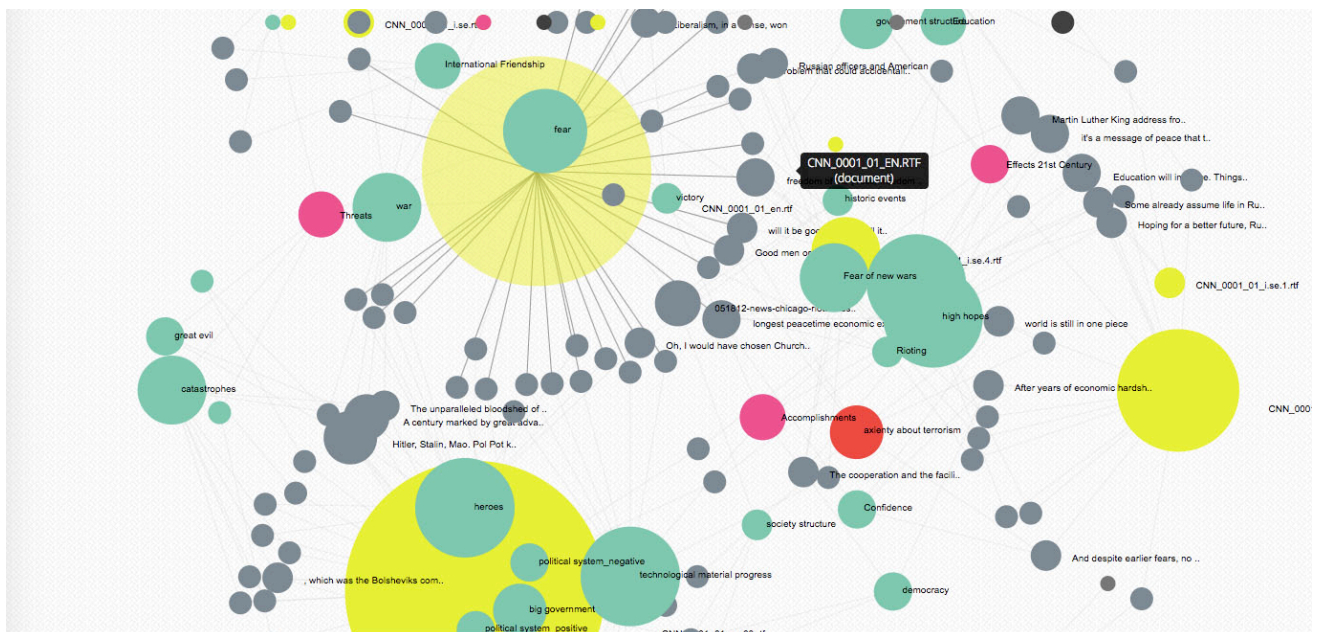
Figure 31. Anne Luther, *First Node-Link Visualisation with the Entity Mapper*, 2013, screenshot.

This first visualisation led to many meetings, drawings, discussions and tests. The circular process of developing the software tool Entity Mapper included rendering, understanding the hierarchy and weight of the entities, and defining a new language with every step. The technical renderings were mostly based on the understanding of the methodology and the coding process that I developed in my research. Renderings in the usability of the software became theoretical questions that I had to answer, for example should the text be visible on the right side of the map in a text box, when the user (researcher) clicks on the quotation bubble (node). The premise was to show the full complexity of the network and therefore the answer for a decision like this was yes, and it was based on the theoretical understanding of the network structure in contemporary collecting. My research in the field of study, the research into data visualisation, data structures and network theory was at all times information for the technical rendering of the software, realized by the programmer based on my recommendation. The premise of the visualisation was to create a tool that allows the display of a messy and unstructured network, but at the same time leads the researcher to insights and a new method for the analysis of the field data. The organic character of a network that can constantly change seemed most appropriate to display with bubbles as nodes due to the implication that they are movable, permeable and organic, in contrast to, for example, a square, which suggests a fixed structure and borders. To make the network less crowded, two features were added after the first visualisation. The first feature allows one to switch off the visibility of certain node types. For example, the yellow circle in Figure 19 shows the raw text file. Switching the display of the text file (as a digital object) off left the visual map with only the elements, quotations, codes and code families. The map can be abstracted further by switching off the entity types so that only the theoretical map

with the code families is displayed. Switching the entities off was done by visually striking them out with a simple click on the entity's nametag, which is displayed at the bottom of the web browser [Figure 32].

A second feature that allows the visual map to appear in its full complexity, but less messy is another 'view' or visualisation of the node-link relationships that 'packs' the nodes with the following hierarchy: transcript is a child of the quotation (parent), the quotation is a child of the code, the code is a child of the family. Each child-node is packed into the circle of the parent-node [see Figure 33 and 34].

After the hierarchy of the nodes was established, a second visualisation option, Circle Packing Graph,[257] was developed for Entity Mapper (as shown in Figure 36). The display of the quotations is separate in a box to the right when the researcher clicks on one of the code circles. The codes linked to the code families are displayed in the box as written text when the researcher clicks on the code family circle. Clicking on the code as written text in the box to right brings the researcher to the linked quotation of the code. The written text in the box at the right side of the web browser is also interactive and follows the same node-link hierarchies that the visual map displays as bubbles or circles (nodes) and links (packed or lines).

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[257] Mbostock. "Circle Packing," Last modified November 13, 2012. Accessed April 13, 2013, http://bl.ocks.org/mbostock/4063530.
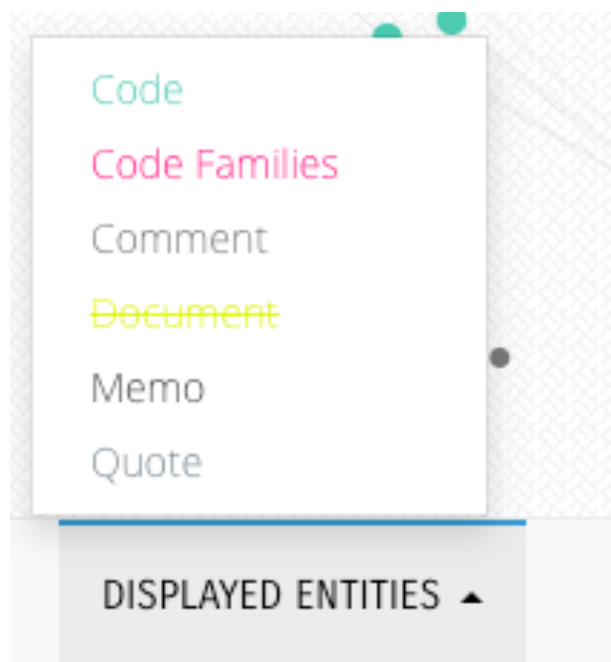
Figure 32. Anne Luther, *Displayed entities box*, 2015, screenshot.
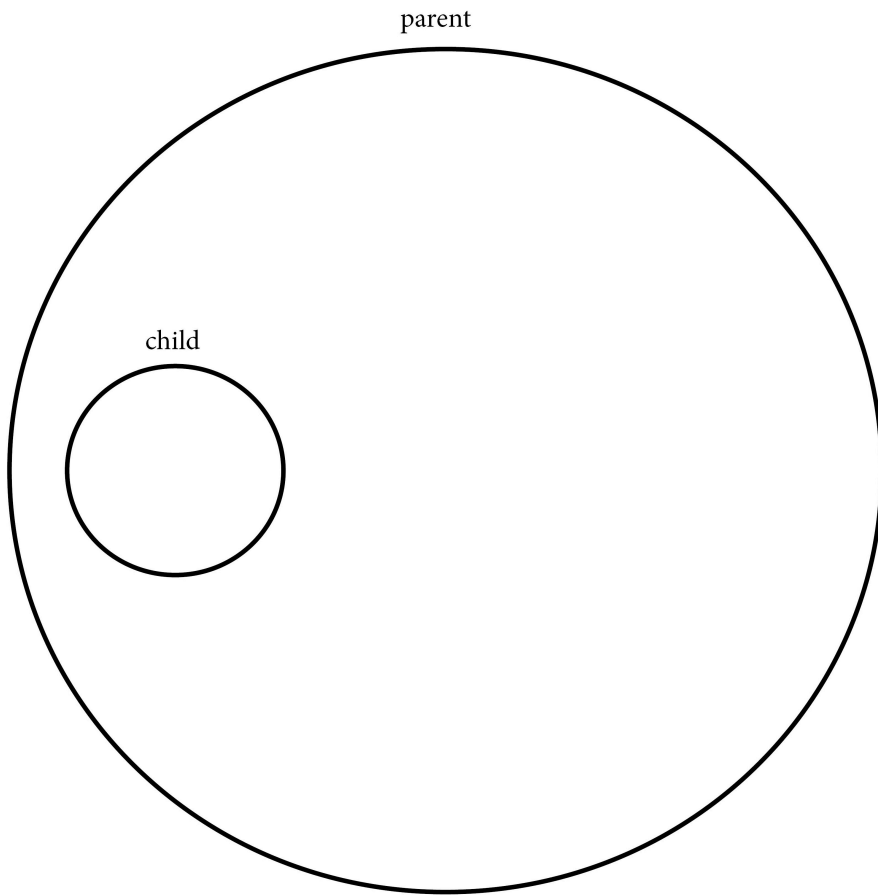
Figure 33. Anne Luther, *Child-Package*, 2015, screenshot.
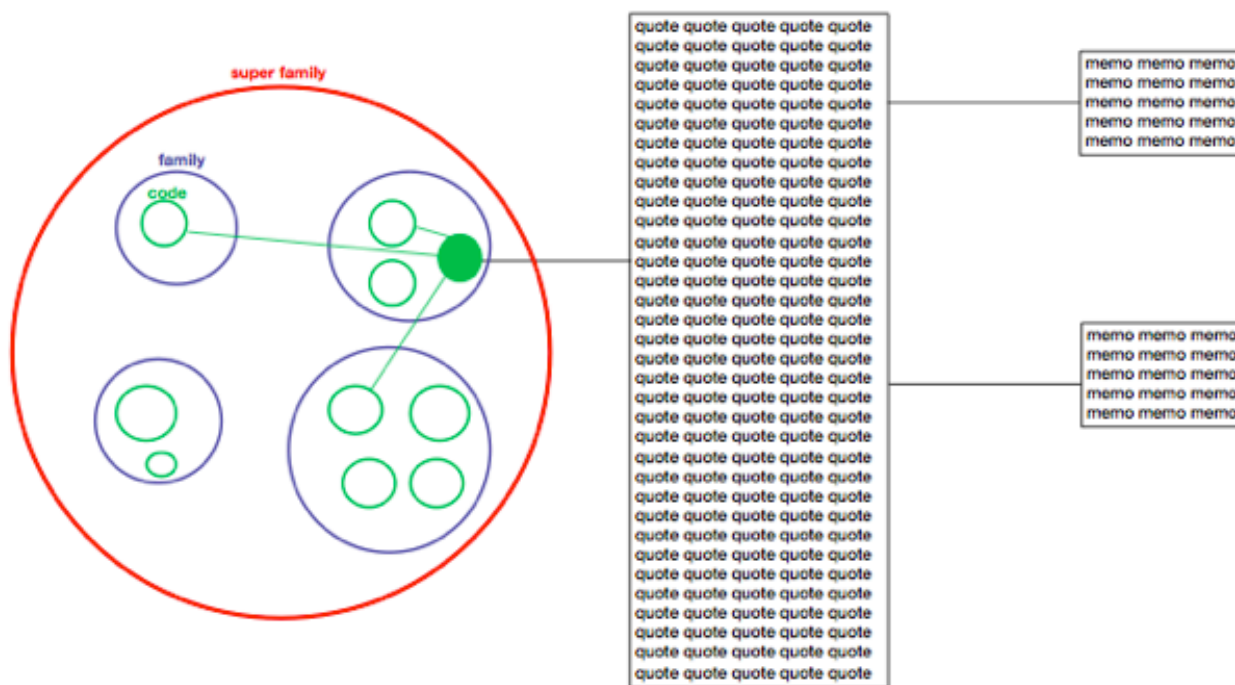
Figure 34. Anne Luther, *Child-Package graph concept for Entity Mapper*, 2013, digital drawing.
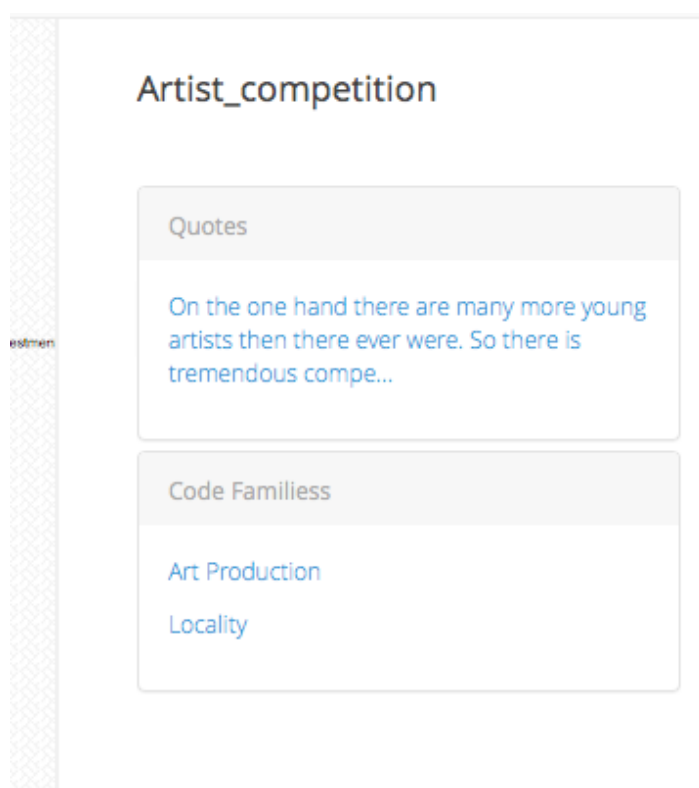
Figure 35. Anne Luther, *Text box,* 2015, screenshot.
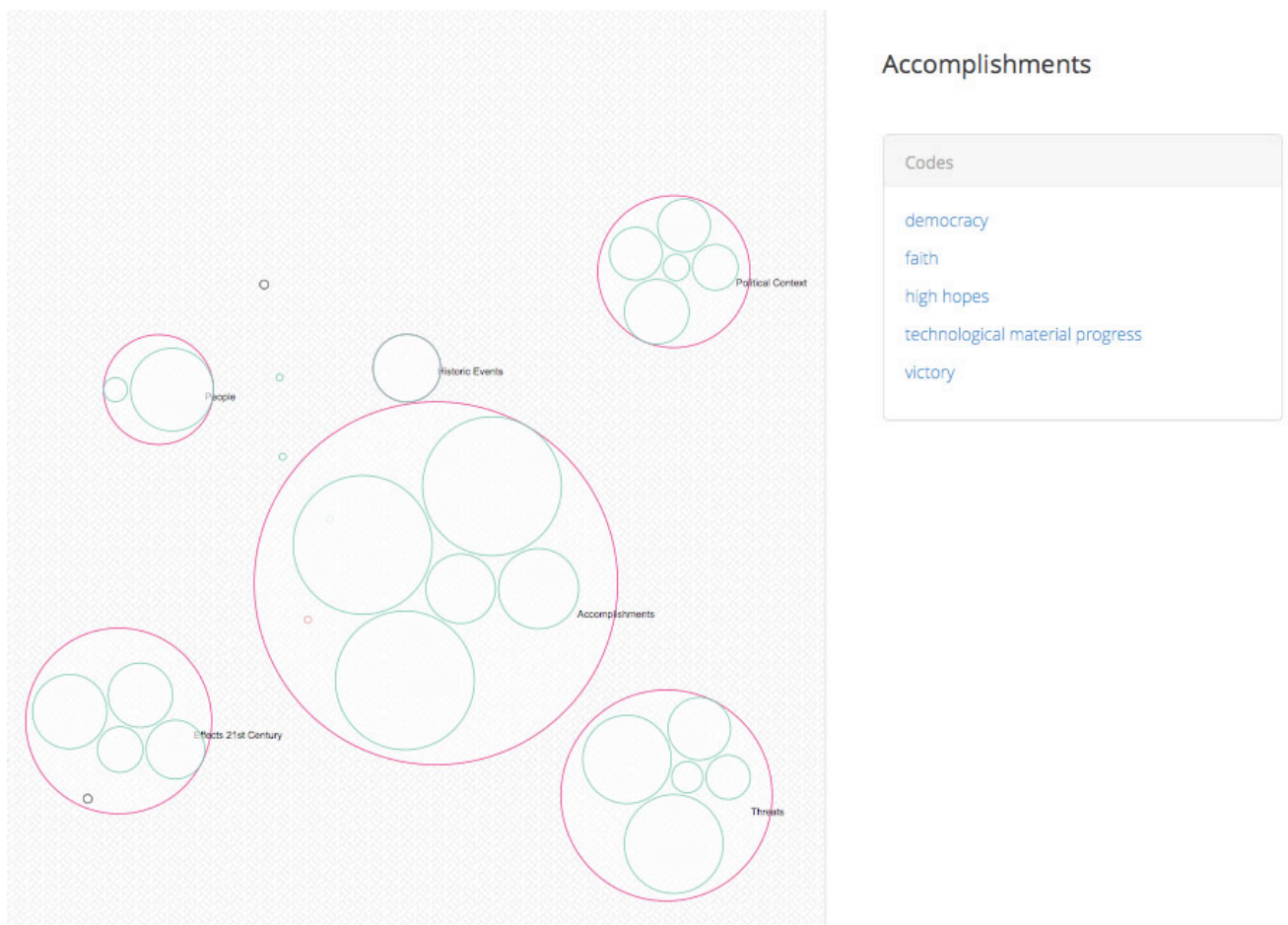
Figure 36. Anne Luther, *Circle Packing visualisation option*, 2015, screenshot.

5.3.1. Peer reviewed development of the software Entity Mapper

The tool was made available as an open source web-application for researchers

working with Atlas.Ti in April 2014 at http://piim.newschool.edu/entitymapper/ and

on https://github.com/lutheranne/entity-mapper [see Appendix for the full code in

text form]. Publishing[258] and presenting about Entity Mapper at academic

conferences[259] and working with a full data set, Professor Lisa Rubin, Associate

Professor of Psychology and Assistant Director of Clinical Training at The New

School, New York, completed the development of the software with critical peer-

reviewed input. The development of the software with a peer-reviewed process also

allowed me to develop new insight into the field, which lead to invitations to give

lectures[260] and to participate in the metaLab workshop at Harvard University

(concerning digital data collection, visualisation and structuring in the context of

museums) as a researcher with a focus in software development for data

visualisation in qualitative inquiry in an art context. Atlas.Ti consulted me on my

software development and invited me to publish about the application in an

upcoming company newsletter distributed to their international clients. I strategized

the bridge of academic research rigor and the inclusion of Atlas.Ti as a business in

the development of the software in order to get feedback from the developers of

Atlas.Ti in the field of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis. The expert view

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[258] Anne Luther. "The Entity Mapper: A Data Visualization Tool for Qualitative Research Methods." *Leonardo MIT Press*, June 29, 2015. doi:10.1162/LEON_a_01148.

[259] For example 2015 at the Designs on eLearning conference at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, London; 2014 at The Tenth International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Theorizing the Web Conference, New York, 2013 at The Research Network of University of the Arts London: Spring Research Symposium, and OSEHRA 2nd Annual Open Source EHR Summit & Workshop.

[260] For example: Qualitative Research Methods seminar, The New School for Social Research, New York, "Qualitative Data Visualization in Psychology" Course supervisor: Lisa Rubin, Associate Professor of Psychology and Assistant Director of Clinical Training

and critical feedback made it possible to release the work as an open-source tool and lead to a focus at Parsons Institute for Information Mapping in developing a new contribution to data visualisation with the Lab for Qualitative Data visualisation [QDV] at PIIM.[261]

The visual analysis starts after the data has been coded in Atlas.Ti. The coding of the data is not regarded as the analysis itself, and the first operations that a researcher using the software undergoes are usually sorting, cleaning and understanding the data on a visual level. The visual analysis begins with drawing conclusions from the visual map, by pinning entities into an argument structure (described below), by comparing shapes (quantity) and finding relationships in the proximity of overlapping entities (a feature that is possible in both the circle pack and the forced-graph). The coding process in Atlas.Ti is therefore the premise for the visual analysis but seen here as a separate and independent flow in the methodological process.

The researcher exports the coded data [HU] as an xml file in Atlas.Ti [Project -> Export Project to XML]. After the log-in into the registered Entity Mapper account, the xml file is uploaded by choosing Admin -> Upload a Dataset, naming the file [Name], choosing the type [Atlas.Ti], selecting the file [Choose File] and making it publicly available or private [Figure 37 Upload a Data Set]. After the file is uploaded the researcher can either chose to see the uploaded data as a visual map by choosing the dropdown [Dataset] or [Edit the Dataset] [Figure 38 Edit the Dataset].

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[261] Anne Luther. "Lab for Qualitative Data Visualization," Accessed January 28, 2015, http://www.qdv.parsons.edu.

The editing process of the dataset is the 'data cleaning' process on the visual level. The data is not rendered or deleted in this process, the researcher just decides which entities will be displayed and how they are displayed (as a force-directed graph or a circle pack view). The researcher can edit colour coding, node sizes and link distances [Figure 39 visualisation Settings]. The editing process is a constant back and forth between the entities that are seen in the browser and the editing menu. The researcher makes decisions about the relevance of the entity types for the visual analysis – which level of abstraction from the coding process should be displayed to draw the best conclusions from the data visualisation?

The level of abstraction is chosen with the visibility of the codes – when every entity is displayed the researcher choses to show the complex and messy nature of the coded network. By choosing to make certain entities invisible the researcher abstracts the hierarchical layers until it is possible to display only one entity type. The following visual maps [Figure 40-42] illustrate the decision process of cleaning the visual map, from displaying all entities to only displaying the code families.

Uploading the coded data from this study for the first time made immediately clear what was missing: where codes were linked to the wrong code families, and which codes were displayed with different in vivo codes and needed to be collapsed into one summarizing code. The circular research design described in Chapter 4.1, became more apparent than it previously had been; seeing that the researcher needs to hear more about a certain topic in the field study or about something that was only mentioned in one quotation in all of the interviews meant that the reflection on missing in-depth discussions lead the researcher to organize a follow-up interview accordingly. The visualisation of the data helped to organize the complexity and

amount of the collected data for this study, and made it possible to structure the code and code-family relationship in a deeper visual reflection. The next chapter shows that the visual representation of the data coding differs in its usability and interface design from the textual comprehension of the coded data. It became evident that the software used in current qualitative research does not reflect the possibilities in usability and interface design that are standard in algorithmic quantitative data analysis. Bridging this lack of design, the aesthetics and utility of computer-assisted data analysis of quantitative data (see examples of these standards in Chapter 5.1) was gained with the development of the software Entity Mapper. The next chapter illustrates the need for this contribution and shows features that make the visual analysis a unique contribution to the field of qualitative data analysis.

Figure 37. Anne Luther, *Upload a data set*, 2015, screenshot.
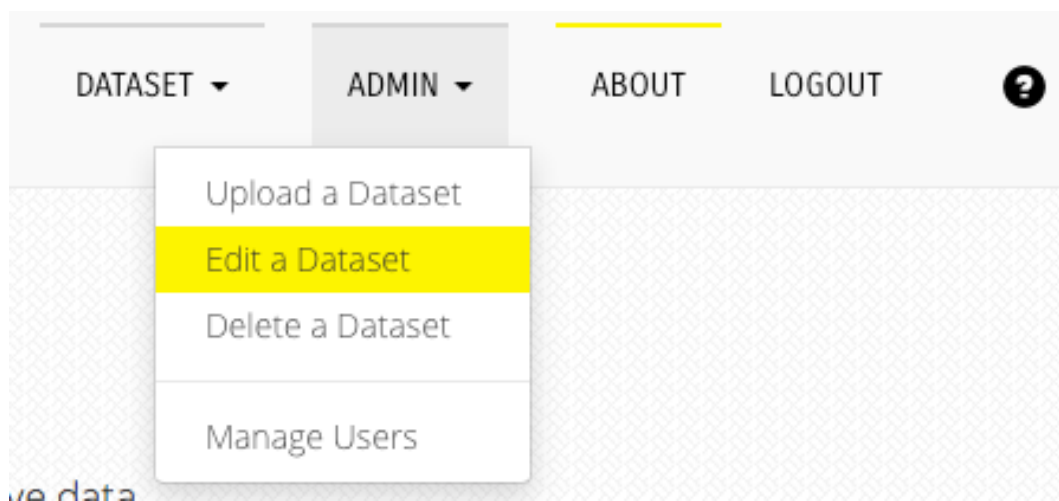
Figure 38. Anne Luther, *Edit a dataset,* 2015, screenshot.

Figure 39. Anne Luther, *Visualisation setting,* 2015, screenshot.
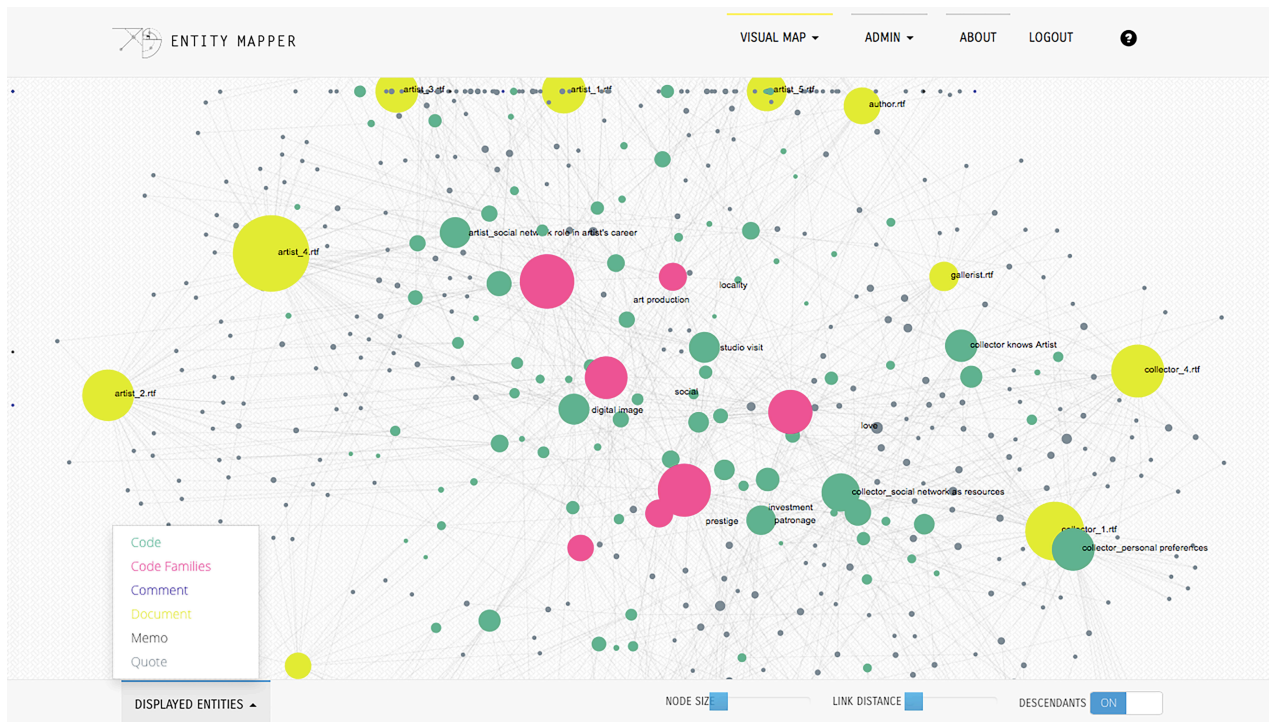
Figure 40. Anne Luther, *Display of all entities,* 2015, screenshot.
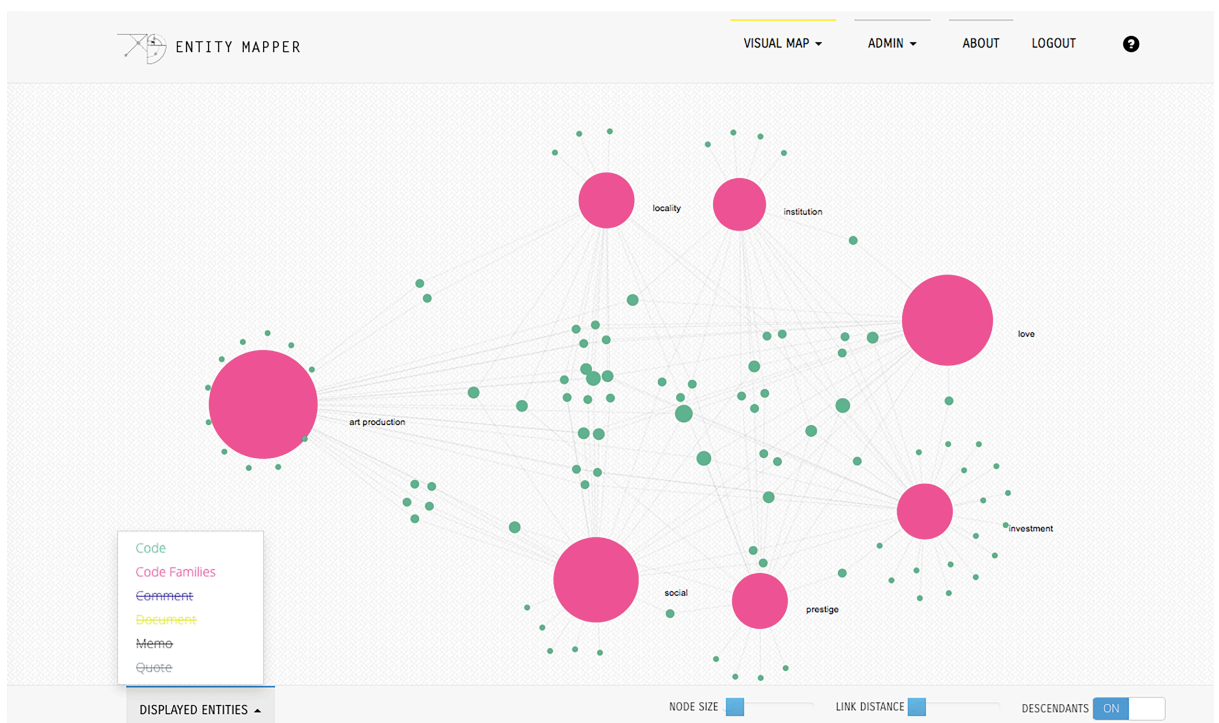
Figure 41. Anne Luther, *Display of the entities codes and code families,* 2015, screenshot.
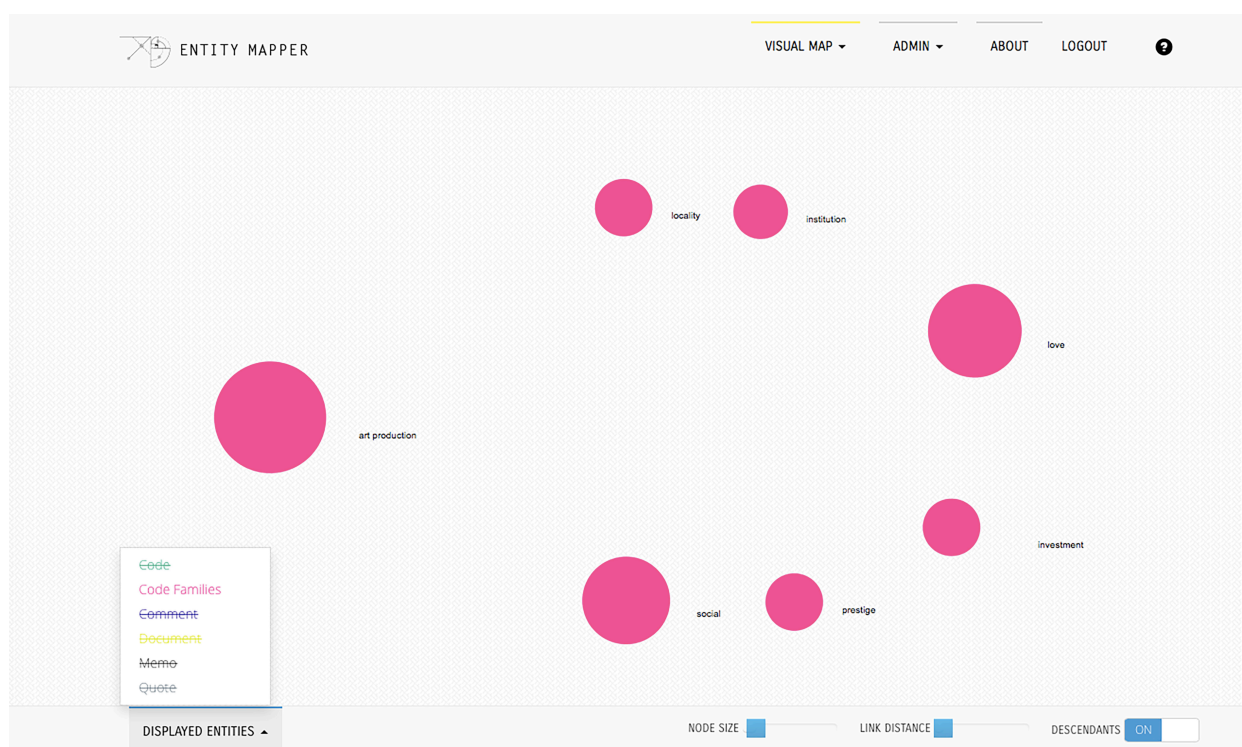
Figure 42. Anne Luther, *Display of code families*, 2015, screenshot.

5.3.2. Features for a visual data analysis

A comparison of the differences and commonalities in colours, shapes, location and textual information can visually represent hierarchies (node-link hierarchies as described above), providing an argument structure for the visual analysis and the quantitative structure of the coded data (more links/less links in one topic area). Comparing these features visually explains how the researcher can use the metadata that these features provide in the visual analysis by constructing a visual map accordingly.

Colour Coding:

The different entity types (text, quotation, code, code family and memo) are coloured differently to immediately show the researcher the significance and hierarchy of the entity in the visual network. In the back end of the software, the colours can be changed by choosing a shade that suits the researcher's aesthetic perception. The individual colour coding of the entities was added as a later feature to the software.

Figure 43. Anne Luther, *Colour coding options*, 2015, screenshot.

Quantity Display:

The figure below shows the textual analysis field of Atlas.Ti in one of the hermeneutic units of this analysis. The screenshot taken from the desktop application shows the transcript in the middle part, the codes that mark the quotations on the right to the text, and on the left, the titles of the anonymised interviews with the number of quotations underlined in this interview. The quantity of codes in relation to code families can be seen in Figure 44, the 'Code Manager' in Atlas.Ti. Both the number of quotations in relation to the codes and the quantity of codes in relation to the code families is displayed with the size of the nodes in the Entity Mapper. The bigger the node, the higher the quantity of connections.

The largest node in the network is the art production node [shown in Figure 45]. Although the interviews were structured around collecting processes, art production was mostly quoted as a relevant contribution in the interviews. The quantitative weight of the quotations and codes in this code family is logical because art production is the a priori causality for art collecting. Without the mechanisms of production, art collecting would not exist. Another important factor for the quantitative weight of the art production node is the focus in the analysis on topics that are related to collecting. The code families that are related the strongest to collecting are love and investment, which have 54 codes between them. Art production has 35, so although the art production node appears to be the biggest node in the visual map, the two focuses come from a quantitative and qualitative standpoint on collecting.
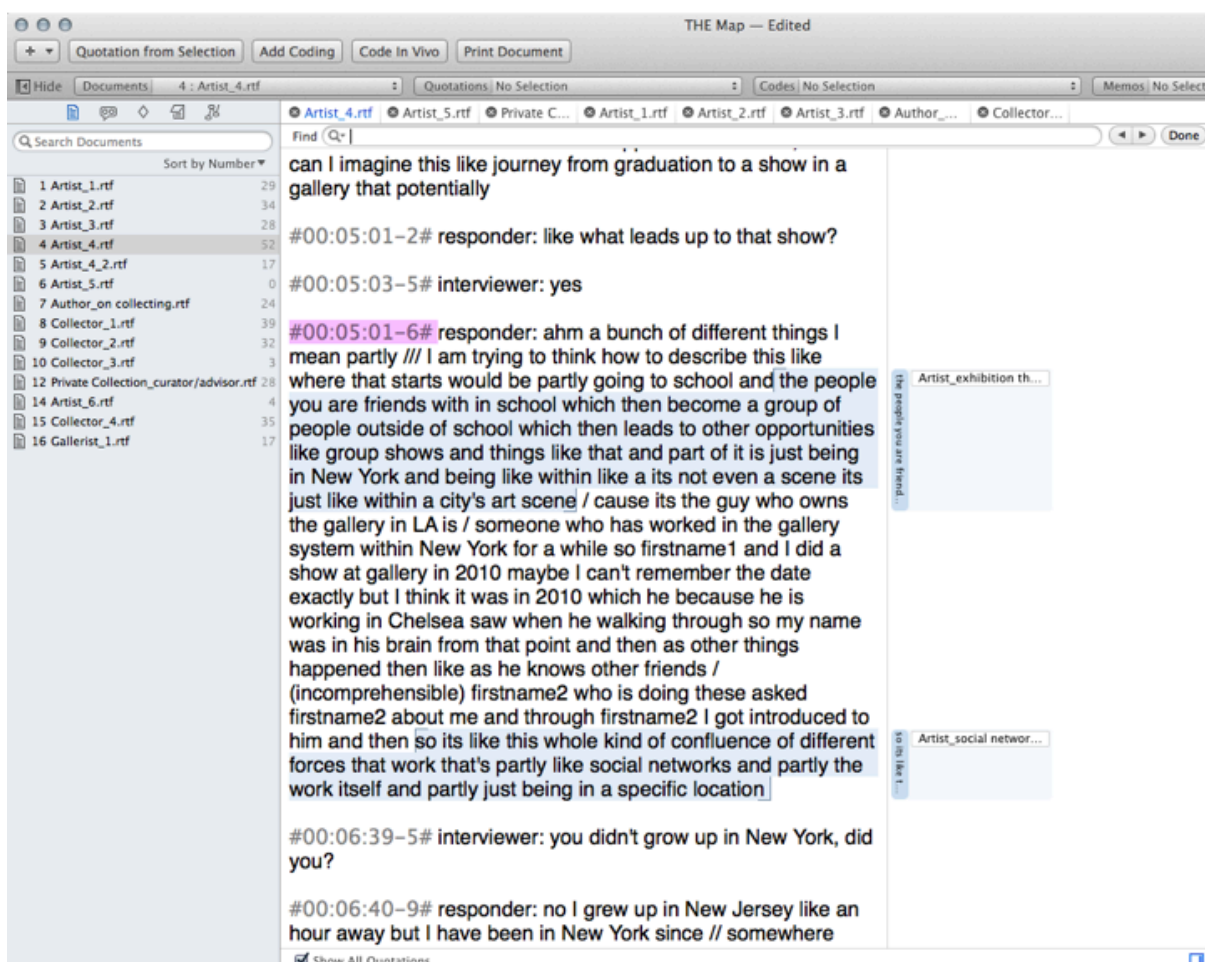
Figure 44. Anne Luther, *Atlas.Ti code manager,* 2014, screenshot.

Figure 45. Anne Luther, *Quantity of code in code families,* 2014, screenshot.
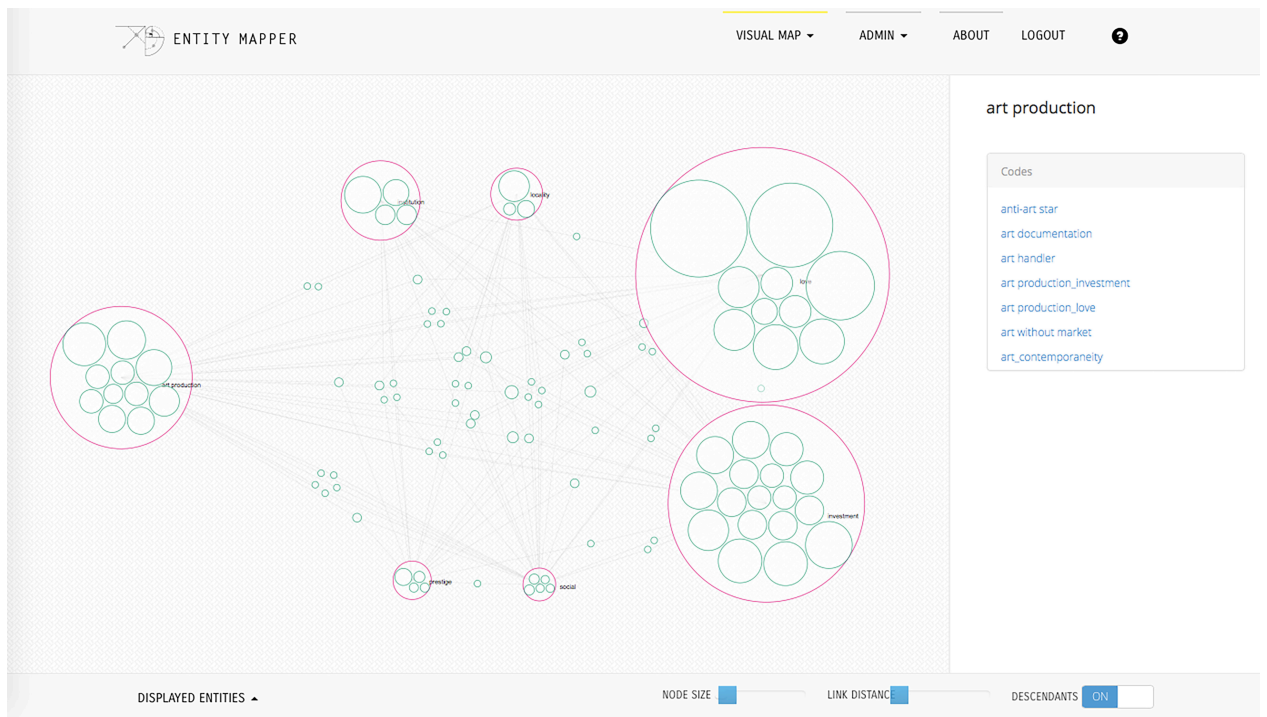
Figure 46. Anne Luther, *Quantity of code in code families in in the visual map*, 2014, screenshot.

Node-Link relationship in textual and shape form:

The box on the right of the web browser reacts to the researcher's interaction with the visual map. Choosing an entity by clicking on it in the web browser displays the textual information within this entity and the linked entities. For example, when one chooses a code family, the codes that are linked to it appear in the right box in text form and are highlighted in the visual map with by emphasizing the links with a stronger line thickness [see Figure 47]. Choosing a code in the visual map by first hovering over it will highlight the code in the visual map with the feature of displaying the entire map as more transparent – the link becomes apparent with the textual label [see Figure 48]. Choosing the code in the map or in the textual box displays the quotations linked to the code and the code family in the text box [see Figure 35]. The logic of the text box display follows the coding hierarchy/structure. Choosing a code from the scroll-down in the text box shows the entire quotation, which allows a copy and paste for direct quotations in the textual translation of the visual analysis [see Chapter 6]. By clicking on the quotation, the parent of the quotation, or the rtf file from which it's taken, becomes apparent in the text box. The codes displayed below the quotation show to which codes the quotation is linked [Figure 49].
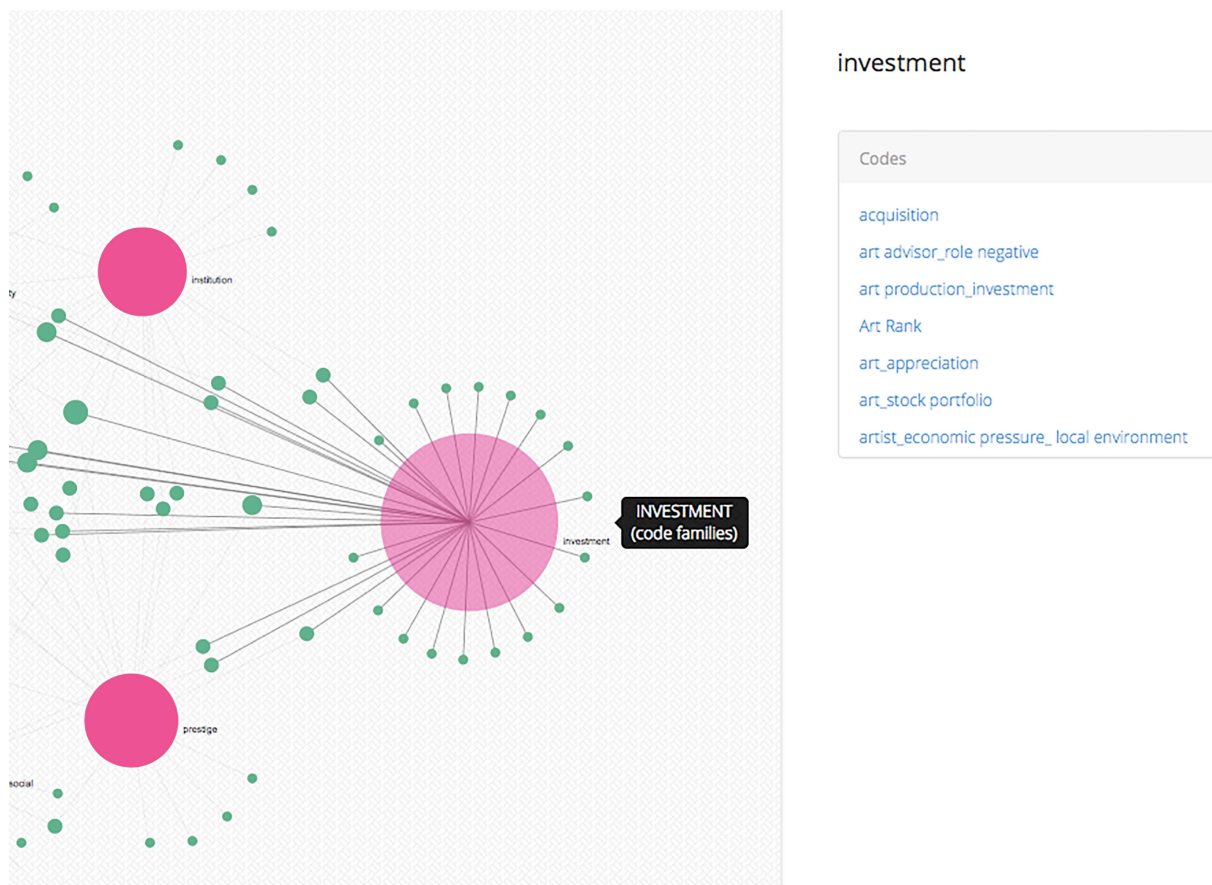
Figure 47. Anne Luther, *Link emphasize,* 2015, screenshot.
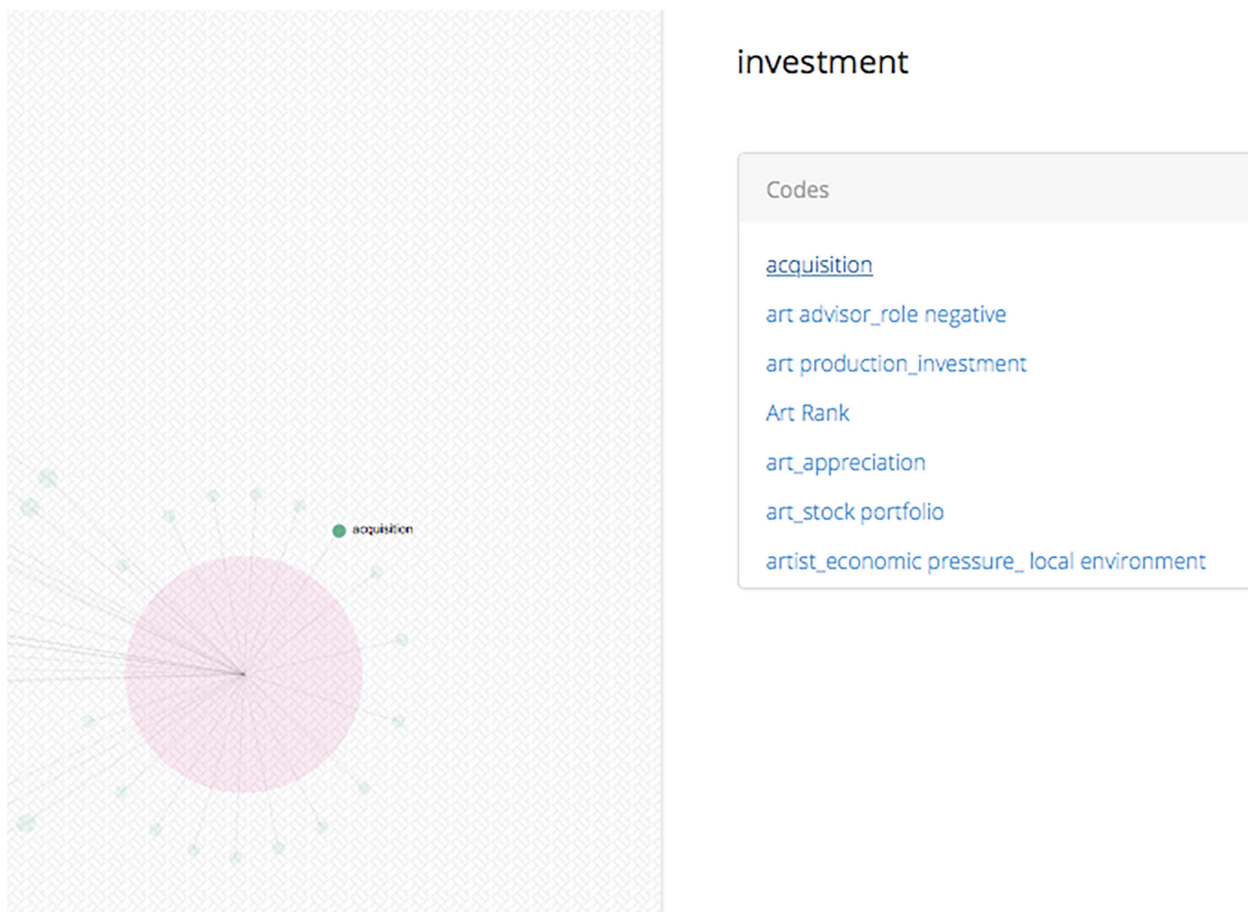
Figure 48. Anne Luther, *Highlighting a single node,* 2015, screenshot.
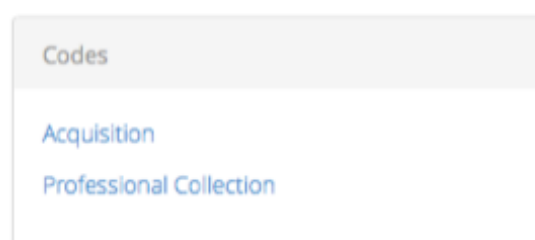
Figure 49. Anne Luther, *Textual quotation display,* 2015, screenshot.

Movability:

The movability of the entities in the visual map is an important feature that allows the researcher to construct patterns that are not directed by the network structure. The feature initially shows the movability of the entities, the logic being that the strongest entity is directed to the centre of the network. The strength of the entity is measured by the quantity of links connected to the node (the more links, the further it is centred). The researcher can nevertheless alter the position of the entity in the visual map by holding the command key [⌘] and clicking on the entity/node. The command key fixes the node and releases it from the force-directed logic. The nodes can be moved but the links always stay the same. The node-link relationship cannot be rendered in the visual map, but the location of the nodes can be altered. When a node is pinned in a specific location, it can be released to its organic force-directed movability by clicking on it without pressing the command key. The release of the node brings it back to the position based on the quantity of links in the network.

5.3.3. The construction of a visual argument

The movability feature of the nodes allows the researcher to bring them in proximity to each other or display them according to a schema suggested by the methodology or otherwise. In Chapter 6, Figure 52 shows how the code families were located in the visual map according to a paradigm model that Strauss and Corbin developed for Axial Coding.[262] Pinning the codes in patterns that relate to each other in a more distinct way than the summarizing code is another way to use the pinning feature to structure an argument in the visual analysis. Figure 52 shows how this feature was applied in Chapter 6.4 to structure the codes related to the code family of prestige into patterns that were separated into floating signifiers in relation to language, economic signifiers, personality and institutional acts.

The model suggests moving one's gaze over the visual map from left to right to follow the logic of argumentation in the analysis. Moving, pinning and structuring the nodes in the visual map is a feature that was developed from the narration that infographics create, as described in Chapter 5.

The described features that Entity Mapper provides for visual analysis were conceptualized by me and developed as a software feature by Noah Pedrini. The development was based on the testing phase of two sample datasets that I coded and one dataset that was coded with Grounded Theory methods that Professor Lisa Rubin provided in confidence. The development of these features, on one hand, made the software tangible and more usable for the researchers in the field of qualitative data analysis. On the other hand, this confronted me with the problem of originating features that would translate the needs of a researcher in qualitative data analysis into visual representation beyond a simple network display. The added features allow the researcher to abstract the complexity of the node-link network without losing the complexity of the data, because every entity type is always accessible even if it is not displayed visually. The features were also constructed with the character of the field of study in mind – abstraction, movability, organic

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[262] Uwe Flick. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications, 2010): 311.

shapes and the structuring of certain rules that can be dismissed instantly (pinning and releasing of nodes) are descriptive of the network of contemporary art collecting processes.

The visualisation produced with Entity Mapper offers an understanding of the data coding and the empirical content in relationship to theory development that would not be available through strictly textual means. The rigorous and systematic work of coding brings patterns to light in the conventional and semi-structured interviews, which are visualised clearly in the Entity Mapper. The original contribution to knowledge is a software application that brings together loosely formed interviews and highly structured data analysis in a visual way that shows patterns of both the content and analysis. The Entity Mapper allows the researcher to reflect on the empirical content and the pattern that were detected in the data coding in one visual map, the research outcome works with the data (empirical content) and metadata (visual information in the visual map on location, size and colour hierarchy) as valuable contributions to theory development.

PART III

Collecting Contemporary Art: a visual analysis of a qualitative investigation into patterns of collecting and production

6. Chapter 6: Visual analysis

6.1. Contemporary art collecting and art production

The aim of visualising the coded field data is twofold: to show the data in its complexity to the reader of this thesis, and to create a visual analysis using a map that is based on the coding and structuring of the field data. The map introduced in this chapter was built with Entity Mapper, and was developed for this research study to visualise the structure and coding hierarchy of this thesis on a methodological level. It also serves to demonstrate that the patterns detected in the methodological understanding of the data can show, through the content they carry, relationships in the culture of collecting and production of contemporary art.

The aim is to create a visual understanding of the complexity that comprises contemporary art collecting. The visual analysis brings an understanding that collecting is not solely based on personal preferences, that it is also not isolated from certain discourses and patterns in art production and that the relationships between every entity are traceable. On a methodological level, the visual map shows that the art world is a cultural milieu that can be observed, described and analysed, even though it is not a closed, institutional system. It also shows on a content level which and how certain nodes are connected to each other. Both the methodological handling of the map and content will be described in this chapter. Chapter 6. will give an overview of the development of the network by starting to show the textual analysis and the visual taxonomy in the textual analysis of the interviews in Atlas.Ti. It continues with the translation into the visual map in Entity Mapper and concludes with how the usability of the new software helped in arriving at the final network, which will be the base for the analysis of the entities in Chapter 6.3. Each pattern is

outlined according to the quotations and theoretical coding and their relationship in the analysis. In Chapter 6.4, this analysis will be extended to the overlapping codes that connect the individual patterns. This structure of analysis makes it possible to understand the flexibility and shifting nature of the network, the content of the detected patterns of the collected field data, and the theoretical analysis of overlapping entities and network structures.

6.2. Introduction of the visual network structure

For the analysis of the field research, the decision was made to include 16 interviews with about 20 hours of transcribed semi-structured interviews for the construction of the visual map. Two hour-long interviews with two collectors were not recorded because the interviewees did not agree to be on record and shorter interviews in informal settings during my participant observation are transcribed as notes. The reflective notes of the short and one-hour long semi-structured interviews were transcribed as notes/comments but are not displayed in the visual map. They serve as a memo for the field research and supported my conclusions in the course of the analysis.

6.2.1. Quantity versus quality

The quantity of the codes per interview does not necessarily reflect the weight or quality of the statements and quotations taken from the interview. One example shows how the researcher weighed critically if the interviewee gives a statement that can stand on its own, or if it needs a reflexive support or counter argumentation: "So it's like this whole kind of confluence of different forces that work, partly social networks, partly the work itself and partly just being in a specific location." (from the interview Artist_4.rtf.) This description of the forces that bring an artist into an exhibition is very general and does not carry a lot of specific content with it. Observing artists in a highly competitive environment like New York, this statement also does not seem very critical or honest. The effort that artists strategize is not only based on 'being around', as the interviewee said in the same interview. Rather, it often occurs by validating through peers what kind of social network the exhibition space carries with it, where the work could end up, if the representing galleries are in agreement with the exhibition, if production, travel and shipping costs are paid, and other artists on the gallery's program. Often artists are not concerned with the sheer quantity of exhibitions, but rather the environment the exhibitions create for the work. This strategy is partially based on experience of some artists and partially on

the idea the gallerist and artist have of the continuous career.[263] This reflection of
the almost casual explanation of the quotation cited above is based on notes from a
participant observation during Frieze New York 2015, in which I followed an artist
from Europe for one week after the opening of his first exhibition in New York. The
New York art dealer, artist and gallery owner of Gavin Brown's enterprise since the
mid 90s spoke of this strategizing in Spike Art Quarterly in a more negative voice,
noting that it is not possible for an artist to lean back and be 'lazy':

> If Wekua were to truly opt out he could be as lazy as he likes, but as long as
> he is in this system then he must abide by its rules. And these days that
> means production. Just as there seems to be a bubble of capital there is also a
> bubble of activity in response to that capital. We are all strapped to the oars
> and the drum is beating faster and faster. Ramming speed![264]

This critical reflection on the interviews is important because it shows that
the visual quantitative representation in the network is information for the research,
but not the main focus. In this qualitative analysis it demonstrates that the sheer
quantity of a mentioned topic does not always reflect on the content that is usable
and relevant for the analysis. In the following, this reflection on quotations will
continue and act as part of the analysis.

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[263] 'Well, you know the artists I collect are very young and many of them are rising stars so there is a
lot of demand for their works, so I think this is where people get reluctant. Because there is
global demand for their work. There are some galleries where, you know, if I go to a Paris
gallery many times I am welcome, many times the artist wants to have followers in Europe and
they don't want American collectors to come there. So there, that is another kind of practice
which I understand.' Collector_1.rtf

[264] Daniel Baumann. "The Demise of the future. Gavin Brown & Daniel Baumann in a Conversation
about the Art Market." *Spike Art Quarterly*, no. 40 (Summer 2014). Accessed July 08 2015,
http://www.spikeartmagazine.com/en/articles/demise-future.

6.2.2. Code and code family relationships

The network contains seven code families: *art production*, *prestige*, *social*, *institution*, *locality*, *love* and *investment*. The code families were established in the axial coding process described in Chapter 4.3.2. Methods and arrive from a circular, reflective process that was drawn from the in vivo coding process, the literature about the field of study and the participant observation. The code families were established with in reference to the set of relationships in the paradigm model[265] and the hierarchies of the visual map.

The code families are flexible and can be moved in the web browser. Although this flexibility allows variations in structure and display, an orientation based on a paradigm model that Strauss and Corbin developed for Axial Coding[266] will be used in for the analysis below. This structure is an orientation, and not a fixed causal explanation of the structure that defines collecting processes. Once again, flexibility and the possibility of constant change in patterns is the premise on which the thesis and the visual network were developed. Static images and the paradigm model are only used here to describe the detected patterns and to illustrate the developed network in this thesis. The visual map itself is nevertheless changeable, temporary and interactive, like the field itself [Figure 50 The paradigm model].

Art production is the cause for the entire network. As mentioned above, without art production there would not be collecting and the art context. Social, institution, locality and prestige are the phenomena, which are here related to everything that constitutes collecting, strategies, context and intervening conditions [see Figure 52]. Love and investment are the consequences, which in this analysis are analogous to collecting [see Figure 51, first model of the visual map through the paradigm model].

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[265] Anselm L. Strauss and Juliet Corbin. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. (New York: Sage Publications, 1998): 122.

[266] Uwe Flick. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. (London: Sage Publications, 2010): 311.

Before going into further detail of the codes that are linked to the code families, a more developed paradigm model needs to be introduced [see Figure 52 The Paradigm Model as Collecting and Art Production Network]. Here, and as shown in the paradigm model of Strauss and Corbin, the solid arrows show a relationship that follows the logic of 'because of this ➔ that'. The extended thought here is that the dashed arrows show possible 'because of this ➔ that' relationships that are not mandatory but are very likely to have an impact on *art production*. This model will be investigated in further detail in the analysis below with a clarification of each of the relations. 'We are not talking a language of cause and effect. This is too simplistic.'[267] The statement above 'because of this ➔ that' is therefore not referring to a imperative cause and effect logic due to overlapping codes that can be found in more than one category (for example, art without market is a code linked to the code families *art production* (a cause) and *love* (a consequence). The paradigm model is here used as an orientation for the following analysis and is as flexible as the visual map.

The code family *art production* links to the codes:
Anti-art star, art documentation, art handler, art production_investment, art production_love, art without market, art_contemporaneity, art_context as medium, art_interpretation of the artist, art_social impact, artist CV, artist studio, artist_assistant, artist_competition, artist_control over artwork after it left the studio, artist_day job_independence, artist_economic pressure_ local environment, artist_economic pressure_ tuition fees, artist_exhibition through peers, artist_gallery representation through peers, artist_influence of art school, artist_reflection, artist_social network role in artist's career, as long as it succeeds, digital image, gallery demands, gallery space outside of market space, gallery_control, local support system, material, no such thing as 'art career', studio visit, studio_ selling work, time, trading works of art.

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[267] Anselm L. Strauss and Juliet Corbin. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. (New York: Sage Publications, 1998), 130.

The code family shows entities that the artist needs or establishes for producing artworks or that is related to anything the artist produces to promote the art production independently. The network visualisation shows that art production cannot be separated, but on a methodological level, I focused more extensively on separating patterns that were detected in relation to collecting. This led to the accumulation of codes that could in themselves lead to another analysis and thesis.

Prestige, social, institution and locality are the code families that point to the periphery of the entities that constitute collecting, beyond the art objects themselves and their production. In the paradigm model the code families of locality and institution are spatially assigned to 'Context and Intervening Strategies', and the code families social and prestige are assigned to 'Strategies'.

In the realm of collecting two main patterns that were mentioned strongly in various forms in the interviews are investment and love.
As a phenomenon that follows the question 'what is going on here?',[268] the category of *institutions* has the following codes linked to it:
advertisement, art magazine, institution_curator, university accreditation, gallerist as mediator, collector_role in museum, collector influences art history, Discourse, gallery identity, gallery space outside of market space, institutional critique, institutional validation, patronage, private museum for public engagement, private museum for tax advantages

The code family shows entities that are related to established institutions that are relevant for collecting processes such as museums, universities and art magazines. The family also shows nodes of new developments that are related to the institutional model and influences that institutions can have for art.

Locality is a code family that shows entities that are related to knowledge production that is based on and primarily accessible through a local environment (for example, a city). The code family is connected to the following codes:

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[268] Anselm L. Strauss and Juliet Corbin. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. (New York: Sage Publications, 1998), 130.

Access, art advisor_role negative, art advisor_role positive, gallery reputation artist_social network role in artist's career, collector_blacklisted_personality, artist knows collector, collector_local scene, art handler, artist_economic pressure_ local environment, art opening, art world place as subcultures

Social shows the codes that constitute interaction, acting and roles in the environment of collectors:

anti-art star, artist CV, after party / gallery dinner, art opening, art selfie, art world place as subcultures, art_context as medium, art_social impact, artist knows collector, artist_exhibition through peers, artist_gallery representation through peers, artist_no personal connection to collector, artist_personality, artist_social network role in artist's career, artist_university affiliation through peers, collector_insider knowledge, collector_local scene, collector_secondary market activity destroys primary market prices, collector_social network as resources, Discourse, local capital as resource for art production, local support system, trading works of art

Prestige illustrates the entities that compose strategies that show status, reputation or knowledge of the field:

Academic language, access, art advisor_conditions for offering work, artist CV, artist_influence of art school, artist_personality, collector_good due to true interest in art, collector_role in museum, curator in collection, gallerist_personality, gallery identity, gallery reputation, gallery_control, institutional validation, private museum for public engagement, professional collection, university accreditation/reputation

Love and *investment* as the consequences are here the focus of the thesis namely entities that describe collecting. *Love* describes entities that count as positive or good.[269] *Love* can also be related to belief or devotion here. Entities show acts, opinions, roles and context:

anti-art star, art production_love, art without market, art_fetish of the original,

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[269] Olav Velthuis. *Talking Prices: Symbolic Meanings of Prices on the Market for Contemporary Art.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 42-45.

art_social impact, Believe in Art, collecting intellectual activity, collecting personality, collector knows artist, collector wants to learn, collector_good due to true interest in art, collector_insider knowledge, collector_international scene, collector_personal preferences, collector_role in museum, collector_selling for the right reasons, collector_social network as resources, commitment, Discourse, gallery believes in art gallery space outside of market space, institutional critique, patronage

Investment shows entities that are linked to economic interests, strategies and options:

Acquisition, art advisor_role negative, art production_investment, art_appreciation art_stock portfolio, artist_economic pressure_ local environment, artist_economic, pressure_ tuition fees, auction_arranged before sale, collector has no contact to artist, collector_blacklisted_bargaining, collector_blacklisted_personality, collector_financial self interest, collector_liquidate after death, collector_role in museum, collector_secondary market activity destroys primary market prices, collector_selling for investment reasons, collector_selling for the right reasons, collector_storage, collector_watch list, digital image, financial anonymity – where is the money coming from?, gallerist as mediator, gallery identity, gallery_pricing, local capital as resource for art production, market success, patronage, private museum for tax advantages, professional collection, secondary market prices, studio_ selling work

The logic of the codes can be summarized as all relating to collecting processes. Art production is described in the loose structure relating to the paradigm model as the intrinsic cause for the visual map in this study but also, in the field, as a factor shaping collecting processes. *Art production* codes were accumulated, as, while not a focus of the study, art production is a necessary precursor to collecting patterns.

The code families *prestige*, *social* and *locality* have a similar rating in that they constitute and contextualize collecting patterns, but are, unlike *art production*,

not the object of desire in the first place. Knowledge about and placements within *prestige*, *social*, *institution* and *locality* can be transported by art but are not art itself. *Love* and *investment* are the two categories that describe and analyse the collecting patterns and processes both internally and in relation to *art production* and *prestige, social*, *institution* and *locality*. The code family titles are developed from the quotations and coding of the transcriptions of the interviews, but also relate to a current understanding in literature on collecting. Whether the understanding of the collector or the literature came first cannot be detected here. References to current literature were mentioned in Chapter 2.3, State of play: collecting or investing.[270] [271] *Love* and *investment* were also mentioned in Velthuis' *Talking Prices*[272] as right and wrong reasons for acquisitions. Here the distinction is not made on the judgmental level that Velthuis describes but rather is based on the reasons that the interviewees said motivated their collecting patterns. As mentioned in the introduction, every acquisition is based on economic possibilities. Nevertheless, interviewees described certain acts and feelings that are not related to the purchase, the economic cash flow or investment of money that they are putting into collecting art:

> The truth is that I could build an equal collection. I like to travel and I like having relationships with people around the world and meeting collectors because I learn from them. Collector_1.rtf

> Did you ever have a boyfriend or a girlfriend and have you fallen in love with them? It is the exact same thing. So the difference is that your interaction maybe is different, right, so the art has to interact with you in your life on a daily basis in a way that you know makes you feel happy when you come home. Maybe it is an aesthetic thing, maybe it's that the artwork is challenging for you. For me, I live with art and I can't imagine not living with art because when I come home and it has been a bad day, I turn on the lights and I have the most amazing things around me that make me happy. I think it is just that simple, it makes you happy to look at it. And at a certain point you get bored of it and you get a divorce. [laughs] Collector_2.rtf

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[270] For example: Ethan Wagner and Thea Westreich Wagner. *Collecting Art for Love, Money and More*. New York: Phaidon Press, 2013.

[271] Adam Lindemann. "The Art World's Biggest Lie: A Collector Debunks Art as an Investment." *Observer* February 11, 2015. Accessed February 23, 2015, http://observer.com/2015/02/the-art-worlds-biggest-lie-a-dealers-mea-culpa-on-collecting-as-investing/.

[272] Olav Velthuis. *Talking Prices: Symbolic Meanings of Prices on the Market for Contemporary Art*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 42-45.

These two quotations show on a very raw level how the love of collecting was described during the interviews. This introduction gives a brief overview of the topics and structures that will be discussed and analysed with greater detail with an orientation to the described paradigm model.
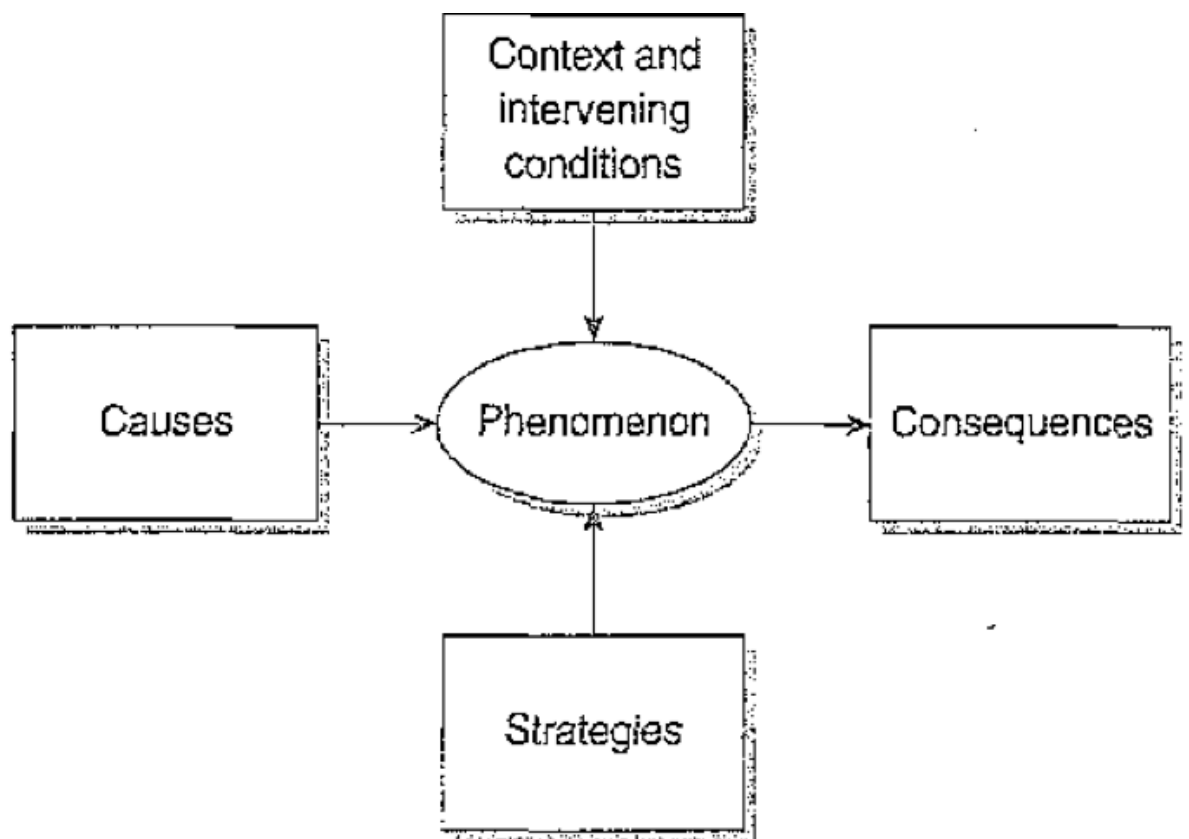
Figure 50. Anselm L. Strauss, and Juliet M. Corbin, *The paradigm model,* 1998.
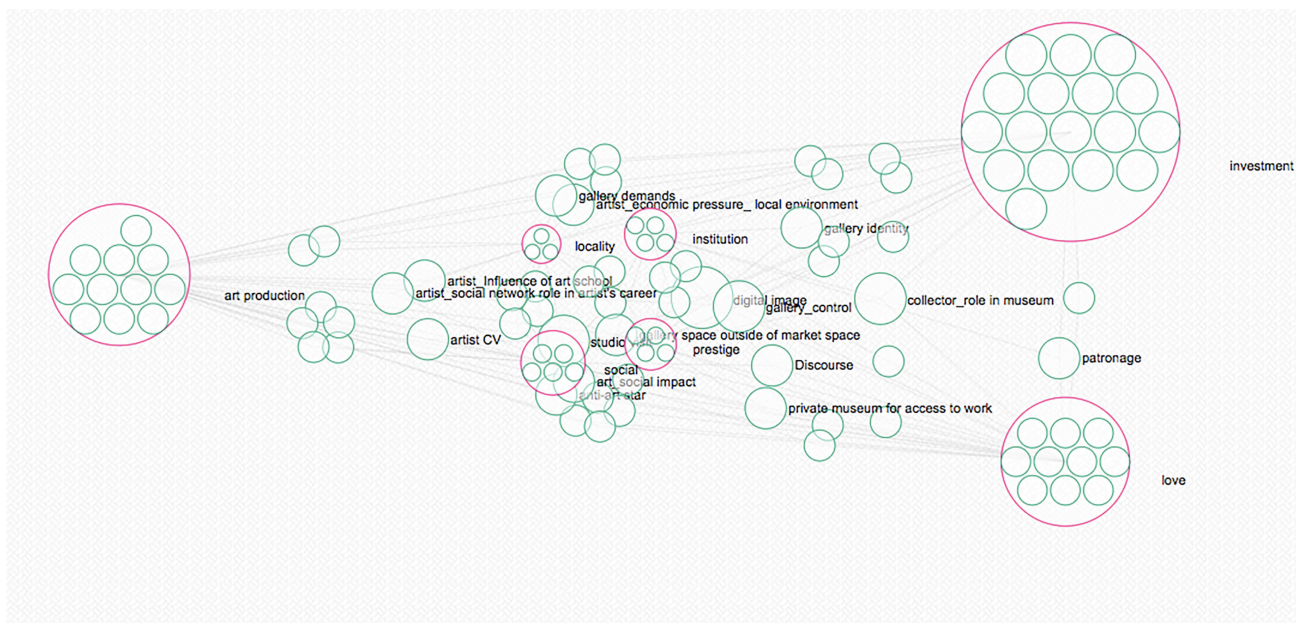
Figure 51. Anne Luther, *First model of the visual map using the paradigm model,*
2015, screenshot.
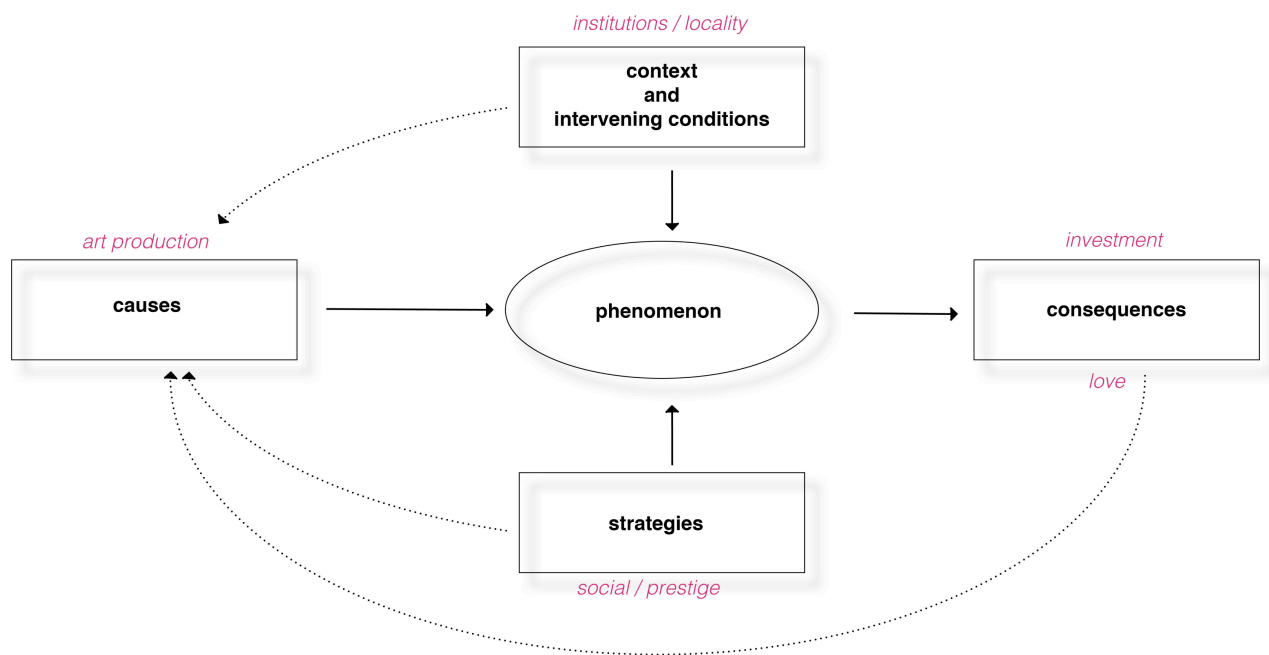
Figure 52. Anne Luther, *The paradigm model as collecting and art production network*, 2015, digital drawing.
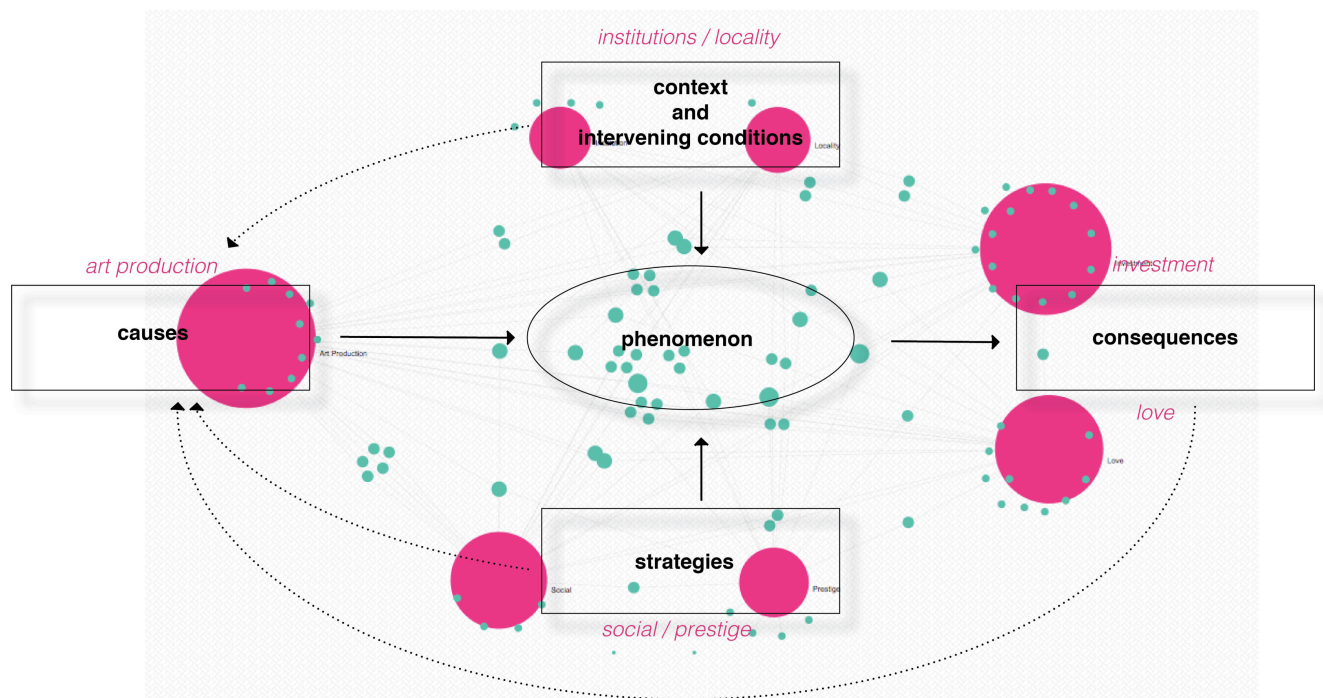
Figure 53. Anne Luther, *The paradigm model and visual map,* 2015, screenshot and digital drawing.
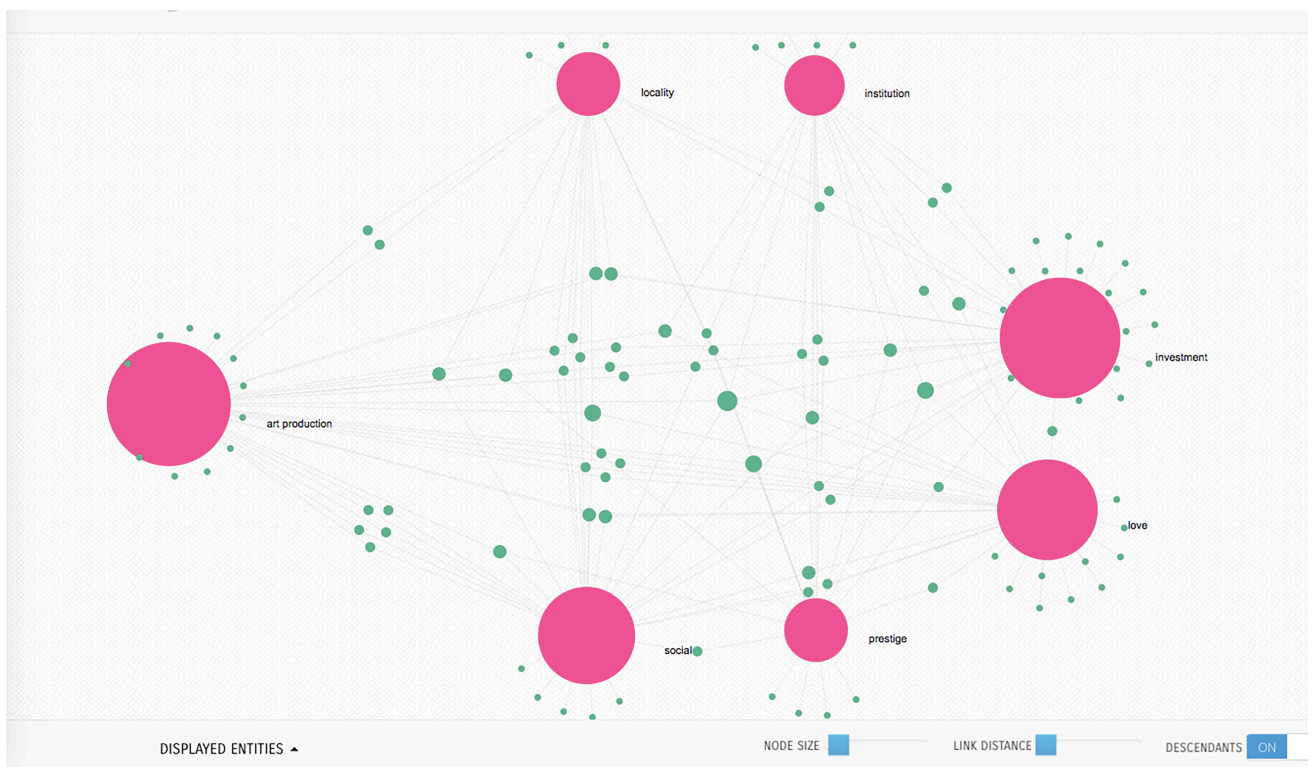
Figure 54. Anne Luther, *The visual map*, 2015, screenshot.

6.3. Analysis of eight patterns in the network of collecting

The analysis of eight patterns in the network of collecting is related to the paradigm model [see Figure 53 and 54]. As described in Chapter 5, one of the features of Entity Mapper is to pin nodes in order to structure the force-directed graph. The view that is used for the visual analysis is the Force-Directed Graph (and not the Circle-Pack view). The pinning of the nodes is used to bring the nodes, here described as patterns, into the structure of the paradigm model [see Figure 52].

The patterns that will be analysed here are the code families that were developed in the coding process. The visual analysis related the conclusions of these patterns to their location in the constructed map and their proximity and links to the code families. The visual map in this chapter is viewed as a network of patterns that were established from the field study. The visual map relates here to both the phenomenon that is analysed (the network of collecting patterns related to art production) and the methodological structure of the network that is built on the paradigm model. The methodological structuring of the map serves here as a tool to analyse the network of collecting patterns. Pinning the nodes into the structure of the paradigm model reveals the logic of the following analysis and gives the meta-structure that the researcher chose for the analysis of the field. The ability to unpin the nodes and bring the visual map back to its original organic and force-directed nature symbolizes that the analysis is the not the field itself, but rather an outside analytical perspective on the field of study.

Figure 53 shows the relationship between the paradigm model and the visual map. As described above, the paradigm model is the methodological pattern that is used to develop theoretical results regarding the field of study. The relationships that are visible in the map relate directly to all the layers of the network (quotations, codes and code families).

6.3.1. Art production

Art production is a node in the visual map that was pinned on the left as a starting point or cause for all the other entities in the network to exist [Figure 54. Art production in the visual map]. As mentioned above, without the production of artworks as objects, digital media or conceptual and performative initiation, the entities in the network would not appear because art is the essence for collecting in this study.

Figure 55 shows the visual map with *art production* on top to illustrate dependency of the other nodes. Moving *art production* to the top of the map illustrates the importance of the node because in this visualisation the other nodes 'hang' on the *art production* node. If the node disappears, the network collapses and every other node disappears. Follow the links that are connected and visualised with a stronger link in Figure 55 – one can detect that every code family node in this map has a connection to the *art production* node.

The visual map will not be translated into a textual description of a meta-structure (which node is connected to other nodes etc.). An exploration of the visual map can happen interactively in the web browser. The analysis here will reference certain nodes and their location in the visual map, but it values the autonomy of the visual; much of this analysis does not need to be translated into written word in its full relations. In this chapter the node that will be considered most and described in its location in the visual map and role in contemporary art collecting is the *digital image*. The chapter on Art production will not focus on particular practices, material and content of art production processes, but rather on a node that occupies an important place between the production of an artwork and the investment made in the artwork. The analysis will be contextualized in a current criticism of the digital comparability of works of art in online media. This context will lead to an analysis of the digital image in art production, and the conclusion that the digital image points to social (or physical) engagement with the work.

In order to understand where certain patterns and topics discussed are arriving from, we need to take a look at art production and related topics. It is important to note that it was concluded here that *art production* is not an isolated and independent entity. Although *art production* was historically (by, for example, Clement Greenberg and Michael Fried) and still can be criticised using purely formal characteristics, it is nevertheless not isolated from influences that are not purely formal. These influences are described below in three categories. Reflection here is closely related to a post-modernist approach to discourse that considers discourses in an ambiguous manner but also as certain 'discursive practices' that reflect in 'activities and institutions'.[273] Reflection is chosen because the term *Discourse* can bring the argumentation of this study into the realm of ideologies and disciplines that it is not related to (for example, a Foucauldian or Derridian corner of discourse-related analysis). Reflection here means everything that artists might take into account when researching, making or strategizing certain projects and developments, established in the coding process as a topic that concerns artists in their production processes.[274] Focussing on one code in particular, the *digital image* in relation to *art production* in this chapter shows how one entity can be analysed with its connections to other entities, here noteworthy connections to art criticism, documentation and investment.

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[273] David Howarth. *Discourse (Concepts in the Social Sciences)*. (Birkshire: Open University Press, 2000), 4.

[274] 'I guess what's complicated about it is you / what complicates is you. So there is a review for the show that says one thing; there is what gets purchased and what doesn't get purchased, which says another thing; there is a response of the gallerist which says another thing; there is your own response to the work, which says something else; and then there is a friend's response to the work, which says something else. So you are trying to figure out of all that information that comes at you. What you are actually interested in, and what the different forces are that are pushing you towards different things, and then balancing that out in some way.' Artist_4.rtf
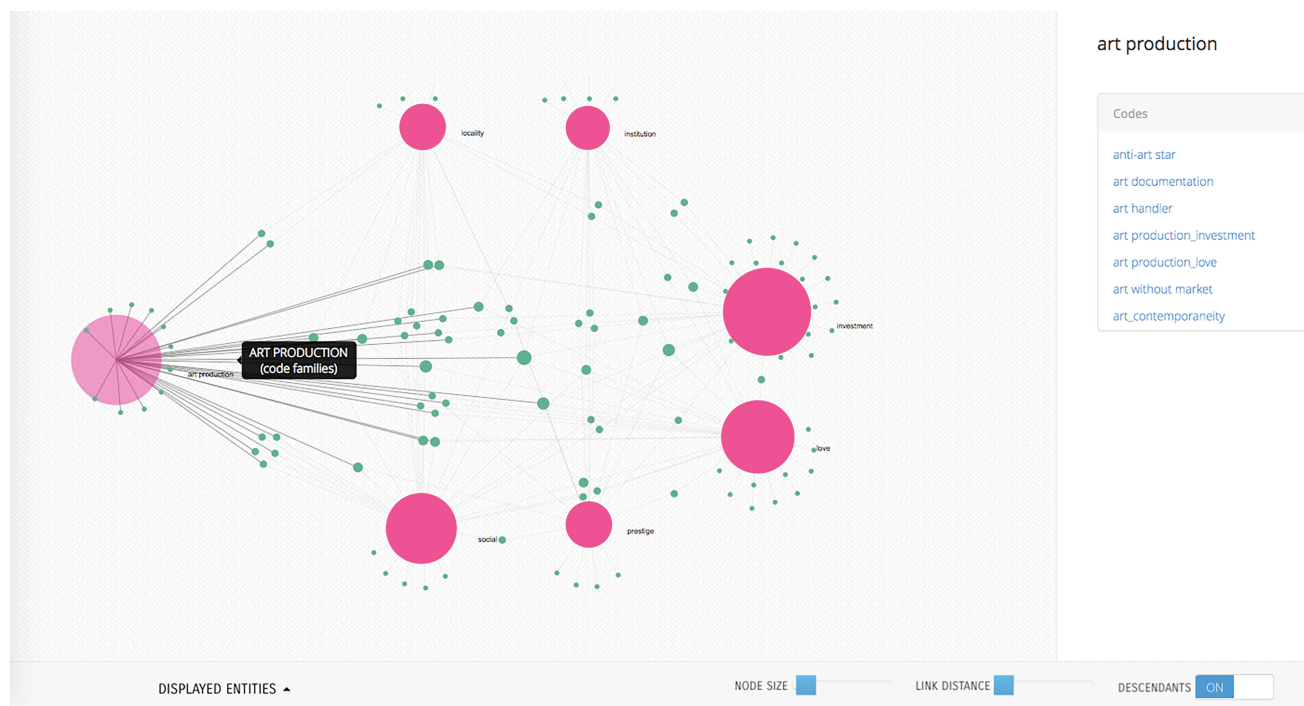
Figure 55. Anne Luther, *Art production in the visual map,* 2015, screenshot.
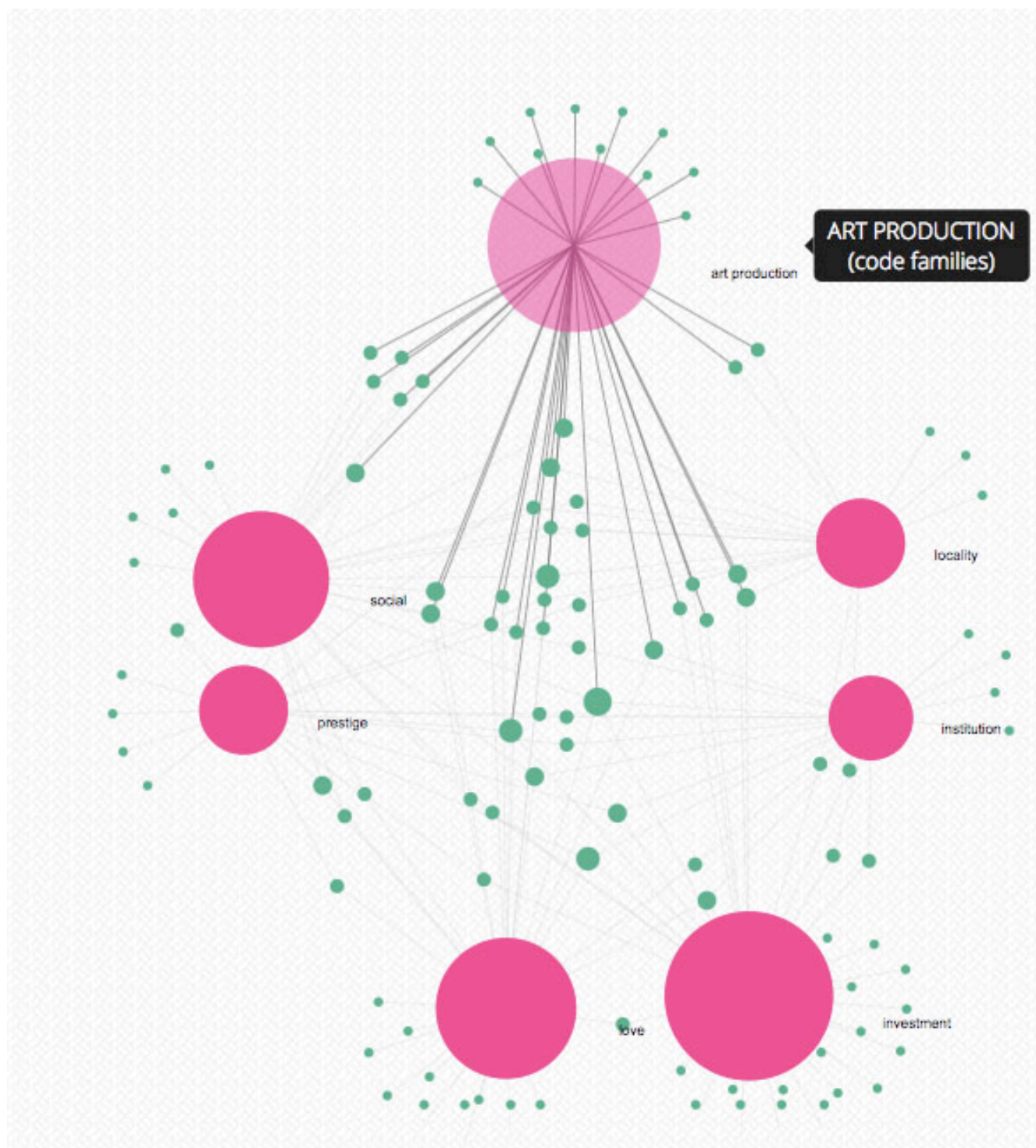
Figure 56. Anne Luther, *Art production on top of the visual map,* 2015, screenshot.

6.3.2. Digital image

Art production is not strictly divided into formal and discursive here, but rather into reflection, making and topics that are practically related to post-production. Nevertheless, the entity *digital image* will be used as an example here to show a connection between the formal and discursive influences in *art production*, and how these are related to collecting processes. This is very closely related to the dashed arrows in the paradigm model that is initiated in 'phenomenon' and 'consequences', and which leads back to *art production*. The dashed arrows suggest that something is transported back from the periphery of *art production* into the strategies of *art production*.

A poorly argued article by Jerry Saltz in *New York* magazine from 2014 shows that the digital image and its implications for art production and collecting are discussed in popular art criticism. He writes,

> A large swath of the art being made today is being driven by the market, and specifically by not very sophisticated speculator-collectors who prey on their wealthy friends and their friends' wealthy friends, getting them to buy the same lookalike art. The artists themselves are only part of the problem here. Many of them are acting in good faith, making what they want to make and then selling it. But at least some of them are complicit, catering to a new breed of hungry, high-yield risk-averse buyers, eager to be part of a rapidly widening niche industry. The ersatz art in which they deal fundamentally looks the way other art looks. […] the term coined by the artist-critic Walter Robinson: Zombie Formalism.[275]

Visually comparable art seems to be a pattern for Saltz that points to a network of collector friends, market performance and art production. The article places more blame on a collector base for visual comparability then the artists themselves, who 'are only part of the problem here. Many of them are acting in good faith, making what they want to make and then selling it.' The ambiguity and irresolution of Saltz, however, signify that a conclusion that artists *only* produce work with a certain market success or sellability in mind is not reasonable. How heavy the influence of

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[275] Jerry Saltz. "Zombies on the Walls: Why Does So Much New Abstraction Look the Same?" *Vulture* June 17, 2014. Accessed June 18, 2014, http://www.vulture.com/2014/06/why-new-abstract-paintings-look-the-same.html.

current discourses and comparability is in art production is therefore dependent on the individual artist. But as my interviewees also made clear, visual comparability is indeed part of a contemporary moment. As part of the quoted article, Saltz uses a slideshow to compare the artists mentioned on a solely visual level, displaying works as two-dimensional that might come from different approaches, materials, sizes and scales, spatial context, research and influences. The content and references of the works are not discussed, but rather, Saltz and other critics that are mentioned in the article compare in a Tumblr, Instagram or Artsy-esque visual structure [see Figure 57 and 58].

The visual comparison of artworks in that form is nevertheless born in the same moment that Saltz and others criticise here, namely the accessibility of online data and structured content and represented documentation. This moment can be located using important nodes linked to art production in the visual network, namely contemporaneity and digital image. One of the artists interviewed says:

> I don't know how you would state it specifically, but there are definitely certain styles you see that become very of a moment. And these styles get recognized as being contemporary, which obviously has a certain amount of value to it. So in that way I think you are kind of aware of what works. Artist_4.rtf

Writers and critics who coined the term 'Zombie Abstraction' or 'Zombie Formalism' are viewing works of art from a two-dimensional and materially isolated standpoint.[276] Comparability and a 2D representation of work is, however, not a new phenomenon, as one of my interviewees points out:

> Today, of course, the compression of the world to two dimensions, through people staring into the computer screen, has increased exponentially. This is, for the most part, how we interact with the world – with a screen. And therefore I can also imagine that the young artists that you are thinking of are suffering from the same syndrome on the one hand, while on the other hand they still know that adjusting to it in terms of how the potential clients

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[276] 'The essence of the argument, introduced by art critic Walter Robinson and popularized by his colleague Jerry Saltz in the widely read essay "Zombies on the Walls", is that all these works looks the same, their manufacture is simple, they are devoid of originality and they are craftily deployed to fulfil a market craving that resonates with high-end contemporary interior design. That they are, in some essential sense, trite and superficial.' Travis Jeppesen. "Zombie Criticism." *Spike Art Quarterly* 44, (Summer 2015): 52.

function is smart to do. And the trick would be to be able to produce something that can indeed be experienced fully and with pleasure in three dimensions, and that somebody is able to reproduce this in a photograph and some other manner, so that it is still attractive on the screen. […]Well, in certain ways it is not as new a phenomenon as we are speaking about, because documentation in terms of photographs in books, in periodicals, etc., has been around for as far as we know... On the printed page, of course, it's also two-dimensional. And in order to make something appear attractive matches in a way too." Artist_1. rtf

The new forms of distribution and mass comparability through online databases are nevertheless a contemporary moment. Critics, such as Walter Robinson and Jerry Saltz who used and established the term 'Zombie Abstraction' participate the same way they criticise art production processes. They compare and critique artworks on the level of visual comparability of the digital image. Travis Jeppesen criticises this form of art criticism on the level of digital image comparability in *Spike Art Quarterly* by saying that critics have lost the ability to 'look closely', and calls the reduction of painting to its digital representation 'Zombie Criticism'.[277]

These examples show a current discourse on the digital image in regards to art production processes and representation of artworks. This comparability is not restricted to painting itself; every medium and art production can be compared in such a way, as can every topic, product or country (as Artsy, Google image search and other databases show). The question of whether or not one comes first from a comparable aesthetic is therefore not the question to ask here. Saltz's article, as part of the moment it describes, shows that all three realms described here – art production, art phenomena and collecting processes – are part of a larger contemporary moment, namely a digital culture of comparison.

Digital image is a node that is connected to art production and Investment in the visual map. The relationship that Saltz makes can therefore also be found in the

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[277] Travis Jeppesen. "Zombie Criticism." *Spike Art Quarterly* 44, (Summer 2015): 52.

network, albeit with a different conclusion.[278] It must be noted that digital images as part of an essential conceptual reference is not my topic of discussion at this point.

The *digital image* becomes an entity in art production that is connected to the recognition of a certain contemporaneity for the artist and the collector:

> Contemporary - meaning like, for me, a contemporary experience is sort of a layered experience where there are virtual and actual things and they are not necessarily separated out, but are layered up on top of each other. And then how you represent that in a material way, which for me falls on the actual side. Like its an actual real material, but you are trying to represent virtual things through it. Artist_4.rtf

This describes how the entity influences both artist and collector with a discursive reflection, as the artist recognizes the visual representability of the work through the used material or documentation, and the collector recognizes certain indicators for contemporary representation. The artist experiences this discursive reflection[279] because they consider both experiences and the collector.[280]

Art Production relates to perception of the 2D (digital image) and 3D (experienced in space). Artists are considering the digital image as part of their practice because it often transports the work to collectors, to curators,[281] and as part of the documentation, which then often becomes part of a discursive circulation (social media, gallery websites or online and printed articles). The perception of the

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[278] This is said because Saltz concludes in such a unrealistic, irrelevant argumentation that this article cannot account for any realistic criticism: 'My guess is that, if and when money disappears from the art market again, the bottom will fall out of this genericism. Everyone will instantly stop making the sort of painting that was an answer to a question that no one remembers asking—and it will never be talked about again.' Jerry Saltz. "Zombies on the Walls: Why Does So Much New Abstraction Look the Same?" *Vulture* June 17, 2014. Accessed June 18, 2014, http://www.vulture.com/2014/06/why-new-abstract-paintings-look-the-same.html.

[279] 'They still know that adjusting to it in terms of how the potential clients function, it is smart to do that. And the trick would be to be able to produce something that can indeed be experienced fully and with pleasure in three dimensions and that somebody is able to reproduce this in a photograph and some other manner, so that it is still attractive on the screen.' Artist_1.rtf

[280] 'I want a piece out of x's show, right, out of this artist's show. So I go about just letting the gallery know that, staying on top of it, and then they send me jpegs first, so we have a first exchange, and then from there I do research and work on just understanding what their body of work is about.' Collector_2.rtf

[281] 'I also have had people who I have no contact with who have just seen something online somewhere and got in touch that way too, just through images.' Artist_4.rtf

collector, curator and online communication is therefore closely connected to *art production*. The formal experience is a step that often comes after – the 2D image points to the 3D object, as described by Isabelle Graw after her lecture 'The Economy of Painting: Notes on the Vitality of a Success-Medium'[282] at the Jewish Museum in New York. The digital image points to the question of whether or not the collector wants to see the work in a booth at the art fair or in an exhibition or collection of an institution. The digital documentation therefore still indicates a material and spatial experience, even if that does not take place. As Saltz dismisses this statement in his piece on Zombie Formalism, 'It looks pretty much the same in person as it does on iPhone, iPad, Twitter, Tumblr, Pinterest, and Instagram.'[283]

> Johann Koenig, a dealer in Berlin, mentioned in an interview that he doesn't think social media is relevant for selling, but it is relevant for communicating what the work is about. This is how Instagram comes in to play: although you can share a lot of information with many people at the same time, there are also negative sides. Like all these abstract painters who look the same online; there's no more deep looking past the surface, I feel. The art market was always driven by opinion leaders, and followed by others who heard about it and didn't really do their own research or form their own opinions. But where it used to be a smaller group of followers who through word of mouth propaganda heard about the latest hot stuff, now you can follow online to hear about it—and there are thousands of followers. [284]

But to dismiss completely the physical indication in the digital image would lead to the question of 'Pourqoi tout n'a-t-il pas déjà disparu?' ('Why hasn't everything already disappeared?').[285] Art Fairs, large physical gallery spaces and the rise of private museums show that the description 'Art as Bitcoin'[286] is not a realistic

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[282] The Jewish Museum. "Isabelle Graw: The Economy of Painting – Notes on the Vitality of a Success-Medium." Accessed August 2, 2015. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1JDthDEcmAs

[283] Jerry Saltz. "Zombies on the Walls: Why Does So Much New Abstraction Look the Same?" *Vulture* June 17, 2014. Accessed June 18, 2014, http://www.vulture.com/2014/06/why-new-abstract-paintings-look-the-same.html.

[284] Polina Bachlakova. "Johann Koenig on the Art Market, Art Careers and Making Money Quickly." *Bast Magazine*, August 08, 2014. Accessed May 13, 2015. http://bast-magazine.com/2014/08/04/johann-koenig-on-the-art-market-art-careers-and-making-money-quickly/?fb_action_ids=10154437612770084&fb_action_types=og.likes.

[285] Jean Baudrillard. *Warum Ist Nicht Alles Schon Verschwunden?* Berlin: Matthes & Seitz, 2008.

[286] Jerry Saltz. "Zombies on the Walls: Why Does So Much New Abstraction Look the Same?" *Vulture* June 17, 2014. Accessed June 18, 2014, http://www.vulture.com/2014/06/why-new-abstract-paintings-look-the-same.html.

description. The connection that is made here between the discursive, the formal, and the 2D and 3D experience of a work. The presentation in the form of the digital image points to the physical object, and the physical object creates a potential semiotic discourse which leads to back to the materiality of the work.[287] In the artist's studio, the digital image can be the longer lasting experience of the work for an artist:

> It was a gallery talking, like pressuring you, and I mean now I think differently about it. But there were definitely moments out of naivety or out of not knowing: giving things away and sending them without photographing them. Artist_3.rtf.

Even if a work does not enter into circulation, it nevertheless is the lasting representation that the artist has in their studio and from which an intrinsic, closed and art production- and practice process-related conversation between the artist and the work can be initiated. The potential for a semiotic and material reflection is therefore also present in art production through the digital image, even if the node does not connect to any outside or peripheral nodes (such as contact with the gallery or collector).

The location of the node in the visual map is between art production and Investment and close to the code family nodes Social and Prestige [Figure 59]. Figure 59 illustrates the location of the code node *digital image* in the visual map. The green node highlighted in this figure shows where it is located in the visual map. Considering the location of the node in the visual map, my conclusion is that the digital image is a gateway medium that points to a physical engagement. The digital

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[287] Peter Osborne touches on the 'distributed image' in relation to post-conceptual art when he writes 'First, the post conceptual work is also distributed across the open and, in principle, indefinitely proliferating totality of instances of its production and exhibition. However, rather than these instances being, exclusively, instances or events of "visualization" (in the sense in which an image is always a perceptual abstraction of a visual structure from its material instantiation), in the post conceptual artwork they are also instances of *materialization*. The aesthetic fullness of the material means is as significant to the work as the structure of their image – along with the wider relational and conceptual aspects of the work, through which it derives its social and historical meanings. The artwork cannot be reduced to its character as an image. The work is thus best identified with the *distributive unity* of the totality of its materializations, at any one time, rather than with the *element of identity* that links the distributed series of visualizations of digitally produced images, at the level of their visual form. In terms of its logical form, the post conceptual artwork is thus more radically distributive than the digitally distributed image.' Peter Osborne. "The Distributed Image." *Texte Zur Kunst* 99, September (2015): 84.

image that points to the physical artwork and social engagement is therefore placed in between production, engagement and investment, as it leads to the potential ownership of the work by a collector. Figure 59 shows the position of the *digital image* in the middle of the visual map. The position in the network between production and collecting shows that the digital image has become a major entity in the process of collecting. It is often the first or sometimes the only view a collector gets of exhibitions and artworks and influences the decision of whether or not to see and further interact with the work in the physical space.[288] The medium becomes a gateway in that sense that it has impact in the way it is distributed as information about media and material of the work it is showing and the image the work itself is producing but also about the context and "the trained eye" can identify symbolic information that the digital image can transport. Monetary value of the artwork in the image can for example be drawn from the contextual information - wall floor relation and colour, lighting and hanging/placement of the work. Galleries have established a visual language that allows the trained eye to identify that an installation view was made by gallery X and that the artists represented by this gallery have a price spectrum of $x to $xx for a work that is represented in the digital image.'[289] The 'distributed image'[290] becomes therefore a medium in collecting processes that often leads to the decision about interacting with the physical object. The value that images transport (the colloquialism for this is 'the money shot') in printed material is an extension of the digital image because the digitally produced image of exhibitions and art works are often used in printed material as well. As one of the interviewees stated:

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[288] But not surprising with so many emails I have only been able to see less and less exhibitions in real life. So a lot of it is accessing projects and exhibitions via the image, via the internet and understanding them in that way. Even if they are in New York. If it is something that I am really interested in, I make the effort to go see it. But otherwise, on occasion that is the only way I will see it. Collector_3.rtf

[289] Anne Luther. *What do you want? An experiment to exhibit the entire Harvard Art Museums Collection for non-humans.* Paper presented at Beautiful Data II, Cambridge, metaLab at Harvard University, July 6 — July 16, 2015. Available at http://issuu.com/annekatrin6/docs/what_do_you_want_issuu.

[290] Peter Osborne. "The Distributed Image." *Texte Zur Kunst* 99, September (2015): 74-86.

The website, the books, those are crucial elements for people to understand the exhibitions and but yes of course, you know, seeing the [artist name] book and a collector is flipping through that, and there are five works printed in the books and there are five available that aren't, they are probably going to buy the one that is in the book. Collector_3.rtf

The digital image therefore does not only carry information about the object, it becomes an object in itself that produces value, has impact on the engagement with artworks and transports information on the symbolic and monetary context of the work that it shows.
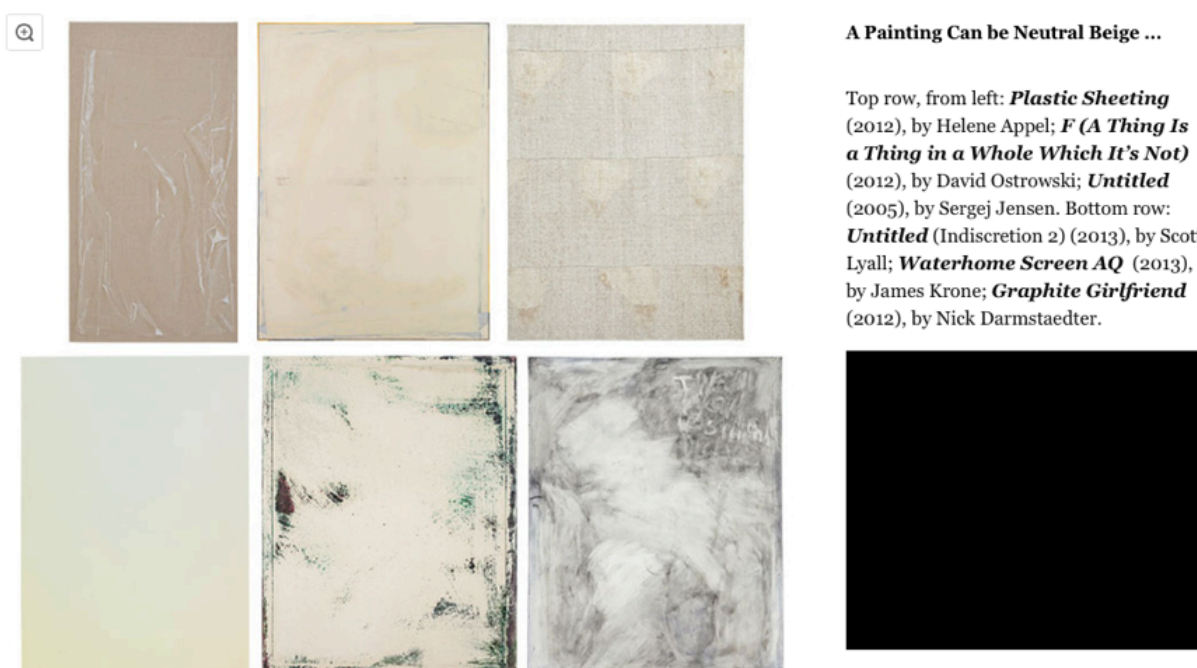
Figure 57. Vulture, *A Painting Can be Neutral Beige...,*, 2014, screenshot taken from Saltz, Jerry. "Zombies on the Walls: Why Does So Much New Abstraction Look the Same?" *Vulture* June 17, 2014.
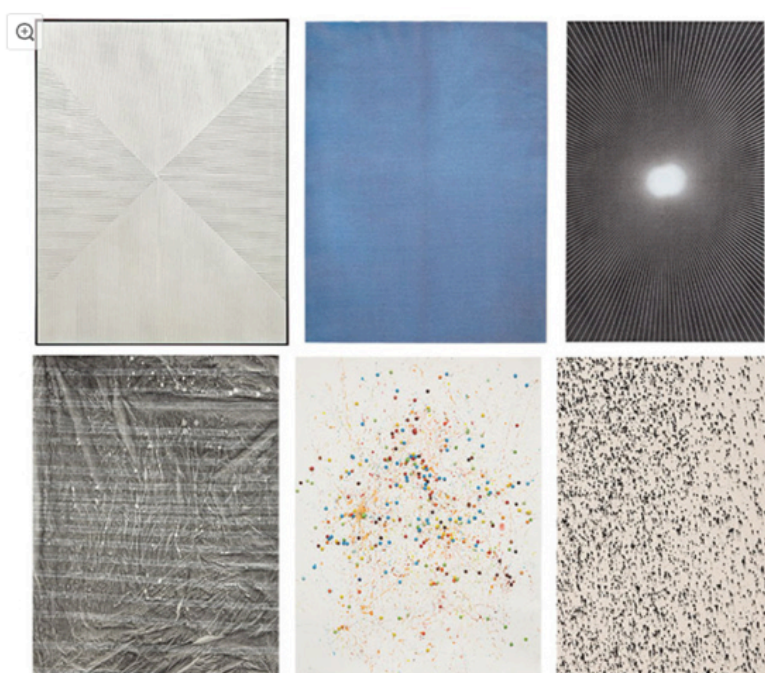
Or Fine Stripes, or Fine Dots ...

Top row, from left: *Untitled* (2010), by
Ned Vena; *Untitled* (2011), by Hugh
Scott-Douglas; *Spine, Chapter 20
(Silberkuppe)* (2010), by R.H.
Quaytman. Bottom row: *Bleach Bum*
(2011), by Sam Moyer; *To Be Titled*
(2011), by Dan Colen; *The Lady Eve*
(2012), by Lucien Smith.
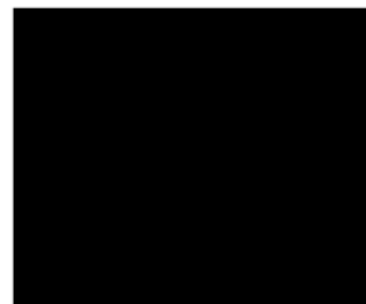
Figure 58. Vulture. *Or Fine Stripes, or Fine Dots...,* 2014, screenshot taken from Saltz,
Jerry. "Zombies on the Walls: Why Does So Much New Abstraction Look the
Same?" *Vulture* June 17, 2014.
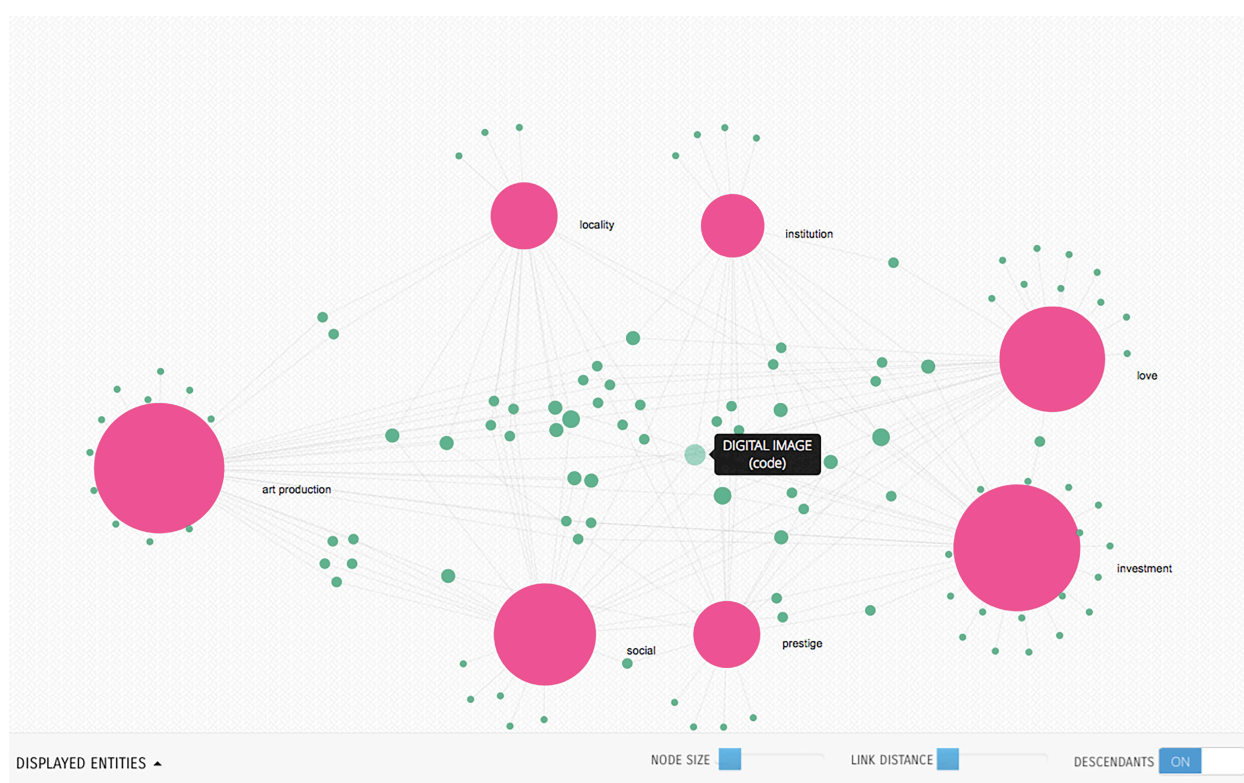
Figure 59. Anne Luther. *Digital Image*, 2015, screenshot.

6.3.3. Social and prestige

Figure 60 highlights the location of the code family node *social* and the linked code nodes and their location in the visual map. Figure 61 shows the location of the node *prestige* in the visual map. The linked code nodes are highlighted through stronger lines to show their location and relationship to other patterns in the visual map.

In this chapter three entities in the visual map will be discussed: *artist_social network role in artist's career*, *collector social network* and *collector role in museum*. Pablo Helguera writes, 'Artists make art that creates an art world that makes all of us who belong to that world perform. And, as we perform, we contribute to the construction of an art scene. The main premise of this book is that contemporary art makes us perform self-conscious or instinctive interpretive acts.'[291] His argument that 'art makes us perform' in a certain scripted way is not the approach taken in this chapter. The social engagement described here is connected to entities that are again linked to *art production*, but nevertheless, it is not Art itself that 'makes something' with us. While describing the social, I am not leaning towards a materialistic approach or even discourses that could be found in speculative realism.[292] Instead, *social* and *prestige* are here considered entities in the network of collecting processes. They are two entities in a complex network which overlaps with other entities that are, for example, based more on materiality (see the code Material with the parent *art production*). The position of the nodes is therefore an important consideration in the network, as it also places the thesis outside of certain philosophical and social scientific discourses.

The node *social network role in artist's career* is linked to the code families *art production*, *locality* and *social*, placed closer to *art production* on the left and between Social and Locality. Its location in the visual map illustrates that the role of the social network (digital and personal connections to other individuals) is

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[291] Pablo Helguera. "Art Scenes: The Social Scripts of the Art World." Accessed January 19, 2013, http://pablohelguera.net/2012/11/art-scenes-the-social-scripts-of-the-art-world-2012/.

[292] Timotheus Vermeulen. "Borrowed Energy." *Frieze* 165, September (2014). Accessed 03 December 2014, http://www.frieze.com/issue/article/borrowed-energy/.

dependent on locality, an important entity for *art production* that is based on social interactions. The interviewees described social interaction in various forms: online networks that are connected to non-online networks,[293] social media,[294] and introductions that are solely based on personal social connections.[295] It seemed that the artists described the social as part of their *art production* process, and within this entity made particular note of invitations to exhibitions, introductions to collectors, artists and curators. The social – art openings, parties, dinners and so on – is not only dependent on access and locality, but also on actively participating in a local community. Here, the placement of the social network is again an important consideration, because it is visually illustrated as just one entity in the network. This means that although openings, dinners and parties were described by the interviewees and in academic literature, they are not exclusively considered as the context or periphery of art making and collecting but more as one part of the various entities that make this network. Artists and collectors who are engaging in this network without this entity can still be part of the collecting and *art production*

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[293] 'Like Contemporary Art Daily, you would have to friends with certain people to be on that site.'Artist_4.rtf. It is not so much that you have to be friends with certain people, but that CAD recognizes the network in which certain exhibitions are. The work itself and the social network influence frequency on the curated website as I detected in the research for an article in which the programmer Cooper Francis and I scraped the entire CAD database from the website between 2008-2015 and tried to detect internal networks of curators and artists, trending cities and galleries, top artists etc. Cooper Francis and Anne Luther. "Contemporary Art, Remembered: Constructing Form from the Data of Digital Experience." Manuscript under peer review for *Network Ecologies Digital Scalar Publication*, Durham: Duke University, 2015.

[294] 'I also have had people who I have no contact with who have just seen something online somewhere and got in touch that way too, just like through images' Artist_4.rtf

[295] 'And while I was still in [name of town] at the academy I became intrigued by the work of the ZERO artists. And I was friends with (incomprehensible) and friends with [artist name]. And he introduced me to [gallerist] in Düsseldorf. And then he got a, I think it was a fellowship, here in Philadelphia, and made connections in New York, and also made a connection for ZERO artists at the Howard Wise Gallery. And on the basis of that I was, again, introduced to a gallery here that became my home until it closed. Artist_1.rtf

'Coming out of Cooper, doing like odd jobs for galleries, odd jobs for artists, installing art in collectors' houses, installing art in galleries. Just having a privileged view, even if you're the help. You learn a lot. Like about people's valence, but also about people, too, you're having access to these people... Well, they're people, and you have a professional relationship and it's not the art relationship. It's not the wink and the handshake at a party... You know what I mean? They're treating you in a slightly more genuine way.' Artist_2.rtf

network described in this thesis. It is, however, an entity that finds a lot of weight in the network itself and is therefore described and pointed out in the visualisation.

Figure 61 shows a merged image of three figures screenshot from the visual map in the web browser. It illustrates the location relationship between the codes *artist_social network role in artist's career*, *access*, and *collector_social network as resource.* The code Access is placed almost in the middle of these two codes, prominently in the middle of the entire visual map. All three codes are linked to either Social or Prestige. Access is linked to Prestige and Locality and is one of the central nodes in this visual map. Access is a form for a collector to acquire and sell what they like. The collector has the resources or uses an art advisory[296] to move the collection in any way they want:

> I would say that in terms of serving our clients, they are advantaged by our relationships with galleries around the world. This is a very competitive market and when somebody says I am sorry, you know, get on the waiting list, we don't have that, there is no such thing as a waiting list for our firm. And even with auctions, when a client wants to give something to an auction in order to trade up, we have different financial relationships with them and our clients get the advantage of that. Our service is completely transparent so we are never ever ever involved in any way with the selling institution or the seller. We are only involved with the buyer, the buyer pays our fees, the buyer knows exactly what the seller has been paid and our relationships are very, very good. And that's to the advantage of our clients. Collector_4.rtf

The buying (acquiring) and selling (deaccessioning) of a work comes with many different protocols for a collector, and here it is worth mentioning a few (though, as said throughout this thesis, these are not any kind of rules or they are not mandatory in any way[297]:

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[296] Robin Pogrebin and Graham Bowley. "Soaring Art Market Attracts a New Breed of Advisers for Collectors." *New York Times* August 22, 2015. Accessed September 03, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/23/arts/design/soaring-art-market-attracts-a-new-breed-of-advisers-for-collectors.html?_r=0.

[297] The protocols mentioned are by no means rules. The field in this thesis has a fluidity that establishes and dismisses these protocols in this ever-changing environment. The surplus contemporary, as argued in the introduction, brings a constant reinvention of the product of this field 'contemporary art' and the way it is distributed, sold, bought, collected, preserved, communicated and criticised. The protocols mentioned were detected in the field during my participant observation and are described as a form of agreement that can be seen as common protocol at the time of the field study.

Selling:

- Galleries often include a paragraph on the resale of the work that the buyer is acquiring. It states that the buyer has to offer the work back to the gallery before offering it to any other party (this is not mandatory on every sales contract, it is dependent on the contract of the gallery.)[298] [299]

- Galleries have established a language that allows them to control the price of their artists, and that language allows them to ban buyers who sell their work privately or at auction, which means that they might not be able to buy from them again (and they even deny having done business with them).[300] Artists also use this kind of language in contracts and agreements.[301]

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[298] The resale of a work of art and the rights that artists have about the resale of the work has been discussed and presented in July 2015 at Artist Space in New York. The event shows that the discussion that was initiated prominently in the 1970s has reach a new relevance due to the high auction results on contemporary art in recent years. Artistspace. "The Artist's Resale Right. Presentations and Discussion July 22, 2015". Accessed July 28, 2015, http://artistsspace.org/programs/the-artists-resale-right.

[299] Here are two examples of wording in terms and conditions on a gallery invoice:
'Gallery shall have a right of first refusal with respect to any sale by Purchaser of the Artwork, beginning on the date Purchaser provides payment in full for the Artwork to Gallery and continuing for a period of three (3) years thereafter. Prior to any proposed sale of the Artwork, Purchaser must first offer the Artwork to Gallery in writing specifying the terms and conditions of the proposed sale with reasonable supporting documentation as may be requested by Gallery, after which Gallery shall have thirty (30) days to elect to purchase the Artwork upon the terms so provided by Purchaser. If Gallery does not elect to purchase the Artwork during this time, Purchaser shall be free to sell the Artwork to a third-party buyer, provided that Purchaser may not sell the Artwork on more favorable terms than offered to Gallery without first offering the Artwork to Gallery on those more favorable terms and conditions. Purchaser further agrees not to sell the Artwork at public auction for a period of three (3) years from the date of this Invoice. Gallery and Purchaser agree that the terms of this Section 2 were negotiated at arm's length and that such restrictions are necessary in order to provide for an orderly resale market for the artist's works of art.'
'If the purchaser decides to sell this work within five years of purchase, the gallery will have the right of first refusal to buy back the work at fair market value. Fair market value shall be determined by the gallery's retail price for works of similar scale and significance at the time of resale and/or auction house estimates, if applicable.'

[300] Many important galleries have blacklisted Simchowitz as a buyer, forcing him to take extreme measures to secure desired work, including using consultants as undercover mules. Simchowitz told me about a recent scheme in which he had a consultant buy three pieces from Essex Street, a Lower East Side gallery. The purchase was nominally on behalf of another client, but the ultimate recipient was Simchowitz; by the time the gallery suspected the ruse, money had already changed hands, but the pieces had not been delivered. The gallery requested that Simchowitz not only cancel the purchase but also return another piece by the same artist that was already in his possession, which he did. Moreover, the gallerist, furious over what happened, called the other client to inform him that he was colluding in fraud, an accusation that heartily amused Simchowitz. (Asked for comment, the gallery responded, "Essex Street has never done business with Stefan Simchowitz.") Christopher Glazek. "The Art World's Patron Satan." *New York Times*, December 30, 2014. Accessed January 23, 2015,

Buying:

- Some galleries follow strategic placement of artworks in collections and
establish protocols for the initiation of sustainable markets for their
represented artists. This can mean that some collectors cannot buy an artwork
of a certain artist in their own city but travel instead to another country.[302] [303]

- The strategies for offering works to buyers are often linked to the influence
the buyer has in the art world. Galleries place works in collections that
support the network of the artist and the gallery. An influential art advisory, a
publicly accessible collection or being a board member of a museum (to
name but a view), are a surplus and show the influence of the buyer. The
gallery does therefore not only sell a work of art but also establishes
connections to a network that can influence the position of the gallery on the
international market.

Access is connected here to *art production* (and the selling and buying of
artwork) and *social* (activities that make it possible for a gallerist, advisor or artist to

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http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/04/magazine/the-art-worlds-patron-satan.html?partner=rss&emc=rss&smid=tw-nytimes&_r=1.

[301] I drew up an agreement in the early Seventies that reserves certain rights to the artist, including
participation in profits that might be made on the resale of the work, but also on exhibitions,
where it could be exhibited, and so forth. And that I have used since it was published, and that
gives me certain control over what happens to my work, and, again, it's not good business. For
one there are a number of collectors, who don't want to enter in such a relationship with me, and
they can't have my work. And there are others, who try to bargain over certain aspects, and I say
'Listen, if this is unacceptable for you, you are unacceptable to all my work.' Artist_1.rtf

[302] 'The artists I collect are very young and many of them are rising stars so there is a lot of demand
for their works. I think this is where people get reluctant. Because there is global demand for
their work. There are some galleries where if I go to a Paris gallery many times I am welcome.
But sometimes the artist wants to have followers in Europe and they don't want American
collectors to come there. That is another kind of practice, which I understand. […] I play
internationally. I buy a lot of work, even if it is an American artist, internationally because I am
at a fair or I have a fond relationship with a German dealer, a Scandinavian dealer, or a dealer
from another territory. I bought from a polish dealer. But they are still the same artists that I am
watching on the list. So its not like, oh I just travel and I buy things from different galleries
around the world, I always buy things with a purpose.' Collector_1.rtf

[303] 'I also felt that it wasn't a supporting role like he was looking for ways to buy it cheap and it wasn't
particularly sensitive, I think he offered the right things in advance and then he wanted all sorts
of discounts and I do offer that, if I think someone is paying the project up front, they should
receive a discount for that, but in that moment it just felt a little bit like there is something not
right about it. He didn't really fell invested into the work.' Gallerist.rtf

understand motives and an economic background, like the gallery dinner, after

parties and phone meetings that allow one to exchange information informally). It is

also connected to the personality and social network of a collector.[304] Access in

connection to Prestige can show to a group also linked to the same sources that one

collector has more 'access' then others. This can be as coded as the seating order at

gallery dinners, as one of the interviewees mentioned:

> There are these two long tables. All of the important people are down here, all the important people are here. And then there are descending hierarchies into, like, Nobody Ville, and I was sat on the very last seat, right here, across from someone's secretary, because they didn't bother to show up and sent their assistant. But if you were an operator in the art world, you'd be feeling dejected, because your lowly status was made so explicit through this seating plan. Author.rtf

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[304] 'Yeah, there are some people to whom I don't want to be associated with.' Artist_1.rtf
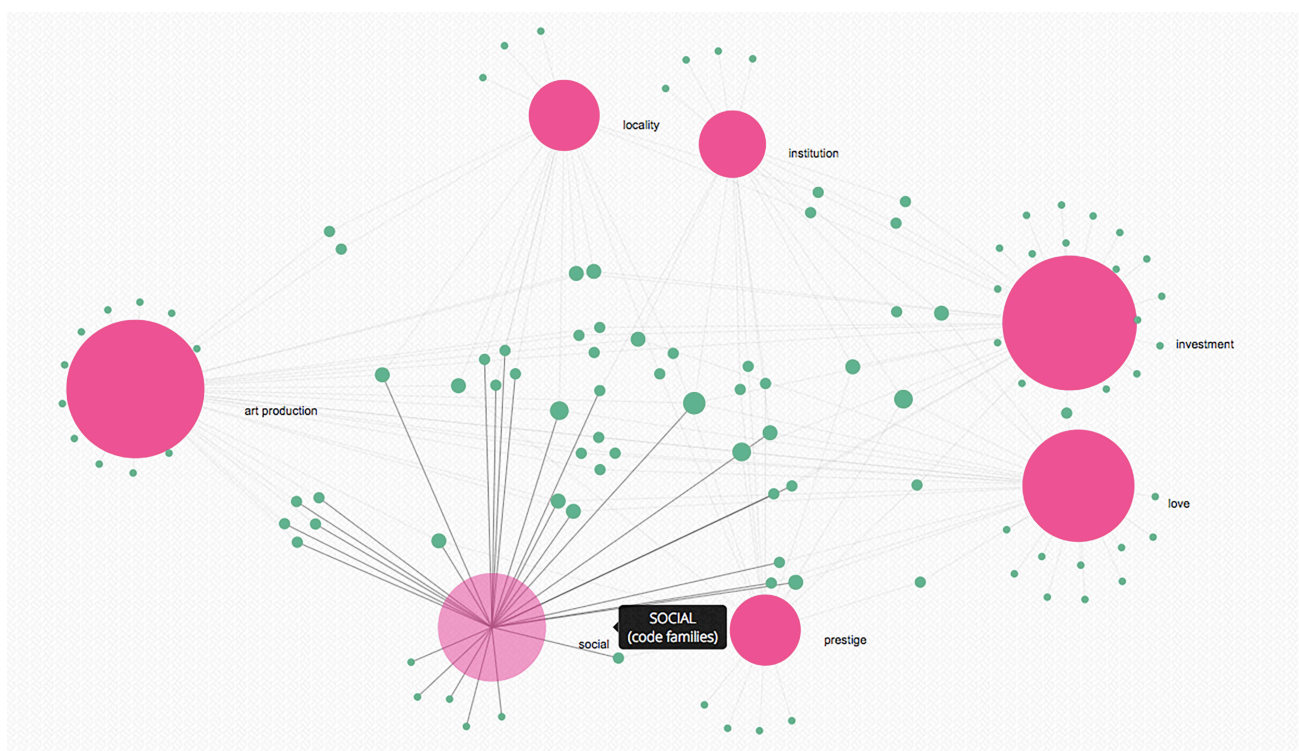
Figure 60. Anne Luther. *Social,* 2015, screenshot.
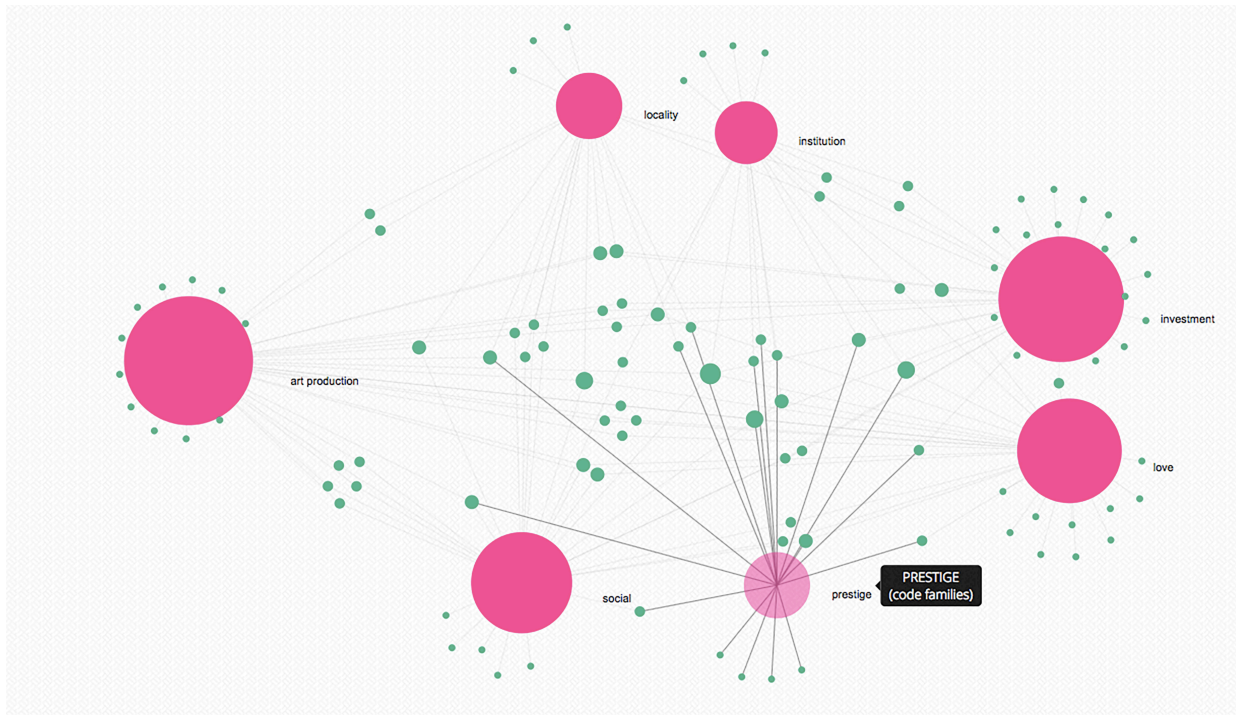
Figure 61. Anne Luther. *Prestige,* 2015, screenshot.
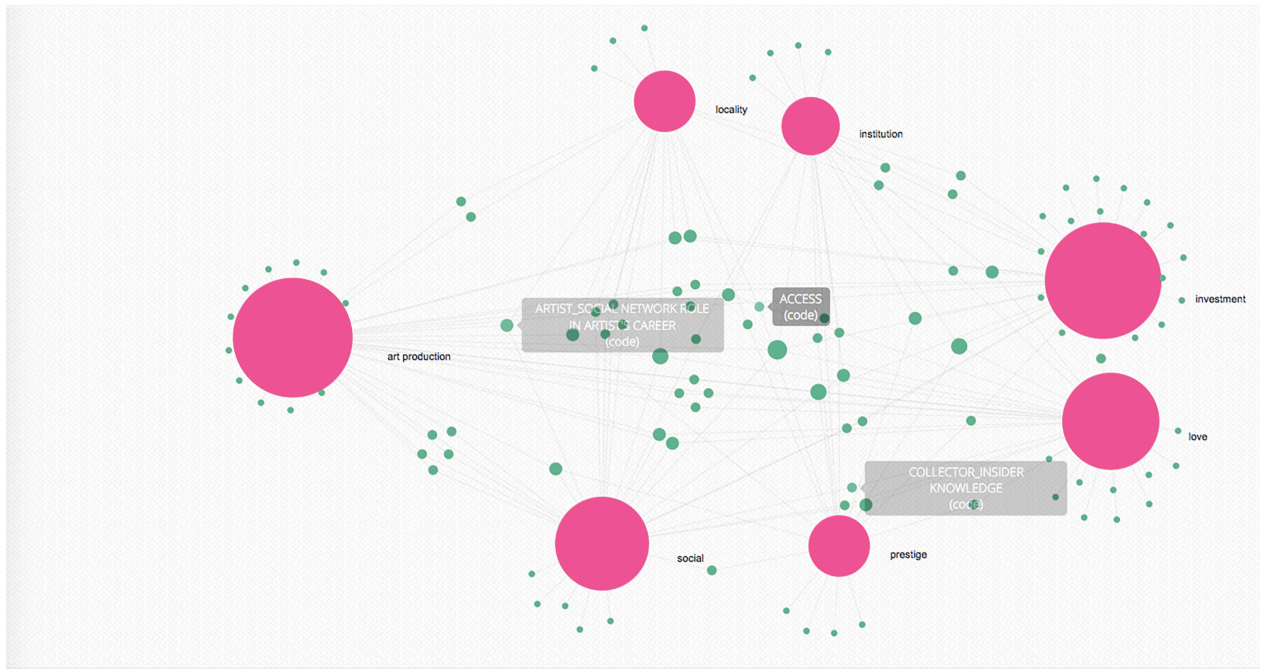
Figure 62. Anne Luther. *Access in relation to artist_social network role in artist's career, access and* collector_social network as resource, 2015, screenshot.

6.3.4. Locality and institutions

Figure 63 shows the location of the pattern *locality* and the linked code nodes in the visual map. Figure 64 illustrates the location and the linked nodes of the code family *institution* in the visual Map. Figure 63 and Figure 64 are the patterns analysed in this subchapter in regards to their appearance in the visual map.

The description of art collecting as having a strong connection to locality and institutions is, on one hand, an obvious understanding, because collectors live in certain places and might show interest in their local gallery or artist network. This node appears with a lot of weight and as a code family in this visual map because the field research was conducted in New York, a city where the quantity of art galleries and institutions is very high and the connection of these local institution is very tangible. The physical connectivity between galleries and collectors, for example, manifests itself in art storage facilities and art handling (galleries sending their own art handlers to the collector's house). The physical connectivity between the artist and his or her collectors manifests itself in, for example, studio visits. The social aspect in this chapter will play a certain role, but locality and institutions will be described on a level that touches on aspects of the social and the 'pointing to a physical object' that was described above. In New York, for example, the physical location of a gallery can be read as a code for the price range, prestige and in some cases even handling of sales. The size possibilities of artworks and rent prices are an indicator for those relations. The Lower East Side hosts galleries in storefront and loft spaces with rent ranges that can dip below $10.000 per month,[305] while Chelsea galleries with '20-foot ceilings' were bought for '$11.5 million'.[306] The size of the space and the rent prices allow artwork to be up to a certain size and to be under a certain price range.

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[305] Andrew Russeth. "Welcome to Art Market Boom 2.0. The economy continues to tank, but money flows in art land." *New York Observer* September 06, 2011. Accessed March 22, 2014, http://observer.com/2011/09/welcome-to-art-market-boom-2-0/.

[306] Andrew Russeth. "Welcome to Art Market Boom 2.0. The economy continues to tank, but money flows in art land." *New York Observer* September 06, 2011. Accessed March 22, 2014, http://observer.com/2011/09/welcome-to-art-market-boom-2-0/.

Collectors open their houses to local actors, as described by the art advisors and collectors Thea Westreich and Ethan Wagner in their book *Collecting Art for Love, Money and More*: 'So, it's quite ordinary, almost de rigeur, for collectors to open their homes to friends, fellow collectors museum groups, artists, dealers and curators.'[307] The concept of a salon, as it was held by Gertrude Stein (1874 –1946)[308] or Lilly Bliss (b. 1864 – 1931, one of the founders of MoMA together with Mary Quinn Sullivan and Abby Aldrich Rockefeller),[309] has become a pattern for collectors, who are also linked to roles in museums. As one of the interviewees described:

> I invited her [the artist] to come and talk to a group of women that I could get together about her work, and she liked that. I have a lot of salons in the house with the artists I collect, introducing them to other collectors.…I am in the conversation reviewing with other collectors, curators. I am acquiring for MoMA, so I am part of the acquisitions committee, and I am paying attention to what they are doing. Sometimes an artist comes out of a field that I have never heard of, or never looked at, that I look at differently once I see how it's been presented by others. And then sometimes I just go to a fair and I see something […] Collector_1.rtf

The location of the gallery in the city and the collectors who have conversations in their homes with collectors and other actors who are connected to institutions in the city are based on a very physical interaction with both peers and the art.

These relationships give the space for a very local conversation that is connected to similar codes in an international and digital locality. An example of this is the artist's CV, which indicates where the artist exhibited (gallery, independent spaces or institutions, art centres like New York, Berlin and London), but also in which price range the artist might be (which can be understood by knowing the price range of a gallery, understanding institutional representation, age and media of the

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[307] Ethan Wagner and Thea Westreich Wagner. *Collecting Art for Love, Money and More*. (New York: Phaidon Press, 2013), 18.

[308] James R Mellow. "The Stein Salon Was The First Museum of Modern Art." *New York Times* December 1, 1968. Accessed July 22, 2014, https://www.nytimes.com/books/98/05/03/specials/stein-salon.html.

[309] MoMA. "Modern Women: A Partial History. Bliss, Lillie P. (1864–1931)" Accessed July 04, 2015, https://www.moma.org/explore/publications/modern_women/history#lexicon4.

artist. The actual price range of an artist's work is never indicated specifically on an artist's CV) and often in which local network the artist is (indicated noting the city one lives and works in – and the representing gallery, curators and writers who have presented the work):

> So we do a bit of research, find out who the artist is, where they studied, who showed them, what curators have shown interest in them. You know, all of those things, and you find that out through their CV, through discussing with the gallery and then also informal discussions with your colleagues and contemporaries. Collector_2.rtf

This knowledge of indicators that are relevant to certain collectors is not solely dependent on social interactions but also on time that the collector spends in 'the field'. One of the interviewees described this time factor as being part of a watch list she is continuously updating:

> You would see me doing deep research at any given time on about 35 artists, 35 - 50 artists that I am following. New ones come and new ones go and get prioritized, but there are always 35 - 50 that are actively on my watch list. And then I work with my consultant and we start to dialogue around them, what's the work like, how is it evolving, and then we talk about shows that are opening somewhere around the world with that artist and opportunistically if there if there is a piece that I love, then they come to the top of the list. Collector_1.rtf

The dialogue that she describes is often related to the factors listed above that one can see on the artist CV, but also relies on insider knowledge about upcoming exhibitions (especially when it comes to exhibitions at institutions[310]). Institutional validation is therefore based on two strong assumptions: it can be used as a sales tool by the gallerist, and it can validate the work away from a market performance. This play between the raising prices based on the information that the artist's work is curated into an institutional space, and at the same time validating the work in a non-

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[310] The gallery will use that as a selling tool. You know, they'll say so and so recently acquired a group of works by x artist saying that this work is valid because this institution is supporting this artists career. Collector_3.rtf

market institution is here also based on local social networks (as described above)[311]
and on a development comes close to the distinction between the dichotomy of 'love
and money'.[312] The distinction between the market and world was described in
Chapter 2, and although it is shown in this chapter that this distinction was
prominently disregarded, it is nevertheless to be found in a moment when the market
performance could become a validating indicator.

The examples in this chapter show that collectors are informed by codes that
the networks establish and validate. The codes established in this chapter are mostly
related to discourses that are connected to a locality, be it the urban environment (for
example, how the location of the gallery can be an indicator for the prices of
*artwork*s) or on the artist's CV (the gallery location and prestige can also be an
indicator for a price range and support). The chapter also shows that meta-discourses
intrinsic to the network are not always an indicator for nodes in the network.
Secondary market prices as a validation form for the success of an artist lead back to
the dichotomy of institutional validation vs. market/economic validation, although
the visual map and discourses described in Chapter 2 show that a distinction between
the two cannot be made.

In this regards another node in the network has to be mentioned – the rise of
the private museum. This concept, opening a private collection in an institutional
manner to the public, is not a recent phenomenon (see the Frick Collection[313] and the

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[311] There are many different places or situations where the interests of the museums, artists, and the
market coincide. Museums have boards of trustees who – given their wealth and the returns on
their wealth, are very much in favor of the current situation which is encouraging this boom.
The museums have joined the arms race and are all expanding. As for the artists, if they said
no, none of this would be able to happen. It seems to me that there is greed all over the place.'
Daniel Baumann. "The Demise of the future. Gavin Brown & Daniel Baumann in a
Conversation about the Art Market." *Spike Art Quarterly*, no. 40 (Summer 2014). Accessed
July 08 2015, http://www.spikeartmagazine.com/en/articles/demise-future.

[312] Ethan Wagner and Thea Westreich Wagner. *Collecting Art for Love, Money and More*. New York:
Phaidon Press, 2013).

[313] Frick Collection. "About The Frick Collection." Accessed July 07, 2013,
http://www.frick.org/about.

history of the Guggenheim Museum,[314] both in New York). Nevertheless, the sheer quantity of private museums that opened in the past 10 years is incomparable to years prior. The BMW Art Guide[315] published a list of over 230 private collections with public access in its third edition since 2012, and lists such as 'What Are America's Top 10 Private Contemporary Art Museums?'[316] on ArtNet show institutional collections mostly founded between 2003 and 2009. Institutional validation here is connected to personal taste: the collector sees the institution in the public space but is not responsible to the public in the sense that a publicly funded museum likely has a clear educational mission. The Rubells stated in the first Global Private Museum Summit in London[317] in 2013 that private museums can react and exhibit more frequently and quicker absorb young positions in the contemporary art world because the decision-making processes are often dependent on a small team of staff in the private collection museums. The summit in London might be a benchmark for an international network within the described network, one which separates itself as comprising dedicated collectors who are willing to show a public program rather then solely participating in collecting on small level of engagement. This trend is reflected again in the two methods mentioned, namely the right and wrong reasons for acquiring work.[318] The assumption here is that collectors are building private museums for tax deductions.

As one of my interviewees mentioned when I asked about the rise of the private museum: 'That also has to do with the tax rate. I think you should think about that. I think it is always different, I think there are a lot of really great collectors out

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[314] Guggenheim. "Guggenheim Foundation History," Accessed January 19, 2015, http://www.guggenheim.org/guggenheim-foundation/history.

[315] BMW Art Guide by Independent Collectors. *The global guide to private yet publicly accessible collections of contemporary art.* Berlin: Hatje Cantz, 2015.

[316] Artnet. "What Are America's Top 10 Private Contemporary Art Museums?" Last modified October 8, 2014, https://news.artnet.com/art-world/what-are-americas-top-10-private-contemporary-art-museums-56919.

[317] Artlyst. "Private Museum Owners Gather In London For First Summit." Accessed June 16 2015, http://www.artlyst.com/articles/private-museum-owners-gather-in-london-for-first-summit.

[318] Olav Velthuis. *Talking Prices: Symbolic Meanings of Prices on the Market for Contemporary Art.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 42-45.

there, but it is a very expensive habit and there is a tax deduction.' And as mentioned in a recent New York Times article, '…founders can deduct the full market value of any art, cash and stocks they donate, even when the museums are just a quick stroll from their living rooms.'[319] The good reason here is the commitment a collector shows by opening a museum to the public:

> We are not a kind of big, heavy bureaucratic organization. We are a very small group of people who are free from any of those ties, so we can change our mind and change things. Which is also where people get frustrated and concerned because what I suppose people think it means is that we could disappear and not be public anymore. But what you don't really see or you don't really understand is that the level of commitment and that there is a certain momentum that when you stop… you can't really stop. Once you've started collecting at this level – and I don't mean that as in like financial level, I mean more like volume or capacity of how much you are doing and how many people you have employed to do that – it's not very easy to get rid of those things. You get kind of bound up in it and it is a big commitment. So maybe there isn't a twenty-five year plan, but there is a five year kind of focus on what we are doing. And now more and more, there are longer term plans, because of the children getting more involved, and that's kind of necessary. Curator in private collection.rtf

The economic investment into art as a collector is not seen as the most invested concept. Considering commitment, two connections have been described so far in this chapter, namely the involvement in opening the collection to friends and other art world related figures (in the form of salons, for example), and the investment in an institution (like, for example, a member of the acquisition committee as mentioned by an interviewee above). This public engagement and institutional commitment also takes form in the rise of the private museum, opening the collection to a wider public and employing curators, art handler, administrators and security as members of staff in a private institution.

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[319] Patricia Cohen. "Writing Off the Warhol Next Door." *New York Times*. January 10, 2015. Accessed January 15, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/11/business/art-collectors-gain-tax-benefits-from-private-museums.html?_r=0.
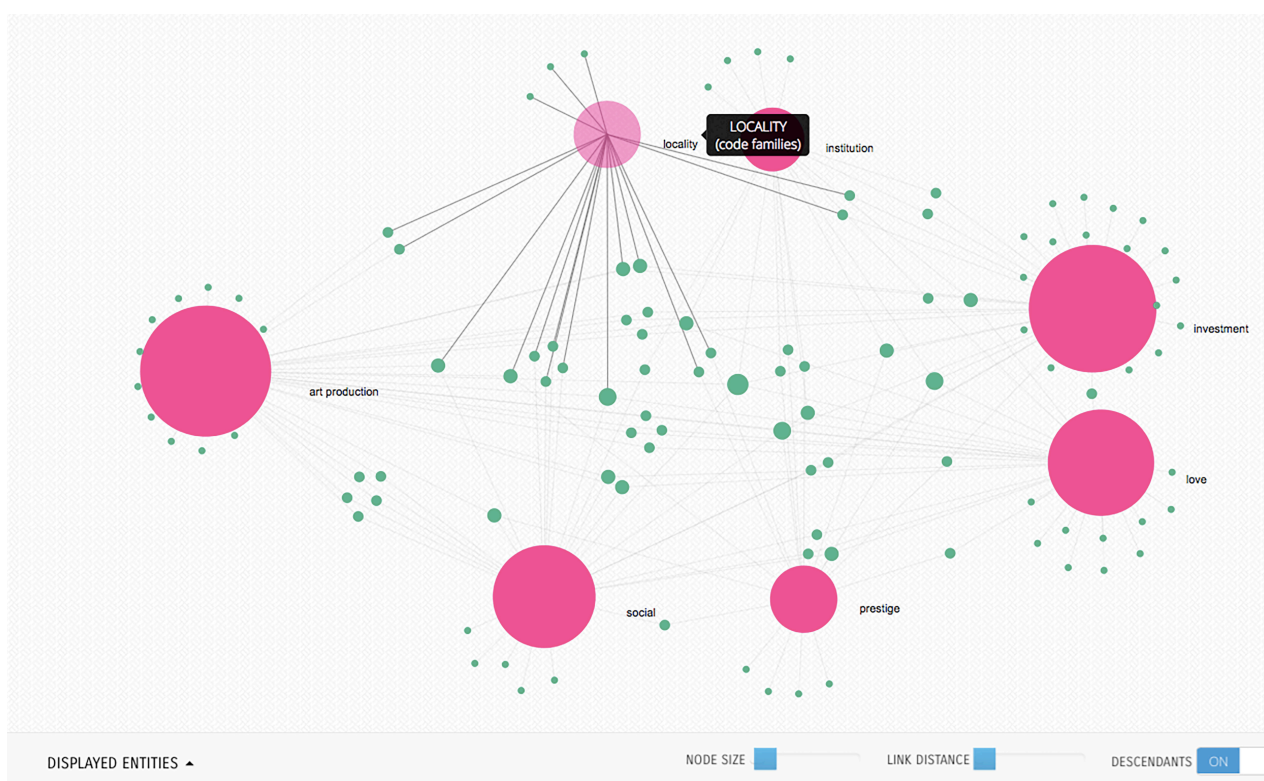
Figure 63. Anne Luther. *Locality,* 2015, screenshot.
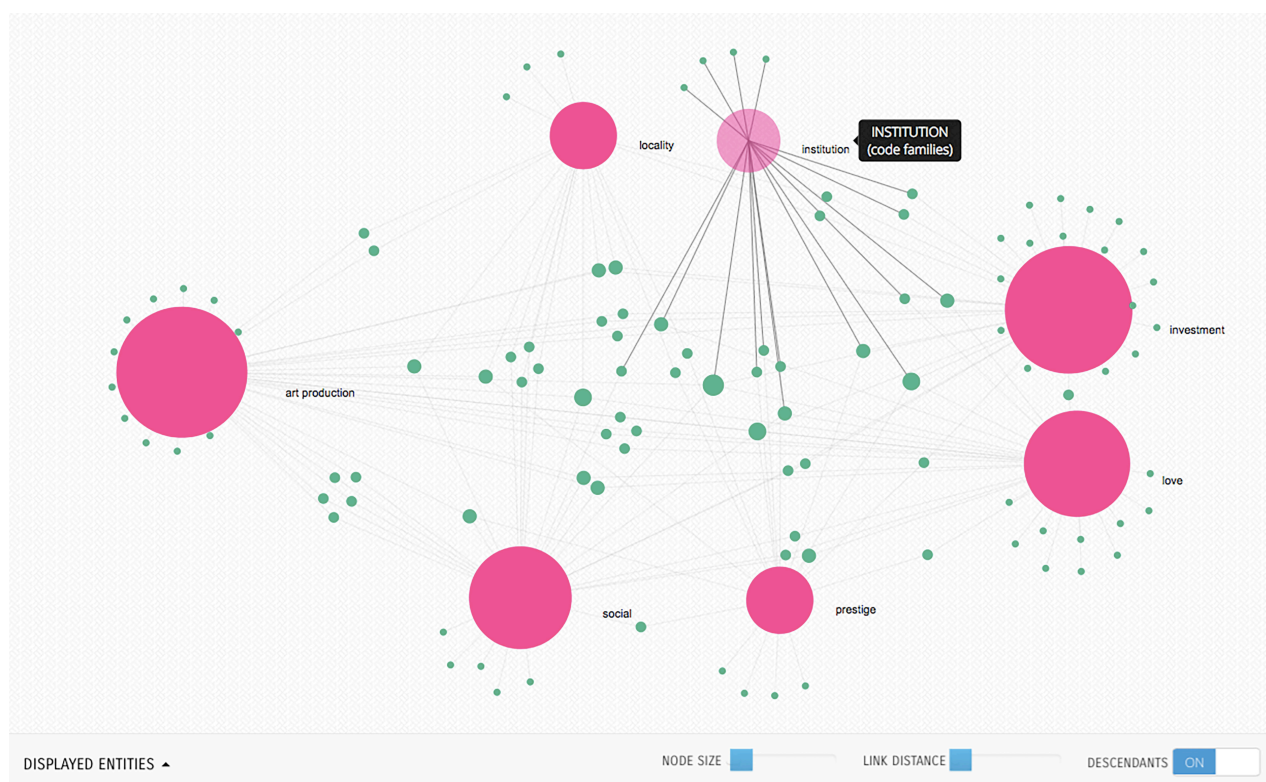
Figure 64. Anne Luther. *Institution,* 2015, screenshot.

6.3.5. Love

Through the visual map it became clear that nodes connected to the code family *Love* are overlapping with all of the other code families. *Love* and *Investment* are, as shown in the paradigm model, consequences in this visual map. The overlapping entities result in and inform the collecting process. They can be found in the described entities that are flowing between the cause, *art production*, and the consequences, *love* and *investment.* As illustrated in Figure 65, the codes connected to *love* are widespread over the entire visual map. Love illustrates codes that are also related to entities that are linked to the economic investment, as well as the practical decisions that come with that (storage, where to buy work, shipment costs, how to deaccession [etc.]). The codes that are not linked to any other entity in the network are *collecting personality*, *commitment*, *Belief in Art*, *collecting intellectual activity*, *collector knows artist*, *collector_personal preferences and collector wants to learn*.

One question in all of the interviews was always asked after a description of almost all of the interviewees that collecting is love for art, it was the question if they could describe this love, what they mean by that. An interviewee described it in the following way:

> Did you ever have a boyfriend or a girlfriend and have you fallen in love with them? It is the exact same thing. So the difference is that your interaction maybe is different, right, so the art has to interact with you in your life on a daily basis in a way that you know makes you feel happy when you come home. Maybe it is an aesthetic thing, maybe it's that the *artwork* is challenging for you. For me, I live with art and I can't imagine not living with art because when I come home and it has been a bad day, I turn on the lights and I have the most amazing things around me that make me happy. I think it is just that simple, it makes you happy to look at it. And at a certain point you get bored of it and you get a divorce. Collector_2.rtf
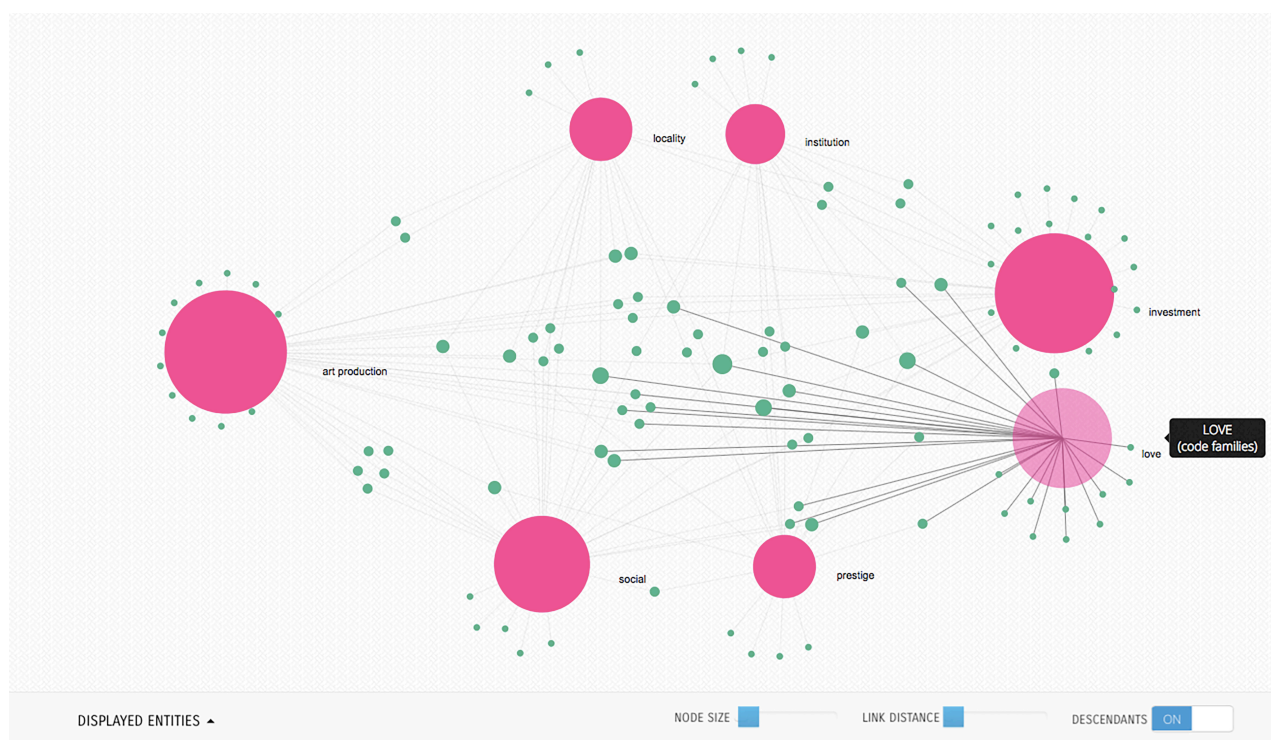
Figure 65. Anne Luther, *Love*, 2015, screenshot.

Highly personalized relationships to the objects of desire:

Isabelle Graw describes buying painting as a 'highly personalized' act when she writes: "[…] acquiring a work of art means getting a hold on the artist's labour capacity and therefore owning a slice of their life. Buying artworks indeed comes close to buying people – and this is especially true for painting."[320] The understanding that works of art can have agency is, for Graw, here connected to the semiotic hints an artwork can give to an imagined artist who made the work. Semiotic hints points towards the imagined artist (what did she think of when making the work? How long did it take to make the work? What inspired her? How did she develop the process, how old is she, what was she like when she made the work?) and an object (image production, a painterly gesture, material, and composition). These semiotic hints in works of art are often described by the collector on a highly emotional level – an identification with the image that the work produces or an idea that the imagined artist developed is here one aspect of the node Love. As one interviewee described:

> […] generally I collect contemporary art of now and something that resonates with me, I call it collecting psycho-analytically. I am in touch with something in myself that a piece of art sparks and then I have to acquire it […] Sometimes it's visual, sometimes it's emotional, sometimes it's intellectual. For example, I bought Jason Loeb's *[title of the work]* because I had spent a year working on the obsolescence of newspapers and thinking about what is a future without a physical newspaper, and what replaces it, and how that must feel to peoples' intellect, and how the conversation around the news that is very different now that you can interact with the news. So when I saw that piece I knew I had to have it, because it was how I was spending every waking hour. Collector_1.rtf

As she describes a 'spark' that can resonate on an emotional, intellectual or visual level, the conversation about the desired object becomes part of that spark, the contextualization of a work that gives these intellectual references or conceptual and concrete concepts an emotional response. One example here could be the work of the

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[320] Isabelle Graw. "The Value of Painting. Notes on Unspecificity, Indexicality and Highly Valuable Quasi- Persons." In *Joy Forever: The Political Economy of Social Creativity*, edited by Michał Kozłowski, Agnieszka Kurant, Jan Sowa, Krystian Szadkowski, and Jakub Szreder, 65–74. (London: MayFlyBooks, 2014), 46-47.

artist Israel Lund – an artist in the collection of the interviewee above, also described to me after the interview ended [see Figure 66].

The visual image that the painting creates can bring an emotional response for a collector that works on purely an aesthetic subjective level and that is not connectable to any other nodes in the visual map, but has been described in many published interviews with collectors.[321] The personal emotional response that the collector has can be captured in the visual map as such, but not with the sources and reasons for the associations, emotions and affects. Still, the image that is created in the painting follows a discourse that touches on contemporary topics through the production process of the work that the collector can follow and therefore respond to on an intellectual level.[322] This discourse is connected to the code Discourse in the visual map, which is connected to Social and Institution. In the example of the work shown above by Israel Lund, the image is created through a process of screen printing without an actual image – rather than the image being burned onto the screen, it is instead made through a process of printing solely with a screen with recognisable holes. These holes allow the paint to create visible dots on the canvas that are layered with each newly applied paint (in the work above, the artist uses only primary colours and black and white.) The quantity of dots on the canvas creates patterns that allow us to see a composed image. The contemporary discourse here is related to the pixel; images created through small coloured entities, just like the ones on Israel Lund's canvas. It goes further into image production and circulation and expands to the topic of the 2D digital image with its pixels and 3D depth perception of the dots on the canvas and the 3D object of art. The references here are the discourse that hints towards the artist, validation through critics and the

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[321] For example here: 'Finally, art must surprise me, challenge me, open up my mind and heart following the definition that I heard many years ago from Mera Rubell: "Art is a language which opens your heart to the Other." BMW Art Guide by Independent Collectors. "Interview with Alain Servais." Accessed June 15, 2015, http://bmw-art-guide.com/idx/collectors/interview-with-alain-servais.

[322] 'Ideally, I am visually attracted to the work firstly as then find out about its deeper meaning.' BMW Art Guide by Independent Collectors. "Interview with Frédéric de Goldschmidt." Accessed June 15, 2015, http://bmw-art-guide.com/idx/collectors/interview-with-frederic-de-goldschmidt.

object itself: Alex Bacon in 2014: "Israel Lund's Analog JPEGs." in *The Brooklyn Rail*; Boško Blagojević in 2014: "Israel Lund." in *Artforum*; Paul Wagenblast in 2013: "Israel Lund Process Painting in the Meta Age with the US Artist." in *Dazed Digital* (and more). One interviewee described intellectual activity in the following way:

> It's an intellectual activity, let's not forget that. Art is an effort to make sense of one's time, or to comment on one's time. Those are pretty big goals and objectives. And it's visual, it's not linguistic. The linguistic is a little bit easier for us to understand because we understand scholarship, we understand the reading and the describing and the learning, but with art, there is that other thing, there is a stand in for the reading. It is not that the reading isn't important – it is – but the object ultimately is the thing. And the opportunity for the thing to grow legs in the way it does, to become essential in the way it does […] there is an ineffable power of an art making practice that's available, that is the potential. Not every artist is great, we know that, but they are pretty brave. Collector_4.rtf

The intellectual activity node is placed close to discourse in the visual map [see Figure 67 and 68]. As described in the paragraph above, contemporary discourses are closely related to the intellectual activities that collectors might engage in, such as reviewing historical texts, critical reviews and museum discussions of the artist's work. The close proximity of these two entities in the network that one can see in the figures below supports the argument above.

Figure 66. Israel Lund, *Untitled*, 2015, Acrylic on raw canvas, 88 x 68 inches, installation view Osmos Address, New York, photo by Adam Reich.
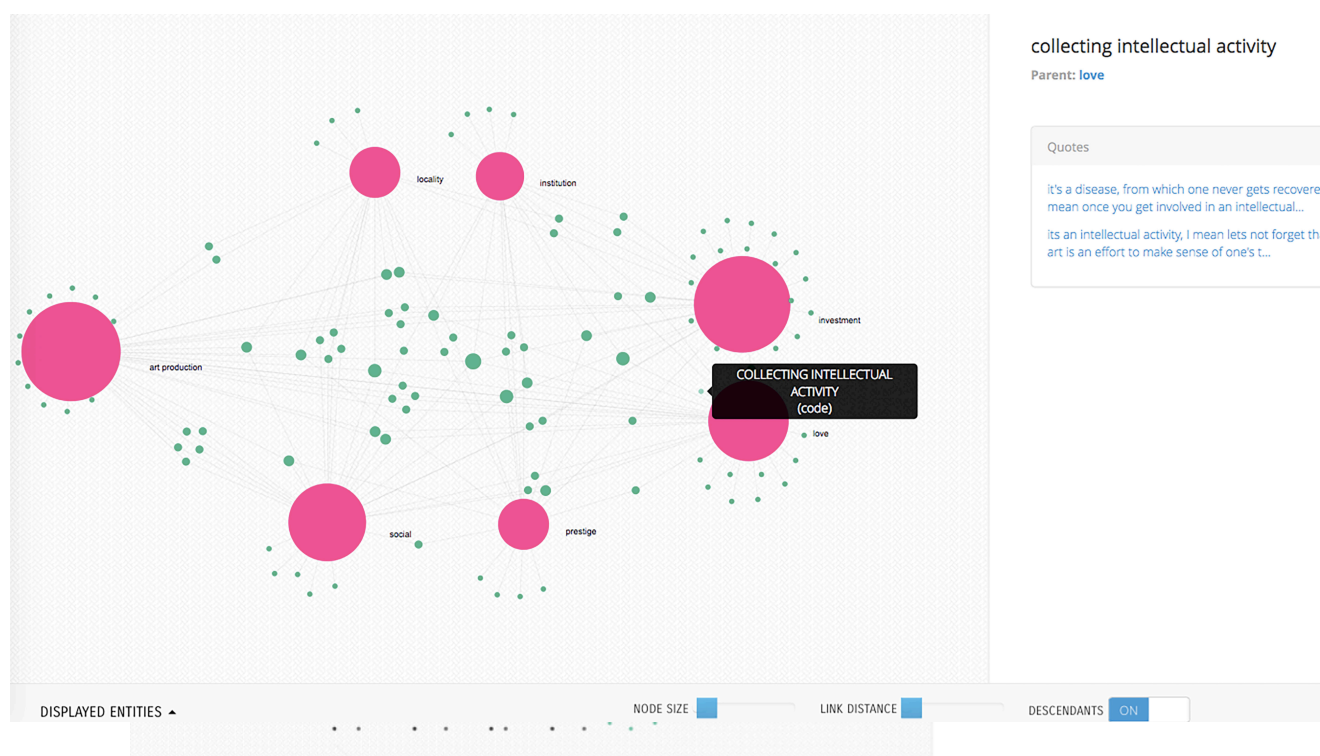
Figure 67. Anne Luther, *Collecting intellectual activity*, 2015, screenshot.
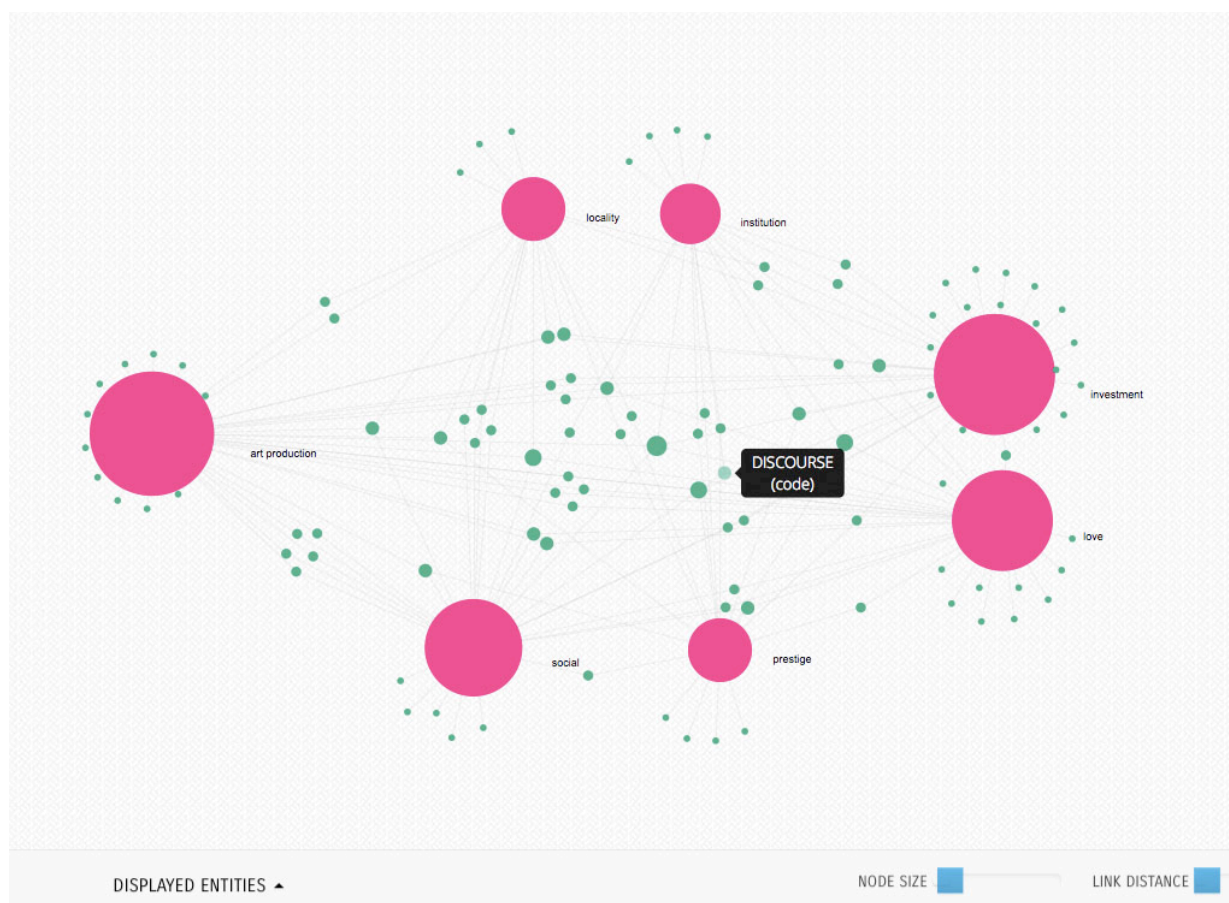
Figure 68. Anne Luther, *Discourse*, 2015, screenshot.

Collecting as an occupation in the daily life:

> It definitely marks life. When I walk around my house and I look at the pieces and the artists and the period that I bought it in, I also think about where I was and what I was thinking. It's a reflection. And there are certain pieces that are meditation, there are certain pieces that are really calming to me. I bought them because they really gave me a calming moment, they are really emotional, they were a great release for me at the time and they still bring me to that state of meditation. Collector_1.rtf

Three characteristics that came up often are living with the work, the activity involved in finding a work (often described as a chase) and the 'semiotic personalized experience'[323] of the work, which hints in the direction described above by Graw – the personality of the artist and a potential object. But the personality of the artist in Graw's example does not hint at the 'real' artist. The collector does not need to have a personal connection to the artist to guess 'the expressiveness of this person' through, for example, the painterly gestures that the collector could detect in an artist's work.

The chase is an activity and a commitment that the collectors do on a daily basis. It is an occupation that the collector identifies with because it brings the individual to make aesthetic and economic decisions[324] about objects that are potentially seen by the individual on a daily basis or visited by others. This investment on a daily basis is coded with *collector_good due to true interest in art*. This code floats between Love and Prestige in the visual map [see Figure 69].

When the activity is shared between a couple (see famous American art collectors such as Donald and Mira Rubell, singer George Michael and Kenny Goss, Christine and Andrew J. Hall, Herbert and Dorothy Vogel, Thea Westreich and Ethan Wagner) it is often described as an occupation that they both see as a life long project:

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[323] Isabelle Graw. "The Value of Painting. Notes on Unspecificity, Indexicality and Highly Valuable Quasi- Persons." In *Joy Forever: The Political Economy of Social Creativity*, edited by Michał Kozłowski, Agnieszka Kurant, Jan Sowa, Krystian Szadkowski, and Jakub Szreder, 65–74. London: MayFlyBooks, 2014.

[324] Adam Lindemann. "The Art of Buying." *Sunday Telegraph*, July 9, 2006. Available at http://www.adamlindemann.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/lindemann_sunday_telegraph.pdf

It's a disease from which one never gets recovered, I mean once you get involved in an intellectual community, you are there, it's tough to get out. You know that from scholars, […] you know in scholarship it tends to be very tiny and refined and really dedicated and very thoughtful, but when you are in the art world its very tough, because it's all over the place, its stimulation is on going, it's forever, it doesn't exist in books only, it doesn't exist in magazines only, it doesn't exist in studios only, it doesn't exist in museums only, it just goes on and on and on. The questions are forever, and the investigation is forever, and it's just too exciting for words, just to be continually looking at something and saying, 'Well, how do you feel about that?' You have to see the things in person, and it's – I mean, we can go through a Cranach exhibition, my husband and I, and say which one would you take home if you could. It's just that constant enjoyment of selecting and thinking about something and what makes something great and why is it great and is it just your own eye or you know just the endless – sorry, I've got the disease, so...' Collector_4.rtf

This investment in the chase of the right artwork is connected to time, money and the described belief in art. Some collectors travel to galleries in other countries, and would not miss art events such as the Venice Biennale, Frieze, Art Basel Miami Beach, Documenta, etc. Traveling shows this commitment to the collection and the contemporary artists. But it also, as one of the interviewees described, could offer often more possibilities to acquire art from galleries that are selling work by a represented artist that another gallery would not sell.
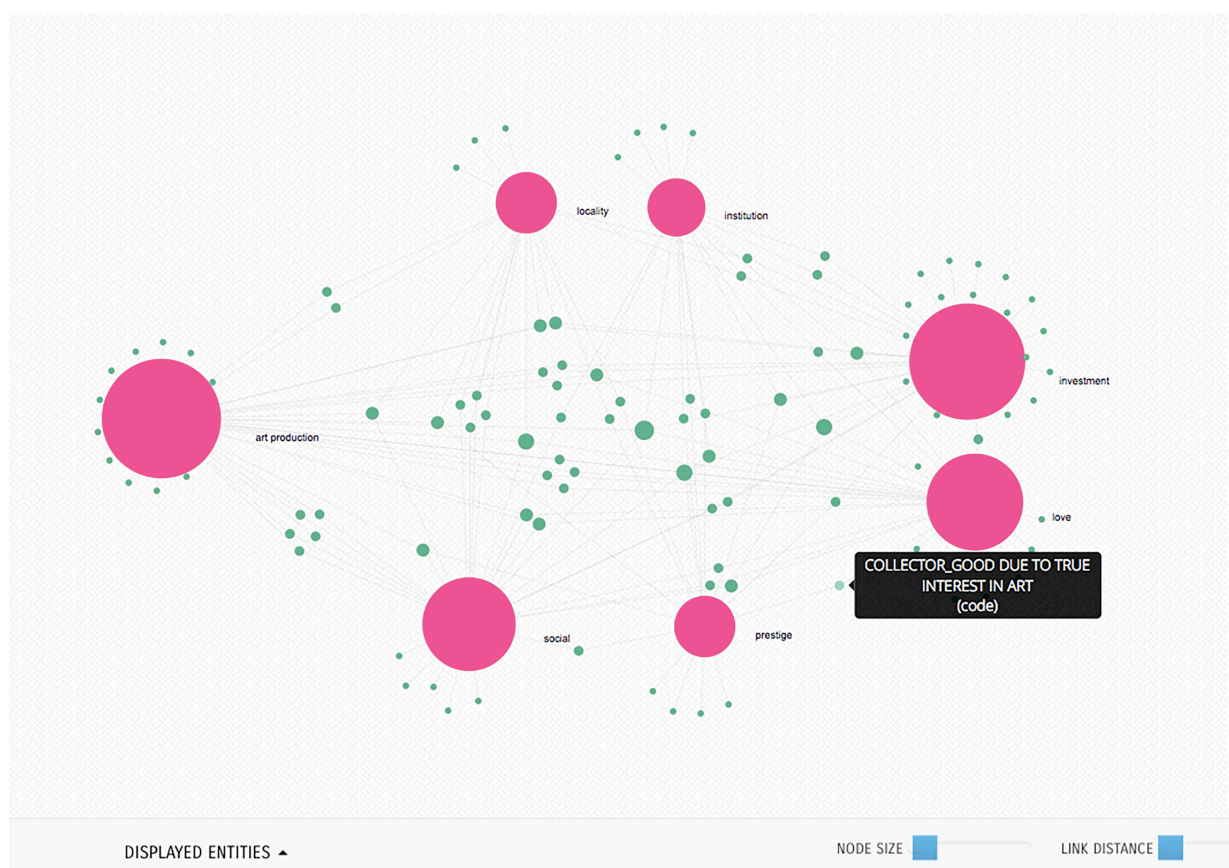
Figure 69. Anne Luther, *Collector_good due to true interest in art,* 2015, screenshot.

Time perception of the collection:

Life-long is here an indicator that also describes two different perceptions connected to time (a code in the visual map connected to the code families Love and *art production*), namely to collect to 'give' something that will last until after one's own death, and on the other hand to 'give' something that will allow ancestors to liquidate after one's own death [see Figure 70 Time]. *Time* is clustered in the visual map in the constellation of three codes – *artist studio*, *art production _love* and *art without market*. In this constellation it becomes clear that Time perception in collecting is related to *art production* and 'something' outside the market. This 'something' will be discussed here as an entity that relates to the perception of a lifespan of collected objects that have the potential to outlive the collector. The closeness to *art production* shows a rush or a fast understanding of contemporaneity (the present, or material and discourses that are discussed or used right now in the present moment). It might be compared to the economic rush of the chase to understand an artist before she is validated by institutions and a reflective discourse. This expansion from the Now to the end of the life is a red thread throughout most of the interviews conducted for this study, and also found in the interviews quoted earlier from the BMW Art Guide by Independent Collectors. The knowledge that the works can outlive the collector was referred to as wanting to 'find a good home for the work' after death. Donating to museums becomes an option that is not only related to the institutional validation of the collection, but also to the knowledge that the institution will outlive the collector. This connection to immortality on a material level has been discussed by Boris Groys.[325] The understanding that works of art are seen as objects worth collecting rather than consuming (here with a sense of 'annulation, destruction'[326]) leads Groys to the question of what gives the right for a work of art to be collected, stored and kept 'alive'.

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[325] Boris Groys. *Logik der Sammlung: Am Ende des musealen Zeitalters.* (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1997), 26.

[326] Boris Groys. *Logik der Sammlung: Am Ende des musealen Zeitalters.* (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1997), 25.

The question of a potential material immortality is often referenced to another non- materialistic understanding of art. For Benjamin the hermeneutic context or memory[327] that is attached to the objects in a collection is what makes it worthwhile for a collector to store works of art for a collector on a subjective, personal level.

The materiality of the objects that can outlive the collector is in this chapter inscribed in a museum that can hold the works of art after the death, like a graveyard[328] holds the material corpses,[329] or it can be capitalized by the descendants, as described by one interviewee:

> In order to insure it and in order to protect it and in order to be sure that even if I never saw it in my life time, my family may choose to liquidate and make sure that it find a good home, because that is my wish. So we just think of it as an investment. I have a stewardship of those pieces while I am here, but then my whole idea is that the galleries and the artists trust that I will take care of it. I am going to show it to other people, I am going to share with institutions, sometimes I am going to donate some things to institutions and then when my family wants to part with it, we find a great home. I think that this is the obligation of a collector. Collector_1.rtf

To inherit or give the collection to children also connects to the concept of material immortality in the sense that the family has the potential to outlive the collector in the same way that the objects of art also can:

> [I collect as an] homage to my grandmother who was a collector. When I inherited the collection from her, I also inherited her passion to collect art. I hope I'll be able to pass on a taste and a collection to my grandchildren too, but in the meantime continue to be challenged by art and artists.[330] [331]

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[327] Walter Benjamin. "Unpacking My Library: A Talk About Book Collecting." In *Illuminations*, edited by Hannah Arendt, 59–68. New York: Schocken, 1969.

[328] Boris Groys. *Logik der Sammlung: Am Ende des musealen Zeitalters.* (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1997), 9.

[329] Rachel Barker and Alison Bracker. "Beuys Is Dead: Long Live Beuys! Characterising Volition, Longevity, and Decision-Making in the Work of Joseph Beuys." *Tate Papers*, Autumn (2005). Last modified January 31, 2012. http://www.tate.org.uk/download/file/fid/7404.

[330] BMW Art Guide by Independent Collectors. "Interview with Frédéric de Goldschmidt." Accessed June 15, 2015, http://bmw-art-guide.com/idx/collectors/interview-with-frederic-de-goldschmidt.

[331] And in the interviews: 'there is more than one collector in the collection really, because there is (collector name) and (collector name) and their children they are all involved now. Their younger two not so much but starting to be. […] And now more and more, there are longer term plans because of the children are getting more involved and that's kind of necessary.' Curator in private collection.rtf

One could ask why collectors want to preserve the objects in the collection, even if the collection itself would dissolve in a partial museum donation or liquidating the objects in auctions or private sales. Why don't they just throw the art away when they have finished with the pursuit of and life with the works?[332] Waste, using and consuming art with a declining value or potential, is not discussed prominently in regards to collecting. A belief in art that is manifested in the constant storing and circulation of art objects makes these materials immortal through an absence of the possibility of destroying the materialistic object once it is no longer wanted (when the facilitation and storage of the object costs too much, and the object can't be liquidated).

Works of art have the potential in their materiality to outlive the collector if they are preserved, stored and collected. For the collector, they have the right to be preserved and not, for example, be thrown away when the collector wants to make room for another work of art 'on the wall'. Interviewees offered donating to a museum or passing works down to children as possible solutions for preservation of a collection after a collector's death. Another solution could be exchanging the pieces in the collection for money. Destroying materials was never presented as an option. Because of this, the question 'what gives a work of art the right to be preserved?' is asked in the chapter about the node *love* in the visual map. Love is separated from Investment in the visual map. Economic investment in the object as a reason to preserve and collect cannot be presented as the only reason because, although works of art are often described as commodities,[333] they do not follow the rules of consumption in economics, creatively described by Groys:

> 'a piece of bread is eaten – and does not exist afterwards anymore. A car is driven for a while – then it is seen as technically or aesthetically old and will be scrapped. A newspaper text or scientific text is read, understood and then it its original form forgotten: if you recite the information you do it "with your own words": the text as an object is consumed, annulled, destroyed in

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[332] Gisela Ecker and Martina Stange. *Sammeln – Ausstellen – Wegwerfen*. Konigstein: Ulrike Helmer Verlag, 2001.

[333] Ethan Wagner and Thea Westreich Wagner. *Collecting Art for Love, Money and More*. New York: Phaidon Press, 2013), 75 - 76

its moment of understanding. A work of art is in contrast not consumed as an object but preserved: it is not allowed to be eaten, used or neither completely understood.' [334]

Even collector items other than artworks have the potential to be used or consumed - wine can be drunk, jewellery can be sold in the system of regulated market prices, yachts can be moved, etc. The potential to use and consume stamps and rare books, and with that consumption and use devalue the collectible, sets these items apart from Art. On the primary market, as one of the interviewees described, the price a collector would pay for a work of art cannot be rationalized with market rules:

> That usually is only on the secondary market, where something has been shown at a gallery, bought and then is now again for sale, that's when you can assert that something is too expensive for what it is. You should buy it but you shouldn't buy it at a price over x number of dollars, that's the only time. On the primary market you either like it enough to pay that or you don't, and that's what it costs. Collector_4.rtf

Womit verdient ein bestimmtes Kunstwerk das Recht, gesammelt und aufbewahrt zu werden, wenn dieses Recht nicht seinem Marktwert entspringt?[335]

The question is answered in the chapter on the node *love* from three angles: the personal relationship a collector develops with the work of art; the career-like dimensions collecting can potentially bring to a collector's life in the form of traveling and courting artists and collectors; and a shifting perception of time influenced processes of *art production* and, in the long term, the longevity of the art object. These nodes are connected as a consequence of the Strategies and Context (see paradigm model) of collecting – the visual map and chapters above describe how this love that is described by collectors is a result of the entities that constitute it. In regards to collecting, love is connected to the economic investment of chasing, owning and preserving works of art. This investment is therefore linked to love via

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[334] Boris Groys. *Logik der Sammlung: Am Ende des musealen Zeitalters.* (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1997), 25. (Translated for this thesis by Anne Luther).

[335] 'What gives art the right to be preserved and collected, if this right does not origin in its market value?' (translated for this thesis by Anne Luther). Boris Groys. *Logik der Sammlung: Am Ende des musealen Zeitalters.* (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1997), 25.

the overlapping entities illustrated in the visual map, which will be described in the following chapter.
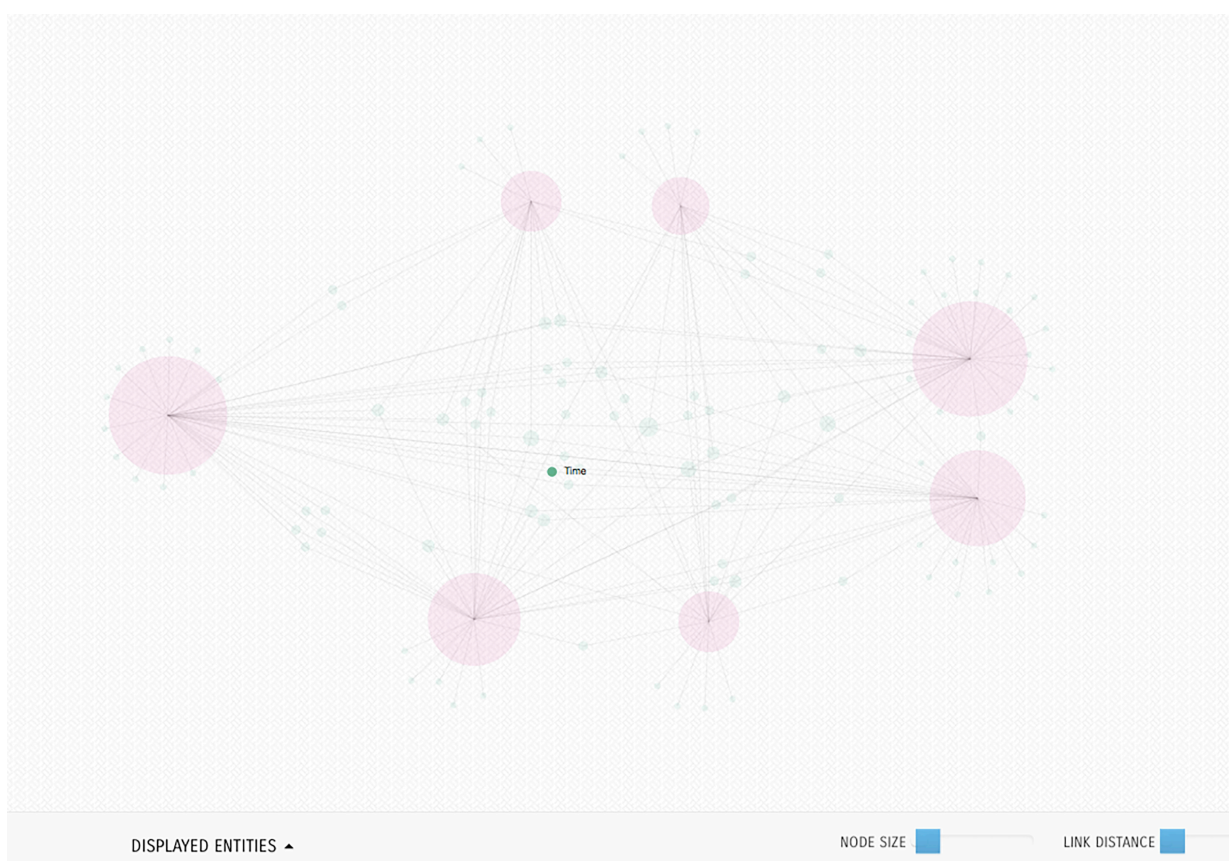
Figure 70. Anne Luther, *Time*, 2015, screenshot.

6.3.6. Investment

How much money can you spend? The relationship between revenue and art prices: The separation between *love* and *investment* is to be understood in the same way as it is with the other entities (code families) in the network – they are each here illustrated as an entity that has its own place but within the network, connected to the entities that. for example, also overlap with *love*. Acquiring an artwork as a collector is the exchange of money for an object of desire:

> I make my money as an investor, investing in companies, building companies, consultant companies […]I made some money and had some disposable income […]I had always been interested in art as cultural expression and an emotional statement but I decided to start investing about 8 years ago. Collector_1.rtf

The money that is spent on art is often an asset that the collector has at hand – and the relation of the amount that is spent on art to the total income varies. Nevertheless, data on total prices of the art at a fair like Art Basel gives an example of the potential of sales of successful galleries – the data of galleries on the primary market is mostly not available. In 2015, Art Basel showed works worth 3.4 billion USD in total that 300 international galleries brought to the fair and with approximately 92,000 visitors.[336] In 2011, Art Basel Miami Beach showed work approximately worth 2.5 billion USD and in 2013 approximately 3 billion USD[337] amongst 267 exhibitors. According to Statista, the revenue of art dealers who deal with contemporary and modern art on the primary and secondary market in 2013 shows Larry Gagosian with 925 Million USD, and David Zwirner with 225 Million USD [see Figure 71]. The statistics on the revenue of top art dealers is here relevant for indicating a relationship between investment and art prices, and the revenue of the people who decide the prices of their works and the social network they are part of. Speculation on the income of collectors is here exemplified with statistics of the

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[336] Jeanelle Zara. "$3.4 Billion Worth of Art in a Little Corner of Switzerland." Last modified June 29, 2015. Accessed August 26, 2015, http://www.cnn.com/2015/06/19/world/art-basel-2015/.

[337] Katja Kazakina. "Miami Event to Offer More Than $3 Billion Worth of Art." *Bloomberg Business,* December 04, 2013. Accessed December 04, 2013, http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2013-12-04/zuckerberg-to-koons-s-egg-power-3-billion-miami-art-fair.

revenue of their dealers. David Zwirner brought a work from 1966 by Agnes Martin with a price of 9.5 million USD to Art Basel in 2015 (according to an insider source at the fair), while gallery Skarstedt brought the most expensive work by Andy Warhol from 1986 with a price of 32 million USD. The relation between the revenue of the clients of the exemplified art dealers above and the prices they are willing to pay for works of art[338] needs to be addressed because the majority of potential readers of this thesis (including myself) might not have a relationship to these amounts of money. As these examples show, there are individuals with a certain access to money that allows them to pay high prices for contemporary art. When this is a given that we accept when looking at the numbers and statistic of art fairs and auctions, question arise about strategies of sales for works of art; it seems that the economic potential for collectors to purchase (or acquire) a work of art is not the only requirement. One focus in this chapter is finding these patterns that allow a collector to acquire a work. I will also discuss what the involvement of artists, dealers and collectors has been in the manipulation of the economic investment in recent years. These queries are described using the knowledge gained from the visual map and the entities described in chapters above. The investment here is approached from two sides that inform each other, the entities that constitute an allowance for a collector to buy works and also to sell work.

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[338] 'They are totally interactive and interrelated and some are way more to the money and some are a related more to the ideas but they are impossible to separate. I think we are about as idealistic as two people can be my husband and I. I mean we are, we are insane, but you know at some point you have to sit down and say, well can we pay for it. […] You've got to think about it. But usually for us the more important question is, where are we going to get the money to buy what we want, rather then, then what will it be worth in ten years because I have confidence that what we like is good and I just know, I mean I have been there so long that I have seen things that I paid 900 dollars for that I adore and love it will be two and a half million dollars in fifteen years, well that's nice but I still loved the work for what it was in 1983 or 85 or 99.' Collector_4.rtf
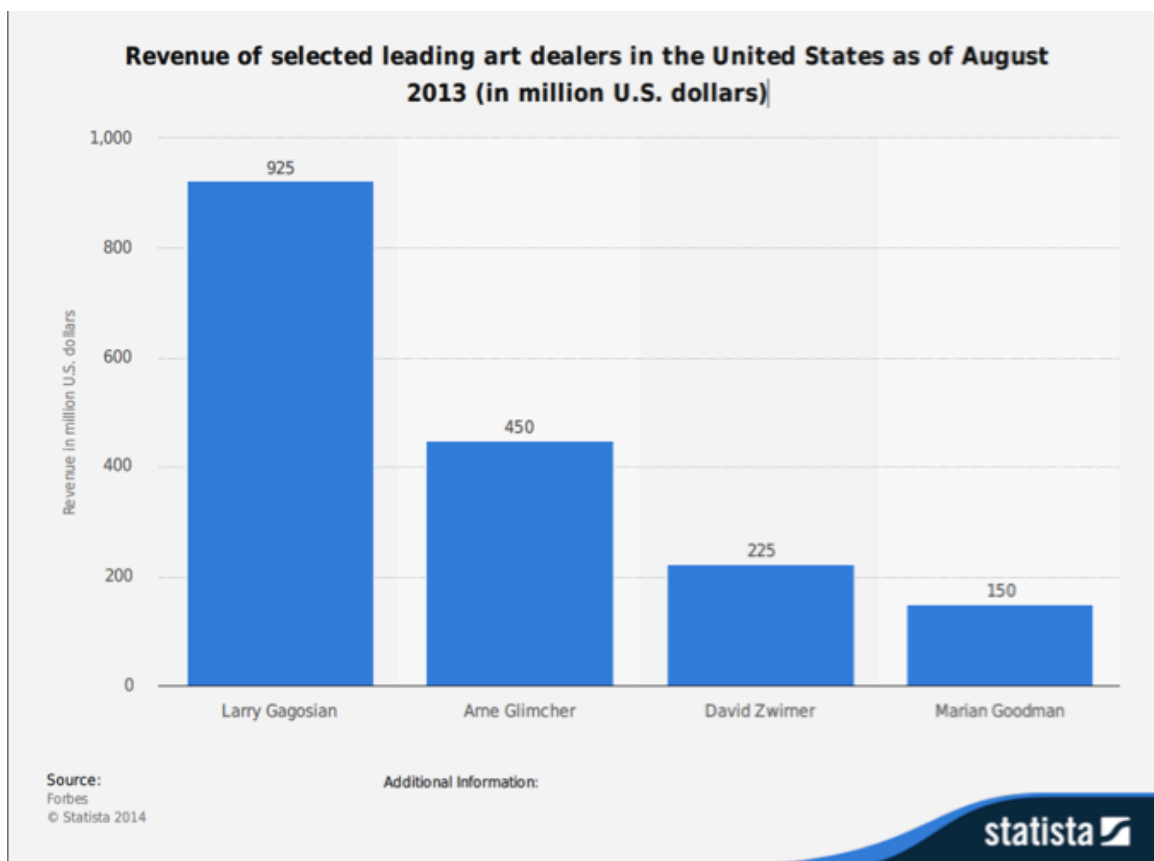
Figure 71. Statista, *Revenue of Selected Leading Art Dealers in the United States as of August 2013 (in Million U.S. Dollars),* digital graph.

Money can't buy you art:

> You can't understand it as a simple act or an exchange of money for an object, because it is definitely not. […] Network is also an important part of it, because you can't collect unless you have a network. You can buy prints online but you still need some sort of network somewhere, because access to works is a big part of the job of a collector to get to a level where they are allowed to buy art, allowed in. That's a really big part of it, which I underestimated for quite a long time, the game side of it. Collector_1.rtf

In the past five years, a few examples made it clear that financial interest in buying and collecting art is communicated more strongly online.. Two examples from the recent past should be mentioned here because of their media attention and their relationship to a reoccurring discussion that exemplified financial interest in art as a clearly defined reason for collecting, one that comes with negative judgements and cultivates scepticism towards the intentions of the collectors. The two examples are http://artrank.com, a website that ranks artists according to their market performance, and the media attention around Stefan Simchowitz,[339] [340] [341] who became a face for the so-called 'art flippers,' a term that describes individuals who buy work from young artists and try to hype their market in order to sell these artists on the secondary market not longer after they initially purchase the work. When works of art are connected to an apparatus that was successfully established to deal with the financial side of art, with entities such as galleries, auction houses, art advisories and private sales rooms, it is again a question of why the financial side of the art often cultivates a negative judgement of a purely financial understanding of works of art. When, as Groys writes, value of art has become arbitrary and subjective, and the

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[339] Andrew M Goldtsein. "Cultural Entrepreneur Stefan Simchowitz on the Merits of Flipping, and Being a 'Great Collector.'" *Artspace*, March 24 2014. Accessed May 03, 2014, http://www.artspace.com/magazine/interviews_features/stefan_simchowitz_interview?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_term=Master&utm_campaign=March_30_2014_Editorial_Weekly.

[340] Jerry Saltz. "Saltz on Stefan Simchowitz, the Greatest Art-Flipper of Them All." *Vulture* March 31, 2014. Accessed April, 27, 2014, http://www.vulture.com/2014/03/saltz-on-the-great-and-powerful-simchowitz.html.

[341] Christopher Glazek. "The Art World's Patron Satan." *New York Times*, December 30, 2014. Accessed January 23, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/04/magazine/the-art-worlds-patron-satan.html?partner=rss&emc=rss&smid=tw-nytimes&_r=1.

collector choses to collect what he likes on a subjective understanding,[342] then why is the understanding of art in terms of a speculative commodity or asset judged as 'the wrong reason to buy art'?[343]

The intention behind buying art is a criteria described by gallerists who choose to 'work with a collector' and for collectors who distance themselves from investors, rather than collectors. As discussed above, perception of time for a collector inherently shows that works of art in a collection can potentially outlive the collector – an investor who liquidates immediately after the sale does not value or attach a subjective understanding to the works they are buying. The belief the investor attaches to the material nature of the work is that it has the potential to accumulate more economic value. The agency of the work of art here, that it has the potential to show economic value, is different from the intellectual and subjective conceptions, but it also shows an agency. Describing the collection as a stock portfolio or a portfolio that rises in economic value, and knowledge of the economic value of the collection, is part of the conversation between the collector and the investor.

> I know a lot of collectors that collect because it's merely portfolio. And they diversify their investment strategy by buying art because it's proven to be an asset class that's been very powerful. So there are many people I know that would buy a Picasso or a Warhol painting because they could buy a lot more stocks and bonds, but they have so many of those and they have so much in terms of their resources that they decide to diversify. And they like the art, don't get me wrong, they know they are buying masterpieces or they like the contemporary works, but really they are buying it as a portfolio. As opposed to just buying it because they just have to have it because they are passionate about it. I know a lot of people that just hire great consultants that build a great collection for value. Sure, it's nice to look at, but once they are done, their portfolio is on the wall, and they are done. They are not collectors. They are not what I just described to you: the hunt and the research and the study. There is nothing wrong with that; it is just a different way of collecting.[344] [345]
> Artist_4.rtf

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[342] Boris Groys. Logik der Sammlung: Am Ende des musealen Zeitalters. (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1997), 26.

[343] Olav Velthuis. Talking Prices: Symbolic Meanings of Prices on the Market for Contemporary Art. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 42-45.

[344] 'I bought it for X dollars and I sold it 5 years later for 10 times that, I mean I think people, especially in the banking industry, I think they are interested in the maximum appreciation and

Two main reasons for a scepticism of economic speculation with works of art were raised by gallerists and artists in the interviews: One, the gallerist hopes to be able to control the prices of the artist because they are responsible for selling works of art in a fashion that guarantees a continuous working relationship for the gallery and for the artist. And secondly, artists often view the speculation of their works as a negative judgement of their work because it reduces the ideas, concepts and time spent on the development of the work to a commodity that does not factor in these intellectual properties.

The control of prices for a gallerist who works with young contemporary artists (and these are the artists most targeted by investors who hope to 'flip' with a high gain – see artrank.com and the strategies described about Simchowitz[346]) are important because they work with clients who often can buy in a certain budget category. In 2010, in one of the first examples on the recent contemporary art market of fast flipping with high auction results for an artist with a very young career, a painting by Jacob Kassay sold for $86500; it was sold for $5000-$8000 on the primary market the year before.

The example indicates the beginning of a strong interest in investing in young contemporary artists whose work is bought with the intent of immediately bringing it to auction. The work by Jacob Kassay was made only one year before the

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sometimes they don't sell, you know, they just like to have it hanging on the wall.'
Collector_2.rtf

[345] But there is, also more today probably than in the past, a type of collector, who views these kind of purchases merely as an investment and is already thinking 'How much is is worth in five years down the road?' and what is he or she going to make at an auction if they hold on to it and they play it like stock market. And there are plenty of financial advisors who then make suggestions, and you see sometimes, when you walk around galleries, look at shows, you see somebody who is being taken around by the advisor. These people don't really look at what's on the wall, they just listen to what the advisor tells them, so that you can witness it, it's obvious that they are primarily interested in filling their stock portfolio, so to speak, with something that somebody, who knows more about it, a broker let's say, tells them that's a good investment. And that is obnoxious and probably also undermining the artist in the sense of their self-esteem. And just.. if a person is viewed, or the production of a person is viewed, as an investment, I don't think that is an uplifting experience. Artist_1.rtf

[346] Jerry Saltz. "Saltz on Stefan Simchowitz, the Greatest Art-Flipper of Them All." *Vulture* March 31, 2014. Accessed April, 27, 2014, http://www.vulture.com/2014/03/saltz-on-the-great-and-powerful-simchowitz.html.

auction and was the 'youngest' work for Phillips. Flipping is therefore targeted at works of young artists, bought in young but market relevant galleries. The artist's CV (with the indicators described above) and the gallery that the artists are showing with are the indicators for investors to buy to flip. In order to understand the influence collectors can have on the market and career of an artist with this flipping mechanism, the pricing on the primary market and prices on the secondary market need to be explained.

Pricing strategies or scripts on the primary market are dependent on a function of social consensus, where the opinion of art world insiders has greater weight. [347] Olav Velthuis wrote a prominent essay[348] pricing scripts, and characteristics in the text for this social consensus include the exhibitions the artist participated in, production costs, material and size, and prices that don't decrease over time on the primary market. These scripts are not a consensus based on an outspoken understanding of how prices are made. They are always made with the clients a gallery can serve with those prices in mind. The code *gallery_pricing*, which is connected to Investment, shows a few quotations that make a non-consensus clear:

> […] For the first show at galleryname1 it was very much sort of me relying on them to figure out those prices […] it is a fuzzy science where you are looking around and you try to determine other people who are at the same level that you would be and who have the same sort of desirability. You take their pricing and sort of average that out and start to determine where you should be. A lot is just like what you feel it should be and also trying to understand how much interest there is, how much demand there is for it. It also depends on what it is you are producing, how serial it is and how unique it is and there is like all these different factors […] Everybody has these different rationales on how you do the pricing. It is very fuzzy.' Artist_4.rtf

The pricing on the primary market does not only follow understanding of gallerist of comparable artists on the market but also relates to the budget of their clients:

[347] Susanne Schönfeld, and Andreas Reinstaller. "The Effects of Gallery and Artist Reputation on Prices in the Primary Market for Art: A Note." *Journal of Cultural Economics* 31, no. 2 (February 23, 2007): 143–53. doi:10.1007/s10824-007-9031-1.

[348] Olav Velthuis. "Symbolic Meanings of Prices: Constructing the Value of Contemporary Art in Amsterdam and New York Galleries." *Theory and Society* 32, no. 2 (2003): 181–215. doi:10.1023/A:1023995520369.

> From his (the gallerist) point of view he wants to sell and he wants to keep the price down a little bit to make sure he does sell. But you don't want it to be so low that people think like, 'Oh that's weird, it's too cheap, you shouldn't buy that.' And you don't want it to be so high that people get scared off, So the gallerist is usually pushing a little bit towards the lower end and I am trying to pull that up just a little bit too, because over the course of a career you want to build it enough to the point where it's comfortable, instead of just like, getting by. Artist_4.rtf

The influence of the collector on pricing on the primary market is therefore measured by the 'demand' or budget collectors working with a certain gallery are able or willing to pay for artists. Although the price is not only made on demand (the more people who want to buy, the higher the price can get), it is nevertheless influenced by collectors who have a regular relationship with the gallery. The gallery wants to be able to control the prices in order to be certain that strong clients can afford to buy their artist's work.

Flipping artworks is to be avoided because it sends the wrong signals in two ways: First, the artist's reputation as a 'market darling' has a negative connotation and might influence curators and writers to invite them into institutional contexts because a conversation outside of the market success is taking over, rather then presenting content and ideas of the work (these quotations are connected to the code Market Success, linked to the Investment node):

> It's not even that they talk about the content of the work. They just use the conditions of fairs to be able to sell products in order to pay their rent. There is not actually a conversation about the work. Artist_3.rtf

> I found it really interesting to see that such young artists already have something that feels so finished. I thought, where is the room for that process, where is the room for that conversation, like where do you go from here when you already present something like that? So maybe that's also part of the change this attitude, of even art students. Artist_1.rtf

Also, seeing works by a young artist resurfacing at auction can signify that they have produced 'too much', 'sold to the wrong collector, because they want to sell the

work faster then they bought it' or 'worked with the wrong dealers, because they were not selling to clients that want to preserve and collect.'

These two points make control over artworks harder because the scepticism held by institutional curators prevent a controlled price increase intrinsic to the gallery pricing 'scripts', in response to the artist's reputation. On the other hand, the discrepancy between the primary market prices and the secondary market prices might also bring the artist to join other galleries that could meet clients with that budget – the artist outgrows the existing gallery. When prices for an artist rise too fast, the supporting collectors might tend toward sales and become less likely to buy more pieces by the artist:

> We very rarely deacquisition at the stage of things that we've just bought. However, there are certain situations, like for example with [artist name], where the market was just so crazy, I couldn't help to deacquisition from my own personal collection, so I went back to the gallery. Collector_2.rtf

Going back to the understanding that the intention of the collector has to be clear in order for an acquisition is therefore strongly related to the gallerist's own intent to control the prices of an artist in self-interest:

> I have had situations with people who wanted to have a work and give money towards a project, and I in fact did not sell the works because I didn't understand what their motivations were. I remember one guy in particular, I didn't trust his motivations and I really lost that relationship. I also felt that it wasn't a supporting role, like he was looking for ways to buy it cheap, and it wasn't particularly sensitive. I think he offered the right things in advance and then he wanted all sorts of discounts. I do offer that if I think someone is paying the project up front, they should receive a discount for that, but in that moment it just felt a little bit like there is something not right about it. He didn't really feel invested into the work. Gallerist_1.rtf

This investment in work is often related to the intention of a collector to preserve and collect the work, rather to invest to liquidate, which as stated above has more than just an influence on an artist's career. Control over market prices and therefore over an artist's reputation, potential exhibitions and institutional validation call for a system of vouching for a collector's intentions, getting to know the

collector before a sale, and understanding who the collector or advisor has bought from before and if they have sold at auction.

Strategies galleries use to build a collector base in a way that allows an artist's career to develop in a continuously growing manner can also be based on placements of artworks in specific collections, which make it impossible for collectors acquire a work if they are not on the list of potential important collections or from the 'right country' at the moment:

> The artists I collect are very young and many of them are rising stars, so there is a lot of demand for their works. I think this is where people get reluctant, because there is global demand for their work. There are some galleries where, you know, if I go to a Paris gallery many times I am welcome, many times the artist wants to have followers in Europe and they don't want American collectors to come there. So that is another kind of practice which I understand. Collector_1.rtf

Mechanisms for controlling prices make it impossible for some collectors to acquire work. Intentions of the collector are often suspect because of their personality and bargaining (see the codes *collector_blacklisted personality* and *collector_blacklisted bargaining*). The code *collector_blacklisted personality* is arranged between *investment* and *locality*, and *collector_blacklisted bargaining* can be found very closely to *auction sale arranged before auction*. The intention of the collector is only questioned in the case of a quick sale on the secondary market. The quick sale, as described above, can bring a market presence to the artist's work that could bring about a negative outcome for the artist's and gallery's reputation. The gallery's reputation is connected to *locality* and *prestige* in the visual map, and plays a significant role in sales. The interplay between the control of galleries in terms of sales and prices and the collector who can influence an artist's career in a negative way within the described secondary market sales is a space that artists also engage in [Figure 74]. A recent example of the artist's ability to control the market and react to collectors' choices to manipulate the artist's representation in terms of market presence is Wade Guyton. Between 2013 and 2014 his secondary market prices at auction rose significantly [Figure 75]. In order to steer the conversation away from

the possibility of having his work traded and perceived as a commodity, the artist reacted in two ways. In 2014 Guyton created an Instagram account to post images of the 'mass production' of a painting that was up for auction at Christie's with a high estimate of 3.5 million USD, threatening to sell these copies for a low primary market price [see Figure 74 Screenshot from the instagram account burningbridges38 on 20/06/2015]. Later in 2014, Guyton produced a black painting for his five representing galleries (Petzel/New York, Gió Marconi/Milan, Galerie Gisela Capitain/Cologne, Galerie Francesca Pia/Zurich and Galerie Chantal Crousel/Paris). The exact same painting has a price of $350,000. The artist described this act in regards to his practice rather then as reaction to the market: 'Mr Guyton explained that he instructed the dealers to hang his paintings at identical heights, "so each time you walk up to one, you would have a similar physical encounter." He added: "On the one hand, it is a way to satisfy all my galleries simultaneously and fairly. It's also a way of talking about the repetitive experience of seeing similar artworks throughout a fair and embracing that aggressively by showing almost identical works."'[349] This and other examples show how established contemporary artists are reacting against the tendency of collectors to deal with their artwork in a way that reduces it to an economic market presence:

> There are some people to whom I don't want to be associated with. […] [collector name] was interested, I can not say a hundred percent, somebody representing him, let's put it that way, enquired about the[artwork title] when it was first shown in Cologne, and I told the gallery 'Under no circumstances is this going to be sold to [collector name] or anybody that represents him.' Artist_1.rtf - quotation in code *collector_blacklisted personality*

The visual map shows that the control galleries try to embrace over-primary-market prices and sales of art to 'the right person' are not connected to social prestige and economic hierarchies, but rather follow the logic of a sustainable market for the practice of an artist. Gallerists are often the mediators (a code connected to Institution and Investment) which strategize their own existence by holding prices in

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[349] Carol Vogel. "At Art Basel, Works With a Museum Presence." *New York Times* June 19 2014. Accessed August 04, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/20/arts/design/at-art-basel-works-with-a-museum-presence.html.

the budget of their collector base, and at the same time, the artist's practice, by raising prices continuously in relation to the artist's reputation and exhibitions. Distancing collectors from investors, as mentioned in the interviews and articles,[350] [351] is therefore not only regarded in a financial light, but also filtered through an understanding of how to behave in the network shown in the visual map in order to buy works on the primary market. The control a gallery wants to maintain over buyers' names ends with a sale at auction, because auction houses guarantee the anonymity of their buyers when they are not present. Private sales from that point on are not in the control of the gallery anymore and can also have decreasing effects on the value and reputation of an artwork:

> When it comes to secondary market work, there is a lot more research. Obviously we search Artnet to see if there is an auction history, we do research about the provenance, we just make sure that the work is authentic and hasn't had any condition issues and that it hasn't been shopped around a lot. We research comparables, so in that way we can explain to our client to why this is the estimated price, and we also make sure that it hasn't been shopped around through a million different dealers and different patrons. Collector_2.rtf

Investment again stands in a complex juxtaposition to Love, because the secondary market activity can have decreasing effect on economic value and the reputation of the work in general (it is an artwork that does not live long with the owner). Collecting out of economic interest often opposes collecting to preserve and own.

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[350] Adam Lindemann. "The Art World's Biggest Lie: A Collector Debunks Art as an Investment." *Observer* February 11, 2015. Accessed February 23, 2015, http://observer.com/2015/02/the-art-worlds-biggest-lie-a-dealers-mea-culpa-on-collecting-as-investing/.

[351] Katja Kazakina. "Miami Event to Offer More Than $3 Billion Worth of Art." *Bloomberg Business,* December 04, 2013. Accessed December 04, 2013, http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2013-12-04/zuckerberg-to-koons-s-egg-power-3-billion-miami-art-fair.
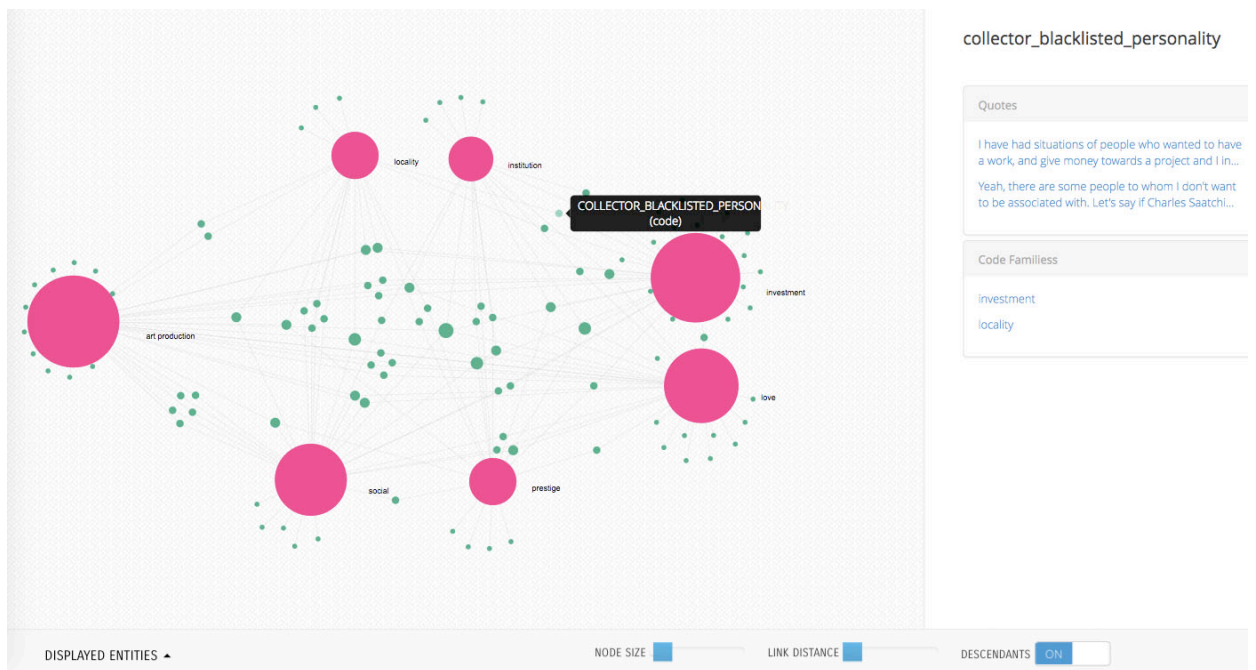
Figure 72. Anne Luther, *Collector_blacklisted personality,* 2015, screenshot.
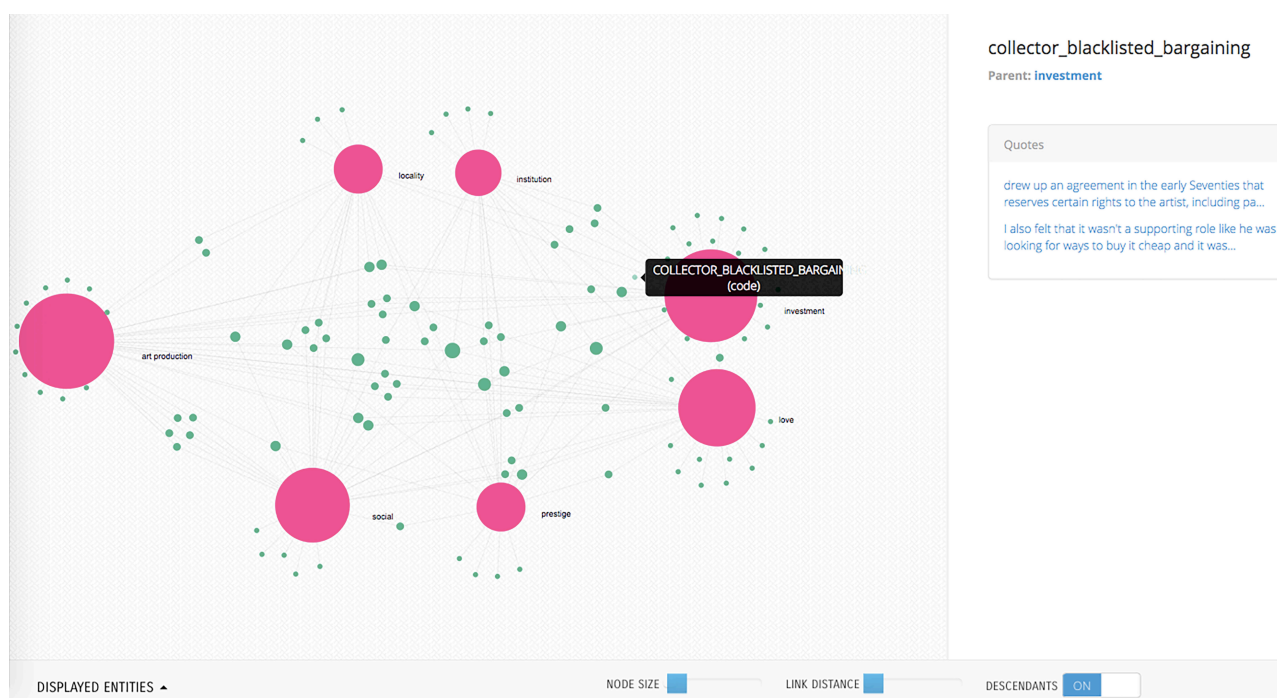
Figure 73. Anne Luther, *Collector_blacklisted bargaining,* 2015, screenshot.

Figure 74. Anne Luther, screenshot of the instagram account of burningbridges38 on July 20 2015.
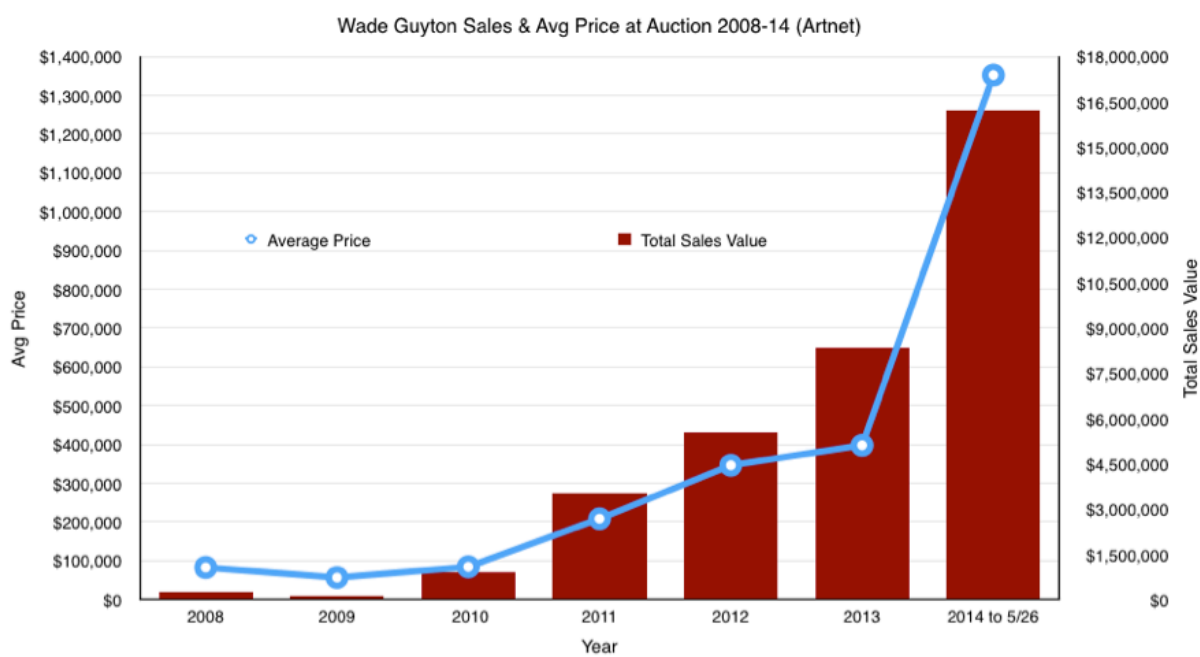
Figure 75. Marion Maneker. *Wade Guyton Sales & Avg Price at Auction 2008-14 (Artnet)*, 2014, digital graph.

Money can buy you art:

The process of gallery control and influences of collectors on this control described here does not mean that the processes are mandatory. Again, the flexibility of the visual map shows that for some collectors, gallerist and artists nodes can disappear. Non-representing galleries are, for example, galleries that do not represent an artist but often sell work after an exhibition without consigning with representing gallery, instead receiving work directly from artists. The galleries do not consider a long-term price control system they work with existing prices and sell to clients that they consider.

In the visual map the prominent node in the middle between *Love* and *Investment* is titled *Collector_selling for the right reasons*. Reasons given by collectors for bringing a work to auction, although they do not collect primarily out of financial interest, are:

- When the collection shapes in a different direction than before:

> A very hard decision, but when you collect for a while, your taste changes and your collection starts to take shape, so most of the things that I am shedding are things that I bought earlier on that no longer fit. They are very beautiful works but they no longer fit with what I am collecting. Collector_1.rtf

- To support a collector's lifestyle:

> I suppose at one point or another we have to stop doing what we are doing but I don't know when. And then we will have to sell a few things that we held back to support our lifestyle, such as it is (laughing) flying around the world looking at art.' collector_4.rtf

- And to sell to buy new works for the collection:

> I have sold a couple of works recently to buy other things. Collector_2.rtf

The 'right reasons' are all related to the sustainability of the collection and not a financial self-interest that is isolated from the network the art came out of. Selling a work from a collection is often related to a network of entities including the gallery, an advisory, collector friends or a relationship to a high-profile collection that provides the work with added value, which is often relevant for an auction house. Galleries can provide the collector with a private sale that does not guarantee

the highest bidder but a comparable price to the market value. As described in the earlier chapters, market value is generated through comparable works on the secondary market, the provenance of the work, and a general survey of the time in the artist's career (upcoming institutional exhibitions can have a temporary effect on the increase of the price). Selling work on the secondary market therefore often follows the same signs that validate a price on the primary market.

Auction houses nevertheless work with collectors who are willing to pay secondary market prices without the acts mentioned connected to the codes social and locality. Part of that willingness comes from a chase, the ability to spend a significant amount of money in bidding against other competitors, but could also come from an individual misinformed about primary market prices, described by one of my interviewees as fake scarcity (see code *auction_fake scarcity*):

> Let's think about the original role of the auction house. The auction house was a place for you to go to get a deal. It was a place for people who desperately needed money on the spot, but they become so savvy in marketing. When I first started, the evening sale was 30 lots and now it is almost 80 lots, that is how they sold 800 million dollars in May. Because yes, pieces are going very high for sure, but there are not even enough people to make that sustainable. There are only like four people right now who are willing to bid on a Wade Guyton at auction and they could also just go to the gallery and wait a little bit and get one for a lot less money, so why don't they just wait a little bit and get one for a little bit less money? But the auctions house says, there is nothing available, they create this false scarcity, they are very smart about what they are doing. I mean it is just not true, but they are really good at doing that. Collector_2.rtf

Once clients start to understand primary market access, the 'chase' starts individually or with an advisory. The understanding of artwork from an investment standpoint, with an understanding of secondary market trends and numbers, is an activity that was described as less effort:

> That is really boring, right? No one wants to stand in front of an artwork and be like, that artwork is great because it has that price. That is boring, it is much more interesting to talk about the contextual things. Collector_2.rtf

And another collector said:

> It's easy, though, because those are numbers, this is an 'a' this is a 'b', this is a 'c', this is a 'd', this is a hundred percent, this is a fifty percent. That's just an easy way of quantifying and organizing information, but it's a delimiting way because if it's a 50 and you haven't figured out what really makes it a hundred, then you are missing out on the opportunity to look at it and really begin to learn from that. Collector_4.rtf

Quantifying a work in terms of economic value is also avoided in sales rooms of the gallery, leading to a sense that there exist 'strange codes of exclusivity' because 'all of the business conducted [in the gallery] seems to transpire behind closed doors, in a vaguely secretive, conspiratorial fashion.'[352] Although the gallery functions as an environment for selling works of art, the conversation that occurs in the gallery space is directed away from the direct price of the work. The gallery is a space that wants to connect to entities that create value on the level of locality, social, institution and prestige. Galleries communicate prices over email in direct requests, in conversations by appointment, and with sales representatives after or during a conversation in which both content and references of the work, the artist's CV and the context in the gallery setting are exchanged. The established pattern of hidden prices in galleries, a place of primary market investment, is connected directly to the understanding that art transports more than an economic understanding of the work through the entities connected in the context and strategies of collecting (see the paradigm model in relation to the visual map).

Considering that the collectors who are engaging with work in a way that is 'non-committal' to the apparatus of galleries, or with a mostly commercial understanding of the performance of the work, also brings up this scepticism toward their intentions among fellow collectors. Nevertheless, this creation of scarcity and the non-committal engagement of collectors is a common routine. The international art world became complex in order to hold control over sales to collectors using threats to blacklist collectors from gallery sales because of their intentions (see codes

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[352] Jerry Saltz. "Jerry Saltz: In Praise of Art-Gallery Attendants." *Vulture*, June 23, 2015. Accessed July 11, 2015, http://www.vulture.com/2015/06/saltz-in-praise-of-art-gallery-attendants.html.

collector_blacklisted bargaining, collector_blacklisted personality). Often sales depend on availability of the work at the gallery. Collectors who are invested in their collection with the intention to 'preserve and collect' are considering buying work at auction in the realm of a certain budget if the work is older and not available at the gallery anymore, if the gallery cannot offer the desired work from a private sale, or if other sources of private sales outside of the gallery are not available. These instances allow an investment that is based on demand and the best bidder or offer for a work. Artists usually do not receive a share from auction results. Although laws such as the 'California Resale Royalties Act, requiring anyone reselling a piece of fine art who lives in the state, or who sells the art there for $1,000 or more, to pay the artist 5 % of the resale price'[353] attempt to address these issues, an artist career's can see negative effects in the long run as mentioned above in terms of the artist's reputation and future sales of the gallery.

Secondary market prices, at auction and private sales, are controlled by other mechanisms, such as creating a sense of scarcity, selling work only when an institutional or important gallery exhibition creates press, and comparing the prices to a market value of the artist's market performance on the secondary market. Comparing these numbers over time, creating a market portfolio for the work and considering the offer that might be based on the comparison of a market analysis like this are investment strategies that collectors and investors consider. Websites such as artnet.com and artsy.net offer the possibility of viewing all past auction results, which can create an understanding of market value of comparable works. Websites such as artfacts.net are tools that give a collector an overview of a ranking that considers exhibitions, social media and press. The indicators described above are here quantified and measured with secondary market performance.

These examples show that Investment is part of collecting in a way that effects, creates and corresponds to the entities illustrated between 'cause' and

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[353] Patricia Cohen. "Artists File Lawsuits, Seeking Royalties." *New York Times*, November 1, 2011. Accessed November 13, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/02/arts/design/artists-file-suit-against-sothebys-christies-and-ebay.html?_r=0.

'consequences'. The two interwoven juxtapositions in this chapter are positions in collecting contemporary art that are based on an economic understanding of works with a purely commercial interest and investment, and the effort by galleries not to sell works to individuals with an interest that's clearly solely financial. *Art flippers* and *gallery control* are two strong patterns in the visual map. The correlation between a purely financial interest and galleries controlling artists' prices is connected to the longevity of support from the side of the collector and the gallery in an artist's career. In this context, Access becomes a tool with which to support art production in a way that guarantees the gallery will profit with the rise of the artist's career. The gallery places artwork*s* into collections that have connected entities. The restriction is that one must only sell the available work to collectors who can promote the work with their own network and place it into a context that does not promote a 'flooding of the market'. Selling work at auction without having owned or preserved the work – flipping it in the same year it is made – can consequently influence an artist's intellectual reputation and trigger a sales wave in collectors who are not collecting with a primary financial interest. The impact collectors can have on an artist's career and art production are in this instant with a negative outcome.

The chapter investigated in which instances a purely commercial investment in art is possible and focussed on 'art flippers' and activities on the secondary market. It further concluded that this purely commercial investment often leads to a gallery control over prices and sales to collectors with 'the right intentions'. The control of a gallery on primary market sales wants to avoid an investment that serves purely commercial gain.

Lastly the buying and selling of works on the secondary market for the 'right reasons' were also described above. The three patterns are showing that buying and selling of art is based on an understanding that contemporary art transports more than economic value and that the reduction of art to its economic potential can have negative implications on the artist's reputation and further sales and exhibitions. Both the gallery control and sale strategies (back to the gallery, to peers, after a

longer time has passed) that consider the artist's career and longevity are patterns

that are agreed to be possible without negative consequences for both the collector

(not blacklisted for example) and the artist.

> And we never try and cut out the gallery from the conversation because the galleries have to support the artists afterwards, before and afterwards, whereas we're only able to come in and do a show, or to buy work and then - and that's a big thing about who, about how much effect you have. Curator in private collection.rtf

One example that occurred in 2015 is the legal case of the Dutch collector Bert

Kreuk against the New York based artist Danh Vō. In July 2015, a court in

Rotterdam ruled that Danh Vō has to produce a commissioned work of art for the

collector Bert Kreuk that is '"large and impressive,"'[354] after the artist declined to

produce a work for the collector because his peers (gallerists and artists etc.) have

advised him that the collector tried to buy works by the artist after an exhibition of

Danh Vō's work in the private museum of the collector, in order to flip it on the

secondary market.[355] The *intentions* of the collector became obviously monetary

rather than supportive and intellectually interested so the artist and gallerist Isabella

Bortolozzi decided against a commission offer.[356] The artist is ordered to pay

$10,000 daily if he does not deliver the commissioned artwork of $350,000 to the

collector.[357]

The case shows the pressure a few collectors feel in contemporary collecting

culture and the importance of the entity the digital image: 'The market has become

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[354] Artnet. "Danh Vō Tells Collector Bert Kreuk To 'Shove It' in Stunning Private Letter After Contentious Court Ruling." Last modified July 16, 2015, https://news.artnet.com/people/danh-vo-tells-bert-kreuk-to-shove-it-317385.

[355] Doreen Carvajal. "Danh Vo and Bert Kreuk's Legal Battle Pits Artist Against Collector." *The New York Times*. July 13, 2015, accessed July 15, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/14/arts/design/danh-vo-and-bert-kreuks-legal-battle-pits-artist-against-collector.html?_r=0

[356] Doreen Carvajal. "Danh Vo and Bert Kreuk's Legal Battle Pits Artist Against Collector." *The New York Times*. July 13, 2015, accessed July 15, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/14/arts/design/danh-vo-and-bert-kreuks-legal-battle-pits-artist-against-collector.html?_r=0

[357] Ann Binlot. "Artist Danh Vo To Collector Who Sued Him: Shove It Up Your A*s, You Faggot." *Forbes*, July 17, 201. Accessed August 09, 2015, http://www.forbes.com/sites/abinlot/2015/07/17/artist-danh-vo-to-collector-who-sued-him-shove-it-up-your-as-you-faggot/

so crazy that as a collector, you have a couple of hours to decide from a JPEG if you want something,' he said. 'If not, there are five others on the waiting list.'[358]

This legal battle is a scenario in which both the artist's and the collector's reputations are negatively discussed in the media.[359] The case shows that the gallery control and the artist's monetary reputation can lead to a negative outcome in which a collector believes to receive a product that the artist would deliver after being sued. Danh Vō, proposed an artwork with the content 'Shove it up Your A*s, You Faggot.', and based the written content for the museum's walls on current artistic practices in recent works. The decision by the artist and the gallerist to make this case public shows how galleries are also forming the reputation of collectors in the media. This attention can have the result that the collector gets blacklisted from other gallery sales. It is the first case in the Netherlands in which an collector sues an artist to deliver a commissioned piece.[360]

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[358] Doreen Carvajal. "Danh Vo and Bert Kreuk's Legal Battle Pits Artist Against Collector." *The New York Times*. July 13, 2015, accessed July 15, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/14/arts/design/danh-vo-and-bert-kreuks-legal-battle-pits-artist-against-collector.html?_r=0.

[359] Benjamin Sutton. "Poll: Who Is the Bigger Baby, Artist Danh Vō or Collector Bert Kreuk?" *Hyperallergic* 17 July 2015. Accessed July 17, 2015, http://hyperallergic.com/223014/poll-who-is-the-bigger-baby-artist-danh-vo-or-collector-bert-kreuk/.

[360] Doreen Carvajal. "Danh Vo and Bert Kreuk's Legal Battle Pits Artist Against Collector." *The New York Times*. July 13, 2015, accessed July 15, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/14/arts/design/danh-vo-and-bert-kreuks-legal-battle-pits-artist-against-collector.html?_r=0.
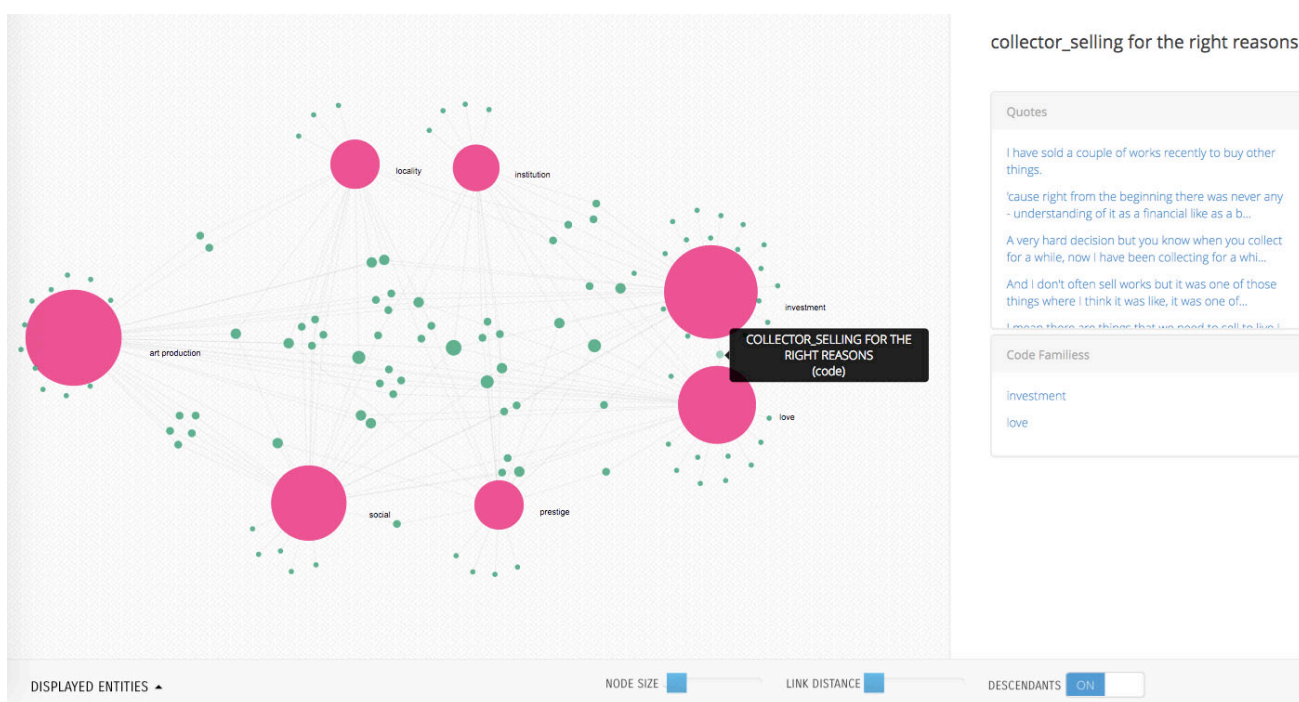
Figure 76. Anne Luther, *Collector_selling for right reasons,* 2015, screenshot.

6.4. Overlapping patterns in art production and collecting

In earlier chapters a few influences that entities illustrated in the visual map can have on art production were touched on. In this chapter a focus on overlapping entities (codes that can be found in more than one code family) will emphasize how the network of collecting influences art production processes. The codes will be analysed in consideration of entities close to the codes, patterns in a constellation that is illustrated in the visual map.

This introduction shows the obvious connection between the artist and the collector, the financial aspect of art production is mostly dependent on sales of artworks through the mediating role of the gallery in New York. The short introduction to some of the facts on the financial pressure of artists in the city is in this chapter the approach to the more elaborate overlapping patterns between collecting and art production.

This chapter is following Chapter 6.3. with the analysis of pattern in the network of collecting. Here the emphasis is on art production and the relationship to collecting patterns analysed in the chapter before. Both Chapter 6.3. and 6.4. are the foundation for the theoretical elevation of the resulting conclusions from these chapters which will be described in Chapter 7. The relationship between art production and collecting will be apparent from two perspectives, collecting (6.3.) and art production (6.4.)

The financial influence between art production and collecting can be that collectors stop buying and collecting art from an artist and therefore the economic possibilities for the artist in their art production will be limited. At the same time if collectors buy more art it can influence the artist in the choice of their access to more expensive material, tools, sizes and studio facilities. This obvious connection between the collector-artist relationships is reflected in the codes *artist_studio*, *artist_assistant*, *artist_day job independence* and *artist_economic pressure*. The freedom to hire assistance, to move into a bigger studio, to quit the day job and to pay off debts from tuition fees can change art production in various ways depending

on the artist's practice. Artists often enter their practice with a certain economic

wealth. Tuition and local economic pressure are high in a New York environment

with rent starting at $1000p/m in Brooklyn for a room in a shared flat and studio rent

start around $500p/m. Tuition fees of the 10 most expensive art schools in the US

are higher than Ivy League School according to an article in the Washington Post in

2014 [361] (for example tuition per year at Columbia University is $45,290 and at Bard

College is $43,840[362]). One example from 2015 is the 'USC seven'. An entire MFA

year left The University of Southern California (USC) in protest because the stipend

promised in the second year could not be extended.[363] As one of the interviewees

stated:

> Certainly, in this country the tuition of Graduate Schools, unless one gets a
> Teaching Assistantship and doesn't have to pay a tuition and makes a little bit
> money on the side, is horrendous. And so they are in debt and they have to
> somehow take care of that debt. This is a vicious cycle. Yes. Artist_4

Tuition fees and local economic pressure are two entities that influence the

connection between art production and financial investment by the collectors. The

local and personal pressure are extended to the demands a gallery brings potentially

to the production of the artist:

> It was just kind of like a mushroom. It totally exploded and was so fast and
> you know so many shows and I couldn't say no and all this stuff and it
> suddenly gets out of control, so to say […] the timeframe is a little artificial, I
> mean, this might sound really old school but painting takes a certain amount
> of time. Not just the actual making of it, but also each painting needs a
> certain amount of time. When it's done already and when it leaves your
> studio, you realize, oh, the surface is still wet [laughing]. I sometimes feel
> you can make some mistake by doing that and you realize much later maybe

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[361] Catherine Rampell. "The Most Expensive Colleges in the Country Are Art Schools, Not Ivies." *Washington Post*, March 28, 2014. Accessed July 12, 2014, http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/rampage/wp/2014/03/28/the-most-expensive-colleges-in-the-country-are-art-schools-not-ivies/.

[362] Catherine Rampell. "The Most Expensive Colleges in the Country Are Art Schools, Not Ivies." *Washington Post*, March 28, 2014. Accessed July 12, 2014, http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/rampage/wp/2014/03/28/the-most-expensive-colleges-in-the-country-are-art-schools-not-ivies/.

[363] Andrew R. Chow. "U.S.C. Fine Arts Students Drop Out in Protest." *New York Times*, accessed May 18, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/18/arts/design/usc-fine-arts-studentsdrop-out-in-protest.html?_r=0.

that wasn't done or I needed that to just be with me. I didn't want it to go. Looking back I have been in moments where I, for different circumstances, whether it was a show or whether it was like a gallery pressuring you. I mean now I think differently about it but there were definitely moments, also out of naivety or out of not knowing when I gave things away. Artist_3.rtf

This quotation from the artist refers to working with one of the most successful galleries in New York but as also mentioned in the quotation, working with this pressure can also mean that the artist can not say 'no' to certain practices of galleries (for example working with deadlines for the production of works or taking the work from the studio too early. The representation of galleries with their roles as mediators (see code *gallery as mediator*) between the collectors, institutions and other entities and the artist's work, is ambiguous in many instances. Again, this thesis does not discuss gallery practices on the level of examples because every gallery has their own business and personal strategies. Nevertheless on the level of what the role a gallery usually can be in relation to art production and collecting, certain patterns can be discussed here. The role of presenting and selling work is a current pattern for a lot of galleries in New York. Other models of gallery spaces as bars (for example, Beverly's: http://beverlysnyc.com), salons (private spaces that open up as temporary galleries) and studios (for example, Grand Century: http://grandcentury.biz) can also be mentioned here but these are exceptional, individual concepts, that lean on the language of galleries in presentation, sales and promotion but nevertheless work in relation to other models as well. The most apparent difference between those models or the studio and the gallery is that the gallery is not a place for production but for the promotion and sales of a finished object:

It is just like a bigger apparatus. It is almost like the staff - I don't know the people. It is a big space I don't have a relationship to or connection with. It its an anonymous space. It feels more anonymous. It is not that I hang out there with my friends and be like ok what's going on here, you have an idea, lets do it right now. It is a structure, a given structure and the structure is not

there to work against you it is actually there to work with you but of course it comes with certain demands. Artist_3.rtf [364]

The understanding of a gallery reputation is as socially coded as the understanding of the reputation of galleries and institutions (university and art institutions (code in the code family *Prestige*)) on the artist's CV. Chapter 6.4.1. will elaborate on this understanding of floating signifiers. Chapter 6.4.2. shows institutional acts in private collections as mimicry of institutional approaches of established art institutions. This pattern can influence art production in a way that collectors show work that an institution or gallery could not commission and an artist could not realize (for example in terms of scale and production costs) anywhere else. Institutional acts influence art production in this exclusivity. The understanding of economic signifiers that go beyond the number of a price paid for the work firstly influenced by an artist and secondly understood by the collector. This relationship is elaborated in Chapter 6.4.3. The connection between the interest in an artist's work and the personality of the artist is described in Chapter 6.4.4. Chapter 6.4.5. is a summarizing pattern. It is build on all four patterns described above – reputation is established through the understanding of floating signifiers, institutional acts, economic signifiers and personality. This summarising pattern is strongly connected to Chapter 7.

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[364] So yes, I feel that even now when it comes to, for example, the big gallery, kind of like commercial, very big commercial gallery spaces, I feel that a lot of young artists ask themselves 'Why do these gallery spaces exist without more spontaneous opportunity to make something happen in the gallery space?' So they question not only the, sort of like, selling side of the gallery identity, but also things like space or personal connections to the team for example and these kinds of things. And I find it very interesting that there is something happening. Artist_4
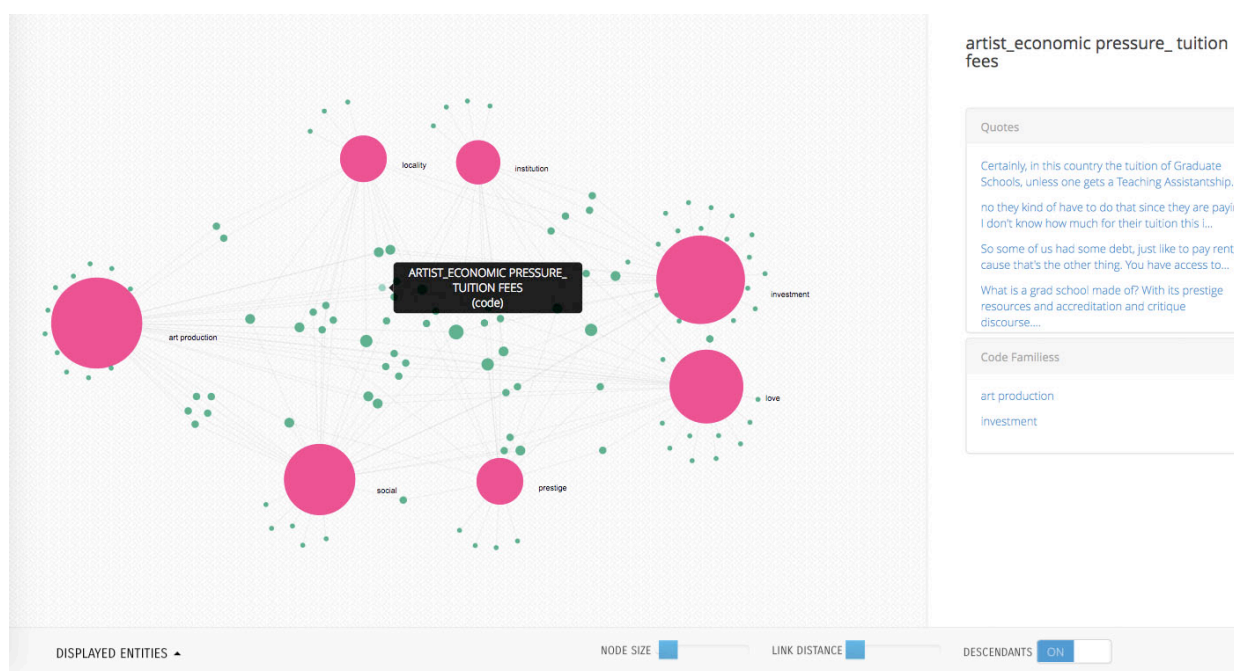
Figure 77. Anne Luther, *Artist_economic pressure_tuition fees,* 2015, screenshot.
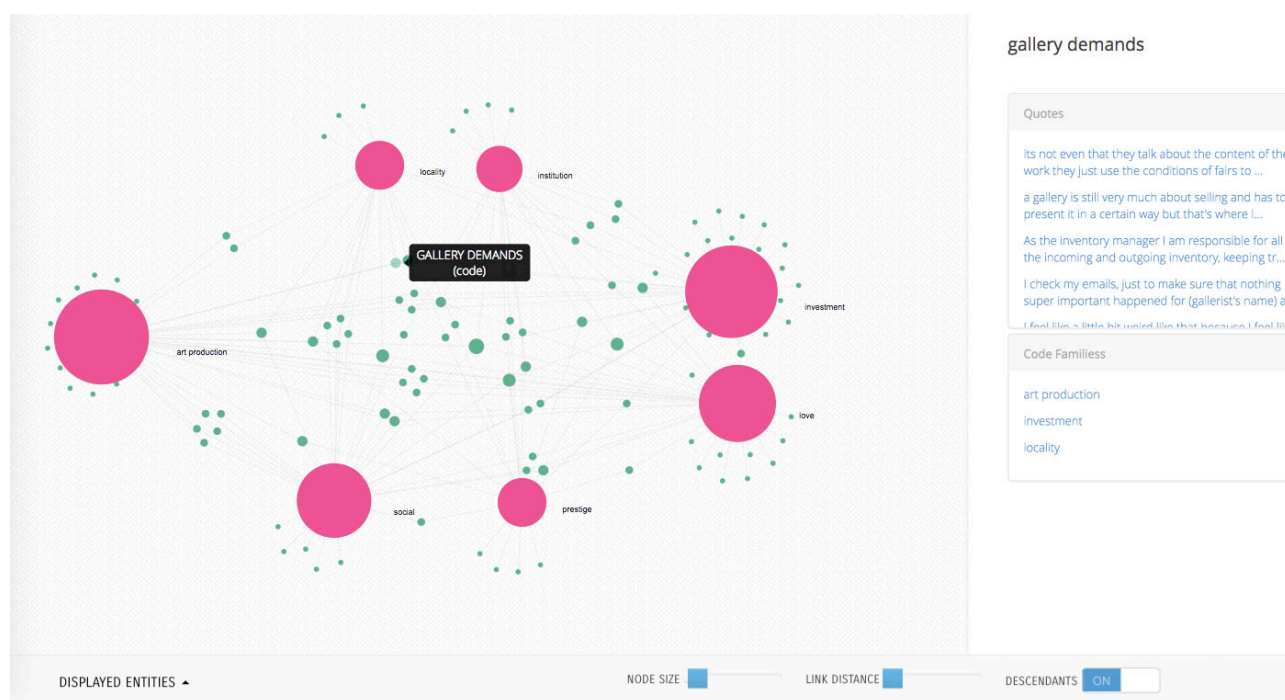
Figure 78. Anne Luther, *Gallery demands*, 2015, screenshot.
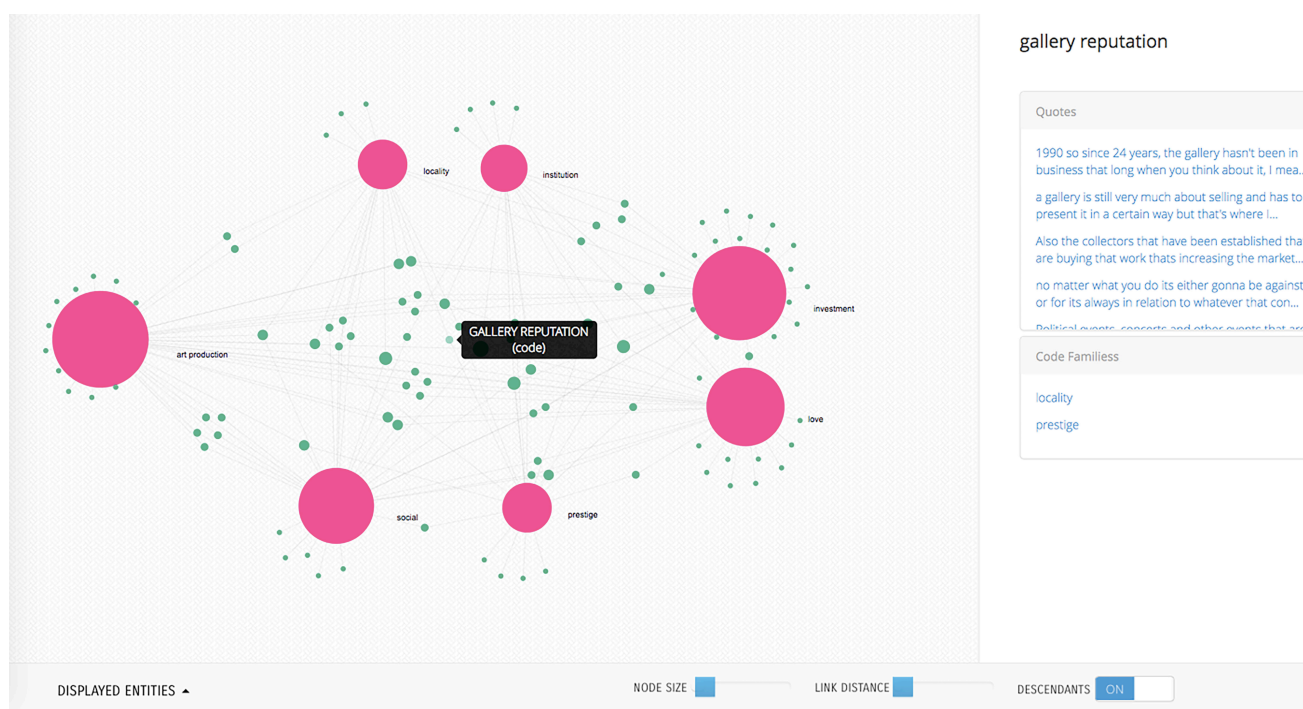
Figure 79. Anne Luther, *Gallery reputation,* 2015, screenshot.

6.4.1. Floating signifiers

Academic language, access, artist CV, institutional validation – these codes in relation to reputation show a semiotic understanding of signifiers. The signifiers here do not point directly to an object or material. Levi-Strauss introduced the concept of floating signifiers in his Introduction to the work of Marcel Mauss in 1987[365] and opened with this text an interpretation of the understanding of words with a potential to shift in their meaning. Academic language used to describe artistic practice, the artist CV and institutional validation often contextualize their use of words as floating signifiers. The example of Tauba Auerbach's CV below will show that the understanding of signifiers here can be related to the concept of floating signifiers but also contradict this concept to a certain extent by showing that the signifiers are pointing to objects (gallery square meters, location in the city) and that the understanding of the physical and visual object (which art is shown in the gallery how is it photographed) is dependent on the description and consent towards these objects (again in the context of another institutional environment such as the art magazine) etc. One example is the understanding of the names of institutions on an artist's CV [see Figure 80]. On the CV shown above the One-Person Exhibitions show that Tauba Auerbach showed mostly in the US and the UK in recent years, in institutional (Bergen Kunsthall, Wiels Contemporary) and commercial environments (Deitch Projects, Standard (Oslo), Paula Cooper). Not only does alone this information point to the actual physical house (which is not primarily relevant here at first) in the sense of how many square meters does the gallery have and are the walls painted white, where is the gallery located in the city and is the light in the gallery natural) but moreover it points to signifiers that describe an understanding of the gallery which is not based on the physical object per se. The understanding of this physical space comes from the experience an individual had with the space, with language that was used to describe this space and the understanding of the context in

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[365] Claude Lévi-Strauss. *Introduction to the Work of Marcel Mauss*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987.

which this language was used (a friend, an art magazine. which magazine and what kind of reputation it has, what kind of language was used to describe the space). The understanding of these signifiers has been described by one of the interviewees as looking and learning:

> We travel incisively obviously, everybody in the art world does now and has to […] I mean if it's interesting and worth looking at we try to learn about it and be aware of where it is and how to get to it and in the end what it should cost. […] We're in India we're asking the same questions we would be if we would be in the Lower East Side, I mean it's just looking, learning, looking, learning. Collector_4

The shared spaces to understand the value and reputation of for example the words on an artist's CV are a 'spatial-temporal' given[366] in that certain individuals concerned with the objects on an artist's CV (collectors, artists, gallerists) share the use of these words with the potential to change the temporal understanding of the physical object by shared behaviour (programming, documentation, control of prices) and language (academic or popular (a focus of the language of Deitch Projects, for example, for many years)) that is used to make these spaces.[367] Floating signifiers are overlapping patterns between art production and collecting because the shared and constantly renegotiated understanding of the described signifiers are produced by the artists and everyone who is a shared entity in the field of art production (the collector in that sense as well).

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[366] Claude Lévi-Strauss. *Introduction to the Work of Marcel Mauss*. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987), 17.

[367] Claude Lévi-Strauss. *Introduction to the Work of Marcel Mauss*. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987), 16.

PAULA COOPER GALLERY

Born 1981 in San Francisco, CA
Lives and works in New York

Education

1999-2003   BA Visual Art, Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA

Awards

2011   Artist Research Fellowship, Smithsonian Institution
2008   SECA Art Award, SF MoMA, San Francisco, CA
2008   Eureka Fellowship, The Fleischhacker Foundation

One-Person Exhibitions

2014   *Tauba Auerbach: The New Ambidextrous Universe*, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, UK (4/16 – 6/15/14)

2013   *Gnomon/Wave*, part of the Night (1947 – 2015) sculpture-in-residence program at Philip Johnson Glass House, New Canaan, CT (5/2 – 9/1/13)

2012   *Float*, Paula Cooper Gallery, New York, NY (5/5 – 6/9/12)

2011   *Tetrachromat*, Bergen Kunsthall, Norway (11/11 – 12/22). Travels to Malmö Konsthall, Sweden (3/16 – 6/10/12); Wiels Contemporary Art Center, Belgium (3/28 – 6/6/13)
       A Book is Not An X, Glenn Horowitz Bookseller, East Hampton, NY (8/12 – 9/20)

2010   *The W Axis*, Standard (Oslo), Oslo, Norway Quarry,
       Whitney Museum Construction Site Installation, New York, NY
       Ne Year, Western Bridge, Seattle, WA

2009   *Here and Now/And Nowhere*, Deitch Projects, New York, NY

2008   *Passengers*, Wattis Institute for Contemporary Art, San Francisco, CA
       The Uncertainly Principle, Standard (Oslo), Oslo, Norway

2007   *The Answer/Wasn't Here*, Jack Hanley Gallery, San Francisco, CA

Figure 80. Paula Cooper Gallery, *CV of the artist Tauba Auerbach*, 2015. PDF download from the gallery's website.

6.4.2. Institutional acts

University accreditation/reputation, artist_influence of art school, collector_role in museum, curator in collection, private museum for public engagement, professional collection, gallery identity. These codes in relation to *prestige* show acts that are connected to supporting institutions,[368] establishing roles of institutional contexts for a private collection[369] or establishing a certain discourse of an art school further in an artist's practice.[370]

Institutional acts, acts that use the language of established art institutions, are based on an understanding of the approach an institution takes to collecting, conservation and exhibiting. The approach to reach a public, to have a public voice or influence that reaches further than personal taste and the support of art and artists that reaches further than personal commercial means (in for example commissioning works, putting on exhibitions with consigned or loaned works from galleries instead of works from their own collections – one example of a program like this is The Power Station, Dallas – an institution like space owned by the collector couple Alden and Janelle Pinnell, that shows only exhibitions with work not owned by the collector[371] [372]). For both the artist and the collector these institutional acts become

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[368] 'And then also to look at the overall what we do philanthropically in terms of supporting other organizations, universities, other museums, other artists and then the exhibition program. 'Curator in private collection.rtf

[369] 'That is also something that I already wanted to do, rather than just working with objects, working with the people who produce them and there was no direction from her specifically about what she wanted to the program to be. So in the first year the conversations that we had were, who do you want to, you know what do you want to show here, how do you want to work, want to work with the collection, want to work with curators, want to have the collection seen as a resource and want to work with artists.' Curator in private collection.rtf

[370] 'Columbia has a reputation for being that type of MFA program where they produce people that are immediately introduced into the market whereas Bard is like a little bit less like that […] its like you learn all the right things and then you just apply it and that is very different then at least I thought about it.' Artist_4.rtf

[371] 'The Power Station is a not-for-profit initiative dedicated to providing a platform for ambitious contemporary art projects in Dallas, Texas. Housed in a Power & Light building constructed in 1920, artists are invited to respond to the raw character of the architecture, offering an alternative to the traditional gallery and museum context. Geared toward an international audience and most immediately, the community of Dallas, the bold programming serves as a catalyst to provocateur public discourse around art and culture. Projects and publications at The

patterns in the way they interact with each other. The collector starts to mimic an institutional language that shows that they are interested in following the same support as established institutions for the art production processes of an artist. Financial models to finance art production in commission before the work is shown in the private institution/collection are patterns that become prominent. This pattern influences art production on a financial level (production costs for projects that the gallery or studio (the artists) could not financially realize without the financial support of a collector offers exclusivity for the financed art work or another reward such as discounts of other works by the artist).

Power Station are made possible through funding provided by The Pinnell Foundation.' Power Station Dallas "About" Accessed August 25, 2014, http://powerstationdallas.com.

[372] Barbara Pollack. "Alden Pinnell: Powering Up The Dallas Art Scene." *Artnews*, July 08, 2014. Accessed August 24, 2014, http://www.artnews.com/2014/08/06/alden-pinnell-powers-up-dallas-art-scene/.

6.4.3. Economic signifiers

Art advisor_conditions for offering work, Gallery_control: These codes in relationship to reputation are related to economic signifiers an artist's work can carry in addition or separate from the market value of the art object itself.

> If I think the quality is good and then from there I offer the artwork to my client, ones that I know that that's what they are looking for. And sometimes the work isn't good enough. It is basic research on that level. Collector_2.rtf

Quality of the work and signifiers for the quality of the work as a condition to offer works by an art advisor are often based on comparable artworks, materiality and production quality, the representation of the work in digital images on a visual level and the written discourses about the artist and again signifiers from an artist's CV.

The gallery control was discussed earlier in regards to the control of prices and the control over the placement of works in specific collections. Reasons mentioned above for the control of galleries are the longevity in economic self-interest of the gallery by raising their prices in the means of their collector base, placing works in specific collections that do not try to profit quickly on the secondary market because that could indicate a lack of interest of strong collections in the long-term career of the artist, and building an institutional reputation for the artist with collectors that could be connected to a network of individuals in an institutional context. The control of the gallery can be understood as a sincerity of the gallery to work with their artists and collectors in a sustainable way:

> I am very interested in new ways of collecting and production and I developed a few ways of getting funding for the artists to do projects and I continued to do that, I did that on a large scale for the PS1 show of artist1 and I continued to do that on a smaller scale, well sometimes not so small, in asking collectors to fund a project because I find a lot of artists not working like other commercial artists. Gallerist_1.rtf

Economic signifiers overlap as a pattern in art production and collecting as the signifiers such as quality of material, the visual representation of an art work (digital image), and the mediated discourse are all directed by the artist in the first place. Both the artist and collector share the understanding of these signifiers.

6.4.4. Personality

Artist_persona, collector_good due to true interest in art, gallerist_personality, gallery reputation

The influence of an artist's persona in regards to the understanding or respect for their artwork is in this instant described in a direct and tangible meeting with the artist. It is not the 'highly personalized' semiotic understanding of an artist's persona through the visual impressions of an art object but rather instances when an artist speaks about their work, is introduced to advisors or collectors or gives and interview for an art critic. The contextualization of the work is sometimes understood with regards to the absence of the artist:

> Artists can sometimes be really polarizing. If a collector meets the artist, and decided to not like the artist and then will definitely not like the work anymore although the work is really good. There are certain artists that are fine, there are just a lot of artists that are not. Collector_2.rtf

Relating this discrepancy between the artist's personality and the artist's work to the linguistic theory Roland Barthes developed in 1967,[373] the individual who is viewing the work independently from the 'author's' interpretation, character and biographical information approach the work with their own understanding of the languages a work can inherently present. Barthes argued that while an author claims to assemble original ideas, every word, reference and image she could write about is already embedded in culture and growing from that context. The viewer can therefore 'look inside themselves' to understand these signs from their own perspective and context. When this individual's understanding clashes with the understanding of an artist's personality, it can lead in certain circumstances to dislike the work because the personality became part of the individual understanding of the work. Moral and life-style decisions can also play a role in this discrepancy:

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[373] Roland Barthes. "The Death of the Author." In *Image-Music-Text,* translated by Stephen Heath, 142-148. New York: Hill and Wang, 1977.

> Also if I see an artist really fucked up on drugs or something I am not going to buy their work, they might just die and their market can just stop.
>
> Collector_2

An art critic made it clear in the interviews that her interpretation of a certain focus or interest she saw in the work of an artist did not match the way the artist talked about his work and she described this for inability to escape an established discourse as negative (boring):

> I still really like his work, but the way he talked about his work was such a bore. It was like he developed a discourse in the late Seventies that would work for him at that time and then he got trapped in it. He was not interested in any social or political, larger cultural, questions I was asking. Even when there was clearly politics in the work. Author.rtf

The relationship between a collector and an artist can also be based on personality in a supporting role:

> I think after one of the performances I was like, oh artist1 I want to introduce you to collector1 and they chatted and at the end of the day artist1 was like, that is the guy right? And I was like yes, and then they became friends, they are like the same age. And they became friends, to a degree I think, you know that is just my way of working, I believe in these relationships […] you know those guys became friends but it was sort of an odd adventure because it was very much about collector1 supporting the exhibition. So this is how that worked. Gallerist.rtf

And for some collectors the personality and biography of the artist is an approach to understand the work and to support the work:

> It depends on the collector and I always ask them right away do you want to meet the artist and they usually say, yes that would be amazing or they say no, and they enjoy the work and they focus on the work. It really depends on the collector. I do know that a lot of galleries are very protective about how they introduce the artist to the collector. […] I feel that they do want some involvement or participation or direct experience which is informed not only directly by the work but also by a conversation with the artist. Which I like, the idea of it, people as oppose to a consumer who will just purchase one piece, this idea that they want the experience of supporting the project, I like that idea a lot.[374] Gallerist.rtf

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[374] 'They have read every single article about their childhood and there are moment when we stand in front of a painting and they say I can definitely see that, and I am like, I don't know what you are talking about but please tell me.' Collector_2.rtf

The understanding of the personality plays a role for the gallerist in detecting whether or not the collector has a true interest in art and it can also play a role in the choices a collector makes in regards to supporting a gallery with acquisitions (codes *collector_good due to true interest in art, gallerist_personality).*

Personality as one of the patterns in the visual map shows an influence towards the collecting decision of collectors. Again, this node can also disappear for some collectors who have no interest in meeting the artists.[375] As Isabelle Graw examines in her chapter 'How Much of a Product Is a Person?' in *High Price*, 'person and product tend to become one'[376] and compares artists and celebrities with their identity towards products in every day life. Personality is regarded here as something slightly different. Graw writes about expectations someone can have towards an artist portrayed as an artist[377] or showing some domestic elements in the work[378] or shaping a relationship between 'life' and 'work.'[379] Personality here is understood via direct contact with an artist rather than a mediated personality or biography. The contact and relationship a collector might want to establish with an artist is a pattern that can have influence on the artist's performance but not, as Graw writes, on the work itself. The work can still be a 'good work' and the collector might not doubt that, but she is not interested in collecting the artist's work anymore for reasons that are connected to reputation. The separation between work and personality can still function on the level of belief in the quality of the work and still influence the decision to not collect the artist's work.

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[375] 'It depends on the collector and I always ask them right away do you want to meet the artist and they usually say, yes that would be amazing or they say no, and they enjoy the work and they focus on the work. It really depends on the collector.' Gallerist.rtf

[376] Isabelle Graw. *High Price: Art Between the Market and Celebrity Culture*. Berlin, New York: Sternberg Press, 2010.

[377] Isabelle Graw. *High Price: Art Between the Market and Celebrity Culture*. Berlin, (New York: Sternberg Press, 2010), 165.

[378] Isabelle Graw. *High Price: Art Between the Market and Celebrity Culture*. Berlin, (New York: Sternberg Press, 2010), 164.

[379] Isabelle Graw. *High Price: Art Between the Market and Celebrity Culture*. Berlin, (New York: Sternberg Press, 2010), 164.

In the past year, one example that occurred during my participant observation in the field involved a collector promising an artist an exhibition in their private exhibition space after working together with him on a non-related project. The artist placed information about an upcoming show on their website after a conversation without confirming it with the collector. After a few more conversations with peers, the collector found out that the artist has worked with dealers of Stefan Simchowitz (see references in earlier chapters[380] [381]). The artist's eager and forward personality and the mediated personality of the collector Simchowitz made the collector break his promise and call off the exhibition with the artist. This memo from the field research is one example where personality doesn't represent quality in the artist's work, but does show that an artist's personality is related to reputation and therefore can have influence on exhibition-making and market performance.

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[380] Jerry Saltz. "Saltz on Stefan Simchowitz, the Greatest Art-Flipper of Them All." *Vulture* March 31, 2014. Accessed April, 27, 2014, http://www.vulture.com/2014/03/saltz-on-the-great-and-powerful-simchowitz.html.

[381] Andrew M. Goldtsein. "Cultural Entrepreneur Stefan Simchowitz on the Merits of Flipping, and Being a 'Great Collector.'" *Artspace*, March 24 2014. Accessed May 03, 2014, http://www.artspace.com/magazine/interviews_features/stefan_simchowitz_interview?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_term=Master&utm_campaign=March_30_2014_Editorial_Weekly.

6.4.5. Reputation

The link between *investment* and *prestige* is in this chapter an investigation into the understanding of reputation, in regards to the collector and artist. How can reputation influence both art production and collecting? And how can one depict reputation on a level of patterns rather than an individual understanding? The choice to investigate *investment* and *prestige* this way comes from the codes and quotations cited above. *Investment* and entities that are overlapping between collecting and art production here are *local economic pressure, gallery demands, tuition fees* and *investments of art production materials*. This pressure is connected to some entities linked to *prestige*; the artist tries to build a career that can be represented on the artist's CV, which can then be presented, by galleries to their clients. Building a reputation is not only linked to exhibition making – the four patterns described above are equally important for understanding elements that count as reputation. Floating signifiers in relation to language, economic signifiers, personality and institutional acts are all patterns that describe the elements that go into understanding of an artist's reputation. The patterns attached to *prestige* have a positive influence, and when these patterns tip towards reasons to build economic success rather than the approach to establish content and material in art production, the reputation can be negative.

Reputation summarises the overlapping patterns mentioned above. An understanding of the personality of the artist, the economic signifiers, the interaction with institutional acts and the renegotiation of floating signifiers are all constructed by the artist and understood by the collector in order to make critical or affirmative decisions (see Chapter 2.1). Both the artist and the collector are building and constantly establishing a reputation for themselves with entities that are connected to the mentioned and analysed patterns. Reputation of a work, an artist, a gallery, a collector and other entities that are connected to art production and collecting are linked to the four patterns mentioned in this chapter, it is what constitutes reputation.

7. Chapter 7: Why do individuals collect contemporary art in current culture?

Four patterns will be described with their linked entities in this chapter. Economic exchange, reputation, a relationship to time and material and the personal/emotional understanding of objects are patterns that occur in the visual map as reasons for or consequences of why individuals currently collect contemporary art. The entities in these patterns have been described in the context of earlier chapters (see the description of patterns in the visual map in chapter 6.2.). The four patterns are related to Investment and Love and point here back to the entities that are connected to them. This is illustrated in the dotted arrows in Figure 81. Without going into a description of the individual entities connected to the patterns here, the description is elevated to a theoretical conclusion rather then a descriptive data analysis. The chapter draws its summaries from the earlier description of codes and quotations connected to them. The following four reasons for collecting contemporary art in current culture are the result of the data analysis of the collected and coded field data. The analysis is elevated to theoretical propositions through the described and analysed patterns and codes in the visual map.

Collecting contemporary art in current culture has two a priori causes: artists produce art, and collectors invest financially in order to buy and preserve the work. Investment in the collecting process covers more than the acquisition of the artwork. It also covers the transportation and installation of work, insurance and storage. The preservation of the work is extending the financial investment in proper art storage facilities, and it also involves the protection and conservation of artworks, the distribution of documentation, loans to museums, and research and connections for potential public displays.

In contemporary collecting, financial investments for the purpose of owning art vary in the degree of interest expected by collectors. The following patterns mention shifting possibilities. The network analogy and the visual map help us understand that not every collector is currently interested in every aspect described here, or is implicated in every behaviour or act. For example, a collector who can

and wants to collect and preserve art with her means of economic investment might hire an art advisor or curator to find, propose and buy works for the collection. The understanding of the work comes from the research of the advisor and the rigor in collecting has motivations that are stronger (or heavier) in the nodes that are linked to economic exchange and reputation (which will be described in the following). Therefore, the following theoretical propositions are described as patterns or causes that are found in contemporary art collecting, but do not suggest that every individual collector follows these causes or is motivated by every entity linked to the theoretical propositions.
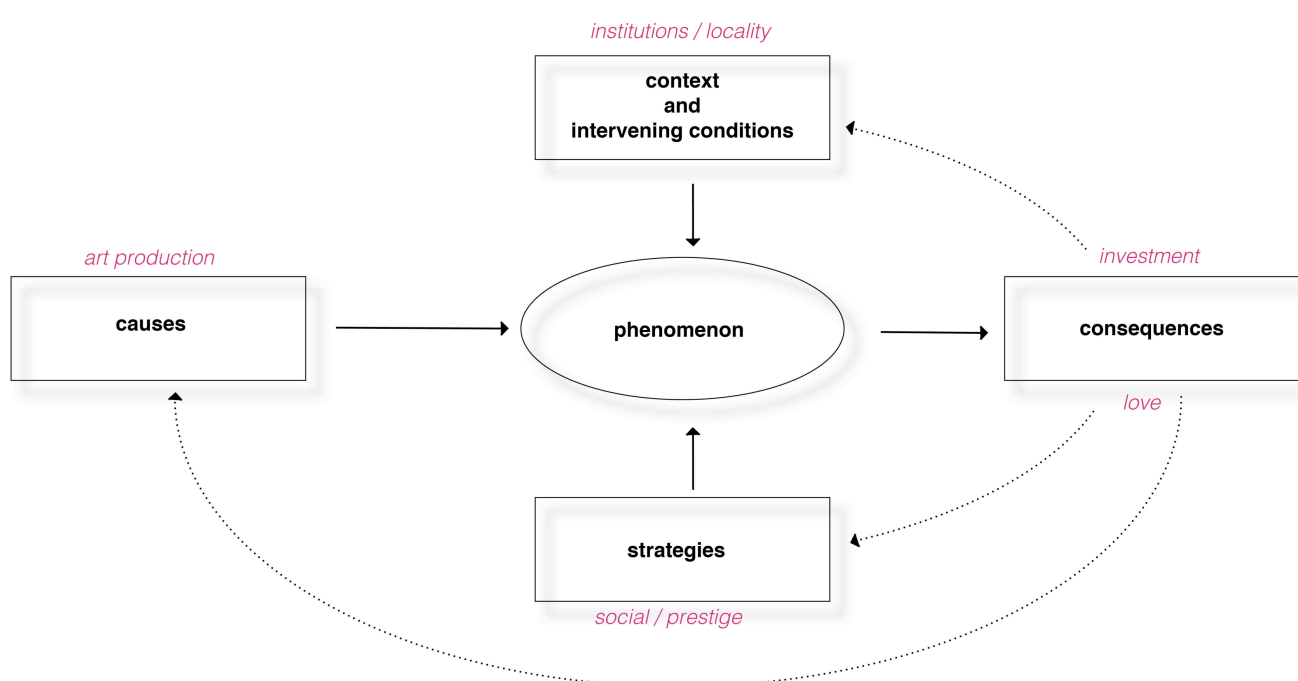
Figure 81. Anne Luther, *Consequences point back to context, strategies and causes,* 2015, digital drawing.

7.1. Economic exchange

Economic exchange between collectors or patrons and artists has a long tradition and has been discussed in recent years with references to a discourse on 'theories of symbolic exchange' by the authors mentioned in Chapter 2. It is important to mention that the 'fact that [the artwork's] market value is justified purely by its symbolic, which in turn is an expression of the manner in which it is loaded with idealistic concepts'[382] with a focus moving away from an understanding that the collector pays a symbolic price for the idealistic concepts that can be found in the art object itself. Prices, gallery control and the interwoven activities of collectors on the secondary market are a set of entities linked to the reputation of an artist that can influence the work with curators and institutions. The 'belief system'[383] is not a symbolic understanding of the idealistic concepts of the works of art, but rather an economy of interwoven entities that sustain art production with sales of works of the artist. Sales to collectors and institutions are nevertheless not only connected to belief in the work itself but also to secondary market performance, which can indicate either a negative reputation due to artwork perceived to be commercialized and the potential that a collector wants to sell the work quickly again, or positively show that the demand for the work is higher then the access to primary market production of the works of an individual artist. Access to the work is controlled by galleries, often with the objective of selling to collectors or institutions that will promote and preserve the work, rather than sell it quickly in private sales or the secondary market which could devalue the work due to the described negative indicators above. The support of the work happens through structuring a conversation about the artist's career and their work's content and materiality, rather than its market performance. This sustainable kind of support is often also carried out strategically through placements of works in specific collections that have either

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[382] Isabelle Graw. *High Price: Art Between the Market and Celebrity Culture*. (Berlin, New York: Sternberg Press, 2010), 29.

[383] Isabelle Graw. *High Price: Art Between the Market and Celebrity Culture*. Berlin, (New York: Sternberg Press, 2010), 25.

individual connections to members of institutions (board members, collector peers and supporting curators) or have collections that adopt the language of institutions through public and educational outreach in the form of private museums or publicly accessible collections.

The 'fuzzy science' of art pricing is therefore not only referenced in comparison to materials, art production costs and sizes of works, or reduced to the comparisons with other artists. It is also based on the collector base of a gallery, and the potential to sustain a rising price. The investment of insurance value of the work for storage and exhibitions is another tangible aspect in the economic exchange for works. Investment in and economic exchange of artworks cannot be reduced to a belief system in idealistic concepts in the art objects themselves anymore. The links to a market that sustains galleries and institutions and therefore tangible jobs (such as the artist's career, foremost, but also art handlers, shipping companies, insurance businesses, art fairs and curators that are connected to collector based operations, to name but a few), which construct the pricing, gallery control and economic investment.

The reason to have an economic exchange between art production and the potential to collect the desired art objects is based on a notion that the selling gallery supports the artist in a sustainable way, and that this support also comes back to the collector with the access to further work of other artists (and also potentially in other galleries). The understanding of the economic value of a work in the first investment ('This is how much I paid for it') and the rise of prices ('The new series goes for this price now') and the secondary market value in private sales and auction estimates and results are aspects that collectors consider, some more so than others. Media interest in market performance of certain artists and art forms (such as the recent mediated conversation about market performance of abstract painting[384]) also provide references for collectors interested in the market performance of their collected works of art. The references that websites (artrank.com, artnet.com and

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[384] Jeppesen, Travis. "Zombie Criticism." *Spike Art Quarterly* 44, (Summer 2015): 52.

artinfo.com) provide are also part of the research of collectors or their advisors/curators. Sales are the initial point of entry into a collection and the insurance, storage and art handling (installation and transport) costs are a constant reminder for the collector of the economic investment and potential market performance of the artists in their collection. Nevertheless the indicator of price ('I bought it for this price') and the market performance ('Now it sells for this price') can be an indicator for a collector to have understood the reputation (floating signifiers on artist's CV and written text about the artist, where was the artist's work placed, the personality of the artist, gallerist and supporters, and the economic signifiers – who is selling for what price).

7.2. Understanding of a highly socially coded environment

The entities connected to the four structured patterns that describe reputation have been described above in Chapter 6.4.5. The collector, who is interested in the desired works, starts to build an understanding of the artist's reputation and the potential consequences of the reputation of the gallery and institutions that support the artist's work (art magazines included).

Language (Floating Signifiers) that describes the work, sales and exhibitions are decoded by the collector and used to show that she is dedicated. Examples of the use of coded language were mentioned in the analysis above and introduced in Chapter 1 and 2. Examples are not only concepts that have been established by art history and academic discourses about concepts and materiality that art can be inscribed in. Behaviours such as 'buying' and 'selling' are paraphrased as 'acquiring' and 'deaccession', words that signify an entry in a collection and the funding through sales for further acquisitions. The understanding of signifiers used to describe the artist's career (on the CV, for example) and the environment of a certain local scene around a gallery or artist are also entities the collector learns to understand. The use of coded language to describe collecting behaviours, to show an understanding of art historic rhetoric to contextualize discourses about the material or conceptual work, and to identify a career development of young contemporary artists are three examples of how collectors distinguish and establish reputation. Moving with these signifiers is part of gaining access to desired works. Furthermore, the language of institutional collecting is a tool used by private collectors to establish a reputation as a dedicated collector with intentions to preserve and collect works of art. Language of institutional collecting is manifested in roles that are hired to establish a collection (such as art advisors, curators and administrators), but also the physical space (a collection room with exhibition space, the rise of the private museum or public visitor hours of project spaces) and production of printed matter and communication tools such as websites and social media are all points of reference for an educational outreach, a permanent collection

(rather than collecting based on ephemeral trends) and a dedication to art on par with
that of a traditional patron.

These entities (use of language and intuitional references) are backed up by
the personality a collector can establish in a local and international or mediated
environment. Establishing a reputation and understanding its terms makes it possible
for a collector to develop deep knowledge of a highly socially coded environment on
intellectual, historic, economic and personal levels. Showing this understanding
through the 'acquisition' of material objects to peers (other collectors, curators or
board members in institutions) or a public (by showing an artist before an institution
did) is a strong reason to collect contemporary art with regards to the Other.[385] By
looking at the collection, which is a result of the all the accumulation of the past, the
collector becomes an object in the present. The collector nevertheless has a desire
that points always to the future; desire is a starting point for a lasting relationship.
Nevertheless the desire for a certain object is not fulfilled when it is inscribed in the
collection. The collector has established a language of persuasion (understanding and
using floating signifiers, establishing a reputation and making economic investment)
that leads to access to further desired objects. The other can therefore always see the
present through the accumulated collection. In other words, if the collector stopped
acquiring contemporary work, the collection would be of the past, of past signifiers,
past prices, past codes of local scenes and reputation. The other in collecting
contemporary art is not one desired person. It is the interaction with the entities
involved in the process of collecting – articles (and signifiers), market value, and
also individuals such as the gallerist, peers and curators. Even if the collection is not
on public display, the established knowledge of the reputation and

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[385] The gaze of the other is a concept that has been discussed and established in the writings of
Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*. Evanston: Northwestern University
Press, 1968.; Jean-Paul Sartre. "Part Three: Being for Others." In *Being and Nothingness*, 301–
534. New York: Washington Square Press, 1992.; Jacques Lacan. *The Seminar of Jacques
Lacan Book XI The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. Edited by Jacques-Alain
Miller. New York: W.W. Norton, 1981. and Mikhail Bakhtin. *The Dialogic Imagination*.
Austin: Texas University Press, 1981. In this context it is taken as a framework for
understanding persuasion and the gaze of the absent other in regards to the influence unspoken
or absent market personalities and roles play in collecting processes.

economic/institutional performance are reassurance of the presence of an 'absent other'.

7.3. Material and the personal/emotional understanding of objects

The other lasting desire to establish a persuasive reputation so that one might access more contemporary art objects is also interwoven with the highly personal experience a collector has with the object. The object has an agency, it points to memories (personal content),[386] individuals (such as the highly personalized idea of the artist),[387] and things as formed matter (for example a pair of shoes or more conceptually or political referenced topics through for example form and colour composition).[388] This agency of an object initiates a personal and emotional understanding of objects; it moves. The collector can identify with a narrative or aesthetic that is tied to an individual understanding of the work. The memories, individuals and objects the artwork points to for the collector are not represented in any general accessible way, which means that they were not primarily constructed by a narrative or discourse that the artwork is embedded in any mediated way. Material can point to a contemporary conversation on the use of material in art making, but this general embeddedness into discourse is linked to the tangible entities of reputation rather than the abstract rhizomatic nodes that lead to an emotional and personalized response to a work of art. The nodes that start in the world and the materiality of the work are impossible to trace for each individual collector unless she constantly retells the narrative she constructs on a personal level through the memories, individuals or referenced objects.

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[386] Walter Benjamin. "Unpacking My Library: A Talk About Book Collecting." In *Illuminations*, edited by Hannah Arendt, 59–68. New York: Schocken, 1969.

[387] Isabelle Graw. "The Value of Painting. Notes on Unspecificity, Indexicality and Highly Valuable Quasi- Persons." In *Joy Forever: The Political Economy of Social Creativity*, edited by Michał Kozłowski, Agnieszka Kurant, Jan Sowa, Krystian Szadkowski, and Jakub Szreder, 65–74. London: MayFlyBooks, 2014.

[388] For example a pair of shoes in Martin Heidegger. "The Origin of the Work of Art." In *Basic Writing*. New York: Harper Collins, 2008.

7.4. Time

Time plays a significant role in art production and collecting, in the activities that an artist or a collector invests in. In both art making and collecting, the time that one spends on decision-making and the artwork itself often gets shortened. Some collectors work with advisors because the time that needs to be invested in order have access to the work they desire (as related to the control of galleries and the reasons for their distribution control) is not feasible alongside their other commitments, be they professional or familial.

Investing time in collecting and art production, respectively, leads to a different result. The artist lets go of work that they have been working on for a specific time. They develop ideas, material and concepts, and for some artists this is an investment that they see disappear as soon as the work leaves the studio. The accumulation of work or a body of work is released and vanishes.[389]

The demands from the representing gallery come here into the relation of time investment. The collector, on the contrary to this time investment, equals the loss of a body of work, and gains the possibility to accumulate the work and objects of desire.

The time that is invested in the present in order to acquire a work of art is bound to the understanding that the material of the work of art can outlive the collector. The collection is in its physical condition potentially preserved in a way that has a longer life span than the collectors themselves. Preservation in storage facilities with controlled conditions designed for artworks represents an economy in itself that does not even consider active conservation and restoration proceedings. The artist's intention for the life span of an artwork is often not considered when it enters a collection (institutional or private), and recent examples of research in

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[389] I find when work sits around for a while you start to realize things in it that you didn't see before so the more time you can spend with it the more it actually shows you about what you are doing and what you are interested in so having those disappear is like sort of shutting off a time period that you worked within so like a year of work just disappears and you don't see it again so its a little sad. Artist_4.rtf

digital light restoration at MIT show that site specific commissioned artworks are now restored with the intention of animating them after their death (once colour on canvas, for example, has faded).[390] The destruction of a private collection after the death of the collector is not a relevant or desirable part of reasons for collecting – a total physical destruction of the collection in a fire[391] or water damage[392] is counted as loss and the liquidation and therefore destruction of the collection into other potential collections counts as the transformation of the collection for the financial good of the collector's own family.

The potential that the artwork's physical and digital metadata (collection database with records on prices, market value over time, provenance etc.) will outlive the collector is tangible through posthumous plans made by living collectors. 'Finding a good home' in an institution, leaving inheritance to family members or the liquidation of the collection for the gain of the family are always present. The idea of giving something meaningful to the world after their death, therefore claiming an immortal remembrance through the attachment of the name of the collector to the collection or private museum, shows that collecting reminds the collector of both her mortality and the potential to be remembered.[393] The digitalization of private collection material (like digital images, title, year, material description, research about the artists and exhibitions, press, CV and primary and secondary market developments and other metadata) is often sorted into a digital

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[390] Louis Menand. "Watching Them Turn Off the Rothkos." *The New Yorker*, April 1, 2015. Accessed May 23, 2015, http://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/watching-them-turn-off-the-rothkos.

[391] New York Times Online Archive. "Disastrous Fire. Total Destruction of Barnum's American Museum." *The New York Times*, July 14 1865. Accessed September 09. 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/1865/07/14/news/disastrous-fire-total-destruction-barnum-s-american-museum-nine-other-buildings.html.

[392] Daniel Grant. "The Art World After the Storm: Chelsea Dealers Still in Recovery Two Years From Sandy." *The Observer*, October 22, 2014. Accessed November 02, 2014, http://observer.com/2014/10/the-art-world-after-the-storm-chelsea-dealers-still-in-recovery-two-years-from-sandy/.

[393] One example of this immortality is the distribution of the Vogel Collection of 50 works for 50 states (museum institutions in these US states). Miriam Bale. "Sharing the Bounty of Priceless Art 'Herb & Dorothy 50x50' Tracks the Vogel Collection." *The New York Times*. September 12, 2013. Accessed September 03, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/13/movies/herb-dorothy-50x50-tracks-the-vogel-collection.html.

database that also suggests the immortality of all the research the collector put into the acquisition process. The mortality of digital *metadata* from the physical collection items is a topic that institutions and private collectors are only now beginning to tackle.[394] Nevertheless, collecting and sorting the digital metadata of the collection items in databases suggests the consideration of a non-ephemeral collection and the future.

Considering the future as one of the reasons for collecting stands in contrast to actions in the present (knowledge, access and prestige) and the contemporaneity of the objects of desire. Following this logic, the *contemporary* in contemporary art becomes art history in a preferred future scenario. Donating one's collection to a museum is one of the ways to inscribe the contemporary objects into an art historic context. For this scenario it is nevertheless not enough that the collected art is from (made in) the present. The works need to have characteristics that contribute a surplus of contemporaneity. This surplus is the result of the network shown in the visual map; it is constructed by mediated discourses about research and materiality in art production that are constantly in flux. The mediated discourse is therefore always writing about the contemporary in a reflective mode – it seems that the collector is a few steps removed from the 'contemporary' in the present. The suggested future-leaning consideration in collecting contemporary art leads the collector to an enthusiasm for finding not only art of our time, but moreover art that represents contemporaneity in the art of the present in an imagined and aspirational future art history.

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[394] The Guggenheim created a digital initiative role in the museum in 2014 for the conceptualization of their digital material. (Guggenheim. "Guggenheim Creates New Curatorial Position for Architecture and Digital Initiatives." Accessed July 07, 2015, http://www.guggenheim.org/new-york/press-room/releases/6165-guggenheim-create-new-curatorial-position-for-architecture-and-digital-initiatives.) And the Getty has a funded program for the digitization of museum collections and the education on how to collect and work with the digital collection data. In 2015 I participated in the workshop Beautiful Data II at the metaLab at Harvard University as part of that program (("Digital Art History." Accessed September 09, 2015, http://www.getty.edu/foundation/initiatives/current/dah/dah_grants_awarded.html.). And initiatives that deal with the mortality of digital data and the death of 'digital artefacts' are for example Networkmortality. "Main Page". Last modified 5 July 2015, accessed August 09, 2015, http://networkedmortality.com/Main_Page.

8. Conclusion

The thesis offers an understanding of contemporary art collecting and the relationship to art production. The central point of my research was to examine how art collecting and art production are interwoven in current practices and to find a way to visualise these relationships. The visualisation of the network that constitutes both art production and collecting became the central focus of the analysis. The analysis resulted in the detection of patterns that overlap in both practices and a series of theoretical conclusions about motivations for collecting. The theoretical understanding of reasons for collecting is based on a field study with semi-structured interviews and participant observation through a research position at an art advisory in the contemporary art world of New York between 2013-15. The software application Entity Mapper, which allows a visualisation of the data coding of the collected interviews, was developed over the course of this thesis. The visualisation makes the entire coded data set visually available and an analysis of the interviews in reference to the theoretical understanding of the networked art world would otherwise not have been possible. The understanding of the field data and the theorisation of the coded network was only possible given a visual understanding of the relationships the network shows; the understanding of the field I develop here was not available through strictly textual means. The rigorous and systematic coding process brought patterns to light that were visualised through the newly developed software. Conventional text analysis could not have offered this detailed insight into the field data because the illustrated patterns and the information that was visualised from the meta-data (meta-structure of location of nodes, colour hierarchy and the construction of a networked map) of the data is not apparent in conventional text analysis. As elaborated in Chapter 5, current software in qualitative data analysis does not offer sufficient visualisation tools that allow an insightful visual analysis. The Entity Mapper is a new contribution to knowledge that allows an analysis based on the content of the data and the structure and hierarchies of the data coding. In reference to the networked field under study, conclusions were drawn about the

structure and content of the field itself. The visualised network served as a tool to reflect on the social world that is studied and as a concept to draw conclusions on a methodological level in regards to hierarchy (color and size of entities) and structure (locality of entities).

In the text that follows I will clarify the research development and limitations. I will continue with comments about the future of this research: It started with a comprehension about what the art world is and how other researchers and authors have defined the contemporary art world, therefore contextualising the contemporary art world as the field of study. The literature review showed that prominent authors describe the art world as a networked milieu. My research continued into the notion of the network, and it became clear that the network is a useful concept or tool for tracing the field of study. Networks became part of the methodological approach of this thesis, and were elaborated in regards to data in other disciplines and literature in social research, as with Bruno Latour's notion of reassembling the social. The research continued into my data and the data structure that I would construct in the rigorous and systematic coding process. It became apparent that the data hierarchies that I detected constituted a complex network. The understanding of my data coding process as a network structure allowed me to develop a software application that visualised this network in its full complexity. This visual understanding of the data allows one to draw conclusions about the theoretically described networked art world in a literal and tangible way, which would not have been possible in a conventional textual analysis. The consideration of the meta-data (location, size, and relationships in the visual network) in the analysis made a new analysis available.

The literature review served this thesis in two ways: it contextualized the thesis into the writings of other researchers in the field, and also gave an understanding about the nature of the field of study itself. The literature review led to the conclusion that the art world is a shifting milieu that is constantly reinventing

itself, and that it has been described as a networked art world in various ways. This milieu, made up of members of the art world, does not follow fixed rules because the contemporaneity of the product 'contemporary art' is a temporary concept that constantly calls for renewed legitimation. Contextualising art colloquialisms in the introduction and identifying that prominent authors in the field have used and defined terms such as price and economic, cultural and symbolic value in different ways shows that the field has room for negotiation in the use of language.

The use of language had therefore also been defined in the context of this thesis. The literary context around the art world was extended to literature about network structures because it became clear that by placing this research within the mentioned literary context, theorizing and conceptualizing of networks was the approach taken to understand the field of study.

The extension of the theoretical understanding of the context of this study as a networked contemporary art world to a methodological approach that matches this theoretical approach is the main focus of this thesis: How can we creatively think about networks, codes and data in order to create a methodology that visualises the field of study? I brought both fields of literature on the contemporary art world and a technical understanding of networks together in order to construct a method that could serve in two ways: understanding the content of data and drawing conclusions from the visual appearance of the networked data.

Research into the state of qualitative research methods and their understanding of data hierarchies, structures and coding processes was compared to the state of the art in data visualisation. Understanding the frustration that the prominent software in qualitative research would not allow for the display of the structured data of this study in an interactive way that matches intuitive use of the software and current standards in data visualisation brought me to the conclusion that new software needed to be developed. The software is a new contribution to knowledge in qualitative research analysis, as it built on the data structure of the methodology Grounded Theory and allows researchers working with this

methodology to understand and extend their theoretical understanding of their data coding in a visual way. The software elevates a textual understanding to a visual understanding of the research data and allows the researcher to draw conclusions from the visual appearance of the data structure. This study is the first example that applied the Entity Mapper as a tool to draw theoretical conclusions about the field of study from a visual analysis of the networked data.

The research drew on many intersecting and distinct disciplines and their theories and literature in order to extend and develop my methodology and theoretical understanding of collecting. Using literature from computational studies, design, art, social sciences, ethnography and philosophy shows that this research was not limited to certain protocols of distinct disciplines, but rather opened an understanding of theory and methodology in overlapping concerns and arguments. The understanding of networks and data are examples that expand over multiple disciplines throughout the entire thesis without losing a tangible conclusion on their use.

The analysis shows eight patterns in the network of collecting contemporary art with the following structure: Art production is the cause for the existence of the network. Artists produce artworks that have the potential to become objects of desire for collectors. Reasons for their desirability beyond the material or digital object, as argued in this thesis, are based in the described network. Context and intervening conditions are institutions and locality. *Locality* and *institutions* describe the conditions that lead to local knowledge and value production. Locality of art galleries can, for example, be a contextual indicator for the price range of their artists and intervene in the interest of collectors. The strategies that are often also connected to the local context are *social* and *prestige*. The social pattern points to interactions, acts and social roles in the network, and prestige illustrates strategies that composes status, reputation and knowledge of the field. Love and investment are, for artworks, the consequences from this network and are subsequently described as collecting contemporary art. The digital image is an outstanding pattern in the network of

collecting and art production because it is often the first interaction a collector has with the artwork – a digital representation of the physical object. Floating signifiers, institutional acts, economic signifiers, personality and reputation are patterns that overlap in their significance in art production and collecting. The analysis of these patterns led to the understanding of four reasons for why individuals collect contemporary art in current culture: the economic exchange, an understanding of a highly socially coded environment, the material and personal/emotional understanding of objects, and an understanding of time.

Media coverage of contemporary art collecting demonstrates high levels of financial investment in art. Collecting contemporary art is often reduced to the financial interest of the collector and produces a monetary understanding of art. Understanding secondary market fluctuation and trends was described in the interviews as the easy and mostly uninteresting side of collecting. Financial investment and understanding of the secondary market is nevertheless a major part of collecting. A highly intellectual understanding of current discourses in art and criticism is another mediated overlapping area in which collecting practices are also discussed as shown in numerous articles from art magazines and newspapers in this thesis. In academic discourses the field has been mostly deductively approached or from an academic analytical standpoint. Through my participation in the field, and by working in an art advisory as part of my research, this thesis has used the study of collecting to develop a cultural analysis that elaborates on the highly socially coded and networked side of collecting contemporary art considering present intellectual discourses, an emotional understanding of material and objects, and financial investment in contemporary art. The understanding of signifiers that are important for artists and collectors in the same way are made available visually and described in a tangible way. Using interview quotations in the thesis shows the connection between the theoretical understanding and the description of field members. Making this complex and socially coded environment comprehensible to those outside of the collecting world in a concrete and theoretical manner is where I have taken the

current state of collecting contemporary art. Collecting is a highly socially coded field in which constant changes occur in the network structure with social, material, institutional and theoretical understanding of the product it produces. The theoretical understanding from this constantly changing understanding of the field makes it possible to conduct further research that is not reduced to the findings in the current field data. Four of the reasons for collecting contemporary art – the economic exchange, an understanding of a highly socially coded environment, the personal/emotional understanding of objects and material and an understanding of time – can serve as a foundation for future research.

Two a priori causes were mentioned in the thesis for collecting contemporary art in current culture: artists produce art, and collectors invest financially in order to buy and preserve the work. Chapter 7 shows the reverse action to art production as the cause for collecting contemporary art. Figure 81 illustrates that collecting is not one-way, but interwoven with art production. The network that this thesis shows and the overlapping entities between art production and collecting that were described in Chapter 6 show that the financial, emotional/personal, time-based and intellectual investment of collectors also influences art production because of the interlinked connectivity between the entities in the field.

Chapter 7 elevates the analysis to four concluding reasons for collecting contemporary art in current culture. Economic exchange is in this thesis not reduced to the understanding of primary market prices based on material, size of the work and the comparability of the artist with other artists. Rather, the chapter expands this understanding of economic valuing of art to the gallery's knowledge of their collector base and their sense that pricing can mean sustainability for the artist's career. Raising prices is furthermore connected in the illustrated network to an understanding of reputation (of the gallery, artists and collectors) and floating signifiers that are shown on an artist's CV, as elaborated in Chapter 6.4.1. The financial investment (paying for the artwork) is extended to an on going economic exchange that preserves the work of art in the permanent collection with storage,

insurance, conservation and art handling costs. This investment shows the dedication

of the collector and can build a reputation that brings access to other galleries,

artworks and social inclusion. Primary market prices and secondary market

comparison is a reminder for the collector that she understood the mentioned floating

signifiers, reputation and discourse in a highly socially coded environment. The

socially coded language in the field of study is focused on intellectual, art historic,

economic and personal rhetoric. Understanding this environment with its floating

signifiers, discourses and the establishment of reputation through the use of

institutional language (educational outreach, a permanent collecting and dedication

to art) is illustrated in Chapter 6, based on tangible examples that show that the

collector can learn and understand these codes with a certain time commitment. The

personal and emotional understanding of material and objects is the third reason

mentioned in Chapter 7. From the analysis I concluded that art objects have an

agency – they move. The objects point to memories, individuals (for example the

imagined artist) and things as formed matter (image). The personal and emotional

understanding of artworks is a network that is impossible to trace as the nodes that

are connected to this understanding lie in the personal history and understanding of

discourses at large. Time, the last mentioned reason for collecting, is linked to the

decision making process of both the artist and collector in regards to subject and

material. The material of an artwork has the potential to outlive the collector.

Sustaining the collection is a reminder of mortality for the living collector. The

understanding of the present, through its constantly shifting nature, shows the

contemporaneity of the collection. Nevertheless, this contemporaneity, the surplus to

art of the now (as described in Chapter 2), points towards the hope for an art historic

relevance of the collected artworks in the future. The present is therefore a reminder

of the collector's mortality and at the same time insurance to understand a constantly

changing contemporary culture in order to point to its (past) historic relevance in the

future. Elevating the complex network analysed in Chapter 6 to four theoretical

conclusions shows the embeddedness of the theory development in the methodology

and the understanding of complex networks as multi-dimensional (for example, unstructured, coded and theorized data). These four reasons for collecting contemporary art are grounded in the field research and visual data analysis. The elevated theoretical conclusions about the field of study form a foundation for a theoretical approach to the field of collecting in my future research.

The software application The Entity Mapper, that was developed in this research, extends the methodology of Grounded Theory through the visualisation of the data and metadata from the field study and coding process. The software visualizes the entire relational network created by the researcher in the structuring process of the data analysis. The researcher collects data (e.g. interviews), anonymizes it and then structures it with quotes, codes and concepts (code families). Every connection that the researcher made during the coding process becomes visible in its full complexity with the Entity Mapper by simply uploading the data into the application using the standard data format, XML. This visualisation reveals relationships that are not comprehensible in the traditional textual analysis. The relationships between concepts and raw data allow for a new insight. The researcher can now draw conclusions about topics and concepts that are closely related, but might not seem so in a textual analysis. Furthermore, the ability to move the developed entities allows the researcher to bring into the data visualisation and analysis their own relationships, cluster and narratives. The digital nature of the software application and the flexibility that the Java Script visualisation offers in the web browser help the researcher to interact with the data directly. The visualisation's immense adjustability allows users to pull and pin the network in a diverse range of network views without losing the integrity of the built network structure and relations. This illuminates varying aspects and smaller integral relational clustering in the network. Without the visualisation, these relationships would be almost impossible to articulate. The flexible nature of the network is a characteristic that was built to represent the nature of qualitative data networks and the field of study it represents. That the data visualisation is available online makes the data sharable

with a research community or other researchers that work on this specific project. The visualisation only shows data that has been previously structured, and therefore only shows anonymized data, which makes the sharing of the visualisation safe and accessible for other researchers. The collaborative possibilities that the researcher has with the Entity Mapper represent a new form of digital data visualisation.

As described in Chapter 4 the research is based in Grounded Theory methodology. Grounded Theory allows the researcher to arrive at theoretical results by grounding the analysis in collected and structured field data. It can be defined with the following processes: "Data gathering, analysis and construction proceed concurrently; coding starts with first interview and/or field notes; theoretical sampling is the disciplined search for patterns and variations; theoretical saturation is the judgment that there is no need to collect further data; identify a basic social process that accounts for most of the observed behavior."[395] I identified that the computer-aided data coding process in Grounded Theory research is a node-link network between the Interview, Quotes, Codes and Code families (as shown in Figure 20). In other words, every researcher working with Grounded Theory methodology constructs relationships between the field data (interviews and quotations), the summarizing codes that describe the collected data and the theoretical understanding of patterns and variations. This data structuring is recorded with popular computer-aided qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS)[396]. The software used for the coding process in this thesis is Atlas.Ti. Atlas.Ti allows users to export data analysis into an XML file, which displays the relational network shown in Figure 20 (see Chapter 5.1.3).

I used Grounded Theory because it is an established methodology, and extended it by identifying the relational, node-link hierarchy as a network structure that can be visualized. Extending this understanding to an interactive, movable

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[395] Uwe Flick. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research.* (London: Sage Publications, 2010), 428-429.

[396] Uwe Flick. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research.* (London: Sage Publications, 2010), 359.

mapping of the entire data structure and coding process lead to a new understanding of data analysis in Grounded Theory. The identification of "patterns and variations"[397] is visually traceable through the developed extension of Grounded Theory research. The data structure and metadata can now be mapped with the Entity Mapper. The development of a new software tool that facilitates interacting with the data structure (node link relationship) and new meta-data (location, size and clustering) represents a new contribution to knowledge. Every researcher working with Grounded Theory can now, with the Entity Mapper, visualize the coding process, understand the data structure in visual patterns, and construct visual maps (like the Paradigm Model) and visual narratives or argumentation structures.

The researcher can visually trace relationships between the field data and the coding process. This visualisation allows the researcher to draw conclusions about the field they are studying—for example, in this thesis, the analysis of the significance of the digital image in the network between art production and art collecting. The location of the entity *digital image* in the center of the network shows an equal relationship, which leads to a focused analysis of the entity. The network that every researcher constructs in a Grounded Theory coding process is made visual, interactive, and traceable. The theory development that is grounded in the field is now visually comprehensible.

The usefulness of the tool in data analysis is described through the features the tool offers in Chapters 5.3.2 and 5.3.3. By using the Entity Mapper, the researcher gains a visual understanding of the data structure, data hierarchies and the developed data network. At the same time, the software makes it possible to access the textual data directly in the interactive map. The node-link relationship (see Figure 20) visualized with the Entity Mapper gives the researcher the ability to understand the data with visual qualities: The location of nodes in the coded network shows the relation of topics, clustering of codes and patterns of overlapping links to different code families. Understanding the full complexity of the coded data reveals

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[397] Uwe Flick. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. (London: Sage Publications, 2010), 429.

a functionality in the research design: The researcher can comprehend patterns in the data structure and decide if it is necessary to change the focus of the study, collect missing data or enter the field again for further investigation of the pattern. The location of the entities in the visual network can indicate qualitative relationships to other codes (topics), and the size of the nodes can indicate a quantitative focus of the field study. The color coding of the entities immediately shows the hierarchy and significance of the different entities. The Entity Mapper also allows the researcher to create a visual argument—in this thesis, in form of the Paradigm Map—by pinning entities in a specific location. This visual formatting is an important feature of the software because it allows the researcher to interact with the data in a flexible and effective way that then makes possible it possible to arrive at analytical conclusions. Color coding, quantity display (size), node-link relationships (location), access to textual and visual data, and movability (pinning, interacting, force-directed) are features that extend the data analysis into a more complex and comprehensive understanding of the data. It influences the researcher's decisions about the field data (e.g. collect more data, shift the focus of further interviews) and conclusions (related topics, patterns and argumentation are visually traceable). In addition to the current project, the Entity Mapper is a data visualization application may be productively used for many other projects.

The research has a clear linear direction or progress orientation, a continuous flow that nevertheless at all points loops back to itself recursively. Figure 18 shows this flow, and the recursive levels of the progressive flow. The recursive flow interconnects all parts of the research, from the proposal to the data collection, software development and analysis. The resulting analysis also shows a flow in itself (see Figure 81) that reflects on the continuation of the recursive nature of the research in the theory development and illuminates how connected research design, the ethnographic field study and the theory development are. A recursive flow arises throughout the research design, methods and empirical data analysis, which are connected and interrelated. The research design shows the flow (Figure 18) to have

has a clear progress, which nevertheless depends on a repeating circulation: The reflection at any stage of the research leads to the possibility of shifting, moving and changing anything that is missing or that was not comprehensible before. For example, the visual mapping of the data led me to go back into the field because I could *see* that certain topics were still underdeveloped. Going back to the stage of data collection made possible a continued flow in the data analysis. The literature review (Chapter 3) became an important stage in the field study because the interviewees were familiar with the literature studied for this research (see p. 106), which meant texts recurred throughout the research process. The research's design shows a clear recursive flow that also appears in the understanding of the field and the theory that developed from the visual map. Figure 81 shows that the consequence collecting (love/investment) influences the context, intervening conditions, and the strategies and art production in a recursive mode: Art production is the entity that the entire network depends on, but it nevertheless is influenced by art collecting. The ways in which this recursive movement accrues and influences the field is described in Chapter 7. One example from the empirical research which emphasises the recursive nature of the field is the financial investment of a collector that flows back to the artist, who in return can produce more work: Financial investment influences art production. The flow that happens before the financial investment is illustrated in the network that the artwork enters (see arrows left to right in the visual map). Without the illustrated network, the collector was not observant of the artist, which makes it possible to influence production directly through financial support. The circularity is not a sheer repetition of patterns; it is a responsive flow that depends on the recursive movement of the field. In the same way that the research design feeds the movement of the visual network by the potential to shift a focus in the research, the field itself is constantly in flux through this described reclusiveness and constant feedback.

The limitations of this research come from the location of the field. The future of this research could include expanding the field research outside of the US

and western Europe and approaching the inductive results with technical literature on economic exchange, social codes, the material and personal/emotional understanding of objects, and an understanding of time. Furthermore, its contribution to qualitative research with the software Entity Mapper will be extended to further methodologies in on going research. The limitation of developing a software that is bound to one methodology was in the scope of this PhD research. The application of the software and the peer-reviewed process nevertheless showed that there is a need to bring data visualisation, with its current possibilities in interface design and usability, to more methodologies. Extending research methods with digital tools that can be updated by a coding community due to the open-source nature of the software makes it possible to create methodologies that are constantly on the same technical level as other disciplines. The choice to develop Entity Mapper as an open source tool was made considering that more researchers would have access to the tool and the community on GitHub, an open source platform that allows anyone to comment, rewrite and use the software code for further development.

The findings of this research show that we can learn from the software development and analysis that shifting complex milieus can nevertheless be visually analysed in common patterns and elevated to a theoretical understanding of a wider phenomenon. The commitment in future research to the visual analysis of the field of collecting contemporary art allows a comparability of visual maps from other cities such as Brussels, London, Berlin but also outside the US/western European geographical focus of this thesis. Returning to the study in New York in 10 years to create a visual map on collecting contemporary art allows a direct visual comparison of how the field has changed and which entities shifted, disappeared or emerged. The outstanding entity *digital image*, analysed in Chapter 6, will be of special interest in a future comparison. An online archive of visual maps about the field of study of international milieus is a useful future contribution. Researchers with access to the visual maps could use this archive and contribute their research for a further reaching data set and visual archive.

The anonymisation of the interviews is an important process with regards to future research and the accessibility of the visual map. As argued in Chapter 6, personality and reputation are a substantial part of the field of study in regards to professional development and interaction. The data set should not serve as an archive of personal anecdotes and gossip, but rather as a documentation of the understanding and use of language of and in the field of study. It is therefore important that the interviews are only accessible in the visual map as anonymised quotations that do not reveal the interviewee through the entirety of the full interview.

The software development contributed a new understanding of data analysis with a visual understanding of data structure and the networked patterns of the data coding to the Grounded Theory methodology. This became an inspiration for continuing the research in data visualisation for other methodologies in qualitative research, and the conceptualisation of resulting data structures. The consideration of knowledge drawn from the visual meta-data (location in the network, size of nodes, colour coding to detect hierarchies) showed that qualitative research methods can extend the analysis from a purely textual or hierarchy-based understanding of field data. The data coding and methodology that I constructed as I gained expert knowledge from the field became a complex visual network from which I could draw conclusions with an understanding of the network itself. Understanding the relationship between code and code family, for example, helped to construct a theory elevation that was based on both the content of the data and the visual understanding of the metadata. Concluding that the understanding of the data structure in conceptual and visual ways can contribute to the theoretical understanding of the life worlds we are studying shows the need for further development of data visualisation for qualitative research methods.

To summarize, the study followed an inductive approach to theory development and identified limitations in current research on a methodological and content level in the area of research. I developed, revised under peer review and applied a software tool that allows users to visually comprehend the distinctly

networked milieu that constitutes the collecting and production of contemporary art. The network of human and non-human entities can be visualised because the network is a concept one can use as a tool to trace patterns of a networked reality. This cultural study shows the highly socially coded environment and elevates the description of patterns in contemporary art collecting and production to four theoretical concepts as reasons for collecting in contemporary culture. Economic exchange, an understanding of a highly socially coded environment, the material and personal/emotional understanding of objects, and an understanding of time are the basis for an on going research that will emerge from this thesis.

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Appendix

I Instruction for Entity Mapper

The Software is available as open source on GitHub:

https://github.com/piim/entity-mapper

By logging into GitHub you can download each component as a zip file from this

GitHub profile. Every component is available as open-source material.

The visual map referenced in this thesis is available at:

http://piim.newschool.edu/entitymapper/#!/hom

- Go to DEMO on the far right of the website header
- You will be prompted with a log-in on the Demo site
- Use the following log-in:
  EMAIL: entitymapper.login@gmail.com

  PASSWORD: EntityMapper

- Three data sets are available once you have logged in. 'Cnn transcripts' and 'veteran chronic pain' are sample data sets that are available to every new user. The visual map of this research is titled 'Visual Map'
- Go to 'Visual Map' → the map will start loading once you clicked on the link
- The map will appear in its full complexity → all nodes are 'on'
- Go to 'Displayed Entities' at the bottom of the page
- Choose the entities you want to turn off (I recommend to start in the hierarchy of the data structure: first click on 'Document' (yellow), then click on memo (dark grey), then click on quote (light grey). You now see the visual map displayed with codes and codes families.
- Turn the node size at the bottom of the page lower (slide the blue button to the left)
- The link distance button should also slide to the left
- Hold the command/control key (⌘) and click on an entity (code or code family). By holding the command key and clicking on the entity, the entity gets pinned on the screen. You can now place it where you want and it will stay there. Releasing the entity is by clicking on it again while holding the ⌘ key. Clicking on the code family (pink) shows the codes linked to the code family on the right side in the 'Text Box'.
- Choosing a code in the 'Text Box' displays the quotations that are linked to the code. This allows full access to the coded data set.
- Bring the code families in the following display by pinning the code families to the screen as described:
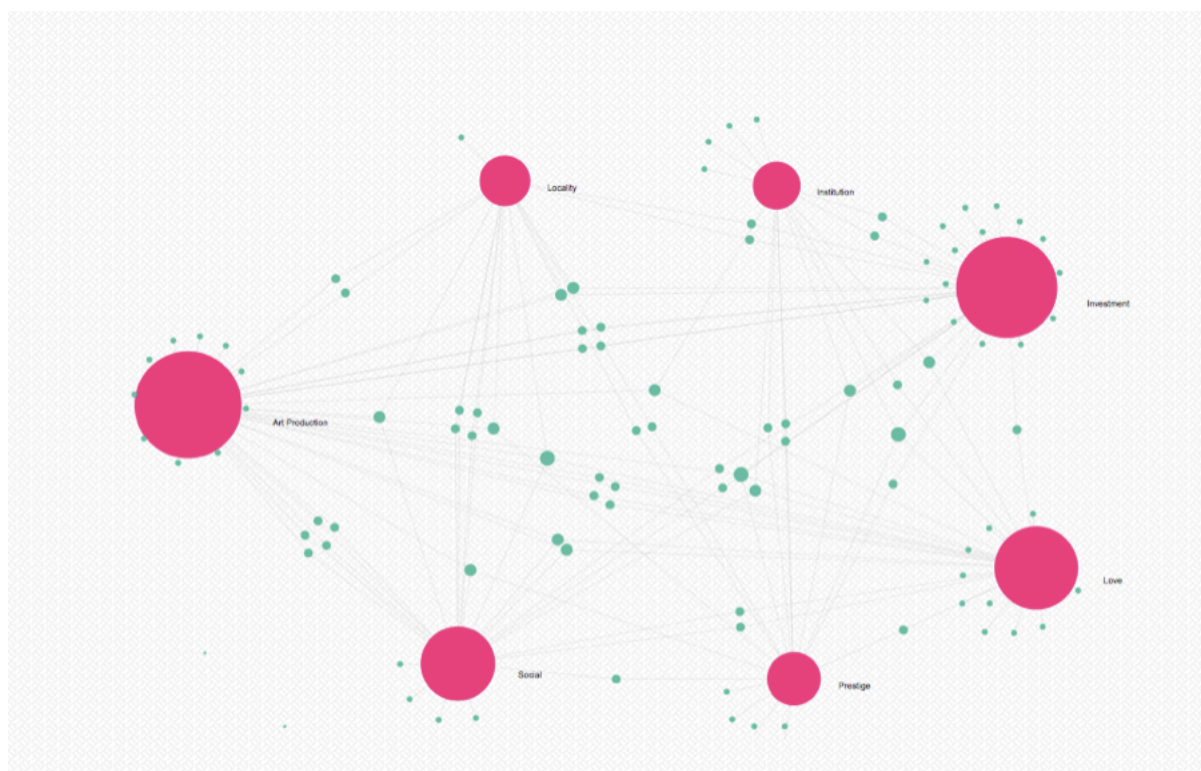
Left: Art production

Top left: Locality

Top right: Institution

Right top: Investment

Right bottom: Love

Bottom right: Prestige

Bottom left: Social