ON CURATING.org

THE MAKING OF...

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Dorit Margreiter, *Into Art*, 1998, exhibition view from *The Making of*,
Generali Foundation Vienna, 1998. © Generali Foundation.
Photo: Werner Kaligofsky

EDITORIAL: THE MAKING OF...

By Sønke Gau, Siri Peyer, Dorothee Richter

On DVD editions of feature films, it is almost a matter of course: in addition to audio comments, an alternative ending, scenes shot and later omitted, a selection of funny slips of the tongue and various trailers, the so-called bonus material also includes a 'Making' of. The 'Making of' is usually a short documentary which takes a look behind the scenes during production, explains special effects, shows persons involved in the production process at their work — persons who will no longer be seen later, in the actual movie. Naturally, on the one hand this and other extra material merely serves the purpose of advertising the product. On the other hand — as pointed out, for example, by film theorist Volker Wortmann in his text *DVD-Kultur und 'Making of'*[1] — the 'Making of' is also significant in as much as "here various discourses are superimposed, diametrically opposed perspectives are united, interests of producers, authors and recipients come together."[2] Wortmann argues that the additional material on DVDs provides various forms of access to the work on a wide range of different levels, and enhances the respective frame of reference with multiple layers of discourse. Voice-overs of the contributors mark diverging producer- and authorships and, according to Wortmann: "The same thing happens with the various versions, the alternative editings, beginnings and endings, i.e. aspects which provide insights into the film's decision-making processes and revolve around the variability of an aesthetic decision — not in a comparative or judgmental

sense, but in the sense of initiating a discussion about the film, a discussion which can only begin to unfold in the light of the various possible forms it could have taken."[3] In this context, the 'Making of' could thus be understood as an instrument for the creation of transparency with regard to aesthetic production processes and a means of discourse initiation and mediation. At least on this level, the supposedly individual authorship of the director is expanded to include the polyphonic voices of other contributors to the production, and the recipient is supported in his/her task as 'expanded author' with additional information.

Unlike DVD editions of feature films, most exhibitions of contemporary art[4] offer no information about how they emerged and developed. In this respect they often present themselves as a 'black box' — or as one bon mot sums up this tendency to exclude the production conditions and development processes: "With exhibitions it's like with hot dogs — you'd rather not know how they were made." In the 'operating system' of art there may indeed be various more or less 'unappetizing' details which, if they were known, could be capable of detracting from the enjoyment of the respective artworks and exhibitions. Fundamentally, however, there is a danger that this lack of transparency fosters the widespread idealization of artistic/curatorial productions which leads in turn to the withholding of background information that could serve to expand the context of artworks and exhibitions for the viewer, and, what is more, tends to hush up discussion about the precarious

working conditions of artists and curators outside the international mainstream. The museum / exhibition institution is a special kind of location associated with numerous naturalization effects. Oliver Marchart points out four components as forms of such naturalization effects in the field of the fine arts: firstly, the power of definition which dictates that the art institution is a neutral mediation and evaluation entity; secondly exclusions and inclusions which conceal the fact that there are always exclusions; thirdly, the cultural-political, budgetary and similar conditions to which the institution itself is subject; and fourthly, its class character.[5]

Not only is the exhibition 'apparatus' — contrary to the paradigm of autonomy — dependent on political processes; in view of its ability to bring discourses out into the open, it also bears an influence on every such process. Already for this reason alone, a discussion of the respective 'making of' would be an important step toward the demythologization of that conglomerate of media known as the exhibition.

To make progress toward a rethinking and revision of paradigms with regard to the lack of transparency concerning the development processes and production conditions of exhibitions, one obvious point of departure would be to take this aspect more into account in the training of future curators. The web journal On-Curating.org established within the context of the Postgraduate Program in Curating at the Zurich Hochschule der Künste (ZHdK) is conceived as a platform for curatorial discourse. The present issue as well as Issue 1 were planned and produced in close cooperation with the respective students; *Institution as Medium* was produced jointly by Dorothee Richter and Axel Wieder of Künstlerhaus Stuttgart;

Issue 3 — *Curating Film* — consisted of interviews conducted by Siri Peyer and Wolf Schmelter at the Kurzfilmtage (short film festival) in Oberhausen; Issue 4 was based on the initiative of two young Norwegian curators, Gerd Elise Mørland and Heidi Bale Amundsen. The present issue — no. 5 — is concerned with placing a central focus on current collective and individual research on the part of the students, and the further development of this approach. The basis for the respective projects was a joint discussion on the emergence processes and production conditions of exhibitions. In addition to a number of other concrete examples, we concerned ourselves in this initial phase with the exhibition *The Making of*[6] which took place in 1998 at the Generali Foundation in Vienna — and whose title we adopted for this edition of the web journal. Even if the show was realized more than twelve years ago, the topics dealt with in that framework exhibition seem surprisingly relevant for curating practices of the present. Artistic works developed especially for the exhibition revolved around "understanding the institution as a symbolic structure in which heterogeneous and overlapping conceptions of culture are articulated."[7] The Generali Foundation, which served the project not only as a setting but also as a subject of critical examination, was particularly appropriate since it is an exhibition space founded and financed by the globally active insurance corporation of the same name. Here, in condensed form, cultural, economic, social and societal interests overlap — but they are interests also manifest in other art institutions and accordingly of relevance above and beyond the specific example of Generali.

Apart from the revised version of a discussion of

the exhibition and the related contexts by Sabeth Buchmann, this issue of On-Curating.org encompasses research and contributions by the students which do not refer directly to the project at the Generali Foundation. Discussions about the exhibition and the text by Sabeth Buchmann did, however, serve them as a kind of foil for coming to a more precise understanding of their own present research interests. Taking the concrete examples as a starting point, questions about discourses which take a critical stance on institutions were raised — more specifically, questions concerning the continuity (and lack thereof) as well as the potentials and problems of such discourses — and related to the conditions of exhibition curating today. We presided over this process from the sidelines — in the foreground, however, was the students' desire to create scope for the development of their own questions and issues, which were then to be discussed in groups to the extent possible. The contributions emerging from this work thus critically examine the 'making of' exhibitions from their perspective, while on the other hand — on a project-inherent, self-reflective level — also reflecting on their own research and results. For example, they address group-dynamic processes, self-organization, collective writing, etc., as well as the production conditions they, the students, have at their disposal.

This edition, *The Making of...*, endeavours to focus on certain important and representative aspects of existing approaches and discourses revolving around the development processes and production conditions of exhibitions, and to pursue them further against the background of the students' own interests. Many of the participants have already gathered practical experience in the field of art.

For their contribution *Authorship, Collaboration*

and Political Engagements in Curatorial Teams, Marjatta Hölz, Isin Önol and Véronique Ribordy talked to four very different curatorial teams. They interviewed the collective What, How & for Whom (WHW); Iris Dressler and Hans D. Christ, the couple forming the double head of the Württembergischer Kunstverein in Stuttgart; Françoise Mamie and Hélène Mariétholz, directors of the Villa Bérnasconi in Lancy; and Jean-Paul Felley, who, with Oliver Käser, co-directs the Centre Culturel Suisse in Paris and the art space attitudes in Geneva. In the process, the students endeavoured to identify out the mechanisms by which these teams function, and the extent to which role attributions and hierarchies affect the respective cooperation.

Mara-Luisa Müller, Nicola Ruffo, Radu Vlad Tartan and Karen Weinert made a contribution entitled *People of the 21st Century* in which they make reference to August Sander's photographic project *Menschen des 20. Jahrhunderts (People of the 20th Century)*. With his portraits, Sander created an image of the structure of German society during the Weimar Republic. The students, for their part, sketch an ironic, fictional panorama of the possible future players within the art world.

The article *Structures in Collaboration, Institutional Networking and Individual Strategies Uncovered* by Valentine Meyer, Anastasia Papakonstantinou, Silvia Simoncelli and Anca Sinpalean combines interviews with Andrea Thal of les complices*, an artist-run space in Zurich; Irene Calderoni, curator at the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo in Turin; and Antoine de Galbert, collector and founder of Maison Rouge in Paris, a foundation for the production and promotion of contemporary art, as well as co-founder of FACE, a European network of various foundations of which

the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo is also a member. Talks were also conducted with Christian Brändle, director of the Museum für Gestaltung in Zurich, and Mario Gorni, founder of the project space C/O in Milan, which, in collaboration with Via Farini, forms the DOCVA (Documentation Center for Visual Arts). The group moreover spoke with the Romanian artist Delia Popa. The students examine questions revolving around the needs and motivations underlying these various collaborations.

In her contribution *Art* World* City**, Annalies Walter takes data she gathered in a survey of representative Zurich galleries and self-organized art spaces as a basis for describing the current state of the 'art city' Zurich. At the same time, Vivian Landau sent all members of the Verein Zürcher Galerien (association of Zurich galleries) three questions concerning the organization as well as the gender- and nationality-specific composition of the artistic concepts presented in exhibitions in the year 2009. With the reactions and answers — as well as the non-reactions and non-answers — she designed diagrams presenting her study in visual form.

The Recipe for Newcomers? developed out of numerous interviews conducted by Marina Lopes Coelho, Juan Francisco Gonzalez-Martinez, Nathalie Martin and Andrea Pitkova with various curators and artists. In those conversations, they concerned themselves with the aspects to be taken into account in the organization and realization of an exhibition, and the stumbling blocks that await the so-called 'newcomers' with little previous curating experience. The search for 'recipes' led to an amusing potpourri.

The studies contributed here are conceived of less as results than as interim steps, are not merely designed to answer questions but, on the

contrary, reflect an effort to raise questions with the aim of further advancing discussion on the matters addressed. In keeping with this approach, it is our hope that the perusal of this issue will trigger productive discourse.

1
Volker Wortmann, "DVD-Kultur und 'Making of'. Beitrag zu einer Mediengeschichte des Autorenfilms", in Simon Frisch et al., eds., *RABBITEYE Zeitschrift für Filmforschung*, 01/2010, Bremen and Hildesheim, pp. 95—108. Also see http://www.rabbiteye.de/2010/1/wortmann_dvdkultur.pdf, 21 Mar 2010.

2
Ibid., p. 99.

3
Ibid., pp. 98—99.

4
Current examples were to found, among other places, at the 11th International Istanbul Biennale, curated by WHW in 2009 (an interview with WHW is to be found both in the second issue of On-Curating.org as well as in this one) or in the project series *Work to do! Selbstorganisation in prekären Arbeitsbedingungen*, curated in 2007/2008 by Katharina Schlieben and Sønke Gau for the Shedhalle in Zurich. Also see the publication of the same title published by Verlag für moderne Kunst, Nuremberg, 2009.

5
Oliver Marchart, "Die Institution spricht", in Beatrice Jaschke et al., eds., *Wer spricht? Autorität und Autorschaft in Ausstellungen*, Vienna, 2005, pp. 39f.

6
The making of, curated by Mathias Poledna, Generali Foundation, Vienna, 05 February — 12 April 1998. Also see http://foundation.generali.at/index.php?id=69&L=0, 21 Mar 2010, or Mathias Poledna, ed., *The making of*, Vienna, 1998.

7
Ibid.

AUTHORSHIP, COLLABORATION AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENTS IN CURATORIAL TEAMS

By Marjatta Hölz, Isin Önol, Véronique Ribordy

Throughout the past two decades, we encountered an increasing number of art collectives. As a continuation of this phenomenon, curators have begun taking a similar interest in alliances in recent years. Especially the last editions of the various Biennales, Manifestas, and Documentas have introduced many different kinds of cu-ratorial teams. Today's art institutions also point to the possibilities of directorial teams, as well as a vast variety of curatorial collaboration models.

Our contribution aims neither to present an overview of this latter variety, by comparing and contrasting different conceptual approaches of curatorial teams in relation to their choices of artists, artworks, spaces, themes etc., nor to provide a general account of collaborative curating. Our interest is rather to see how these teams function in terms of their methods of sharing tasks and resolving conflicts. We have endeavoured to take a closer look at some models of collaboration in order to bring into view how the notion of authorship functions within their work.

Iris Dressler and Hans D. Christ
Photo: Marjatta Hölz

In conventional structures, institutional teamwork functions through a set of rules and hierarchy. Staff often remained uninvolved in decision-making. In collectives, hierarchy needs to yield to equal job sharing and co-determination.

As three independent curators (from Geneva, Istanbul, and Stuttgart), we selected four different collective curatorial models, and interviewed their curators to observe their motivations to become a collective as well as their methodologies for maintaining teamwork. We wanted to explore different possibilities of decision-making processes in curatorial teams as alternatives to the conventional and hierarchical model. Considering disagreements in collaboration, we sought to see the varying methodologies of problem solving and the way in which the notions of democracy, consent, and consensus are applied within institutional and non-institutional structures.

AVOIDING TUNNEL VISION

Interview on teamwork with Iris Dressler and Hans D. Christ, 1 March 2010, Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart, by Marjatta Hölz

Since 2005, the Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart has had two directors, Iris Dressler and Hans D. Christ. Their contract has recently been prolonged for the next five years. Iris Dressler is an art historian, while Hans D. Christ has an artistic background. They have been working as a team for nearly fifteen years. Their concept for the Württembergischer Kunstverein is collaborative and process-oriented, which means that they often invite other curators and many of their projects are developed in cooperation with other institutions.

We wanted to gain an insider's view of their collaborative working methods. Moreover, we realized that other aspects like institutional critique and the question of how museum institutions differ from an institution like the Kunstverein often occur during discussions about teamwork since their conception of hierarchy is different. In this context, it was interesting that when we called the Kunstverein there was no receptionist. Instead, we were immediately on the phone with Hans D. Christ and Iris Dressler, who agreed on an appointment for an interview at short notice.

Motivation

Marjatta Hölz (MH): What was your motivation for working as a team of two directors? In your lecture at the White Space in Zurich, you already mentioned that this approach helps you avoid 'tunnel vision'.

Iris Dressler (ID): We started working together at the Künstlerhaus Dortmund, where we curated the 1996 exhibition program, collaborating already then with various institutions and artists and focusing on site-specific artistic productions. At that time, I was employed as the coordinator of the Künstlerhaus, and Hans had his studio there. Step by step, this turned into a platform for developing exhibitions. In this period, the program of the Künstlerhaus was curated every year by another team. To be able to work more constantly in our curatorial practice we founded the Hartware MedienKunstverein in 1997 (today directed by Inke Arns), realizing at the beginning exhi-bitions in a quite nomadic manner for different sites (such as the Museum for Occupational Safety or the Union Brewery), later at the Musik- und Kulturzentrum, and finally in the

Phoenix Halle. In 2004 we applied together for the director's position at the Württembergische Kunstverein in Stuttgart, and the board accepted this. In Stuttgart we continued to regularly invite external curators and artists to develop the exhibition program — amongst other things to avoid a certain 'tunnel vision', which you also (or probably especially) risk if you work together over such a long period.

MH: What are the advantages and disadvantages of working as a pair?

ID: Of course the advantage is that you can develop projects, and discuss and manage problems together. The other thing is that it becomes difficult to get away from work.

Collaboration methods

MH: You said that with "process-related collaborating you don't know what comes out at the end." The result is multivocal, even contradictory. How do exhibition visitors react to this? How do you deal with audiences that by contrast prefer one clear thesis?

ID: I think it is important to show that especially

contemporary art cannot be read in one direction, but that it instead offers multiple ways of interpretation. To us it is an important issue to convey this to the public, even though some people, being more and more trained by the consumption of art via headphones, might prefer a linear and unambiguous narrative about art.

MH: In spite of that, don't you need a clear statement as a starting point for any discussion?

ID: In projects like *On Difference* or *Subversive Practices*, the starting points are specific questions and problems that we share with other people. We invite artists and curators dealing with these issues in different contexts and from different perspectives and who themselves are used to open and collaborative ways of working.

MH: The exhibition also has a title.

ID: Sure, but we decide this mostly at a later moment of the process. The point of departure in these projects is never a title nor a certain thesis but an interest in circling around certain open questions and problems.

MH: Concerning your experience with groups: according to you, do teams go through 'stages of team building'; does this work, or is it rather beautiful theory on paper?

ID: Well, our interest in collaborative curatorial projects is not based on a certain neoliberal ideology of efficiency. It is not about building a team of experts that works on the solution of a problem by channeling the different competencies in one direction.

The interest is rather to share knowledge without knowing in advance where this will lead you, and to initiate a process that not only results in one 'product' (e.g. an exhibition), but which also has an impact on the working contexts of the different people involved. This idea of sharing is closer to what you might call 'open source philosophy' than to team management rhetorics nicely written on paper.

MH: You also deal with the space in a flexible way: the artists are not really forced to adapt to fixed constructions.

ID: We basically develop the architectures of exhibitions

— as an important part of the process — in close discussion with the artists and/or curators. With regard to exhibitions like *On Difference* and *Subversive Practices*, which consisted of six to nine sections developed by different curators, we explicitly invited each to propose their own visual displays. As these exhibitions neither follow nor proclaim a homogeneous discourse, it would be fatal to homogenize them finally on a visual level. Instead, these exhibitions show explicitly the different, even contradictory curatorial approaches.

Who does what – sharing

MH: How do you share the work, who does what? What do you decide together, what is an individual task?

ID: Together we basically decide the program and questions with regard to the operational structure of the Kunstverein, including other people like, for example in the latter case, the board and/or the team. At certain moments, we of course need to split our responsibility, for example with regard to the various exhibitions or the different parts related to a project (architecture, catalogue, etc.).

MH: Who gives the annual report at the members' meeting?

ID: At the annual general meeting, the financial situation is presented by our manager and treasurer, while we present the past and upcoming program. Besides the general meeting, we discuss issues related to the Kunstverein at the board meeting, held four times a year. And there is the monthly 'Jour-Fixe', a members' meeting where we talk about the current exhibition and other subjects related to art.

MH: If a member of the association makes a suggestion, this might not fit into your program. Is it hard for you to turn down these proposals?

Carlos Altamirano, *Retratos (Portraits)*, 1979-2007, Digital prints
Exhibition view: *Subversive Practices*, Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart, 2009.
Photo: Serge de Waha

[Hans D. Christ, working in the same room, now joins us for the interview.]

Hans D. Christ (HDC): Many people, not only our members, send us proposals — especially for exhibitions. I guess every art institution is confronted with this. It is fine, but in most cases we of course need to refuse. But there are also requests and proposals from members (and other people) that we act on. There is, for example, the annual members' exhibition, the subject and structure of which we recently discussed with the members.

MH: In your current exhibition *Art and Society*, the members' exhibition, the exhibition architecture with its own statement saves the show, since it holds together the diversity of the exhibited works.

HDC: The architecture was developed by the 'A-team', consisting of 5 persons working in our technical team. As they are also members of the Kunstverein and artists, they applied for the members' exhibition proposing to design the architecture. During the past years, they (as the whole technical team) became more and more involved in the development of the exhibition's displays. So, even though they did not apply with a ready-made concept, but were instead more interested in a collective open process, we accepted their proposal and gave them a 'carte blanche'.

ID: The result is fantastic. They used the left-overs of the displays of the recent regional government's exhibition *Ice Age*, that took place parallel to our program in the Kunstverein's building. They kept most of the materials in the condition they found them, so it was very obvious where the walls etc. came from. In this sense, they also commented on the recent vast cutting of subsidies for culture by the city of Stuttgart, a development that also affects the Kunstverein.

MH: Concerning the *Subversive Practices* with 13 curators - which was your role apart from initiating and coordinating the project?

ID: Basically, it was a moderating role. We discussed the different curatorial proposals by having the whole project in view.

MH: How to involve 13 curators from all over the world in decision-making and project planning?

ID: The process started back in 2007 with the research project *Vivid Radical Memory*, which was initiated by the University of Barcelona and brought together curators, art historians, artists and theorists from Europe and Latin America dealing with conceptual art developed in the so-called 'peripheries' under conditions of political repression. We were soon very interested in initiating an exhibition project on the basis of this network.

As soon as the financing was assured, we invited the curators and started the process with a meeting, where we discussed the general questions, problems and challenges of the project as well as first curatorial ideas. After this meeting, the curators (or curatorial groups) developed their own sections independently, that is, basically in the context of their individual networks. We did not intervene in their choice of artists.

HDC: It was not about finding a consensus, but about confronting different points of view.

MH: How did the collaboration in *Subversive Practices* work in a practical sense, for example when deciding who gets which part of the space?

ID: The gross structure of the space was defined by us, dividing it into nine sections connected to each other in multiple ways.

HDC: After we received the sketches from the different curators, the discussion started, leading to the final detailed floor plan, which was then again slightly shifted during the set-up of the exhibition on site.

Hierarchy and democracy

MH: You said that you want to avoid monolithic discourses, and instead link practice with research. Is there any hierarchy in the team of the Württembergischer Kunstverein?

HDC: Instead of hierarchy, I would speak of responsibility. In a working process like that of *Subversive Practices* conceptual responsibility is spread over many curators. Within the Kunstverein, those involved have different competencies and responsibilities, which basically structures the way of working together.

MH: I would say if there is very little time, then hierarchy could be useful.

ID: Of course we sometimes have to take decisions that not everybody can agree with.

We do not discuss everything with the whole team, since this would make no sense, but rather with those colleagues directly involved in a certain issue. On the other hand, the same colleagues would not discuss every working step with us. Again, when decisions need to be taken that have a long-term effect on the Kunstverein, we discuss them with the board members, as they need to take the responsibility.

HDC: Because we as directors of the Kunstverein are a temporary phenomenon.

Conflict management

MH: You seem to work very peacefully here. What about conflicts? Of course it is difficult to talk about this, but maybe you can give some example of a well-resolved disagreement?

HDC: Well, of course, there are conflicts. Some of them can be solved easily by simply discussing them. Others stay and you need to deal with them. If people for example disagree with our program, we need to accept this.

MH: Which experiences do you have with exhibitions that had to be modified due to a conflict?

ID: In the process of installing the exhibition *Postcapital*, we realized at a certain moment that a huge construction built specifically to display several monitors just looked awful in the space, as it was too monumental and would have destroyed the whole setting. So we needed to keep it out.

HDC: There wasn't any other solution. The person who carried out the construction was involved in the decision and he could finally accept that his work of the last five days had been for nothing.

Internal teamwork and collaboration with external institutions

MH: How does internal teamwork differ from collaborating with external institutions, artists, curators etc.?

ID: The former is related to a continuous, the latter to a temporary process. In a more or less constant rhythm, these two processes intersect. When the artists and/or curators stay here for the set up of the exhibition, this can have a deep impact on the daily life of the institution: Offices turn into 'internet cafes'...

HDC: ... or even artist's studios.

MH: What was your motivation of collaborating with the Staatsgalerie Stuttgart on the Stan Douglas exhibition? Was there another reason apart from getting a new audience, cost sharing, and a larger exhibition?

HDC: At the beginning, there was a very pragmatic reason.

Parallel to our program, the cultural ministry of the region, as in the case of the *Ice Age* exhibition, regulary presents exhibitions in our building (which belongs to the regional government). In 2007 a dinosaur exhibition was planned….

ID: …but the dinosaurs did not fit into the building, so the exhibition was cancelled at our place. We suggested to the cultural ministry to instead charge the Kunstverein to realize an exhibition of contemporary art, namely a solo exhibition with Stan Douglas. This suggestion was finally accepted, but only if a state institution would be involved.

Fortunately, Sean Rainbird, who at that time had just started as the new director of the Staatsgalerie, agreed. So the collaboration, which also made sense in terms of space and funding, and which also offered the possibility to present the work of an artist in two quite different institutions, could start.

HDC: As the Staatsgalerie and the Kunstverein are indeed quite different institutions with quite different ways of working, this process, as you can imagine, also led to some conflicts, especially in the beginning.

ID: But there were also many constructive working processes. The registrars and restaurators of the Staatsgalerie, professionals in dealing with photography, for example also cared about the works presented in our spaces and it was great to work with them.

HDC: One of the Staatsgalerie technicians who initially more or less refused to collaborate finally became very involved.

MH: What happened? Did you say "doesn't work, doesn't exist?"

HDC: It seemed that once he realized the productive and creative part of the project, he decided to be part of it.

Authorship

MH: According to you, what is the meaning of a curator's individual authorship in exhibition making nowadays? What about the danger of name-dropping?

ID: The people involved in an exhibition should be credited, and if an exhibition is curated by 13 curators their names should of course be mentioned in order to make clear the structure of the exhibition. Then there are people responsible for coordination, press, architecture etc., in our case mostly freelancers. I think it is important to give credit to them as well.

MH: So you think it is important to publish all the names?

HDC: It depends on the media. In the catalogue, the press communication or on the website we in general publish all names. In the flyer we mention at least the names of the artists and curators, the latter especially to communicate — as in the case of *Subversive Practices* — an important point of the exhibition: that it does not represent a singular curatorial point of view but offers different perspectives and approaches.

MH: Iris Dressler and Hans D. Christ, thank you very much for the interview.

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Summary

Iris Dressler and Hans D. Christ aim at avoiding one-dimensional discourse, and often invite external curators to their projects. Their process-oriented working method is ambiguous; the final outcome is always open. They see this in analogy to interpreting contemporary art. Since many people (external curators, other institutions) are involved in their projects with their own contributions, they claim that visualizing individual authorship is important.

JOHN-PAUL FELLEY, *THE TRUE DUET*

Interview with Jean-Paul Felley, co-director with Oliver Käser of the Centre Culturel Suisse, Paris, and of attitudes, Geneva, by Véronique Ribordy

Jean-Paul Felley and Olivier Käser have been the co-directors of the Swiss Cultural Centre (CCS) in Paris since 2008. This unusual situation — that is, of two directors assuming responsibility for one single structure, which had previously been run along traditional, hierarchical form — can be explained by the personalities of the directors. Jean-Paul and Olivier are the founders of attitudes, Geneva, which they have co-directed since 1994. attitudes has presented more than 400 artists, and it is one of the best known exhibition structures in Switzerland. Neither a gallery nor an institutional centre of contemporary art, attitudes is independent, due to sponsorship and to the publication of books and artist multiples. As a journalist, I have often had the opportunity to contact attitudes and the Villa Bernasconi

Shahryar Nashat, *Das Beispiel*, attitudes, Genève, Swiss Exhibition Award 2008.

Tobias Putrih, *Cinéma attitudes*, attitudes, 2008.

Andres Lutz & Anders Guggisberg, *Il était une fois sur la Terre*,
Centre Culturel Suisse Paris, 2009.
Photo: Marc Domage

in Lancy. It also seemed feasible to compare the only two co-curated entities in French-speaking Switzerland.

Motivation

Veronique Ribordy (VR): What was your motivation to work as a team of two directors?

Jean-Paul Felley (JPF): The curatorial team is very topical. We recently discussed this issue with the co-directors of the Avignon festival. True co-directorship is rare, and many such ventures are artificial.

We started working together naturally. Our first joint project was a Botta exhibition in 1988-1989, while we were still students at the University of Geneva. We had known each other since 1985, being the only two students with exactly the same orientation (history of contemporary art, fine arts). Olivier was a lecturer at the Centre for Contemporary Art (CCA), and I joined after a work experience at the Foundation P. Gianadda. Our exchange continued thereafter. After a while at the CCA, we wanted to have our own projects and to work for ourselves. We created attitudes in 1994. When we left the CCA, we had no more funds coming in, but we bet on our own structure.

Who does what — Sharing

VR: Do you share the work?

JPF: The specificity of attitudes is precisely the way we work. At attitudes, we have no structure, but instead do everything ourselves and each of us can do anything. Our first goal was to be able to leave and to travel in rotation. This requires very strong knowledge of each other and to be very aware of what the other does. It's like cooking. Everyone has strengths and weaknesses: I'm more comfortable with numbers and computers, Olivier prefers to write articles or have human relationships, and he is very good at public relations. But we are still interchangeable, even in these respects.

We take all decisions jointly; this is the huge advantage and equally the tremendous disadvantage of co-managed ventures.

An artificial duet, which meets precisely for a situation, for an examination, and yet which has never gone the extra mile to become profoundly acquainted, cannot be successful. You should know how we'd live with each other. Every proposal must pass through the other's filter. With some projects, it is impossible to convince the other that they are worth undertaking (and yet both must be in agreement). We do not need long sessions; everything is done by direct contact and more recently also by email. The sessions are our weak point in directing the Centre Culturel. We don't need sessions for ourselves. We have the same email address, we sign with both names. When things need to be discussed, we put the mail in the box marked 'draft' for the other to see. New technologies give us the opportunity to work at a distance very easily. We rarely have a problem with this mode of operation, except with the political stakeholders, who are not used to dealing with two people.

We decide to go alone or together to the appointments. For a major project with artists, the presence of both is essential at the first encounter. Then we share.

We need to spend time together so it will work. We have two places, but the same office and the same attitude toward the office, working side by side, in Paris and Geneva. We spend two days a week together. All this came naturally.

Conflicts

VR: How do you resolve conflicts?

JPF: Recently, we felt the need to take time, discuss and reflect alone, far from the internet and phone. We spent a few days in the mountains; we talked about our desires, about artists and projects. The moment you have no more time to talk creates a problem. The project is built upon and through dialogue.

The only thing we do not share is our privacy. We rarely invite each other to our respective homes. We have our separate families, friends, and hobbies. I would say that we share 89% of our time ...

In Paris, we have to assemble the team once a week. It is imperative to take the time to make assessments, to share our feelings about past exhibitions, and to discuss what has stuck.

VR: Can it happen that you work independently?

JPF: Between us, we have no need for independence. Our personal independence lies in our privacy.

Sometimes one works without the other. Olivier likes to write articles for magazines. He easily accepts all offers; I refuse more easily, especially when I fear overloading myself. It is important that everyone is happy with his life. The moments of stress occur due to a lack of time. It's like a couple's life.

Sometimes it is impossible to convince the other to include an artist in a project. The decision is taken very quickly; it does not take much time. It is rare that one of us makes a proposal of no interest to the other. But in case of doubt, the other will make a difference.

Conflicts arise suddenly and can be violent. You should know how to decompress. We like to play ping-pong. A few minutes are enough.

Hierarchy

VR: How is this lack of hierarchy perceived at the CCS?

JPF: At CCS, some people have difficulties in understanding that we are two directors, a kind of mum and dad ... but nobody can divide us. To avoid division and conflicts, we must be quick and clear to inform each other. And in case of doubt, the first one who said it is always right.

Authorship

VR: How do your projects reflect your bi-vocal language?

JPF: We don't pretend to have more than one authorship, except in certain texts. We co-sign everything, editorials and exhibitions. We have also the same business card, with both names. I don't know any other team that does the

same. For the CSS, the place is more important than we are and it must survive its directors.

Advantages - Disadvantages

VR: What are the advantages and disadvantages of being a curatorial team?

JPF: Now art is global and requires extensive knowledge and public relationships. As we are two people, our presence is increased. Another advantage is that each of us is a filter where the other can test one's judgment.

VR: Any disadvantages?

JPF: The disadvantage is that we have low returns. We both work full-time, but are paid for two part-time positions. In Paris, we have no official residence. We obtained 20% each for programming, in addition to a shared management salary. Attitudes gives us 'un petit quelque chose en plus.' We have kept our publishing activities and some outside projects, like *Beirut* in 2011. In Paris, we focus exclusively on contemporary culture. Each event (visual art, theatre, music etc.) receives the same communication. We have replaced posters with flyers and a monthly newspaper that allows in depth work on each topic. The library will be transformed into a cafe-bookshop, opening May 8. This will be the only place in Paris where you will be able to obtain Swiss newspapers on Sunday.

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Summary

Jean-Paul Felley and Olivier Käser have worked together since they met at the University in Geneva more than 20 years ago. They consider themselves a real curatorial team, unlike 'artificial' curatorial teams formed for occasional projects. They pretend to have a complete collaboration and to be interchangeable. They share all decision-making and spend '89% of their time' together. They know each other inside out and have the same vision, but conflicts can occur due to lack of time, stress, different work rhythms (Olivier accepts more additional duties). Conflicts seem quickly resolved, most of the time by discussion or by ping-ponging, or sometimes by spending a few days in the mountains 'far from the internet and phone'. They have a common signature for all aspects of their job, and their names appear jointly on their business cards. They see the advantage of being two; each serves as a filter to the other's judgment. Disadvantages sometimes arise from the political stakeholders involved in their ventures, and also from being paid one salary divided into two.

FRANÇOIS MAMIE AND HÉLÈNE MARIÉTHOZ, *THE ORGANIC WAY*

Interview on teamwork with Françoise Mamie and Hélène Mariéthoz, 26 March 2010, Villa Bernasconi Lancy, by Véronique Ribordy

For ten years, Françoise Mamie and Hélène Mariéthoz have been the co-directors of the Villa Bernasconi in Lancy and the cultural delegates of the city of Lancy, Canton of Geneva. The Villa Bernasconi is part of the cultural department of the city of Lancy. Under their direction, the Villa Bernasconi has become a point of reference for a generation of artists. The two co-directors have placed

June Papineau, *Peau de séquoia*, mixed media, 2009, in *Chassez le Naturel*,
Villa Bernasconi, 2009.

the Villa on the institutional map in Switzerland due to
their very serious and highly committed work, even if they
have the modest income of a small town (Lancy). But the
audience comes largely from neighbouring Geneva.

Françoise Mamie comes from theatre where she had previously
experimented with a directorial team. She formed a co-
directorship with a former candidate for the Villa
Bernasconi. This first collaboration functioned until the
entrance of Hélène Mariéthoz some years later to replace
the outgoing co-director. Hélène Mariéthoz had already
gained experience with teamworking as a journalist.

They have now already been working in tandem for 10 years.
Françoise works 90%, Hélène 70%.

When I began to work on curatorial teams, I was curious
to better understand this atypical structure. The Villa
Bernasconi is the only public institution specialized in
contemporary art and linked to municipality (in French-
speaking Switzerland) to be directed by a team. The CAN in
Neuchâtel or FriArt in Fribourg have a traditional hierarchy.

Geneva is also where Olivier Kaeser and Jean-Paul Felley
have founded attitudes, a non-institutional structure with
a completely different way of working. But we can suppose
that only such a place, with a large audience and large
possibilities of subsidies, can afford the creation of a
directorial team, and a curatorial one in these two cases.

Thus, a kind of comparison between the two structures, one
involving two men, the other two women, seems to make sense.

Motivation

Veronique Ribordy (VR): What was your motivation to work as
a team of two directors?

Françoise Mamie (FM): When I applied for this post, I met
Caroline Coutau, also retained by the politics. We then
proposed a co-directorship.

Hélène Mariéthoz (HM): Politics supports shared jobs
in Lancy.

FM: When Caroline left, I would have been able to continue
on my own, but the two posts exceeded a full-time position.
I also wanted to go on in tandem because I saw the
advantages of working this way, especially the dynamism,
the creativity, and the exchanges.

HM: It is more comfortable to be two. Françoise already
had the know-how. I had also previously experienced
teamwork when I worked for a newspaper.

FM: I came to Villa Bernasconi from a co-directing a
theatre. It was different in the sense that we did not
have the same skills: I had the administrative part,
he had the artistic one.

VR: How do you share the work, who does what?

FM: This evolved in an organic way, during the work.

HM: We have a common basis, the projects, the calendar, the budget, the line (contemporary art, Comic book, readings). Each of us likes doing everything. We decided to alternate the responsibility for the outdoor festival in May, which calls for a lot of work, and to rotate exhibition management.

FM: This alternation was decided four years ago, to avoid a duplication of work. We share the same office; and we discuss our projects. We alternate our own projects and those from outside. At first, we discuss the choice of projects.

HM: We love the curatorial work and the search for artists. It also asks for more energy and risk-taking.

VR: What do you decide together?

FM: The projects are distributed according to our respective enthusiasms, but we assume joint programming responsibility towards our superiors. Everything concerning the Villa is co-managed on the basis of sharing and alternating responsibilities. Politics leave us free in our choices.

Keiko Machida, *Jardin d'hiver*, slide film, synthetic flowers, black light, 2009, in *Chassez le Naturel*, Villa Bernasconi, 2009.

Pierre Ardouvin, *Soleil couchant*, in *Série noire*, Villa Bernasconi, 2007.

Hierarchy

VR: Can you please give us some information about the teamwork of your institution in general?

HM: We have an administrative assistant. One part-time person and here and there help with the guided tours, guards, the May festival in the park etc.

Conflicts

VR: How do you resolve conflicts and disagreements in your teamwork?

HM: We resolve disputes by arguing, and also by alternating projects.

FM: It happens that faced with uncertainties, we help each other in one way or another. We voice our doubts at the beginning. When the project is chosen, we take the responsibility together. When we agree with the choice, we can move.

HM: We keep involving each other in the process.

FM: We share an office, so we can hear and follow each other.

HM: We gave up holding scheduled weekly meetings; we did not manage to maintain the rhythm.

FM: It is not necessary because we share the same office. The misunderstandings can arise during the periods when we do not have time to speak. Errors of communication can engender problems. Otherwise, it takes place naturally.

Decisions

VR: Which decisions do you take together?

HM: Well, first and foremost all budget decisions. As a public institution, we undertake no fundraising. On the contrary, we manage public funds and distribute subsidies.

FM: But sometimes we receive support from the Nestlé Art Foundation.

HM: We have no user instructions for conflicts. We try to speak.

FM: It is very close to the functioning of a couple.

HM: The solution is outlined when we are finally able to speak. It often happens after insufficient communication.

FM: My receipe is to wait until tension subsides, and then I can speak.

HM: The conflicts occur when territories are badly defined, when an exhibition is not attributed to one of us, or when we make decisions in the absence of the other. One of the reasons for proposing alternation is to better define territories in order to avoid duplication. It is also a question of going faster with only one decision-maker.

FM: With my previous colleague, we split tasks, like the catalogue, technology, transport or contacts with the artists. Alternation strikes me as a better and more polyvalent solution. It is also necessary to say that the program is much heavier today.

Authorship

VR: How important is individual authorship to your exhibition making?

HM: No tasks are reserved for one of us.

FM: I know what interests Hélène.

HM: What changes is our investment in a project. The progress of the work is individual, but the result falls under our joint responsibility. It is not a question of authorship. We work in a public service; we are on duty for the artists. Exhibition is not the place where to leave our signature.

FM: I share this point of view. I find that the notion of the curator is over-estimated. A show is good when the director disappears.

HM: We are administrators. We do not have to exist personally. If we were independent, we should sign. It is not the case.

FM: But when we organize in situ creations, we sometimes have the impression of being authors slightly more.

VR: What exactly is your line as curators?

HM: We have two main exhibitions lines, comic strip and contemporary Art.

FM: There is a historical reason for comic strip. The city was used to rent the Villa for private holidays. When the cultural service was created, we began making exhibitions in the park, then indoors, outside and indoors. At the beginning, it served a large family oriented audience. We developed contemporary art and are fortunate to have space. The space can seem complicated, but it actually turns out great.

HM: The Villa has meanwhile gained greater recognition and visibility.

Advantages and disadvantages

VR: What are the advantages

and disadvantages of being a curatorial collective?

FM: It is necessary to be organized and attentive to others. If codes change without explanations, it can hurt the other. The disadvantage is, it can be a constraint.

HM: Another disadvantage is the necessity for discussion and to have to account for one's work. Being two can stop a process, because nobody intervenes to mediate in case of opposition.

FM: It happens that we decide to see an artist again to modify a judgment.

HM: It allows us to get around a problem.

FM: Differences of opinion occur more often about details than basic questions. The guiding bottomline does not change.

HM: The difficulty sometimes comes when it is necessary to tell artists we are two people. The advantages are a larger opening and more visibility. One possible disadvantage is that two leaders sometimes creates confusion not conveying a clear sense of directorship.

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Summary

Françoise Mamie and Hélène Mariéthoz are the co-directors of the Villa Bernasconi in Lancy, specialized in contemporary art with four or five exhibitions a year. After six years of working together, they decided to rotate the managing of exhibitions. The reason seems to be practical: they want to avoid a duplication of work. They seem reluctant to share the same thoughts about artists. The rhythm of taking decisions seems different for each of them. But they see advantages in co-directorship by having more dynamism, a larger opening, and more visibility. Under their co-directorship, the Villa Bernasconi has attained greater visibility and recognition.

POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT AS A BASIS FOR COLLABORATION

Interview with What, How and for Whom, Curatorial Collective and directors of Gallery Nova, Zagreb, by Isin Önol

What, How & for Whom/WHW is a curatorial collective formed in 1999 and based in Zagreb, Croatia. Its members are Ivet Curlin, Ana Devic, Nataša Ilic and Sabina Sabolovic, and designer and publicist Dejan Kršic. WHW organizes a range of production, exhibition, publishing and lecture projects, and since 2003 has been directing city-owned Gallery Nova in Zagreb.

Their approach to collaborative work was seen during the course of their exhibition entitled *Collective Creativity* and shown at Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel in 2005, which presented more than forty international artistic positions dedicated to the idea of collective work. In their suggestions for the possibilities for problematizing issues through collective thinking, they raised significant questions as a means of critiquing the dominant systems of politics and art as well as their institutions.

The latest WHW program, *Ground Floor America*, is based on the same-name book written by Ilf and Petrov. It consists of a series of exhibitions and lectures. What has kept the collective together for so many years is their political involvement, which constitutes a strong basis for their discussions and projects.

WHW curated the latest Istanbul Biennale, which was exceptionally controversial. The exhibition entitled *What Keeps Mankind Alive?* was a continuation of their projects in general. However, the Biennial was based on Bertolt Brecht and his play *Three Penny Opera*; contradictorily, according to many people, one of the largest holdings in Turkey was its sponsor, and WHW hence met with fierce criticism. Our interest in interviewing WHW was derived from their very successful joint effort and solidarity in digesting and responding to these criticisms very smartly and sincerely.

Motivation

Isin Önol (IÖ): What was your primary motivation in coming together in the first place? Ten years after, what keeps this group together? What are your motivations to sustain the group today?

WHW: We got together on a particular project, which was the first exhibition that we did and from which we also have our name *What, How, & for Whom*. This was in 1999, when we started working on the exhibition dedicated to the 152nd anniversary of the Communist Manifesto. Just as with our projects now, this particular exhibition was very much rooted in a particular local and political situation. At the time, the right-wing, heavily nationalistic politics that were characteristic of Croatia in the 1990s finally started to loosen their grip. In the confusion of the so-called 'transition', with its rediscovery of capitalism, crumbling social infrastructure, the quest for the holy grail of national identity, and a complete suppression of socialist history, we felt intellectually closer to the so-called 'civic scene' that developed in

the 1990s than to a system of art institutions. Especially influential in the founding of WHW was Arkzin, which started in 1991 as the fanzine of the Antiwar Campaign of Croatia and later become a publishing house. Arkzin was a major forum (for a couple of years in the mid-90s, virtually the only one) for independent and alternative critical information and debate. In 1998, they published a 150th anniversary edition of the Communist Manifesto by Marx and Engels, with an introduction by Slavoj Žižek. Although Žižek was a theoretical star, the book went totally unnoticed, and they approached one of us to organize a contemporary art exhibition, to see if an exhibition could trigger a public debate on the issues the Manifesto might raise in Croatia, related to a suppressed socialist past. Organizing an exhibition on the Communist Manifesto immediately seemed to have the potential to intervene in the field of art on all levels, in terms of content, obviously, and in terms of organizational know-how, as well as in terms of assessing and building local and international contexts. The goal of these interventions was to oppose an individualistic understanding of cultural work.

We did not start immediately as a group; there was no 'we' from the start, but each one of us was aware of a chance and responsibility to become 'we'.

Somehow this first project went really well. We were really happy with our own communication and with what we came up with, and how it was accepted in the local circumstances. After that exhibition, which was dedicated to the relation between art and economy, we chose the name of our What, How, & for Whom coming from the three basic questions of every economic organization. We decided to stay together and work together and try to keep in mind these questions, which
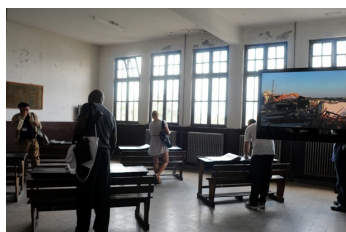
General views from the 11th Istanbul Biennal.
Photo: Nathalie Barki (Left Above).
Photo: Ilgin Earslan (Left Below)
Photo: Not given (Right).

are always overlapping in reflecting on what we want to do, for whom we are doing it, and of course this important how, which shapes this realistic way in which the project will develop.

Our practice today is still influenced by the social conditions we work under in Croatia, where the dominant cultural setting is characterized by an identity-based understanding of culture, especially with regard to national identity. This has not changed much with the recent 'normalization' and our work is opposed to this dominant understanding of culture, instead trying to propose different models of cultural and collective work under very specific circumstances. In our approach, we try to translate different social and cultural conditions. In this sense, our work is never really about Croatia, but about Croatia as a symptom of the formation of post-socialist national identity.

Collaboration Methods

IÖ: How does the teamwork function in the production process of WHW? Do you intuitively know that certain work would belong to certain people? Are there individual tasks?

WHW: Over the years, we have repeatedly structured and restructured our collective work in a way that we support each other in things that one person knows or does better than the others. But, on the other hand, we try not to divide tasks over too long a period of time, and instead create separate professional fields within our work, so that for example one person would become the press specialist, another is responsible for production of the artworks, and yet another for finances or fundraising and so on. Somehow each one of us is involved with everything, from developing the concept to the last phases of realization for each project, and even if one of us is responsible for a certain part at one particular moment, the other three are following what is happening; they don't have the luxury of 'switching off', at least not entirely. This enables us to continue to learn new things by doing them and to support each other. Of course, often things get divided by default, as somebody does a certain thing better and faster and there is a crises, but we try to constantly renegotiate and re-examine how we divide the work so that the group roles, which inevitably form just as in

any group process, do not become ossified. This sliding between the various roles among the four of us also helps us to keep the level of enjoyment in our work, because what one does best is not always what one enjoys most.

IÖ: How do you approach the concepts of 'hierarchy' and 'democracy' in your decision-making process?

WHW: Both in the division of work and in our collective decision process, we are opposed to the notion of hierarchical professionalism. We believe that WHW as a collective of equal members insists on an alternative model of cultural work in present times, opposed to the notion of individual genius and its assistants, in art, and in the wider cultural context. On the other hand, hierarchies emerge in all groups and their manifestations are often very different, triggered by various situations and processes. First of all, one has to recognize them, realize that they exist, then to become aware of their structure and what is exactly going on. Only after that do you try to untangle them and to break them down. But really important is to set up things

from the beginning in a way that prevent hierarchies among us from emerging, because no one is happy with them. We make all important decisions by consensus, and just as every consensus, this is a lot of work: it takes much more time to talk things through than it would have taken to make a decision in some other way, like voting. It is important that none of the decisions we make makes any single one of us uncomfortable. Also, one should not overestimate the power of consensus: some people are more articulate, or more patient, or more whatever than others, so you have to make sure that what is democratic in consensus does not get cast away. In the end, it's always about an awareness of processes that the group is going through.

Authorship

IÖ: Has the notion of 'authorship' ever become problematic within the collective work of WHW? How do you deal with this notion?

WHW: As we mentioned previously, we are opposed to the idea of individual 'genius', and so far we did not have any serious issues over 'authorship' - we are all authors, in collaboration with artists, writers, theoreticians, and especially designer Dejan Kršic, who is also member of WHW, of all WHW projects. Topics and

ideas for exhibitions and projects appear among us in a rather organic way, from discussions on political situations or things that are happening, on things that are in crisis or are burning issues that we feel strongly about and then we start discussing: "How can we address it?" Or sometimes they arise from our own interests, or from a lack of knowledge that makes us feel that we should do something. In any case, the moment one of us puts an idea on the table, everybody influences it so that it is no longer anyone's particular idea but immediately changes in this process of communication.

Conflict Management

IÖ: What kinds of strategies do you use in cases of disagreement? What are your methods of conflict resolution?

WHW: Disagreements and misunderstandings are part of normal group process, and we try to deal with them by talking, talking, and talking - as we said, we make decisions by consensus. Sometimes we also try to introduce some rules, and they have proved to be quite useful as tools in certain occasions, because most of the conflict for us did not come from disagreements on content and programmatic issues, but from a lack of time and from the administrative burden

that has steadily increased during the ten years we have been working together. But as in all long-term relationships, sometimes we also tend to neglect some things and hope that they will pass. And that maybe the dynamics will change in time, in the process, and so on. This can be productive, and sometimes it doesn't work; the issue then has to be opened up, and we have to go back to the talking method.

IÖ: Do you see any relation between the sustainability of the collective creativity and gender?

WHW: We believe the fact that we are a self-organized and self-governed collective, opposed to the notions of hierarchical professionalism, already has a political dimension. This bears more weight than the fact that we are a women's collective. However, we support the position of feminism and try to oppose a backlash against many rights—women's rights included—that is threatening to cancel the achievements of the decades of people's struggles. For us, considerations about the social construction (and constriction) of gender are inseparable from questions of general human emancipation. Today the adjective 'Marxist' is often used in a nostalgic way or as a simplistic label for dismissing polemical opponents

(Marxist = Stalinist = totalitarianism = Gulag). We do not claim to be a 'Marxist' collective, not if central concepts of Marxism are the Party and the proletariat, nevertheless we do believe that a 'communist hypothesis', as Alain Badiou clearly delineates in *The Meaning of Sarkozy* has to be nurtured, and that position is central for our work.

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Summary

WHW not only uses collectivity as an instrument for producing work, but moreover problematizes the collectivity itself, considering it as a strategy for critiquing the art system, the 'bourgeois concept of public space', and the "resistance to the dominant market mechanism for which a value is still based on the authorship of artistic genius."[1] In this respect, their methodology of working as a collective is not simply a solution for practical utility, but also a very conscious political statement, closely related to their subject matters.

1
What, How & for Whom,
"New Outlines of the Possible",
in *Collective Creativity*,
Exhibition Catalogue, Kunsthalle
Fridericianum, 2005.

General view from the 11th Istanbul Biennal.
Photo: Ilgin Erarslan

Members of WHW from left to right: Ana Devic, Nataša Ilic, Ivet Curlin, and Sabina Sabolovic. View from the press conference of the 11th Istanbul Biennial, 2009.
Photo: Ilgin Erarslan

PEOPLE OF
THE 21st CENTURY

By Mara-Luisa Müller, Nicola Ruffo, Radu Vlad Tartan,
Karen Weinert

"People are shaped by what they eat, by the air and light in which they move, by the work they do or do not do, and also by the peculiar ideology of their class. One can learn more about these ideologies — perhaps more than could be learnt from long-winded reports or accusing comments — merely by glancing at the pictures."[1]

Menschen des 21. Jahrhunderts (People of the 21st Century) is a series of photographs taken by Karen Weinert and Thomas Bachler to paraphrase the work of the famous German photographer August Sander. Sander's ambition in *Menschen des 20. Jahrhunderts (People of the 20st Century)* was to create a photographic portrait of German society in the period between the two World Wars. While several of his most striking images have achieved iconic status individually, it is within the context of this comprehensive catalogue of social existence that they attain their full meaning. Sanders divided society into seven sections, attributing special importance to the representation of artists. Taking up this aspect of Sander's work, the images shown in this article focus specifically on people working in the arts today. Both document changing social reality. Today, just as back then, the photographs exhibit identity and individuality as a masked ball of our society. Unlike Sander's rural world, the art world of today is highly specialized, economized, and most recently ecologicalized. Art is constantly interacting with social trends. The following personalities give today's art world a face. They were portrayed at their workplace, and asked the same set of questions. But enough said, as Döblin wrote almost a century ago, more is to be learned from a picture than from several books.

[1]
Alfred Döblin: Preface to *August Sander: Anlitz der Zeit (Face of Our Time)*
Transmare Verlag/Kurt Wolff Verlag: Munich, 1929.

HEIKO S.

Entertainment Photographer

Your idea of art

Art should entertain and it should trigger conversation and discussion.

What you do for a living

I trained very traditionally as a photographer, and spent a fair deal of time in the lab developing pictures. Since the digitalisation of photography, the profession of the photographer has strictly speaking become obsolete.

Everyone is constantly taking pictures of everyone and everything, until the photos disappear in some file on your computer never to be seen again.

Once, when setting up my large-scale camera for a wide-angle architectural shot, people actually stopped to ask me how old my camera was — yes, it is the same that you can see hidden behind the cloth on the picture — I had only just purchased it and it had cost me several thousands! This almost belittling attitude was starting to get on my nerves and since I have been credited with having a talent for acting I decided to combine my profession with my vocation.

In a way I am entertaining tourists, ridiculing their continuous taking of snapshots. Once in a while, they even ask me whether I can photograph them, which makes my heart beat faster. Yes, sometimes it is fun, sometimes sad, but at least in this way I have the impression that I still contribute something positive to the world of photography.

Your most memorable moment

It's good that you ask me this. I just remembered a little boy who asked me to take a picture of him with his camera, which I did, of course. He wanted to see the result immediately and together we looked at the display. I asked him to give me the picture as a gift and pocketed his camera. Naturally, the boy was outraged and so I made the

Heiko S.
Photo: Karen Weinert, Thomas Bachler

following proposal: I would take a picture of him with my own camera and in return he would receive his back; but I would delete his picture and instead would give him mine (he agreed, thinking that he would get my camera.)

So I take my Polaroid camera (nowadays I guard these films like a treasure) and press the trigger. For him it must have been magic watching the picture slowly appear. I handed him back his camera without the picture, which I had meanwhile deleted, and also gave him the Polaroid. He was still so stupefied and impressed that I had allowed him to use my camera and do the 'magic' himself. He gave me the resulting picture, which is now slowly fading like my memory of this moment.

Your goal in life

I would love to work again as a photographer, once the trend for digital photography has passed and people start to appreciate the quality of commissions or art photography again. Currently, I rather see myself in the role of an intermediary, or better, as someone who keeps the tradition of photography alive.

MIRCEA REMUS P.

Your idea of art

I've never really had the chance to develop one. Why? I am always outside the galleries, theaters, museums, showrooms, waiting in line, doing my job… And sometimes waiting so long for something makes you not wanting it at all when the time comes...

What do you do for a living

Oh?! Can't you see? Isn't it obvious? I do this: I hold the places in line for others' hot tickets.

Your most memorable moment

None…

Oh no, wait…, yes… there is one actually – I'll remember it forever – back in first grade when I kissed Dana behind the window's velvet curtain. She was the prettiest girl in class.

Your goal in life

Sitting here all day makes me forget about myself and my situation. But if you ask me right now to think of one… it would be this: Make enough money to buy a fancy car, go back and find Dana, invite her out for a coffee. But we both know this is not going to happen. Let's get real.

TANJA N.

Your idea of art

I think if something is declared to be art, then that is what makes it art… Whether it is good art or not is another question. And that is not really of great interest here.

What do you do for a living

I am currently working as a sponsorship acquisitions representative, meaning that I am trying to keep large multinationals happy and content. Finances are crucial in any aspect of the art world and all threads run together in my position. I host special art dinners for the sponsors and other events such as tours around art fairs, exhibitions, and museums.

Your most memorable moment

It is a wonderful feeling to pull together a successful sponsorship proposal after long hours of planning, organizing, and courting the clients. This is memorable every time.

Your goal in life

I am already at a relatively advanced point in my career, but my ultimate professional goals tend to change and develop. I definitely want to continue focusing on clients, and I aspire to a role defined by its increasing scope for international success and recognition.

Mircea Remus P.
Photo: Karen Weinert, Thomas Bachler

Tanja N.
Photo: Karen Weinert, Thomas Bachler

ANDRÉ F.

Your idea of art

The more you like art, the more art you like. It's just a matter of paying attention. I don't like walking through museums with these old oily paintings of dead painters like Picasso, Van Gogh - you name it. Art lies everywhere on the streets.

What you do for a living

My heart belongs to street art. Therefore, I clean, restore, curate, and repaint graffiti in an urban environment. I would say my profession is an art in itself, one that is highly influenced by Aktionskunst. It is generally about sight-specific interventions that are mostly not legal.

I would call my art nearly subversive. I usually work the whole day to prepare the process and prepare myself mentally of course. At night I do whatever it takes - very quickly. The act of my performance is not the important part. Probably you have heard of Paul Klee's idea of making something visible. That's what my art is about. My work certainly doesn't look like art. But I think that's exactly the powerful thing about it. My art is not something which has a very big first impact. It is sneaking into our society. Of course it's a very slow process. It's nothing you can sell on the art market. I have been working internationally now for the last five years I would say. Next year I have a very big project happening in New York.

Your most memorable moment

I was stuck in an underground car park in South London with my old Cinquecento. When I went to the trunk to search for my tools to repair the car, I suddenly discovered something nobody has probably ever noticed before. I saw an unknown Banksy graffiti on the wall right beside me. For me it was like a fata morgana. That would have been the best piece I would ever have worked on! Unfortunately, the security guard turned up right away and called the police, because my car was blocking the entrance.

Your goal in life

In my life, I try to negotiate the fine line between personal vision and anonymous public art. It's all about an idea at a certain time in a certain city or urban sur-rounding. I try to understand the cultural specifics of a place and then try to respond with my work to the given street art mentality. I hope that my work will influence a lot of artists in a way they have influenced me. Like that, my work will spread secretly in our growing urban society.

TOM L.

Your idea of art

I would say that art lives and dies.

What you do for a living

The profession of the art-recycler was born on the day art started dying. As we can all recall, art before our time was immortal, in everlasting appreciation, imbued by the glossy power of aesthetics and in those days also by the status of a high class component. Nowadays, its survival rate is subject to and subdued by trends of our fast changing society, reduced to more or less ephemeral economic, social, and political areas. Art is made, not so much created, and supposed to be case-specific, suitable, and everywhere. So, the art-recycler is more than a new trend, it is a noble curatorial path.

Your most memorable moment

The most memorable moments of my career are those when I succeed in saving one work of art from the cruel depravation of ignorance and its imminent burial in the cultural scrapyard.

Your goal in life

My ideal of happiness coincides with my goals in life. Mostly like a 'Miss World,' I wish and fight for all 'died' or forgotten art I can revive and spotlight again. Art as a product? Then I have a mission!

André F., Photo: Karen Weinert, Thomas Bachler (left).
Tom L., Photo: Karen Weinert, Thomas Bachler (right).

STRUCTURES IN COLLABORATION INSTITUTIONAL NETWORKING AND INDIVIDUAL STRAT- EGIES UNCOVERED

By Valentine Meyer, Anastasia Papakonstantinou, Silvia Simoncelli, Anca Sinpalean

Collaboration is a principal issue in the artistic world as a number of books, symposia, and exhibitions devoted to this topic in recent years well demonstrate. It has a variety of meanings, since the production process in the art system is very complex and comprises a lot of different phases. From the artist's studio to the museum wall, from the curator's idea to the public sphere, collaboration in the process of the making of an exhibition can assume very different forms and include a number of different actors. It was especially around 1990 that a new wave of interest in collaboration arose, as it was perceived as an alternative to the predominant focus on the individual and a way to question the concepts of production, authorship and audience, a 'Zeitgeist' that the theory of relational aesthetics expressed so well. Increasingly, collaboration between artists, between artists and curators, between institutions, have become more complex and difficult to describe. In approaching this topic, it is therefore necessary to try to understand "how these heterogeneous collaborations are structured and motivated. [...] Concepts like collaboration, cooperation, collective action, relationality, interaction and participation are used and often confused, although each of them has its own specific connotations."[1]

In developing our group's inquiry into collaboration strategies, we first tried to better specify which different types of behaviours are gathered under the cooperation umbrella by using simple questions. What are the strategies undergoing collaborations? Which needs are behind them? What possibilities of breaking boundaries between the different actors involved do they present?

ORGANISATION defines a structure where each member of the staff has a specific task to perform, resulting in a hier- archy that can be visualised in an organisation chart — as in the case of museums, galleries, or large-scale artist studios. When confronted with the pressure of a structure demanding respect for its public role and institutional relationships, also creativity has to comply with strict sets of rules. In contrast, COOPERATION defines a strategy where individuals with an independent and equally strong identity decide to share some part of their experience to pursue common goals or to research themes of common interest. This can be the case of artist collectives or curatorial teams, but also institutional partnerships are very im- portant in this respect (as Christian Brändle, director of the Zurich Museum of Design illustrates, and Mario Gorni, founder of the Milan C/O and DOCVA documentation centre

very well expresses). Associ- ations are also valid tools that benefit from a combina- tion of different identities (we met Antoine de Galbert, art collector and founder of La Maison Rouge, Paris, and Irene Calderoni, curator at Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin, who are both part of the FACE network of private art foundations).

PARTICIPATION, on the other hand, describes a situation where individuals are given the possibility of contri- buting to a project, within certain instructions or a specific kind of relational process that can either be determined by artists in their creative process (as in the case of Delia Popa, a Romanian artist) or given by an open curatorial strategy (we met Andrea Thal at les complices*, Zurich, for an account of this).With a basic set of questions and a map describing networks of collaborations drawn by each participant, we indended to take a closer and somehow disenchanted look at what 'getting together' means in the art world.

1
M. Lind, "The Collaborative Turn" in J. Billing, M. Lind and L. Nilsson (eds.), *Taking the Matter Common Hands: On Contemporary Art and Collaborative Practices*, London, Black Dog Publishing, 2007.

LES COMPLICES*

Interview with Andrea Thal by Valentine Meyer and Silvia Simoncelli

les complices* is a non- profit art space in Zurich, curated by Andrea Thal. Its program places a strong emphasis on production, with exhibitions incorporating intensive debates that take into account an awareness of social networks within which artists work and an interest in self-organised local and international networking with like-minded individuals and groups. The name les complices* represents a collective, conspiratorial process, which does not divide into traditional roles such as curator, artist or critic, but instead aims to

question these positions by allowing a varied process. (www.lescomplices.ch)

V. Meyer and S. Simoncelli (VM + SS): Which occasion did you first work in a collaborative way?

Andrea Thal (AT): I started working in a collaborative way consistently already when I was still a practising artist. I was then interested in the role of women in punk rock music, intended as a whole world consisting of sound, image, and lyrics. I also collaborated with a band at that time. My interest in this theme was mainly focused on lesbian history in the 1970s and 80s, and I couldn't have done the related pro- jects I have done by myself. Of course the status of art- authorship was very present at the time and was also questioned. If you refer to my current experience with les complices*, I have to say that the practice of organising events came along with my work as an artist in quite a natural way. This is also why I don't consider myself a curator, but I would describe my practice as an intersection of my background interests and activities; this is true inasmuch as I come from practising art, but also because I have been trained as a photographer and studied theory for some time.

VM + SS: How would you describe your collaboration with the people involved with les complices*?

AT: There are a lot of different levels. Firstly, I talk a lot and share opinions with some artists I really feel close to, in terms of sensitiveness and interests, such as Georg Rutishauser. Then I have a strong collaboration with Anna Frei, with whom I do the graphics and communi- cation for les complices*. This is very important for me because I am interested in finding ways of conveying through graphic design the idea and the contents of les complices*. For me it is not a matter of invitation cards, nor merely an emphasis on

the names of the people involved. It is mostly about being able to show how things happening at les complices* are interrelated. Then, of course, there are the artists, researchers, activists, and theorist who present their projects in the space.

Referring to collaboration in the exhibition process, talking is always the starting point. All projects are developed especially for this space. This is also why it is normally quite a long process; it can take up to a year and a half, maybe two. But I am mostly interested in producing the exhibitions or the projects, and this of course is not just something related to the financial but mostly to the discursive process. When defining collaboration, it is important for me to understand it as a form of complicity, that is, a sort of instability between the roles of the people involved or how the space functions. This is not a gallery, neither a institution nor an art school, and although what happens here is close to what happens in those places, it is more a matter of inclusion and of different formats overlapping. When developing an idea for a show, it is always important to feel a responsibility — about what we do, how we develop it, and how do we show it. Reflecting and being part of what you do and how you do it — this is very important.

VM + SS: How does an idea for a show emerge and how do you develop it within your team?

AT: I can use the example of an exhibition we staged as an attempt to work with theatricality in museums or institutions. *Die Zeitschrift in der Rahmenhandlung* was a play written specifically for the space. The public sat inside the gallery, while the action was taking place outside, in the street or in the garden. The content of the play critically reflected on how we can escape the social text, how we act according to written scores intended as social or pol-

itical codices and roles. In the process of creation, it became a very large project, which also needed a lot of money. On the other hand, at the moment we are having a series of screenings and talks. I like having two different paces in the program, a long-term view with projects for exhibitions and a more rapid one, with talks and evening events that are scheduled in a very informal and accelerated manner.

VM + SS: Which advantages of team working have you experienced?

AT: Advantages? This is not the question for me. I just can't do things on my own! I need people to have a relationship with or a shared reflection space — that sort of engagement and very close exchange. I need the process of talking, and I like people!

VM + SS: How do you manage to merge different positions and to solve conflicts in your collaborative relations?

AT: It really depends. Collaborating is a very delicate thing. You need to talk a long sometimes to get to a shared vision, sometimes it is just not possible... When collaborating, then you also have to be able to step back a little bit. In the end, I think it is best to try to be sensitive — there is a great need for awareness and also for trusting feelings. The essential is finding time — to talk, to try out, to think.

FACE

Interview with
Irene Calderoni
by Silvia Simoncelli

FACE is a European network of art foundations established with the aim of developing collaborations between the partner institutions and, in particular, exchange programmes between partner collections. FACE founding members are private collectors who have set up public spaces for the production and

promotion of contemporary art. These are Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin (Italy), Ellipse Foundation, Cascais (Portugal), La maison Rouge — Fondation Antoine de Galbert, Paris (France), Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall, Stockholm (Sweden), DESTE Foundation, Athens (Greece). Irene Calderoni is curator at Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin. We met her on the occasion of the exhibition *Investigations of a Dog*, the first project developed by FACE. (www.art-face.eu)

Silvia Simoncelli (SS): Could you present the FACE project and tell us on which occasion the five foundations first collaborated? Had any of them collaborated previously?
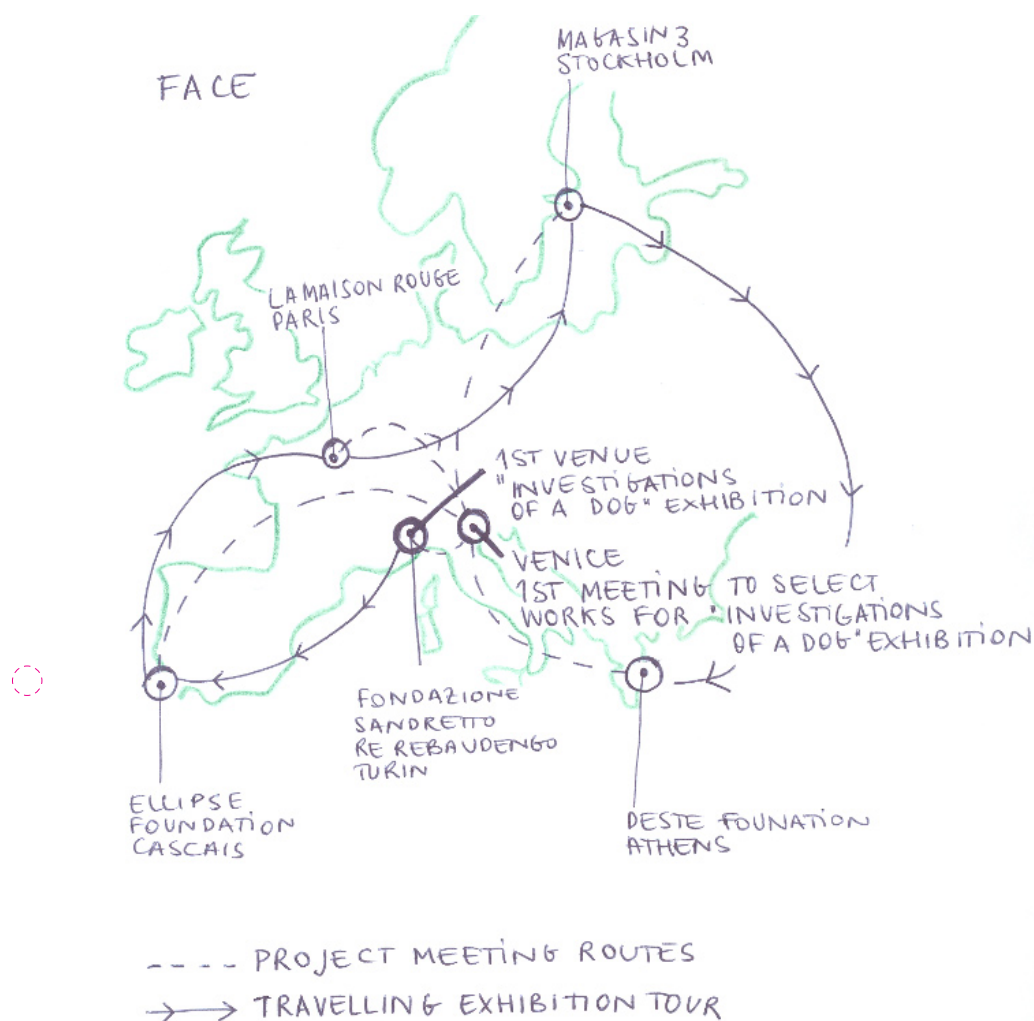
Irene Calderoni (IC): FACE is an association of five private Art Foundations sharing common perspectives on their role in the contemporary art field. All have been established by private collectors wishing to evolve their private commitment into non-profit institutions open to the public. The partners, though, have specific missions, varying from one to another: Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo (Turin) and Magazine 3 (Stockholm) share an attitude very similar to the Kunsthalle's, as they host temporary exhibitions and show mostly group or solo shows where artists are commissioned new works; Deste Foundation (Athens) mainly shows the collection of its founder Dakis Joannou, both at its site in Greece and in temporary exhibitions hosted in various venues in Europe or in the US; La Maison Rouge (Paris) presents exhibitions of others collections, whether by artists, foundations, or other collectors; Ellipse Foundation (Cascais) invites different curators on a regular basis to differently re-read and re-stage the collection. Even if the founders of these institutions had been

in contact very often as private individuals, FACE project, officially presented in Brussels to the European Parliament in April 2008, represents the very first collaboration between their foundations and the exhibition *Investigation of a Dog* is its very first collaborative project.

SS: How would you describe the collaborative relation between FACE members?

IC: The idea of a possible collaboration between the different foundations started - as it is often the case - in an informal way, but it soon evolved into a well structured project, aimed at reaching a very high quality level and defining some sound shared presupposes. The project was rather ambitious, but all partners knew the advantages deriving from this venture — being able to benefit from economies of scale and from the network of the individual skills — would have enabled them to pursue their goals in a far more effective way. FACE's main purposes — namely to sustain and promote contemporary art; to commission new works encouraging mostly young and emerging artists; to organise shows and events and publish catalogues and books — mirrors those behind each and every participating foundation, even though they are magnified and broadened by the international network.

In relation to the exhibition making process, when working together with the other curators for the exhibition *Investigation of a Dog*, we managed to strike a good balance between a collaborative practise and the individual identities of every foundation. The core theme and its topics were firstly developed together, then each curator used them as a tool to identify works in her/his collection relevant to the project. The results were then discussed and jointly commented on. The body of works selected will be displayed at each

FACE

MAGASIN 3 STOCKHOLM

LA MAISON ROUGE PARIS

1ST VENUE "INVESTIGATIONS OF A DOG" EXHIBITION

VENICE 1ST MEETING TO SELECT WORKS FOR "INVESTIGATIONS OF A DOG" EXHIBITION

FONDAZIONE SANDRETTO RE REBAUDENGO TURIN

ELLIPSE FOUNDATION CASCAIS

DESTE FOUNATION ATHENS

- - - - PROJECT MEETING ROUTES

——→ TRAVELLING EXHIBITION TOUR

Network map for FACE *Investigation of a Dog* exhibition.
Drawing by Irene Calderoni and Silvia Simoncelli.

venue by the curator in charge, so that the exhibition will possibly result in very different arrangements each time. This is a very interesting part of the project, since it will enable the highlighting of different possible relations between the works and enhance their meaning differently in every display.

SS: How did the idea for this show emerge and how did you develop it within the FACE curatorial team?

IC: The exhibition *Investigation of a Dog* was developed as the very first event in the FACE programme. It was aimed at presenting and putting FACE under the spotlight, as after its first opening at Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo it will be travelling to all the other FACE sites and has already been requested to

also travel to some European institutions, such as the Kunsthalle Bonn. This exhibition was planned not as a showcase of highlights form the different foundations, but as an autonomous project whose thematic knots would have attracted different works out of every individual collection. As a consequence, we wanted to find a theme suitable to and consistent with the call for quality and research advancement in the art field we have as a guideline. We therefore decided to focus on the social and collective interest shared by many artists in the collections, who were mainly working during the 1990s when a new wave of interest in this subject arose, and who were sometimes indebted to previous artistic experiences and sometimes able to inspire future developments in the younger generations.

As a working tool, we decided to focus on the reading presented by Deleuze and Guattari of the short novel *Investigations of a Dog* by Kafka. In the novel, the relation of the individual with society is presented through the reflections of the dog, who withdraws from the social realm and at the same times meditate on it, unable to reject it totally. The two philosophers' reading of the novel is connected with their theory of Minor Literature, as an interpretation of the attitude of refusal and resistance to a dominating and homogenizing culture. This theory has of course a political dimension, which doesn't focus on the explicit content of the work of art, but mostly on its formal and linguistic elements, which are believed to be able to convey a content of their own,

working at a more subtle and sensitive level. Grotesque and irony are some of the tools of this minor approach, which was endorsed by post-colonialism and feminism, among others in the works of Kara Walkers and David Hammons. Deleuze and Guattari continued this definition of Minor Literature, also incorporating it into some forms of discourse, such as the metaphor — which, by establishing a binary connection, preserves the status quo and is therefore a tool of the dominant culture - and metamorphosis — which is definitely its opposite, as it infuses new life into the meaning of words and images, activating and placing them into a process of change and evolution. Mark Menders has made wide use of the metamorphosis in his works, which appear to be a continuous investigation of the

self through the medium of architecture.

We met several times to discuss and develop the theme, and then finally at the opening of the Biennale in Venice last year each curator presented the works selected, and this was when the show actually started to come to life. This process of working separately on every individual collection, when choosing the artworks to be exhibited, also gave us the possibility to re-trace within every proposal not only a national element, but also some crossing-border ones, as in the case of Roberto Cuoghi, an Italian artist chosen by Deste Foundation.
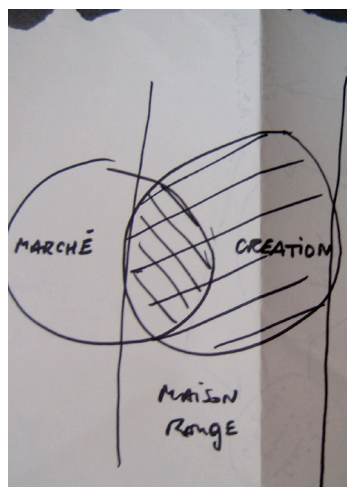
SS: Which advantages of team working have you experienced?

IC: Further to the challenging opportunity to work as a curatorial team in the development of the show, also on a specific practical level, collaboration has brought many advantages. Firstly, each curator has taken care only of the works selected from her/his collection. This has made the loan process and as well as the transport and installation process much easier. Everyone was then extremely committed to the project, resulting in working as a team of very reliable partners — which is not so often the case when organising an exhibition with various works on loan. The high professional level of everyone involved — and a shared vision of the operation procedure was then also heightened by the enthusiasm for this venture. I couldn't list any true disadvantage or problem I have encountered. Of course not all five foundations have the same organisation model, so we sometimes had to overcome our individual roles and become more flexible to fulfil every task required. But, as I said, enthusiasm and professional reliability made everything smoother!

SS: How do you manage to merge different positions

Network maps of La Maison Rouge. Drawing by Antoine de Galbert.

and to solve conflicts in this collaborative situation?

IC: We developed the exhibition as a discursive process, so everything was openly discussed as a mode to find a consensus on our individual choices and positions. As a result, for example, some works initially proposed for inclusion were not part of the show in the end, after a debate on their consistency with the project or on their too strong individual identity and recognition, which would have compromised the balance of the show.

LA MAISON ROUGE, PARIS

Interview with
Antoine de Galbert
by Valentine Meyer

Antoine de Galbert, private collector and founder of La Maison Rouge (Paris), a non-profit foundation dedicated to the production and promotion of contemporary art, is one of the founding members of FACE. (www.lamaisonrouge.org)

Valentine Meyer (VM): Since you have decided to
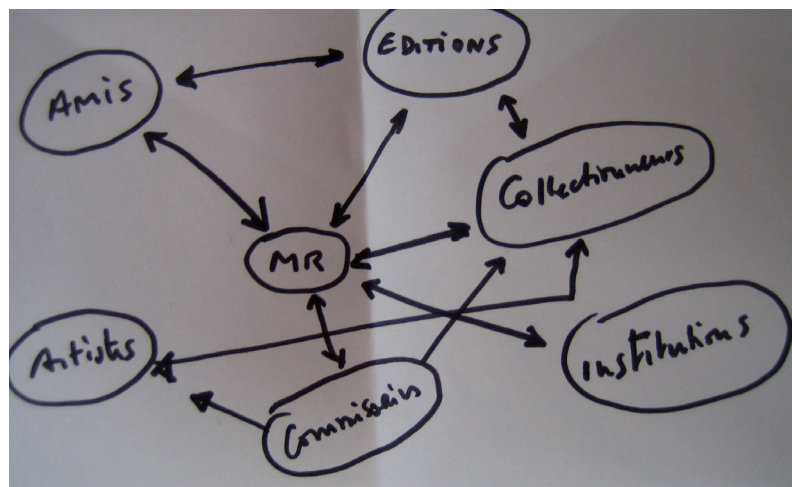
create exhibitions with other private collectors forming FACE, I'd like to ask you: On which occasion did you first collaborate with this private network? And then with public institutions?

Antoine de Galbert (AdG): First of all, I just want to say that I am collector on one side, and a founding member of this foundation on the other. I have not yet shown my private collection in my foundation, so the two activities are distinct. But both of them are there to support artists in the long run.With FACE, *Investigations of a Dog* is our first real collaboration with FACE, which means that we do not collaborate only on practical level (such as communication or transport) but also on an artistic level. Accordingly, we try in this exhibition to have young artists from each country, and we try to turn real differences into a kind of strength. Our collaboration with institutions is based on artwork loans; some museums (like Centre Pompidou) lend me some works, and I lend almost 100 times a year artworks of my collection to museums and art spaces.

VM: How would you describe your collaboration?

AdG: As absolutely vital. It nurtures exhibitions, makes the collection come alive, and helps artists as well.

VM: What are the advantages of teamworking? Do you see any limits or disadvantages?

AdG: No, I don't see any.

VM: How do you resolve different points of view, for example with curators?

AdG: It doesn't happen so much, otherwise we discuss and then I decide.

VM: Who manages the budget?

AdG: I do.

VM: Could you draw a map?

AdG: Yes, I will draw you a first map. Here is the market and here is Maison Rouge. There's an intersection but no more, which means that sometimes we can meet. But I don't follow the market nor do I think in terms of trends or 'must haves.' I just follow my own interests. The second map is more classical; it is about all of Maison Rouge's different kinds of partners.

MUSEUM OF DESIGN, ZURICH

Interview wit Christian Brändle by Valentine Meyer

Christian Brändle is Director of the Museum of Design Zurich, which is Switzerland's premier design and visual communication museum. The museum's exhibitions, collections and publications make it a forum, an archive and a laboratory in one, creating a lively mix of research, collection, and communication.
(www.museum-gestaltung.ch)

Valentine Meyer (VM): You are the director of the Museum of Design Zurich, which is one of the largest such museums in Europe. It is located in two different places in Zurich, namely here (at Ausstellungstrasse) and in the Bellerive district. The Museum of Design is also part of Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK), which shares the same building. So it seems that you are really working on a collaborative basis. Which brings me to my first question: When did you first collaborate with the director of the Bellerive Museum and when with the Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK)?

Christian Brändle (CB): Bellerive Museum was founded in 1968 as an 'annex' to the Museum of Design. In other words, 'collaboration' might not be the most appropriate term. I would rather speak of one house with two exhibition venues. Bellerive was founded for two main reasons: first, for a touristic purpose; and secondly, in order to show its dedicated collection of art and applied art. The Museum of Design (at Ausstellungstrasse) is dedicated to:

- industrial design
- visual communication
- photography
- architecture

But following the political pressure in 2002 from the Canton of Zurich, and the resulting significant budgetary constraints, we needed to create synergies. Now, for example, our programmes are published on the same leaflet, we have a joint 'circle of friends', and we issue the same loan contracts. As regards the ZHdK, I am not sure whether collaboration is the right term either. The Museum of Design was established first, and then three years later the school was founded as part of the museum. Now, the museum is part of the school. It doesn't really matter, but we are keen to strengthen the presence of the museum within the school in various ways:

- research
- teaching, that is, the training of profesionnals with an MA degree in 'Ausstellen und Vermittlung' (which is not a postgraduate 'Master of Curating'). So, for instance, I teach in the Department of Design and also in the Department of Performing Arts and Film.
- concept development: how to create future publications in a more efficient way, since we have a great deal of proven experience of coordinating projects as well as established connections with publishers.
- I am also developing a concept for the University of fine arts even if I am not sure if it is my task; once again, however, we have this specific experience at the museum, and it should be put to the best possible use.

On the other hand, most exhibitions require IT expertise and support, and we wouldn't be able to mount exhibitions without the help of the IT department: so, on balance, it is rather an exchange of tasks and skills than a matter of collaboration.
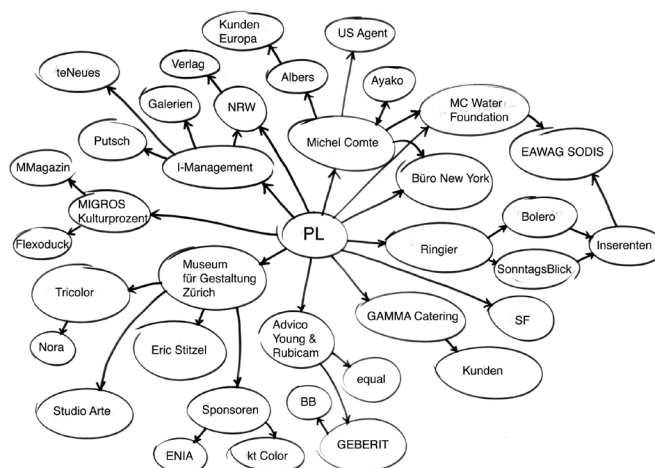
Network map of Michel Compte exhibition at Museum of Design. Drawing by Cristian Brändle.

VM: How would you describe your collaboration with the Bellerive on programming exhibitions, for example?

CB: As regards content, we always share our programming resources, such as our board of curators, ideas, and project discussions. It is very simple but important, so every three weeks we have a programming meeting where all curators are invited and asked to make proposals. There are two levels:

- 'a glimpse into the kitchen': shall we develop this particular concept or not? And if so, how? Sometimes, projects already die at the initial stage because they don't meet the criteria.
- the second level involves actual conceptual work: we discuss a given project in depth, which is what happens when you have so many brains around the table; it is very helpful for both sides to open up.

VM: What are the criteria?

CB: Projects must be relevant, which means they must match our key topics (industrial design, visual communication, architecture, photography). Or they should serve as a bridge to a contemporary debate or be historically relevant: for example, we will do an exhibition on Charlotte Perriand. This will not be the first show about her, of course, but ours will be the first to show the relationships between her design and her photographic works.

VM: What kind of feedback on your collaboration with the university do you receive?

CB: Well, there is an implicit kind of appraisal, in terms of the number of students who are in the exhibitions.

VM: When you say students, do you mean their work?

CB: No, I mean as visitors, even if student work is on display. But we also commission such work when we see some interesting projects: which is rare, otherwise this kills the museum.

VM: I am raising this question because I saw the *Eidgenössische Förderpreise für Design 2008* exhibition at the Bellerive, which showed the work of the best young Swiss designers...

CB: But that is something quite different, it is a large competition organised by the Federal Office of Culture.

VM: Yes, the best student applied art is shown, so could one also exhibit the work of the best curating students, especially since the curating programme is part of the university?

CB: If you look at the tradition of the Museum of Design, or the MAK in Vienna, they were often divorced from their affiliated university. Essentially, any exhibition must be relevant and interest a certain amount of people, not only the participating students and their families. Otherwise, it is not worth running this great machine. In the final instance, it must be efforts balanced.

VM: Which percentage of your average 100,000 visitors a year are students? (This year, the Design Museum welcomed 150,000 visitors, which places it just behind the Kunsthaus).

CB: Around 1/6.

VM: How do you manage to merge different positions and to resolve conflicts in your collaborative situation?

CB: I try to establish a culture of discussion where the best argument wins. It is also an important part of motivating people.

VM: Could you please draw a map showing your network of collaborative connections?

CB: That would take about a week ... in fact, I have already done this for one project, the Michel Comte exhibition. If you wish, I can print a copy for you.

VM: Great, thank you.

DOCVA, MILAN

Interview with Mario Gorni by Silvia Simoncelli

DOCVA (Documentation Center for Visual Arts) was established in Milan in 2008 as a collaborative archive of two non-profit organisations, C/O — founded by Mario Gorni — and Via Farini. The DOCVA Documentation Center for Visual Arts collects and divulges documentation material about contemporary visual arts: books, magazines, videos, artist portfolios and information about international organizations. These materials were gathered within the activities organized by Careof and Viafarini, through the portfolio viewing programme and the video post-production service, as well as through purchase and donations. (www.docva.org/english/home.html)

Silvia Simoncelli (SS): C/O (that is, Care of) is a very important association in the Milan and Italian art scene. It recently established a cooperation with Via Farini, a non-profit association also active in the art field. Can you tell us how this all started and how these two associations started collaborating?

Mario Gorni (MG): C/O was born back in 1987 as an association of artists and intellectuals, and it was intended as a concrete answer to the need for professional exhibition spaces for young artists. In those days, the Arte Povera artists and the artists of the previous generation were still receiving all the attention from commercial galleries in Milan and from art professionals. One of the few possibilities for young artists to show their works in a spontaneous and free situation was the abandoned Brown Boveri factory building, where of course there were no proper conditions. So we started our space in Cusano Milanino, just outside the city, which was actually the first non-profit private space in Italy, with the intention of offering basic but good exhibition facilities to young artists. I was an artist myself at that time and so were a lot of people involved in the association, but we decided from the beginning that the members wouldn't show their work in the space, because we didn't want the space to be ambiguous in its purposes in any way. This also led to the fact that little by little the artists involved in the association quit or decided to quit to commit themselves to the association itself, as in my case. In very short time, C/O became able to offer a map of the creativity in Milan and its surroundings. Artists were sending in their curricula and portfolios, and we began working on an archive, which grew tremendously in a very short time. Young curators were also contributing, and the exhibition schedule was very intense from the outset. Via Farini was started in 1991 by the initiative of Patrizia Brusarosco, and focused its mission on young artists too, so we obviously got in contact pretty soon. The association was based in the city centre and its intention was to offer young artists a series of services, among others a press office, contacts with commercial galleries, a database of grants and competitions, etc. In 1995, the city council launched a competition to delegate a series of services for young artists - such as information, education, workshops, exhibitions - to private associations, so we made a joint venture. This seemed to be the most obvious solution since we were already offering these services and there was no reason for being competitors in such a scenario. Each of us would have then benefited from mutual cooperation, since we could have kept concentrating on the services already provided individually. We won the competition and between 1995 and 1999 we worked together, but still in two separate locations. Already in 1994 we had started working on a project to start an art centre in the city, open to different realities already operating, such as Studio Azzurro, House of Poetry, Metamorfosi, Out-Off Theatre and Anteo Cinema. We had developed a programme and made an official request to the city council, so that these independent initiatives could find a proper place and also gain official recognition for their value to the arts and culture in the city. This project was finally accepted in 2000 as the city council decided to renovate an abandoned industrial building in via Luigi Nono, and eventually an international jury was established to decide which high profile associations were eligible for renting the spaces. C/O and Via Farini co-participated once again with the additional project of creating a shared archive out of their individual ones. The project was accepted and from then on I have concentrated on the archive: cataloguing, preserving, implementing and diffusing it through seminars and conferences.

SS: How would you describe your collaboration nowadays?

MG: The archive is the main motor of our collaboration. It is thanks to our shared and now extremely vast collection of materials on Italian artists that we were able to participate and win many competitions, and also obtain long-term funds from important foundations such as Fondazione Cariplo. In 2008, we were recognised as an historical archive, which granted us funds to organise exhibitions. All the competitions have enabled us to grow and to ameliorate our working methods, increase our archive materials, and to strengthen our identity as an institution. We became recognised as a reference institution by universities and art academies, which in turn was a very stimulating

Map by Delia Popa.

experience for us, too. The archives are open to the public and we constantly receive new materials, not just form young artists now, but also from established ones, since we have gained a sort of official recognition. Getting together has increased our potential, but has also practically increased our spending, since we now have employees, so we have to keep looking for funding with an ever increasing responsibility to artists, the public, and staff.

SS: What are the advantages of team working?

MG: In the beginning they were quite obvious: by collaborating we eliminated one opponent in the funding and public competitions fields. We also had the chance to share our different approach and missions: Via Farini has always been more active in the research funding process and had a more prominent managerial attitude, while Care Of has provided the archive. DOCVA is an acronym, a place where two different souls cohabit.

SS: How does an idea for a show arise how do you develop it within your team?

MG: Since we started DOCVA, I have left the exhibition programme to a young and very motivated curator, Chiara Angello. Via Farini has always had external curators organising the show, as is now the case with Milovan Farronato, who has already been responsible for some years. The two curators meet on a regular basis to discuss the programme, and sometimes they develop a show together, but the two institutions often have different shows at the same time. We still have two separate but close exhibition spaces, so that we can decide to turn them into a shared one on the occasion of a show where the two curators develop a common project. But once more I would say that the archive is the centre of the exhibition programme, whether individual or jointly developed.

SS: How do you manage to merge different positions and to solve conflicts in your collaborative situation?

MG: We have discussions almost every day. Fighting is not negative, but instead a way of confronting different strategies and different attitudes and also how two different visions can come together. Then, of course, there are some conflicts that cannot be solved, but we have to learn to live with them, since we have a shared goal, namely, the archive and the artists themselves. The bottom line is that we need funds to continue our mission.

DELIA POPA

Interview by Anca Sinpalean

Delia Popa is a young Romanian artist. In her practice, collaboration is an essential tool for artistic creation. She does not have a permanent collaborative group, but she develops her performances together with other artists or friends, with whom she stages her works. This drive towards collaborative practice has prompted her to publish her list of artistic intentions in the first person plural (we), rather than the singular (I). (www.deliapopa.com)

Anca Sinpalean (AS): On which occasion did you first work in a collaborative way?

Delia Popa (DP): I started collaborating with other artists fairly early, while I was still at university. When I was studying at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) in the US (2005-2007), I took a class called *The Art of Collaboration*, taught by Professor Lin Hixson in the Performance Department. It was probably the most fun I've had in a class in my life, and when I say fun I mean enjoyment and a real sense that something beautiful was being born there.

The class focused on collaboration within any kind of performance, be it theater, dance, performance art and

especially the meeting point between all of these. We were taking turns in directing and performing and there were fixed rules as to how these performances were being conceived. First of all, there was one space in which we were working and everything was happening there within a few hours per week and we were being transported to other worlds each time. The rules of the game varied during the course, but one type of collaboration was as follows: You were assigned a team of three or four people and the (assigned) director had to give them some words and ideas to think about and to write a little text for next time and bring it along as a fragment of the performance. In the following week, the director would have a set time to design the performance from all the fragments and to give instructions to the performers. The duration of the performance was also set in advance by the class instructor. Most of the time this time limitation, the knowledge that the public (the other students) was open and eager to experiment and the dedication and capacity to 'be in the moment,' as Lin Hixson would say, of the team members would make for a magic experience.

The critique at the end of the performance would not be based on the binary oppositions of yes/no, good/bad. Instead we had to imagine the performance as something else, for example food, and then describe it. The fact that we were using our bodies to make work and before that to relax and feel 'centered' made us feel more open and intimate with each other, so that we could give a lot of ourselves in the making of the work.

To answer the question about previous collaboration, the answer is no; that was the first time I worked with those artists and the class was purposefully structured so that people would not choose who they wanted to work with.That was for me an ideal collaboration.

In 'real life' situations, there is always something at stake, which doesn't necessary have something to do with art, for example deadlines, money pressures, power negotiations and miscommunication. When a collaboration is longer, there will always be bad days and conflicts. You cannot expect two or more people to work passionately on something without stepping on each other's tails. What I learned in that class and in the *Goat Island Summer Class* in 2006, led by Goat Island director Lin Hixson and other Goat Island company members, is to never say no to an idea just because it doesn't sound good the first time you hear it, and never think that you have the solution.

AS: How would you describe your collaboration?

DP: Depends on the situation. I have worked with artists in making a common work and that is the hardest type of collaboration, I think, and I have worked with curators and people who were assisting and guiding me in my process and, because there is a better defined relationship, it can be easier. A lot of the key to success in either case is trusting the other person to make the right choices and trusting yourself that you have chosen the right person.

I've had collaborations with other artists in which we were just following the process and (almost) nothing was set in advance, and we got to the point at which I was left to continue on my own, because the other artist stopped liking what we were doing. It can be as simple as that and that can happen if the terms and conditions are not discussed properly in advance. Usually the enthusiasm while working is very high and only after the work is done, or it gets to a difficult point, do problems appear and questions about credits (if it's not co-authored) and authorship arise.

AS: What are the advantages of team working?

DP: It's a complementing relationship. After a few years of various kinds of collaborations, I have come to the conclusion that it is indeed smart to have a team of people with different skills, that do not compete with each other. They should not all be great drawers or great rabbit catchers, there should ideally be one who can draw and one who can catch rabbits so that at the end of the day you have a rabbit and a drawing. Also, from the beginning they should know who is in charge of what and when they get confused they should talk about it. If they're both good at drawing and rabbit catching, as many people do have many talents, they should take turns and be aware of it.

AS: How does an idea for a show emerge and how do you develop it within your team?

DP: Well, in my team of Delias and Popas it is indeed like being on a roller coaster. When Delia is high, Popa is on the low side, so that conflict arises and ideas for a show emerge slowly. Sometimes Popa leaves Delia behind and goes out to meet other people to work with. It has so far worked splendidly.

AS: How do you manage to merge different positions and to solve conflicts in your collaborative situation?

DP: Hmm, I have certainly not done that in all the collaborative situations, but it is very much like in love: you listen to the other person, you express your position, and then together you think of a solution. If that doesn't work, God help!

AS: Could you please draw a map showing your network of collaborative connections?

DP: Yes, I could.

ART*
WORLD*
CITY*

By Annalies Walter

Zurich is a place where art, money, and gentrification combine in a very unique manner. The favorable laws for art acquisitions and the large 'Zollfreilager' (duty free bonded warehouse) are highly attractive for both international art dealers and financial markets. Kathrin Herzog wrote in November 2009: "What used to be the role of the Church has become the role of the banks — the promotion of the arts and the awakening of art knowledge within the public."[1] This endorsement of the arts was and is no selfless deed, as certain goals can more easily be achieved when a company or a city within the international city competition has a culturally involved image. Here it should be added that even the so-called more fortunate in our society, that made their wealth with illegal businesses such as weapons dealing or Nazi handlings in the Second World War, like to portray themselves as art patrons. Two very controversial 'Dynasties' that have been greatly criticized for this are the gentlemen Flick and Bührle, who have both caused quite an uproar in the Zurich art world.

Friedrich-Christian Flick wanted to present, close to and in cooperation with his close friends at the Hauser & Wirth Gallery, his Flick Collection in a newly-built museum in the very trendy and booming Zurich-West quarter. The building and presentation of the Flick Collection was hampered by Rein Wolfs, who was then director of the Migros Museum, "We would prefer other neighbors, rather than a museum intending to

exhibit art bought with the Flick fortune. It would cast a bad light on Switzerland if it were to permanently show a collection that was rejected in Germany due to the family history of the collector. Just because Zurich is a 'neutral' zone, it should not justify harboring such a museum."[2] Since 2004, the Frick Collection has been located in Berlin.

Many years ago, Emil G. Bührle financed the addition to the Zurich Kunsthaus, city's principal art museum, and endowed his own private Bührle Museum. The artist Roman Signer has observed in this respect that, "the people of Zurich should not be so hypocritical: the Bührle-Saal in the Zurich Kunsthaus was constructed after the war and financed with money from weapon's dealing. The whole thing reeks of blood. Art is not undefiled and virginal, art is corruptible."[3] The Bührle issue has not yet been resolved. The large collection of Impressionist Art is planned to be housed in the new Kunsthaus annex. In my opinion, this would, however, characterize the identity of the Kunsthaus, and question the positioning of the Kunsthaus in a dynamic art environment.

Zurich's gentrification really kicked off in 1980, which marked and still continues to generate great changes. The destruction of the autonomous youth centre, previously situated on the current bus parking lot behind the central station, really marks the beginning of change in the city. The demolition of the youth centre was quickly followed by the occupation of the Rote Fabrik and its conversion into a cultural center, the squatting of the Wohl-grothareal, the aggravation of the situation in so-called needle-park, and eventually the horrific fixer-scenes at the Letten-Bahnareal, which prompted violent police intervention. For the gentrification of Zurich's inner-city dis-

tricts, a project called *Langstrasse PLUS* was created and is still in full force today. The city confiscated any locations and buildings that had been acquired with drug money. After this controversial consolidation of land in the city, specu-lative building plans followed and a true building boom occurred in Zurich West. 1996 was a year of many changes, of which some of the most remarkable ones were the conversion of the Löwenbräuareal into a cultural multiplex, the construction of a Techno-park, the Puls 5 complex, the Schiffbau Theater, the Escherwies highrise, and parallel to all this the explosion of the disco scene and the birth of the yearly streetparade. The Tages-An-zeiger, a daily newspaper, spoke of a, "Seefeldification[4] of the once proletarian quarters", in an article published in January of this year. This social shift also brings with it a boom in creating a more up-market art scene in the area, which plays a somewhat doubtful role: spacious and cheap artist studios such as the Schöllergut are converted into grand lofts or elegant galleries, which increases the market value and makes rents soar, causing the typical corner shops and the local alternative art scene to disappear. This is a common phenomenon that we see happening in many cities such as New York, Berlin, London, etc.[5]

Money and art attract one another in financially potent cities. With its very high concentration of galleries, Zurich currently belongs to one of the ten most impor-tant gallery cities in the world. Many banks and foundations are based in the 'Limmatcity'; compared to other European states, it is very attractive to buy art in Switzerland: there are no restrictions on resale rights and compared to other countries VAT is very low. For numerous international galleries, auction houses, and art dealers, it is important to have a branch

establishment in Zurich for financial reasons, but also for their corporate image.

Independent art- and project rooms, small galleries and off-spaces are the glue of the local artscene. Derelict buildings are converted into art spaces to offer the possibility of newness and creation. There are still quite a few project rooms in Zurich that offer a variety of activities. At these locations, the emphasis lies mostly on cultural-political debates and socially contro-versial themes. They receive very little support from the city and live along the lines of "freedom rather than security".

The problems that come with the idea of a "globalised city art Mecca" and the continuous exclusion and suppression of the alterna-tive art scene from the city centre due to exorbitant rents have led me to select several renowned galleries and alternative project rooms/off-spaces, in order to question them about their modus operandi, their budget calculations, and their employment conditions.

The project rooms I interviewed (such as Message Salon, Kunstraum Walcheturm, Station 21, Kunstraum R57, etc.) are all generally located in the few remaining affordable areas, which must make do with a very low budget (less than CHF 50'000,- per year), and have about 10-12 art shows per year. At the other end of the spectrum, renowned galleries (Hauser & Wirth, Bob van Orsouw, Mai 36, Mark Müller, etc.) have budgets that exceed well over CHF 100'000,- per year, have many more full-time employees, and only have an average of 4-8 shows every year. Their galleries are always at very attractive locations within the city centre. It proved to be a big problem for the re-nowned galleries to speak openly about their budgets for reasons of fiscal discretion.

1
www.
handelszeitung.ch/
artikel/
Unternehmen-Kunst-
foerdern-und-
Netzwerke-
pflegen_631829.html
referenced on
13 April 2010.

2
www.woz.ch/
dossier/flick.html,
referenced on
13 April 2010.

3
www.woz.ch/
dossier/flick.html,
referenced
on 13 April 2010.

4
Seefeldication is
a mixture of the
word centrification
and the name
of the upcoming
area in Zurich
called Seefeld.

5
Kunstforum, Band
132, 1995, S. 308
ff (Jochen Becker.
"Wir fordern die
sofortige
Schliessung der
Stadt Zürich").

6
www.woz.ch/
artikel/
inhalt/2001/nr11/
Kultur/10486.html,
Thomas Buomberger:
Süddeutsche
Zeitung
13 March 2001,
referenced on
13 April 2010.

It was remarkable to see that the project rooms were not reserved about disclosing their budgets. They were pleased to answer all my questions without reticence and happily shared which great contribution they were making to the cultural sector, even on tight budgets.

It is interesting to see that the response to the question of 'curator-related costs' for renowned galleries was mostly 'none', whereas the project rooms showed that an average of 5–20% of their budget is spent on curators. From this, we can conclude that prominent galleries focus solely on sales and try to create a bond with their clients by appearing with their acclaimed artists at international art fairs. Off-spaces, on the other hand, have to subsist on their reputations as places of creativity, and must therefore work much harder on providing new, interesting, and critical projects and viewpoints in a broad curatorial context. They mostly represent young, agile, experimental, socially critical, and political themes.

My interviews showed that in the domain of project rooms most jobs are undertaken on a volunteer or very low wage basis. The operators of such institutions hold their heads above water through secondary incomes, help from founda- tions, sponsoring and grants. Even with a much higher amount of shows per year, the commissions for employees are negligible.

There is little difference between well-known galleries and project rooms when it comes to fighting for public attention and clients/visitors. For project rooms, however, there exists the possibility in wealthy Zurich to show many exhibitions with a very limited budget.

Due to their great dedication towards the cultural sector, they are able to convey important artistic impulses. For many underpaid, critical, and self-reflective curators, these project rooms can be a stepping stone towards the state-funded art institutions and private exhibition spaces. For a few of the artists exhibited in the more common group exhibits at project rooms, it can be an opportunity to be noticed and shown in the more advanced institutions.

It is the critical eye of the independent art scene that is essential in a city where rents are booming. A financial boost on the national, cantonal, or city level is very hard to obtain for experimental art projects. Sponsorships are mostly given to established art institutions or to cooperative projects involving Swiss artists. The support

of national artists, however, is lately more in the form of competitions. The concept of competitions brings less work for the authorities and after the selection process they no longer have to work with several institutions but only with one.

Sadly, diversity is something that these patrons of the arts promote much too little. Already in 2001, the Swiss historian Thomas Buomberger stated in an interview given to the Süddeutsche Zeitung on 13 March 2001 that "of course there are very good reasons, not just on a tax level, why people such as Flick or Marc Rich enjoy living in Switzerland. It is one of the few places in the world where one is left in peace. Too much peace, however, can be very damaging."[6]

MAKING EXHIBITIONS
SURVEY FACTS AND FIGURES 2009

Survey by Annalies Walter

I sent out the respective survey to the following galleries which are all located in the city of Zurich:

- Bob van Orsouw
- May 36
- Mark Müller
- Sam Scherrer Contemporary
- Art Forum Ute Barth
- Hauser und Wirth

The survey was also sent to the following project rooms:

- Message Salon / Esther Eppstein
- Kunstraum Walcheturm
- Station 21
- Kunstraum R57

The percentage of returned questionnaires submitted to the galleries was 66.6% (4) and for the project rooms 100% (also 4). Later inquiries showed that — especially with the galleries — great concerns existed regarding the publication of financial figures and therefore they would not participate in the survey. Only those surveys were taken into account that were actually returned (total 4 surveys from galleries and 4 surveys from project rooms = 100%) All questions concern exclusively the year 2009.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

Question 1
How many exhibitions did you have in 2009?

CHART 001
-
■ Project Rooms
▨ Galleries

EXHIBITIONS 5-10

EXHIBITIONS 1-4

1   2   3   4   Number of Galleries / Rooms
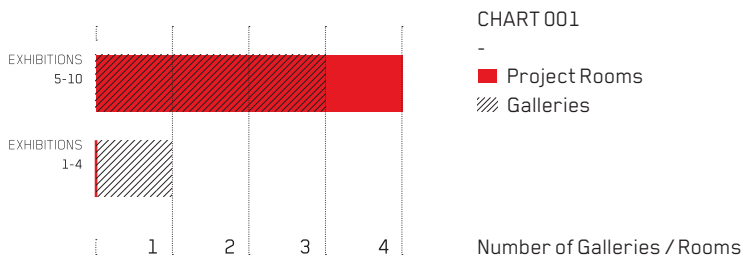
Question 2.A
What is the age range of the chosen artists?

Question 2.B
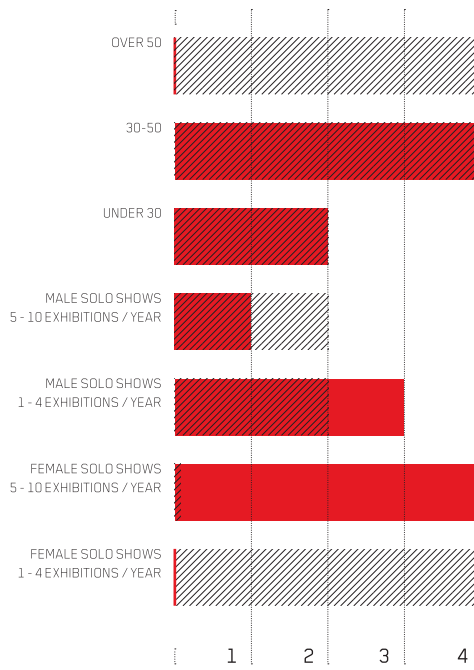How many female / male artists did you show in
solo exhibitions?

CHART 002
-
■ Project Rooms
▨ Galleries

OVER 50

30-50

UNDER 30

MALE SOLO SHOWS
5 - 10 EXHIBITIONS / YEAR

MALE SOLO SHOWS
1 - 4 EXHIBITIONS / YEAR

FEMALE SOLO SHOWS
5 - 10 EXHIBITIONS / YEAR

FEMALE SOLO SHOWS
1 - 4 EXHIBITIONS / YEAR

        1   2   3   4   Number of Galleries / Rooms

Question 3
Where do the artists exhibited originally come from
(country of origin)?
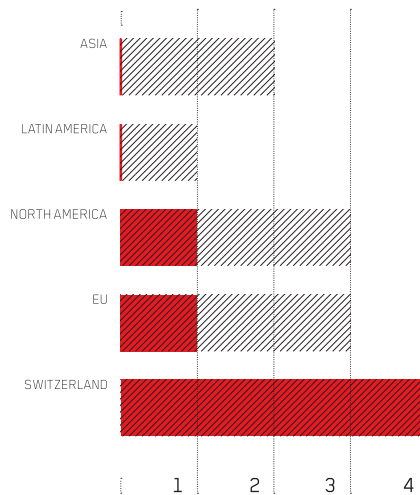
CHART 003
-
■ Project Rooms
▨ Galleries

ASIA

LATIN AMERICA

NORTH AMERICA

EU

SWITZERLAND

        1   2   3   4   Number of Galleries / Rooms

Question 4
What was your expenditure in 2009 ?

– less than CHF 50'000
– between CHF 50'000 and CHF 100'000
– more than CHF 100'000
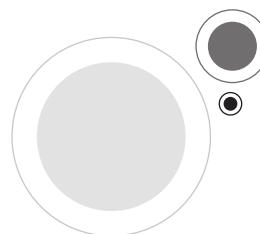
CHART 004.1
-
50-100
MORE THAN 100
SUM

GALLERIES
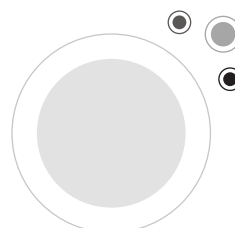
CHART 004.2
-
UNDER 50
50-100
MORE THAN 100
SUM

PROJECT ROOMS

Question 5
How many % of the yearly budget is spent on operational
and promotional costs?

(Temporary assistants, travel expenses, advisory board
meetings, press and PR, marketing, sponsorship, general
hospitality costs, local transport, opening events,
ceremonies, parties).
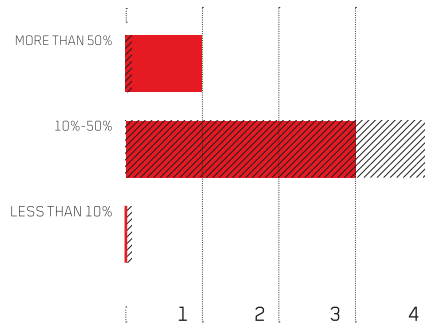
CHART 005
-
■ Project Rooms
▨ Galleries

MORE THAN 50%

10%-50%

LESS THAN 10%

1   2   3   4   Number of Galleries / Rooms

Question 6
How many % of the yearly budget is spent on
exhibition costs?

(Venue rental costs, construction, insurance, works
transportation, installation team, technical equipment,
maintenance, security).
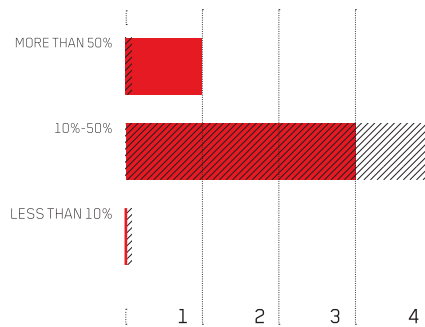
CHART 006
-
■ Project Rooms
▨ Galleries

MORE THAN 50%

10%-50%

LESS THAN 10%

1   2   3   4   Number of Galleries / Rooms

Question 7
How many % of the yearly budget is spent on artist
related costs?

(Travel, accommodation, production).
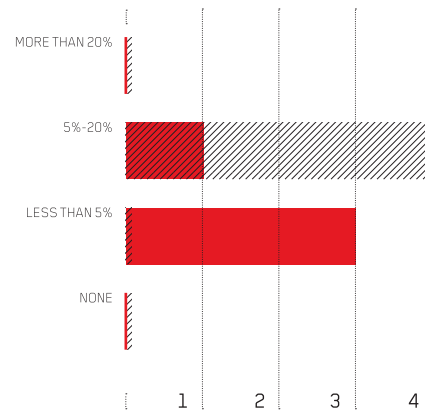
CHART 007
-
■ Project Rooms
▨ Galleries

MORE THAN 20%

5%-20%

LESS THAN 5%

NONE

1   2   3   4   Number of Galleries / Rooms

Question 8
How many % of the yearly budget is spent on curator
related costs?

(Curatorial fees, curatorial research, curators'
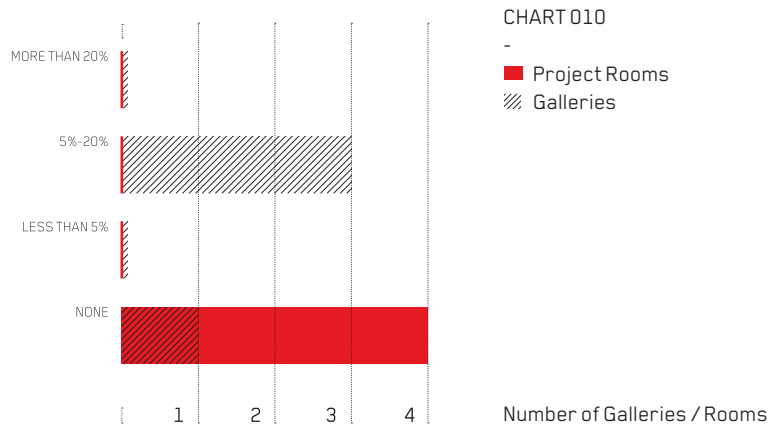travel expenses).
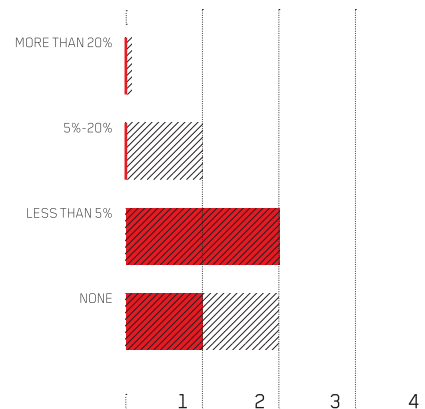
CHART 008
-
■ Project Rooms
▨ Galleries

MORE THAN 20%

5%-20%

LESS THAN 5%

NONE

1   2   3   4   Number of Galleries / Rooms

Question 9
How many % of the yearly budget is spent on publications and discursive events?
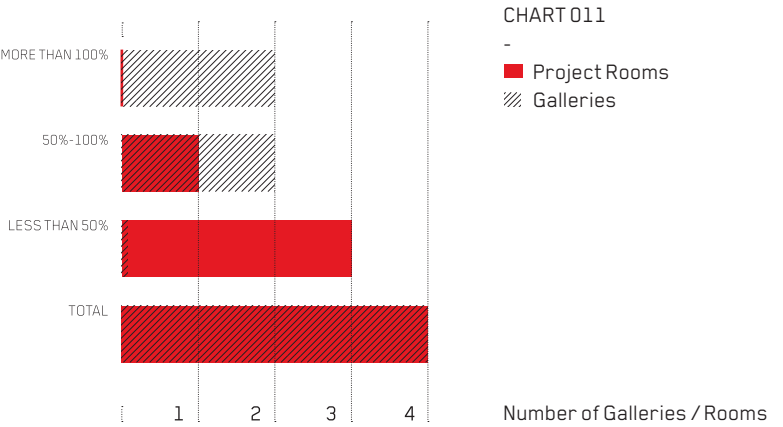
(Lectures, workshops, textbook-related costs).

CHART 009
-
■ Project Rooms
▨ Galleries

MORE THAN 20%
5%-20%
LESS THAN 5%
NONE

1   2   3   4   Number of Galleries / Rooms
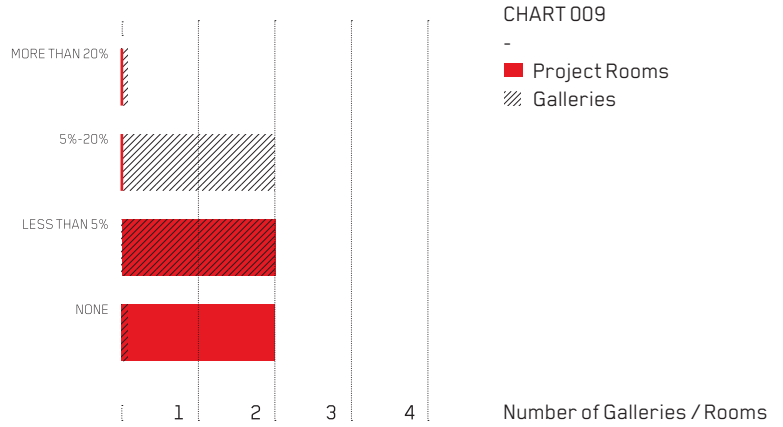
Question 10
How many % of the yearly budget is spent on art fairs?

CHART 010
-
■ Project Rooms
▨ Galleries

MORE THAN 20%
5%-20%
LESS THAN 5%
NONE

1   2   3   4   Number of Galleries / Rooms

Question 11
How many full time equivalents (FTE) do you employ?

CHART 011
-
■ Project Rooms
▨ Galleries

MORE THAN 100%
50%-100%
LESS THAN 50%
TOTAL

1   2   3   4   Number of Galleries / Rooms

FACTS AND FIG-URES: GALLERY EXHIBITIONS IN ZURICH, 2009

Survey by Vivian Landau

The following graphs display the results of a survey sent to 50 galleries in Zurich, all of which are members of the Zurich Association of Galleries (DZG).

The Survey is comprised of 3 questions, which determine

how these galleries function in their output of exhibitions, as well as the age and gender of the artists exhibited.

The galleries were free to decide how and whether to participate in this survey.

Of the 50 galleries contacted, 76% (38) responded. Of the 38 galleries, 55% (20) choose to remain anonymous, whereas 18 galleries agreed to have their name and survey answers published.

SURVEY

79% of the galleries made one to four exhibitions in 2009, and 21% made more than four.

CHART 001
-

MORE THAN
4 EXHIBITIONS

UP TO
4 EXHIBITIONS

25   50   75   100   PERCENTAGE
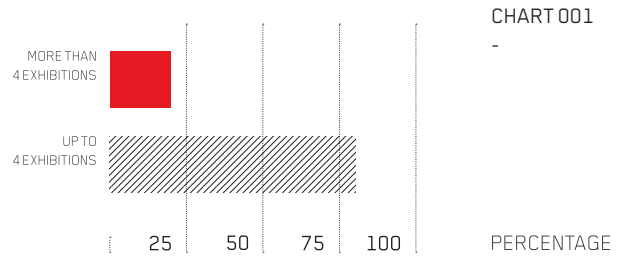
Galleries with 1–4 exhibitions per year (2009)

In 2009 the percentage of male artists who exhibited in solo exhibitions was 58% compared to 17% female artists shown in solo shows; the remaining 25% were exhibited in group shows.

CHART 002
-

SOLO FEMALE SHOWS

COLLECTIVE SHOWS

SOLO MALE SHOWS

25   50   75   100   PERCENTAGE
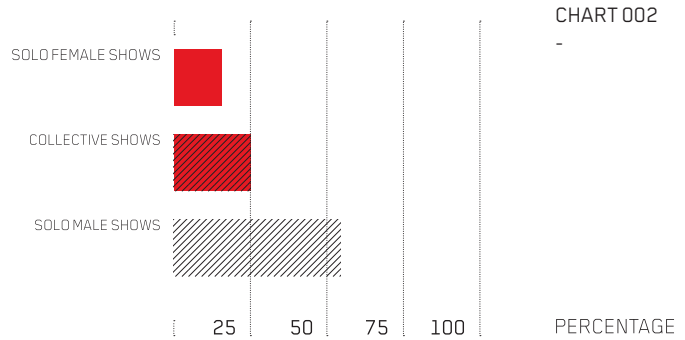
Galleries with 5–10 exhibitions per year (2009)

In 2009 the percentage of male artists who exhibited in solo exhibitions was 54% compared to 11% female artists shown in solo shows; the remaining 34% were exhibited in group shows.

CHART 003
-

SOLO FEMALE SHOWS

COLLECTIVE SHOWS

SOLO MALE SHOWS

25   50   75   100   PERCENTAGE
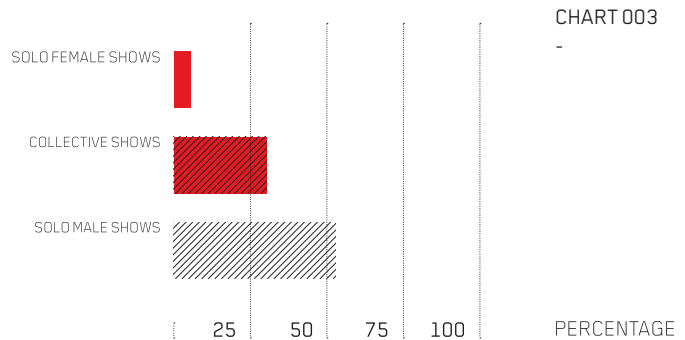
56% of the artists shown in these exhibitions were aged between 30 and 50, while 33% of them were over 50, and 11% were 30 or younger.

CHART 004
-

OVER 50

30-50

UNDER 30

25   50   75   100   PERCENTAGE
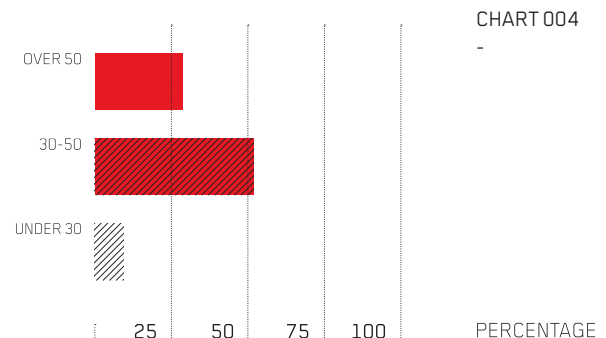
THE RECIPE FOR NEWCOMERS?

By Marina Lopes Coelho, Juan Gonzalez Martinez, Caroline Lommaert, Nathalie Martin, Andrea Pitkova

"Taste is what brings together things and people that go together."[1] Pierre Bourdieu

There are many diverse but related aspects of the dialog taking place between galleries and institutions on the one hand, and artists on the other - especially since artists have turned their attention, both creatively and critically, toward a rethinking of the ideas underpinning the exhibition space. Institutional critique has drawn attention to the class character of exhibitions alluded to in the above-cited quotation.

Changes in the art field can present themselves unexpectedly, a possibility we are especially interested in: "The great upheavals arise from the eruption of newcomers who, by the sole effect of their number and their social quality, import innovation regarding products or techniques of production, and try or claim to impose on the field of production, which is itself its own market, a new mode of evaluation of products".[2] So we interviewed internationally based curators and artists — both novice and established exhibitors — about their experiences of their first exhibitions, and what they learned and would do or did differently in further exhibitions. We also asked various curators and institutions to shed light on their cooperation with novice exhibitors as compared to more experienced ones. For our survey we chose partici-pants from different cultural backgrounds as well as different types of institutions.

We can conclude that, as expected, there is no such a thing as an answer in the sense of a generalized recipe. In reality, exhibition-curating proves to require a blend of relevant economic and cultural production and social reality. We recognize the art field as one structured by power and how it is distributed, as well as evolutions and ruptures in time. The internal structure of the art field - its functions, transformations, meanings, and the relationships between positions of its players - thus overshadowed by competition for legitimacy. And then there is the complex concept of the habitus — characterized by a set of sensibilities, emotions, dispositions and taste, which, as the product of a social trajectory, leads to a behavioral pattern that makes success more or less likely.[3]

Nevertheless, as a result of our efforts, we hereby present and share the insights and statements of the curators and artists we interviewed, which were honest, interesting and sometimes also remarkably amusing.
We are grateful to all the participating artists and curators. The sequence of the interviewees is arbitrary.

Questions

In your experience, what is the difference between working with less experienced artists and those with more experience?

What do you have to do additionally when working with novice exhibitors so that the end result is a great show?

What are the positive sides of working with artists who are newer on the scene?

What are the challenges/problems?

What did you experience in the context of mounting your first exhibitions?

What did you learn?

What would you do in future exhibitions that you noticed you didn't do in the first ones?

Can you tell us about different experiences with curators or institutions?

Did you feel the institution or curator had to do something special with you because you were more inexperienced?

How do you compare your more recent exhibitions or projects with the first ones in terms of the overall production or the installation?

What do you do differently now?

Is the way the institutions deal with you now different from how it was before? Are they more relaxed?

Do you have more conflicts?

Gustavo Villegas: From the first exhibition on, I was lucky to have somebody giving me support with the public relations aspect — which was totally new to me. I learned that when the work is mature enough, the product is 'cooked', but 'packaging' is needed in order to show it or sell it, and a certain atmosphere needs to be generated so that the viewer can enter into a relationship with the work and understand it better. One part is the cake and the other its presentation and marketing.

1
Pierre Bourdieu,
Distinction:
A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste (Cambridge, Massachusetts:
Harvard University Press, 1984),
p. 241.

2
Pierre Bourdieu,
The Rules of Art (Stanford, California:
Stanford University Press, 1996), p. 225.

3
Ibid.

I learned that the viewer enjoys the work or series of works when the language is friendly and you provide him or her with tools to understand the works better, even where the ideas are relatively complex.

_ Something that I have learned from the first exhibitions is to understand that there are exhibition projects that help to legitimize the work, and then there are projects that are helpful for their commercialization. Sometimes there are projects that encompass both goals, but that is not always the case. Learning about this difference has helped me not to get frustrated when it proves difficult to sell the works. With time, I have also learned about the importance of having a discursive line backing-up the work, a kind of theoretical framework for the project.

Stella Rollig: Based on the experience of having worked with artists for more than twenty years, I cannot generalize when making statements on young vs. older artists. Like people in general, every artist is a character. You may, however, find some recurrent models of behavior: There is the artist who knows exactly what s/he wants, there is the one who is uncertain and needs to discuss every detail. There is the control freak who insists on editing the press release by her/himself, and there is the high-maintenance artist who calls the curator at any hour of the night in need of emotional support. There is the generous artist, the one willing to synchronize her or his ambitions and ideas with the existing circumstances — mostly

Set up of the exposition *SEE THIS SOUND*, Lentos Museum, Linz, Director Stella Rollig, Curator Cosima Rainer. Photo: Dorothee Richter

in terms of budget — and there is the one making long-distance calls that go on for hours from the museum office, leaving the mini-bar in the hotel empty at the museum's expense, etc.

_ A great exhibition is almost always the result of intense communication between artist and curator. And this is the big pleasure in working with artists, be they young or old, new on the scene or already around for a while: There is so much to learn, and every exhibition, every collaboration is a new adventure.

Bernard Duqué: In general, I've noticed that artists with less experience are very insistent about the way they want to display and hang the artworks. Very often they have a fixed and pre-conceived idea. This sometimes causes discussions that become a little too theoretical and encumber the display, and are often a significant waste of time.

_ On the contrary, a more established artist starts a dialog with the gallery owner and is prepared to make compromises. The display accordingly develops in a more professional manner.

_ I don't have to do anything extra when working with artists with less exhibiting experience. It only takes more time to put up an exhibition.

_ The positive side is the opportunity to work with artists whose artwork is 'fresher' and innovating, allowing the public to discover art that (s)he hasn't seen anywhere else. For the gallery owner, it is more intellectually stimulating.

_ With young artists, especially photographers, I insist that they do a good presentation of their artwork (frames, quality of paper, etc.) or that they produce certain works in large formats. I notice that this is not easy for some of them, since it represents significant costs.

_ The challenge on the commercial level is that it is necessary to sell more works to cover the costs, as the prices of less well-established artists are lower than those of better-established artists.

Jörg Zenker: I spent all my time on the artwork, not on the presentation or preparation of the show. I also took less of an effort to promote myself before and during the show. I would do more self-promotion. Working more with the exhibition space to make good use of the rooms, and plan for each space, making clearer what kind of spaces I can and cannot use.

_ One curator was very strict and had a professional staff, who looked at all the artwork and arranged it in an interesting and appropriate way. This person was also objective and left most people satisfied. Another curator I worked with had clear favorites and put them in the forefront, which wasn't great for the less well-represented artists, but fair since the curator was investing in it financially.

_ I try to start further in advance and work with a theme that I am already using and develop it. Then I get more precise information about the exhibition, who will be there, who will pay for what advertising, and how much, and how many visitors are expected. I want to know how and where my work will be hung and what the lighting is like, as well as who else, if anybody, will be exhibiting.

_ It's less stressful closer to the exhibition day and the day of the installation because a lot more has been clarified beforehand.

Agnaldo Farias: I found that the more experienced artists make fewer mistakes. In my role as a curator, I need to calm down artists with less exhibiting experience and talk about the way their work will be materialized in the space,

as well as explaining to them, in the case of group shows, that their works will establish relationships and dialogs with other works in a way they did not expect and maybe do not want. This process can take a lot of energy because, unlike other curators who work with pre-existing works or already know very well what they want from the artist, I prefer to finance new projects. I'm against a curatorial practice that is full of orders, and prefer to let the artist work more freely, and take risks in cases of newer artists.

_ In the case of commissioned works, one of the difficult tasks is to keep control of the available amount of money on the one hand and the development of the work on the other. When this does not happen, either the work remains unfinished or the budget explodes. In either case, it is a nightmare.

_ However, working with newer artists is always a surprise; one never knows how it will be and what they will present. In a way, this is the aspect that constitutes the appeal of working with newer artists. They reinvent the exhibition space, the role of the curator and even that of the public. In a nutshell: they reinvent the notion of what art is supposed to be.

Marcos Gallon: One of the riskiest aspects of dealing with newer artists is finishing the works, and the fact that some of them do not understand the institutional difference between a museum and a commercial gallery very well. However, a positive side of working with newer artists is the media plurality that can be presented in a single show: video installations, drawings, photography, sculpture and performance. One of the biggest challenges is to know how to handle the artist, solving the questions in a way that contributes to the work rather than interfering with it.

_ Most of the established galleries give provide the artists with every conceivable type of support during the process of setting up the exhibitions, apart from taking care of all the arrangements for the opening night, such as beverages, invitations, press release, etc. The gallery provides a technician who is usually able to deal with aspects like lighting, painting the walls and installing the artworks, and they help the artists with any technical problems that might arise.

Ticha González: The motivation to do my first solo exhibition Trespassing the threshold of the skin came from a proposal by my teacher Gustavo Villegas. One of the requisites for being in his class is to commit ourselves to doing a solo exhibition, even if it takes place in a garage! He pushed me more and went with me to talk to Gabriel Horner, the director of the Museo de la Ciudad. He was very kind, agreed to work with me and gave me a date for the exhibition, which I postponed three times. I had also made a commitment to my friends, who pushed me to deal with my insecurities and fears and I overcame them.

_ With all the stress I was about to collapse. My family didn't see me even for meals. They supported me greatly and never discouraged me. They would ask me how they could help, but in this matter of painting … how could they? At the same time, I had my business (an art-supplies shop), and well … everywhere I looked there was a mountain of work, and I just couldn't cope: I would wake up at dawn, and went to bed very late. The result was very good … I lost six of the ten kg I was overweight.

_ I cried and worked. I chose the theme exactly because of the meaning it had to me.

_ Anyway, at the same time I was working with a writer to learn how to put my ideas down on paper.

_ I panicked when I realized that on top of that there were going to be a lot of people, and that I was exposing the most intimate part of myself, and that by doing that I was putting myself in the spotlight and bound to receive bad and good criticism.

_ At the opening, after a speech by Santiago Carbonell, I broke out in tears and I only said "Trespassing. Trespassing". It was very exciting because really, for me this was all about transcending the fears that block me. It was very strong. It will be one year next July and I still cannot believe it.

_ I was very well received by the public and I sold half of the works. The people who bought them said things like "Yes! I want that one!" so it was really a dream come true. Everything came out perfectly.

_ The museum was great to put the space at my disposal, and Cain, the technician gave me a lot of support. My brother printed the invitations, which was great because the museum has a very low budget.
The Museo de la Ciudad, is a great institution that has supported many artists by giving them space to exhibit. Many recognized artists, for example Teresa Margolles, had their first exhibitions there. It sadly has a very low budget and many people to support.

_ What will I do next time? I really don't know. The human being is the only animal that bumps twice against the same stone, and I'm sure I will make a lot of mistakes again. I know that until the moment I die I will not stop learning and thinking about what I could do better next time. Enjoy more and suffer less!

Isin Önol: For me, it has usually been much easier to work with more experienced artists, since they knew what they want from the beginning, and they more or less stick to that idea until they attain it. The inexperienced artist is naturally more stressed about decision-making as well as trusting others to make decisions. Compared to these difficulties, I find it easier to deal with the obsession or perfectionism of the experienced artist. On the other hand, with the young artists there is usually more scope for experimental and innovative ideas, which is one of the delights of curating.

_ Well, for a 'great' show all you need is to choose 'great' and relevant artworks. All you can really do is increase the means ensuring that a work will be perceived better.

_ The feeling of discovering and showing something new is attractive to many curators. I personally enjoy brainstorming with an artist, perhaps mostly because I come from an art background myself. This is more possible with young artists.

_ Lack of self-confidence is a challenge, but very understandable. The same applies to curators. I am not sure if the stress goes away for a curator after having enough maturity. It is risky but also a positive challenge to work with the artist to create the meaning of the work.

Jimmy de Bock: The first exhibitions were a rush, and very exciting. I didn't know a thing. How to frame my work, what price I should ask for it, how to limit the edition of the prints, etc. I learned a lot!

_ It was interesting to see how people would react to my work, their comments, that some people like certain things and others like something completely different. An exhibition is a learning experience in and of itself. Confronting other people's eyes and sensibilities with my work offers me the opportunity to look at my work through their eyes and see it in a different way. It makes me grow as an artist. It gives me ideas.

Set up of the exposition *SEE THIS SOUND*, Lentos Museum, Linz, Director Stella Rollig, Curator Cosima Rainer.
Photo: Dorothee Richter

_ Each exhibition is unique and yet helps you do the next one better. Something I noticed I had to improve is my communication. I have come to believe it is vital to build a network of people who know your work and know you are active.
_ About my experiences with curators or institutions? It is great to be in contact with a curator who knows what he's talking about, who is dedicated to the world of art, takes the time to get to know the artists he works with. I see the relationship between artist and curator as a collaboration with mutual benefits and enrichments, not a one-way "I pick you and you exhibit and that is the end of it" situation. In a certain way, I believe curators and institutions should act as 'mentors', meaning: introducing artists to other institutions they are personally familiar with (or not) that would be interested in the artist's work, giving the artists advice as to their position in the art world, listening to the artists' opinion on the matter.
_ Did I feel the institution or curator had to do something special with me because I was more inexperienced? Actually, I have always been very involved in the preparations for my exhibitions.
_ Compared to before, I now develop and maintain my network. I keep a better website and tend to participate in more competitions. I look into getting press coverage.
_ My work and its evolution, as well as the way I present myself and my work, have an impact in the sense that institutions take me more seriously now than before.

Karen Weinert: The first group exhibition I organized in collaboration with two other artists (students at the time) cost me an unbelievable amount of time. It was very difficult to make a decision over every small detail and the complexity of it all was not easy to get a handle on: we had to organize an exhibition of the works of about fifteen German and French students, complete with an accompanying catalogue. We did the entire publicity work for the first time: the walls, the titles, the catalogue and the budget.

_ When I look back, I don't know how we accomplished it, but I will never forget the feeling when we opened the exhibition. It has gradually become clear to me how much I've learned from experience; you put so much work into your first exhibitions and they really stay in your memory. For the exhibitions I organize now, I have the smaller details under control and I can make decisions more easily. However, it surprises me when I realize how naive I still am, and to what extent one's work in exhibition-making can be perfected.
_ I do things differently depending on the composition of the group that is organizing the exhibition. When you know and trust each other, and know one another's competences, it can be very relaxing. Clear task distribution is good, but it doesn't mean there shouldn't be task exchange.
_ Whether or not you're taken seriously does not depend only on the experience you have or don't have, but also on your age. It also helps when you're better at setting priorities, and don't have to get involved in every decision. There are things that are very important for someone, things that person is not willing to give up, for example the meaning of a work, the framing or the installation.

Ildiko Hetesi: It was frustrating in the 'building' process, and very rewarding when it was finished. I have learned that if I want to build an exhibition 'professionally' a) it is not possible to do it without money b) I cannot rely on the help of 'friends' building it and organizing it. I have learned that an exhibition is a business.
_ In the future I would 'turn down' the level of naïve enthusiasm and plan it as one should plan a 'business': fund-raising, supporters, technicians, transfer, publicity, exact plan and schedule. Also, I would try to avoid any 'last-minute action' = be finished at least twenty-four hours before the opening.
_ I think curators and institutions both want good art (even if one can dispute forever what good art is) and it does not matter if one has been producing for two years or twenty, as long it is 'good' art.

_ Comparing what I now do differently from before: I plan more exactly and I stick more self-confidently to what I think I need in order to put up a good show. Now I can say: "either you provide me this and this and this and this — or I am not doing the show". Artists at the very beginning of their careers cannot do this because they are usually desperate to find a place where they can show.
_ I know this sounds funny, but I feel that professionals working behind the stage in putting up shows 'mature' faster: after one bad show you just learn how to do it better. Also, I find that just 'hanging in there' makes collectors and organizers take you more seriously; the discussions between the two sides take place on a more equal footing.

Bettina Meier-Bickel: Doing something extra in the preparation of the show does not depend on whether the artist is established or not; it is after a young artist's show that the work really starts. Mediation is crucial.
_ We maintain close relationships to the newer artists, go to their studios, stay close to them during the production phase, guide them — they are still open for response, they need the feedback.
_ The positive aspect about newer artists is that they really have a fresh motivation. It's not so much about money or sales yet. We invest in young artists and their production costs.
_ We plan the shows about one year in advance, but keep a leeway so that we can always move around in case some great contemporary artist comes along. This market moves so fast that you have to catch the artist when you can.
_ The more experienced artists are sometimes more difficult. When they know what they're worth they become more demanding.
_ Regardless of their experience, it is always important to have a good relationship with the artist, so that you get insight into their personal sphere.

Asli Cetinkaya: Younger artists, even though they are more anxious or less confident (which is noticeable in their indecisiveness about the details or conditions of display, etc.), seem to be more enthusiastic about the show and its reception. They are more adaptable and willing to work with curators; more open to suggestions, even when significant alterations to their initial installation plans are being proposed. On the other hand, young artists are less punctual, leaving so many details to be taken care of till the last minute, putting an extra burden on the technical and support staff.
_ However, we cannot establish a clear categorization with these parameters: I have also met newer and more established artists that prove the opposite of what I have described.
_ Regarding newer artists, sometimes we might need to monitor them with regard to the timing and other requirements for the show.
_ It is always exciting to be introducing a new artist and new work of art to the public. The institution I work for is quite well known for this aspect. It is also an ongoing interest which rewards us as we see those artists exhibiting more often and embarking on promising careers.
_ The art public more readily accepts invitations to shows of established artists. So from time to time, it is a challenge for us to draw a larger number of viewers to the exhibitions of young artists. Sometimes young artists seem to be expecting miraculous solutions to most of the problems we/they face during the preparations.

Marjatta Hölz: It can happen that the more established ones have more fixed concepts, especially concerning traveling exhibitions with similar works at each of the locations.

_ But I think how the planning process is realized mostly depends on the artist's individual interests and character. We discussed our ideas for the installation and tried out different variations. Sometimes the more established artists who didn't have a lot of time at their disposal just trusted me, let me compose the plan for the installation and didn't come until the opening. But I also remember that in one of these cases an artist wanted to change the hanging of a series the evening before the opening. The new place he had chosen unfortunately was not much better because bothersome reflections came about on the glass surfaces of the frames, so we ended up having to darken the room. The problem with such short-term changes is that the artist is not as well acquainted with special characteristics of the space as the curator, who is dealing with it all the time.
_ A well-known artist with media presence is an eye-catcher, and a proportion of the visitors visit the exhibition because of the name.
_ For a younger artist, on the other hand, it is necessary to reinforce the public relations, to make it very clear why this exhibition is extraordinary. An inspiring subject with a striking title can be helpful. It is also a good idea to invite younger and more experienced artists together.
_ With younger artists I see an opportunity to discover and mediate new artistic approaches, especially when they relate to our life, in a bold, critical and sometimes humorous way; and it is a chance to support them in making progress.
_ Both newer and more established artists are interested in site-specific working methods, but I have the impression that the younger are slightly keener on experimenting with environmental shape and discussing alternative presentation forms with the curator.
_ The curiosity and openness of the public is often more developed since most of the people who visit newer artist's exhibitions come for the sake of art and not because of the name. Furthermore, a young artist attracts more young visitors, and a mixed audience can prevent the formation of closed circles.

Anca Sinpalean: With the more 'experienced' artists, there is less scope (and often less time) for dialog and 'negotiation'. These artists have a pretty good idea about what they want to exhibit, and how they want to exhibit their work. The younger artists are more open and flexible, in my experience.
_ Young artists need more support and more confirmation/affirmation of this support. The key element is trust. They need to be able to trust you, to have the confidence that you will help them and work with them, and that the final result will be a great show. If time allows it, and the relationship grows, the curator can become a sort of counselor, in times of doubt or confusion. The curator should also help to bring about a reality check, helping to filter the ideas that are most realistic and practical, without destroying the artist's 'creative nest'.
_ The motivation and energy of the young emerging artists is an important driving force when working with them. Their dedication and honesty is a motor that 'fuels' the whole project and often offers new solutions along the way. It is like they are on a constant search (and the curator has the privilege of being taken along with them), a search for the best solution, idea, material, etc. This creative restlessness is a quality that, in their later career, does not always stick with an artist.
_ Since young artists have less experience, some problems may crop up along the way, such as: unrealistic estimations and expectations (that can be hard to 'remove'), a kind of tension and fright that can slow or block the creative

flow of the project, and — sometimes - various forms of intolerance. For the artists who have had unfortunate experiences working with curators, it is important to cure them of a certain skepticism towards curators and their alleged meddling; convince them that you are a partner, and gain their trust.

Lena Mohammed: More experienced artists tend to have a clearer idea of how they want their art to be perceived, which can be of great benefit as it encourages the curator to share their vision. In contemporary art, the space in which art is displayed is obviously of great importance, and if we don't get it right, it can alter the artwork and the viewer's perception of it. However, it can also be limiting: experienced artists can have such a precise idea for the installation of their work that it can restrict the role of the curator and the creativity needed when displaying a work. Since the artist tends to be completely engrossed in the creation of their work, it is often difficult for them to view it objectively.
_ When working with younger artists one needs to encourage them constantly since their confidence is easily shaken. One must also understand their process of making art, as this permits an understanding of the works themselves.
_ They are always keen to learn more, and always enthusiastic. It is also very exciting for the curator to share in this moment of achievement.

Revinder Chahal: My first experience setting up an exhibition taught me that I needed to become very thick-skinned. When you are in a group of artists in a joint exhibition, there are a lot of egos and each artist believes they deserve the most and your work — there is no point putting yourself last since your

Set up of the exposition *SEE THIS SOUND*, Lentos Museum, Linz, Director Stella Rollig, Curator Cosima Rainer. Photo: Dorothee Richter

work will suffer by being pushed to the back and not being shown in its best light. If you don't stand up for yourself, no-one else will.
_ I also didn't have all the right tools/equipment and wasted a lot of time waiting around to borrow a screwdriver or hammer from someone else! I assumed everything would be provided — now I know always to take a tool kit with me.
_ Now, I always make sure I know the other artists I exhibit with. I feel it is important that there is mutual respect and it always helps if you like and understand the work of those you exhibit alongside. I would also be sure to check any publicity or promotional material (posters, flyers, web adverts, etc) for any mistakes. Where possible, I would promote the exhibition as much as possible myself to ensure a good result.
_ The worst experience I had was being pressured into paying a gallery organizer to frame and show my work for me. I was very naïve and trusted him to do a good job, but when I arrived on the night of the opening, the mounts didn't fit the artworks and the frames didn't suit the work; very little care had been taken to show the work in a professional way. Now, I always

ensure I have a hand in everything I do and check everything before I allow it to go on display.
_ There was only one time when I felt that an institution (a gallery) did something special with me because I was more inexperienced. I was offered a lot of help with the installation and decisions on how to display my work, for example which pieces worked better together and why, and this was because I was new to exhibiting my work. I found this advice invaluable and still keep it in mind whenever exhibiting my work.
_ With the other galleries/venues, I was pretty much on my own and had to rely on what I had learned myself.

-

Thanks to…

Gustavo Villegas
Artist, Mexico

Stella Rollig
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Jörg Zenker
Artist, USA/Germany

Agnaldo Farias
Chief curator 29. Biennale

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Marcos Gallon
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Ticha Gonzalez
Artist, Mexico

Isin Önol
Curator, Turkey/Austria/
Switzerland

Jimmy de Bock
Artist, Belgium

Karen Weinert
Artist/ curator, Germany

Ildiko Hetesi
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Germany

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Gallery, Zurich, Switzerland

Asli Cetinkaya
Manager, Sabanci University
Kasa Galery, Turkey

Marjatta Hölz
Curator/art historian,
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Anca Sinpalean
curator/artist, Romania/
Switzerland

Lena Mohammed
Freelancer, England

Revinder Chahal
Artist, England

UNDER THE SIGN OF LABOR

Sabeth Buchmann

I
From the Dematerialized Object to Immaterial Labor

Anglo-American Conceptual art, which emerged in the mid to late 1960s, displayed a new interest in linguistics and information theory that clearly distinguished it from the industrially coded production aesthetics of Pop art and Minimalism. The thesis that went along with this was that replacing author-centered object production with linguistic or information-based propositions represented a challenge not only to any traditional 'material-object paradigm' (Art & Language) but also to those aspects of craftsmanship within 'production values' that are crucial to any claims to authorship and the 'work,' and this perhaps helps to explain how and why the history of Conceptual art has mistakenly been written as a history of "dematerialization of the object."[1] Without wishing to enter into any detailed critique of the concept of dematerialization, for this has already been sufficiently undertaken and documented,[2] I would still like to take this as a starting point, though not in order to discuss the status of the object in the context of postconceptual practice or to relativize the problems inherent to the discourse of dematerialization. Instead, I am interested in the inherent revaluation of 'work' that the concept involves. Lucy Lippard was not alone in seeing one of Conceptual art's main goals in replacing the traditional object with distribution-oriented sign systems in order to overcome the market logic of art production and anchor these distribution-oriented sign systems within noninstitutional, noncommercial public space.[3] Although this goal was not achieved, Conceptual art was still successful in establishing the idea that art's symbolic value did not necessarily have to be judged on the basis of its material production, but could just as well be gauged in registers of social productivity. This means that whereas art was traditionally seen in terms of categories of objects (works of art), now there was a renewed call for art committed to the avant-garde and a form of communication capable of generating public space. As the work of the early Conceptual artists shows, this amounted to a new notion of public space that was that was projected onto such various interrelated spheres as urban space, social movements, the mass media, new technologies, libraries, etc.

We can assume, along with the philosopher Jacques Rancière, that at the basis of such a discourse of public space lies not only the avant-garde notion of transferring art to life, but also simple, classical images of the 'emulating artist,' who in contrast to the 'standard' worker, who is excluded "from participation in what is common to the community," "provides a public stage for the 'private' principle of work."[4] But as standard categories of material production become obsolete with the relativization of forms and notions of the work that are focused around the notion of the author, then the question arises as to the status of the artistic work that is to be exhibited in the public realm. If Maurizio Lazzarto's idea of 'immaterial labor,'[5] which refers to service activities in the realm of education, research, information, communication, and management, is taken as a starting point, then a possible answer to this question might lie in linking Chandler and Lippard's discourse of dematerialization with the modes of representing labor in the neo-Conceptual movements of the 1980s and 1990s.

II
From 'The faking of' ...

If the dematerialization discourse is interpreted in the sense of superimposing 'material' with 'symbolic' production, it can be seen as corresponding to a social process: "the reconfiguration of labor relations in the major industrial nations" that began in the early 1970s.[6] In their book *The Labor of Dionysus*, Toni Negri and Michael Hardt write: "The most important general phenomenon of the transformation of labor that we have witnessed in recent years is the passage toward what we call the factory society... All of society is now permeated through and through with the regime of the factory, that is, with the rules of specifically capitalist relations of production."[7] The two authors conclude that "the traditional conceptual distinction between productive and unproductive labor and between production and reproduction... should today be considered completely defunct."[8] Negri and Hardt thus broaden prevailing concepts of value to such an extent that 'immaterial' or self-utilizing forms of labor can be included.[9]

Although these discourses were not yet public in the 1980s-at least not in the art context-comparable revisions of the traditional concept of labor and production can be detected, albeit in an entirely different theoretical realm. These included above all Jean Baudrillard's proposition-put forward as early as the 1970s-that 'production' (which went along with the industrial age) had been replaced by

1
Lucy R. Lippard and John Chandler, "The Dematerialization of Art," in *Art International*, Vol. 12, no. 2 (1968): 31-36. See also Lucy Lippard, *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973).

2
See for example Charles Harrison, "Einleitung," in *Art & Language: Terry Bainbridge, Michael Baldwin, Harold Hurrell, Joseph Kosuth*, ed. Paul Maenz and Gerd de Vries (Köln: DuMont, 1972), 11-17; and Pamela M. Lee, "Das konzeptuelle Objekt der Kunstgeschichte," in *Texte zur Kunst*, Vol. 6., no. 21 (March 1996): 120-129.

3
Lippard, "Escape Attempts," in *Reconsidering the Object of Art*, eds. Ann Goldstein and Anne Rorimer, exh. cat. (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1995), 16-39.

4
Jacques Rancière, "On Art and Work," in *The Politics of Aesthetics* (New York/London: Continuum), 42-43.

5
See Maurizio Lazzarato, "Immaterielle Arbeit: Gesellschaftliche Tätigkeit unter den Bedingungen des Post-fordismus," in Toni Negri, Maurizio Lazzarato, and Paolo Virno, *Umherschweifende Produzenten: Immaterielle Arbeit und Subversion* (Berlin: ID Verlag, 1998), 39-52.

6
Michael Willenbücher, *Migration-Illegalisierung-Ausnahmezustände: Der Illegalisierte als Homo Sacer des Postfordismus*, unpublished Magister thesis (Heidelberg: Ruprecht-Karls-Universität, 2005).

7
Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, *The Labor of Dionysus: A Critique of the State Form* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), 9-10.

8
Ibid., 10.

9
Negri und Hardt, for instance, take recourse to the Marxist concept of 'general intellect,' according to which knowledge and intellectual capacities are accumulated and mobilized in the sense of labor's self-amortization. But in the way that the authors take account of social and symbolic forms of value production, they differ from the Marxist theory of value. They affirm the networks of producers that, according to their depiction, refuse control by capital and thus have greater connection to value creation and production. All the same, this could be criticized as an idealistic option, since companies also absorb such projects to promote the abolition of all wage guarantees. It has for example been pointed out a number of times that this process, which Negri and Hardt consider a positive development, leads to a more extensive exploitation, to new forms of control in the lowest-wage service economy, and finally contributes to corporations penetrating more and more into the social realm.

'simulation' (in the age of information).[10] Backed up by discourses on the 'immaterial' (Lyotard),[11] postmodern media theory was increasingly to take on the role of a social theory[12] and as such be able to find its way into those (neo-)Conceptual forms of thought and praxis that overlapped with the approaches of poststructuralism, deconstruction, and cultural studies that were emerging at the time. In contrast to the focus on linguistics that still determined the discourse on the dematerialization of the object, here semiotics enhanced by cultural criticism came onto the scene, no longer measuring the 'real' as a fact of material production, but rather as an effect of a process of 'de-realization' driven forward by media technology. Concepts often used at the time, such as 'simulacrum,' 'surrogate,' and 'fake,'[13] as well as the founding of fictional "corporate identities," provide a sense of how references to ideas like 'labor' and 'production' have undergone a form of virtualization, and, even if only 'simulated,' a form of corporate privatization.

The fact that the playful analogy of artistic self-organization and fictional 'corporate identities' was to turn into economic reality in the 1990s could be one of the reasons why postmodernist media theory slowly went out of fashion. So-called reality had returned to the art world, and not as a result of the crisis in the art market that took place in the interim. Political and economic discourses around post-Fordism, service culture, and neoliberalism, including the concepts they used for capital, labor, and production such as 'flexibilization,' 'deregulation,' and 'mobilization,' became key terms within those post-Conceptual developments that took recourse to approaches from the 1970s (such as site-specificity, identity, and institutional critique) and thereby positioned themselves against the ongoing demand of the art market for 'good craftsmanship' and quantifiable 'production values.' Parallel to this, the economic situation of those institutions and artists dependent on public funding became more drastic, as the cultural sphere was increasingly hit by cuts, meaning that budgets for production formats not adequate to the art market became more scarce and new forms of 'aggressive sponsoring'[14] found their way into museums and art associations. Thus, any talk of 'fictional corporate identities' became hopelessly obsolete when, due to a mix of voluntary and forced self-determination, artists saw themselves confronted with the necessity of organizing their own financial means for production, work spaces, exhibition sites, contacts, possibilities of distribution, and publics. Hence, the discourse on the "mobilized relation between capital and labor"[15] became increasingly obsolete with the increasing entanglement of self-organized, institutional, corporate, and state economies. This was a process that became a major issue and also a subject in their work for artists who sought to integrate into their works the changing conditions of labor and production and the discourse on the public and the private that these conditions engendered.

III
The making of

In the following I will explore the 1998 exhibition *The making of*, organized by the artist Matthias Poledna at the Generali Foundation in Vienna, in which the artist himself, together with Simon Leung, Dorit Margreiter, and Nils Norman participated. This exhibition both explicitly and implicitly addressed the problems sketched above. For example, it was concerned with the transformed modes of presenting and publishing artistic work within the

tradition of Conceptualism, as related to 'low-capital, labor intensive industries,'[6] as a characteristic of the economics of post-Fordism marked by mass unemployment. In *The making of*, this included critical revisions of techniques of site specificity, identity critique, institutional critique, postproduction, and cultural research, and hence revisions of conceptual notions of the work that intended to historically illuminate the blind spots of modernist art discourse – its overlapping with phenomena of everyday life, commodity and media culture, architecture, and design. *The making of* was framed by an exhibition design that contained references to Michael Asher's 1977 solo show in Eindhoven's Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum, Daniel Buren's exhibition *Frost and Defrost* (1979, Otis Art Institute, Los Angeles)[17] and information on the corporate design of the Generali Foundation itself. Asher's concept had been to dismantle fifteen glass ceiling panels from one of the exhibition spaces of the Van Abbemusuem, and to then determine the duration of the exhibition as the time required for the installation team-working to a fixed schedule – to reinstall the glass panels.[18] Poledna then cited this idea by also taking down the ceiling panels and having them placed in the entryway of the Generali Foundation's exhibition space. Instead of reinstalling them, as Asher did, Poledna gave them a new function as bearers of information with passages from a handbook of the Generali Foundation on questions of design and quotations from the building design of the architects Jabornegg & Palffy. In this way, the works presented became legible in the context of a highly charged contemporary debate on the autonomy of commissioned art.[19] It was, of course, inevitable that this debate would also affect the Generali Foundation itself,

10
Jean Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange and Death* (London: Sage Pablications, 1993).

11
Consider in this context the 1985 exhibition *Les Immatériaux* at Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris.

12
Katja Diefenbach, *Theorien der neuen Technologien: Zur Bedeutung der Informations- und Kommunikations-technologien im Spätkapitalismus*, unpublished Magister thesis (München: Ludwig-Maximillian-Universität, 1992).

13
See Stefan Römer, *Künstlerische Strategien des Fake: Kritik und Original und Fälschung* (Köln: DuMont, 2002).

14
See Walter Grasskamp, *Kunst und Geld: Szenen einer Mischehe* (München: Beck, 1998); Hans Haacke, "Der Kampf ums Geld: Sponsoren, Kunst, moderne Zeiten," Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (11 October, 1995); Dierk Schmidt, "Sponsorenstress: Ein Beitrag zur politischen Kampagne," A.N.Y.P. 9 (1999): 32–33; Hubertus Butin, "When Attitudes Become Form Philip Morris Becomes Sponsor," in The Academy and the Corporate Public , ed. Stephan Dillemuth (Bergen: Kunsthøgskolen, Köln: Permanent Press Verlag: 2002), 40; Alice Creischer and Andreas Siekmann, "Sponsoring and Neoliberal Culture," in ibid., 58.

15
See Willenbücher, "Migration-Illegalisierung-Ausnahmezustande".

16
See "Substituting one fungus for another: Nicolas Tobier in conversation with Nils Norman," in *The Making Of*, ed. Mathias Poledna (Wien: Generali Foundation, Köln: Buchhandlung Walther König, 1998), 207.

17
"In this site-specific work the ceiling panels

in both gallery rooms were removed and covered with striped paper. The panels were reinstalled by units of seven per day per room to their original place in the ceiling. At the same time objects left in room B used for installation were put back a piece at a time in the storage room. The evolution of the work was documented in the catalog." See Daniel Buren, *Frost and Defrost*, exh. cat. (Los Angeles: Otis Art Institute, 1979). Quoted from http://percept. home.cyberserve. com/percept/ exhibitions-html.

18
See Michael Asher's description of his exhibition concept: "I propose that before the exhibition opens on August 3, all the glass ceiling panels in rooms 1, 2, 3, and 4, plus all the glass panels in one half of the museum shall be removed, which would leave rooms 10, 9, 8, 7, and part of rooms 5 and 6 open for exhibition. Starting August 3 and working 4 hours every morning during each day of the work week, an exhibition crew will replace the ceiling panels." Quoted in Michael Asher, "August 3–August 29, 1977 Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum Eindhoven, Netherlands," in *Writings 1977-1983 On Works 1969-1979*, ed. Benjamin H. D. Buchloh (Halifax: Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1983), 174–83, here: 178.

19
See the debate on Andrea Fraser's Project in two phases (1994-95).

as it is publicly seen to be a private art institution funded by an insurance company, and also especially since the Generali Foundation was especially interested in the tradition of Conceptual art and its associated forms of institutional critique. This show made reference to a paradigmatic work of institutional critique and to Poledna's own involvement as a graphic artist in the corporate design of the Generali Foundation, references which mutually influenced each other, and the selected form of exhibition design clearly showed that the relationship between the two can hardly be limited to a polarized view of critique, on the one hand, and affirmation on the other.[20] For it was precisely from his position of involvement that Poledna formulated a position of critical distance that is seldom encountered in what are otherwise generalizing attacks on art as service. As Poledna explained in the interview for the exhibition catalog: "Interestingly, the Generali Foundation – as far as I know – voluntarily subscribed to the corporative aesthetics of the Generali, in that the logo, typefaces, colors, etc., correspond to a great extent to the logic of representation of the Generali Insurance Company. At the same time, the terms that appear in this text – position, identity, form, content, style, format – are constantly applied in art contexts. This reciprocal saturation of different rhetorics becomes particularly virulent when the language appears to indicate that the artists of the exhibition are speaking for themselves."[21] Thus, in his eyes, the differences between "'free' and contractual artistic work are generally less than assumed. Precisely because artistic projects are considered non-determined, one is confronted more with implicit expectations and general assumptions, that-consciously or not-inscribe themselves into the respective approaches."[22]

In light of the reference to Asher, Poledna's statement can help to explain further aspects of the exhibition design that affect the relationship between public and private work discussed above. For what category does corporate identity belong to, and can its thematization, like Asher's intervention, allow the distinctions between 'visible' and 'invisible,' 'standardized' and 'flexible,' 'physical' and 'intellectual' labor and their proper evaluation to become evident? By using the ceiling panels as an exhibition display and as a bearer of information with the aim of making architecture the object of the exhibition (allowing it to block the lines of vision in the exhibition space), Polenda modified Asher's reflection of the shifting relationship between artistic and institutional labor economy in the sense of an overview of "architecture, corporate design, and institutional self-portrayal."[23] Using Asher's design as a point of departure, the distinction between private labor, which is private because it is usually invisible, and public, or usually visible labor, was expanded by an implicit reference to the equivalence of symbolic and corporate capital.[24] In this way, the exhibition also addressed the various institutional, social, and art critical evaluations of the role of the artist and the role of the service provider.

The combination of historical and site-specific, topical reference to labor's (self-)representation staged in *The Making of* carried yet another discourse with it – the discourse rooted in the avant-garde tradition that claims that making production visible amounts to turning art into social productivity. According to the standard view, this takes place only when the limits of the institution of art are transgressed and other social fields are entered. As the art and culture critic Christian Höller writes in his catalog contribution: "In symbolic-political production, therefore, working with overlapping and permeating

contexts is inherent. Contexts understood as 'institutional' require, though, a more complex positioning than the following alternatives suggest for the moment; direct linkage (for instance onto the exhibiting institution) or unbound 'outer' orientation."[25]

In the light of the polarization of institutional and social fields, as problematized by Poledna and Höller, the exhibition design for *The Making of* offered a starting point at the end of the 1990s for reworking apparently stagnating institution-critical practices – including criticism of these practices themselves – by virtue of a broadly framed discourse on the reciprocal relationship between processes of corporatization and shifting modes of labor and production. As far as the visibility of non-artistic, that is, industrial and standard 'labor' in the context of the Generali Foundation is concerned, here, too, a link can be made to what Poledna envisioned as the "interrelations between architecture, corporate design, and institutional self-portrayal."[26] In the interview quoted above, the artist noted that the ceiling "actually displays an outside of this relatively hermetic space" of the Generali Foundation: "After the dismantling of the ceiling panels the room evokes the image of an industrial shed, or backyard industry. On the lot where the foundation is now situated, there was originally a shed in which hats were produced. My concern was to advance other images against the original appearance of an architecture which oscillates between a supposedly pragmatic understanding of classical modernity and a certain late eighties look."[27]

That means that just a few years after the reconstruction of the building, the basic design principle – the avoidance of 'irregular contours' to create a "clear

20
See Helmut Draxler's contribution in S.Buchmann, A. Alberro ed. *Art After Conceptual Art* (Generali Foundation Collection Series), The MIT Press/ Cambridge, Mass. 2006.

21
"Blanks and side effects: Sabeth Buchmann in conversation with Mathias Poledna," in Poledna, *The Making Of*, 223–24.

22
Ibid., 220.

23
Ibid., 225.

24
Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996).

25
Christian Höller, "The making of ... political contexts? Preliminary work on a symbolic political context understanding," in Poledna, *The Making Of*, 173.

26
Buchmann/Poledna, "Blanks and side effects", 225.

27
Ibid.

image"[28] – surfaces in *The Making of* as a historically determined motif. The proposition implicit in this intervention, that this image could already soon prove to be something worthy of revision, also resonates in Nils Norman's contribution Proposal 10. Corresponding to the symbolic reconstruction of a history of industrial production eradicated by the architecture of the Generali Foundation, the contribution foresaw "the radical redevelopment of the Generali Foundation, Vienna. Consisting of various architectural, bureaucratic, environmental, and psychological interventions."[29] Nils Norman's proposal of an alternative foundation that issued from the interest he noted in 'alternative economic forms'[30] as a consequence of the closure of industrial companies and the resultant mass unemployment thematized at the same time the possibility that the Generali Group might someday turn to marketing concepts that are socially more productive and invest its money in ecology and related socio-technological projects – things that themselves have in the meantime become a feature of a deregulated variant of 'do-it-yourself' culture.[31]

The idea that a new understanding of work and production could have an influence on the respective relations of visibility of 'standard' private labor and 'artistic' public labor is one of the subtexts of Dorit Margreiter's spatial and video installation *Into Art*. Analogous to the exhibition design, here, too, cultural and corporate forms of capital are related to the material and symbolic value of those fields of labor and activity in which institutional and social contexts as well as 'autonomous' and service-oriented forms of labor overlap in terms of their compatibility with media-effective image functions. In an interview that I held with Margreiter for the catalog to *The Making of*, she explains, that "the art-place itself already presents a medial construction... a site of production and reproduction of the symbolic..."[32] Here, we again see a typical argument of media theory approaches in the 1980s, which considers the notion of production as an effect of technologically supported processes of 'de-realization.' On the other hand, the notion of the 'social factory' is also apparent here, coined to refer to the de-differentiation and immaterial-ization of realms of production and reproduction.

Appropriating the genre of a trailer for a TV soap, *Into Art* simulates the self-representation of a private art institution according to the standards of the 'creative industry.' Following the sketch printed in the exhibition catalog:

"The series begins with a director being appointed to the institution which at the time had been in existence for three years. At this time there was a restructuring not only of staff but also of programmatic orientation. The newly constructed museum building is supposed to reinforce the role of art as an image bearer for the corporation, at the same time the new institution is supposed to develop its own profile within the context of international art discourse."[33]

The accompanying storyboards, which were installed in the exhibition as user-friendly text panels on the rear of the wall construction, included fragmentary infor-mation on the life and work of the actors. These were characterizations of functions within the institution and also of 'freelance' jobs as well as information on individual preferences in terms of fashion and leisure activities, cultural habits, social activities, and sexual and family relations. In line with the principles of the 'social factory,' professional and personal worlds as

depicted here oscillate, as in the case of 'Peter,' who defines himself as "someone who works in ‚art-related' contexts. Growing up in a working class family he gained early experience in political work at the grass roots level. At the insti-tution he works to make a living in the development team. Here he is not re-cognized as an artist. In a different scene, however, he is a well-known, important figure. At the beginning of the series, he organizes an exhibition and a panel on 'minority politics.' He has tried repeatedly to change the institutional exhibition program from 'below,' but has had only limited success." The 'possible topics' attributed to him are "'class,' political activism, institutional recognition, alternative spaces, economic situation, etc."[34] As can be deduced not only from the figure of Peter, but also from the other roles sketched, they not only illustrate structural characteristics, but also individual and psychological aspects. This not only distinguishes Margreiter's work from classical forms of insti-tutional critique, but could also indicate that the category of the institution is here seen as a category of the 'social factory.' Seen in this way, the exhi-bition title – *The Making of* – proves to be a making of the self, where 'the issue is a post-Fordist' intersection of institutional, cultural, and private spheres of life and work.

Even if limited to a few brief selections, the locations and staging of roles presented suffice to make comparisons to the Generali Foundation, the location being visited while viewing *The Making of*. The reflection of and on the corporate design of the Generali Foundation that the exhibition design engenders is varied in *Into Art* by representing realms of labor and production such as project development, communication, design, the

28
See "Exhibition design", in Poledna, *The Making Of*, 85.

29 Norman, "Proposal 10," 128.

30 Ibid.

31 See Tobier/Norman, "Substituting one fungus for another," 208.

32 See "Definitions of a building site: Sabeth Buchman in conversation with Dorit Margreiter," in Poledna, *The Making Of*, 204.

33 See Dorit Margreiter, "Into Art," in Poledna, *The Making Of*, 109.

34 Ibid., 114.

making of exhibition displays, exhibition assembly, and control. As such they affect management, image design, "internal and external means of communication,"[35] and therefore those activities where Maurizio Lazzarato's definition of 'immaterial labor' could be applied. In *Into Art*, we become aware of this by way of fragmentary scenes from daily activity, intercut with staged snapshots and documentary material from the archive of the Generali Foundation. The intersplicing of 'real' and 'fictional' material-found footage, artistic documentation, and fictional elements of plot - serves on the one hand to counter the fiction that institutional structures can simply be made legible by way of critical reflection; at the same time, an implicit de-differentiation of real and fictional characters is enacted here, with a view to making intelligible the transformed relations of the visibility and representation of private and public labor.[36] Employees play themselves, in both public and private moments. Institutional stagings of roles, including an actress miming the role of the artist - which could also be her own role - take on the character of a soap opera, which in turn allows the de-differentiation of public, private, and media spheres of (re)production and labor to become 'reality.' In this way, what Margreiter intends with her definition of the art institution as a 'media construction' and "production and reproduction of the symbolic" becomes visible: that is, (re)gauging the relationship between 'autonomous art' and 'service-oriented art' in the context of an institutional logic that seeks to integrate artistic labor's media-effective publicity potential in the sense of 'corporate identity.' In her function as a graphic designer, she is, as she explained to me in the above quoted interview, "involved with the make up of the institution... with the image it imparts and wants to impart."[37] That means that *Into Art* not only sharpens this image by way of thematizing the production and design of catalogs, posters, and invitations - but also sets this against the value system that still sees art as the opposite of 'function.'

But in the context of the exhibition design for *The Making of*, *Into Art* reverses the opinion of critics at the time, according to which 'paid institutional critique' forced the artists into the role of affirmative service providers. In contrast, by way of restaging corporate identity, it became clear that it was the key intention to allow the institution to come to the foreground as a site of artistic production. The institution cannot do without the autonomy of the producer if it wants to "bring sense into these [its] rules, to make them alive."[38] These rules are fictionalized in *Into Art* in the form of ready-made plot lines that, by way of a casual camera technique and sometimes blurry visual aesthetic, evoke a pseudo-unprofessional image that could let Into Art pass as an artistically well-versed form of corporate self-representation. But it is precisely this that lends the video trailer the appearance of a 'real' production, as is typical of media formats that suggest authenticity. All the same, *Into Art's* editing, which combines various levels and forms of representation, makes it possible to experience the 'real' as the result of visual-technological 'de-realization.' For instance, Margreiter's staging of a 'real' institution presents a link between site-specificity with media-supported techniques of postproduction, allowing for reflection on the fictionalized representation of labor and production as corporate image. While this might sound like the practical application of the theory of the spectacle, it is given a particular twist in *Into Art* to the extent that it measures the image function of artistic labor as public labor within the economic morality that demands the production of social

values under the conditions of publicity. If the actors who appear are characterized by various social origins, cultural and institutional positions, forms of private and professional life, and emotional and psychological positions, they also allow the art institution presented to appear as a representative social structure, while making it clear that it consists of subjects and subjectivities that cannot be depicted in a merely structural conception of the institution. Instead, the people involved are service providers on a freelance basis and salaried employees whose activities in the meantime hardly differ from artistic labor, a state of affairs that Poledna describes as the "hipness-phantasma of deregulated labor."[39] This idea can serve to name an essential aspect of Margreiter's staging of roles, to the extent that the presented mix of work and labor effuses the impression of a creative, vivid dynamism. This impression is amplified by the sound samples from television series such as *Dallas, Melrose Place, Tatort*, etc., which short-circuit the figures represented with the consumption and temporal structure of media formats. The layers of image, text, and sound are sampled and disassociated from one another in an avant-garde manner, thus counteracting the construction of simplifying, totalized images; this is then complemented by the suggestion of flexibilized attitudes of reception, amplified by the inserted zapping noises of a remote control. The open beats and bass mixed into the soundtrack suggest the question as to 'our' relationship to corporate patterns of identification: do we see ourselves in a relationship based on free choice (corresponding to spaces for free expression as they are projected onto artistic autonomy), or in a relationship of enforced

35
"Exhibition design", in Poledna, *The Making Of*, 85.

36
See on this Rancière's argument in favor of fiction, in "On Art and Work,".

37
Buchmann/ Margreiter, "Definitions of a building site," 196.

38
"Exhibition design", in Poledna, *The Making Of*, 85.

39
Buchmann/Poledna, "Blanks and side effects," 225.

choice (corresponding to the 'self-determined' acceptance of economically determined circumstances)? That we become 'fictional authors' of fictional series can be interpreted as a reflection of the increasing influence of participating consumers and fans in the product design of the culture industry - a phenomenon that shows the totalizing function of the cultural imperative to be creative.[40]

In that *Into Art* allows this distinction to appear questionable by means of the chosen methodological - thematic and technological - formal structure, it marks a further characteristic of the 'social factory,' as according to Negri and Hardt, to the extent that freedom of choice presents itself here as a version of the dominant credo of production. From the corporate executive to the freelance graphic designer who is 'really' an artist, all of us are subjected to this credo, even the beholder participating by way of an imaginary zap function.

Thus *Into Art* can be seen to imply both a distance to the idealistic equation of art and autonomy and the cultural-pessimist equation of art and entertainment or service industry - whereby the pessimist view is often used a way of legitimizing the idealist. This distance is apparent because the conflictual interest in art's (critical) potential for publicity here does not take place along clearly defined front lines, but rather in the midst of a general reconfiguration of social labor relations, of which it is a constitutive element. This position was ultimately presented by *Into Art's* spatial installation itself, to the extent that it placed the represented fictional location and the real space that was used by the visitors, and also the museum wardens and cashier staff, in a relationship with the usually invisible administration. The notion of surveillance that resonates here can be seen as the extension of the decision to let the employees play their own roles, as 'real' as if the camera were always there. The control-society implications of video technologies find their correspondence in the double-wall construction that Margreiter had placed in the exhibition space, as a reference to Poledna's intervention in the sense of a reflection on the determination of artistic freedom by way of architectural conditions. The height of the two walls was conceived so that they could not fit into the exhibition space without dismantling the ceiling.[41] As the artist explained to me in our interview: "The ways and means in which both walls stand with relation to one another, lets them appear cast aside and also suggests the possibility that they could, potentially, stand in a different way to each other or could be duplicated."[42] The decision to insert the walls as simultaneously site-specific, flexible, and performative spatial elements - as wall, presentation surface, and backdrop at the same time - placed them in a structural and metaphorical relation-ship to the technical apparatus installed in the space between the two walls, which could only be seen from one side. The stills showing technical equipment, such as a camera lens, electric cables, volume and remote controls that were included in the video trailer suggest that the selected form of visualization was based on principles from avant-garde or apparatus theory. But perhaps it is not merely what has become a standard unveiling of the process of production (if you can afford transparency, you must be doing honest and good work) that lies at the heart of this observation of the intersection of display and technology in the installation, but the inherent rela-tionship between autonomous and corporate production, and thus the relationship between public and private labor. Here, techniques of visualization cannot automatically be short-circuited with a reflexive critique of the fetish, but contain for their part mechanisms of corporate image

formation. Seen in this way, *Into Art's* operative drama-turgy thus works with both public and institutional as well as private and indi-vidual modes of production and reception. 'Corporate identity' thus appears as an externalized as well as in-ternalized relationship, into which the 'average' media consumer is structurally and mentally integrated.

Margreiter's fictional (self-)representation of a private art institution takes the goal of experi-mental film and alternative video - to reach an extra-institutional audience - and transforms it into the 'thesis' of the reciprocal penetration of avant-garde (public), ordinary (private), and corporate (private-public) forms of labor and production. In contrast to Asher's intervention - which places generally invisible physical labor on the stage of artistic work, thereby thematizing the hierarchical relationship of difference between the positions of the commissioning institution, the 'delegating' artist, and the worker charged with carrying out the task - *Into Art* deals with the erosion and partial reversal in the evaluation of visible, pub-lic, and invisible, private labor.

Thus, in Margreiter's sketch of a Generali-like institution, corporate image intermingles with social modes of experience; such a transparent view of the realm in which one's staff operates is normally only entrusted to a target group considered trustworthy. And the capacity to represent oneself as a 'whole person' is part of the repertoire of 'immaterial labor.' As shown for instance in Harun Farocki's film *Die Schulung* (1987), training for mana-gers not only focuses on 'rhetoric' and 'dialectic,' but also, in the form of Brechtian role playing, it attempts to teach the participants the ability to assess themselves, for a good atmosphere can only be disseminated by those who

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See Marion von Osten and Peter Spillman, eds., *Be Creative - Der kreative Imperativ* (Zürich: Museum für Gestaltung, 2003).

41
See Buchmann/ Margreiter, "Definitions of a building site," 197.

42
Ibid.

have both themselves and their private lives well under control. If 'I' feel well in my role, there is a good chance that the person opposite me will do the same: and precisely this can be decisive for a sales talk or successful service.

Seen in this light, *Into Art* can be considered a topical reenactment of those versions of historical institutional critique that have integrated labor both in a material as well as a performative sense into artistic work, that is, not just by 'representing.' In the context of the Generali Foundation's collecting strategy, which takes an expanded view of sculpture and above all focuses on work formats that include media such as photography, television, video, and digital technologies, Silvia Eiblmayr describes the 'peformative' as the "pivotal point in the dialectic of the link between the artistic conception of the artwork and the way it is perceived... Here the 'theatrical' aspect typical of all of these expanded forms in the visual arts merges with linguistic dimension."[43] But this also means that the "space or the location where the artwork takes place, is exhibited, or performed is integrated into its own conception in a reflexive manner."[44]

I certainly do not intend to reproduce here the misleading equation of theatrical performance and linguistic performativity, but nonetheless Margreiter's installation seems to me to be mobilizing both of these categories. This occurs on the one hand in reference to the way in which labor is represented both as real and symbolic production, and, on the other, the way in which the visitors are addressed as both clientele and participating actors. Performance und performativity are not limited to their 'social significance,' which is attributed primarily to "signifying or discursive forms of practice." Instead, "we use labor to focus on value-creating practices."[45] To this extent, *Into Art* counters those dominant economic trends according to which the semiotic representation of work is equated with the fact of production. But the latter includes in the sense of the 'factory society' not just material 'hardware,' but also nonmaterial 'software.'

This means that the ability of contemporary capitalism to "give subjectivity itself a value in its various forms as communication, engagement, desires, etc.,"[46] compels us to redraw the traditional boundaries between private and public categories and spheres of labor and production. This necessity also surfaces in Simon Leung's contribution for *The Making of*. In *Squatting Project Wien* he literally squatted in front of buildings that belong to Generali and had himself photographed. As he explained in an interview conversation with Nicholas Tobier, published in the exhibition catalog, "the body works structurally in several ways: through repetition, through the semiotics of squatting, but also pictorially - it's figure and ground."[47] When Leung then explains that it is decisive "what kind of photographic object you think it is,"[48] we can assume that he is driving at the de-differentiation immanent in performative and conceptual art of subject/object, reality/representation, image/copy, production/reproduction.

Reproduced using the code of architectural photography, the body here takes on a productive semiotic function within an indexical system that can be interpreted according to linguistically and visually formalized rules. In *Squatting Project Wien* this system can be read as positing an equation between nonproductive real estate ownership and self-utilizing performative work, which makes the characteristics of contemporary capitalism presented by Paolo Virno legible on and through the body of the artist. According to Leung's interpretation, the

artist's (invisible) capital-communication, commitment, desire - proves to be a literally 'incorporated' mechanism in the logic of corporate value creation. But ironically, the analogy suggested by the title of the work and the photographed pose between squatting as a bodily gesture and squatting as taking possession of property raises the question of whether the photographs are a quasi-private act of the reproduction of corporate self-representation or a public staging of the 'unemployed' (private) body, whose incompatibility with a corporate logic of valuation surfaces precisely in the claim to semiotic equivalence.

That artistic involvement in an institutional and corporate structure as a "site of symbolic and material production and reproduction" stands in a relationship of both compatibility and incompatibility with the dominant economy of the sign can also be seen as the subtext of Mathias Poledna's exhibition contribution at that time, *Fondazione*. This was a semi-documentary video on the archive of the history of the labor movement and socialism founded by the radical left-wing publisher, millionaire, and Generali stockholder Giangiacomo Feltrinelli. That Poledna playfully employed the genre of the documentary film to portray an institution far from the art world that can be vaguely linked to the Generali Foundation might be explained in terms of the documentary film's synthesizing function. The "connection between architecture, corporate design, and institutional self-representation" made in the exhibition design of *The Making of* becomes legible by virtue the kind of film montage selected as a syntax of heterogeneous elements, where it is not a specific institution or a specific genre, but the aesthetic and scientific method of the production of signs that comes to the fore within a concrete thematic context.

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Silvia Eibelmayr, "Schauplatz Skuptur: Zum Wandel des Skulpturbegriffs unter dem Aspekt des Performativen" in *White Cube/Black Box*, ed. Sabine Breitwieser (Vienna: Generali Foundation, 1996), 89.

44
Ibid., 87.

45
Hardt and Negri, Labor of Dionysus, 8.

46
See Willenbücher, *Migration-Illegalisierung-Ausnahmezustände on Paolo Virno's A grammar of the multitude* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2004) and Sandro Mezzadra's "Taking Care: Migration and the Political Economy of Affective Labor," working paper for Center for the Study of Invention and Social Process (CSISP), Goldsmith's College, University of London, March 2005.

47
"Or Is This Nothing: Nicholas Tobier in Conversation with Simon Leung," in Poledna, *The Making of*, 179.

48
Ibid.

49
Buchmann/Poledna, "Blanks and side effects," 227.

This way of proceeding can also be verified by way of the bench designed as a 'bulletin board' that was placed before the film screen, since its double function as a piece of furniture and a bearer of information clearly relates, in a manner that is charged with information aesthetics, to the historical discourse on the 'dematerialized object.' With this reference to kinds of works that focus on presentation, reception, and distribution – and with the addition of techniques of postproduction, the combination of symbolically interrupted documentation and furniture thus presented a site-specific relationship to media information landscapes. On an abstract level, this can be seen as a recourse to both linguistic-semiological and also identity and institutional critique traditions in Conceptualism, which "can be drawn from design, architecture, media all the way to political resistance."[49] Before this backdrop, the decision to integrate a film narrative on an archive of the history of the labor movement and socialism into the context of an exhibition whose subtext was the (reciprocal) relationship of autonomous art and service-oriented, corporate and commissioned work, represents – on the level of content – the historicization of the methods and procedures used. The selected genres that were combined with one another–documentary, narration, and fiction were well-suited to deconstruct the monolithic topos of artistic production, and the sound design composed of well-known film music by Luciano Berio, Giorgio Gaslini, and Nino Rota made it legible as (medial and) cultural knowledge, albeit knowledge excluded by art history. As a reflexive structural element, the soundtrack was associated with images of high voltage wires; the function of these wires as recurring 'title-design'[50] was both that of a narrative abstraction and a point of intersection between the assembled forms of representation. By including reports from the media on Feltrinelli's eventful life, the motif of the high voltage wires is given a historic charge, in that the spectators learn that the millionaire lost his life in 1972 attempting to explode a power pole near Milan.

In the figure of Feltrinelli as a vibrant and emblematic figure of the New Left, various narrative lines meet that condense to form a fragmentary and associative and also anecdotal reflection on the construction of (political) history. In this way, the abstract narrative logic of *Fondanzione* avoided a coherent, significant recourse to the Generali Foundation as a concrete institution. Instead, this was an attempt at an artistic epistemology that declared the archive a 'workplace,' and therefore a location where the avant-garde claims that still reside in the self-image of institutional critique underwent a historical revision. On the one hand, the archive founded in 1961 by Feltrinelli can illuminate methods of the historical and academic study of industrial labor and its forms of organization that can be implicitly or explicitly linked to both the historical and the postwar avant-gardes. This means that they can be related to the history of collective interest groups such as the trades unions, works councils, political parties, organized and spontaneous or 'wild' strikes, etc. On a second level that is mediated here, Poledna's contribution can also highlight the significance of publications by authors from the circle of the Italian Autonomia Operaia labor group in the German art context in the 1990s, including Negri and Hardt's *The Labor of Dionysus*, or Lazzarato's treatment of 'immmaterial labor,' which appeared in 1998 in Negri und Virno's volume *Umherschweifende Produzenten: Immaterielle Arbeit und Subversion* in the same year as *The Making of*. In this way an analogy is drawn between the topos of media technology that resonates here and the historicization of proletarian or Fordist labor, whose transformation to a 'social factory' as claimed by the above-named authors has since become an frequently cited subject within cultural and art discourse engaged in a critique of capitalism.[51] This means that here reflections on the historicization – according to Jacques Rancière's definition – of private forms of labor were presented on the stage of an institution whose interest is to integrate the public character of artistic labor into its own corporate identity. But in Poledna's design, the question of whether and to what extent such a discourse of labor justifies comparing the two institutions recedes behind the more fundamental question of the methods with which 'history' or cultural significance is produced. This question is tellingly posed in *Fondazione* by an art critic, 'played' by Matthias Dusini, who in the role of a television reporter does an interview with the library director David Bidussa. His task is to produce an image of the self-understanding of the Fondanzione Feltrinelli. The camera shows him talking about the library's function and its collection, as well as transformed methods of bibliography. In this context, he points to the original 1835 manuscript of Charles Fourier's *La fausse industrie*; the fact that the library owns it is due to the 'accumulation of sources,' as embodied in the initial 'work ethic' of the library.[52] Or we are informed about files on the "the structure of the CUB-Communitati Unitari di Base – forms of representation of factory workers who belonged to the extreme left."[53] Answering the reporter's question about how one gets hold of such material, Bidussa explains that, in "Italy the courts throw away files after twenty five years if they are no longer necessary for cases. In this way the authorities who are responsible for public security have become information agencies for

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Ibid., 228.

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See Stephan Geene, *money aided ich-design: techno/logie. subjektivitaet. geld* (Berlin: b_ books, 1999); Marion von Osten, ed., Norm der Abweichung (Zürich: Edition Voldemeer, 2003); *Arbeit**, ed. Silvia Eiblmayr, exh. cat. (Innsbruck: Galerie im Taxispalais, 2005); Beatrice von Bismarck and Alexander Koch, ed., *Beyond Education: Kunst, Ausbildung, Arbeit und Ökonomie* (Frankfurt a. M.: Revolver, 2005).

52
See Mathias Poledna with Matthias Dusini, "Fondazione," in Poledna, *The Making of*, 145-163, here 152.

53
Ibid, 156.

political extremism."[54] By this point at the latest, we get the distinct impression that Bidussa maintains a distanced relation to the history represented by this archive. This impression is underscored when he contradicts the supposition that the Fondazione Feltrinelli "belongs to the left, if not the far left."[55] He then points to seminars that have taken place there where 'assistants and researchers' have participated "whose political spectrum extends from the left to the extreme right, –including a position which one could call post-fascist."[56]

The fact that Feltrinelli, expecting a state coup on the part of the fascist Right, propagated the militant struggle of the Left and was ultimately forced to go underground where he sought to continue to organize his social-revolutionary struggle,[57] can give a sense of the Fondazione's changed self-understanding. Bidussa's indifference as to the political interests of the users of the archive is shown again when he claims that an analysis of treatments of worker organization and representation in a sewing machine factory is formally no different than the analysis of the catechism for first communicants.

As in Poledna's study *Scan* (1996), a two-part video on questionable methods of the historicization of pop culture and punk design, using the *Jamie Reid Collection* at London's Victoria and Albert Museum as an example, the issue is methodological and ideological processes of revaluing historical material. Similarly, *Fondanzione* focuses on the question of the forms of categorization and the constitution of the storage media in the way they influence the status of the archived material. In *Scan*, Poledna argues by way of the example of the *God Save the Queen* album cover that what was "originally conceived of as mass-cultural and serially produced, suddenly emerges as dadaist collage – an extremely bibliophile artefact"[58]; equally, *Fondazione* can demonstrate how methods of archiving ultimately distort and destroy what they claim to preserve and historicize. This is also true, on a structural level, of the research medium chosen by Poledna. For example, Franco Berardi, a political fellow traveler of Toni Negri, explains in an interview with the newspaper Jungle World that the late 1970s, when the 'classical factory conflict' approached its end, was also the beginning of an era when "the costs of communication technologies dramatically sank: video tape, radios, offset printers, photocopiers, later desktop publishing, all of that eased the access to the production of signs to an extent never before known."[59] In other words, the dissociation from the material fact of production that resonates in the topos of the dematerialized object surfaces as a phenomenon of a techno-linguistic turn that corresponds with the increasing importance of information and knowledge production that Lazzarto describes with the concept of 'immaterial labor' – ultimately a form of labor that, as has been shown, can be applied to The making of.

Since, according to Bidussa, the documents collected by the Fondazione Feltrinelli are merely holdings of information with a purely academic value, they become emblematic of a politically no longer accessible history of the labor movement and socialism – a history that has been recoded through methods of archiving. But taking into account the debates of the late 1990s on the dominance of immaterial labor in the context of the service industry and corporate culture, in which there was often a clear sense that an attempt was being made to set aside Post-Conceptualism and institutional critique as a failure, then *The Making of*, working eight years later from a perspective that could almost be called historical, provides arguments why methodological and

political reflection on the history of modern art and cultural institutions as a form of work based on the (material) conditions of public labor and the (immaterial) signs produced in its name should not be abandoned (including 'the faking of').

54
Ibid.

55
Ibid., 155.

56
Ibid.

57
See Henner Hess, "Feltrinelli und die Gruppi di Azione Partigiana (GAP)," in Poledna, *The Making Of*, 161–62.

58
Buchmann/Poledna, "Blanks and side effects," 230.

59
"Vom Subjekt zum Superorganismus: Ein Gespräch von Stephan Gregory mit Franco Berardi über seinen Weg von Operaisten zum Cybernauten, die mentale Arbeit und die virtuelle Macht," Jungle World 24, 7 June, 2000. http://www.nadir.org/nadir/periodika/jungle_world/_2000/24/15a.htm

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Nils Norman, *Proposal 10*, 1998, exhibition view from *The Making of*,
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