THE DIRTY PATRONS: ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY AND MUSEUM SPONSORSHIP

Dr Laia Anguix-Vilches
Postdoctoral Researcher, Radboud Institute for Culture and History. Radboud University (Nijmegen, The Netherlands)

Abstract Over the past two decades, societal pressure over and scrutiny of the ethics of museum funding have grown exponentially, particularly regarding sponsorship from the fossil-fuel industry. This spotlight, fuelled by environmental concerns and accusations of 'greenwashing,' has prompted significant changes in museum/oil company relationships. For instance, protests by climate activists and artists led to the end, in 2022, of the 30- year partnership between BP and the National Portrait Gallery in London. Whilst flagship museums such as the Louvre and the British Museum are still renewing oil-funded partnerships, the evolving landscape suggests a growing environmental responsibility in sponsorship models. In order to facilitate an understanding of the ongoing shift, this article explores the impact of environmental and art activism on museum/fossil-fuel connections. By using mainly primary materials, it emphasises everyday practice over theoretical analysis, encouraging a reflection on museums' links with their sponsors, and highlighting ideas of trustworthiness, accountability, financial independence, transparency, ethical decision-making, and social and environmental responsibility.
Keywords: Museum sponsorship, ethical funding models, institutional critique, museum activism, environmental responsibility.

This article traces a timeline of the shifting relationship between museums and their patrons, focusing particularly on the evolution and the complexities of the controversial links between museums and fossil-fuel industries. In doing so, it aims to facilitate an understanding of the impact of societal pressure over the ethics of museum funding. It describes the ways in which, over the last two decades, the increase in public scrutiny, together with the protests carried out by climate activists and artists, have put sponsorship deals linked to fossil-fuel industries in the spotlight on an international level. It also evidences the ways in which environmental concerns and accusations of 'green washing' have ultimately pushed towards substantial changes in the bond between museums and oil companies, thus paving the way for more transparent and responsible models of museum patronage.[i] Methodologically, the text examines primary materials such as contemporary press releases, museum reports, environmentalist investigations, and activist performances. This approach aims to put the focus on the different actors and

ingredients of the conflict, highlighting the practical elements of museum everyday work and offering a multi-faceted account of a complex issue, rather than a detached, theoretical analysis.

Museums and Their Environmental Responsibility: an Evolving Positioning

Before delving into the evolving relationship between individual museums and their sponsors, we will allude to the environmental positioning of the museum as a sector more broadly, as this will enhance the understanding of existing complexities and contradictions. Traditionally, museum industries have not been particularly 'green' institutions per se. Commonly hosted in large buildings with open-plan halls, often designed in historical periods in which environmental concerns were not a priority, they have tended to consume copious amounts of energy in the form of heating and lighting. Moreover, major museums usually act as tourism magnets, a status often emphasised by temporary blockbuster exhibitions relying on international loans, and attracting thousands of visitors flying in from all over the world. These dynamics increase their already large carbon footprint.ii

Environmental awareness within the sector, however, has been growing exponentially, with the last few years showing ample evidence of specialised conversations on the topic, together with major steps being taken towards sustainability. The International Council of Museums (ICOM) is currently featuring environmental sustainability prominently in its agenda. For instance, in 2018 the institution created its Working Group on Sustainability, implementing its Agenda 2030, which acknowledged the environmental impact of museums, and established measures to reduce it, as well as to enhance the vital role museums should and can play in taking action against the climate crisis. Following this trend, the theme chosen for World Museum Day 2023 was Museum, Sustainability and Well-being. Related recent ICOM initiatives include the creation of sustainability awards and a call to action for Cop28 (ICOM, 2023a and 2023b).

Additionally, museums have begun advocating for greener buildings: a landmark example is the new Science Museum in the Swedish city of Lund, scheduled to be completed in 2026. With its wooden structure and zero C02 emission target, the building is expected to become a model of environmental sustainability at an international level (Cobe, n.d.). This rethinking of museum architecture and operational logistics has come hand-in-hand with a move towards a more rational use of museum collections, exhibitions and knowledge, in order to encourage audiences to make positive environmental changes. The newly gained awareness in exhibition topics and practices is not limited to science museums. A fitting example is the exhibition Waste Age, which took place at the Design Museum in London in 2021-2022, and which promoted the ideal of living without waste, whilst trying to imagine a more resourceful world for future generations (The Design Museum, 2021).

Observing this rapid sectorial move towards environmental responsibility, one would be inclined to assume that museum sponsorship would have already been included in the conversation, as a natural component of the sector's increasing self-awareness. However, the following paragraphs aim to demonstrate that the shift towards greener funding models has not strictly come from within the museum sector itself. Instead, it has been led in great measure by growing societal pressure and external scrutiny.

The Impact of Art Activism

Action groups composed of artists and climate activists have been denouncing fossil-fuel patronage in museums since at least the turn of the 21st century, with broader coalitions such as the UK-based Rising Tide beginning to form as early as 2004 (Art Not Oil, n.d.). Amongst them, the group Liberate Tate has stood out for the visual power of its actions. The collective, born in January 2010 within the context of a Tate-commissioned workshop on art and activism, described themselves as critical of but friendly towards the gallery. The group emerged as the Tate curators tried to prevent the workshop attendees from expressing criticism against Tate sponsors. The resulting frustration fuelled the participants' desire to continue working together on their denounce of ethical issues within such sponsorship (Liberate Tate, n.d., b).

Over the following six years (2010-2016) Liberate Tate staged a series of highly provocative performances and protests demanding an end to BP's sponsorship of the Tate. One of the earliest unauthorised events taking place inside the Tate Modern and Tate Britain buildings was Human Cost (2011), featuring a naked activist curled up on the marble floor of Tate Britain's marble hall as oil was poured over them.iii The performance, concurring with the first anniversary of the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill and its ensuing environmental tragedy, was followed a year later by The Gift (2012), a work of performance art in which over 100 Liberate Tate activists carried a 16.5 metre-long wind turbine blade into the Tate Modern's Turbine Hall. The activists unsuccessfully attempted to donate the enormous object to the Tate's permanent collection, as a gift to the nation 'for the benefit of the public'. In 2015, Liberate Tate carried out another two striking actions. The first one, Time Piece, lasted 25 hours, from high tide on the 13th of June (11.53 am) until high tide on 14th of June (12.55 pm). During that time, 75 members of the collective used charcoal to write passages from books on climate, art and oil on the floor of the Turbine Hall, urging Tate to drop its BP sponsorship deal before the Paris Climate Summit that was to be held in December that year. Later in 2015, Liberate Tate organised Birthmark, a makeshift tattoo parlour at Tate Britain, where each performer was tattooed with the atmosphere's carbon dioxide level on the year they were born.

During its six-year existence, Liberate Tate generated copious media attention, succeeding in pushing the underlying presence of fossil-fuel sponsors in cultural institutions to the centre of public debate. By 2016, and after receiving petitions from over 8,000 Tate

members and visitors, and from over 300 artists and cultural workers, Tate Director Nicholas Serota ended the gallery's 26-year sponsorship deal with BP (Khomami, 2016). Several collectives born in the mid-2010s, such as the Netherlands-based Fossil Free Culture NL and the UK-based BP or not BP, took inspiration on Liberate Tate's highly- mediatic, mass-participation performance style to bring about further significant milestones against fossil fuel sponsorship. For instance, later in 2016, Edinburgh Fringe theatre festival ended its 34-year BP partnership (Donnelly, 2016). Then, in 2019, the Royal Shakespeare Company dropped its BP funding, being soon followed by the National Theatre's break-up with Shell (Kolirin, 2019). In Norway, Statoil ended its music sponsorship programme in 2013, whilst the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam concluded its 18-year sponsorship deal with Shell in 2018 (Plets and Kuijt, 2022).iv More recently, in February 2022, the National Portrait Gallery in London ceased its 30-year BP sponsorship: by 2023, its annual Portrait Award was already newly sponsored (Harris, 2022).

New and Continuing Fossil-Fuel Sponsorship Deals

As the previous examples demonstrate, the pressure exerted by activist groups over the past twenty years has been key in attracting public attention towards museums' existing sponsorship deals with fossil-fuel companies, and in ultimately pushing toward their termination. One might assume that museums would be already taking the lead to cancel existing sponsorship deals with oil firms, and that they would be reluctant to initiate new ones. However, there is fresh evidence of both new and continuing fossil-fuel partnerships amongst several major museums. For instance, in 2022, Greenpeace France won an action before the Paris Administrative Court to obtain disclosure of the partnership between the Louvre Museum and the TotalEnergies Foundation (Le Journal des Arts, 2021). The documents obtained demonstrated continuing subsidisation of the Louvre and the Foundation du Patrimoine, in spite of the mediatic actions performed by the artist collective Libérons le Louvre. Inspired by the provocative aesthetics of Liberate Tate, the French activist group carried out scenic performances, such as laying black cloth down the steps of the Louvre, creating a symbolic river of oil; or covering the Louvre's iconic pyramid with black handprints. However, neither activism nor public pressure prevented the museum from establishing a major partnership with its notoriously oil-funded Abu Dhabi branch, which is scheduled to last at least until 2037. This decision aroused strong public outrage throughout the cultural sector in France, with a petition signed by nearly 5,000 curators and art historians.v

The number of oil-funded museums, galleries, art collections, cultural events and temporary exhibitions remains large indeed. Amongst them feature, for instance, both the Getty and the Guggenheim foundations, with their several international branches, as well as the British Museum, which in December 2023 signed a new ten-year, £50-million partnership with BP (Kendall Adams, 2023a; Kerr, 2021).vi The latter news came as

particularly shocking, and even prompted the resignation of the museum's deputy chairwoman, Muriel Gray (Kendall Adams, 2023b). With this new partnership, the museum demonstrated its disregard for the longstanding pressure exerted by the activist group BP or not BP, which since 2016 has been carrying out distinctively high-profile performances, and which even attempted to occupy the museum, being cut short by means of police intervention. Their most dramatic performance was the thirteen-foot-tall Trojan horse carried to the museum in response to the exhibition Troy: Myth or Reality (2019). The event, comprising nearly 1,500 participants, was supported by members of the Public and Commercial Services (PCS) union at the British Museum, representing the museum workers, as well as by former trustee Ahdaf Soueif, who had resigned from her post on the museum's board earlier that year, following museum director Hartwig Fischer's renewed endorsement of BP (Brown, 2019).

In Italy, the oil company Eni is still frequently involved in arts sponsorship, not only within the Italian territory, but also in major foreign capitals such as New York and Paris. For instance, it financed the restoration of the Basilica of Collemaggio after the 2009 earthquake at L'Aquila, in a move that involved renaming the park in front of the church with the name of Eni's founder, Enrico Mattei (Comune de l'Aquila, 2013). Exemplifying an intertwining between oil sponsorship and state politics, the annual Eni Awards (the company's international prize to research projects in the fields of energy, sustainability and the environment) are delivered directly by the President of the Italian Republic at the Palazzo del Quirinale, despite the fact that article 9 of the Italian Constitution obliges the Republic to protect the environment. In Norway, Statoil (now rebranded with the more environmentally friendly name of Equinor) is still a major art patron, owning a collection of over 1,400 international contemporary artworks, sponsoring temporary exhibitions at the Oslo National Gallery for Contemporary Arts, and funding festivals such as NordNorge and Bergen International (Evans, 2015). Equinor also sponsors museums abroad. It is, for instance one of the patrons of the Science Museum in London, together with the coal company Adani and with the nuclear power company Urenco. As we will later discuss, conditions of sponsorship can include problematic gag clauses – as is the case with Equinor-funded exhibitions at the Science Museum -, thus impacting the museums' institutional credibility (Crisp, 2023).

Symbolic Capital and Social License in Fossil-Fuel Museum Sponsorship

Scholars such as Bargenda (2004), Kirchberg (2003), Lund & Greyser (2015), O'Hagan & Harvey (2000), and Oesch (2002), have investigated the motivations that guide private company investments in the cultural sector. Without going beyond the scope of this article, it is worth reflecting more specifically upon the potential benefits obtained by fossil-fuel corporations in sponsoring museums. A first advantage would be what Haacke (Bourdieu, Haacke and Johnson, 1995: 17) designated as 'symbolic capital', and which in more recent

research and environmental activism outputs has been coined as ‘greenwashing’ (de Freitas Netto, Sobral, et al., 2020; de Jong, Huluba & Beldad, 2019). With art sponsorship, fossil-fuel companies gain public exposure and positive brand associations, such as an improved corporate image. By tying their names to art and culture, oil industries create ‘clean’ impressions amongst consumers, who tend to link business corporations with the institutions they sponsor. A fitting example would be BP’s sponsorship of key British cultural institutions such as the Tate Modern, the British Museum, the Royal Opera House, and the National Portrait Gallery, which over the years have provided the firm with a platform for marketing, branding and public presence amongst cultural institutions (BP Press Office, 2011).

Secondly, as Cornwell and Maignan (1998) describe, governments often reward arts and culture sponsorship with tax exemptions, which can make museum patronage not only more impactful for fossil-fuel companies than their regular advertising campaigns, but also more cost-effective. Environmental activists have criticised such tax-relief models, on the grounds that they allow oil companies to take ‘much more from the public purse than they are ‘giving back’ in sponsorship’, and that ‘a proper tax system’ would instead cover ‘not only for full public funding of the arts, but better public healthcare, education and welfare systems too’ (BP or not BP, n.d.). Thirdly, when signing deals with science museums, oil companies gain what has been coined as ‘a social license to operate’ - a term referring to an increased social perception of credibility and trustworthiness, which Evans (2015) criticises as a way of masking the environmental impact caused by the sector.vii This ‘science-friendly’ image has been considered to distract public attention from the sectorial efforts to block new research on more environmentally sustainable energy sources (Macalister, 2015).

Last, museum sponsorship has been described as a means for the CEOs of oil companies to join museum boards of trustees, thus allowing them to intervene in the planning and design of educational programmes, events, and exhibition contents, so that their industrial activities can be showcased in more favourable ways (Janes and Richard, 2019). Likewise, Evans (2015) considers museum sponsorship as a gateway for oil companies to carry out political lobbying, such as holding meetings with politicians at exhibition openings and cultural events. These meetings can, thus, become platforms to cultivate strategic relationships that benefit industrial activities and business operations. An example would be the Indigenous Australia: Enduring Civilisation exhibition (2015) sponsored by BP at the British Museum, which took place in the context of the company’s attempts to drill in the Great Australian Bight. As demonstrated via an Art Not Oil investigation in 2016, this sponsorship granted BP representatives access to meetings at the Australian High Commission.

Impact of Fossil Fuel Sponsorship Upon Museums

After analysing the benefits obtained by fossil-fuel companies on their museum patronage, it is worth asking why museums have been slow or reluctant to abandon fossil-fuel sponsorship. The most straightforward explanation would be an economic one. The museum sector is known to struggle with financial sustainability, so one may be inclined to assume that fossil fuel patronage crucially boosts these money-starved institutions. However, research carried out by environmental campaigners belies this assumption. For instance, when in 2015, after a three-year legal battle, Tate was forced to disclose publicly the financial terms of its BP sponsorship deal, it came to light that the museum had been receiving from the oil giant £150,000 a year between 1991 and 2000, and then £330,000 a year from 2002 to 2007 (Brown, 2015). Such amounts represented only around 0.5% of Tate's overall operational income during the period, and since 2000, less than 1% of Tate's self-generated income (i.e., donations, sales and sponsorship). Similarly, in 2016 Art Not Oil reported that BP's funding of the British Museum for that year was equivalent to less than 1% of the annual income of the institution. Likewise, in 2016, and in response to pressures by the environmentalist group 350.org, the American Museum of Natural History disclosed that less than 2% of the institution's $650 million endowment was indirectly connected to oil, coal and natural gas companies through pooled investment funds (Stoddard, 2016). These data have been used by climate activists to claim that fossil-fuel funding is not as vital for museum survival as presumed (BP or not BP, n.d.), which begs the question of ongoing sponsorship. For instance, the Fossil Fuel Culture NL manifesto, read out by activist Naomi Pieters as part of a performance at the Van Gogh Museum in 2018, suggested political associations and multifaceted networks of interests and favours, by alluding to a 'revolving door that fossil fuel lobbyists use to move between business, political and cultural sectors, pedalling their poisonous influence' (Fossil Free Culture NL, 2018).viii

Leaving aside the financial benefits obtained by museums on these sponsorship deals, discussions have long been ongoing about the damaging effect that sponsorship models societally perceived as unethical may have upon museums. Such models can potentially harm museums' capacity for knowledge production and education, as well as their institutional credibility, thus creating a reputational damage that may outweigh any potential monetary gains (Alexander, 1996; Cameron, 2011; Shymko and Roulet, 2016). Fossil-fuel sponsorship can threaten museums' credibility in multiple ways. In the case of art museums, artists have expressed their concerns about being linked to 'dirty patrons', which they have seen as damaging for their personal reputation and harmful to the integrity of their artistic message. On this regard, the platform Oil Sponsorship Free has gathered nearly 400 artists and culture professionals, and over a hundred art collectives, who explicitly refuse to have their work associated with fossil-fuel sponsors. Similarly,

artists Reem Alsayyah and Zoe Lafferty contested the presence of their work in the BP-funded British Museum's 2019 exhibition 'Troy: Myth and Reality'. In a letter to the museum, they lamented having been placed in an impossible position, where we must decide whether it is worse to try and remove our work from the exhibition … or to allow our work to help art-wash the impacts and crimes of BP, a multinational oil and gas company that has wreaked havoc on this planet and its people' (Alsayyah and Lafferty in Selvin, 2019).

For science museums, the association with polluting sponsors may pose even greater risks. It can potentially undermine the credibility of their exhibitions, influence policies and programming, incite self-censorship, and even create conflicts of interests, via the inclusion of 'gag clauses' and the presence of representatives of oil companies in museums' decision-making boards (Crisp, 2023; Evans, 2015; Macalister, 2015). On this regard, the long-standing connection between the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History and the billionaire fossil-fuel industrialist David Koch, is instructive. Societal pressure forced Koch to resign from the museum's directing board in 2016. His 23-year tenure had been extremely controversial, as the Koch family reportedly spent millions funding climate crisis-denier groups and disinformation campaigns, causing outrage throughout the scientific community in the United States (Leonard, 2019). Given that academic research and sector reports consistently show museums are among the most trusted institutions in society, it would be crucial for them to preserve their credibility, especially in the current climate emergency.ix Museums do not only possess the informed storytelling skills, but also the ability to educate, increase awareness and open up democratic debates on climate-related topics, all of which are currently needed in order to increase audience engagement and to 'put human face on climate change' (Newell, Robin & Wehner, 2017). Beyond the physical space to display objective and reliable scientific data, the current climate challenges would require museums to demonstrate, more than ever, a commitment to social and environmental responsibility (Janes in Knell, MacLeod and Watson, 2007).

Towards An Environmentally Responsible Funding Model

Having described the evolution in the relationship between museums and fossil fuel sponsors, unpacked some of its many complexities, and highlighted its varied impacts, it is time to consider the potentialities of oil-free funding models to strengthen museums as socially and environmentally responsible institutions. On this topic, we must highlight that each major museum mentioned heretofore already has efficient mixed-funding models in place. The Tate, for instance, receives around 35% of its funding from government grants, whilst the rest is 'self-generated' from private donations and earned revenue from space rental, ticket and retail sales, and investment income (Board of Trustees of the Tate

Gallery, 2022). The Smithsonian Museum obtains two-thirds of its funding from public money, whilst the rest comes from its own endowment, corporate and individual donors worldwide, and from advertising, sales in the museums' cafes, and licensing agreements (Smithsonian Dashboard, 2015). The institution has also raised hundreds of thousands of dollars through Kickstarter campaigns.

UK government agencies such as Arts Fundraising and Philanthropy, and grassroots organisations such as Julie's Bicycle, Culture Hive, Live Art Development Agency, and Platform, amongst others, offer resources, training and information to cultural industries who wish to navigate toward more ethical sponsorship models. For museums, the focus lies on developing and strengthening ethical fundraising policies, which can then be used to form and renew sponsorship agreements. The Ethical Fundraising Policy of the National Portrait Gallery in London provides a suitable example: it includes a list of due diligence questions and a process for evaluating potential donors. The policy, made publicly available in 2017 through a Freedom of Information Act request prompted by a Culture Unstained campaign, grants the gallery the right to refuse donations in specific situations. For example, this includes instances where the donor is considered to be closely associated with a regime known or suspected of violating human rights (Romer, 2017). Likewise, grant agencies such as the John Ellerman Foundation require museums submitting funding applications to develop environmental sustainability policies (Ahmad, 2022). The foundation, a signatory of the Funder Commitment on Climate Change since 2019, encourages museums to conduct eco-audits, and provides funding to implement the resulting recommendations. Their website's many case studies exemplify their interest in the potential of arts, culture and heritage to engage audiences with climate-related challenges (John Ellerman Foundation, 2024).

However, while such funding options have pushed museums to reflect on and to develop their ethical and environmental policies, encouraging a search for less controversial sponsors, the core of the discussion remains whether public museums should depend at all on private funding for their survival. Organisations such as PCS Union - which represents over 5,000 workers in UK museums and galleries - have laid out alternative proposals exploring ways in which the arts could be funded without the need for corporate sponsorship (Tannock, 2023). Following up on ideas of social responsibility, and recognising museums as vital for social change, and as guarantors of free and democratic access to culture, education, and wellbeing, it is thus crucial to separate them from the free-market system (Janes, 2009). Only by making sure that museums do not rely on external, private funding – with their associated biases -, citizenship can ensure that museum exhibitions, policies and curatorial practices stay focused on serving their communities, and away from underlying conflicts of interest. This idea aligns with ICOM's 2022 definition of museum, where the ethical commitment of these institutions towards promoting sustainability takes central stage:

A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing.

Conclusion

This article has described the evolution of museum sponsorships by fossil-fuel industries over the past two decades, highlighting the pivotal role of climate activists and artists in advocating for more transparent and responsible models of patronage. It has also explored the complexities of fossil-fuel sponsorship and its impact on the public image of museums. Lastly, it has discussed the potential for oil-free funding models, and invited reflection on the ethical role of museums as environmentally and socially responsible institutions.

As a conclusion, we must consider that historical shifts in sponsorship models within museums have often been initiated by critical voices, such as artists, campaigners, academic experts, and broader societal actors. A well-known example can be found on the oeuvre of the artist Hans Haacke (b.1936), one of the founding fathers of the institutional critique movement (Alberro and Stimson, 2009; Wallis, 1986). In his Cowboy with Cigarette (1990), Haacke collaged tobacco-related press clippings and Philip Morris company documents in order to transform Pablo R. Picasso's (1881-1973) Man with a Hat (1912) into an advertisement against cigarette-smoking. In doing so, Haacke criticised Philip Morris's corporate sponsorship of the MoMA Museum in New York, demonstrating that corporate patronage is not solely guided by disinterested benevolence. Marlboro was, indeed, one of the major corporate sponsors of museums and performing arts at that time, until the combination of societal pressure and international health laws prohibiting tobacco advertisement finally led institutions such as Tate Modern, the National Gallery, and the National Portrait Gallery to put an end to their tobacco-linked sponsorship deals (Bailey, 2023). In a related, albeit more contemporary perspective, Nan Goldin’s award- winning documentary All the Beauty and the Bloodshed (2022) has recently led major museums internationally to cancel their deals with the drug company Sackler.x In all the cases mentioned above, new funding sources were quickly secured, allowing the museums to continue operating without major setbacks. The same has happened with institutions such as Tate, the Edinburgh International Festival, The Royal Shakespeare Company, and the National Portrait Gallery, all of which have ended their oil-related sponsorship deals in recent years (BP or not BP, n.d.). Activism has, thus, succeeded once again in changing patronage models, prompting museums to reflect on their ethics and

societal goals. With mounting social pressure on museums and increasing scientific evidence of the catastrophic impact of fossil fuels on the environment, it is perhaps time for museums to proactively commit to social and environmental responsibility, honouring the trust put in them by their communities, and thus, eliminating the presence and influence of fossil fuel industries.

Notes

i Cambridge Dictionary defines 'greenwashing' as the 'behaviour or activities that make people believe that a company is doing more to protect the environment than it really is.' (Cambridge Dictionary, 2024).
ii For instance, in the UK, the museum sector accounts for almost a quarter of the CO2e (carbon dioxide equivalent) emissions of all Arts Council England NPOs (Julie's Bicycle, 2020).
iii The data and descriptions featured in this section are based on the images of Liberate Tate's performances over the years, available on Liberate Tate (n.d., a), 'Performances'.
iv Plets and Kuijt (2022) have delved into the significance and impact of oil funding in the Dutch heritage and museum sector in view of the creation of museum narratives favourable to the agenda of the gas and oil sector.
v The full implications of the partnership involving the Louvre's Abu Dhabi branch have been detailed in Graebner (2014).
vi After multiple delays, Guggenheim Foundation's new Emirates branch museum is set to open in 2025. The Getty Trust, founded in 1953 by famous oil tycoon J. Paul Getty, is worth more than $10 billion nowadays (ProPublica, 2018).
vii The term 'social license to operate' was first used by Jim Cooney in 1997, within the context of the attempts of the mining industry to gain trust and respectability from local communities (Thomson and Boutilier, 2011).
viii During the performance, the activists hung a 12-meter-high text installation that read 'End of fossil fuel age now', urging the museum to cut its ties with Shell (Fossil Free Culture, 2018).
ix Research commissioned by the American Alliance of Museums in 2001 found that almost nine out of 10 Americans find museums to be trustworthy— no other institution rated a similar level of trust (American Alliance of Museums, 2021).Similar findings can be concluded from the reports issued by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (2008), Reach Advisors (2015), IMPACTS Research (2017), Wilkening Consulting (2018), and IMPACTS Research (2020).
x For a more detailed analysis of Goldin's activism group Pain, and her quest to remove the Sackler name from museums, after the opioid crisis that has killed nearly half a million people, see: Alesandrini (2020); Glazek (2019); Jobey (2019).

Works cited & references

Ahmad, S. (2022). 'How can funders help address the climate crisis'. Museums' Journal. Available at: https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/opinion/2022/09/how-can-funders-can-help-address-the-climate-crisis/ (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

Alberro, A. & Stimson, B. (eds.). (2009). Institutional Critique: An Anthology of Artists' Writings. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Alesandrini, E. (2020). 'What Artists and Museum Educators Can Teach Us About Combatting the Opioid Epidemic'. AMA Journal of Ethics, 22(8), 735-738. Available at: http://doi.org/10.1001/amajethics.2020.735 (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

Alexander, V. D. (1996). 'From philanthropy to funding: The effects of corporate and public support on American art museums'. Poetics, 24 (2-4), 87–129. Available at: http://doi.org/10.1016/0304-422X(95)00003-3 (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

American Alliance of Museums. (2021). Museums and Trust. Available at: https://www.aam-us.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Museums-and-Trust-2021.pdf (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

Art not Oil Coalition (2016). BP's cultural sponsorship: A corrupting influence. Available at: https://www.artnotoil.org.uk/sites/default/files/BPs%20Corrupting%20Influence.pdf.pdf (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

Art Not Oil Coalition (n.d.). Art Not Oil, 2004-13: the story so far. Available at: https://www.artnotoil.org.uk/sites/default/files/ANO%202004-13%20story%20so%20far%20longer.pdf (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

Bailey, M. (2019). 'Why is the British Museum still accepting tobacco sponsorship?' The Art Newspaper. Available at: https://www.theartnewspaper.com/news/why-is-the-britishmuseum-still-accepting-tobacco-sponsorship (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

Bargenda, A. (2004). 'The Business of Art: Corporate Sponsorship in the Cultural Sector', Le Cahiers de Recherche, International Business and management School France, 4:61.

Bourdieu, P., Haacke, H., & Johnson, R. (1995). Free exchange. Cambridge: Polity Press.

BP or not BP (n.d.) Do the arts need oil sponsorship? Available at: https://bp-or-not-bp.org/does-the-arts-need-oil-sponsorship/ (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

BP Press Office. (18 December 2011). BP and leading UK cultural institutions extend partnerships with 10 million sponsorship. Available at: https://www.bp.com/en/global/corporate/news-and-insights/press-releases/bp-and-leading-uk-cultural-institutions-extend-partnerships-with-10-million-sponsorship.html (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

Brown, M. (26 January 2015). 'Tate's BP sponsorship was £150,000 to £330,000 a year, figures show'. The Guardian. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2015/jan/26/tate-reveal-bp-sponsorship-150000-330000-platform-information-tribunal (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

Brown, M. (16 July 2019). 'Trustee resigns from British Museum over BP sponsorship and artefacts repatriation'. The Guardian. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2019/jul/16/trustee-resigns-from-british-museum-over-bp-sponsorship-and-artefacts-repatriation (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.). Greenwashing. Available at: https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/greenwashing (Accessed: 15 May 2024).

Cameron, F. R. (2011). 'From Mitigation to Complex Reflexivity and Creative Imaginaries – Museums and Science Centres in Climate Governance'. Museum and Society, 9 (2), 90–106.

Cobe. (n.d.). Science Center. Available at: https://www.cobe.dk/projects/sciencecenter (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

Comune de l'Aquila. (30 August, 2013). Recupero della Basilica di Collemaggio e di Parco del Sole, il testo dell'accordo firmato dall'Eni e dal Comune dell'Aquila. Available at: https://www.comune.laquila.it/archivio3_notizie-e-comunicati_0_2201.html (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

Cornwell, T. B. and Maignan, I. (1998). 'An International Review of Sponsorship Research'. Journal of Advertising, 27 (1), 1–21. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/4189056 (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

Crisp, W. (16 February 2023). 'Science Museum sponsorship deal with oil firm included gag clause'. The Guardian. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2023/feb/16/science-museum-sponsorship-deal-with-oil-firm-included-gag-clause (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

de Freitas Netto, S., Sobral, et al. (2020), 'Concepts and forms of greenwashing: a systematic review', Environmental Science Europe, 32 (19). Available at: https://doi.org/10.1186/s12302-020-0300-3 (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

de Jong, M., Gabriel Huluba and Ardion D. Beldad (2019), 'Different Shades of Greenwashing: Consumers´ Reactions to Environmental Lies, Half-Lies, and Organizations Taking Credit for Following Legal Obligation', Journal of Business and Technical Communication. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/1050651919874105 (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

Donnelly, B. (2016). 'Oil giant BP's sponsorship of Edinburgh Festival ends after 34 years'. The Herald. Available at: https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/14408536.oil-giant-bps-sponsorship-edinburgh-festival-ends-34-years/ (Accessed: 14 May 2024).

End the Fossil Fuel Age Now. (2018). 'Typographic installation & Manifesto recital – Van Gogh Museum'. Youtube. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z7Sybb3dYV8 (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

Evans, M. (2015). Artwash – Big Oil and the Arts. London: Pluto Press.

Fossil Free Culture NL. (n.d.). Manifesto. Available at: https://fossilfreeculture.nl/manifesto/ (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

Glazek, C. (2019). 'Case Study: Christopher Glazek on Nan Goldin and the Sacklers.' Artforum International, 57 (9), 206-208. Available at: https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A586014135/LitRC?u=anon~8b74b7e4&sid=googleScholar&xid=c598cc07 (Accessed: 19 Apr 2024).

Graebner, S. (2014). 'The Louvre Abu Dhabi: French Universalism, Exported', L'Esprit Créateur, 54 (2), 186-199. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/26378905 (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

Harris, G. (22 February 2022). 'National Portrait Gallery in London ends BP sponsorship after 30 years', The Art Newspaper. Available at: https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2022/02/22/national-portrait-gallery-in-london-ends-bp-sponsorship-after-30-years (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

ICOM. (n.d.). ICOM working group on sustainability. Available at: https://icom.museum/en/committee/working-group-on-sustainability/ (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

ICOM (2022). Museum Definition. Available at: https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/museum-definition/#:~:text=Following%20the%20adoption%2C%20the%20new,exhibits%20tangible%20and%20intangible%20heritage (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

ICOM. (2023a). Climate Heritage Campaign: Call to Action ahead of COP28. Available at: https://icom.museum/en/news/climate-heritage-campaign-call-to-action-ahead-of-cop28/ (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

ICOM. (2023b). ICOM Award for Sustainable Development Practice in Museums. Available at: https://icom.museum/en/news/icom-award-for-sustainable-development-practice-in-museums/ (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

Janes, R. R., & Sandell, R. (2019). Museum Activism. London: Routledge.

Janes, R.R. (2007). 'Museums, Social Responsibility and the Future We Desire'. In Knell, S., MacLeod, S., & Watson, S. (eds.), Museum Revolutions: How museums change and are

changed. Routledge. Available at: https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203932643 (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

Janes, R.R. (2009). Museums in a Troubled World: Renewal, Irrelevance or Collapse? Routledge. Available at: https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203877456 (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

Jobey, L. (8 November 2019). 'Nan Goldin on art, addiction and her battle with the Sacklers over opioids'. Financial Times. Available at: https://www.ft.com/content/d6500c16-002a-11ea-b7bc-f3fa4e77dd47 (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

John Ellerman Foundation (2024). Grants list. Available at: https://ellerman.org.uk/what-weve-funded/grants-list (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

Julie's Bicycle. (2020). Culture, Climate and Environmental Responsibility: Annual Report 2019 – 20. Available at: https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/ACE%20JB%20annual%20report%202019-20.pdf (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

Kendall Adams, G. (19 December 2023) 'British Museum announces new £50m BP deal to fund masterplan'. Museums' Journal. Available at: https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2023/12/british-museum-announces-new-50m-bp-deal-to-fund-masterplan/ (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

Kendall Adams, G. (20 December 2023). 'Deputy chair quit before British Museum announced £50m BP deal'. Museums' Journal. Available at: https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2023/12/deputy-chair-quit-ahead-of-british-museums-announcement-of-bp-deal/ (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

Kerr, S. (2021). 'Abu Dhabi commits to long-awaited Guggenheim museum by 2025,' Financial Times. Available at: https://www.ft.com/content/25e2b5b7-f180-425d-8528-ec1422fc4b0b (Accessed: 10 March, 2024).

Kirchberg, V. (2007), 'Corporate arts sponsorship', in Towse, R. (ed.), Recent Developments in Cultural Economics, 143-151. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Kolirin, L. (2016). 'BP to end Tate sponsorship after 26 years,' The Guardian. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2016/mar/11/bp-to-end-tate-sponsorship-climate-protests (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

Kolirin, L. (2 October 2019). 'Royal Shakespeare Company cuts ties with BP after school students threaten boycott,' CNN. Available at: https://edition.cnn.com/style/article/rsc-bp-ends-gbr-scli-intl/index.html (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

Le Journal des Arts (2021). Greenpeace demande des comptes au Louvre sur des partenariats passés avec TotalEnergies, Available at: https://www.lejournaldesarts.fr/actualites/greenpeace-demande-des-comptes-au-louvre-sur-des-partenariats-passes-avec-totalenergies (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

Leonard, C. (2019). Kochland: The Secret History of Koch Industries and Corporate Power in America. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Liberate Tate. (n.d., a). Performances. Available at: https://liberatetate.wordpress.com/performances/ (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

Liberate Tate. (n.d., b). Where it all began. Available at: https://liberatetate.wordpress.com/liberating-tate/about/ (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

Lund, R. and Greyser, Stephen A. (2015). 'Corporate Sponsorship in Culture: A Case of Partnership in Relationship Building and Collaborative Marketing by a Global Financial Institution and a Major Art Museum'. Working paper. Harvard Business School, 16 (41). Available at: https://www.hbs.edu/ris/Publication%20Files/16-041_0a81dd11-2e2f-459c-8eca-008f24bb313e.pdf (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

Museums + Heritage Advisor. (2023). New sponsor for National Portrait Gallery's former BP Portrait Award. Available at: https://advisor.museumsandheritage.com/news/new-sponsor-for-national-portrait-gallerys-former-bp-portrait-award/ (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

Newell, J., Robin, L. and Wehner, K. (2017). Curating the Future - Museums, Communities and Climate Change. London: Routledge.

Oesch, P. (2002). Kulttuurin sponsorointi ja yritysyhteistyö. Kehitys ja käytännöt. (Culture, Companies and Sponsorship. Development and Practice. English Summary.) Taiteen keskustoimikunta. Helsinki. loppuunmyyty [koko julkaisu, 134 s., 392 kt]. Available at: https://www.taike.fi/fi/file-download/download/public/234. (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

O'Hagan, J. and Harvey, D. (2000). 'Why Do Companies Sponsor Arts Events? Some Evidence and a Proposed Classification'. Journal of Cultural Economics, 24, 205-224. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1007653328733. (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

Oil Sponsorship Free. (n.d.). Who. Available at: https://oilsponsorshipfree.org/who/ (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

Plets, G. and Kuijt, M. (2022). 'Gas, Oil and Heritage: Well-oiled Histories and Corporate Sponsorship in Dutch Museums (1990-2021)', BMGN - Low Countries Historical Review. Available at: https://doi.org/10.51769/bmgn-lchr.7028 (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

ProPublica. (2018). J Paul Getty Trust. Available at: https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/951790021/201941359349101914/IRS990PF. (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

Romer, C. (2017). 'National Portrait Gallery receives formal complaint about BP ties'. Arts Professional. Available at: https://www.artsprofessional.co.uk/news/national-portrait-gallery-receives-formal-complaint-about-bp-ties (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

Selvin, C. (2019). 'Syrian Artist Calls Out BP Sponsorship of 'Troy: Myth and Reality' Exhibition at British Museum'. Art News. Available at: https://www.artnews.com/art-news/news/british-museum-troy-exhibition-bp-sponsorship-1202668242/ (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

Shymko, Y., & Roulet, T. J. (31 July 2016). 'When Does Medici Hurt Davinci? Mitigating the Signaling Effect of Extraneous Stakeholder Relationships in the Field of Cultural Production'. Academy of Management Journal. Available at: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2816535 (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

Smithsonian Dashboard. (2015). 'Budget/Federal Appropriations'. Smithsonian Institution. Available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20170217030101/http://dashboard.si.edu/budget-federal-appropriations (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

Stoddard, D. (2 November 2016). Letter to Boeven, McKibben & Economopoulos. Go Fossil Free. Available at: https://gofossilfree.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/stoddard_letter.pdf (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

Tannock, S. (2023). 'Culture workers against big oil: the importance of labor education in fighting the climate crisis'. Environmental Education Research, 29 (11), 1709–1723. doi:10.1080/13504622.2023.2273792. (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

Tate Gallery Board of Trustees. (2022). Annual Accounts 2021-2022. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1119050/E02803724_HC_Tate_Gallery_ARA_21-22_Accessible.pdf (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

The Design Museum (2021). Waste Age: What can design do? Available at: https://designmuseum.org/exhibitions/waste-age-what-can-design-do (Accessed: 20 Mar 2024).

Thomson, I. and Boutilier, R. G. (2011). 'Social License to Operate'. In: Darling, P. (ed). SME Mining Engineering Handbook. Littleton: Society for Mining, Metallurgy and Exploration.

Wallis, B. (ed.). (1986). Hans Haacke: Unfinished Business. New York and Cambridge: New Museum of Contemporary Art and MIT Press.