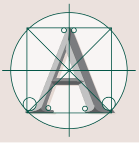

Artisan Global Value Fund

QUARTERLY Commentary

Artisan Partners Global Funds plc

As of 30 June 2021

For Institutional Investors – Not for Onward Distribution

Investment Process

We seek to invest in high-quality, undervalued companies with strong balance sheets and shareholder-oriented management teams.

Undervaluation

Determining the intrinsic value of a business is the heart of our research process. Intrinsic value represents the amount that a buyer would pay to own a company's future cash flows. We seek to invest at a significant discount to our estimate of the intrinsic value of a business.

Business Quality

We seek to invest in companies with histories of generating strong free cash flow, improving returns on capital and strong competitive positions in their industries.

Financial Strength

We believe that investing in companies with strong balance sheets helps to reduce the potential for capital risk and provides company management the ability to build value when attractive opportunities are available.

Shareholder-Oriented Management

Our research process attempts to identify management teams with a history of building value for shareholders.

Team Overview

Our team has worked together for many years and has implemented a consistent and disciplined investment process. Our team is organized by geographic regions, but within those regions we are generalists who look across all industries. We believe this model enables our analysts to become broad thinkers and gain critical insight across all economic sectors.

Portfolio Management

Daniel J. O'Keefe
Portfolio Manager (Lead)
Managing Director

Michael J. McKinnon, CFA
Portfolio Manager
Managing Director

Investment Results (%)

As of 30 June 2021	QTD	YTD	Average Annual Total Returns 1 Yr	3 Yr	5 Yr	10 Yr	Inception
Class I USD—Inception: 01 Mar 2011	**5.06**	**14.92**	**50.11**	**10.96**	**11.99**	**10.41**	**10.40**
MSCI All Country World Index (USD)	7.39	12.30	39.26	14.57	14.61	9.90	9.65
MSCI All Country World Value Index (USD)	4.84	14.13	38.39	8.38	9.81	6.96	6.70
Class I EUR—Inception: 14 Dec 2015	**3.87**	**18.36**	**42.14**	**10.37**	**10.51**	—	**9.61**
MSCI All Country World Index (EUR)	6.43	15.87	31.90	13.97	13.13	—	12.27
MSCI All Country World Value Index (EUR)	3.90	17.75	31.07	7.82	8.39	—	8.25
Class I GBP—Inception: 14 Jun 2016	**4.69**	**13.64**	**34.42**	**9.24**	**11.14**	—	**12.46**
MSCI All Country World Index (GBP)	7.26	11.12	24.56	12.85	13.86	—	15.37
MSCI All Country World Value Index (GBP)	4.70	12.93	23.78	6.76	9.09	—	10.59
Class A USD—Inception: 06 Aug 2013	**4.84**	**14.39**	**48.77**	**10.01**	**11.03**	—	**8.15**
MSCI All Country World Index (USD)	7.39	12.30	39.26	14.57	14.61	—	10.65
MSCI All Country World Value Index (USD)	4.84	14.13	38.39	8.38	9.81	—	7.01

Annual Returns (%) 12 months ended 30 June

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Class I USD	**21.80**	**5.88**	**3.88**	**-12.39**	**50.11**

Source: Artisan Partners/MSCI. Returns for periods less than one year are not annualized.

Past performance does not guarantee and is not a reliable indicator of future results. Performance is NAV to NAV, including reinvestment of dividends and capital gains, if any, and is net of fees and expenses, excluding any subscription or redemption charges which may be levied. At the moment, the Fund does not intend to charge subscription or redemption fees. The Fund may be offered in different share classes, which are subject to different fees, expenses and inception dates (which may affect performance), have different minimum investment requirements and are entitled to different services. An investor cannot invest directly in an index.

Investment Risks: Investments will rise and fall with market fluctuations and investor capital is at risk. Investors investing in funds denominated in non-local currency should be aware of the risk of currency exchange fluctuations that may cause a loss of principal. These risks, among others, are further described on the last page, which should be read in conjunction with this material.

Performance commentary is provided in relation to the Fund's USD share class.

Market Overview

"It all depends on how we look at things, not how they are in themselves."

—Carl Jung

The stock market is at an all-time high. The economy in many parts of the world, particularly the US, is booming. JP Morgan Chase & Co kicked off earnings season reporting that consumer spending on its credit and debit cards is now 22% above pre-pandemic levels. Inflation is surging. June's CPI shows a 5.4% inflation rate, and this is probably understated by at least half given the government's optimistic (i.e., inaccurate) methodology. Nevertheless, the official data shows prices up 10% annualized for the three months ending in May. Gas prices are ahead 45%. Median national rent is up 9%. US housing prices are up 15%, which is the most in 30 years.

Yet central bankers in the world's largest economy remain unperturbed. Monetary policy is pedal to the floor—appropriate perhaps for an economy on life support, but not for "the best economy I have ever seen" according to a trusted CEO of one of our companies. It beggars belief that the Fed continues to buy about $100bn dollars per month of mortgage backed securities, presumably to support a housing market that is already soaring and pricing many buyers out of the market. And fiscal policy also remains expansionary, with another $3trn spending bill currently percolating in Congress. We have never in our careers seen monetary and fiscal policy so out of whack with the state of the economy.

But the bond market and the stock market recently seem to be taking their cues from central banker talking points which we could summarize as follows:

- The virus still holds significant risk to the global economy with vaccination rates stalling and cases surging in many parts of the world
- Inflation will prove transitory and return to anemic levels quickly
- Sustained strong economic growth is not likely to persist without continued government support

US Treasurys and interest rates around the world signal economic weakness ahead. Treasurys reversed their recent rise, and yield curves started to flatten again. The real yield on the 10-year US Treasury is now around -4.0%, or much more negative depending on your view of actual inflation. (Put us firmly in the "far more negative" camp.)

Equity investors also fell in line with the central bank outlook. They rotated back to the perceived safety of growth stocks. Big tech drove global equity performance in the quarter. Almost one-third of the MSCI All Country World Index's return was from ten companies—all but one was a US technology company (Nestle being the sole exception).

We say "perceived" because the valuations for many of these companies don't signal safety to us. Valuation matters—or should. To be sure, growing companies are worth more than companies that don't grow—often far more. However, there is a limit to a price that leaves room for a return. Note that the 10 companies that drove the index return this quarter trade at an average valuation of 66X earnings. As Exhibit 1 illustrates, valuations for US technology stocks are now higher than the dot-com era in 1999. Maybe things are different this time. Maybe not.

Exhibit 1: US Tech Valuations Higher Than Dot-Com Bubble

Source: Bloomberg.

As our long-time clients already know, our approach is different. We prefer to manage risk by purchasing quality businesses at a discount to their intrinsic value. We like growth—as is evident in our two most recent purchases outlined below—but we will not overpay for it.

For what it's worth, it appears that we are also less pessimistic on the outlook for the economy than the recent rotation back into growth stocks would suggest. No doubt, the current environment is highly uncertain. There are many possible explanations for the conflicting data we are seeing, and we won't know for sure until it's in the rear-view mirror. But investing is always about making judgement based on an uncertain future. Our approach is to anchor on facts and make a judgement as to which facts matter the most.

We believe there is one set of facts that overwhelms everything else—the size of the government's fiscal and monetary stimulus. This year alone, there have been two pandemic relief packages totaling $2.8trn. This includes the $900bn relief package signed by President Trump last December, and the $1.9trn American Rescue Package signed by President Biden in March. (And as we mentioned above, there is another $3trn spending package being discussed.)

Compare this number to the current output gap—the difference between actual and potential GDP. In laymen's terms, the output gap measures the hole in the economy that the stimulus attempts to fill. The current output gap is estimated to be only $400bn–$600bn. In other words, we are throwing $2.8trn in stimulus at a ~$500bn hole. Said another way, the stimulus that is now working its way through the economy is 5X-7X larger than then the problem it's meant to solve.

Incredibly, there is more. There is an estimated $2.6trn in excess savings that was built up since the start of COVID and is still

available to be spent. To make this a little more tangible, look at the most recent quarterly earnings from JP Morgan, which show its cash deposits are up 51% since 2019. JP Morgan has grown its deposit base more in the past 18 months than it did over the last decade.

It's hard to overstate the magnitude of this stimulus, much of which is still in the process of working its way into the economy. In July, the US started monthly payments of $300 per child to 40 million families as part of the March stimulus bill. This is on top of stimulus checks, unemployment benefits, state and local aid, and other forms of business support. Altogether, it represents an enormous amount of demand creation that should drive a meaningful amount of economic activity.

This demand is hitting the economy at a time when supply is constrained. Factories are still ramping up, inventory levels are low, supply chains are clogged, shipping containers aren't available, restaurants aren't fully staffed, semiconductors are scarce. The list goes on.

It is true that much of these supply-side distortions are temporary and will eventually normalize. But investors too focused on the supply side are missing the elephant in the room—the amount of demand created by this potent combination: the largest peacetime stimulus in history, a hoard of household savings that is sitting on the sidelines, and plenty of juice from central banks.

It's this trifecta that gives us confidence the economy is likely to remain strong for an extended period of time, and we believe our portfolio is well positioned to benefit.

Portfolio Discussion

We made two new investments during the quarter: Alibaba and Nintendo.

Alibaba is China's largest e-commerce and cloud company. Overall retail sales in China are growing 9% per year. Within that, e-commerce penetration is 25% and rising. This creates an e-commerce market growing in the mid-teens. Its cloud business is also a secular grower, driven by rising penetration of outsourced IT infrastructure, like what's happening in the US and Europe.

Alibaba is the dominant player in both markets. Its e-commerce business has massive scale with over 800 million active customers and $1.1trn in gross merchandise volume. This gives it ~65% market share of e-commerce, and 20% of total Chinese retail spending. This is 3X larger than the second-largest player in China, and more than 2X Amazon's global e-commerce business. In cloud, Alibaba has a 42% market share, which again is 3X the second-largest player in China, and makes Alibaba's cloud business the third largest globally, after Microsoft and Amazon.

There is a strong moat around the business which comes from its scale and the network effects endemic to marketplace e-commerce businesses.

The current profitability is burdened by a slew of loss-making investments. These include investments in traditional retail, food delivery, international markets in Southeast Asia, logistics and others. These have served to significantly depress the group's margins over the past few years. Despite these investments, the business remains nicely profitable and cash generative.

The shares have been pressured by concerns of regulatory actions and competition. Both concerns are valid, and profits won't grow this year as a result. But longer-term, we believe profit growth is inevitable given the market growth and Alibaba's market positions. There is potential to grow faster than the market by increasing the take-rate from ~4% today (about 1% commission and 3% advertising) to closer to global norms. For context, we estimate Amazon's take-rate is closer to 30%—this includes 8%-15% commission rates, additional services (logistics, storage and other) and advertising of 4%-7%. While the take-rate isn't perfectly comparable for several structural reasons, there should be room for Alibaba's to rise. In addition, the investment losses should eventually fade (or at least scale), which would improve profits.

Given the sprawling business and numerous loss-making investments, the valuation is not straightforward. We estimate we're paying somewhere between ~15X-20X unlevered earnings. This valuation embeds ~$10bn in ongoing losses, which provides a margin of safety for regulatory actions and option value if some of these initiatives end up becoming successful. There is additional margin of safety in the balance sheet, with $140bn in cash and investments that represents ~25% of the market capitalization.

Nintendo is a Japanese video game company. It owns one of the best collections of intellectual property in the video game industry. This includes durable franchises with global appeal like Mario, Pokémon, the Legend of Zelda and Animal Crossing.

The global video game market is ~$175bn and growing as video games take share of consumer entertainment spending. Nintendo currently participates mostly in the ~$50bn console segment, which grows mid-single digits, but it also has initiatives in other areas of the market.

Nintendo is somewhat unusual in the industry in that it is vertically integrated. It produces both video game consoles and software, mostly based on its own intellectual property (i.e., not licensed). Historically, Nintendo has been a leader in both due to innovative hardware and a strong intellectual property portfolio that allows it to consistently introduce popular games. We believe there are multiple levers for diversifying the business and improving profitability.

In the past, the business has been highly cyclical around new console launches. We believe this is changing. Nintendo's current console, Switch, has been extremely successful. It has sold 85 million units since launching in 2017 and is on track to reach over 100 million units this year. Management is focused on extending the lifecycle of the Switch. This will transform what is historically a boom-and-bust business model to a more stable installed base model, into which Nintendo can sell more video game content.

Profitability should rise since selling video game content is far more profitable than selling consoles—especially if it's done via online or downloadable format. In addition, the company appears to be taking steps to further monetize its IP through movies, theme parks and mobile gaming.

We compare the evolution of the console market to the evolution of the smart phone market in the past several years. Smart phone sales used to fluctuate wildly with large cycles of obsolescence and innovation. As innovation has slowed and become more evolutionary, the business has become much more stable. We think the console market is going through a similar evolution.

Nintendo's valuation doesn't reflect any of these improvements in the company's business model. The shares trade at 12X 2021 unlevered earnings. The balance sheet is flush with $18bn of net cash, which is equal to 25% of the market capitalization. Management has acknowledged it has too much cash and has discussed the potential for share repurchases. In the meantime, the dividend yield is 3.5%.

We exited our investments in FedEx and Cognizant during the quarter. FedEx shares reached our estimate of intrinsic value.

Cognizant was a mistake that we were fortunate to exit with a profit. We acquired the shares with the expectation that a new CEO would be able to turn around the business. Over our holding period, the company has persistently underperformed the market and its peers. Indeed, in the most recent quarter the company's revenue and performance gap widened to the levels we saw before the new CEO joined—and this is after significant capital deployed in acquisitions and restructuring. The business is in much worse shape than we would have expected this far into the strategy, and we have lost confidence in the CEO's ability to execute on his turnaround plan.

The largest contributors during the quarter were Richemont, Alphabet and Facebook.

Richemont shares rose 26% during the quarter after reporting excellent earnings that demonstrated accelerating momentum across its business, and particular strength in its jewelry maisons, which are now solidly above 2019 levels. The business performance is very strong, but there is still work to be done to realize full value in the online and non-jewelry businesses.

Alphabet and Facebook each rose about 18% in Q2. Both companies started off the quarter by reporting very strong earnings, driven by a strong rebound in online advertising and continued strength in e-commerce. Subsequently, they also benefited from the rotation back into growth stocks. Despite increases in their share prices, the companies remain relatively reasonably valued given the long-term growth profile.

The largest detractors from performance during the quarter were Cognizant, Southwest and Booking Holdings.

Cognizant shares declined 9% after reporting poor Q1 earnings with organic growth that continued to lag competitors and a reduced profitability outlook. The company has failed to show progress on its turnaround, and our conversations with management failed to give us confidence that this would change. As noted above, we since exited this position.

Southwest and Booking Holdings declined 13% and 6%, respectively. Both companies were affected by coronavirus variants causing rising case counts in many parts of the world. To be sure, unlocking travel is tightly connected with the path of the virus. While it might take a bit longer to realize a full rebound in travel, there is clear evidence of strong underlying demand, and we remain confident in the eventual earnings power for both Booking Holdings and Southwest.

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