



# The impact of Instagram on pre-digital visual artists

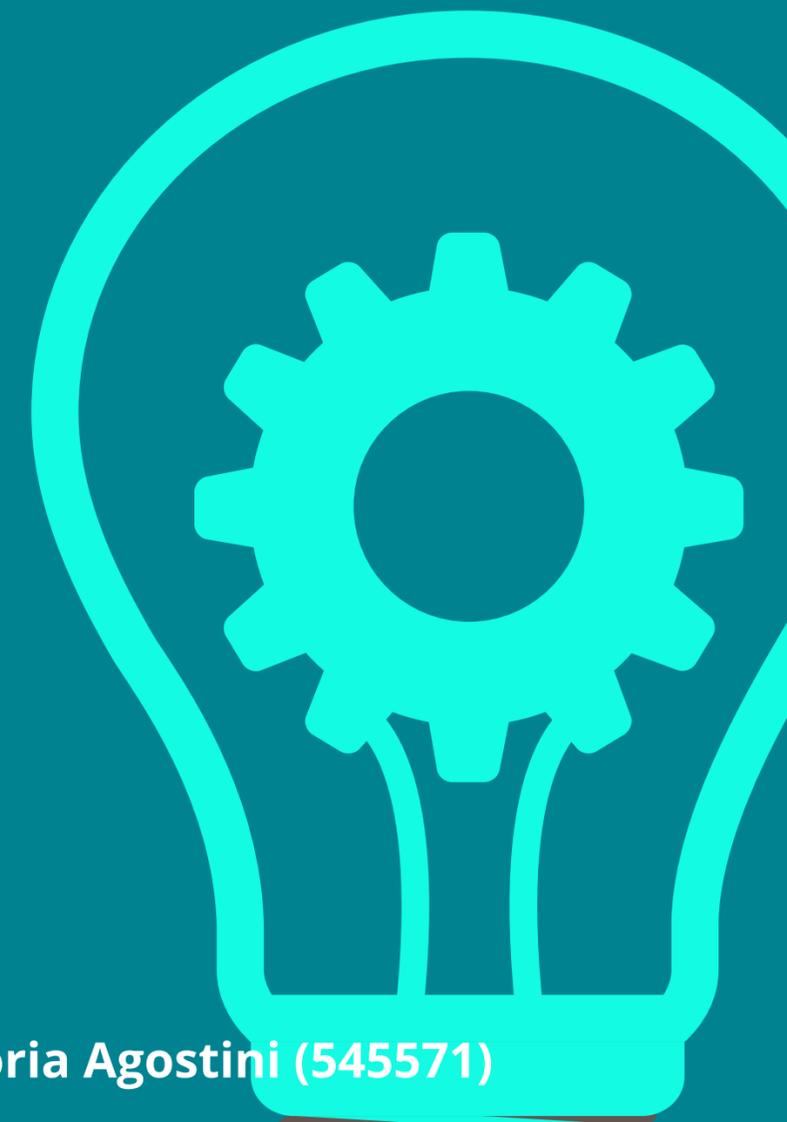
# What is it about?

THE ADVENT OF SOCIAL MEDIA HAS CHANGED THE WAY PEOPLE DISCOVER, EXPERIENCE, SHARE CONTENT, NEWS AND ART. THIS NEW FORM OF MEDIA ALLOWS PEOPLE TO BE CONNECTED AND FORM RELATIONSHIPS FOR PERSONAL AND BUSINESS NEEDS. IN THIS SENSE, **THE ART WORLD HAS BEEN REVOLUTIONIZED.**

INSTAGRAM, THE MOST POPULAR SOCIAL NETWORK IN THE ART WORLD, HAS COMPLETELY CHANGED THE METHODS OF PROMOTING, PRODUCING AND INTERACTING WITH ARTWORKS.

THIS STUDY FOCUSES ON SOME OF THE PROTAGONISTS OF THIS NEW WORLD: **TRADITIONAL VISUAL ARTISTS.** IT AIMS TO CAPTURE THEIR TRANSITION AND APPROACH TO THE ONLINE ENVIRONMENT, EXPLORING THE UNDERLYING **PROCESS** OF COMMERCIALIZATION AND THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THEIR NEW AUDIENCE.

NOWADAYS, ARTISTS NEED TO CONSIDER NOT ONLY THEIR WORK BUT THEIR **BRAND IMAGE, USE MARKETING TOOLS** AND AT ALL TIMES THEY **CANNOT BE SEEN TO BE DIMINISHING THE INTEGRITY OF THEIR ART.**



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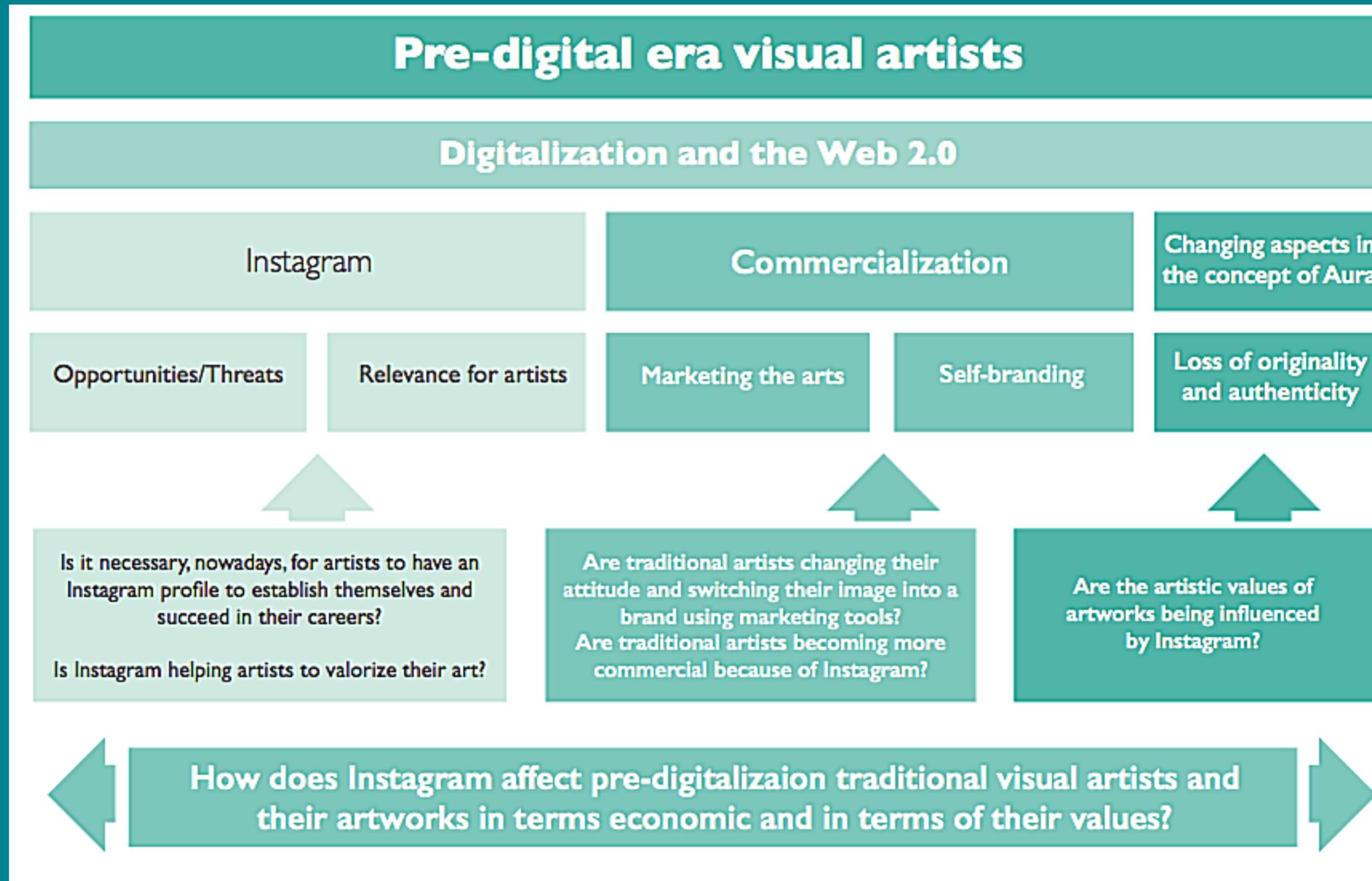
# Research question:

**How does Instagram affect pre-digitalization traditional visual artists and their artworks in economic terms and in terms of their core values?**

## Sub-questions

1. IS IT NECESSARY FOR TRADITIONAL ARTISTS, NOWADAYS, TO HAVE AN INSTAGRAM PROFILE TO PURSUE AND SUCCEED IN THEIR CAREERS?
2. IS INSTAGRAM HELPING VISUAL ARTISTS TO VALORIZE THEIR ART?
3. ARE ARTISTIC VALUES OF ARTWORKS BEING INFLUENCED BY INSTAGRAM?
4. ARE TRADITIONAL ARTISTS CHANGING THEIR ATTITUDE AND SWITCHING THEIR IMAGE INTO A BRAND THROUGH MARKETING TOOLS ?
5. ARE TRADITIONAL ARTISTS BECOMING MORE COMMERCIAL BECAUSE OF INSTAGRAM?

# Conceptual Framework



# Theoretical background

- Pre-digital (traditional) visual art includes art created using traditional methods (Elmansyin, 2011).
- Digitalization offers new marketing parameters and opportunities - switching the market power from producer to consumer (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008).
- The advent of Instagram provides countless opportunities to artists, allowing them to share digital copies of their art and negates the need for physical artworks and/or art buildings (Enhuber, 2015).

# Economic Values

More commercialism in the art.

Many artists have altered their course of action to fit in with modern society, becoming less singular and more focused on making money (Abbing, 2019).

Art may be mass produced or produced solely for the buyer and artists are tempted to turn their artworks into brand (Schroeder, 2005).

The primary non-monetary motivation have shifted into a monetary one (Fray, 2001), being more consumer-centered than product-centered.

Through online portals, such as Instagram, artists are even more focused on self promotion, aiming to attract as many people as possible.

## **Not all bad:**

Many well-known or emerging artists do their best to avoid over commercialization and they develop strategies to resist this trend (Malik, 2007).

# Intrinsic Values

Because of the process of digitalization, art is mutating towards "digital art" which is a new concept regarding creativity and expression, but it also faces **problems** in terms of **originality** and **authenticity** (Budiman et al., 2018).

In doing so, artists are thought to lose their purity and the essence of their creation (Woolf, 2016).

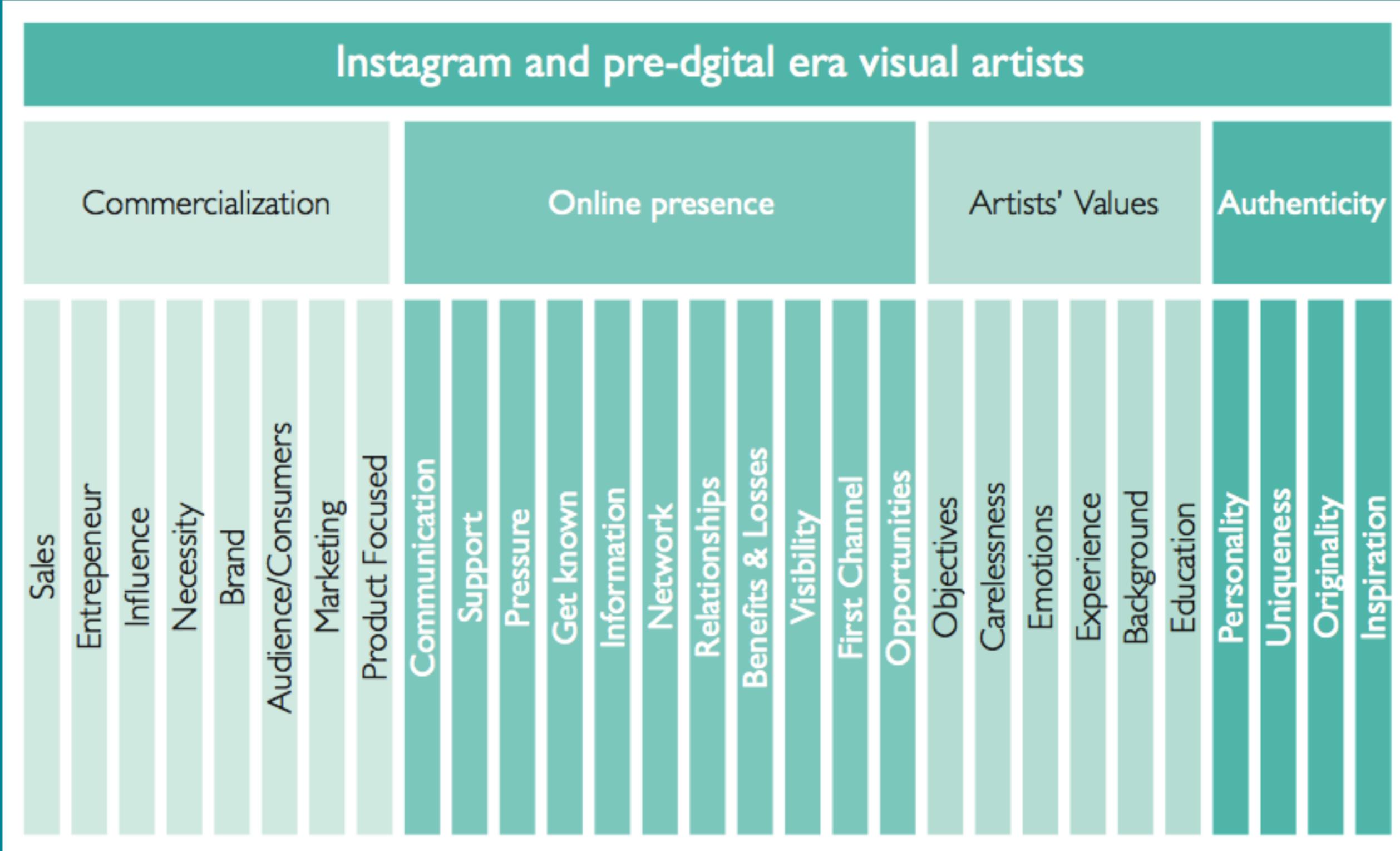
Art has an aura in its production. The originality of an artwork is based on its aura, while something which is reproduced **by** machines cannot be called a work of art (Benjamin, 1936).

The world of art is changing. the tradition is no longer playing a relevant role, but a new concept of doing art is developing, where accessibility and mass replication is preferred over the importance of integrity and authenticity (Sankey, 2016).

# Sample

Visual Artists	Gender	Number of Instagram followers	Region
Jacopo (Photographer)	Male	8,574	Liguria
Carlo (Photographer)	Male	1,660	Sicily
Edoardo (Photographer)	Male	1,476	Lombardy
Chiara (Illustrator)	Female	1,300	Tuscany
Giorgio (Painter)	Male	970	Lombardy
Miriam (Decorator/Painter)	Female	684	Lombardy
Irma (Painter)	Female	622	Lombardy
Michele (Illustrator)	Male	591	Lombardy
Paola (Painter)	Female	443	Lombardy
Milena (Painter)	Female	374	Lombardy
Davide (Illustrator)	Male	299	Liguria

# Methodology: Codebook Interview



# Findings

→ Artists have greater opportunities, more chances to become well known and gain new contacts within their specific oeuvre or in terms of wider, mass market.

Threats and challenges include the need to conform with the masses.

# Impact on artists' careers

## Pros

- Openness and willingness to stay up to date with the world of art.
- Power in terms of self-promotion, viewer engagement and enlargement of artists' network increasing of visibility.

## Cons

- Face-to-face interaction and the personal relationships are a necessity.
- In terms of sales, no verifiable increases were achieved.
- Low job satisfaction.



Instagram has a relevant position, but it is not a fundamental tool for pre-digital artists' career.

# Expression and experience, new opportunities?

## Pros

- More chances to build relationships and to get known.

## Cons

- Difficulties for artists to fully express their **values** and **emotions**.
- The **materiality**, the **dimensions** and the actual **essence** of an artwork can be lost through a screen.

# Commercialism

- To have financial success, it is necessary to use marketing tools.
- The act of branding artists' own image is a necessity today.

→ Instagram is not that relevant and it is not playing a fundamental role.

interviewees are active on Instagram as it does make things easier for them in terms of promotion, communication and work opportunities.

→ Everything is a matter of **choice!**

# Conclusions

Social media is an amplifier.

Instagram has the power to influence people, their thoughts, their ideals, their passions and their tastes.

Instagram is a powerful tool for beginners and for artists who might have the possibilities to be selected by galleries or travel around the world.

The presence of artists on Instagram might end up diminishing the value of their artworks. It could even be argued that the art world might lose the purity and the importance it has always had.

The feeling is that artists are becoming more focused on merely making money than on the expression of their core values.

# Limitations and Future research

1. Qualitative research includes risk of **subjectivity** and **non-credibility** of the study.
2. Because of the current situation (**COVID19**), the researcher had fewer chances to contact artists around the world.
3. Difficulties in the **replication** of the entire study.
4. Focus on pre-digital era visual artists who do not have a large amount of **followers**.
5. **Coding process**, which could cause a loss of the narrative.
6. Number of **respondents** limited.

## Starting point for other researches into this topic:

- Increase the amount of respondents.
- Compare pre-digital visual artists with artists born after the digitalization era.

**Thank you for your  
attention!**

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