

Prosocial Collectors.

Exploring the intertwining between contemporary art collecting and giving attitudes

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ABSTRACT

This study delves into the relationship between art collecting and prosocial behavior, departing from traditional literature's emphasis on self-satisfaction and competition. Focusing on contemporary art collectors in Tuscany, Italy, it explores correlations between collecting behaviors and various forms of giving. Results from 64 survey participants unveil intriguing insights: True Connoisseurs exhibit altruistic tendencies, often favoring anonymity, while Aggressive Collectors are inclined toward prosocial acts in public settings, driven by social validation even if they usually demonstrate lower emotional giving, emphasizing rational factors in their pursuit. These findings partially illuminate the dynamics between collecting motivations and altruistic inclinations, challenging conventional theories and enriching our understanding of art collectors' philanthropic behaviors.

Keywords: art collecting, giving behavior, cultural philanthropy, prosocial behavior

Introduction

Traditional stereotypes depict collectors as self-interested individuals, who jealously guard their material possessions. In parallel, scholars from psychology to social sciences have reinforced this image, portraying collectionism as the quintessential form of household consumption (Bianchi, 1997).

With the overarching intention to integrate and challenge past fragmented literature, this study explores the potential interplay between art collecting and prosociality, and the possible configurations it may assume. We cluster collectors according to their behavior (Baekeland, 1981), and we differentiate prosocial behaviors following Carlo and Randall's (2002) taxonomy. We collect data from a group of small to medium-sized collectors who are primarily vested in contemporary art and we delve into the interplay between collecting motivations and altruistic inclinations.

The paper is structured in four main sections. In the first, we sketch an integrated framework linking previous studies about art collectors' behaviors and prosocial behaviors. In the second section, we outline the context and the methodology we used to sample survey's respondents and collect data. The discussion of results and the implications for research and practice will be outlined in the third and fourth concluding sections of the paper.

Exploring the Worlds of Collecting and Giving

Belk et al. (1990:8) encapsulate the multifaceted nature of collecting, emphasizing its deliberate and ongoing dimension, as well as the inherent meaning attributed to the collection as a cohesive entity. In these regards collecting behavior is conceived as a set of selective acts of longitudinal acquisition, possession, and disposition of an interrelated set of differentiated objects (i.e., material things, ideas, beings, or experiences) that contribute to and derive extraordinary meaning from collection that this set is perceived to constitute (Belk, 1995; Belk et al., 1990; Belk, 1988).

Collected items are required to exhibit some form of connection and be disposed into sets based on criteria such as serialization, aesthetic similarity, thematic similarity, or other collector-defined criteria (Spaid, 2018). Indeed, the selectivity trait allows the distinguishing of the collecting process from other kinds of accumulation. Once collected, objects are stripped of their utilitarian functions and imbued with symbolic significance (Belk, 1995). The sacralization of collected items arises from their removal from the marketplace and everyday use, repositioning them within a new context that endows them with symbolic meaning (Kopytoff, 1986).

According to McIntosh and Schmeichel (2004), collecting follows an eight-step process that typically begins with the deliberate decision to collect. Integral to this process is information gathering, which enhances the collector's expertise, allowing them to identify valuable acquisitions, gain social credibility within the collector community, and secure a competitive market advantage. Once the collecting objectives are clarified and relevant information is gathered, the collector formulates an acquisition plan, detailing where and how to acquire the desired items. The subsequent phase, referred to as the '*hunt*', epitomizes the thrill of the collecting endeavor, and is usually marked by a state of flow wherein the collector experiences heightened absorption and enjoyment (Belk et al., 1990). The culmination of these steps is ownership. The positive effect generated by the possession and the success in competition towards other collectors is considered to be one of the emotional motivations for collecting and has also been the object of discussion for what concerns the obsessive and addictive behaviors that may be the psychological downsides of this activity (Formanek, 1991). However, collecting extends beyond acquisition and ownership, offering social and personal benefits. Participation in collecting communities fosters identity and belonging while expanding a collection brings social recognition and reflects the collector's unique identity and personal history (Danet and Katriel, 1989; Belk, 1995).

Past literature has extensively explored collectors' motivations (Lee et al., 2022; Le Fur, 2021; Spaid, 2018; Formanek, 1991). The primary motivation for collecting pertains to the self (Formanek, 1991), encompassing *defense*, *challenge*, and *maintenance* attitudes. Though less frequently cited, collecting can address an emotional void and counteract a sense of loss. On the contrary, according to Belk (1988), individuals could extend themselves through their possessions, so a larger collection can enhance and empower one's sense of self (Kleine et al., 1993). Thirdly, collecting may be purposed for the maintenance of self-esteem, often directed toward others, allowing collectors to express their individuality and differentiate themselves (Spaid, 2018). Collectors driven by these motivations experience psychological ownership, exhibiting possessive feelings toward their items (Jami et al., 2021). As tangible expressions of one's identity, collections may be considered as 'time capsules' for the collector's personal experiences (Lee et al., 2022). Furthermore, collectors may be driven by the prospect of financial gain, viewing collecting as a form of investment. Although collectibles have mixed financial performance compared to traditional investments, their non-financial value usually offsets potential losses (Lee et al., 2022). Due to the interplay of emotional and financial elements, collectors might struggle to objectively assess their collections' value, making professional guidance from wealth and asset managers essential (Le Fur, 2021).

'Outward' motivations extend beyond the individual to the social environment. Interest groups, both physical and digital, allow collectors to connect socially and experience the emotional significance of community (Spaid, 2018). Within these contexts, collectors share information, support each other in

purchasing (McIntosh and Schmeichel, 2004), and acquire desirable items (Cheetam, 2009). Competitive behaviors, such as the thrill of the 'hunt' and comparison with peers, are also prevalent (McIntosh and Schmeichel, 2004). Ultimately, as collections may serve as compilations of the collector's life memories (Lee et al., 2022), they can also preserve group or societal memories, reflecting the historical traditions of a specific society to which the collector belongs or feels connected. Collectors may perceive themselves as '*cultural patriots*' (Hook, 2010) safeguarding the cultural heritage embedded within their collections and contributing to the collective memory of society (Belk, 1995).

Based on collectors' motivations and behavior Baekeland (1981) identifies three psycho-types of art collectors. The Aggressive Collector is highly competitive, seeking validation through display opportunities and silent or openly expressed comparison with others. This collector is eager to display opportunities, positive returns, and legitimization. Conversely, she may be surprisingly uninterested in the pieces owned by others if they feel sure about their collection's superiority. The Snob Collector shares similarities with the Aggressive Collector but tends to exhibit competitiveness placing a strong emphasis on uniqueness. They often seek to possess rare items, and their area of interest is deliberately chosen to be one of exclusivity where few, if any, others venture. Conclusively, the third archetype, the True Connoisseur, is not significantly influenced by external forces such as trends, or the desire to collect in obscure areas solely for the sake of uniqueness. Instead, they possess profound knowledge in a specific artistic domain within their area of interest.

Past literature shows various classifications like Baekeland's (1981), while no studies have opened any path for an understanding of art collectors as hybrids. As a matter of fact, traditional literature surveyed so far has depicted collectors as self-centered individuals (Bianchi, 1997) without considering collectors also as philanthropists or, at least, displaying some prosociality which blends the motivations of art collectors (Turrini, 2022). Prosocial behavior (or prosociality) can be defined as a 'voluntary behavior that results in benefits for another; the motive is unspecified and may be positive, negative, or both' (Eisenberg, Miller, 1987: 92). Prosociality, characterized as acting in favor of another entity, has been extensively researched across psychology, sociology, and economics for its role in regulating relationships at various levels - dyads, groups, and societies (Thielmann et al., 2020). Research has focused not only on assessing how the tendency to prosociality manifests itself but also on predicting the factors that may trigger those behaviors. Among different studies, Carlo and Randall (2002) reject the notion of a uniform prosocial behavior, proposing a taxonomy with six main types.

- *Altruistic* prosocial behaviors denote selfless, intentional acts of assistance that are predominantly driven by an empathetic desire to tend to the needs and well-being of others, frequently elicited by sympathetic responses, and reinforced by internalized ethical standards or beliefs (Eisenberg, Fabes, 1998).

- *Compliant* prosocial behaviors are the consequential result of a verbal or nonverbal request (Eisenberg et al., 1981), and are more frequent rather than spontaneous helping (Carlo, Randall, 2002).
- The construct of *emotional* prosocial behaviors has been formulated as a predisposition to assist others when emotionally arousing situations arise. Several other variables, such as the observer's relationship with the individual in need and perceived similarities, could potentially impact the degree of emotional arousal (Carlo, Randall, 2002).
- *Public vs. Anonymous*. The performance of prosocial behaviors in the presence of an audience can be partly driven by the desire for social approval and the enhancement of one's self-esteem (Buhrmester et al., 1992). In opposition, anonymous prosocial acts are those performed without knowledge of who helped.
- *Dire*. Dire prosociality, similar to the emotional one, refers to helping others in crisis or emergencies (Carlo, Randall, 2002).

Leveraging on Baekeland's (1981) taxonomy of art collectors' profiles, and Carlo and Randall's (2002) distinction of prosocial behaviors, the study puts forth two hypotheses to investigate the hybrid nature of collecting behavior. The first (H1) posits that collectors categorized as Aggressive demonstrate a heightened propensity to engage in prosocial actions when an audience is present or when called upon to do so (i.e. Public Prosociality). The second (H2) proposes that collectors characterized as True Connoisseurs exhibit a more pronounced inclination towards Altruistic Prosocial Behavior.

Research Methods, Sample and Data Collection

The empirical research unfolded in the Tuscan Marble District, focusing on the municipalities of Seravezza (LU) and Pietrasanta (LU), alongside their corresponding galleries and cultural institutions dedicated to contemporary art. The selection of this region is due to its dense cultural landscape, but also to the geographical practical advantage it affords in engaging directly with art collectors, who typically occupy elevated socioeconomic strata (Rojas and Lista, 2022). Furthermore, collectors gravitating around Pietrasanta and Seravezza exemplify an ideal cohort for this study, characterized not only by their average size but also by their proclivities in the realm of art. The multifaceted roles of large-sized arts collectors (as possessors, displayers, but also opinion-makers in the market), suggest that their inclination toward philanthropy and giving attitudes may be underpinned by mechanisms distinct from those expounded upon in this analysis (Codignola and Mariani, 2022). Additionally, the pronounced predilection for contemporary art, particularly directed toward actively practicing artists, holds the potential to yield insightful perspectives within the ambit of Emotional and Compliant giving behaviors. A total of 64 participants responded to the study.

Obtaining a random sample of collectors presents considerable challenges, mainly stemming from definitional complexities surrounding the population of collectors (Rojas and Lista, 2022). Therefore, a recruitment strategy focused on selected notable contemporary art galleries and foundations was employed. Between August and October 2023, the questionnaire was distributed through the newsletters of the following organizations:

- *Fondazione Arkad*. Founded in 2002 by sculptors Cynthia Sah and Nicolas Bertoux, Arkad is a non-profit foundation that aims to create an intercultural center for cultural projects and the promotion of marble sculpting.
- *Galleria Susanna Orlando*. Inaugurated in 1976 in Forte dei Marmi (LU), and subsequently relocated in 2013 to Pietrasanta (LU), it is led by Susanna Orlando and specializes in contemporary painting and various collateral activities as site-specific interior design projects and catalog publications.
- *Galleria d'Arte Barbara Paci*. Founded in 2003, located in Pietrasanta (LU), it is highly specialized in national and international contemporary art.

To uphold privacy considerations, participants' identities and sensitive information remained confidential. Nonetheless, demographic data were collected to facilitate sample profiling.

Out of 64 respondents, 61 (95.31%) are art collectors, with 36 (59.02%) exclusively collecting contemporary art. 35 are categorized as small-sized collectors, possessing fewer than 50 artworks, while 25 are medium-sized collectors, with collections ranging between 50-149 (23) or 150-299 (2) pieces. One participant qualifies as a large-sized collector, with a collection encompassing 300-500 artworks. The majority of respondents fall within the 45–54 and 55–65 age brackets, while those aged 44 or younger constitute only a cumulative 7% of the total. In terms of gender, 40 identify as male, 20 as female, and 1 as non-binary. The participants are primarily Italian (39 out of 58), followed by French (4 out of 58) and German (4 out of 58).

The empirical research instrument utilized is an open- and closed-ended questions survey. The first block comprises four questions intended to gather information on participants' collections. The central segment is constituted of 25 statements, evaluated using a Likert Scale (0-4), to assess resemblance or dissimilarity with the respondent. This 25-item survey is further disaggregated into eight sub-scales, covering three for collecting behaviors and five for giving behaviors.

To ensure the reliability of these scales, Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were calculated for each sub-scale, both in preliminary (N=12) and final (N=64) studies (Tab.1). In the preliminary study, the Aggressive sub-scale exhibited an alpha of .837, which remained consistent in the final study (.830). The True Connoisseur sub-scale demonstrated a significant enhancement in reliability, with the alpha

increasing from .771 in the preliminary phase to .888 in the final study. The Public sub-scale showed a marked increase in reliability, with the alpha rising from .806 to .914 for the 4-item scale, indicating high internal consistency and improved reliability with a larger sample. Similarly, the Altruistic (R) sub-scale saw a considerable improvement, with the alpha increasing from .760 to .865 for the 5-item scale. The Anonymous sub-scale exhibited excellent reliability, with Cronbach's alpha increasing from .793 in the preliminary study to .920 in the final study for the 5-item scale. The Emotional sub-scale also showed improved reliability, with the alpha rising from .744 to .860 for the 3-item scale, reflecting good internal consistency. Conversely, the Compliant sub-scale alpha remained relatively stable, at .655 in the preliminary study and .658 in the final study for the 2-item scale. This indicates moderate reliability, suggesting that this sub-scale may require further refinement to enhance its internal consistency. Overall, the majority of the sub-scales demonstrated substantial improvements in reliability with larger sample sizes, reinforcing the validity of the instrument in measuring the intended constructs.

Tab. 1 Cronbach's Alpha (N = 64).

Scale	Preliminary (N=12)	Final (N=64)	N of Items
<i>Aggressive</i>	.837	.830	2
<i>True Connoisseur</i>	.771	.888	2
<i>Public</i>	.806	.914	4
<i>Altruistic (R)</i>	.760	.865	5
<i>Anonymous</i>	.793	.920	5
<i>Emotional</i>	.744	.860	3
<i>Compliant</i>	.655	.658	2

Results

Before presenting our survey result, it is essential to note that Aggressive and True Connoisseur subscales averaged at 3.0536 and 4.5902, underscoring the greater prevalence of this latter behavior within the sample (Tab.2). However, it is important to signal that the substantial corresponding standard deviations suggest a noteworthy degree of variability among the respondents.

Tab. 2 Descriptive Statistics Collecting Scales.

Scale	N	Range	Min	Max	Mean	SD
<i>Aggressive</i>	56	8.00	.00	8.00	3.0536	2.42277
<i>True Connoisseur</i>	61	8.00	.00	8.00	4.5902	2.66694

To explore the interplay between collecting and giving behavior, we developed different analysis. Firstly, correlations between the giving and collecting scales have been computed. Secondly, a confirmatory cluster analysis has been performed.

As to the first analysis, the correlation between Aggressive collecting and Altruistic behavior is strong and positive ($r = .722^{***}$) (see Tab. 3)

Tab. 3 Pearson's Correlations among Giving and Collecting Scales.

	<i>Altruistic (R)</i>	<i>Public</i>	<i>Anonymous</i>	<i>Emotional</i>	<i>Compliant</i>
<i>Aggressive</i>	.722***	.735***	-.624***	-.773***	-.174
<i>True Connoisseur</i>	-.727***	-.667***	.739***	.791***	.260*

All tests were two-tailed.

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

Given that the Altruistic scale is reversed, this strong positive correlation implies a significant negative relationship. Individuals who score high in Aggressive collecting behaviors tend to be less altruistic, indicating that their collecting is likely driven by self-interest and competition rather than altruistic motives. Tab. 3 shows also a strong positive correlation between Aggressive collecting and Public giving ($r = .735^{***}$). This suggests that individuals who exhibit aggressive collecting behaviors also tend to engage in public giving, possibly seeking recognition and status both through their collections and their public acts of generosity. The correlation between Aggressive collecting and Anonymous giving is on the contrary significantly negative ($r = -.624^{***}$). This indicates that individuals who engage in Aggressive collecting are less likely to give anonymously, reinforcing the idea that their behaviors are motivated by a desire for recognition and external validation. Additionally, there is a strong negative correlation between Aggressive collecting and Emotional giving ($r = -.773^{***}$). This suggests that aggressive collectors are less likely to be emotionally driven in their giving behaviors, indicating a more calculated or strategic approach to both collecting and giving. Finally, the correlation between Aggressive collecting and Compliant giving is weak and not significant ($r = -.174$).

Interestingly, the correlation between True Connoisseur collecting and Altruistic behavior is strong and negative ($r = -.727^{***}$). Considering the reversed scale, this indicates a significant positive relationship. Individuals who score high in True Connoisseur collecting are more likely to be Altruistic, suggesting that their collecting is driven by a genuine appreciation for the items and a desire to contribute positively to the broader cultural or social context. The analysis shows also a strong negative correlation between True Connoisseur collecting and Public giving ($r = -.667^{***}$), which suggests that True Connoisseurs are less likely to engage in public giving, possibly preferring a more private or intrinsic motivation for their collecting and giving behaviors. While the correlation between True Connoisseur collecting and Anonymous giving is significantly positive ($r = .739^{***}$), which indicates that True Connoisseurs are more likely to give anonymously, aligning with the notion that their motives are more intrinsic and less driven by a desire for public recognition, we found also a strong positive correlation between True Connoisseur collecting and Emotional giving ($r = .791^{***}$): this correlation suggests that True Connoisseurs are also emotionally driven in their giving behaviors, reflecting a deeper personal connection to both their collections and their altruistic actions. Finally, the correlation between True Connoisseur collector's profile and Compliant giving behavior is moderately positive ($r = .260^*$). This

indicates that True Connoisseurs are somewhat more likely to adhere to social norms and rules in their giving behaviors, suggesting a balanced approach that combines intrinsic motivation with societal expectations.

Proceeding to our second level of analysis, we conducted an ANOVA to enhance the quality and the interpretability of the resulting clusters in collecting behavior (Tab.4). The mean square for the Aggressive cluster is 237.767, with an error mean square of 1.575, resulting in an F-value of 150.923, which is highly significant ($p < .001$). Similarly, the mean square for the True Connoisseur cluster is 299.180, with an error mean square of 2.051, resulting in an F-value of 145.878, also highly significant ($p < .001$). These findings suggest that the distinctions between these groups are statistically significant and not attributable to random variation.

Tab. 4 ANOVA Table.

	Cluster		Error		F	Sig.
	Mean Square	Df	Mean Square	df		
<i>Aggressive</i>	237.767	1	1.575	54	150.923	<.001
<i>True Connoisseur</i>	299.180	1	2.051	54	145.878	<.001

The subsequent research step implied the performance of a Cluster Analysis (Tab.5 and Tab.6), intending to identify patterns and groupings within the data. Table 5 shows the final distribution of cases across the two clusters. Cluster 1 contains 23 valid cases, while Cluster 2 contains 33 valid cases, with a total of 56 valid cases and 8 cases missing..

Tab. 5 Final Distribution of Cases in Clusters.

<i>Cluster</i>	1	23.000
	2	33.000
<i>Valid</i>		56.000
<i>Missing</i>		8.000

Furthermore, Table 6 provides deeper insights into defining the characteristics of each cluster. The distinct separation in mean scores between the two clusters for both sub-scales suggests a clear differentiation in the underlying motivations and behaviors of the participants. Cluster 1 (Aggressive) is characterized by a higher tendency towards aggressive collecting (5.52), whereas Cluster 2 (True Connoisseur) is distinguished by a strong inclination towards connoisseurship (6.39). This differentiation underscores the effectiveness of the clustering method in identifying and categorizing participants based on their distinct collecting behaviors.

Tab. 6 Final Cluster Centers.

	Cluster	
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Aggressive</i>	5.52	1.33
<i>True Connoisseur</i>	1.70	6.39

The subsequent research step involved the performing of cross tabulations between the clusters, representing Collecting behaviors, and each of the five Giving attitudes. To facilitate a more comprehensive interpretation, the values of the additive indexes were subject to recoding, and labeled as *Extremely*, *Very*, *Moderately*, *Slightly*, *Not at all*, in descending order. As previously discussed, and highlighted in Tab.7, the responses from individuals categorized as Aggressive Collectors have exhibited a noteworthy trend, with a predominant 60.9% falling within the *Very Altruistic* bracket and 26.1% in the *Moderately Altruistic* category. In contrast, True Connoisseurs show a distinctive opposite pattern, with 54.8% of their scores falling under *Slightly Altruistic*, followed by *Not at All* at 19.4% and *Moderately Altruistic* at 16.1%. It is imperative to mention that the Altruistic subscale is reverted, where lower scores indicate a higher degree of altruistic behavior.

Tab. 7 Frequency distribution Giving Scales by Cluster Membership (% - Rows).

	Altruistic (R)¹				
	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Very	Extremely
Aggressive		13.0%	26.1%	60.9%	
True Con.	19.4%	54.8%	16.1%	6.5%	3.2%

	Public²				
	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Very	Extremely
Aggressive		21.7%	21.7%	56.5%	
True Con.	19.4%	51.6%	22.6%	6.5%	

	Anonymous³				
	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Very	Extremely
Aggressive	72.7%	22.7%	4.5%		
True Con.	6.3%	37.5%	21.9%	31.3%	3.1%

	Emotional⁴				
	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Very	Extremely
Aggressive	21.7%	60.9%	17.4%		
True Con.		3.0%	42.4%	54.5%	

	Compliant⁵				
	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Very	Extremely
Aggressive	8.7%	30.4%	52.2%	8.7%	
True Con.		12.1%	78.8%	9.1%	

Data demonstrate a stark disparity between the two groups in terms of their engagement in Public prosocial behaviors. Aggressive collectors exhibit a predominant inclination towards *Very Public* actions, with a significant majority of 56.5%. In contrast, both *Slightly Public* and *Moderately Public* behaviors account for 21.7% of their responses. Conversely, True Connoisseurs exhibit a different

¹ Pearson Chi-Square = 25.260, sig. <.001 (2-sided). Likelihood Ratio = 29.547, sig <.001 (2-sided).

² Pearson Chi-Square = 19.403, sig. <.001 (2-sided). Likelihood Ratio = 22.537, sig <.001 (2-sided).

³ Pearson Chi-Square = 28.393, sig. <.001 (2-sided). Likelihood Ratio = 33.814, sig <.001 (2-sided).

⁴ Pearson Chi-Square = 39.289, sig. <.001 (2-sided). Likelihood Ratio = 49.420, sig <.001 (2-sided).

⁵ Pearson Chi-Square = 6.601, sig. = .086 (2-sided). Likelihood Ratio = 7.289, sig. = .063

distribution, with a substantial 51.6% of their scores falling into the *Slightly Public* category, while a mere 6.5% are categorized as *Very Public*.

In parallel with the findings outlined in the precedent paragraph, the scores of Aggressive Collectors regarding Anonymous Prosocial Behaviors reveal a pronounced concentration of 72.7% within the *Not at all* category, with *Slightly* accounting for 22.7% and *Moderately* for a mere 4.5%. Conversely, the pattern observed among True Connoisseurs is different, displaying an almost evenly distributed engagement across the three central categories. Specifically, *Slightly* encompasses 37.5% of their responses, *Moderately* stands at 21.9%, and *Very* makes up 31.3%, suggesting a lack of discernible trends within this group's approach to anonymous giving.

Significant disparities between the two groups become evident once more in their approaches to Emotional Giving. Specifically, a considerable 60.9% of Aggressive Collectors interviewed scored *Slightly* concerning Emotional Giving questions, followed by 21.7% in *Not at all* and 17.4% in *Moderately*. True Connoisseurs, instead, are strongly set between *Moderately* (42.4%) and, notably, *Very Emotional* (54.5%) Prosocial tendencies. Mere 3.0% is registered for *Slightly Emotional Giving* behaviors.

In conclusion, in the context of Compliant Prosocial Behavior, Aggressive Collectors' scores cluster primarily in the *Slightly* (30.4%) and *Moderately* (52.2%) categories, with minimal representation at both extremes (*Not at all* and *Very*, each at 8.7%). In contrast, True Connoisseurs demonstrate a distinct preference for *Moderately Compliant* Giving, with a significant majority of 78.8%. The other responses are distributed as follows: 12.1% for *Slightly Compliant* and 9.1% for *Very Compliant*.

Conclusions

To start with, the results provide a positive answer to the initial research question, demonstrating that, indeed, there are significant and measurable relationships between art collecting and giving behaviors which might inspire future studies as well as the practice of museums' fundraising.

Our first hypothesis stated that

H₁: Collectors categorized as Aggressive Collectors are more disposed to engage in prosocial actions when an audience is present or when directly called upon to do so.

This first hypothesis has received partial confirmation through empirical investigation. In particular, while we did not observe statistical significance in the relationship between Aggressive collecting behavior and Compliant giving attitudes, data revealed a positive and significant correlation between the Public and Aggressive scales, confirmed by the cluster analysis. These finding echoes prior research,

suggesting that Aggressive collectors are primarily motivated by the desire for recognition within their social circles (Spaid, 2018; Baekeland, 1981). Collectors socially interact with a diverse array of individuals, including other collectors, artists, and dealers (Baekeland, 1981). Considering the universally positive regard for prosocial behaviors (Klein et al., 2015), it is plausible that Aggressive collectors may engage in philanthropic and altruistic actions with the overarching goal of meliorating the perception the other members of the reference group have (Simpson and Willer, 2015).

Our second hypothesis stated that

H₂: Collectors typified as True Connoisseurs exhibit an enhanced proclivity for altruistic behaviors, driven by selfless motives.

This second hypothesis is confirmed by both correlation coefficients and the cluster analysis. This empirical finding suggests that True Connoisseurs engage in prosocial behavior motivated by altruistic reasons or underpinned by robust moral principles and values, consistent with the conceptual framework proposed by Eisenberg and Fabes (1998). As previously discussed, the correlation between True Connoisseur collecting and altruistic behavior is significantly positive ($r = -.727$, reversed scale). Coherently, Baekeland (1981) describes True Connoisseurs as operating within their collecting pursuits primarily guided by individual choices and preferences, exhibiting a degree of independence from external influences and influencers.

In addition to our research hypotheses, other emerging trends warrant further discussion.

The significant coefficient of .739 indicates that True Connoisseurs are more inclined toward engaging in Anonymous prosocial behaviors. This observation resonates with the notion that True Connoisseurs exhibit a propensity for altruistic actions, as anonymity in giving reflects a selfless intention, shifting the focus from the actor to the action itself (*psychological altruism*, Batson, 1991). Furthermore, the Emotional subscale demonstrates noteworthy associations with both Aggressive ($r = -.773$, $p < 0.001$) and True Connoisseur ($r = .791$, $p < 0.001$) collecting behaviors. To provide a theoretical rationale for this finding, it's essential to consider that Aggressive Collectors are predominantly externally focused, with their collecting activities influenced by environmental factors such as competition, artistic trends, and advisory input (Baekeland, 1981). Consequently, it can be posited that rational factors often overshadow sentimental influences in their pursuit of exceptional art pieces (Spaid, 2018).

This study intends to add depth to our comprehension of the complexity inherent in art collecting by shedding light on a connection previously unexplored in academic literature, between art collecting and prosociality. Our findings, though not devoid of limitations, represent a departure from traditional scholarly perspectives, opening the door to a partial reconsideration of prevailing theories.

Following Eisenberg and Miller (1987), we accepted the idea of prosociality as acting in favor of another entity despite the guiding motive. Based on the recognition that a universal prosocial behavior does not exist (Carlo and Randall, 2002), the research identified various combinations of art collecting and prosociality, ranging from ‘purer’ forms of genuine altruism to more self-centered forms of self-enhancement through others.

The study revealed two primary theoretical prototypes within the surveyed sample. Those classified as Aggressive Collectors (Baekeland, 1981) are motivated by the perpetual desire to outshine collecting rivals and exhibit prosocial behaviors in public settings often motivated towards the enhancement of their personal status and perception in their social circles. True Connoisseurs (Baekeland, 1981), as passionate about art collecting as well as about giving, prefer anonymous giving, they demonstrate altruism and emotional engagement, and they are moderately inclined to respond to philanthropic requests.

Acknowledging the limitations of our research is imperative, and we exercise caution in generalizing these findings to a broader population. Recognizing the multitude of differences in art collecting, we have deliberately narrowed our research sample to ensure homogeneity, primarily in collecting attitude rather than demographic dimensions. Consequently, our results apply to small- to medium-sized collectors (Codignola and Mariani, 2022), with a focus on contemporary art and concentrated in a limited geographical area. Future research could extend the same methodology to different contexts, such as small- to medium-sized antiquities collectors, or contemporary art collectors in different regions.

A quantitative approach facilitated straightforward and interpretable results and, simultaneously, encouraged further exploration through qualitative methodologies. While our quantitative approach provided valuable insights, qualitative methods offer a more nuanced understanding of the intricate dynamics at play in art collecting. In our case, conducting direct interviews with art collectors proved unfeasible due to the need for art gallery mediation, which ensured the privacy and anonymity of their clients. From this perspective, future research could consider interviewing a smaller number of art collectors to obtain more precise information.

We now believe that this study catalyzes the potential development of a ‘modelization’ of the relationship between art collecting and prosocial behaviors by bringing this intertwining to the attention of the scholar domain.

The development of a model carries substantial managerial implications, not only for non-profit organizations but also for cultural entities at large. Understanding the distinct motivations of Aggressive Collectors as opposed to True Connoisseurs can provide valuable insights for organizations seeking to

engage with art collectors, potentially transforming them into valuable partners, especially as the global art market continues to expand (Deloitte, 2023), tailor engagement strategies according to the different behaviors of the collectors.

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Appendixes

I. Final Survey / Scales' Questions

1. As a collector, I am highly competitive. I constantly compare my collection to those by others.
2. I feel most fulfilled when I help other collectors, dealers, or artists in front of a group of people, like during meetings, fairs, exhibitions, or symposia.
3. In looking for a new art piece to be added to my collection, uniqueness is one of the most relevant criteria.
4. I feel that if I help other collectors in their collecting journey, they should help me in the future.
5. In looking for a new art piece to be added to my collection, I don't consider the opinion of external advisors. Instead, I largely rely on my personal taste and knowledge.
6. In general, I prefer anonymous donations rather than public ones.
7. I feel I am more prone to help others when they come in contact with my collection.
8. It is most fulfilling to me when I can contribute to the success of an artist who comes from an emotionally distressed environment.
9. When people are around or I am among other collectors, it is easier for me to help others.
10. The enhancement of my public image is one of the most rewarding aspects of collecting and showcasing my collection.
11. When other collectors or dealers ask for my help, I don't hesitate.
12. I am extremely interested in publicly displaying my collection, and it is important for me to receive positive returns and legitimization.
13. I dedicate a significant amount of time to research. Looking after my collection means also studying and being informed as well as collecting relevant materials, such as books or articles.
14. I believe that donating art pieces or money works best when it is tax deductible.
15. My donations tend to be more substantial when the identity of the contributor remains unknown.
16. If I had to choose an artist to support in their career, I would choose someone I perceive as being, in general, more emotionally distressed.
17. Helping others when I am in the spotlight is when I work best.
18. Standing out among other collectors and having a highly recognizable collection is a priority for me.
19. Most of the time, I support artists or local cultural institutions when they do not know who helped them.
20. I believe I should receive more recognition for time and energy I spend on collecting, researching and collaborating with local museums and cultural institutions.
21. I never hesitate to support artists, dealers or local cultural institutions (according to my capabilities and resources) when they ask for it.
22. I think that helping others without them knowing is the best type of situation.
23. One of the significant benefits of showcasing my collection and/or sharing the primary outcomes of my research is the positive impact it has on my curriculum.
24. I feel a strong emotional connection with artists, dealers and other collectors who revolve around my collecting environment, and this feeling makes me want to support them.
25. I often make anonymous donations because they give me a sense of satisfaction.

II. Subscales Q-Q Plots – Normal Distribution Assessment



