FGV INVEST | 33

Brazilian art dealers in local and international fairs in 2022

The purpose of this short study was to map the presence of Brazilian dealers in art fairs in 2022, year in which in-person events were reopened following the COVID-19 pandemic.

April 2023

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1. Introduction

In 2022 the world finally reopened to in-person events after a long period of isolation due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Among these events were art fairs, important venues for sales (McAndrew, 2022) and networking opportunities for galleries (Yogev & Grund, 2012) and other art-world players.

Because of the forced cancellation of many in-person art fairs during the pandemic, there was a fall in their share in art dealers' revenues. According to ArtBasel & UBS's world art market report (McAndrew, 2022), recovery began in 2021, with 29% of gallery sales coming from art fairs, an increase in relation to the 22% share of 2020 (13% of which from in-person events and 9% from online viewing rooms), but still lower than the 43% reported for 2019, which preceded the pandemic.

More specific to the Brazilian art market, business in art fairs in 2017 represented around 37% of sales for ABACT's gallery members (ABACT & Apex-Brasil, 2018) – ABACT is a Brazilian association of contemporary art galleries. In 2021, Brunello et al. (2022) identified the art fairs in which Brazilian dealers took part: there were only two fairs in Brazil – SP-Arte, in São Paulo, and ArtRio, in Rio de Janeiro, the main ones in the country – and 12 international fairs – all taking place in North America and Europe.

Considering the commercial and networking relevance of fairs to the art market, the purpose of this short study was to map the participation of Brazilian art dealers in both local and international fairs in 2022, the year when in-person events were finally reopened. In addition, to better understand their presence in these fairs, dealers were classified according to other characteristics related to the market and to their location within the country.

2. Dealer data collection

Definitions and inclusion criteria for this study were the same as in Brunello et al. (2022). More specifically:

- Art galleries and other art dealers are considered for the study when having head offices in a physical address (gallery space or office) in Brazil and when buying and selling fine art to third party clients – excluding those dealing primarily with antiquities, crafts, posters, and other art-related merchandise.
- The difference between a gallery and other kinds of dealers is, basically, that the latter do not necessarily have an annual exhibition programme, whereas galleries do.
- The dealer, to be considered for the study, must have a website or, at least, one social media (Instagram or Facebook) profile.

The list of dealers was obtained by using the list of active dealers in 2021 given by Brunello et al. (2022) and updating it for changes identified in 2022, i.e., inclusion of dealers who opened their doors in 2022 or which had been missing from the previous list, and exclusion of those which closed their doors during the year; plus, update of location changes and opening of additional spaces.

For each dealer, some basic characteristics were then identified (geographic location, operating market, and membership in art dealer associations), as was the information regarding their participation in local and international art fairs in 2022.

3. Dealers, their market and associations

A total of 213 art dealers (180 of them galleries) with head offices in Brazil were identified as actively operating in 2022. Of these, 93 (44%) work exclusively in the primary market; 45 (21%) work exclusively in the secondary market; and the other 75 (35%) work in both markets.

There are two art dealer associations in Brazil: Brazilian Association of Contemporary Art (*Associação Brasileira de Arte Contemporânea*, ABACT), whose members deal mainly in the primary market; and Brazilian Art Galleries' Association (*Associação de Galerias de Arte do Brasil*, AGAB), whose members deal mainly in the secondary market. In 2022, only one third (34%) of Brazilian dealers were members of one of these associations: 62 (29%) were members of ABACT;

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and 15 (7%) of AGAB. There were four dealers (2%) who participated in both associations.

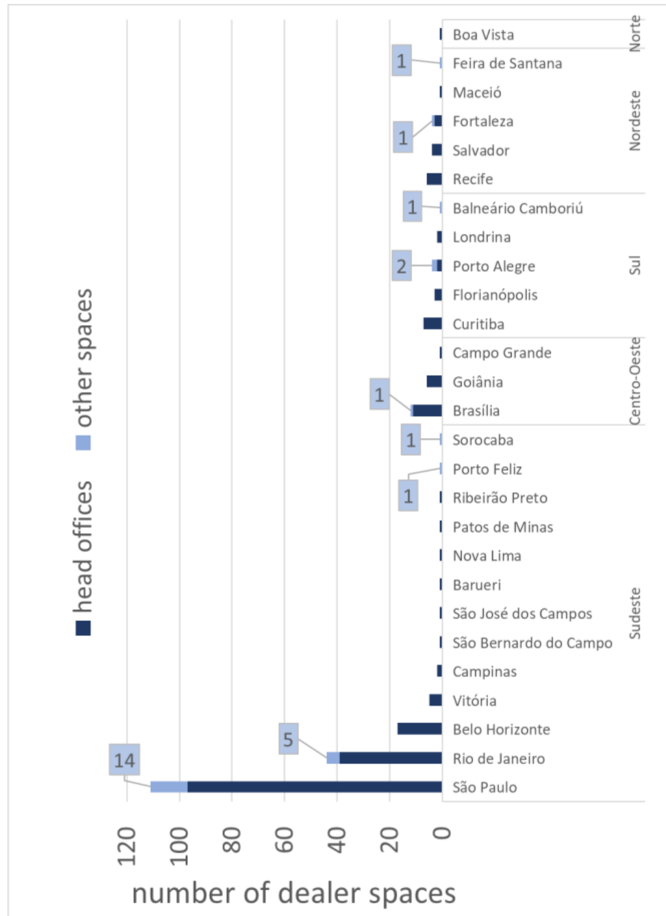
Not surprisingly, due to the nature of these associations, 53% of ABACT's members deal exclusively in the primary market and the other 47% operate in both markets. As for AGAB, 67% of its members deal exclusively in the secondary market and 33% in both. The other 140 dealers that belong to neither association have a distribution similar to that of the total dealer population: 43% deal exclusively in the primary market; 25% exclusively in the secondary market; and 32% in both.

4. Regional distribution

Dealer locations are unevenly distributed throughout the country (Figure 1), with 78% (166) having their head offices in the southeast region (*Sudeste*), followed by 8% (18) in the centre-west (*Centro-Oeste*), 7% (14) in each of northeast (*Nordest*) and south (*Sul*) regions, and only one dealer in the north (*Norte*). Moreover, considering other locations (branches), and not only head offices, there is an addition of 27 spaces, and the *Sudeste* region is the one that gains more (21 spaces), especially the city of São Paulo (14).

However, this is not surprising when considering that the art market is thought of as being related to wealth and, in Brazil, the *Sudeste* region has the highest gross national product and *Norte* the lowest. *Sudeste* is also the most densely populated region.

Figure 1 – Distribution of Brazilian dealers (head offices and other spaces) by city and region within the country



Of note is the fact that 13 of the 27 cities with dealer spaces (head offices and branches) have, in fact, only one space, and that just eight cities have five or more spaces.

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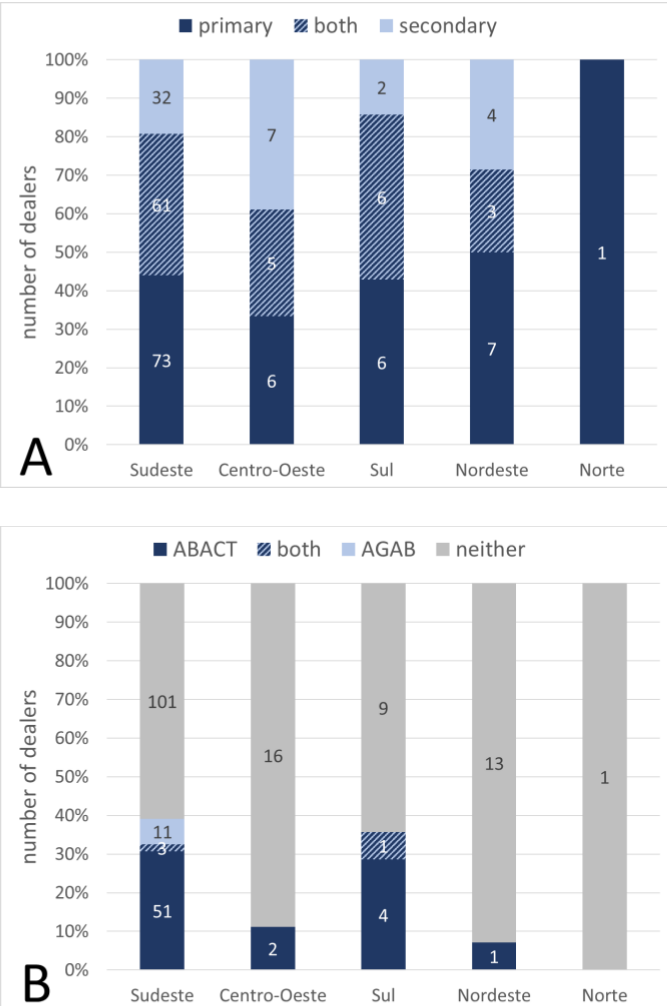
Figure 2 – Distribution of Brazilian dealers (head offices) by region and by (A) operating market, and (B) membership in dealer associations



Looking only at head office spaces, the *Centro-Oeste* region has similar proportions of dealers working in the primary market (61%, 11 of 18) and in the secondary market (67%,12 of 18) (Figure 2A), whereas *Sudeste*, *Sul* and *Nordeste* are more active in the primary market (70-80% primary vs. 50-60% secondary) – the *Norte* region, with only one gallery, was not taken into account. More research is needed to better understand these differences and if at all significant.

As for membership in dealer associations, the distribution favours the *Sudeste*, especially, and *Sul* regions (Figure 2B). *Centro-Oeste*, *Nordeste* and *Norte* regions are less active in these associations, possibly because both ABACT and AGAB are based in São Paulo and, especially, because *Sudeste* has the greatest concentration of dealers.

5. Brazilian dealers in local art fairs

The year 2022 saw an increase in the number of art fairs in Brazil, going from two events in 2021 to six: in addition to SP-Arte and ArtRio, there were ArPa, a new initiative in São Paulo; ArtSampa, the São Paulo branch of ArtRio; *Feira Brasília de Arte Contemporânea* – FBAC, in Brasilia; and *Rotas Brasileiras*, a reduced and thematic version of SP-Arte which substitutes the traditional SP-Foto. Noteworthy is the fact that four of these fairs took place in the city of São Paulo.

Approximately half of the Brazilian art dealers participated in at least one of these fairs, with the greater part participating in two (19%) or three (14%) (Figure 3).

There was a greater presence in these art fairs of dealers from the primary market (86%, 97 of 113 participants) than from the secondary market (56%, 63 of 113) (Figure 4A). This proportion of primary dealers was greater than that in the market as a whole (79%), whereas that of the secondary

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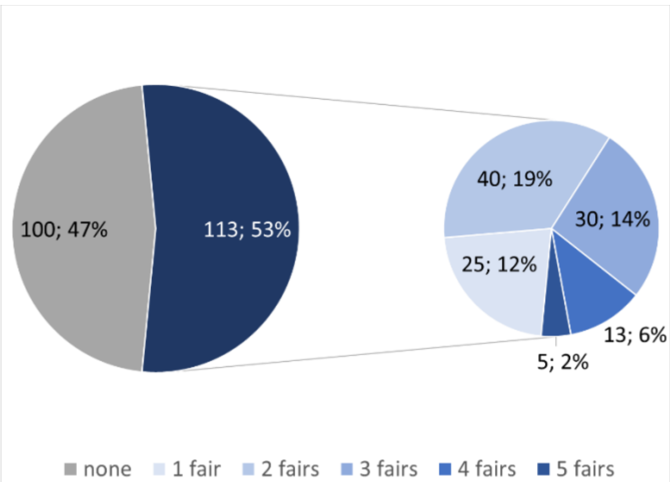
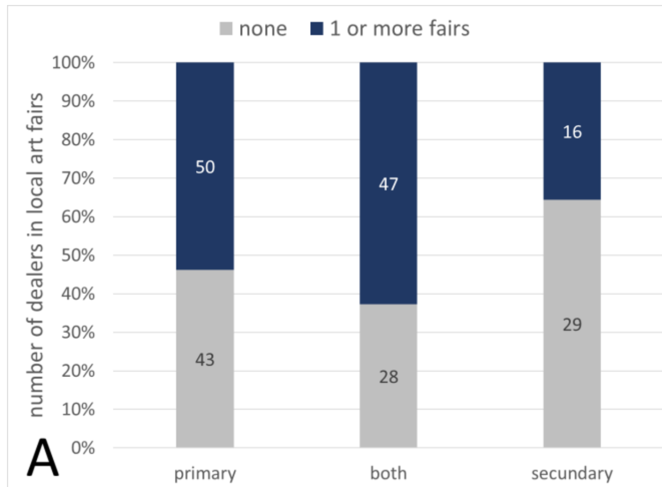
dealers was similar. More importantly, one should note that dealers who work in both markets were relatively more present in these fairs, with 63% of them having participated, compared to 54% of those dealing exclusively in the primary market and 36% of those exclusively in the secondary.

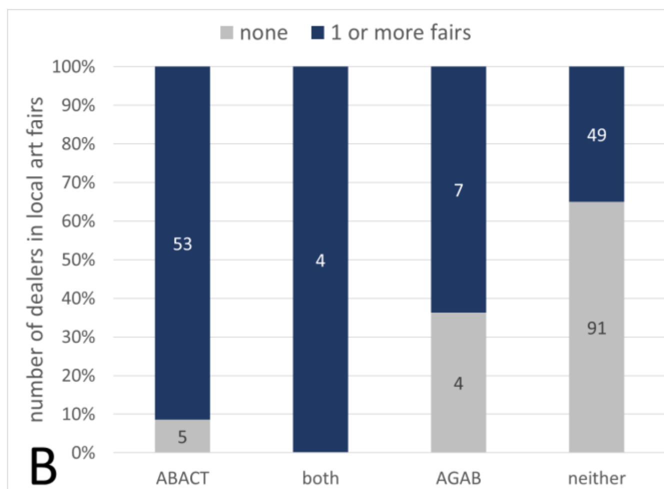
Figure 3 – Number of local art fairs and Brazilian dealers participating in them



It is interesting that more than half (57%, 64 of 113) of dealers in the local art fairs were members of ABACT and/or AGAB (Figure 4B) – and that few of their members (9) did not participate in these fairs – when only one third (34%) of all Brazilian dealers belonged to these associations. It is ABACT that, proportionally, had more dealers present (92% of its members), while AGAB had a relatively smaller presence in the fairs (73%). It remains to be determined if membership in an association boosts the dealer's chances of participating in art fairs or if these dealers are the ones who are already more prominent anyway.

Figure 4 – Distribution of Brazilian dealers (head offices) that participated in local art fairs by (A) operating market, and (B) membership in dealer associations





More than half (58%) of the dealers from *Sudeste* participated in fairs, half of those from *Nordeste* participated, and around one third of those from

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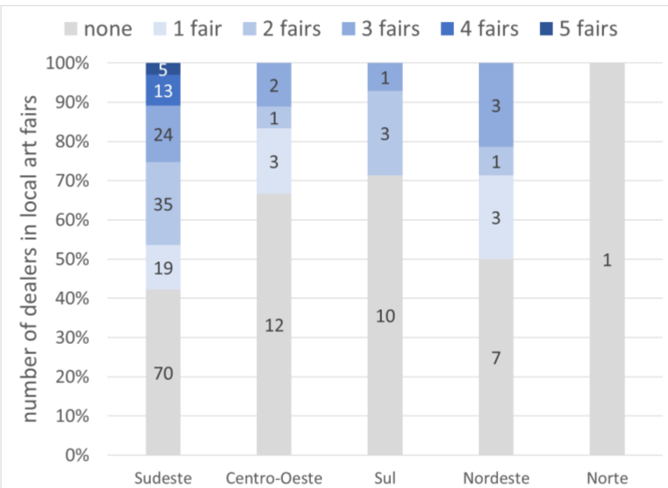
Centro-Oeste and *Sul* (Figure 5). Another interesting observation, although not surprising, is that all dealers who participated in four or five art fairs were from the *Sudeste* region.

Figure 5 – Distribution of Brazilian dealers (head offices) that participated in local art fairs by region



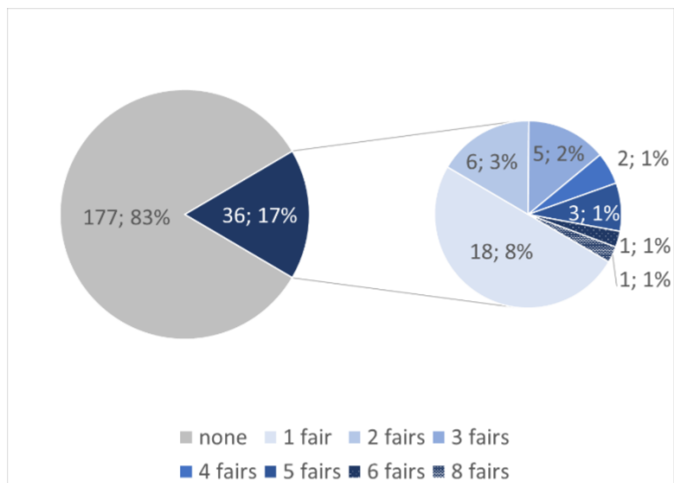
Again, more information is needed to confidently point to the reasons for this, but one may suppose it to be due to the greater concentration of dealers in this region, to the fact that it is where most of the fairs took place – assuming a lower cost of participation for those who are closer – or to these dealers being the ones with greater financial power.

6. Brazilian dealers in international art fairs

The scenery of international art fairs widened markedly in 2022 for Brazilian art dealers: their participation went from 12 art fairs in 2021 (Brunello et al., 2022) to 25 (of which, 15 in the Americas, 13 in Europe and 2 elsewhere). The two fairs with greater participation of Brazilian dealers were ArtBasel in Miami (16 participants) and ZonaMaco (13), followed by ARTBO (8), ArtBasel in Basel (7) and Frieze New York (6).

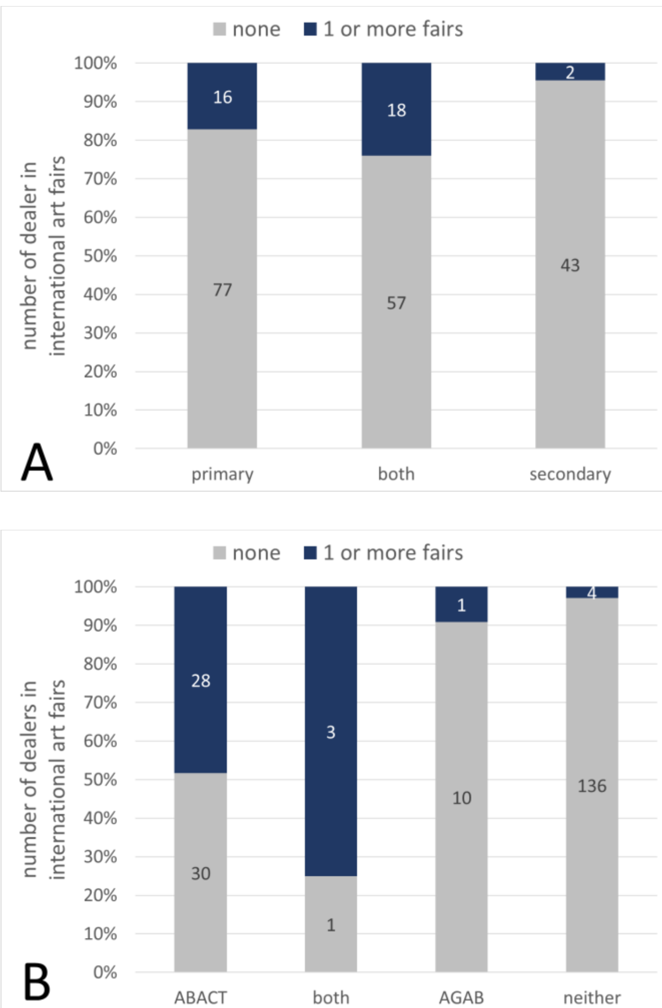
However, as would be expected, it was a small part (17%) of the Brazilian dealers who participated in these art fairs (Figure 6), although half of them in more than one.

Figure 6 – Number of international art fairs and Brazilian dealers participating in them



As seen for the local art fairs, there was a greater participation of primary market dealers in the international fairs (94%, 34 of 36) (Figure 7A), when compared to the proportion of primary dealers in the market as a whole (79%). This was due to a relatively higher participation of dealers who work in both markets (50% in fairs vs 32% not in fairs) as the percentage of dealers exclusively in the primary market was similar among participants and not participants (44%), and similar to that of the entire market.

Figure 7 – Distribution of Brazilian dealers (head offices) that participated in international art fairs by (A) operating market, and (B) membership in dealer associations

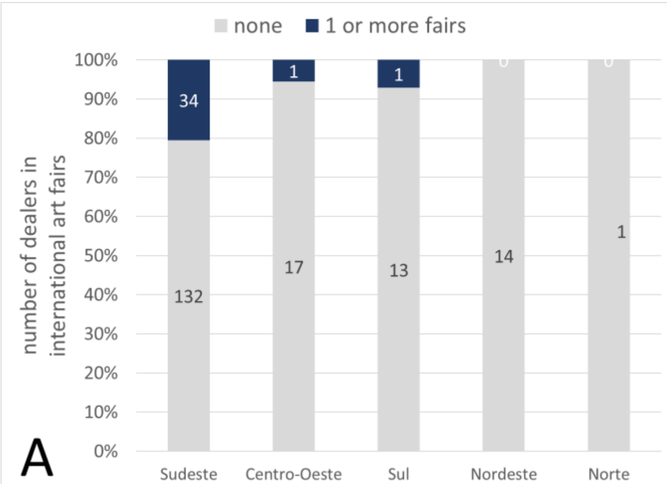


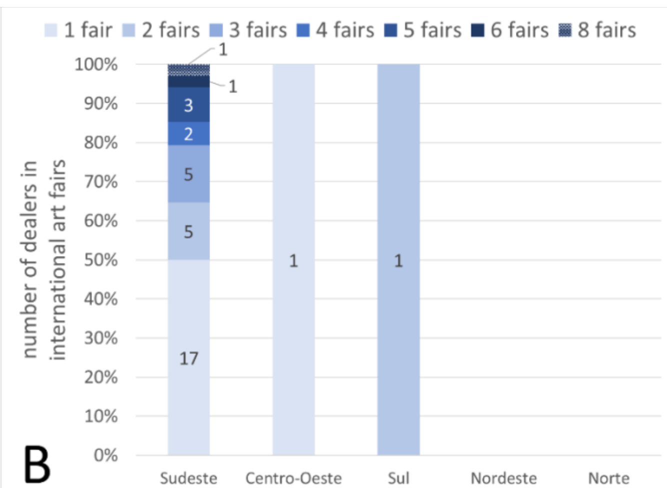
As for dealers working in the secondary market, although the same percentage of 56% is seen for both those who participated in international fairs (20 of 36) and those who did not (100 of 177), which is also the same percentage as in the market as a whole, its composition is different. Participating in fairs, 6% (2 of 36) deal exclusively in the secondary market; and not participating in fairs these are 24% (43 of 177) (Figure 7A); whereas in the whole market there were 21% working exclusively in the secondary market. Therefore, it seems that , just as for local fairs, Brazilian dealers who work in the primary market, and more so if they work in both markets, are more likely to have a spot in international art fairs.

Also similar to what was seen for local fairs, international fairs showed a strong presence of members of ABACT and/or AGAB, with only four dealers who belonged to neither of them (Figure 7B). Although less than in local fairs, ABACT was well represented in the international fairs, with 50% of its members having participated in them. As for AGAB, 27% of its members were in the international fairs.

Only two of the 36 dealers who participated in international fairs were not from the *Sudeste* region (Figures 8A and 8B): one dealer from *Centro-Oeste* was in ZonaMaco and one from *Sul* was both in ZonaMaco and in ArtBasel Miami. It should be noted, however, that the latter dealer has a branch and important operations in the city of São Paulo, *Sudeste* region.

Figure 8 – Distribution of Brazilian dealers (head offices) that (A) participated in international art fairs, and (B) participated in 1 to 8 fairs, by region





As mentioned before, the near absolute predominance of the *Sudeste* region does not surprise, as it is there where most part of dealers are located and, also, where ABACT and AGAB have their offices. Even though, the figures are rather impressive.

Half of the Brazilian dealers participating in these international fairs did so in only one, with another 31% (11 dealers) participating in two or three, and 19% (7) in more fairs (Figure 8B). Once again, without further investigation it is not possible to ascertain this, but it seems reasonable to say that these are the more financially capable dealers.

7. Conclusions

This *short study* set out to map the presence of Brazilian art dealers in art fairs in 2022, the year the world reopened its doors to the big in-person events. There was, in fact, a visible increase in the number of art fairs where Brazilians were present – six in Brazil and 25 abroad – more than double that of the previous year.

It was possible to see that there is a greater presence in art fairs of dealers working in the primary market and, moreover, of those belonging to a dealer association.

Not surprising but nonetheless striking, is the dominance of the south-eastern region of the country (*Sudeste*). As it is the region with the greater number of art dealers, it makes sense that the greater part of dealers in art fairs should come from this region. However, when looking at international fairs, one finds only two out of 36 dealers from other regions, and these are present only in fairs in the American continent.

More studies are needed to determine the causes of the present findings, such as, for example, the relation between a dealer's financial size and its capacity to participate in local and international fairs, or the role a dealer association plays in enhancing the chances of participation in an art fair, however, it is hoped that the present study could bring some relevant information to the art market.

It will be interesting to see what 2023 brings to this sector of the market: if Brazilian participation in art fairs will be maintained, expanded with further investments and returns or, indeed, reduced after the reopening euphoria seen in 2022.

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I would like to thank Roberta Okura for her valuable comments throughout the writing of this short study.

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