

INFLUENCE OF CONTEMPORANEITY ON PRIVATE MUSEUMS

PART - II

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ABSTRACT

Considering the findings of the initially published research i.e a rise in the number of private museums in the previous few years, as well as there being a need for ‘brand theory’ amongst architects while designing these museums; this second part of the research aims to examine the monumental architecture of private museums along with the collection they hold.

There is a focus on female founders of private museums as studies show they make up a slim slice of 19% of founders.¹ Also, statistics suggest female artists represent a mere 2% of the market.² There is an attempt to find a correlation between the two. Therefore posing questions such as : *Does the gender of the patron matter? If so, in what ways does it impact art museums and its context?* This is done by magnifying into and empathising with three case studies — Savina Museum found by Savina Lee Myeong-ok based in Seoul, South Korea. Secondly, Fondazione Sandretto re Rebaudengo in Turin (Italy) which is a non profit arts centre started by Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo in the year 1995. Lastly, the Garage Museum of Contemporary Art in Moscow (Russia), an initiative of Darya Alexandrovna Zhukova.

The aim is to keep the previous goal of the research intact i.e to understand how successfully architects combine their design sensibilities with specific requirements of contemporaneity. In addition, weigh gender of the founders with the art that has been collected or given platform to. It is vital for this research to lay out the percentage difference between male and female artists within exhibitions as well as zoom out from the museum to its context, to realise the overall situation of the country in terms of supporting female art practitioners.

While Savina Museum has a higher number of male practitioners as compared to female ones i.e a regretful ratio of 5:1; Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo and the Garage Museum show a positive sign with female representation as approximately 44% and 30.39% of the examined exhibiting artists, respectively.

¹ Private Art Museum Report, 2015

² Halperin and Burns, 2019

INTRODUCTION

In the previously published part of this research paper, it was seen that there is a drastic rise in the number of private museums over the last couple of years. It was also noted that architects follow ‘brand theory’, where ‘the brand’ is directly correlated with a recognisable, culturally-embedded meaning created by society.³ Brand theory, complemented by the environment in which the museum sits, sets a trajectory for design development.⁴ The two conditions alter design aesthetics and philosophies while building an identity for art museums.⁵ Architecture then succumbs to specific programmatic requirements of contemporary museums.⁶

A report compiled called Larry’s List in 2015, serves as a comprehensive guide to private art museums. It informs in detail, several findings including statistics suggesting 317 privately founded contemporary art museums existed in the world in 2015, 70% of those were found after the year 2000 and 35% i.e more than a third of private museums have over 20,000 visitors annually.⁷ An inference was — all things remaining equal (or next to equal) post the COVID-19 pandemic, the architecture of museums would likely witness dynamic development. A virtual footprint is crucial with ample headroom for the inclusion of social media within museum fabric. Private museums are predicted to hold a dominating stance as compared to government-controlled art museums since they do not rely on public funding.

Moreover, the report highlights two urgent findings; an issue which has prevailed in the art industry for years. The study shows a slim slice of 19% of female founders of these private art museums.⁸ Statistics also suggest female artists represent a mere 2% of the market.⁹ Considering the two findings, this second part of the research aims to scrutinise the architecture as well as the collection of three female-found art museums, namely — Savina Museum in Seoul (Korea), Fondazione Sandretto re Rebaudengo in Turin (Italy) and the Garage Museum of Contemporary Art in Moscow (Russia); while keeping its previous goal to understand how successfully architects combine their design sensibilities with specific requirements of contemporaneity. It intends to weigh the gender of the founders with the art that has been collected and housed within monumental architecture, to pose an important question: *Does the gender of the patron matter? If so, in what ways does it impact art museums?*

³ Hee Lee and Woo Lee, 2016

⁴ Sainani, 2020

⁵ Sainani, 2020

⁶ Sainani, 2020

⁷ Private Art Museum Report, 2015

⁸ Private Art Museum Report, 2015

⁹ Halperin and Burns, 2019

SAVINA MUSEUM, SEOUL (KOREA)

Started as Gallery Savina in 1996, The Savina Museum of Contemporary Art is the brainchild of Savina Lee Myeong-ok based in Seoul, South Korea. She relocated to Anguk-dong, Jongno-gu in the northern district of Eunpyeong in 2002. The novel built structure was designed by studio Space Group, a firm which has an extensive focus on commercial architecture; putting forth proposals for office facilities, education and research premises as well as cultural centres. The studio does not seem to have a distinct visual style in terms of materiality. What one can see, although, is strict geometry is followed while designing the built structure. There is an emphasis on sustainable architecture in the mission of the studio which states — *“We are concerned with the physical context of a project, sensitive to the culture and climate of their places. Space Group projects have always anticipated these trends and have pioneered solutions using renewable energy sources and offer dramatic reductions in pollution.”*¹⁰ Another fascinating area of interest for the group, lies in urban planning and design. This interest drives the architecture produced by the firm. The resultant architecture is a product of a conscious understanding of how the environment can be altered as a consequence of a built form.

Savina Museum along with the National Museum for Korean Literature changed the existing barren district of Eunpyeong to a newly transformed cultural centre.¹¹ Therefore, proving the Space Group designed the museum to align with its above-stated mission by activating the urban fabric of a once-neglected landscape. The architecture of the Savina museum comprises of five stories of triangular floors mimicking the shape of the site.¹² With walls of concrete, the museum is humbly dressed unlike the founder, Savina Lee Myeong-ok, who seems never to miss a pop of colour in her deck up. The facade aesthetics may link more to the belief system of the architects than the founder. Space Group has attempted for the architecture to blend within the site allowing for ample natural light to penetrate the interiors.¹³ The architecture of the museum has a cafe on the first floor. The cafe allows the museum to be economically sustainable as well as produce new ways of social interaction.¹⁴ There are two gallery spaces on the second and third floor, while the fourth floor is dedicated to research and archiving. The museum also has a meditation space on the fifth floor, which serves as a medicating pill for contemporary times as young Koreans not only see ascending levels of stress annually but also are known to have the second-highest number of working hours per day. This space sets out to be one to tackle the issue of contemporaneity.

The museum strives to be deeply engaged with current social changes while being an educational centre. Consequently, as a response to the growing current demand for technology induced within the museum sector,¹⁵ its architecture offers a virtual exhibition space which accommodates for the

¹⁰ Space Group, 2020

¹¹ Savina brings art to Eunpyeong, 2018

¹² Savina Museum

¹³ Savina Museum

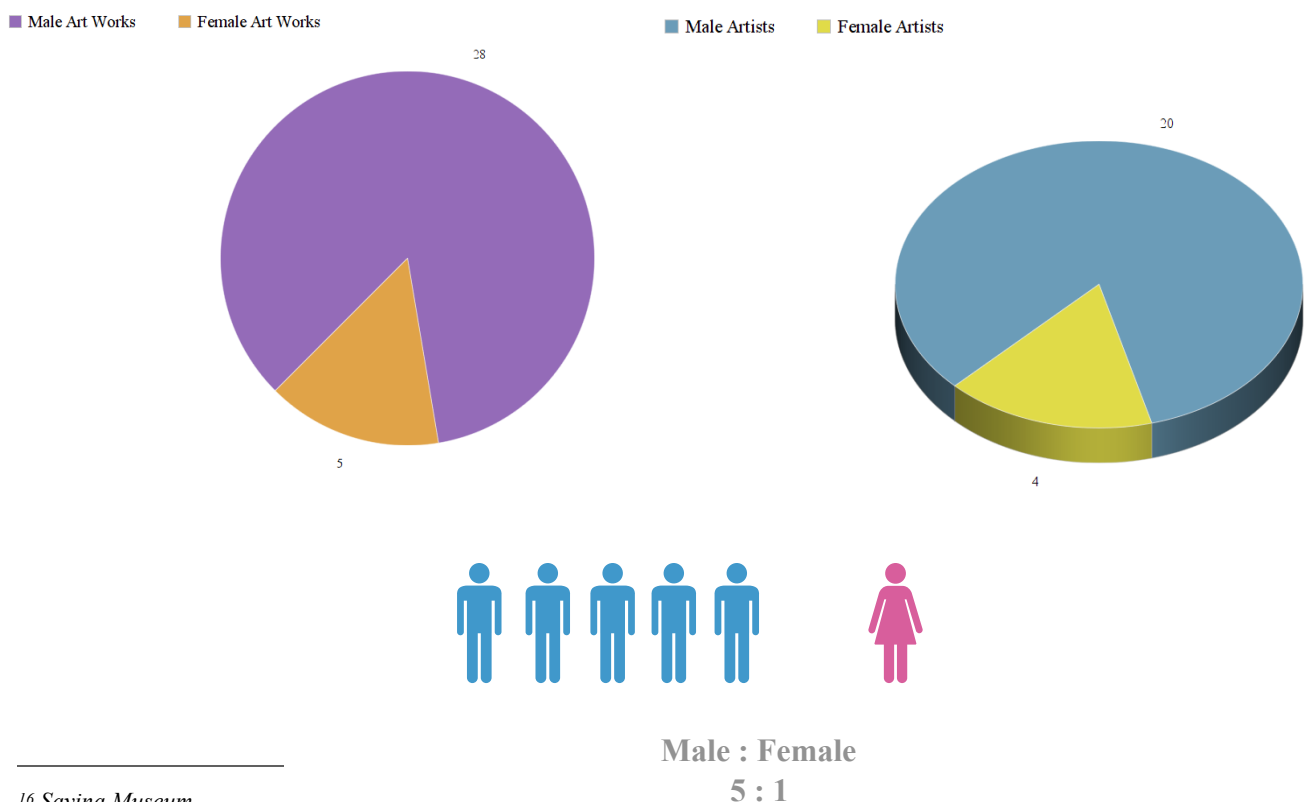
¹⁴ Sainani, 2020

¹⁵ Charr, 2020

viewers to see past exhibitions, artist interviews or seminars.¹⁶ This allows the museum to continuously archive and recycle data. The museum, hence tending to a constant stipulation for ‘newness’ in contemporary society; a society obsessed with showcasing spectacle on social media.

Savina Lee’s unorthodox personality reflects in the museum, as the museum is not a traditional white cube exhibition space.¹⁷ On one hand where Brian O’Doherty’s white cube had at its crux a quasi-religious atmosphere in which time and social space are excluded for the viewer to concentrate on individual masterpieces.¹⁸ On the other, Savina Museum breaks free of the formality to inject hyperactivity. This allows for an interactive space. Rather than exclusion, time and space play an essential role while viewing artworks juxtaposed experientially over one another.

The museum collection claims to be an eclectic mix of major Korean as well as international artists. On scrutinising the permanent collection open to virtual public viewing ¹⁹ it is seen that there are a total of 33 works which mainly lay focus on Korean Contemporary artists. Out of these 33 works, 28 works are produced by male artists whereas the other 5, are by female artists. To sieve through the data further (to ensure no artist is repeated more than once), 20 artists represented are male, 4 are female i.e for every 5 male artists there is 1 female artist given space within Savina Museum premise.



¹⁶ Savina Museum

¹⁷ Savina Museum

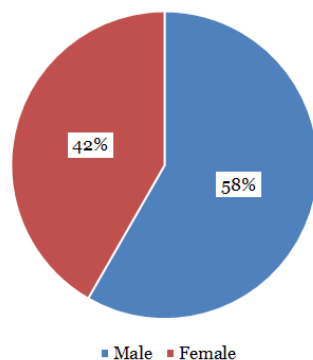
¹⁸ WHITE CUBE : An idea of gallery space, 2015

¹⁹ Savina Museum

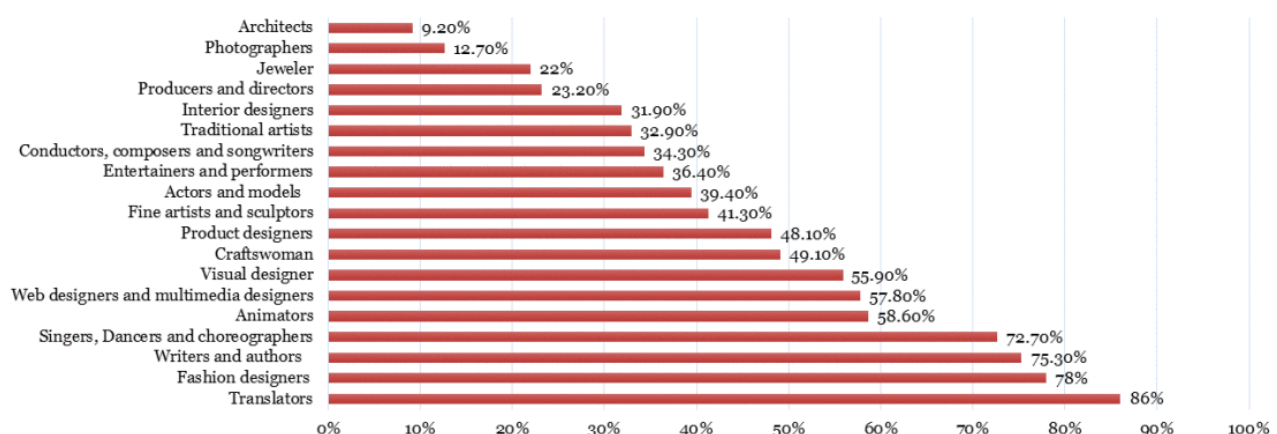
This shows that within the Savina Museum, a female-founded private museum, the premise consists of a higher number of male artists as compared to female artists. Female artists lack representation and are not given a platform as broad as that of male artists. Hence, it is fair to say that in this particular case, the gender of the patron does not matter. The overall representation of female produced artwork is a small percentage; 15.15% of the collection examined.

According to the International Foundation for Women Artists, Korean art market has a decline in the number of female artists when compared with the number of practising male artists.²⁰ In a workforce of 23,749,700, artists are 651,736 in number; out of which 42% (273,730) are women. The highest number of female ‘artists’ are translators, while 39.40% (107,849) are fine artists and sculptors.²¹

Gender Ratio of Artists Percent of



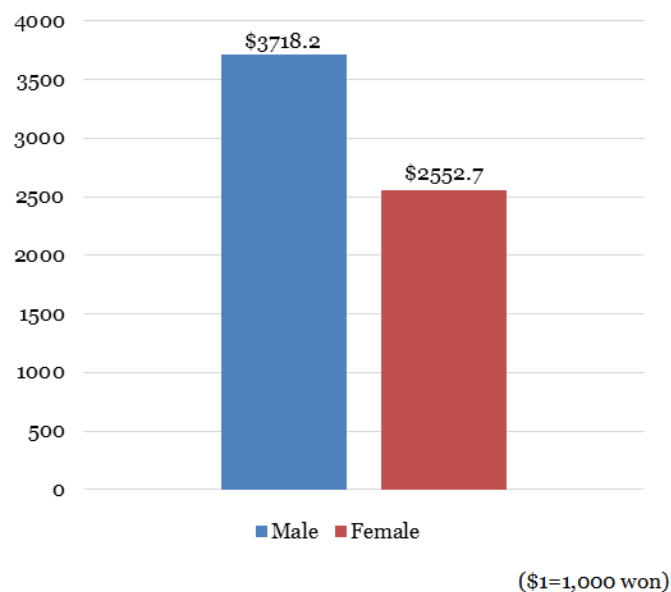
Korean Artists Who Are Female The Average Monthly Income of Artists by Gender



²⁰ Statistics about female in the art and culture industry in Korea, 2014

²¹ Statistics about female in the art and culture industry in Korea, 2014

The Average Monthly Income of Artists by Gender



It is also evident looking at the graph above, that not only are the number of artists low but also female artists see a lesser average monthly income as compared to male artists.²² The difference in monthly income between men and women is 1165.5 dollars. There is a huge gender wage differential in Korea which proves to be a key concern especially when considering that the country has a renowned private museum owned by a female collector. In theory, we should be seeing better numbers at least with Savina in the premise, but that doesn't seem to be the case in the small sample examined, open and accessible to the public.

²² *Statistics about female in the art and culture industry in Korea, 2014*

FONDAZIONE SANDRETTO RE REBAUDENGO, TURIN (ITALY)

Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo also known as the Museum of Contemporary Art Turin, came to life as a museum in 1995 and was started by collector Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo in Turin, Italy.²³ Its architecture began by converting a Fergat automobile factory, at the Borgo San Paolo district, in the urban hub of Turin into a non-profit contemporary arts institution. It was finally open to the public in 2002 after undergoing a renovation by the renowned Italian architect Claudio Silvestrin. The revamp of the space turned heads as it won the gold medal for Italian Architecture at the Milan Triennial one year after its inauguration.²⁴

Claudio Silvestrin is the master of contemporary minimalism, known to be affiliated with celebrities such as Giorgio Armani, Calvin Klein, Anish Kapoor, Victoria Miro and Kanye West. The essence of his architecturally designed spaces lies in their serene nature filled with ingenuity, with a high focus on detail. His architecture strikes a chord visually, as it is humble but filled with soul, austere contemporary but elegantly timeless.²⁵ His design aesthetic lies in the calmness of Japanese architecture. Silvestrin, in an interview with the online forum, designboom states, “*there is no dispersion or fragmentation (in nature). Science tells us that nature is gently electrified, there is no aggressiveness, there is strength but not aggression*”²⁶; he seems to follow through this ideology while designing. In his architecture, there is harmony with no perverse forms. A visual simplicity, devoid of banality or oversimplification.²⁷

The design of Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo is an unfeigned representation of Claudio Silvestrin’s philosophy as an architect. The museum is an effortless, linear structure; an epitome of sheer grace.²⁸ Cladded with sand coloured Lecce stone, the building has accents of cedar-wood which compliment its context, seamlessly integrating with the urbane.²⁹ Glass filled voids on the southern facade allow ample light to break the monotony of spaces. It does not follow the contemporary trend of the ‘Bilbao effect’, where architecture has a striking quality to it with a desperate need for being sensational. Similar to a long shed of 9 metres, it stretches horizontally on

²³ *Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo*

²⁴ *Museum Of Contemporary Art – Claudio Silvestrin Architects*

²⁵ *Biography of the architect: Claudio Silvestrin*

²⁶ *Philip Stevens, 2020*

²⁷ *Philip Stevens, 2020*

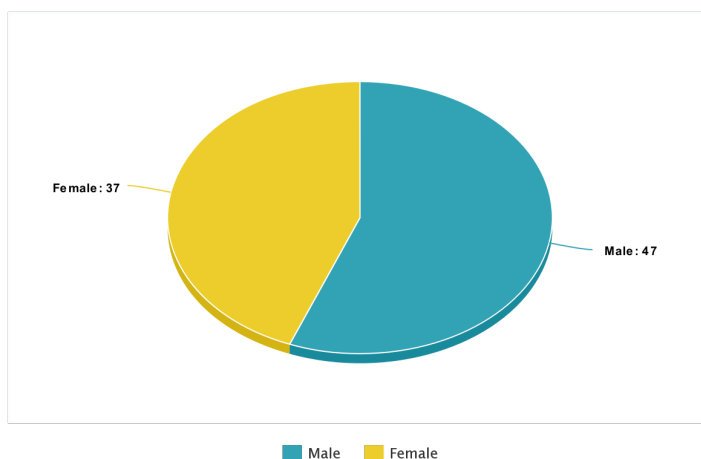
²⁸ *Biography of the architect: Claudio Silvestrin*

²⁹ *Archello, 2002*

a single level for 130 metres.³⁰ The total area of the building i.e 11,000 square meters is divided into three exhibition spaces. The first is the main hall used to exhibit the collection of the museum, the second is reserved for video installations, while the third is a gallery space.³¹ Museum of Contemporary Art Turin, similar to other contemporary private museums of its kind also has commercial spaces such as a conference hall which can seat 150 people, a lecture room, a bookshop, restaurant as well as a storage space essential to safeguarding the collection.

Special considerations have been made by the museum to make the spaces accessible.³² There are no architectural barriers such as a staircase or a steep ramp since the museum spans on a singular level. All spaces within the vicinity are wheelchair friendly, with an additional account taken for toilets to be equipped for people who face mobility issues. Consequently, there is a provision of a tactile map in the museum premise as well as on their website. Guide dogs are welcome within Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, as a facility for the visually impaired. Besides, ‘touch tours’ are organised by the museum for those who need assistance while experiencing exhibitions. Although the text on labels is ensured to be of a reasonably sized font as well as technologically advanced to be downloaded via a QR code on smartphones, it is essential to acknowledge the absence of a mention of brail text on labels.³³

On analysing the museum exhibitions to empathise with the platform given to female artists in Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, it was found that up till October 2020, current exhibits including those named ‘*Waves between us*’ and artist Tarek Lakhrissi’s ‘*This doesn’t belong to me*’ gave space to 7 female artists in a total lot of 9 i.e 77.77%. A future exhibition called ‘*Space Oddity*’, accommodated 12 female artists in a total of 32 artists i.e 37.5% who planned to present. While in the case of past exhibitions showcased a total of 43 artists out of which 18 identified as female artists i.e 41.8% of the artists were females. On calculating the grand total of all the exhibitions at Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, it is seen that in a lot of 84 artists, there are about 37 female artists which come down to 44% approximate prominence of women practitioners.

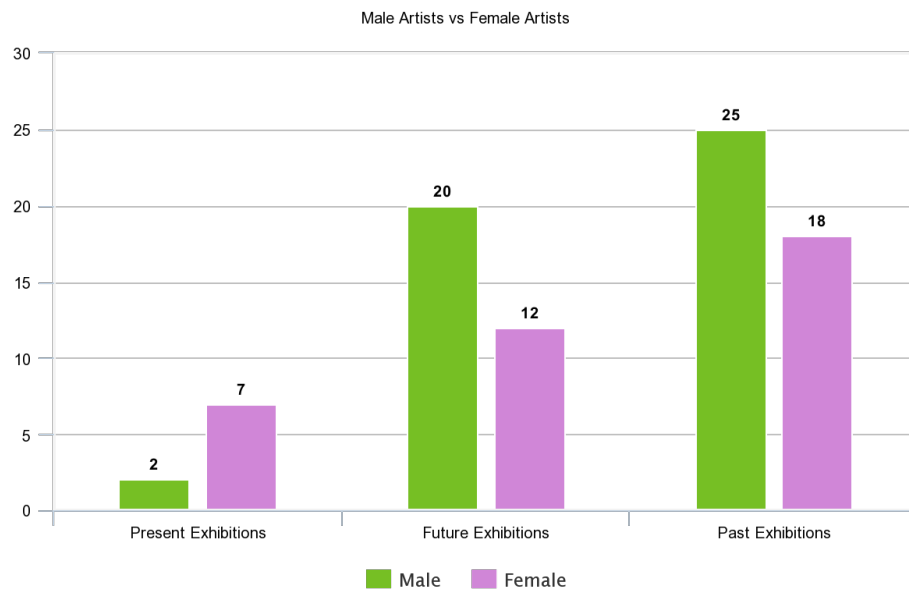


³⁰ Archello, 2002

³¹ Archello, 2002

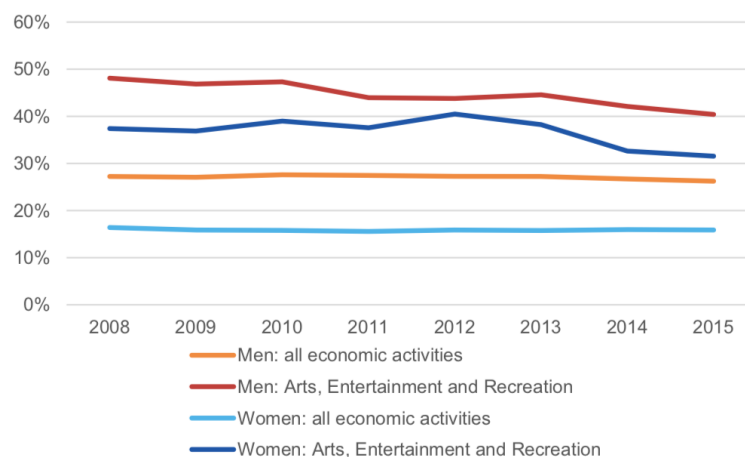
³² Accessibility – Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, 2020

³³ Accessibility – Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, 2020



Empathising with the following figures, in the case of Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, it is seen that the female presence does have sincere weightage. Although the numbers could be improved, it is seen that female artists are represented fairly. 44% prominence within the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo Museum premise is admirable considering female artists represent 2% of the market.³⁴ In this particular case, it can be said that a female founder (Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo) does drive the demand of female artists as well as makes space for them within the art industry by giving them a platform to exhibit their productions.

According to the Gender Equality Policy in the Arts, Culture and Media report compiled by the Hertie School of Governance in August 2017,³⁵ Italy ranks slightly better than the average European Union country in terms of ‘gender mainstreaming’. This highlights the government’s as well as the society’s commitment to achieving overall gender equality.



³⁴ Halperin and Burns, 2019

³⁵ Hertie School of Governance, 2017

The graph above positively reflects the equal pay policies; moreover, it is seen that the gap between the pay of an artist according to their gender do not vary by a huge margin. It is important to mention that the gap could be further decreased but compared to the Korean study, the statistics put forth a hopeful outlook.

	Arts and Humanities	
	Italy	EU-27
2013	71.13%	64.67%
2014	70.49%	64.64%
2015	NA	64.43%

Furthermore, the table above within the Gender Equality Policy in the Arts, Culture and Media Report calls to attention the access given to students within the arts and humanities sector. In this aspect too, Italy seems to be doing better than an average European Union country. Female students enrolled in universities within these sectors also surpass that of their male contemporaries.³⁶

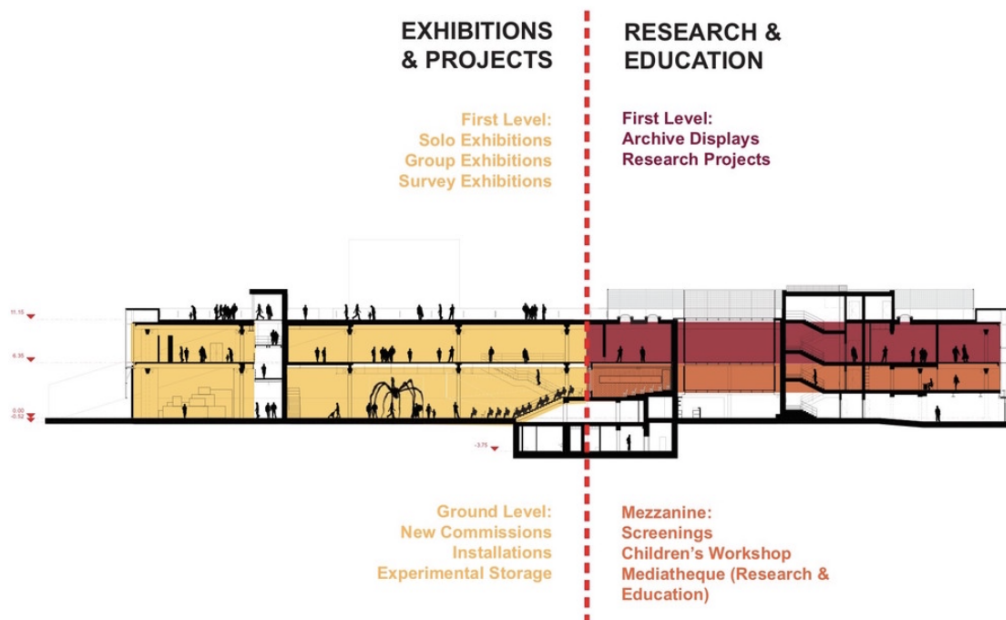
The inference for this specific case study could be two key findings — Firstly, the government and societal norms promote equal female involvement in various sectors of the art, media and cultural industry in Italy. Secondly, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo Museum has a female founder and therefore there is a visible eminence given to the female practitioners of the industry.

³⁶ Hertie School of Governance, 2017

GARAGE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, MOSCOW (RUSSIA)

Garage Museum of Contemporary Art in Moscow Russia is an initiative of Darya 'Dasha' Alexandrovna Zhukova. Prior to the identity assigned to the museum as of today, it was initially called Garage Centre for Contemporary Culture. The building for the museum is designed by the Office for Metropolitan Architecture, the architectural office ran by renowned Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas and Greek architect Elia Zenghelis, along with Madelon Vriesendorp and Zoe Zenghelis. Rem Koolhaas holds a reputation of nestling a philosophy of finding 'new synergies' between architecture and culture.³⁷ With a high focus on the development of Russian as well as contemporary art culture for the Garage Museum, Rem Koolhaas' OMA was the perfect candidate to design the museum to honour the commitment of the museum i.e to provide access to living artists and archive art histories.

The building has an area of 5,400 square metres divided between two levels.³⁸ The ground level contains spaces for new commission, installations, storage along with a mezzanine used for screenings of video based installations, workshop space dedicated to children as well as a research and education mediatheque. On the first floor, there are exhibition spaces for solo, group and survey exhibits.³⁹ The spaces are segregated vertically (as shown in the figure below); Koolhaas is known to 'program' spaces depending on function and human activities.⁴⁰



³⁷ Saxena, 2016

³⁸ *Garage Museum of Contemporary Art / OMA, 2015*

³⁹ *Garage Museum of Contemporary Art / OMA, 2015*

⁴⁰ Saxena, 2016

OMA embraces both features of academia, architecture as well as urban planning. Hence, there is a preservation of the Soviet-era elements such as mosaic tiled walls, from the older structure once present in place of the museum; further adding contemporary technological innovations within the design. Two open spaces are also incorporated within the built form in order to allow fragmentation. These open spaces allow a variation in the interior conditions while connecting them to the context. Another function of these large openings are to allow the installation of sculptures of exceeding heights. Interiors are sophisticated white cube spaces which are flexible in nature, an important quality within contemporary museums as they see large scale installation and variety of media. The walls can be folded from the ceiling, to expand or contract exhibition halls as and when needed.⁴¹ The mediatheque accommodates new age means of expression such as video or film, as well as allows an interactive and tech-savvy pathway towards research and education.

The museum also has a cafe and an auditorium which serves as a means to income for the museum. Furthermore, there is an informal living room with Soviet era furniture as well as an untouched existing facade cladded with brick and green tiles from the 60s,⁴² expanding on the aim of the museum to be one to archive Russian history. The existing structure is enclosed with a polycarbonate sheet, a material that reflects Koolhaas' aesthetics. The architect is known to design buildings that are in stark contrast to the surroundings. His designs do not blend into the environments. They have an urbane quality to it.

The exhibitions within the Koolhaas designed museum ran from the year 2008 till August 2020.

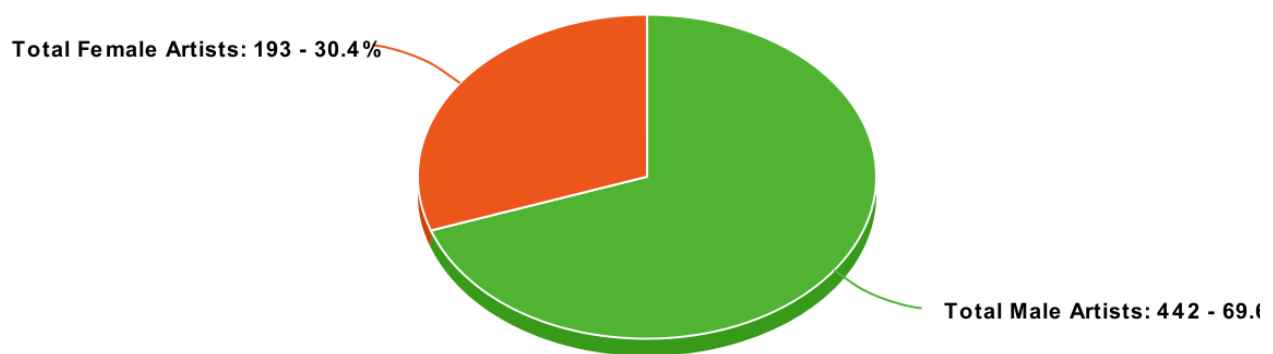
The table below highlights the number of female artists as well as male artists, per year :

Year	Male Artists	Female Artists	Total Number of Artists
2008	8	5	13
2009	16	2	18
2010	19	8	27
2011	46	17	63
2012	24	6	30
2013	7	2	9
2014	126	59	185
2015	58	19	77

⁴¹ *Garage Museum of Contemporary Art / OMA, 2015*

⁴² *Garage Museum of Contemporary Art / OMA, 2015*

Year	Male Artists	Female Artists	Total Number of Artists
2016	16	9	25
2017	13	3	16
2018	43	16	59
2019	11	14	25
2020	55	33	88
TOTAL	442	193	635



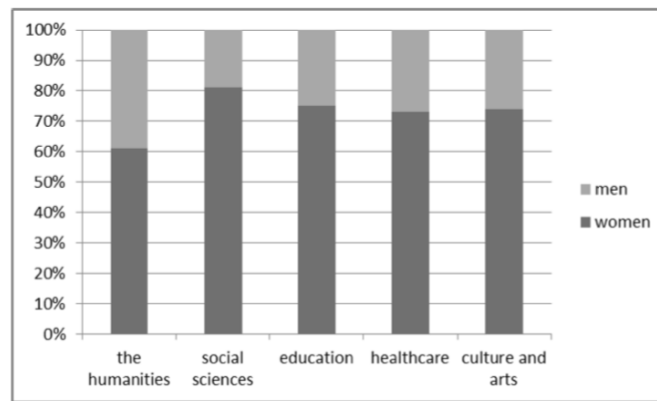
6%

On analysing the table it is seen that over the span of 12 years, 635 artists have exhibited within the premise of The Garage Museum of Contemporary Art. Out of these 635, 193 have been females while the other 442 have been male artists. This means females have had a 30.39% representation in the museum, which is a percent acceptable enough when compared to the 2% statistic mentioned earlier.

According to a report published by UNESCO, it was during the revolution of 1917 when female-identifying individuals increasingly made their mark in Russian Visual Arts to prescribe dialect regarding gender related issues. Prior to this women were visualised as ‘belonging to the domestic’, as makers of ‘decorative applied arts’, responsible to either be wives of artists or other caretakers of family members.⁴³ Since then Russia has seen a growth in the number of female artists as well as escalated their reputation as serious artists within the industry.

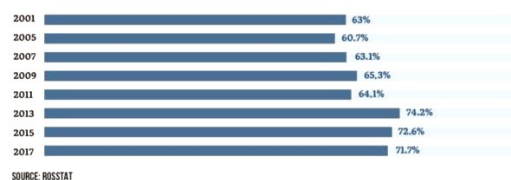
⁴³ UNESCO

Gender Composition of the Higher School Student Body in 2012 (%)



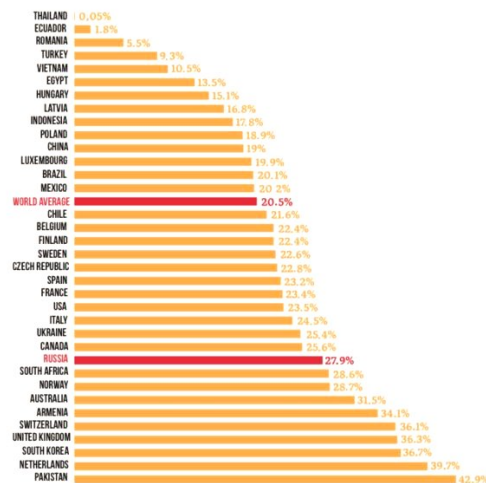
Although, the statistics laid out by the report portrays there is still a gap of 30% between men and women who are interested to be a part of the industry (culture and arts). This may be due to the existing pay gap in Russia. In the graph below, it is seen Russia sees a 30-40% difference in salary between a man and a woman.

RUSSIA: WOMEN'S AVERAGE SALARY COMPARED TO MEN'S AVERAGE SALARY



GENDER PAY GAP

PERCENTAGE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AVERAGE MONTHLY SALARY OF MEN AND WOMEN



Regardless of this, it is important to acknowledge that the percentage lies within the same range as that of Italy. This translates to Russia also showcasing a hopeful outlook towards equality within the industry. The numbers could see a hike with a higher number of female owned/run museums. It should also be noted that Russia is also miles ahead of Korea when it comes to gender equality within the arts and culture sector.

CONCLUSION

Speculating the three case studies it is seen that the architecture of the Savina Museum holds close the value of sustainability, which is of utmost importance to the architects, by producing architecture that is a product of a conscious understanding of the environment ensuring that the context is not overpowered, rather enhanced. Moreover, it serves as a catalyst for the region of northern district of Eunpyeong. The museum has a higher number of male practitioners within its collection housed in Space Group designed museum, as compared to female ones i.e a ratio of 5:1.

Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo designed by Claudio Silvestrin is an epitome of Silvestrin architecture as it has a minimalistic quality to it. One issue of contemporaneity the museum tackles successfully is that of inclusivity. The 1,100 square metre space is a single level arts centre which is wheelchair friendly as well as accommodates needs of other people with disabilities by providing services such as a tactile map. The female found museum also shows a positive sign, with female representation as high as 44% of the exhibiting artists part taking in the past, current as well as future exhibits within the premise. Furthermore, in case of the Garage Museum it is seen that the mission of the museum was a need for delegated space to develop Russian and international artists and art histories. With Rem Koolhaas' OMA as architects, the building is a symbol of contemporary culture while accommodating the historical character of the site. This female found museum, also showcased relatively favourable numbers with female representation up to 30.39% in a total of 628 artists.

It is highly likely that the prevalence of a female private museum founder can, in fact make a difference within the museum arena to improve the known statistics which suggest female artists represent a mere 2% of the market by giving them a platform to showcase their work.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Halperin and Burns, 2019

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