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INSTITUTION AS MEDIUM. CURATING AS INSTITUTIONAL CRITIQUE? / PART II



Possible Encounters at Institution as Medium. Curating as Institutional Critique?, 2010, Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel. Photograph courtesy of Kunsthalle Fridericianum.

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EDITORIAL

Dorothee Richter, Rein Wolfs

The second part of the publication for the symposium, *Institution as Medium. Curating as Institutional Critique?*, organised by the Kunsthalle Fridericianum and the Zurich Postgraduate Programme in Curating (Institute for Cultural Studies, Department of Cultural Analysis, Zurich University of the Arts), deals with notion of art-mediation and addressing publics in the realm of institutional critique. The question remains: how can a practice that intends to radically show the conditionality of art, its financial entanglements, and its function as a means of distinction, be related to institutions and curators' activities therein? Is this not a contradiction in terms? The aim of the symposium was to explore these contradictions, as well as the possibilities and limitations of critical curatorial practice.

Contributions by Giovanni Carmine, Maja Ciric, Neil Cummings, Helmut Draxler, Beryl Graham, Damian Jurt, Hassan Khan, Marysia Lewandowska, Isin Onol, Dorothee Richter and Yael Eylat Van-Essen. Edited by Dorothee Richter and Rein Wolfs.

SOME THOUGHTS ON NEW WAVES OF ART EDUCATION AND MEDIATION

Dorothee Richter

This second part of the symposium, *Institution as Medium: Curating as Institutional Critique?*, discussed new phenomena in the art field: the educational turn and a new wave of art education and mediation.

As a rule, the so-called educational turn in the art field refers to the changes that led to the introduction of discussions and symposia, archives and screenings, and new forms of presentation in art institutions. The numerous producers of culture who worked with other social groups and attempted to initiate new forms of knowledge production were generally reproached for such immaterial work since it paved the way for cognitive capitalism. Such generalisations, however, do not make clear that artists were acting on the basis of specific concerns and that they wanted to engage with, and ally themselves with, activists and other discourses. Postcolonial criticism, gender studies, and anti-racist groups often informed the contents of such new practices.

The shift towards the conflictual field of politics was aspired to inasmuch as it was a matter of introducing new views and perspectives into social discourse. Intellectual and social critical debates found a new home in art institutions. Actions situated between art and agitation, and between art and activism, often influenced public discourses. Such appropriation, moreover, led the involved subjects to believe that self-empowerment is possible. With the benefit of hindsight, we can see that the conceived counterposition also formed part of a larger arrangement, which was associated with social rebuilding of institutions and with affirmation and including critique.

The educational turn, however, also stands for the attempt to use the most intensive and stimulating means possible to activate the immobilised viewer in the modern museum. The idea is to counter the effects of one pedagogic practice, namely, exhibition-making (which involves immobilisation and passivity) with the contrary practice of mediating art (which involves participation and activity). This helps us understand the sometimes peculiar animosity between these discourses in the German-speaking world.

The hallucinating spectator?

Hito Steyerl has recently claimed that the spectatorial positions of self-assurance and that of the project participant are currently being called into question. Steyerl refers especially to multimedia video exhibitions to argue her case. Political film is seeking refuge in the museum, she further observes, since demanding film programmes are no longer screened in cinemas as neoliberalism tightens its grip. Steyerl, moreover, sees the art institution situated in former factories while the actual work is now done on a computer at home.

Video installations, whose length and multiple projections overwhelm visitors, address spectators as a fragmented mass or as a scattered, dispersed multitude. Their visual impression remains single and fragmentary, lines of sight become unforeseeable, the gaze is splintered, and visitors create their own narrative as they move through the exhibition: "The museum doesn't organise a coherent crowd of people. People are dispersed in time and space. A silent crowd, immersed and atomised, struggling both with passivity and hyper-activation."¹ The imagined sovereign and autonomous subject of the bourgeois public sphere, and the self-forming subject of cognitive capitalism, has changed: "The public under the condition of multitude operates under the condition of partial invisibility, incomplete access, fragmented realities, of commodification within clandestinity. Transparency, overview and the sovereign gaze fade away into opacity. Cinema itself explodes into multiplicity, into spatially dispersed multiscreen arrangements, which cannot be contained by a single point of view. The full picture, so to speak, remains unavailable. There is always something missing."²

While Steyerl believes that this constellation can make obvious this very shortcoming and considers the desire for exchange, for a contact zone that is, productive, I am actually sceptical in this respect. What is it if an overwhelmed, fragmented subject is no longer even deemed able to occupy the position of an informed or to be informed viewer.³ In the videos shown, unreflected messages are increasingly bound up with a notion of "politics" based on repeated image-based prejudices. Precisely this is what Roland Barthes called ideological, intentional myths. The combination of signs, decontextualised and de-historicised, and, moreover, charged with intentional political attributions, replaces an understanding of information resting on long-term and multilayered analyses of different interests. One characteristic feature of this stance is to ignore one's own involvement in global conflict at all costs (one prime example in this respect is the Middle East conflict as an exculpatory [relief of strain] discourse for central Europeans). Thus, the contents of the objects of films always matters, as well as their historical references to the specific contexts of display.

Ultimately, Steyerl's observations on the viewer's changed position correspond to the altered forms of address in the so-called public urban sphere and in media space.

Being continuously addressed by film projections alienates addressees from their own mirror image, and turns them in the long term into what the media theorist Christian Metz called "the double of his double."⁴ Since Metz made this observation, this process has intensified considerably, in that tangible and intangible spaces have begun to permeate each other in hitherto unknown ways due to the development of telecommunications and network media. What has emerged is a digital dimension of interaction and imagination, with corresponding imaginary communities and imagined part-identities. (Urban) spaces, and social and political spheres, are increasingly influenced by remote effects conveyed by the media; such effects need neither be understandable nor legitimated wherever they had practical consequences. Here too, the subject doesn't necessarily occupy a sovereign position, since the subject is manifoldly embroiled in projections and dependencies to which only limited access exists. In the public and private sphere, subjects find themselves incessantly confronted with image-based projections (in both senses of the word). These projections are splintered, fragmentary, and remain imaginary. What arises in relation to the subject is a quasi-hallucinatory effect.

Let's summarise:

In ideal terms, subjects visiting traditional exhibitions (with hanging paintings) to a certain extent train attributes that benefit the (inconspicuous) controlled, judgmental, responsible citizen. Visitors who are confronted by a confusing, compelling media exhibition, experience fragmentation, atomisation, hallucinatory excess, and an incomplete narration experience – an interpellation that positions them as overwhelmed and fragmented. When visiting projects committed to the educational turn, we are addressed as subjects able to participate in some way or another. We educate ourselves and engage in discussion, communicate amongst ourselves, and enter into contact and networks. These three registers of address exist side by side, however, or, indeed, they overlap. Their implications exist in the most diverse arrangements, both to various extents and remaining open to discussion. These three registers can be partly set in parallel to Martin Jay's three *scopic regimes of modernity*.⁶

1
Hito Steyerl, *Is a Museum a Factory?* in *e-flux journal* No 7, 2009, <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/is-a-museum-a-factory/>

2
ibid.

3
This scopic regime that is described here by Hito Steyerl partly resembles the regime named by Martin Jay, the baroque regime: "If, however, we turn to a third model of vision, of what can be called the second moment of unease in the dominant model, [...] [the] baroque connoted the bizarre and peculiar, traits which were normally disdained by champions of clarity and transparency of form." Later he points out the "Explosive power" of this scopic regime. Martin Jay, "Scopic regimes of modernity." In Hal Forster, ed., *Vision and visibility*, The New Press, New York, 1988, p.16.

4
ibid. p.14

5
Vgl. Viktor Kittlausz, "Urbane(s) Fragen, Auf der Suche nach den Medien des Städtischen," in Elke Krasny, Irene Nierhaus eds., *Urbanografien, Stadtforschung in Kunst, Architektur und Theorie*, Reimer, Berlin 2008, pp. 193-203.

6
Martin Jay: *Scopic Regimes of Modernity*; in Hal Forster, ed., *Vision and visibility*, The New Press, New York, 1988.

Where do curatorial programmes come into this inventory?

Curatorial programmes are especially committed to the re-evaluation of immaterial work, the imparting of specific cooperative skills, taking action on meta-levels, and project-based work. They are, as such, part of a neoliberal rebuilding of university education. Indeed, the profession of the curator is a prime example of this new kind of meaningful, or at least project-creating, management, especially since these postgraduate programmes are being increasingly subjected to economic principles in the style of the British system. This would be the starting point for critique in our case. Form and content interact, but form does not equal content. Curiously (and the world is full of contradictions), it is precisely during the restructuring of numerous universities and universities of applied sciences according to the school-like Bologna model, with its regulated curricula, programmes, and examinations, that a comparatively large degree of freedom of form and content exists within the less regulated postgraduate programmes.

The learning and unlearning of habitus

"Il n'y a pas de hors texte." as Derrida put it. – Right, there is nothing outside or beyond the text, nor beyond or outside discourse. And I do not wish to construe a position contrary to this statement. Nevertheless, it does seem important to me to take a particular position within the discourse. "Speech is a text, gesture is a text, reality is a text in this new sense." But precisely for this reason, it is not a matter of indifference which position I take as a curator or artist; it always has political implications.

I would therefore like to plead for learning and unlearning the habitus. That is to say, the following issues ought to be negotiated in a curatorial programme: making visible the power of definition, revealing inclusions and exclusions, making evident cultural policy and budgetary conditions, and identifying or unlearning the habitus.



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CRISIS AS FORM. CURATING AND THE LOGIC OF MEDIATION.¹

Helmut Draxler

The rapid increase and expansion of curatorial practices since the late 1980s could easily be understood as the manifestation of three distinct moments of crisis. The first crisis would concern the institutions of the bourgeois art establishment, which have struggled ever since to find adequate responses both to the challenges of contemporary, particularly neo- or post-avant-gardist art and to the requirements of the expanding art business. Independent curators stepped in to take on the tasks which the custodians of the classical museums were no longer able to undertake. They became the tracker dogs and "head-hunters" of a *scene* in which they soaked up a wide variety of assertive gestures derived from art, theory, and politics in order to legitimise their advanced status in terms of knowledge, coolness, and jargon. The institutions appeared slow and sedate by comparison. Today, they increasingly attempt to integrate the model of independent curating into their administrative and representative operational processes.

The second crisis would refer to the relationship between artists and curators. Traditionally there had been a clear division of roles between productive artists and selective curators/custodians, who would engage in critical reflection and mediation. But already the first independent curators were faced with the criticism that their actual intention was to be "grand artists" who used other artists as their material. Since the 1980s, however, a reverse tendency can be observed in the increasing number of curatorial projects conducted by artists. Today, many of the most interesting art projects are essentially curatorial projects. What appears to happen is a kind of continuous exchange between artists and curators in which the specific roles are not abandoned but constantly being re-adjusted to each other.

The same observations also serve to demonstrate the third manifestation of crisis, namely the crisis of artistic production itself. It is evidence of the fact that since the 1960s it has become almost impossible to maintain the high standards of originality and innovation typical of the modern period. An element of reflexivity, with regards to both history and media, has become an integral aspect of art practices, which are increasingly based on processing existing materials in analogy to the cut and paste principles of digital modes of production. In that sense curators act like DJs in that they cultivate "secondary" modes of production such as selecting, emphasising, and above all recycling, even when they appear simply to create space for "original" productions. Perhaps these "secondary" modes of production have become so interesting for many artists that curating, not unlike critical practice, seems to have become the actual mode of artistic expression.

How can we understand the connections between these three crises? It is already not an easy question to decide whether we are dealing with various facets of a single crisis or with a range of different but overlapping crisis phenomena, and whether the role of curating should be regarded as a solution or as a symptom of the respective crises. And then the question arises whether the notion of crisis is at all appropriate to describe the specific nature of this process of transformation. The answers to such questions depend both on the underlying assumptions that inform the diagnosis of the present historical moment and on the implied models of historical differentiation and dynamics which form an essential part of any reflection on the process character of the modern era. The essence of curating can therefore only be grasped on the basis of specific assumptions regarding its social, cultural, and economic contexts. How these contexts are interpreted will also determine the answer to the question whether the processes of transformation and the role of curatorial practices in them are seen as progressive or as problematic changes. In other words, does curating represent new ways of approaching the critique of institutions and overcoming traditional images of the role of artists as well as traditional notions of production, or does it stand for typical manifestations of new, culturalised economies in which a culture of the secondary and of mediation merges seamlessly with the processes of value creation and the logic of social fragmentation that are typical of "progressive" capitalism?

What seems to be characteristic is the fact that casting the issue in terms of an either/or between emancipation and co-optation apparently fails to grasp the particular constel-

¹
The term "mediation" (German: *Vermittlung*) is used here not in the prevalent narrow sense of a specific process aimed at the reconciliation of disputes between parties (as in family mediation, business mediation etc.) but in the wider sense indicating the intervention of a third party to facilitate interaction, communication, and ultimately a shared understanding between two parties. In the present context of "art mediation" (German: *Kunstvermittlung*), it indicates an understanding of curating as an intervention designed to facilitate and potentially improve interaction/communication/understanding between artist and audience. [Translator's note].

lation of curating. What is progressive could at the same time be exactly the root of the problem, for example when the critical moment in curating is presented as a motor for change that no longer butts heads with "fossilised" structures but rather is readily absorbed into them. Or when the moment of selection in curating can no longer be distinguished from the dominant patterns of selection and exclusion. Such effects have been extensively described in the context of the globalisation of the exhibition business and the "immaterialisation" of neoliberal working conditions and requirements of subjectivity. These are therefore not merely the symptoms of a dissolution of institutions, identities, and notions of the artwork giving way to new modes of articulation in the name of curating. It is rather a multi-layered transformation from rigid to flexible institutions, from the immediate subject position of the artist to that of the mediator, from original creation to secondary production.

Such changes cannot, however, be understood in terms of one-dimensional motion sequences; they imply shifts within the "systems" of relationships in which the individual and the institution, the mediated and the unmediated, the primary and the secondary are always already interrelated. These dualistic terms are interdependent, and none of them can be subsumed into its opposite. The crucial question concerns the assessment of the factual shifts from one pole to the other that take place within the field of curating and how they impact the bourgeois system of checks and balances, i.e. the separation of powers that manifests, for example, in the distribution of subject positions between artists, custodians, and critics in an arrangement of mutually related articulations designed to ensure the bourgeois preservation of values. Is the increase in practices of mediation a gain in the sense of progressively overcoming bourgeois society or is it rather a regressive loss of differentiation and institutional structure? Is it simply a further differentiation of possible subject positions, which allows for a wide range of social and cultural actions, no longer restrained by dominant patterns of identity, or is it a systematic loss of differentiation, which ultimately leads to a co-existence of uncontrollable assertions of value, existing without hierarchies but failing to generate any value or create any public? And what is the function of the notion of crisis as an interpretive paradigm?

The term "crisis" doubtlessly denotes first of all an imaginary perception of reality which limits the wide variety of possible perceptions and furnishes the diagnosis of the present moment with historical significance, but it also denotes horizon of meaning for one's actions, which can then be regarded as an attempt to "overcome" the present crisis. It is particularly within a mode of thought influenced by the critique of culture and the philosophy of history that the crisis is seen as an unmistakable sign of changes to come. Within a theory of modernity, however, it would rather tend to indicate the normal state of permanent change in the modern era, for example in the sense of Joseph Schumpeter's "creative destruction." Without necessarily subscribing to such euphemisms one can certainly agree with Reinhart Koselleck's diagnosis that the crisis has become permanent since the 18th century, that bourgeois society has never been able to close itself so as to form a new model of sovereignty but rather constituted itself as permanently in crisis. It is by definition never sufficiently democratic, egalitarian, solidary, or liberal enough, and it is always in cultural, psychological, and social decline, at least within the crisis imagination of its agents. This provides a good explanation for the function of crisis rhetoric in the attempt to establish new practices, particularly in the field of mediation. Their increase in all aspects of society is related to the fact that they are always oriented towards ideals, with the intention to remedy any failure to reach them, and it is precisely this failure which is being experienced as crisis. The unintentional, functional, and unconscious aspects of one's own actions tend to be disregarded: By acting in the name of an ideal purpose that bestows legitimacy, their actual achievement of symbolisation – the "reality of ideality" in their specific methods and practices with which they inscribe themselves within the field of culture – is overlooked.

It is therefore unavoidable to address that which is unmediated within the process of mediation, in other words, in the case of curating, to address not the ideal purpose, not the imaginary self-fashioning, but that which is actually being symbolised. The imaginary dimension of curating always relates to a position of selection and thus to the implied notion that the world is available for such acts of selection. The significance of these acts of selecting and making available is legitimised by the claim to unmediated truth of the selected content. The personal proximity to the unmediated position (such as the position of artist or activist) is supposed to justify this claim in the sense that it communicates the claim to a public which lacks such immediacy. Even though significant achievements are no doubt possible in this regard, the act of mediation per se cannot succeed as a matter of principle. Its aim is not actually to remedy the problem, to overcome the crisis, but ultimately to define the various positions in the first place through acts of attribution and de-attribution. Mediation does not mediate between positions of the unmediated and positions of lack as if they already

existed, it rather sharpens these distinctions and thus contributes to the reproduction and dissemination of a constellation of positions that are ultimately irreconcilable and can be related to each other only in the notion of crisis. That is the symbolisation which they achieve.

The increase in curating in no way abolishes the difference in positions, but it does achieve specific re-adjustments of their relative importance. For example, as the curatorial act of selection becomes less underwritten by institutions and less embedded in a system of checks and balances designed to ensure the bourgeois preservation of values, each of these acts tends to become a positioning or assertion of its own to rival the artistic claims. It reveals a situation in which it is no longer the curatorial that is dependent on the artistic, but rather the artistic that is dependent on the curatorial. While in the classical institutional system the high value of the unmediated had been based on a quasi-objective selection, in today's individualised situation the act of selection also implies a concrete relationship of hierarchy and thus dependence. It is the root of the specific conflicts between artists and curators revolving around the power to define the unmediated. In other words, the specific methods and practices of curating are by no means innocent procedures in the service of their cause; they are replete with highly ideological assumptions, claims, and justifications, and as such they always already contribute to the definition of the relationships to the other positions. The question of dealing with the symbolical structure of its own "cause" therefore remains central to any curatorial practice. It is a question of reflecting and negotiating the position of selecting and the availability of world, the specific acts of attribution and de-attribution as well as the idealisation of relationships of proximity and the "realisation" of relationships of distance.

The curatorial can today be regarded only as an artistic, social, and political problem, not as a solution for any crisis. The crisis is precisely the problem of curating and of any form of mediation. It is not that institutions, identities, and forms of production are objectively in crisis, it is rather that the crisis provides the interpretive model in which institutions, identities, and forms of production appear amenable to a description in which our activities of mediation assume their meaning and significance. However, since curating as a specific form of mediation can manifest only within the three positions of the unmediated, mediation, and lack, its meaning and significance quickly appear of relatively minor importance since it is precisely within such a constellation that the crisis is not overcome but rather energised in the first place as an irreconcilable tension between the "fullness" of the unmediated and the lack on the part of the audience. But it is exactly this ambivalence of curating that could also be seen as an opportunity to express the cultural logic in which the currently dominant forms of subjectivity are articulated. The attraction of curating is first and foremost based on the fact that it allows individual social agents to satisfy several conditions of subjectivity simultaneously, whether they are economic or cultural, emancipatory or co-opting.

Similarly it becomes possible to assume privileged positions without bearing full responsibility for them because such responsibility has essentially been delegated to the position of the unmediated, and even qualifying de-attributions are possible without visible consequences since they are undertaken with the good intention to overcome the inequalities that result from them. In other words, if curating wishes to do justice to its emancipatory claims, it can only regard itself as a field of conflict. It would be wrong to drive out this ambivalence since it is a manifestation of the specific conditions of today's culture. The contribution of curating would consist in an attempt to realise this fact with its own "body" by transforming the ambivalence into an (ambivalent) exhibition practice. It would require an understanding of exhibitions not as a space of mediation between artists and audience but as a specific medium within such a field of conflict in which not only the imaginary and symbolical aspects of curating itself remain visible but in which also the *crisis as form* can be opened up to debate in its various artistic, theoretical, and political dimensions.

SELF-INSTITUTIONALISATION: WHO, IN WHAT KIND OF SYSTEM?

Beryl Graham

One of the problems with past approaches to institutional critique, is that they set up a binary: on the one hand there is the hide-bound institution, a centralised system embedded in its own bureaucratic wants and needs; on the other hand, there is the "independent" curator or artist, heroically criticising and resisting, sometimes from the outside, sometimes from within. At the *Curating can be learned, but can it be taught?* seminar at Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art NGCA in 2005, Barnaby Drabble and Lisa LeFeuvre pointed out that the binary is not so clear cut¹: independent curators bear the burden of maintaining their own freelance profile, sometimes at the expense of artists', whereas the more anonymous institutional curator can get on with refining the access of the audience to the art – they may have to jockey with Byzantine bureaucracy, but at least they stand a chance of understanding their local audiences, and what it might mean to participate.

Recently, artists have explored more complex relationships between institution, artist and audience, even to the extent of institutionalising themselves. The Yes Men, for example, are famous for their fake-self-institutional tactics: a cut-and-paste Dow Chemicals web site led to the BBC contacting them for a statement, and they seized the opportunity to announce on television that Dow chemicals would "do the right thing" and make full compensation for the Bhopal tragedy in India, making it extremely difficult for Dow to spin a retraction with any degree of self-righteousness. In a more specific art-world context, Harwood@Mongrel was commissioned to work with the Tate collection in 2001. His work with the behind-the-scenes collection was in fact presented very front-of-house: he copied the Tate publicity web site, inserting montaged images from famous artists in the collection, and re-writing the sanitised "history of the Tate" to include slavery, and prison hulks. Unsurprisingly, this involved the curator in highly interesting negotiations with areas of the institution not usually critiqued in terms of power – in this case, the marketing department in charge of the website, who requested a great deal of modification of the artwork in order to differentiate the work from the "real" Tate site².

Artists can, of course, not only critically copy the "look" of an institution, but can also decide what kind of system they might choose to run their own organisation. NODE_London for example, managed the extraordinary feat of getting funding from Arts Council England for a "season of media arts" in 2006 across London, which had no central curator, but used a linked system of nodes – small groups of artists or organisations in different locations.³ NODE_London were admirably open about their processes, and in order to discuss their methods called upon the three current network models of *centralised*, *decentralised*, or *distributed* systems.⁴ The participants used collaborative production tools such as wikis extensively, but because there was some centralisation of publicity and co-ordination, it wasn't purely a distributed system. Ironically, they discovered, it wasn't always the centralised business models that worked in the most efficient way.

Participatory Systems

The history of self-institutionalisation by artists does of course have a long knowledge-base in the form of artist-run centres and "community arts",⁵ but what is interesting about the case of NODE_London is that the debates about artist/curator models were overtaken by the issues of participative structures for larger groups of people who may be neither artist or curators, but "audience/participants." These recent choices of system also strongly relate to much recent debate concerning methods of art interaction, participation, collaboration and *the relational*⁶. All of these terms are prey to a notoriously slippery terminology, and a sense that all these things are vaguely desirable – after all, who would admit that they didn't want to "relate"? In practice, all participatory systems need an accurate description of exactly who is intended to participate in what, and to what extent, and in addition the systems demand many skills to make that participation likely to happen. Even the famous Joseph Beuys commented on reluctant audience behaviours in response to his *Bureau for Direct Democracy* installation at Documenta 5: "Some only come to the door and leave in fright, as if they had come into the wrong restroom."⁷ Sometimes, you might build it, but they don't come.

In the debates about relational systems, the artworks discussed (for example Rirkrit Tiravanija's social/eating spaces, or Anthony Gormley's invitation for the public to display themselves on the fifth plinth in Trafalgar Square) have primarily concerned *the audience* as

¹ Paul O'Neill has also acknowledged the complexity by using the term "Co-dependent curators" rather than "independent." Paul O'Neill, "The Co-dependent Curator" *Art Monthly* vol. 291, November 2005, pp.7-9.

² Sarah Cook, "An interview with Matthew Gansallo," *CRUMB*, 2001a. <http://www.crumbweb.org/getInterViewDetail.php?id=1>.

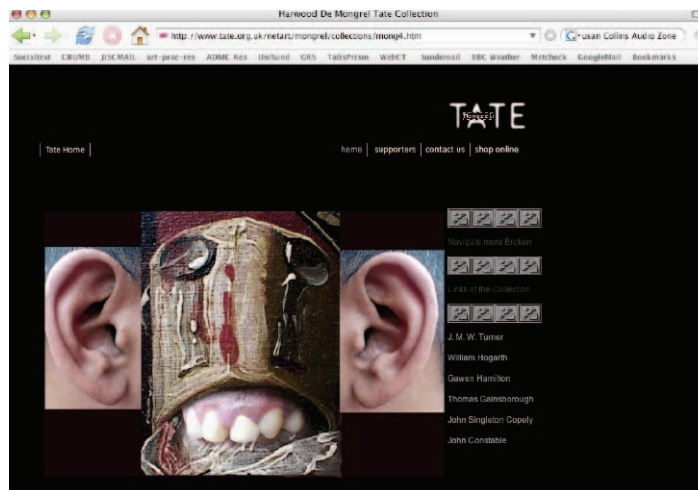
³ <http://www.nodel.org/>

⁴ NODE_London discuss this on their web site, and are interviewed by Sarah Cook in: Beryl Graham and Sarah Cook, *Rethinking Curating: Art After New Media*, MIT Press, Cambridge, 2010. Network models in relation to curating contemporary art, including open source methods, are discussed further in: Beryl Graham, "What kind of participative system? Critical vocabularies from new media art" in Anna Dezeuze ed., *The Do-it-Yourself Artwork: Participation from Fluxus to New Media*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2010, pp. 281-305.

⁵ Discussion of artist-run models, collaborative curating, audience as curator, participatory systems, and "the relational" are explored in: Graham and Cook, 2010, *ibid.* and Graham, 2010, *ibid.*

⁶ See note 5.

⁷ Joseph Beuys and Dirk Schwarze, "Report on a day's proceedings at the Bureau for Direct Democracy // 1972," in Claire Bishop ed., *Participation (Documents of Contemporary Art)*, MIT Press/Whitechapel, Cambridge/London, 2006, pp. 120-124.



- 1 Jeanne van Heeswijk, *iWorks*, 1993-2004, in *Typologies and capacities*, 2004, Neue Gesellschaft fur Bildende Kunst, Berlin. Map by Maurits de Bruijn. <http://www.jeaneworks.net>.
- 2 Harwood@Mongrel, *Uncomfortable Proximity*, 2010. <http://www.tate.org.uk/netart/mongrel/home/default.htm>
- 3 The Yes Men, Screen shot from BBC TV appearance, 2004. <http://theyesmen.org/hijinks/dow>.



participants, with more or less scope for either tokenistic or more engaged creative input. Considering audiences as participants might have profoundly affected the systems of institutions, but the role of audience as curators is a far more radical proposal. However, it could be argued that audiences have already been doing this for some time – selecting and arranging works from museums' online collections, or tagging favourites in YouTube. The notion of selection is only one part of a curator's role however, and certain examples go further towards seeing the audience in organizing and arranging roles. Rhizome's Artbase is an online repository of art, and the artists self-submitting work can also tag them with keywords. This is especially useful when nomenclatures and categories of art are still under development. The most commonly used keywords, which can include keyword searches by audiences, appear more prominently, start to gain acceptance, and move towards a taxonomy, or at least a *folksonomy* based upon a wide base of participation. It is interesting to note, however, that Rhizome also display a set of keywords edited and organized by a panel of experts, which give a clearer structural picture, less prone to the artefacts or glitches of popularity or self-promotion.

The notion of audience as curator obviously raises huge issues of quality and skill for any institution, but, so far, the role of the curator as expert taxonomiser, arranger, and arbiter does not seem to have expired. With systems such as Rhizome's which offer both expert and popular structures in parallel, it would seem that there is still space for both systems, where each enhances and informs the other.

If artists and curators such as node_LONDON or Rhizome have already self-institutionalised in terms of making their own collections and exhibitions, and have already integrated both artists and audiences into the ways in which their systems work, then perhaps older models of institutional critique need to be updated in terms of more subtle differentiations of kinds of system. Are these institutions really distributed, or just decentralized?

Artists are, as ever, leading this critique of complex systems, and might have gained through experience a much more accurate understanding of systems of participation than even prominent curators. Jeanne van Heeswijk, for example, has been working in participatory art projects for many years, including housing projects. As part of the exhibition *Tatig Sein* she installed *Works 1993-2004, Typologies and capacities*, and with Maurits de Bruijn she made a database of all the people involved in certain projects, and the relationships between them. From this database she made a sculptural installation, with wires joining the people – each person's role being represented by a different kinds of potato – curators, for example, being the "Mentor" variety⁸. This fantastically complex yet clear visual representation of the nodes and connections of collaborative projects wittily critiques the complexities of decentralized modes of working in relation to art. During each exhibition, the potatoes showed a tendency to start to sprout – putting out their own tendrils and forming an unpredictable network of connections of their own ...

In teaching an MA in Curating now, it seems important to equip students with a basic understanding of systems, not only in relation to their own position as curators, but their own relationship to artists and audiences. They are, after all unlikely to work purely on the outside or inside of institutions, will need to be flexible about their position, whether embedded, or some other kind of node,

and may even self-institutionalise at some stage. The binary opposition of "inside" or "outside" positions on institutions needs further refinement if the position of artists, curators and audiences within institutional systems is to be understood in terms of levels of power, rather than prey to vague buzzwords of tokenistic or compulsory "participation."

CRUMB Curatorial resource
www.crumbweb.org

8
Jeanne van Heeswijk,
Axel Lapp, and Anja
Lutz, *Jeanne van
Heeswijk SYSTEMS*, The
Green Box, Berlin,
2007.

POSSIBLE ENCOUNTERS

A talk with Giovanni Carmine & Hassan Khan

Institution as Medium. Curating as Institutional Critique? 27 March 2010, Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel.
In collaboration with the Postgraduate Programme in Curating, Zurich University of the Arts



Giovanni Carmine & Hassan Khan, *Possible Encounters*, at *Institution as Medium. Curating as Institutional Critique?*, 2010, Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel. Courtesy of Kunsthalle Fridericianum.

Introduction by Rein Wolfs: I will first say a few words about the two men next to me who will be speaking on the topic, *Possible Encounters*. I am intrigued by the sentence that starts the abstract for their talk: "How can the emotional conditions that lie behind the sensitive and complex relationship between artist and curator be understood as part of the practice of exhibition making?"

Giovanni Carmine, who I have known for about ten years, and artist Hassan Kahn, will tackle this question. Giovanni Carmine has been the director of the Kunsthalle St. Gallen in Switzerland for about three years. He has worked closely with artists, such as Christoph Büchel. During the Venice Biennale in 2007, he did several free projects planned with the platform, *Zimmerfrei*, in Switzerland. He recently exhibited artists such as Gedi Sibony, Shahryar Nashat, and Matias Faldbakken who will also be shown at Kunsthalle Fridericianum this Autumn. Hassan Khan is an artist from Cairo. He has participated in a large number of biennales and triennales.

GC: Thank you Rein, and good morning. Thank you for the invitation, I am very happy to be here. We completely changed the subject of our talk. We will still talk about emotions, but yesterday, while we were traveling here and nearly hit by lightning, we had an intense discussion about the synopsis of the symposium. That conversation inspired us to react to some of the topics. We feel an urgency to do this, and there are probably people here who also have things to say about this synopsis. I also want to thank Hassan, who accepted my proposal to do this together.

We are working on a project that will open soon at the Kunsthalle St. Gallen. Discussing the relationship between artists and curators is one of the basics of curating. I want to start with an anecdote about how I met Hassan: I was invited to Cairo to do studio visits, along with another curator. We visited around twenty-five artists in four days and Hassan was one of the last artists we met. We had an appointment with him in a bar where you can drink beer – which is not possible at just any public bar in Cairo. When we arrived there, Hassan made it clear that he did not want us to be in his space, in his studio. He wanted to meet us to understand why we were there and what we wanted from him. Usually at a studio visit, you meet somebody and ask about their works. I felt it was the other way around – the artist was interrogating the curators. What was your intention, Hassan?

HK: I think it's a good point to start with, especially in relation to this symposium. This first meeting was clearly about power: an artist refusing to allow the determining factors of this relationship to be predetermined; to have a stake, and claim that stake within the relationship. It was also about responsibility. If we are to build a relationship together, this relationship has to be built on a certain understanding of what the relationship means, where it comes from and what kind of investment it requires on every level, including on an emotional level. We are functioning in a field where the individual is part fuel and part product. I needed to be aware of these things from the first meeting to determine how this relationship would proceed. I was willing, of course, as in any relationship, to lose everything and to gain everything.

I can now relate this to what we noticed when we were reading the synopsis of this symposium. It was my impression, and perhaps others share this impression, that there was an implicit position being constructed for what is called the "critical curator." The positive point about this position is that one is able to stand untainted by market and untainted by hierarchy. This seemed to be the underlying rhetorical thrust of the text. From my position as an artist, one of the few sprinkled in this room, the exact opposite has been the most productive in both my personal and professional life. It is actually the meat of the matter that has been most productive, rather than this abstracted "pure, floating critical curator."

I would like to go back to you, Mr. Giovanni. Yesterday we came up with the acronym, "CCC," which we gleaned from this text, standing for the "Critiquable, Critical, Curator." That seemed to be an ideal, invisibly lurking underneath these words. How would you relate to that ideal?

GC: This ideal was the concept we extracted from the text, and is not closely related to the praxis of curating. There are many concrete things that relate to the work, and yet often we do not talk about these things when we meet. I am very happy to have an artist who can also critique the "critique congress." It is a bit self-referential to exclude artists from meetings between curators because, in the end, they are the reason we all have a job.

I think that the pyramid of the relationship between artist and curator should be re-established. The work of art and artist should be the primary concern, and then the curators and institutions. We tend to forget this and instead investigate theories that are not directly connected to the praxis of exhibition making. Yesterday we discussed this idea of *dirtyness* – the giant orgy that is the art world, where everybody has relationships with everybody. There are curators who write for magazines, make exhibitions in galleries, and hold positions in foundations. Everything, everybody, all the time. That can be fun, but I think very pragmatically when I create exhibitions. My position has changed drastically between when I began as an independent curator and now that I have an institutional position. In an institutional position, one's focus changes completely because one is positioning oneself in relation to a program rather than to a specific project. At least, if one is running an institution like the Kunsthalle, with limited financial and personal resources.

Now to re-introduce the idea of emotions. Maybe it's a bit romantic, but I believe a real involvement, a passionate involvement is necessary to create a curatorial energy and to realize projects. Hassan, you told me yesterday that there are two kinds of curators you like to work with. Can you comment on this?

HK: I either like to work with a super-professional, distant figure, who is there and with whom I can very clearly work out exactly what we want and why we are in this relationship. These projects are completely achieved and everyone is treated perfectly correctly. I also like to work with the opposite type: completely engaged. The collaboration could be quite messy sometimes, but there is a real dialogue in terms of both content and relationship. This type of relationship can be very tense, but is also very productive. In both cases I feel that what is at stake is valued. This is opposed to what one notices a lot in collaborations with curators, which is the gesture, the instrumentalisation of your work to support a thesis. It subverts the very space through which the artist should operate. That happens through the figure who does not value what is at stake, and therefore is not invested.



Possible Encounters, at Institution as Medium. Curating as Institutional Critique?, 2010, Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel. Courtesy of Kunsthalle Fridericianum.

Both of the prior poles I mentioned before are completely invested, but they have different understandings of what is at work. They both possess a certain precision, which is sadly lacking in this half-baked theoretical technique that uses theory to ground the claim. It is the artist's responsibility to complicate this relationship, to speak from a very clear position, to always be strategic, to know what his or her interests are, and to demand them in one million and one ways. That is productive.

GC: I think is very important to place clear cardinal points, which is what you did at the bar in Cairo. And after the discussion you ended up inviting us to come to your studio and showed us your work.

Returning back to this responsibility to make things complicated, do you see yourself as a difficult artist?

HK: I think a lot of people see me as a difficult artist. But I want to emphasize the ideal of an *emotional economy*, under which the artist is operating. This means that the artist is not in a cycle of production, but is actually invested as a persona, regardless of the content of the work. This creates a very specific area in which one must operate and in which one must protect oneself. Everything within that is valid. Not just valid, it's necessary – for the whole circuit, not only for the artist.

GC: One point that we discussed yesterday and this morning, which takes us back again to this emotionality and pragmatism, is the idea of *academicism*. This idea is connected to the many curatorial courses and schools that have emerged, and often inspires projects about curating, forgetting the position of the artist inside this triangle of public, art, and institution.

HK: I never understood what academicism really meant until an experience I had recently. Last year I was invited for the first time, with two other colleagues, to be part of a selection jury for a national competition that is called *The Youth Salon* in Egypt. *The Youth Salon* is an open call for all artists under thirty years old to submit works that are then selected and shown in an exhibition. The jury is composed of nine people. My colleagues and I were the only members of the jury who were not parts of the state system. There are many reasons why we were invited, some that have particular resonance in relation to this symposium. This institution was in transition, moving from being part of the tools of state power, to becoming a model of new institutions. One of their reasons for inviting us was that we possess a certain kind of cultural capital and credibility, as we all came from a position of "critique" – although I would not use those words. But that was their fantasy of who we are.

During my time in the jury, I saw 1,100 works of art over one month. After the period was over, my colleague and I were writing a text about the works, and needed to look at these 1,100 works of art again for one week. During that week, we discussed them very profoundly, and that was when I learned what academicism meant. We had to ask ourselves "Why is it so clear to us from our position that so many works are so poor? Why? Where did that come from?" In the artwork, we could see a clear process of validation. One of our colleagues had a very informed practical art history background, and was able to trace the genealogy of the gesture of the artwork. He could sit down and tell you, "this work is mannered in this way because this guy is a student of this professor, who studied there, then." Sum total: what you see in the artwork are aesthetic gestures that are present to make arguments about what the artist is, or who the artist is. What is valued is different in terms of time and position, but this idea of creating an argument is what academicism is.

GC: This can take us back to the subject of the symposium. Just a thought: Maybe it's the lack of institutional critique that generates academicism, at least in the Egyptian context. But perhaps we can discuss that later.

In the text of the synopsis of the symposium, there are many rhetorical questions. The CCC that we mentioned before is presented as the politically correct way to see curating. I think it's dangerous to be politically correct. Hassan, you picked out a sentence that you would like to quote.

HK: Yes, but actually I will jump somewhere else that is related. What I also realized was that there was some genealogy thrown into the text that connected the rise of the critical curator to 1960s anti-art, which is a nice subversive, glamorous precedent. I was telling you about an analysis of this moment in contemporary art being much more related to what happened in the 1980s with Thatcher and Reagan, rather than connecting it to the 1960s with anti-art. Is it possible to read such meetings as attempts as legitimizations of these shifts within the scenes, rather than real investigations?

GC: Talking about institutional critique and the establishing of a new elite, I would like to talk a little bit about the project you are preparing to do at the Kunsthalle St. Gallen. It's an intense and important project. You also worked in the institution, so maybe you can explain one of your pieces you made for the show. It was a process I observed directly and much of the team was involved very directly in the piece.

HK: For the piece, I worked with Giovanni, Marin and Hilda, three members of staff at the Kunsthalle who were available during the time I was there. I worked with them to produce a little play that was shot in an empty theatre and will be made into a film. It's a film of a play that is shot in a theatre. The play is not in any way related to the role in the institution or the relationship to the institution

whatsoever. It was based upon very intense individual work with each person. I knew I wanted to do this because it builds a certain relationship. Through that relationship, a form is produced. I did not have any preconceived notions of what that play was or what it was about. It was an open exploration with each individual as an individual, not in terms of their institutional affiliation. A lot of the work involved their biographies and personal lives, but that remains completely confidential and is not disclosed in the final product. The final product that is shown is not about those things, they were just part of the material we used to produce what I am calling here a "form", in an expanded sense. But that is treating the institution as medium. However I did not do it with the hope of reaching some kind of critique, which is absolutely uninteresting and reductive to this kind of work. I could have done this work with completely different people and produced another slightly different format, but the interest was twofold. One interest is, in terms of my own practice, that I am engaged with the idea of working with people to produce a form. The other is the choice of what kind of relationship one builds with an institution. This relationship is invisible to the audience in the end, but it was an important part of what happened during the period of preparing for the show. However, the work itself does point to the fact that the people you are seeing in the film are members of staff at the institution. So whatever they are doing, even if it has no relationship to critique or institutions, becomes, in the eyes of the public, accented by that definition. And that is not the aim of the work, but it is an interesting side effect.

GC: Maybe I can read between the lines and propose that what you are saying is that you are aware that critique is fashionable.

HK: Can I not be?

GC: Yes you can. Or critique is a fetish in curatorial congresses, and the element of the audience. You used the word "audience" for the piece in St. Gallen, but you also talk of the "invisible audience" as an ideal public for your work when you are in the process of generating a work. Do you want to talk more about the invisible audience?

HK: Yes, that is something that I discovered over fifteen years of practice. I was once asked by my gallerist, "who are you producing this work for?" With time I discovered that what I am actually doing is constantly testing the work, in my imagination, against an audience that I call an invisible audience. This might sound like an absolutely narcissistic experiment. There is no audience that I am locating from any specific demographic or any specific geographical location. This invisible audience is not an inner voice telling me what to do, but a fantasy based on every single experience that I have had. It is related to every audience I have been in, and every person I know; it is related to the sum total of my experiences, and produces a sort of sparring partner that is always looking. I am testing the work to see how the invisible audience reacts. I imagine how they will negotiate the work formally and technically. The conceptual side is also visible as I imagine how people will read and comprehend the work. It's a complete fantasy of course. But it is a fantasy that is very productive because, first of all, it saves me from serving an ideal. If one is supposed to be critical, or otherwise, one is caught in a struggle of expectations and looks. The other side is that the invisible audience can also be a form of cultural history because the invisible audience is a sum total of one's experiences. In my case, these experiences are filtered, constantly reassembled, and charged with my own priorities.

As the director of an institution, you are in a different position. You are probably more constrained. Do you think about what your institution is supposed to do in terms of the audience, or what kind of service you are supposed to offer them?

GC: You were saying this morning that it is getting more and more important for institutions to have visitors because it's becoming the reason for the politicians to finance them. We recently had to fill out a huge survey from the political office in St. Gallen. The survey was used to figure out if it makes sense to finance the Kunsthalle and other institutions in St. Gallen, or not. I do not think these people have ever come to visit the Kunsthalle, so they were a kind of invisible audience too. It's very important to have people that come to see the exhibitions, but we do not have an ideal public. Often I have the feeling that there is the desire to fulfill the many needs of so many different people, from the kids coming for workshops to the politicians coming every three years to see a little bit of contemporary art. In the end, I think it's much better to ignore this element and trust the professionalism and experience we have. I try to figure out what interests me, what really motivates me to make shows and make exhibitions. These things will find a public or an audience. So again, we are back to what Rein mentioned before about these emotional elements. I think it is very important that the people who come to see the exhibitions are involved, on an emotional level, in what we do with the art. When I go to see art, which is my favorite thing to do, I can be very pissed off, or very impassioned, but I always create an emotional relationship with the art – which does not exclude the intellectual relationship. But it is my personal motivator.

I would now like to open the conversation to the audience.



Possible Encounters, at Institution as Medium. Curating as Institutional Critique?, 2010, Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel. Courtesy of Kunsthalle Fridericianum.

Dorothee Richter (symposium co-organiser): You connected some artistic practices back to the 1960s, and I think that is a very important connection. The artistic practices like Fluxus and so on were laying a basic ground for a meta-level of cultural production that was a shift to a more communal and critical production and artistic realm. I think that in relation to what you called today a "curator," this field of organizing was taken out of the hands of artists and occupied by so called curators. About ten years ago, one very often heard curator bashing from the artist's side, and it's clearly coming up again. But on the other hand, I want to argue that it does not matter so much anymore if you are a curator or an artist because these fields merge to an overall cultural production. What really interests me is the inner tension of the work in a specific context. What the content is in the end is perhaps not totally intended, although this does matter. It is meaningful, and it's important to know what you are doing and to reflect on it.

HK: It does matter if you are the artist or the curator because you speak from different positions. Your interests are different and it's not about bashing or not bashing, it's about speaking from the position you are located in. If one wants to be true to their practice, it is the ultimate condition to be aware of your position and to speak from it. I think it is absolutely essential on every level: political, personal, and otherwise. I think this requires a specificity and this specificity has a relation to curatorial practice, but it cannot be dissolved by curatorial practice. I also want to say one thing about the myth of the rise of communal art practice in the 1960s. I think it's possible to re-look at art history through different paradigms, in which the production of value is a very important element in that. If something is circulating in an economy, it retains its status as an object, whether the economy is financial or not.

DR: That was the strategy of the Fluxus movement and other movements, to shake the commodity value of art, wasn't it? Even if they did not succeed, maybe –

GC: We can have questions from the audience also.

DR: Yes as well, but I feel that I am part of the audience of your talk so I would like to discuss these questions with you. I think it is much more complicated. The Fluxus artists were not very clear on this topic. They had not decided to have their production only outside the art field, the economic field, because they also acted in different ways, with a very interesting ambivalence. They simultaneously wanted to bring it into the art world, and did not want to bring it into the art world.

GC: So back to the CCC, back to the idea of the pure curating or curating as a virginal state of mind. I really don't believe in this. I feel I am a privileged person to live off of artistic work as a curator, and I always thought that if I would like to change the world or, to work on a more ethical level, I should start to work in an NGO. And in this sense I prefer to read *Le Monde Diplomatique* than to go to see a so-called political exhibition. But this is my position on that because I think that journalists sometimes make better work than curators if they deal with certain objects. I personally believe in the artworks and the work with the artist to realize artworks.

Audience member: I have a comment concerning what you said about the audience, the visitor numbers, and the politicians. There is a problem that often institutions have to feature artists who have a well known name, and that the bourgeois public only comes when it sees that there is a well known artist on the programme. But of course there are many very good young artists who are not shown as often as the big names. I think we all are sensitive to these things, to name dropping, so maybe it's a problem with marketing, and also a problem of institutional critique. Could we discuss this?

GC: That is an interesting point because here we are talking about curating contemporary art, but curating is not only this. Of course there are curators making medieval art exhibitions that have completely different professional challenges. In the case of the Kunsthalle St. Gallen, which works with artists from my generation, it makes no sense to make a *Picasso, Cezanne* show. We fill another function in the art world, so it is very difficult to connect marketing with a name like Hassan Kahn. It makes no sense because we are acting in a very specialized field, where people are more or less aware. It is a bit elitist, but this allows us to start to talk about contemporary art on another level because the public coming to the Kunsthalle is aware of a certain language, a certain vocabulary, and a certain development into the art in the last fifty years. This allows us to be more precise in the activity of curating.

Audience member (Dimitrina Sevova): First, I like the idea of academical and anti-academical approaches. I think up until now no one had mentioned that point in this conference. The main focus was institutions – from large scale institutions, to alternative institutions. But I have not seen the viewpoint of people who run the institutions. For instance, in Zurich the scene is mostly based around off-spaces. They have different approaches, I do not want to put all of them in one box because some of these off-spaces are run by artists, and others by curators. There are also some commercial galleries who have developed some interesting programs and tactics how to survive without institutional support – because institutional support always depends on certain politics or certain relations with the state. This anti-academical approaches in institutional contexts and academic contexts are always about certain standards which are related to this bourgeois gaze into exhibition spaces. I really like the idea of the invisible audience. That is, according to Bourdieu, one of the main approaches to deal with capitalist neoliberal system, playing with visibility and invisibility. The visible audience is mostly this middle class. I would like to hear more more about this idea of the invisible audience.

HK: Just one point about academicism. I used the term not necessarily to mean coming out of an art education, but rather to mean practicing art as a way of producing a certain image of what the artist is that is connected to ideological structure. The possibilities are quite open, depending on what model you choose. But it is this concept in which you choose a model of what the artist is, and the work becomes a method of presenting that. That is academicism. Another manifestation of academicism is related to the gestures and mannerisms in which your practice is the practice of seeking validation through a genealogy of gestures and the extent the marks you make through your practice, whatever the practice is, are informed by that. That is also academicism. It is not necessarily related to art school.

The point about invisible audience, I will answer now. The invisible audience is the voice of consensus and the voice of the establishment. However, I am only speaking about my own personal practice as an artist. The idea emerged from an engagement with that consensus, and was informed by it too. It is an internal relationship, and I am aware of the idea of consensus in the background, but I do not reject it. I do not think that the position of the artist is to reject or accept consensus. I am speaking from a personal description of my own practice and I am not trying to make a larger claim about it.

SCÉNARIOS

Damian Jurt

This text describes the process-related concept of transformation active during the 2009 exhibition year of the Stadtgalerie Bern (Loge). Additionally, it will show the continuation of this transformative process into other exhibition venues, such as the Marks Blond Project, the Visarte Gallery, as well as Shedhalle in Zurich, Switzerland.

Loge 2009: Exhibition as Process

The guest-curatorial project Loge is located in the Stadtgalerie (city gallery), an exhibition space situated in the court of the artist-in-residence house Progr. Loge functions as a platform for various artistic and curatorial projects. In 2009 the future of Loge was uncertain, due to commercial city interests. This precarious situation led to the formulation of new questions, resulting in the focus on context specific projects.

A process-related transformation took place between each of the exhibitions. Materials like wooden slats, mirrors, a tree, as well as entire exhibition elements were re-used by following artists, creating thus both new works and environments. A process can be observed beyond the identity of the individual exhibitions. It connects as well as separates the individual exhibitions and seems to have developed a dynamic of its own.



Heinrich Gartentor and Delphine Reist, *Reine Vernunft*, January 17–February 28 2009, Stadtgalerie (Loge). Photograph by Martin Waldmeier.

Two exemplary exhibitions of the Stadtgalerie (Loge) in 2009

The first exhibition with the title *Reine Vernunft* (Pure Reason) was created by Swiss artists Heinrich Gartentor and Delphine Reist. The second exhibition *Eine Schwalbe macht noch keinen Frühling* (One Swallow is not yet Spring) was installed by Belgian artist Adrien Tirtiaux. *Reine Vernunft* addresses the conflict between commercial interests and art production and directly related to the precarious political situation of Loge itself. Heinrich Gartentor was invited first. He chose to divide the exhibition space into two parts, re-designing the larger part as a commercial space. Part of his concept was to close this space to the public and generate income from rent. It was at this point that he acquired the wooden slats which in following became an important formal element of the ongoing exhibition year. The windows were boarded up with wooden slats, rendering the main entrance inaccessible. The now much smaller space was returned with the proposition to use it as an exhibition space. So after Heinrich Gartentor the "real" exhibition space was minimized to approximately ten square meters. Meanwhile, in the run-up to opening day, Gartentor placed ads in the newspaper and on the internet to let his intentions about the space be known. During the exhibition period, Gartentor was absorbed in negotiations with people who were interested in renting the storage room. Most of them were interested in using it as temporary restaurant or bar because of its ideal location in the city.



Heinrich Gartentor and Delphine Reist, *Reine Vernunft*, January 17–February 28 2009, Stadtgalerie (Loge). Photograph by Martin Waldmeier.

For this exhibition Delphine Reist realized the work *Megaphone*, an installation composed of five megaphones directly placed on the floor. Situated in different rhythmic order they projected sounds usually heard in demonstrations. These "whistles, screams, and horns" were able to penetrate the "forbidden" walls of the other space and the walls of the City Gallery.

Using the pavilion architecture of the city gallery as a starting point, Adrien Tirtiaux raised questions on the role of public space and its political connotations. Tirtiaux opened up the space closed by Gartentor and transformed it back into a public space, a space with nature, social attitudes, and political control. The exhibition became "public."

Adrien Tirtiaux re-used elements from the first exhibition. He kept the wall built to separate the room. One window was open during the whole exhibition time. People could enter at any time and were free to do whatever they wanted. Another element was a nest he fixed to the wooden boards. Even the sun was included and as a matter of respect he drew a sundial on the wall. A tree was planted in the ground under the main space, enabling it to grow into the main exhibition space through a hole in the floor. Afterwards, the tree became a part of the third exhibition.

So, both exhibitions were not "finished" on the opening day. Part of their exhibition concept was the idea of changeable development.



Adrien Tirtiaux, *Eine Schwalbe macht noch keinen Frühling*, March 13–April 30 2009, Stadtgalerie (Loge). Photograph by Martin Waldmeier.

Tree that was involved in two exhibitions of the Loge exhibition year, and is now part of the suburban garden plot of Jimmy Ochsenbein. Photograph by Damian Jurt.

Kaspar Bucher and Tomáš Džadon, *Joining things together, you are talking about floor, I am talking about furniture!*, April 4–April 35 2010, Marks Blond Project. Photograph by Kaspar Bucher.

Storage-time and loss of exhibition materials

After the Loge exhibition year the wooden slats were stored in a nearby courtyard for about three months. The ownership of the wooden slats and their application were not obvious and no one used them for other projects. During the wintertime the material became damaged due to rain. Other elements were left unused, disposed of, or taken elsewhere and re-used, like the tree that became part of the suburban garden plot of Jimmy Ochsenbein.

Projects in the Marks Blond Project Space and the Visarte Gallery, Bern

The exhibition *Joining things together, you are talking about floor, I am talking about furniture!* by Swiss artist Kaspar Bucher and Slovakian artist Tomáš Džadon was about misunderstandings of people working together. The idea of a strange interior was used to visualize questions the exhibition project had raised. It took place April 2010 in the Marks Blond Project exhibition space.

Part of the material was re-used by students of The Bern University of the Arts for an interdisciplinary project supervised by Res Ingold, professor at the Art Academy, Munich and was exhibited in June 2010 at the Visarte Gallery. The original concept was the idea to rebuild the prison cell of the Jim Jarmusch's movie, *Down by Law*. This complex project brought together students from such different fields of study as writing, new media and curatorial practice. One aspect of the project was to use the sound of the wooden slats as part of the installation.



Damian Jurt, Scénario n°2 – der fragmentarische Ausstellungsraum, 2010, disposition Scénario n°2 at Shedhalle used as an exhibition space by Georg Keller. Photograph by Damian Jurt.

Scénario n°2 for the exhibition at Shedhalle, Zurich

Following an invitation from Shedhalle, several scenarios could be the starting point for the exhibition:

- the wooden boards save human lives
- a political speech is held on a platform made by wooden slats
- the slats are transformed into a boat that brings refugees from Africa to Europe
- they are used in wintertime to make a fire for homeless people to warm themselves

Finally, the concept was to create a space which is recognizable as such, but at the same time function as a spatial installation. This work consists of a structure of only implied space – three "undone" spaces are visible. But the structure itself is something between a plan, a drawing, an installation, and space. It is rather an idea of space than a real space. Nevertheless, it was the exhibition space of a work by the artist Georg Keller. The question as to how space develops is central to this. It's important to pay equal attention to the reshaping as well as the dissolution of the space. The reuse of the same (artistic) material in different contexts is also a central aspect of process-related work and continuously requires new forms of appropriation and reinterpretation.

Concluding thoughts

This changeable political moment was the motivation to include the idea of process into the curatorial concept. To look at the context as part of or even as a complete element of the exhibitions was essential. This offered the option for process-related exhibitions and site-specific projects. The exhibits would be related to each other and would be able to address the political implications and architecture as a whole. A succession of exhibitions took place in which the same elements were recycled in alternating contexts. This process of re-use and change took on a dynamic of its own. The recycled materials were wooden slats, mirrors and a tree, the wooden slats becoming the central element used in all exhibition projects. It was interesting to observe how the slats changed context and identity from one exhibition to the other and evolved as one of the key elements of transformation.



Damian Jurt, *Scénario n°1*, 2010. Photograph by Damian Jurt.

But, how can we describe this specific form of a time-related process? Contemporary artistic work is based on communicative, semiotic, and linguistic research that can produce tangible processes by means of images and language. As a process is inseparable from the element of time, it is related to the course of time. An objective description of time does not exist, which makes it difficult to characterize process-related projects. Scientists, from the ancient Greek philosophers to physicists like Newton, have tried to describe the abstract idea of time. All kinds of explanations of time exist, from the spiritual to the rational.

The process is already the work, which means that the development (the production) is part of the work. And this process-related project makes the presence of time in the work evident. It seems like the past and the present are there at the same time, assuming that the visitor knows the concept of the work. This work also provides a kind of buttress against the pressures of modernity. As an essential part of these projects, the (time-related) progression shows how the idea of process relates to mass production, global capitalism and differences in nationality. But even if the idea of process already implies a certain kind of content, it seems that we can look at process as a form, comparable to an empty canvas. Is it possible to call process a form that can be used to transform a critical-artistic point of view into a tangible work? In upcoming exhibitions it will become important in which sense the wooden slats can be further manipulated to convey more directly the content of a work above and beyond the formal level.

www.stadtgalerie.ch www.marksblond.com www.visartebern.ch www.shedhalle.ch
www.jurt.tk

MUSEUM FUTURES: LIVE, RECORDED, DISTRIBUTED

Artist's Contribution

A project by Marysia Lewandowska and Neil Cummings



Museum Futures: Distributed, 2008, DVD 32min
Moderna Museet 1958-2008-2058
 commissioned by Moderna Museet, Stockholm for their
 Jubilee in 2008, Collection Moderna Museet

Neil Cummings' & Marysia Lewandowska's film *Museum Futures: Distributed* is a machinima record of the centenary interview with Moderna Museet's executive director Ayan Lindquist set in June of 2058. It explores a possible genealogy for contemporary art practice and its institutions, by re-imagining the role of artists, museums, galleries, markets, and academies in the world dominated by a shrinking public sphere.

The film is live streamed on www.marysialewandowska.com

Film Script

Centenary Interview 2058
 Interior: *The common room, Moderna Museet v3.0*
 A beautiful lounge, comfortable seating, local lighting, graduated windows with breathtaking views of the sea. The Executive of Moderna v3.0, Ayan Lindquist is waiting to be interviewed in real-time from Guangzhou, in the Asian Multitude network. She is browsing screens as a face fades-up on the wall window.

Ms. Chan Nihao, hej, hello! Hello is that Ayan Lindquist?

Ayan Lindquist Nihao, hello. Yes Ms Chan, this is Ayan. We are in sync.

Ms. Chan Thank you so much for finding time... you must be very busy with the centenary launch.

Ayan Lindquist It's a pleasure. We really admire your work on mid 20th C image ecologies. Especially your research on archival practice.

Ms. Chan Well I'm flattered. For many Asian non-market institutions, your pioneering work with long-term equity contracts has been inspirational too!

Ayan Lindquist Oh, there was a whole team of us involved... So lets begin.

Ms. Chan Ok. Just to refresh, for the centenary I'd like to archive your live-thread recall of Moderna.

Ayan Lindquist Yep, that's fine, I've enabled about 20 minutes.

Ms. Chan Ok, live. Maybe we could start with some personal history. What were you doing before you became executive at Moderna Museet v3.0?

Ayan Lindquist Well, I joined Moderna 2.0 in 2049, almost ten years ago. First as adviser to the development working group. Then as part of the governance team. I participated in the forking of Moderna 3.0 in 2'51. And was elected fixed-term executive in 2'52, ... uhhh, ... until today. I've got another four years in the post.

Ms. Chan And before that?

Ayan Lindquist Immediately before joining Moderna I collaborated in the exhibition programme at the MACBA cluster in Mumbai for six years. Although, more in resource provision. That's where we worked on a version of the equity bond issue you mentioned.

Ms. Chan And before that?

Ayan Lindquist In programming again at Tate in Doha for four years, particularly developing exhibitionary platforms. And even before that, I participated in research on cultural governance, for the Nordic Congress of the European Multitude for six years. I suspect exhibition agency and governance are my real strengths.

Ms. Chan Maybe we should dive into the deep-end. Could you briefly say something of why Moderna v3.0 devolved, and why was it necessary?

Ayan Lindquist As you can imagine there was a lot of consultation beforehand. It's not something we did without due diligence. For almost forty years Moderna v2.0 has explored and developed the exhibitionary form. We pioneered the production of many collaborative exhibitions, resources and assemblages. We helped build robust public – what you prefer to term non-market cultural networks. And scaled those networks to produce our *i-commons*, part of the vast, glocal, Public Domain. We have continually nurtured and developed emergent art practice. Moderna can proudly, and quite rightly say that we participated in shaping the early 21st century movement of art. From an exhibitionary practice based around art-artefacts, spectacle and consumption – to that of embedded co-production.

Ms. Chan Do you mean...

Ayan Lindquist Of course there are many complex factors involved... But we were agent in the shift from a heritage cultural mind-set of 'broadcast', to that of emergent, peer-to-peer meshworks. Following the logic of practice, we became an immanent institution.

Ms. Chan Could you say a...

Ayan Lindquist Uhhh... Although having said all of that... We've not really answered your question, have we? Given that Moderna 2.0 continues its exhibitionary research, some of us believe that exhibition as a technology, and immanence as an institutional logic needed to be subject to radical revision. So this is what we intend to explore with Moderna 3.0, we want to execute some of the research. To enact. To be more agent than immanent.

Ms. Chan Ok. I wondered if you could you say a...

Ayan Lindquist Sorry to over-write, but in a way the forking follows something of the tradition of Moderna Museet. Moderna 2.0 mutated through 1.0 because the tension between trying to collect, conserve, and exhibit the history of 20th Century art, and at the same time trying to be a responsible 21st Century art institution proved too difficult to reconcile. Moderna 1.0 continues its mandate. Its buildings and collection has global heritage status. In turn, this early hybridization enabled Moderna 2.0 to be more mobile and experimental. In its organizational form, in its devolved administration, and its exhibition-making practice...

Ms. Chan Could you just expand on the 'more complex factors' you mentioned earlier...

Ayan Lindquist That's a big question!! Let me re-run a general thread from composite... (...) ...uhmm

Ayan taps the terminal/tablet

Well, a good place to start might be the bifurcation of the market for 'contemporary art' from emergent art practices themselves. Although the public domain has a long genealogy; Waaaay... back into ancient European land rights, 'commons' projects and commonwealth's. It was the advent of digitalisation, and particularly very early composite language projects in the 1980's which – and this appears astonishing to us now, were proprietary – that kick-started what were called 'open,' 'free' or non-market resource initiatives. Of course, these languages, assemblages and the resources they were building needed legal protection. Licenses to keep them out of property and competitive marketization. The General Public License, the legendary GPL legal code was written in 1989.

Ms. Chan It's not so old!

Ayan Lindquist So then, text and images – either still or moving; artefacts, systems and processes; music and sound – either as source or assembled; all embedded plant, animal and bodily knowledge; public research, and all possible ecologies of these resources began to be aggregated by the viral licenses into our Public Domain.

Enumerate on fingers?

Landmarks include the releasing of the sequenced human genome in 2001. The foundation of the 'multitude' social enterprise coalition in 2'09. Intellectual Property reform in the teen's. The UN-Multitude initiated micro-taxation of global financial transactions in 2'13 – which redirected so many financial resources to Public Domain cultural initiatives. Well I could go on, and on, and on. But anyway, most participants will be over-familiar with this thread.

Ms. Chan Remind me, when did Moderna affiliate?

Ayan Lindquist In-Archive records suggest Öppna dagar or Häriifrån till allmänningen, with Mejan... I'm sorry. We did some collaborative 'open' knowledge projects with Mejan in Stockholm in late 2'09. And when Moderna 2.0 launched in 2'12 we declared all new knowledge *General Public License* version 6, compliant.

Ms. Chan Wasn't that initiated by Chus Martinez, one of your predecessors? She seems to have shaped early Moderna 2.0, which in turn, became an inspiration globally.

Ayan Lindquist It's nice you say so. Since 2'12 we collaborated with the fledgling Nordic Congress, in what was to become the European Multitude, to form the backbone of the Public Domain cultural meshwork. It eventually convened in late 2'22. So we were at source.

Ms. Chan Ok. Uh ha, thanks.

Ayan Lindquist Now simultaneous with the exponential growth of the Public Domain, was the market for what we still call 'contemporary art'. Many historians locate one of the sources for this 'contemporary art' market, as the auction in New York in 1973 of the art-artefact collection of Robert and Ethel Scull. An extraordinary collection of paintings by pop-male-artists like Andy Warhol, Claes Oldenburg, Ed Ruscha, and... er... I recall... Jasper Johns.

Ms. Chan Ok. From composite I'm streaming the John Schott analogue film of the sale, from New York MoMa's Public Domain archive.

Ayan Lindquist It's a great film, and many of the art-artefacts have subsequently devolved to Moderna.

Ms. Chan I have the catalogue. It's present, ... I'm browsing.

Ayan Lindquist That auction set record prices for many artists. It also connected art-artefacts with financial speculation in a way previously unimagined. By 1981 one of the 'big two' auction houses, Sotheby's, was active in 23 countries and had a 'contemporary art' market throughput of 4.9 billion old US dollars. Soon, global Trade Fairs mushroomed. Commercial galleries flourished and a sliver of 'branded' artists lived like mid 20th Century media oligarchs. By 2'06 complex financial trading technologies were using art-artefacts as an asset class. And most public Modern Art Museums were priced out of the 'contemporary art' market. In retrospect, we wasted an enormous amount of time and effort convening financial resources to purchase, and publicly 'own' vastly overpriced goods. And we wasted time wooing wealthy speculators, for sporadic gifts and donations too!

Ms. Chan That connects! It was the same locally. The conflictual ethical demands in early Modern Art Museums were systemic. And obviously unsustainable. Reversing the resource flow, and using Transaction Tax to nourish Public Domain cultural meshworks seems, ... well, inevitable.

Ayan Lindquist Ahhh, sometimes, rethreading is such a wonderful luxury! Anyway, auction houses began to buy commercial galleries. And this dissolved the tradition of the primary – managed, and secondary – free art market. As a consequence, by 2'12 the 'contemporary art' market was a 'true' competitive market, with prices for assets falling as well as rising. Various 'contemporary art' bond, derivate and futures markets were quickly convened.

And typically, art-asset portfolios were managed through specialist brokerages linked to banking subsidiaries.

Ms. Chan Ok. I also see some local downturns linked to financial debt bubbles bursting. Spectacularly in 2'09, again in 2'24 and again in 2'28. Market corrections?

Ayan Lindquist Probably. Market corrections and their repercussions. Overall the market expanded, matured in 2'27 and has remained sufficiently resourced ever since ... More or less. By 2014 formerly commercial galleries, the primary market, had become a competing meshwork of global auction franchises. By 2'25 they needed to open branded academies to ensure new assets were produced.

Ms. Chan I can see the Frieze Art Academy in Beijing, that was one of the earliest.

Ayan Lindquist The market for 'contemporary art' became, to all intents and purposes, a competitive commodity market, just like any other. Of course, useful for generating profit and loss through speculation. And useful for generating Public Domain financial resources, but completely divorced from emergent art practice.

Ms. Chan Ok. This might be a bit of a dumb query. But does Moderna feel that in the self-replication of the 'contemporary art' market, that something valuable has been lost from public Museums?

Ayan Lindquist To be perfectly honest, no. No, we only experience benefits. You see, through the UN Multitude distribution of Transaction Tax we are much better financially resourced. Which in turn, has enabled us to develop our local cluster and node network. Generally, competitive markets thrive on artificial difference and managed risk. They are just too limited a technology to nurture, or challenge, or distribute a truly creative art practice. And just take all these private art-asset collections, built by speculator-collectors, and supported through private foundations. Apart from the hyper-resourced, they all ultimately fail. Then they're either broken-up and re-circulated through the 'contemporary art' market. Or, more usually, devolve to the multitude and enter public Museum collections. Here at Moderna, we have benefited enormously from a spate of default donations. Consequently, we've a comprehensive collection of 'contemporary' art-artefacts through reversion.

Ms. Chan Ok. Then this was the basis for the amazing Moderna *Contemporary Art* exhibition in Shanghai in 2'24. It was reconstructed as a study module while I was at the Open University in 2'50. I can still recall it. What a collection! What an amazing exhibition! Ok, so maybe here we could locate an ethic approaching something like a critical mass. As Moderna Museet's collection. Exhibitions and activities expanded - and of course other Museums too - the ethic of public generosity is distributed, nurtured and also encouraged. Everyone benefits. I can see that when the Ericsson group pledged its collection for instance, it triggered a whole avalanche of other important private gifts and donations. Like the Azko-la Caixa collection, or the Generali Foundation gift. Or like when the Guggenheim franchises collapsed as the debt-bubble burst in 2'18, and the Deutsche Bank executive decided to revert their collection.

Ayan Lindquist (laughter) We think that's a slightly different case, and certainly of a different magnitude!!

Although it's a common trajectory for many public/private museum hybrids.

Ms. Chan Ok, it's certainly true of museums locally. The former Ullens Center for Contemporary Art in Beijing... and MOCA in Shanghai for instance.

Ayan Lindquist That connects. The increased resources, and the gifts, donations and reversions enabled us to seed our local cluster devolution. From 2'15 we invested in partnerships with the Institutet Människa I Nätverk in Stockholm; with agencies in Tallin and also Helsinki. With the early reversion of the *Second Life* hive, and with *Pushkinskaya* in St Petersburg. We created, what was rather fondly termed, the Baltic cluster.

Ms. Chan Ok, from composite I see there had been an earlier experiment with a devolved Moderna. During the enforced closure in 2'02 - 2'03, exhibitions were co-hosted with sympathetic local institutions. There was even a *Konstmobilen!*

Ayan Lindquist Yeah, and it was always considered something of a success. Distributing and re-imagining the collection through the cluster - incidentally we cut our carbon debt to almost 12 - radically scaled our activities. So, while developing locally, we also began to produce a wider Moderna Museet network. The first Moderna node opened in Doha in the United Arab Emirates. We participated in the local ecologies restructuring of resources; from carbon to knowledge. That was in 2'18. In 2'20, Mumbai emerged, Ex Habare three-year research project in cooperation with several self-organised Research Institutions- I recall *Nowhere* from Moscow, the *Critical Practice* consortium in London, and *Sarai* from Delhi. And as you already mentioned Shanghai launched in 2'24 with the landmark *Contemporary Art* exhibition, then the Guangzhou node went live in 2'29 with *La Part Maudite: Bataille and the Accursed Share*. A really timely exhibition! It explored the distribution of trust and 'well-being' in a general economy. The ethics of waste and expenditure; and the love, and terror, implicit in uninhibited generosity. Isn't that node's location near your present Guangdong Museum hub? On Ersha Island, by the Haiyin Bridge?

Ms. Chan We're almost neighbours! As for the *La Part Maudite*: much of that source work is still live, and still very present.

Ayan Lindquist We saw you did some restoration to the image server codecs recently, thank you for that.

Ms. Chan Ok. A pleasure.

Ayan Lindquist Our most recent node emerged in San Paulo in the Americas in 2'33. Through the agency of the Alan Turing Centenary project *Almost Real: Composite Consciousness*.

Ms. Chan Ok, if I may, I'd just like to loop back with you, to the twenties and thirties. It's when many academic historians think we entered a new exhibitionary 'golden age' with Moderna. You co-produced a suite of landmark projects, many of which are still present.

Ayan Lindquist We're not too comfortable with the idea of a 'golden age.' Maybe our work became embedded again. Anyway, if there was a 'golden age' we'd like to think it

started earlier, maybe in 2'18. We set about exploring a key term from early machine logic – 'feedback.' And we made a re-address to the source, the legendary *Cybernetic Serendipity* exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Art in London; on the exhibition's 50th anniversary.

Ms. Chan From composite – I see Tate has many Public Domain archive resources – it's recorded as the first exhibitionary exchange between visual art and digital assemblies.

Ayan Lindquist For us at Moderna, that exhibition set in motion two decades of recurrent projects exploring *Art, Technology and Knowledge*. Its most recent manifestation, linked to the Turing research, has resulted in Moderna 3.0's cooperation on a draft amendment to Article 39 of the United Nations Declaration of *Human Rights*. We are seeking to extend certain rights to organic/synthetic intelligent composites.

Ms. Chan You're co-producing sovereign composites?

Ayan Lindquist Yes, yes, that's what I was hinting at earlier; about Moderna being more agent, and executing as well as exhibiting.

Ms. Chan Now I understand Moderna's centenary proposal for a *Museum of Their Wishes*. It's absolutely amazing! I know it's a very common thread, but definitely worth re-running. The one about the foundation of the Moderna Museet's collection with the *Museum of Our Wishes* exhibition in 1962. And how this was revisited in 2006 with the *Museum of our Wishes II* – to address the lack of women artists within the collection.

Ayan Lindquist We see our legacy as a resource, not a burden. It's something we have been working with for a while, recursive programmes. It's at root. Actually, *Wish II* was finally fulfilled in 2'22, when some Dora Maar photographs reverted. But, with the emergence of self-conscious composite intelligence, addressing 'their' wishes seemed appropriate, even necessary. And it's true, if the draft amendment is ratified, it will be an amazing achievement.

Ms. Chan Ok. Even if you don't like the term, maybe a new 'golden age' is beginning?

Ayan Lindquist For that, we'll all just have to wait and see. But earlier, you were right to suggest that in 2'20, with *Ex Habare The Practice of Exhibition*, we consolidated the idea of emergent art. And, distributed new institutional practices.

Ms. Chan In the Asian network it's common knowledge that *Ex Habare* reaffirmed the role of the Museum in civil society.

Ayan Lindquist Well to start, we un-compressed the Latinate root of exhibition, *ex habare*, to reveal the intention of 'holding-out' or 'showing' evidence in a legal court. It's obvious, that implicit in exhibition is the desire to show, display and share with others. By grafting this ancient drive, to desires for creative co-production, we enabled exhibitions to remain core to Moderna's aspirations. It's also true that to source, participate, co-produce and share, to generate non-rivalrous resources, are vital to the constitution of a Public Domain. And indeed, a civil society. There's a neat homology. *Ex Habare* distributed these values, and it's also true, they replicated at an astonishing speed.

Ms. Chan It's so good to be reminded! Even I tend to take the power of exhibition as a technology for granted. Do you think that this is because artists and others moved into collaborative relationships with Moderna?

Ayan Lindquist Var ska vi börja? Artists and others realised... that the 19th Century ideological construction of the artist, had reached its absolute limit. As configured, art as a 'creative' process had ceased to innovate, inspire or have any critical purchase. Quite simply it was irrelevant!

Ms. Chan Everywhere, except in the 'Contemporary Art' market!

Ayan Lindquist (Laughter) That heritage 'broadcast' communication model of culture that we mentioned earlier, privileges creative exchanges between artist and media in the studio/manufactory. Exchanges which were distributed through competitive trade and collecting institutions. At best, 'broadcast' extended a small measure of creative agency to the encounter between audiences – often referred to as passive 'viewers' – and artworks.

Ms. Chan Ok, I have material from composite. So even when this model was disrupted; like in 1968, the *Modellen; A Model for a Qualitative Society* exhibition at Moderna for example. It looks like we fell back into umm... Perhaps the wider creative ecology was just not receptive enough.

Ayan Lindquist You might be right, Ms. Chan. It was really when artists began to imagine art as a practice, and explore creativity as a social process...

Ms. Chan Sometime around the late 1990s perhaps?

Ayan Lindquist Yes, yes, then we could detect something of a change. Artists began to engage creatively with institutions, and vice versa. With all aspects of institutional practice; of course through co-producing exhibitions, but also through archival projects – which you've done so much to research Ms Chan – through organisational engagement, administration, and so on...

Ms. Chan Ok, I'm browsing material from composite on *Institutional Critique*. Michael Asher and Hans Haacke, they seem to be mostly artists from the Americas in the 1970s–1980s

Ayan Lindquist Not sure if those are the appropriate resources? Artists associated with *Institutional Critique*, I recall Michael Asher and Hans Haacke but also Julie Ault and Group Material, or Andrea Fraser. They had a much more antagonistic and oppositional relationship with exhibitionary institutions. They resented being represented by an exhibitionary institution. Especially those linked to a 19th Century ideology.

Ms. Chan Ok, now I'm browsing material on Sputniks, EIPCP, Bruno Latour, Maria Lind, Arteleku, Van Abbe Museum, Superlex, Franc Laccarde, Raqs and Sarai, Moderna's projects, Bart de Baer...

Ayan Lindquist Yes, this constellation feels more relevant. As artists rethought their practices, they recognised themselves as a nexus of complex social process. And that creativity was inherent in every conceivable transaction producing that nexus. At whatever the intensity, and regardless of the scale of the assembly. The huge challenge for all of us, was to attend to the lines of force, the transactions, and not be dazzled by the sub-

jects, objects or institutions they produced. We recall that it was under these conditions that artists' practices merged with Moderna. Merged into relations of mutual co-production. And so in exchange, Moderna began to think of itself as a creative institution. Subject to constant critical and creative exploration.

Ms. Chan Ok, so these were the forces generating Moderna 2.0 in 2'12.

Ayan Lindquist You're right. We simply stopped thinking of ourselves as a 19th Century museum – which had to constantly expand, commission signature buildings, evolve huge administrative hierarchies – exhibition, education, support, management and so on. And more on instituting – in the ancient sense of the word – of founding and supporting. On instituting creative practice. So, we started to play, risk, cooperate, research and rapidly prototype. Not only exhibitions and research projects, but ourselves. Some values were lost – which is always painful, and yet others were produced. And those most relevant maintained, nurtured and cherished. We learnt to invest, long-term, without regard for an *interested* return. And that's how we devolved locally, and networked globally. We've had some failures; either exhibitions couldn't convene the necessary resources, or we made mistakes. But as an immanent institution, most experiences were productive. Ahm... Not sure if that jump-cut thread answered your query...

Ms. Chan Sort of...

Ayan Lindquist The short answer could be that artists have transformed Moderna, and we in turn transformed them.

Ms. Chan Ok, but that last sound-bit is rather banal. Although, the thread's not uninteresting.

Ayan Lindquist Ironically, our playful devolution of Moderna 2.0 reanimated the historical collection displayed in version 1.0. We freed art-artefacts from their function, of 'recounting' the history of 20th Century Art; however alternative, discontinuous, or full of omissions we imagine that thread to be. And once free, they engaged with real-time discursive transactions. They became live again, contested nodes in competing transactions of unsettled bodies of knowledge.

Ms. Chan Um..., I'm not sure I'm following this... As time is running out, and there's so much to cover. I just wonder if you could mention... Could you recall, even briefly, some beacon exhibitions. Like *Transactional Aesthetics*, or the *Ecology of Fear*.

Ayan Lindquist *Rädslans ekologi*, or the *The Ecology of Fear* was timely, given the viral pandemic throughout DNA storage – so many systems were compromised; and the various 'wars' that were being waged, against difference, material resources, energy, and public attention... And I guess the same for *Transactional Aesthetics*. It was the right moment to be participating in the production of local social enterprise and well-being initiatives...

Ms. Chan Could you just mention the legendary ARARAT, *Alternative Research in Architecture, Resources, Art and Technology* exhibited at Moderna in 1976, which you revisited on its 50th anniversary in 2'26. From composite I can see archive materials. They're present.

Ayan Lindquist There's not much to add. Obviously the first version of ARARAT explored appropriate local technologies for buildings and urban systems – using sustainable resources. In 1976, this was the beginning of our understanding of a global ecology, and of the finite nature of mineral resources; especially carbon. Given our population reached 8bn in 2'26 it was vital to revisit the exhibition. To somehow, take stock... The first shock was that so little of the initial exhibition was recoverable – we invested in reconstruction and archival research – it's all Public Domain composite now. And the second, was the realisation that so little of the source exhibition had had any real effect. We suspect a serious flaw in the exhibitionary form.

Ms. Chan The lack of resources from those early exhibitions is always disheartening. It's hard to imagine a time before, even rudimentary Public Domain meshworks, embedded devices, and semantic interfaces.

Ayan Lindquist Well, one of the great outcomes of the Moderna Golden Jubilee celebrations in 2'08, is that they revisited and reflected on the preceding fifty years. We recently found shadow-traces for a Moderna History book. And for reasons that are not entirely clear, it remained unpublished during the Jubilee celebrations – so, we intend to issue a centenary heritage publication. We'll be sure to send you a copy.

Ms. Chan I see we have overrun, I'm so sorry. I just wonder before we disconnect, what is Moderna re-sourcing in the near future?

Ayan Lindquist Well, for us, there are some beautiful assemblies emerging. Real-time consensus is moving from a local to regional scale. *Triangle* in the African Multitude is distributing amazing regenerative medical technologies. Renewable energy has moved through the 74% threshold. Um... live, almost retro, music performance is popular again. Nano-technology has come of age, and 1:1 molecular replication will soon be enabled, linked to scanning technology hardwired to the manufactories in the Asian network. Outside of heritage, singularity will be overwritten by difference. Now that's exciting!

Ms. Chan Exciting indeed! Thank you so much Ayan. It's been a privilege, really. Enjoy the centenary celebrations, we'll all be there with you in spirit. Zai Jian, goodbye.

Ayan Lindquist Thank you, Ms. Chan. Goodbye, zai jian, hejdå.

INSTITUTIONAL CRITIQUE AND THE CITY MUSEUM OF TEL AVIV

Yael Eylat Van-Essen



The building itself was originally built in the 1920s as an apartment hotel which would not have provided exhibition spaces in the tradition of the white cube. A rectangular space, which was added to the building at a later stage, was therefore designated to function as the central space of the exhibition.

In the introduction to their book *Museum Culture*,¹ Rogoff and Sherman claim that right through their history, museums were preoccupied with camouflaging the power systems that motivated their curatorial endeavors. The authors suggest to read these museal activities under the flare of all-embracing Foucauldian discourse that refers to the power motivated actions of cultural centers in relation to mechanisms of political control. The project I will be introducing in this paper aimed to make institutional critique a prominent factor in its design. It was built on a curatorial model based on the assumption that the construction of a cultural institution should not only validate a critical ideological agenda, but should also offer a systematic infrastructure which allows for a critical and reflective component in assessing the curatorial act taking place in its framework.² This curatorial model was developed for the planning of the historical museum of the city of Tel-Aviv and was to be opened for its hundredth anniversary celebrations. The building chosen for the museum was in previous decades the residence of the city's municipality and was in the past a thriving centre of public gathering for diverse political and cultural activities.

The initial stages of the project were immediately challenged with fundamental questions of the legitimacy of any curatorial team, to accept the mission of designing a historical museum for the city. Therefore, a decision was made to define the museum as an 'Urban Museum', in which history functions as an essential foundation for dealing with

actual and future issues. The historical representation, according to this definition, stopped functioning as an aim in itself. Instead it evolved as a layer in a much wider multifaceted entity, which validates and deepens the inquiry into issues related to the city as a developing ensemble with a past, a present and a future, with inhabitants who share common responsibility for its development. The aim was to build a museum that will enable a stimulating discourse concerning the complex political, social, physical and cultural issues that the city is facing, that originate from its history as well as from the institutional and political systems which are responsible for their development. In order to achieve these goals, a decision was made to concentrate on four main curatorial principles:

¹
Irit Rogoff and Daniel Sherman. *Museum Culture*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1994.

²
For various reasons this model which was developed by the team, including myself, nominated by the municipality, was not finally realized and an alternate, totally different, program was carried out. The model I am introducing here was developed by Uri Tzaig, myself, and Minz+ Melamed (architects).

a – Current and Past Administrations as part of the Museum Exhibition

This public museum is financed by the municipality of the city of Tel Aviv. As such its content and conceptions need to be approved by the relevant bodies of municipal institutions. The subordination of the curatorial team to the municipality is inevitable when considering curatorial decisions, and therefore it was decided to make such consideration prominent in the museum design. Contrary to the traditional approach which is resolved on hiding the influence of the institution on curatorial decision, the choice was made to put it on exhibit. Thus, it was decided to maintain the historic room of the first mayor of the city as well as an active representative office of the current mayor as exhibition spaces. As a symbolic act and as a mechanism for public discourse in contemporary issues, a screen was located in the present mayor's office which would be updated constantly with the results of votes that museum visitors (physically and virtually) are invited to take part in, with the mayor himself as the official addressee. These votes refer to relevant urban issues on exhibit in various halls throughout the museum which provoke a critical approach in response to the diverse subjects presented.

Public museums incorporate an inevitable and invisible correlation between what they aspire to represent, to provide to the public, and political forces. By pointing at this correlation this museum accentuates the nature of the museum institution as both constitutive and representative, the degree of course dependent largely on the extent of political/institutional interference in the design of the collective representational display.

b – Database as a Structural Element

Contemporary approaches to archives founded on the concept of the *Rhizome* defined by Deleuze and Guattari,³ and based on non-hierarchical data architecture view archives as sites for power relation renewal, as a source for release and change, and as a space offering alternatives to accepted cultural interpretation. In his article, "Database as a Symbolic Form," new-media researcher Lev Manovich refers to the database as a new paradigmatic form. He claims that the database does not only function as a tool for cultural analyses, and suggests seeing it as symptomatic of the current cultural digital realm.⁴ Placing the database (which functions also as a museum archive) as an essential architectural element in the central exhibition hall counteracts the possibility of exhibiting any particular narrative as an exclusive one. The physical design of the space and the generic structure which the database's interface is based on, enables the introduction of ideological curatorial expression based on different cross-sections and connotations that can lead to diverse interpretations that could challenge the institutional narratives.

Therefore it was decided to construct a comprehensive digital database, containing historical documents, photos, video and film footage, interviews, etc., which would increase in content and depth through the years and was intended to form the pivotal collection of the museum. This database is designed to be the predominant structural and display element wrapping the inner shell of the central exhibition space. It is intended for the database to be distributed spatially utilizing a complex technological system and to simultaneously spread the data on the spatial and depth axis when activated by a generic system so as to present visually changing materials at any given moment creating the effect of being surrounded by a

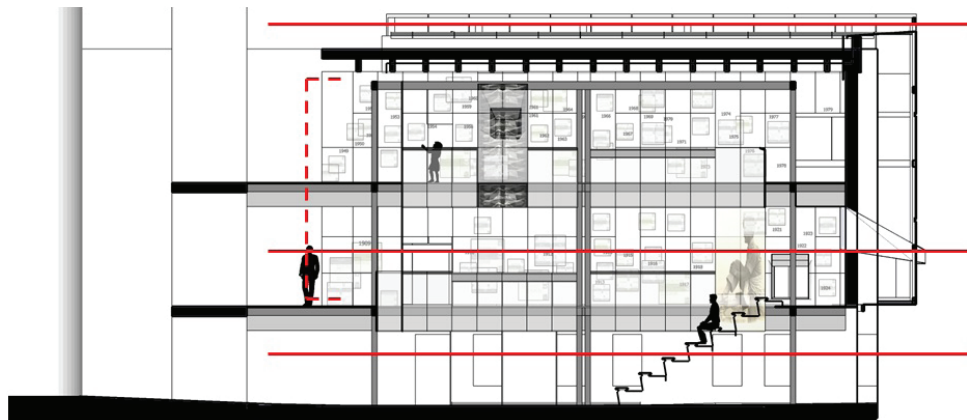
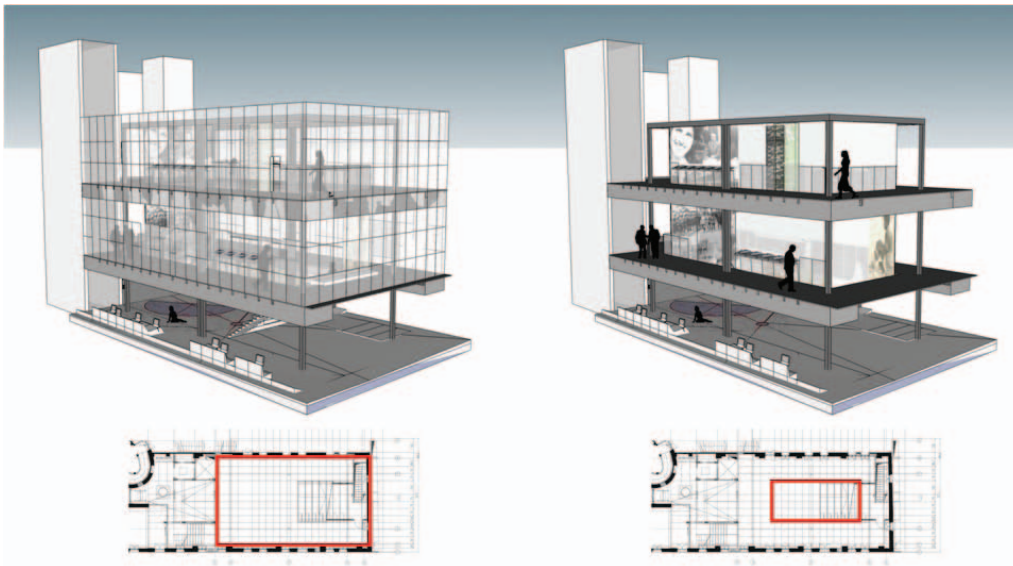
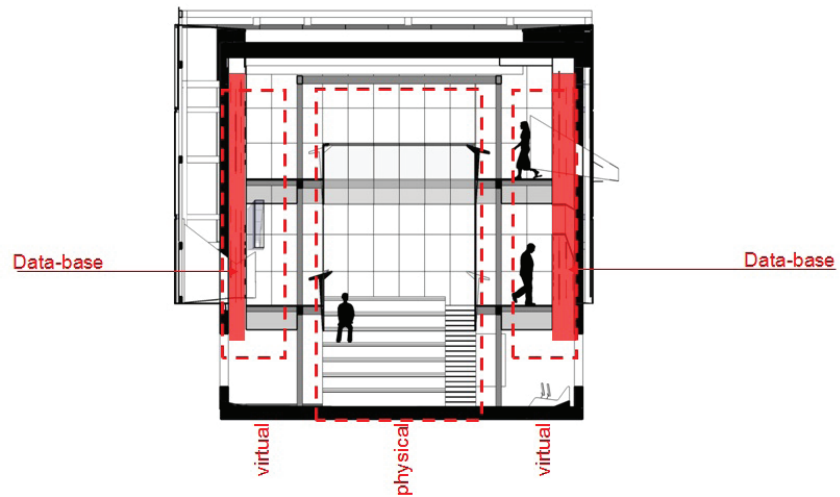
breathing archive. The purpose of making the database so central is not only the compilation of data, but also the ability to accumulate media and via contextual tagging and labelling of its components, to change the ways in which the data is organized and thereby influence the interpretive values derived from it.

c – Dynamic Space

The museum as it is being defined is supposed to fulfil reciprocal relations with its cultural, social, and political environment, and to serve as a tool for the inhabitants to define the city's identity and uniqueness. In order to conduct such a process, it was planned to create a structural infrastructure at all levels of representation, including physical and virtual, that would enable it to be constantly updated. This kind of structural concept derives from seeing the museum as a comprehensive system, with an ability to change in real time, based not only on the ambition to reflect the city's dynamism in the internal mechanism of the museum, but also to establish the museum as a central intersection in the overall urban "being" of the city. In addition it was intended that the dynamism of the city should be realized through the physical presence of the visitors (by a network of sensors) and, according to their fields of interest (by analyzing visitor's navigating roots in the database) identify their affinities. Thus correlations would be revealed, those connecting the visibility of the exhibition and the information architecture in the museum database, which was directly influenced by the curatorial decisions as well as by the ways the visitors experienced their visit.

3
Gilles Deleuze and
Felix Guattari,
*A Thousand Plateaus:
Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, University
of Minnesota Press,
Minneapolis, 1987.

4
Lev Manovich, "Database as a Symbolic Form," *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, no. 2, vol. 5, 1999, pp. 80-99.



1 – The shell surrounding the central exhibition hall is a constantly updated database providing the exhibition systems. The visitors find themselves at the meeting place where the physical and the virtual dimensions of the museum connect.

2 – The virtual database is spread out physically upon the surface of the inner walls of the gallery, and functions as a kind of hidden archive that reveals itself in relation to the location of the visitor. Seeing the exhibited materials is made possible due to the use of special technologies that produce an illusion of depth; of three dimensionality of the surface. The inner layer presents selected material based on chosen curatorial themes.

3 – The museum is designed and laid out as a dynamic and changing system/machine, both in relation to the visitor's presence, as well as in relation to its ability to update itself in real time and to present new contents.

d – The Integration of Art Exhibition with Historical Exhibition Practices.

Via the critical space that art makes possible, in order to enable clear curatorial statements, it was decided to build a museum that combines *art exhibition* with *historical exhibition* practices, while examining urban and historical issues through new perspectives. The art exhibitions in the museum are planned to take place in a special exhibition space for temporary exhibits designated for this purpose, as well as in the generic curatorial platforms set up through the mechanism of the exhibits in the museum's database, and that of the mayor's workplace. The blurring of borders between the common museal disciplines was intended to enable meta-discourse at the level of the conduits of museal representation that this museum uses. The art exhibits were designated to function as an overall mantle to the curatorial activity, in reference to the critical dimension created. The museal activity planned, was based not only on content issues but on a continual process of examining the internal and external mechanisms in which the curatorial activity in particular and the museal activities in general are taking part. The museum as a space which integrates different exhibition and institutional practices, offers reflective curatorial procedures which derive from the representation conventions of each one of the curatorial disciplines defining it.

To conclude

Pierre Nora sees the collective memory as deliberate cultural phenomena that originated in manipulative acts of appropriating the past by the authorities, in order to maximize their present and future interests. He claims that society has lost its ability to "remember" the past spontaneously, and it is supported on what he calls "realms of memory" which are dictated from above.⁵ The 'realms of memory' make contact between time and physical objects (or virtual) located in space, in which museums play an important role. This proposal has introduced, in respect to Nora's position, a critical reflective system presenting the institutional activity. The conceptual construction of this museum is not based on the negation of the authoritative influence on the museum by trying to hold it back, but on the need to introduce critical systems by which a society can examine its cultural processes.

CAN CURATING BE TAUGHT?

Maja Ciric and Isin Onol

Contributors: Lisa Boström, Hyunjoo Byeon, Övül Durmusoglu, Alhena Katsof, Natalie Hope O'Donnell, Andrea Roca, Alessandra Sandrolini, Adnan Yildiz



Educational Critique: How to Swot Curating, panel discussion at Institution as Medium. Curating as Institutional Critique? 2010, Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel. Photograph by Ann Cesteleyn.

The panel discussion *Educational Critique: How to Swot Curating* took place as a part of the symposium *Institution as Medium. Curating as Institutional Critique?* on March 27 in Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel. The goal of the discussion was to look at the increasing number of curating programmes and their aims, functions, roles, and effects within the globally evolving system of curatorial education, from the point of view of prospective curators who are attending or have recently completed these programmes

1
Irit Rogoff,
"Education Actualized" – Editorial,
E-Flux Journal no.
14, March 2010.
<http://www.e-flux.com/journal/view/127>.

Specialized educational programmes in curating and/or curatorial practice were not established within the educational system until very recently, leaving very few established curators from an older generation who have studied it. Although both curating and curatorial practices imply interdisciplinarity in an institutional context, basic statistical research shows that most curators from the "older" generation have a background in one discipline (art history, sociology, philosophy, or fine arts) and that they have emerged from an independent practice. The lack of a model that would lead towards professionalisation paradoxically allowed the older generation of curators towards establishing themselves as authors in an unstructured interdisciplinary field, and by their own methods. The fact that an author emerges from a unique, individual experience makes curating and/or the curatorial difficult to be taught.

2
ibid.

Nowadays, with an aim to establish a profession (in order to control it) educational programmes in both curating and curatorial practices are growing in number. Some of these programmes concentrate on institutional curating, management, and law (Stockholm University; Royal College of Art, London) while others put greater emphasis on experimental curating (De Appel, Amsterdam; L'Ecole de Magasin, Grenoble). There are institutions (Goldsmiths University, London; De Appel, Amsterdam, Postgraduate Programme in Curating Zürich) which choose to bring a critical approach to the history of exhibitions and there are several programmes (De Appel, Amsterdam; L'Ecole de Magasin, Grenoble, Postgraduate Programme in Curating Zürich) that encourage collective curating. Then there are the instant curatorial programmes (ICI, New York) whose main goals are the development of a particular project and the establishment of a new network. There are various curatorial courses in the so called periphery that are adjusting the hegemonic curriculum from the West to their particular contexts (Nadal Center, India) or trying to stand for global curating in the biennial frame (International Course for Curators, Gwangju).

Ambivalent as they are, the curatorial and/or the curating programmes in general teach young curators (young as in new entrants in the field) the necessity of self-reflexivity, criticality, negotiation, and translation, as well as the fact that they only exist within the field of curatorial practice, a joint field in between the power field and the art field. What these young curators do when they get into one of the programmes is a performance of an act of self-colonization with the existing curatorial discourse and its relation to both the art and the power field. They are taught how to write, act, and play, and they are informed about what has already been achieved in the field. So, the real function of the curatorial and/or curating programmes is to introduce young curators into the curatorial field and immerse them in the curatorial discourse that consists of the theory of curating and the theory of curators. The function of these programmes is to teach them the rules of the game, or not, and allow them to play their own game, depending on the political positioning they will stand for once they are out of the "school." The unstructured ambivalent field still leaves some space for these new entrants to organize their own game. The more they establish themselves as authors by reacting, translating, and negotiating different ambivalences, the more they are able to make a difference in curatorial discourse.

Apart from the existing ambivalences of the curatorial field (interdisciplinarity; theory/practice; various temporalities; various geopolitics; critique/criticality; different power relations; etc.), its transformation implies the ongoing manifestation of the educational turn, which implies a wider range of concerns, agendas, and methods, and therefore allows the emergence of multi-vocal and multiple perspectives. The educational turn stands for an education that will not be a response to crisis, but part of its ongoing complexity.¹ In other words, one which is not reacting to realities, but producing them. The educational turn is concerned with the potentiality and actualization; education is the site that is shifting away from a culture of emergency to one of urgency. Being such, the educational turn encourages the journey, not the destination and encourages curating as a constant process of rediscovery.²

If the educational turn means that a range of concerns, agendas, methods, and subjects are at stake, then the field is constantly expanded by its educational programmes. Knowledge production becomes multifocal and, by creating an awareness of the educational turn, curating and/or curatorial programmes capture the dynamics of a turn. Curatorial education, as complex as it is, is mainly centered within the dynamic (constantly changing) landscape of the society and the art world. The more ambivalences a curato-

rial study programme provides, the more accurate it is because it focuses on the unlimited and, paradoxically, inspires one for action and production.

While the interdisciplinary character makes it harder to teach, curating and/or curatorial programmes that internalize institutional critique are beneficial because they act as platforms capable of executing various potentials within their networks. They act as communities, a specific context for reflection in which different characters, identities, and geopolitics meet or collide, embrace, or ignore each other. By exposing themselves in the small-scale and specific context, participants have a chance to modify or confirm their positions. If participants are strong, self-confident authors, their participation into the curatorial and/or curating programmes legitimate their action.

No matter how a particular programme insists on diversity and specific notions of selection, choice and labelling are interlinked to the field of power. However, the main benefit of a curatorial education is the fact that by the ambivalences of the curatorial discourse it introduces, its logics of selection, choice, and labelling distort the existing power field from an epistemological standpoint.

The real players in the field are those capable of understanding both the legacy of curatorial discourse and its unstructured complexities, grasping different and often controversial stimulus. Education can help them to understand these complexities, but can not pave the road of their career. That is something that is a function of the authors themselves.

These authors fall in the category of young curators—young standing for being new entrants in the curatorial field. They would not have made it to the panel discussion *Educational Critique: How to Swot Curating* if they had not attend some of the curating and/or curatorial training programmes. Hereby is the evidence of the plurality of positions and approaches that new entrants in the field embody:

Hyunjoo Byeon, originally from South Korea but currently based in London, completed her MFA in Curating at Goldsmiths College in London. As a person who had a chance to experience the system in Asia, Hyunjoon indicated the western hegemony within the field. She also argued that curating could not be taught:

My answer to the main question at this panel discussion "Can curating can be taught?" is "no." A gradual change in the perception of the role of curator turning away from the predominant notion of the professional museum curator occurred in the last few decades. Many curators have attempted to play a creative, social, political, and active part, adapting to the surrounding codes within a society using the process of production and dissemination of art. Curatorial methodologies and approaches constantly evolve, thus the emergence of curatorial education programmes on the global stage at large seems to reflect on these current states. However, again, can curating be taught? It is difficult even to define what "curating" or "curator" means. In fact, these programmes seem to take an art education as an investment in social agency. The advent of MFA can be an obvious example. In his article "The MFA is the New MBA" in Harvard Business Review in 2004, Daniel Pink argues that the esteem of the MFA as a professional degree was on the rise, considering it as the economic ladder that was once the exclusive province of MBAs. As Pink describes an art education programme in its economic value, many seem to pursue the degrees in curating in order to have various vantage points. Regardless of their economic, social, and political values that underlie curatorial education programmes, it seems to be still worth to have curatorial education programmes in the sense that they open up a ground for a more socially committed and intellectual engagement to the students who are concerned with the emerging curatorial discourses. I have to admit that my curatorial programme provided me with an opportunity to exchange ideas with various curators, artists, art historians, and critics; to build my own curatorial practice; to have a positive attitude; and to develop expertise in new areas. Nevertheless, it can only be achieved by a process of reaching awareness, self-discovery and self-emancipation, instead of being addressed by the pedagogical models of curatorial education programmes.

Lisa Boström, born and currently residing in Stockholm, received an MA from the International Curating Programme, Stockholm University and currently works as a curatorial assistant at Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall. As an individual who directly benefitted from her study programme and was immediately employed after her MA completion, she shared a positive approach for the necessity of curatorial education.

The discussion between the individual and the collective regarding the curator's role is important when it comes to curatorial study programs. An important aspect and challenge of the curatorial study programmes is to encourage collaboration between the curator students. Even if many curator students have similar backgrounds (from art history, philosophy, fine art, and other areas in the cultural field), the different backgrounds and experiences among the students are important. I would like to stress the importance of being generous with experience and knowledge regarding the curatorial field. Since the international curatorial working field can be filled with temporary projects, especially for independent curators, continuous relations have in one sense replaced the former stable employment. The combination of a theoretical education like the International Curating Programme at Stockholm University and practical work with self-initiated projects is a good way to find ones curatorial identity. Is it possible to educate curators through the curatorial programs that are present today? The answer is yes, in the same way that there's a notion of the possibility to educate artists, there's a place and need for curatorial programmes.

Övül Durmusoglu, who was born in Turkey, but currently resides in Stuttgart, did not study curating, but critical studies at Malmö Academy. She has completed few curatorial residences. She defended self-education models rather than institutional curatorial education.

Learn, undo it, and learn again in the process of making. Call it a miseducation or bricolage or deterritorialization. What matters is... I am leaving this blank for each reader to fill herself/himself.

Alhena Katsof was born in Canada, lives in Amsterdam, and recently completed her research at the De Appel Curatorial Programme. She looked at the curatorial education programmes by differing the programmes from their academic and non-academic settings.

I am interested in the differences and similarities between practice-based and theoretical-based learning and I think that this distinction may apply to curatorial studies as it does to fine art. In regards to curatorial programmes, – it seems that there are a few main issues that are particularly relevant right now; these have to do with accessibility, collaboration, and the role of authorship in regard to curatorial practice. During the panel, I touched upon a distinction that I think is incredibly important between compromise and negotiation.

Natalie Hope O'Donnell, born in Norway and residing in London, is currently a Ph.D. Candidate at the London Consortium. She also completed an MA in Curating Contemporary Art at the Royal College of Art. At the panel discussion, she compared and contrasted these two institutions.

The Curating Contemporary Art MA at the Royal College was founded in 1992 by the Arts Council and the RCA. It was one of the earliest curating courses and seemed to be initially geared towards working in an institution, though it was not affiliated to any particular gallery or museum (unlike Magasin in Grenoble or the Whitney Programme). It always had a very international approach, and provided both very practical skills training and an awareness of critical discourses around art and curatorial practice. The most valuable aspect of the MA was this discursive element, which I believe is where curating courses can really have an impact. Therefore, it makes little sense to teach curating as an undergraduate course, as it is less about traditional teaching and more about what people bring to the discussion table from their various, diverse backgrounds. At the same time, I think there is something quite cynical about the massive proliferation of curatorial study programmes, it becomes a relatively "sexy" (and money-making) thing to tack onto an art history, cultural studies or critical theory degree. When I started at RCA, they had an employment record of 98%. Where are all the graduates from the many curatorial programmes going to go when they graduate? I have found it useful to pursue my research into curatorial practices and audience engagement within the context of a Ph.D. in cultural studies at the London Consortium. The relatively nascent history of curatorial practice means that it can benefit from cross-fertilization from other fields, as it begins to define itself as research area in its own right. I hope that my Ph.D. can offer some contribution to the emerging (and exciting) field of research into the history and practice of curating.

Andrea Roca, born in Colombia and currently living in Zürich, has recently completed her Master of Advanced Studies at the Zurich University of the Arts, Postgraduate Programme in Curating, Zürich. She approached the subject from more ironic or even sarcastic point of view, by indicating the power struggles within the field.

Literature

To be a good curating student, follow these instructions:

- Be a good communicator and a good networker.
- Have an opportunistic attitude in a collaborative sense.
- Follow the rules without following the rules.
- Get yourself a nice haircut.
- Being male and white would help you.
- Being exotic would also help you.
- Have a good eye on young and talented artists.
- Tell everybody that you will soon go back to school for a Ph.D. because you want to have more time for research.
- Have a nice and generous sponsor which can financially support you for at least the next five years.
- Do not have a firm position or any beliefs.
- Don't be afraid of flying.
- As a woman don't forget to have birth control.
- Be ready to work many many hours without getting paid.
- Tell everybody that you are very very busy, even if you aren't.
- Read and learn by heart www.artreview100.com

Then mix up everything with art world jargon and with the little bit of art theory you have learned in your curating program... And then be ready for a glorious career in the art field.

Alessandra Sandrolini, who was born in Italy and currently lives in Bologna and Paris, completed her MA at Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera in Milan. Supporting the idea that curating doesn't exist from artists, she looked at the issue by including the thoughts of an artist.

When I was invited to participate to this panel discussion I thought about inviting Rainer Ganahl, an artist who has been working on the very subject of educational politics over many years. With his presence, the point of view on the discussion would probably have been reversed and would have shifted to more interesting issues. Instead of talking about my own experience, I wished to remind others that many artists themselves reflect on curatorship within their creative process, and that a curator should first of all be interested in art. Unfortunately Rainer Ganahl could not participate due to lack of budget; but, I would like share a quote from his essay "When attitudes become curating," written in 2004: "Recently, curating has not only become internationalized but also institutionalized and turned into a discipline that is taught academically. International classes for curatorial learning are now created anywhere: at universities, art schools, museums, auction houses, and so on. The question of "What to teach curators?" is about as impossible to answer as "What to teach artists?" in a time of deskilling and artistic outsourcing. I am convinced that the recipe for a good curator is the same as for somebody who succeeds in life and anywhere else. It is an elixir that I locate in people themselves. It is the basic understanding of who we are, of where we are from, of how we are living, of what we want, and of what we can do." This could be a good way to resume my position.

Adnan Yildiz who was born in Turkey, and currently resides in Berlin, participated in Curator Lab, Konstfack, Stockholm and an Independent Study Program at Valand Art Academy of Göteborg University, Göteborg. He also fully supports self-education models. As his contribution, he preferred to send us the following quotation from the conversation between Z. Bauman and M. Jaukkuri:

... The curator as a professional interpreter and "meaning-broker," spending her or his life on a notorious battlefield where competitive interpretations, all the more militant for being unsure of themselves, meet, clash, and fight the endless war of mutual attrition... But in your present question you lead us onto another battlefield, no less noisy – the one on which culture creators, including the curators, their plenipotentiaries, fight the endless war about the substance of arts and their mode of being-in-the-world... They have different adversary there, though: the politicians, the market bosses – in short, the managers, the "administrators" ... The arts are the advanced units of culture – engaged in reconnaissance battles whose purpose is to explore, pave, and chart the roads which human culture may (or may not) follow ("Art is not a better, but an alternative existence" – said Joseph Brodsky; "It is not an attempt to escape reality but the opposite, an attempt to animate it." And so the artists are either adversaries or competitors in the job which the managers wish to monopolize).

Isin Onol was invited by the Postgraduate Programme in Curating, Zurich University of Art, to organise the panel discussion *Educational Critique: How to Swot Curating* during the symposium *Institution as Medium. Curating as Institutional Critique?* on March 27th in Kassel at the Kunsthalle Fridericianum.

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BIOGRAPHIES

Giovanni Carmine After working several years as an independent curator and art critic – realizing among other projects and books with Norma Jeane, Christoph Büchel, and a temporary exhibition in former Swiss military bunkers (*Unloaded*, 2002) – he has been the director of the Kunst Halle St. Gallen since 2007 (www.k9000.ch). There he realised shows by Swiss and international artists like Ryan Gander, Mai-Thu Perret, Gedi Sibony, Loris Gréaud, Shahryar Nashat, Matias Faldbakken, and Navid Noor. He was the artistic coordinator of *ILLUMInations*, the 54th edition of the *Biennale di Venezia* 2011 and co-editor of the *Biennale* catalogue. He lives and works in Zurich and St. Gallen.

Maja Ciricis is a freelance curator and an art critic. She is a citizen of both Belgrade, Serbia and the transnational-republic.org. Her curatorial practice produces alternative knowledge about social, political, and aesthetic transformations. Her areas of interest include theoretical aspects of curating, curating as institutional critique, and neo-colonial issues.

Neil Cummings was born in Wales, lives in London and when not working as an artist he is a professor at Chelsea College of Art and Design. He is also a member of Critical Practice and on the editorial board of Documents.

Helmut Draxler, art and cultural theorist, occasional independent curator, resides in Berlin and works as professor of aesthetic theory at the Merz Akademie college of design in Stuttgart. Publications: *Gefährliche Substanzen: Zum Verhältnis von Kritik und Kunst*, Berlin, 2007; *Die Gewalt des Zusammenhangs: Raum, Referenz und Repräsentation bei Fareed Aramy*, Berlin, 2007; as editor: Sabeth Buchmann, Helmut Draxler, Stephan Geene, ed., *Film, Avantgarde, Biopolitik*, Vienna, 2008; Helmut Draxler, ed., *Shandyismus: Autorschaft als Genre*, Stuttgart, 2007.

Beryl Graham is a Professor of New Media Art at the School of Arts, Design and Media, University of Sunderland, and co-editor of CRUMB. She is a writer, curator, and educator with many years of professional experience as a media arts organiser, and was head of the photography department at Projects UK, Newcastle, for six years. She curated the international exhibition *Serious Games* for the Laing and Barbican art galleries, and has also worked with The Exploratorium, San Francisco, and San Francisco Camerawork.

Damian Jurt studied at the Geneva University of Art and Design and at the School of Visual Arts in New York. He also completed the Postgraduate Programme in Curating at the Zurich University of the Arts. Since 2008 he has been a research assistant at the Art Institute of the Basel Academy of Art and Design. As the artistic director of the City Gallery (Loge) in Bern in 2009, Jurt focused on contextual exhibition formats that show how social and political tensions can be interpreted within the arts. In 2010 Jurt curated the exhibition *Between Spaces* at the Kunstmuseum Luzern. In 2011 he also acted as curator at the Academy of Media Arts Cologne and participated in conferences at the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Art and at the Nida Art Colony in Nida, Lithuania.

Hassan Khan is an artist, musician and writer who curated The Second New Museum Triennial (New York, 2012), Manifesta 8 (Murcia, 2010), Yokohama Triennale (2008), Gwangju Biennale (2008), and the Sidney Biennale (2006). Khan's album, *tabla dubb*, is available on the 100copies label. Most recently *The Agreement* was published by Sternberg Press (2011). Previous publications include *Nine Lessons Learned from Sherif El-Azma*, published by the Contemporary Image Collective (2009) and *17 and in AUC – the transcriptions* published by Merz and Crousel (2004).

Marysia Lewandowska is a Polish born, London based artist who collaborated with Neil Cummings from 1995–2008. As artists they have been interested in thinking about and working alongside many of the institutions that choreograph the exchange of values between art and its public. Research has played a central part in all of their works, which include a book: August Birkhauser, *The Value of Things*, 2000; *Give & Take* at the V&A Museum, and *Capital* inaugurating *Contemporary Interventions* series at Tate Modern, 2001. Recent projects include *Museum Futures* at Moderna Museet, Stockholm, and Manifesta 7 in Bolzano. Marysia is a Professor of Art in the Public Realm at Konstfack in Stockholm where she established *Timeline: Artists' Film and Video Archive*. www.marysialewandowska.com

Isin Onol (1977, Turkey) is an independent curator and writer based in Vienna. She is a Dr. Phil Candidate in the department of Cultural and Intellectual History at the University of Applied Arts, Vienna. She completed her MAS degree in Curating at the Zurich University of the Arts, Zurich, Switzerland (2009–2011). She also participated in Ecole du Magasin, International Curatorial Training Programme, Centre National d'Art Contemporain, Grenoble, France (2009–10) and the Gwangju Design Biennale International Curator Course, Gwangju, South Korea (2009). She received her MFA in Visual Arts and Visual Communication Design from Sabanci University (2003) and her BA in Art Education from Marmara University (2000), Istanbul, Turkey. She worked as the manager and curator at Proje4L/Elgiz Museum of Contemporary Art, Istanbul (2006–2009). As a curatorial concern, she focuses on the paradoxical impossibility of national representation within nation-based exhibition conceptions.

Dorothee Richter is an art historian and curator; Director of Studies for the Postgraduate Programme in Curating, ICS, at the ZHDK Zurich and publisher of On-Curating.org. Prior to that she was Artistic Director of the Künstlerhaus Bremen. She has initiated symposia on questions of contemporary art with the following publications: *Curating Degree Zero* – an international symposium of curators (with B. Drabble); *Dialoge und Debatten – on feminist positions in contemporary art*; *Im (Be_)Griff des Bildes* (with Katrin Heinz and Sigrid Adorf); *Die Visualität der Theorie vs. zur Theorie des Visuellen* (with Nina Möntmann); *Re-Visionen des Displays*, (with Sigrid Schade and Jennifer Johns); *Institution as Medium. Curating as Institutional Critique?*, Kassel (with Rein Wolfs), teaching: University of Bremen, Ecole des Beaux Arts, Geneva, Merz-Akademie Stuttgart; University Lüneburg, Zurich University of Arts. She initiated (with B. Drabble) the *Curating Degree Zero Archive*, an archive, travelling exhibition, and website on curatorial practice (www.curatingdegreezero.org). Other editions: *Curating Critique* (with B. Drabble), editor of the web-journal On-Curating.org. She is curator of *New Social Sculptures* in cooperation with the Kunstmuseum Thun and students of the Postgraduate Programme in Curating.

Yael Eylat Van-Essen is a researcher and a lecturer of Digital Culture, Digital Art Theory and Museology, Head of the Art and New-Media Department and Academic Director of the Curatorial Studies Program (CSP) at the School of Arts and Technology in Tel-Aviv (2008-2010); was a member of the curatorial team and a media curator for the Museum of the City of Tel-Aviv (2006-2008); editor of the first anthology published in Hebrew on Digital Culture; Currently, in the last stages of completing her Ph.D. thesis at Tel Aviv University on the conceptual influence of new technologies on museums.

Rein Wolfs has been the artistic director of the Kunsthalle Fridericianum since January 2008. From 2002 until 2007 he was the director of exhibitions of the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam. In 2003 he curated the Dutch pavilion at the Venice Biennial. From 1996 until 2001 he was the first director of the Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst in Zurich. Among his most important exhibitions were shows with Douglas Gordon, Maurizio Cattelan, Angela Bulloch, and Cady Noland at Migros Museum and retrospective exhibitions with Bas Jan Ader and Rirkrit Tiravanija as well as larger surveys with Urs Fischer and Erik van Lieshout at Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. At Kunsthalle Fridericianum he curated major exhibitions with Christoph Büchel, Pawel Althamer, Teresa Margolles, Thomas Zipp, Meschac Gaba, Monica Bonvicini, and Danh Vo and shows with Klara Lidén, Latifa Echakhch, Cyprien Gaillard, Nina Canell and Navid Nuur among others. For 2012 he is preparing an exhibition, entitled *The New Public*, for Museion in Bolzano. He is currently teaching at the School of Art and Design Kassel, Free University Berlin and Philips-University Marburg and is a regular guest-tutor at De Ateliers in Amsterdam.

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