The aim of this reader is to present a wide-ranging set of texts from a variety of academic perspectives on the art market and its participants. For this reason, the texts have been excerpted—with the gracious permission of all authors and rights holders—from published work. Section titles are sometimes a shortened or edited version of the original to more clearly convey the excerpt's content. Readers are encouraged to consult the original sources, listed with each excerpt, for the complete texts. Due to space restraints, footnotes, illustrations, tables, and other general references have been omitted, except for direct quotes from academic sources, which are cited within the texts and refer to the bibliography.

Within the excerpts the following punctuation conventions are followed: Ellipses (…) within a sentence indicate that a word or words were omitted. Bracketed ellipses […] indicate omissions extending from a complete sentence to a paragraph or two, or several paragraphs when followed by a linespace. Ellipses and bracketed ellipses at the beginning of a paragraph indicate that the excerpt begins mid-sentence or mid-paragraph in the original source.