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The museum as a laboratory of doubt

Contemporary art and exhibition practices
and their implications for knowledge production
and critical thinking

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Abstract EN

In this Master Thesis I examine ways in which the art institution can become a place for learning that fosters curiosity, uncertainty and doubt, where exhibition practices are not conceived merely as a means for the display and transmission of pre-formulated knowledge, but rather as experience places for generation of knowledge and critical thinking. Focusing on the role that these practices play or could play in contemporary societies, as well as the transformations and processes that characterise them, this thesis considers art no longer as an object of knowledge, but as knowledge producer. Knowledge produced in artistic practice is increasingly seen through the process of creating, mediating and encountering art rather than in any perceived final form. Such exhibitionary forms seem to be more about creating situations, fields of possibilities for different audiences, encounters and interactions, which are in a constant state of process, than about creating art objects. Participants must play an active role as navigators, way finders and meaning makers through the temporality of the event of the exhibition or the display, drawing their own observations and conclusions. These kind of exhibition practices are, in fact, more about not knowing than knowing; they explore all that takes place within the context of the staged exhibition, both intentionally and un-intentionally by the artist/curator.

Abstrakt DE

In dieser Master Thesis untersuche ich, Strategien die Kunstinstitutionen zu Orten des Lernen machen: Orten in denen Neugier, Ungewissheit und Zweifel entstehen. Dabei wird Ausstellungspraxis nicht als bloßes Mittel verstanden vorformuliertes Wissen dar- zustellen und zu vermitteln, vielmehr geht es darum einen Raum zu schaffen, um Erfahrungen zu sammeln und Wissen und kritisches Denken zu generieren. Indem ich mich, einerseits auf die Rolle konzentriere, die solche Ausstellungspraxen in gegenwär- tigen Gesellschaften spielen oder spielen könnten, und anderseits auf die Wandlungen und Prozesse, die diese kennzeichnen, betrachte ich in meiner Arbeit Kunst nicht mehr als Objekt des Wissens, sondern vielmehr als „Produzentin" von Wissen. Wissen, das durch ästhetische Erfahrung produziert wird, ist immer untrennbar mit dem Kontext seiner Produktion und Rezeption verbunden. Vor diesem Hintergrund wird Wissen in Aus- stellungen in zunehmendem Maße als Prozess betrachtet. Bei Ausstellungsformen, die sich an der Schnittstelle zwischen künstlerischen und kuratorischen Praxen befinden, scheint es also mehr darum zu gehen, Situationen zu kreieren, Möglichkeiten für unter- schiedliche RezipientInnen, Begegnungen und Interaktionen, die sich in einem ständigen Entwicklungsprozess befinden, zu schaffen, als bloße Kunstobjekte. Die Beteiligten spielen dabei eine aktive Rolle – sie bewegen sich aktiv durch die Temporalität des Ereig- nisses der Ausstellung oder durch das Display, finden ihren Weg, messen den Prozess Bedeutung zu, machen ihre eigenen Beobachtungen und ziehen ihre eigenen Schlüsse. Bei dieser Art von Ausstellungspraxen geht es in der Tat mehr um Nichtwissen als um Wissen; es geht um Erkundung all dessen, was im Kontext der inszenierten Ausstellung – beabsichtigt und unbeabsichtigt von den KünstlerInnen/ KuratorInnen – geschieht.

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1. Introduction

In this Master Thesis I will examine in what sense the museum or the art institution can become a public space, responsible for stimulating and housing knowledge production and critical thinking in and through curatorial and artistic practices. Focusing on the role that these practices play or could play in contemporary societies, as well as the transformations and processes that characterise them, this thesis considers art no longer as an object of knowledge, but as a context for knowledge production.

The use of expressions such as knowledge production, artistic research and interdisciplinary/transdisciplinary practices have gained prominence over the course of the last decade in contemporary art discourse.[1] Parallel to this development of theoretical reflection on artistic practice, there has also been a marked increase in discursive activities (symposia, lectures, discussions, platforms, forums, panel discussions, artists' talks, etc.) in an advanced segment of contemporary art institutions and alternative spaces, that were once almost exclusively devoted to exhibition and display of visual art. This indicates a change in institutional policies and practices, moving from purely exhibition making, to discussions and discourses on art practice, which may or not be directly linked to the objects on display. It also represents a paradigmatic shift in the discourses in and around museum practices and art production, which in turn reflects a further development of the social and artistic shifts that occurred in the 1960s-1970s, such as the dematerialization of the art object, the expansion of the field of art practices, and the concomitant rise of the artist-as-curator.

Today, we witness a proliferation of exhibition formats, going well beyond object based artwork, dealing with models of display and curatorial work, combining self-authorization with institutional critique. As a consequence, different notions of communicative possibilities and methods for the artwork have emerged, where neither its form or context, nor the audience/spectator is fixed or stable. These exhibitionary practices, seem to be more about creating situations, fields of possibilities for different audiences, encounters and interactions, which are in a constant state of process, than about creating art objects. Participants must play

an active role as navigators, way finders and meaning makers,"… not simply through the subjectivities they project on works whose circuits of meaning they intersect, but through the relations with one another and through the temporality of the event of the exhibition or the display"[2], drawing their own observations and conclusions. This makes everything in and around the exhibition equally relevant and important.

Examining recent work in the visual arts that accounts for the current shift of focus from objects on display to the strategies of their staging and the responses of the viewing audiences, this thesis analyses selected contemporary curatorial and artistic practices that are representative examples in terms of their implication for knowledge generation and critical thinking.

The study is structured in three parts: the first part, examines critical art practices and cultural theories that, throughout the twentieth century, have questioned the museum's role and ways of functioning in society, and have thus contributed to a redefinition of the museum's concept. The underpinning question of this chapter is to describe ways in which the art museum can become an experience place for generation of knowledge and critical thinking in and through art; the following part, revisits current articulations of the notion of knowledge production in the context of art, focusing on art and its position within other disciplinary knowledge systems and analysing the role of the artist, the curator and the audience as knowledge producers in situational environments. The main rationale of this chapter is based on the assumption that the field of art with its 'permissiveness' and interdisciplinary approach, has become a field for thinking alternatively and has thus a privileged position and potential for knowledge production and critical thinking in contemporary society; [3] the last part, describes the exhibition as an experience place and analyses selected exhibitionary forms at the cross-section of artistic and curatorial practices, as sites of display that can produce new subjectivities and new modes of knowing.

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[1] See BAK project *"Concerning 'Knowledge Production' (Practices in Contemporary Art)"*, developed by Binna Choi, Maria Hlavajova, and Jill Winder. This project took place in autumn 2006 and consisted of research, discussion groups, a series of lectures and dialogues by and with artists, curators, and scholars, as well as a series of public readings, screenings, and presentations, all of which evolved around current articulations of the notion 'producing knowledge' through the practices of contemporary art.
<http://www.bak-utrecht.nl/?&click [id_projekt]=38> (26.05.2008)

[2] Irit Rogoff, "Academy as Potentiality", 2007 < http://summit.kein.org/node/191> (26.05.2008).
[3] See Simon Sheikh, Public Spheres and the Functions of Progressive Art Institutions in: eipcp (ed.), transversal online journal<http://eipcp.net/transversal/0504/sheikh/en> (26.05.2008).

2. The art institution in the 21st century: from Institutional Critique to Criticality

Museums are institutions where exhibitions are shown. Exhibitions are ambivalent spaces within which art and artefacts are made accessible to audiences, and particular narratives, histories and ideas are activated. Exhibitions are one of the main vehicles for artistic production, through which critical thinking about art and the world in general is developed. Museums, with their traditional functions of collecting, conserving, researching and mediating, belong together with archives, libraries, universities, schools and media, to the main instances for knowledge production and knowledge transfer.

Today, against the background of the knowledge society debates, it is commonly accepted in the social sciences, that there are different kinds of knowledge systems: theoretical knowledge, practical knowledge, knowledge that corresponds to the traditional bodies of disciplines, knowledge related to everyday practice, as well as other kinds of unclaimed knowledge. A plurality of knowledge types has permeated the theoretical discourse, radically questioning the supposedly objective, neutral and universal 'truth' of the western signifying systems.[4] In a certain way, this development obliged museums to question the ways in which they select, classify and shape knowledge, and thus to critically re-examine their structures and exhibitionary strategies.

But what is implied by this critical re-examination? What is critique?
In the widest sense critique is a practice that might be described without reference to its specific objects, its primary task being to bring to relief the very framework of evaluation itself [5]. In Foucault's sense the very question "what is critique?" not only poses the problem, but enacts a certain mode of questioning that is central to the activity of critique itself. To use his own words" [...] critique is the movement by which the subject gives himself the right to question truth on its effects of power and question power on its discourses of truth" [6]. In his view, critique is "a means for a future or truth that it will not know nor happen to be, it oversees a domain it would not want to police and is unable to regulate". [7] In this sense, critique is that outside perspective on a certain epistemological order that is not yet assimilated into that order.

According to Judith Butler, drawing on Foucault's notion of critique, critique refers to a practice that exposes the limits of a certain epistemological horizon making the contours appear for the first time in relation to its own limit:

"Foucault's contribution to what appears as an impasse within critical and post-critical theory of our time is precisely to ask us to rethink critique as a practice in which we pose the question of the limits of our most sure ways of knowing. [...] One asks about the limits of ways of knowing because one has already run up against a crisis within the epistemological field in which one lives. [...] And it is from this condition, the tear in the fabric of our epistemological web, that the practice of critique emerges, with the awareness that no discourse is adequate here or that our reigning discourses have produced an impasse". [8]

Foucault's definition of the museum as heterotopia is also useful in this context, because it explains how the museum can be progressive, since it is best placed to critique, contest and transgress. As he describes it, in his essay "Different Spaces" [9] heterotopia is a space of difference "designed into the very institution of society" in which ordinary cultural emplacements are brought together and represented, contested and reversed. Heterotopias are spatially isolated spaces that juxtapose incompatible objects and discontinuous times, and have "the role of creating a space of illusion that denounces all real space, all real emplacements [...] as being even more illusory".[10] They are those sites within a culture made and allowed to be other. Foucault's museum is thus defined as being both a space of difference and a space of representation, where the difference between words and things is put on display and made available for public contestation.

Irit Rogoff, in her written contribution to the "ACADEMY" [11] project, argues that in the recent past we have been able to move from criticism, which is a form of exercising judgement, to critique which is examining the underlying assumptions of a certain logic, to criticality: [12]

[4] See Nora Sternfeld, "Aufstand der unterworfenen Wissensarten – museale Gegenerzählungen", in: schnittpunkt, Storyline. Narrationen im Museum, Vienna 2008, (forthcoming).
[5] Judith Butler, "What is critique? An essay on Foucault's virtue", in: eipcp (ed.), transversal online journal <http://eipcp.net/transversal/0806/butler/en> (26.05.2008).
[6] Michel Foucault, "What is Critique?", in: Sylvère Lotringer and Lysa Hochroth (ed.), The Politics of Truth, Semiotext(e), New York 1997, p. 32.
[7] Ibid.

[8] Judith Butler, "What is critique? An essay on Foucault's virtue", in: eipcp (ed.), transversal online journal <http://eipcp.net/transversal/0806/butler/en> (26.05.2008).
[9] Michel Foucault, "Different Spaces", trans. R.Hurley, in: M. Foucault, "Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984, Vol. 2, London 1998, pp. 175-185.
[10] Ibid p.184.
[11] "ACADEMY" (2004-2006) consisted of an exhibition-symposia-book project supported by the Siemens Arts Program, the Kunstverein in Hamburg, the Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerpen, the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, and the Department of Visual Cultures at Goldsmiths College in London. The exhibitions and projects that came to form "Academy" expressed the increased dissatisfaction and concern with the political situation in which both educational academies and art institutions find themselves after the signing of the Bologna Declaration. The project was structured around three main themes, assigned to each of the participant institutions: Academy.Teaching Art and Learning Art (Kunstverein in Hamburg), Academy. Learning from Art (Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerpen), Academy. Learning from the Museum (Van Abbemuseum Eindhoven, Goldsmiths College).
[12] Irit Rogoff, "Academy as Potentiality"<http://summit.kein.org/node/191> (26.05.2008).

"The more current phase of cultural theory, which I am calling criticality, is taking shape through an emphasis on the present, of living out a situation, of understanding culture as a series of effects rather than of causes, of the possibilities of actualising some of its potential rather than revealing its faults. [...]Criticality is therefore connected [...] with risk, with a cultural inhabitation that performatively acknowledges what it is risking without yet fully being able to articulate it. [...] As such we live out a duality that requires at the same time both an analytical mode and a demand to produce new subjectivities that acknowledge that we are what Hannah Arendt has termed 'fellow sufferers' of the very conditions we are critically examining".[13]

But how to translate this notion of criticality to the site of the museum, turning it into a space that encourages new forms of thinking and learning, rather than knowledge transfer?

The beginning of the modern museum is often described as being closely related with the building of the nation state. As a project of Enlightenment, the art museum of the late eighteenth century was built upon the neo-humanistic values of education of the public and the establishing of a sense of community. Part of the art museum's purpose was to create democratic citizens, promote national identity and inspire moral behaviour.[14] It was conceived as a place, where people could develop themselves, become educated and be moulded through the objects on display, into a moral universal human being and a responsible citizen. Or, as the cultural theorist, Tony Bennett explains:

"[...] the spheres of art and culture came to be regarded as a special realm providing a set of resources which, in the following conduct of various kinds of work on the self, would result in a harmonization of the diverse aspects of the individual's personality. The fusion of these ideas with the late eighteenth – and early nineteenth century culture of sensibility led to the views that frequent contact with art would result in more refined codes of personal conduct. It would help knock the rough edges off an individual's behaviour, promoting a softness and gentleness of manners". [15]

The modern museum was thus conceived as an institution with a double role, of simultaneously being a educational and disciplinary space. It embodied the values and visions of the bourgeoisie and promoted their legitimation through an educational and pedagogical approach, based on spatial and discursive curatorial techniques.[16] These complex articulations of artworks, models of display, collections, architecture and public, through which relations of power and knowledge are produced, were described by Tony Bennett as 'the exhibitionary complex':

"The exhibitionary complex was also a response to the problem of order, but one of culture – a question of the winning of hearts as well as the disciplining and training of individual subjects. As such, its constituent institutions reversed the orientations of the disciplinary apparatuses in seeking to render the forces and principles of order to the populace – transformed, here, into a people, a citizenry – rather than vice versa. They sought not to map the social body in order to know the populace by rendering it visible to power. Instead, through the provision of object lessons in power – the power to command and arrange things and bodies for public display – they sought to allow people, and *en masse* rather than individually, to know rather than to be known, to become subjects rather than the objects of knowledge. Yet, ideally, they sought also to allow people to know and thence to regulate themselves; to become, in seeing themselves from the position of power, both as the subjects and the objects of knowledge, knowing both power and what power knows, and knowing themselves as (ideally) known by power, interiorizing its gaze as a principle of self-surveillance and hence self-regulation". [17]

According to Simon Sheikh 'the exhibitionary complex' "[...] not only curated histories and power knowledge relations, but also indicated ways of seeing and behaving".[18] Ideally the public was transformed into 'subjects of knowledge' who would regulate themselves through the cultural knowledge gained from the exhibits. 'The exhibitionary complex' allowed for a permanent display of power in the form of the museum or exhibition and thus served a political purpose.

In the same vein, Carol Duncan in her book "Civilizing Rituals" [19], compares the art museum with its sequenced spaces and arrangements of objects, its lightning and architectural details, to a performance field or a stage setting leading visitors to enact some kind of ritual through which the museum's central meanings are structured.

"To control a museum means precisely to control representation of a community and its highest values and truths". and "Those who are best prepared to perform its ritual [...] are also those whose identities (social, sexual, racial, etc.) the museum ritual most fully confirms". [20]

What we see and what we do not see in the museum, is therefore determined by who constitutes the community and by who defines its identity. This is also the reason why museums, throughout the 20th century, have become sites for social and cultural struggles (gender and sexual difference, race and cultural difference) and the target of fierce criticism.

Since the early 1970s, criticism against the museum's power/knowledge relations and the exclusions it produced, have led to demands for integration and

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[13] Irit Rogoff, "From Criticism to Criticality", in: eipcp (ed.), transversal online journal
     <http://eipcp.net/transversal/0806/rogoff1/en> (26.05.2008).
[14] See Sharon Macdonald, "Museums, national, postnational and transcultural identities", in:
     museum and society, 1 (1), 2003, pp.1-16.
[15] Tony Bennett, "The Multiplication of Culture's Utility", Critical Inquiry, 21 (4), 1995, p. 877.
[16] See Simon Sheikh, "Constitutive effects: The Techniques of the Curator", in: Paul O'Neil (ed.),
     Curating Subjects, London 2007, pp. 177-185.

[17] Tony Bennett, "The Exhibitionary Complex", in: Reesa Greenberg et al. (ed), Thinking about
     Exhibitions, London 1996, p. 84.
[18] Simon Sheikh, "Constitutive effects: The Techniques of the Curator", in: Paul O'Neil (ed.),
     Curating Subjects, London 2007, p. 177.
[19] Carol Duncan, Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums, New York 1995.
[20] Ibid p. 8.

representation from both a generation of researchers in the field of Museum Studies and a segment of Institutional Critique in the field of art. [21]

As a result, developments towards incorporating a more multi-voiced approach to representation, towards making museums responsible for stimulating critical thinking in and through art and more responsive to broader audiences have taken place. Eileen Hooper-Greenhill describes this reflexive turn in the museum practice as a paradigm shift from the modern museum, as a site of authority, to the post-museum, as a site of mutuality:

"The communication and learning theory on which nineteenth-century museums were premised positioned the visitor/learner as passive, understood knowledge to be objective and information based, and saw authoritative linear communication as one of the main purposes of the museums. Today, constructivist learning theory plays together with post-structuralist epistemologies and post-colonial cultural politics to position the visitor/learner as both active and politicised in the construction of their own relevant view points". [22]

Peter Vergo, in his critical and historically relevant book, "The New Museology", edited a series of essays on the museum and its functions. The authors argue that objects have multiple meanings, that museums are products of cultural and ideological discourse, and that the act of collecting has a political, ideological, and/or aesthetic dimension. Every museum exhibition, whatever its subject, inevitably draws upon the cultural assumptions and resources of the people who create the exhibition. Therefore, museums can no longer be seen as the bastions of 'true' knowledge and temples of objective truth. In the introduction, Vergo explains this political dimension of the institution in the following way:

"[...] within the context of a temporary exhibition or museum, display means placing a certain construction upon history, be it the history of the distant or more recent past, of our own culture or someone else's, of mankind in general or a particular aspect of human endeavour. Beyond the captions, the information panels, the accompanying catalogue, the press handout, there is a subtext comprising innumerable diverse, often contradictory strands, woven from the wishes and ambitions, the intellectual or political or social or educational aspirations and preconceptions of the museum director, the curator, the scholar, the designer, the sponsor – to say nothing of the society, the political or social or educational system which nurtured all these people and in so doing left its stamp upon them....Such considerations are the subject matter of the new museology". [23]

As a movement [24], 'New Museology' proposed a radical re-examination of the role of the museums in society and encouraged new relations between museums and communities in attempt to challenge dominant views of the museum, as a site of power relations.

2.1. Institutional Critique and after [25]

Institutional Critique should not only be understood as a movement within the art field, but also one that would hardly be imaginable without considering the social and political context of the period in which it emerged, namely, the Vietnam war and protest movements it entailed, and the 1968 upheavals in Europe. The Vietnam conflict gave the protests of the various national student avant-garde groups an international dimension and a common strategy, which was widely informed by Herbert Marcuse's utopian idea that the aim is to work towards a society, in which people are no longer enslaved by institutions. Herbert Marcuse influenced many students in Western Europe and North America and saw in the protest movements new possibilities for the realisation of alternative ways of living and a way of addressing and expressing very different concerns – feminist, anti-colonialist, anti-racist, anti-authoritarian, anti-imperialistic, anti-militaristic concerns.[26]

In the first wave of Institutional Critique [27] from the late 1960s to the early 1970s, artistic practice questioned the authoritarian role of the cultural institution, mainly the art museum, but also galleries and collections, "[...] pointing to the institutional mechanisms of exclusion or the political and economical background of their apparently autonomic status". [28] Institutional Critique took many forms of artistic practice (performance, happening, art work and intervention, critical writing and activism) and criticism was expressed either "[...] by radically negating institutions

[21] See Nora Sternfeld, "Aufstand der unterworfenen Wissensarten – museale Gegenerzählungen", in: schnittpunkt, Storyline. Narrationen im Museum, Vienna 2008 (forthcoming); Barbara Kruger, Phil Mariani (ed.) Remaking History, New York 1989.
[22] Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture, New York 2000, p. xi.
[23] Peter Vergo, The New Museology, London 1989, pp. 2-3.

[24] See Max Ross, "Interpreting the new museology", in: museum and society. 2 (2), 2004, pp. 84-103. In this article, Ross deploys the concept of the new museology not only as a way of referring to the emergence of theoretical perspectives into museum studies, but also as a movement that triggered more profound changes in the museum world.
[25] This subtitle has been taken from John C. Welchmann (ed.), Institutional Critique and After, Volume 2 of the SoCCAS symposia, Zurich 2006.
[26] See Jens Kastner, "Artistic Internationalism and Institutional Critique" in: eipcp (ed.) transversal online journal<http://eipcp.net/transversal/0106/kastner/en> (26.05.2008).
[27] The origin of the term 'Institutional Critique' is not undisputable. Nevertless, it is commonly accepted that Benjamin Buchloh first established the parameters of this term in his essay "Conceptual Art 1962-1969: From the Aesthetic of the Administration to the Critique of Institutions", October 55, 1990, pp.105-143. See also Isabelle Graw, "Beyond Institutional Critique", in: John C. Welchmann (ed.), Institutional Critique and After, Volume 2 of the SoCCAS symposia, Zurich 2006, pp. 137-151.
[28] Christian Kravagna, The Museum as an Arena: Institutional Critical Statements by Artists, Cologne 2001, p.8.

altogether, by trying to build alternative institutions or by trying to be included into mainstream ones".[29]

Important insights of Institutional Critique were that value is not intrinsic to the artwork, but assigned to it by market transactions and that the contexts in which an artwork is produced or presented are part of its signification.[30]

Andrea Fraser in her essay, "What is Institutional Critique?" describes this phenomenon in the following way:

"Institutional Critique emerged with the realisation by artists that all works, no matter how aesthetically autonomous, can be exploited for economic and symbolic profit – and often not in spite of but *because* of their autonomy, an autonomy that determines their existence not only as objects or ideas but as material or even immaterial commodities. Recognizing the partial and ideological character of artistic autonomy, Institutional Critique developed not as a further attack on that autonomy, but rather as a defence of art (and art institutions) against such exploitation, either through reflection on the discursive and systemic mechanisms of reification and instrumentalisation, as in the work of Broodthaers and Haacke, or through the development of rigorously transitory post-studio practices that directly resisted commodification, as in the work of Asher and Buren".[31]

This form of critique, which began already in the 1910s with Marcel Duchamp's analysis of the status of the art object,[32] directed the focus from an object based art to an art rooted in ideas, art with a relational and discursive constitution. According to Benjamin Buchloch, Conceptual art and Institutional Critique subjected the relationships among author, work and audience to a radical redefinition that destabilised the idea of the closed and unified work of art and the privileged position of the author.[33] One consequence of this approach was that the activities and contexts that participate in the production of meaning were made a component of work of artistic practice. As part of this development, artists saw their activities expanded "to include selecting, compiling, arranging, presenting and transmitting the work of other artists, cultural goods (...)"[34], which in turn lead to the appropriation of curating and to the concomitant rise of the 'artist-curator'.

In the case of the generation of Michael Asher, Marcel Broodthaers, Daniel Buren, Andre Cadere and Hans Haacke the analyses of the institutional art framework became the actual theme of artistic work, leading to descriptions of the processes of production, meaning and value, the relationships of power and the clash of interests.

In the 1980s – as commonly referred – a second wave of Institutional Critique emerged where" [...] the institutional framework became somewhat expanded to include the artist's role (the subject performing the critique) as institutionalized"[35] and where interactivity and performativity became the centre of the reformulations of Institutional Critique. Artists like Andrea Fraser[36], Fred Wilson, Christian Philipp Müller, Mark Dion and Renée Green based their work, in part, on the assumption that there is no possible distance between the subject of critique and its object and that this idea of 'critical distance' or the existence of an outside is, a priori, compromised and has always been a fiction. What was once disturbing for the institution, is now a totally welcomed practice, even supported by the institutions that actively invite artists to investigate them. Both these two movements of Institutional Critique are now part of the art institution; they've been canonized in the form of art history and education, as well as in the practices of contemporary art and curatorial practice.

In this context of critical and discursive curatorial practice visibly inspired by Institutional Critique, it is worth mentioning the work of curator Sabine Breitwieser. Throughout her career as director of the Generali Foundation in Vienna (1988-2008), Breitwieser, engaged in a critical dialogue with the institution by making a commitment to critical oriented artistic practices. Her programme investigated the links between the Austrian neo-avant-garde and international movements such as Fluxus, Performance art, and Conceptual art, and over the years she produced solo exhibitions by Mary Kelly, Martha Rosler, Adrian Piper, Allan Sekula, Hans Haacke, and Gustav Metzger, as well as a number of group shows that critically engaged with contemporary themes.[37]

[29] Hito Steyerl, "The Institution of Critique", in: eipcp (ed.), transversal online journal <http://eipcp.net/transversal/0106/steyerl/en> (26.05.2008).

[30] Isabelle Graw, "Beyond Institutional Critique", in: John C. Welchmann (ed.), Institutional Critique and After, Volume 2 of the SoCCAS symposia, Zurich 2006, pp. 138-139.

[31] Andrea Fraser, "What is Institutional Critique", in: John C. Welchmann (ed.), Institutional Critique and After, Volume 2 of the SoCCAS symposia, Zurich 2006, p. 307.

[32] In his lecture, "The Creative Act" (1957), Marcel Duchamp expressed the view that meaning could only develop if artists withdrew from authorial control of the work: the creative act is not performed by the artist alone; the spectator brings in his interpretation and thus, adds his contribution to the creative act. This postulate has fundamental implications for the art object since it reduces its commodity status.

[33] Benjamin Buchloh, "Conceptual Art 1962-1969:From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions", October 55, 1990, pp.105-143.

[34] Beatrice von Bismarck, "Unfounded Exhibition: Policies of Artistic Curating",in: Matthias Michalka (ed.), The Artist as..., Vienna 2007, p.32.

[35] Simon Sheikh, "Notes on Institutional Critique", in: eipcp (ed.), transversal online journal <http://transform.eipcp.net/transversal/0106/sheikh/en> (26.05.2008).

[36] In 1989 Andrea Fraser, was commissioned by the Philadelphia Museum of Art to create "Museum Highlights: A Gallery Talk". Using the structure of a gallery tour, Fraser began introducing the visitor to the museum and its acquisition policies through comments that were largely drawn from the institution's publications. It quickly became evident to the visitor that Fraser's talk was not the ubiquitous tour they were anticipating. Invited by the Museum to perform the critique, Fraser described the project as a "service-product" project, involving services provided by an artist for the consumption of the institution, but whose forms defy the potential ownership of the product: Fraser's project was situated in the gallery space and its subject was the institution itself. See Sadira Rodrigues, "Institutional Critique Versus Institutionalized Critique: The Politics of Andrea Fraser's Performances", thirdspace ½ (March 2002).

[37] See Jens Hoffmann, "The Curatorialization of Institutional Critique", in: John C. Welchmann (ed.), Institutional Critique and After, Volume 2 of the SoCCAS symposia, Zurich 2006, pp. 327-328.

Perhaps the best example of Breitwieser's commitment to institutionally critical practice, was to commission Andrea Fraser to develop a study and a research paper, "Project in Two Phases" (1994-95), using the Generali Foundation in Vienna as a case study. Founded in 1988, the Foundation was established with two main purposes, namely, to raise the public image of the company and to present art works in the new corporate headquarters to decorate the building and "confront the employees with contemporary art". [38] The first reactions expressed by most of the personnel, to the works acquired by the Foundation and displayed in the Generali headquarters, were quite negative, rather hostile. Nevertheless, after seven years, the personnel came to accept the display of contemporary art in their working space. The exploration of the meaning of this development, from rejection to acceptance, as well as the examination of art's position in the functioning and making-up of a large corporate entity, constitute the two main objectives behind the idea of commissioning the study. Breitwieser describes the two phase project as follows:

"The first, interpretive phase of Andrea Fraser's project consisted primarily of research on the Foundation and the Generali Group Austria. Between May 1994 and January 1995, the artist conducted fourteen interviews with different members of the Foundation's executive and artistic advisory boards and administrative staff as well as members of Generali's Staff Council. Additional material was collected from the Market Communication and Research, Personnel and Education, Accounting, and General Internal Administration departments of the Generali Group Austria and from the archives of the Foundation itself. In late April 1995, the first phase was concluded with the artist's submission of a report on her research consisting of texts by Fraser accompanied by charts, reproductions of documents, and interview material. This report was primarily intended for internal use. Its public distribution is at the discretion of the Foundation.
The second phase of the project, beginning immediately after the first, was conceived as an intervention with respect to the conditions described in the artist's report. In the headquarters of the Generali, the artist produced a "negative" installation by removing all the objects from the collection that were installed in the corporate building. These works were then installed in the new exhibition building of the Foundation in Wiedner Hauptstrasse and hung according to their original placement in the headquarters. After the exhibition, they will be returned to the company's building". [39]

Fraser's project with the Generali Foundation, was undertaken in accordance with her "Preliminary Prospectus for Corporations", and was conceived as a 'service' [40] to be provided in two phases, the first defined as 'interpretive' and the second as 'interventionary'. As stated in the "Preliminary Prospectus for Corporations", collecting contemporary art is perceived by many companies that pursue this

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[38]   See <http://foundation.generali.at/index.php?id=52&L=1> (26.05.2008).
[39]   Ibid.
[40]   In 1993, Fraser produced four "Preliminary Prospectuses", in which she offered a series of 'artistic services'. The two phase project described above, was the first application of this institutional analysis. See also <http://adaweb.com/~dn/a/enfra/afraser1.html> (26.05.2008).

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activity as a source of conflict within their organisations. This was also the case with the experience of the Generali Foundation. [41]

Andrea Fraser, "Project in Two Phases", Generali Foundation, Vienna 1995
Exhibition view, main hall, works from the collection (Photography Werner Kaligofsky)

Fraser's artistic approach can be placed in the traditions of feminist performance art and Institutional Critique. In her works she analyses the functions of both art and art institutions from sociological, psychoanalytical, and feminist perspectives, particularly concentrating on the relations between organisations, publics and constituencies. Or, to use Jan Verwoert's own words, "her works make you experience the full force of the ideologies and power structures that govern the art world, asserting the autonomy of critical art by increasing the disenchantment with the concept of artistic freedom". [42]

From a different perspective, another example of an art practice deeply inspired by Institutional Critique, is Mark Dion's installation "Bureau of the Centre for the Study of Surrealism and its Legacy", which opened at the Manchester Museum in 2005 and will remain until the end of 2008 (with the prospect of becoming a permanent installation). In this project, Dion proposes a new understanding of what is meant by 'Institutional Critique', by engaging in a symbiotic and cooperative relationship with the institution. The project is one of a series in which the artist investigates the institutional context of the natural history and university museum and where he explores and challenges the assumptions of the Museum display strategies concerned with representation of nature. Dion's focus is directed towards an epistemological critique, exploring how museums shape our perception of culture

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[41]   See <http://foundation.generali.at/index.php?id=52&L=1> (26.05.2008).
[42]   See Jan Verwoert, Review on Andrea Fraser, Kunstverein Hamburg, in: Frieze, Issue 80, January-February 2004 <http://www.frieze.com/issue/review/andrea_fraser1/> (26.05.2008).
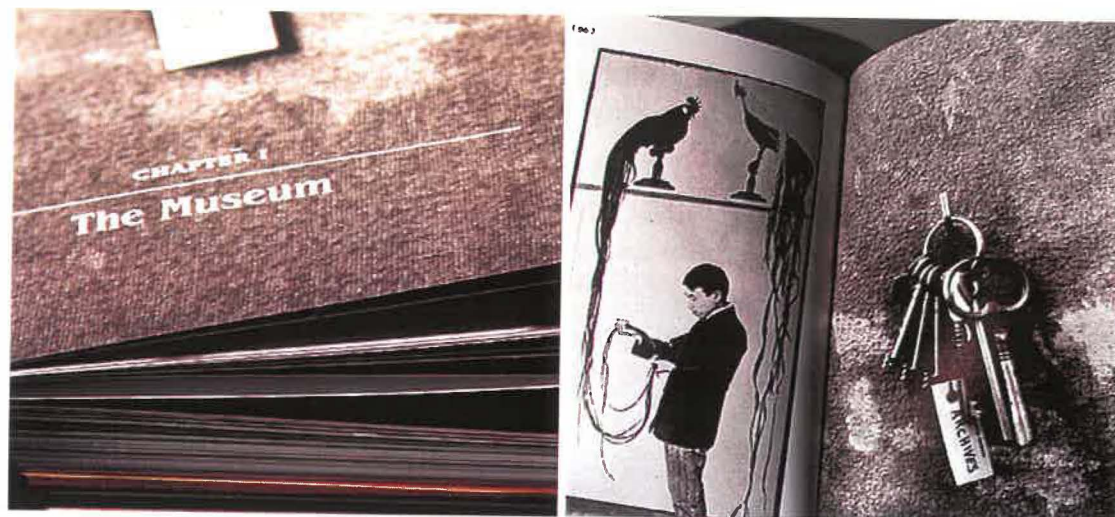
Marc Dion, "Bureau of the Centre for the Study of Surrealism and its Legacy",
Manchester Museum, 2005

and nature through the collection, classification and presentation of artefacts and specimens.[43] The installation is deeply concerned with questioning taxonomy and classification schemes, and its staging reminds us of something between a surrealist curator's office, a storage room and a sixteenth century *Wunderkammer*. The place stirrers curiosity and imagination and its "ambiguity and doubt are the agents preventing the visitor from dully ruminating on pre-digested information". [44] Through the use of bizarre visual constellations and an humorous approach to classification, Dion questions the categories through which museums organise knowledge about the world and thereby shape our perception of it.

The artist's book follows the same concept, providing paradox alternatives to museums departments and establishing significant discordances between illustrations and the descriptive captions. [45] Dion's approach seeks to demonstrate "that taxonomic nomenclatures, scientific categories and, ultimately, knowledge of any kind cannot be taken for granted, as the authoritative museum environment seems to imply, but that they used to and continue to be shaped by a centuries-long process peppered with uncertainties, struggles and debates". [46]

His work is profoundly influenced by artists associated with the practice of Institutional Critique, such as Marcel Broodthaers and Hans Haacke, and he distinguishes between two camps of Institutional Critique, placing himself into the second group:

"As I see it, artists doing institutional critiques of museums tend to fall into two different camps. There are those who see the museum as an irredeemable reservoir of class ideology – the very

notion of the museum is corrupt to them. Then there are those who are critical of the museum not because they want to blow it up but because they want to make it a more interesting and effective cultural institution". [47]

Dion's approach is thus a statement against practices attacking the museums as an institution that got increasingly institutionalised themselves and thus trapped into a new kind of formalism.

In her essay "From the Critique of Institutions to an Institution of Critique", Andrea Fraser argues that a movement between an inside and an outside of the institution is no longer possible, since the structures of the institution have become totally internalised. The emergence being now, to create critical institutions "institutions of critique", through self-questioning and self-reflection. [48]

This recent sense of emergency for critical institutions, is further complicated by the entrepreneurial notion of museums as places for public diversion and mass entertainment, where activities are increasingly driven towards income producing targets and aligned with the interests of commercial entertainment industries, [49] and where, as Nina Möntmann points out, the museum's "educational mission has become a consumption mission". [50]

This is also the context, in which we have to understand the emergence of 'New Institutionalism', a form of a new critical discourse and a new model for museum management and curating.

2.2. New Institutionalism or Institutional Critique seen from the inside

Jonas Ekeberg, in his book called "New Institutionalism", a term borrowed from economics and sociology, defines this phenomenon, as an attempt to redefine the contemporary art institution "which seemed [...] ready to let go, not only of the limited discourse of the work of art as a mere object, but also of the whole institutional framework that went with it" and adopt instead an approach "that establishes an 'active space' that is 'part community centre, part laboratory and part academy". [51]

[43] See Marion Endt, "Beyond institutional critique: Mark Dion's surrealist *Wunderkammer* at the Manchester Museum", in: museum and society, March 2007, 5 (1) pp.1-15.
[44] Ibid p.4.
[45] Marc Dion, Bureau of the Centre for the Study of Surrealism and its Legacy, London 2005.
[46] Marion Endt, "Beyond institutional critique: Mark Dion's surrealist *Wunderkammer* at the Manchester Museum", in: museum and society, March 2007, 5 (1) p.10.

[47] Marc Dion, "Miwon Kwon in Conversation with Mark Dion", in: L.G. Corrin, M. Kwon and N. Bryson, Mark Dion, London 1997, p.16.
[48] Andrea Fraser, "From the Critique of Institutions to an Institution of Critique", in: John C. Welchmann (ed.), Institutional Critique and After, Volume 2 of the SoCCAS symposia, Zurich 2006, pp. 306-307.
[49] Claire Doherty, "New Institutionalism and the Exhibition as Situation", in: Adam Budak and Peter Pakesch (eds), Protections: This is not an Exhibition, Graz 2006, pp. 172-173.
[50] Nina Möntmann, "The Enterprise of the Art Institution in Late Capitalism", in: eipcp (ed.) transversal online journal <http://eipcp.net/transversal/0106/moentmann/en> (26.05.2008).
[51] Jonas Ekeberg (ed.), Introduction, in: New Institutionalism, Versted#1, Oslo 2003, p. 9.

In some sense, New Institutionalism represents the absorption or the internalisation of Institutional Critique, as theorized and practiced by artists since the 1970s. Seen in this way, it is Institutional Critique seen from the inside, exposing the ideological structures through which art in institutions is mediated; a kind of auto-critique developed by the curators. Simon Sheikh describes this change as representing a shift not only in historical terms, but also in terms of who performs the critique since "it has moved from an outside to an inside" and where institutional critical discussions are carried out not to destroy the institution but rather to change and improve it. Therefore, he notes, "[t]he institution is not only a problem, but also a solution!" [52] New Institutionalism, thus maintains a belief in the gallery, museum or arts centre as a necessary platform for art.

This shift in institutional thinking is also related to the rise of independent art curating in the 1990s and to the effects those independent curators had on institutions. [53] This new experimental and multifunctional approach to curating is characterised by the use of flexible, temporal and processual ways of working and a different understanding of the public sphere and the structure of public spaces, "in which different interests existing in parallel have a conflictual mutual relationship". [54] Chantal Mouffe, describes this space as an "agonistic public sphere" [55] an "agonistic pluralism" of adversaries (rather than enemies), as opposed to the Enlightment's idea of an homogeneous public sphere, as theorized by Jürgen Habermas:

"What I call 'agonism' is a different mode of manifestation of antagonism because it involves a relation not between enemies but between 'adversaries', adversaries being defined in a paradoxical way as 'friendly enemies', that is, persons who are friends because they share a common symbolic space but also enemies because they want to organise this commonly symbolic space in a different way". [56]

The challenge facing the new institution, lies precisely in the recognition of difference and dissonances, as creative forces that have the potential to make existing conflicts productive. This is also the approach that, for instance, the Museu d'Art Comtemporani de Barcelona (MACBA) has adopted by considering that public spaces do not need to be unitary or consensual, and that a multiplicity of publics is preferable to a single public sphere. The MACBA understands the public, as an active producer from which new social and artistic structures can emerge, and the museum as being simultaneously an agent and a platform for such practices. Progressive political projects carried out by the MACBA that illustrate this, are such as "Las Agencias" (2001), a permanent workshop where artists and activist groups gathered in the museum for different activities. The project took place at the same time as the exhibition, "Antagonisms. Case Studies", where a series of case studies were presented, that had been a confluence of artistic practices and political activity, in the second half of the 20th century. These included, for example, "a reconstruction of a political reading of minimalism according to Carl Andre's radical materialist approach; or a selection of the multiplicity of graphic work produced in the context of the AIDS protests of the eighties". [57] Another example, worth mentioning is "Desacuerdos", an ongoing project about resistance movements in Spain embedded in classical retrospective exhibitions of work by Robert Frank or Francis Alÿs, for example. [58]

New Institutionalism "embraces a dominant strand of contemporary art practice [...] which employs dialogue and participation to produce event or process-based works rather than objects for passive consumption", [59] where discursivity and sociability are central concerns of the art practice, both in its making and in its viewing. This focus upon the sphere of inter-human relations and on the invention of models of sociability, on new uses of space and restructuring of everyday actions is present in the work of a group of artists covered by what Nicolas Bourriaud has termed 'relational aesthetics' and who sees art as an ensemble of units to be reactivated by the beholder-manipulator. [60] His concept of 'relational aesthetics' has proved to be an influential framework for understanding discipline crossovers in art of the 1990s: works, which fall somewhere between a public installation, a performance and a private archive.

One of the defining traits of 'new institutions' is that exhibitions no longer preside over other types of activity. Instead, the new institution places equal emphasis on a range of other functions. BAK, for example describes itself on its homepage as a platform dedicated to "thinking, researching, producing, presenting and analysing contemporary art." [61] Many 'new institutions' run international residency programmes for artists, curators and critics who are active during their stay in

[52] Simon Sheikh, "Notes on Institutional Critique", in: eipcp (ed.), transversal online journal <http://transform.eipcp.net/transversal/0106/sheikh/en> (26.05.2008).
[53] Since the Millennium, many of these formerly independent curators became directors of medium sized centres of contemporary art in Europe, such as the Palais de Tokyo in Paris, BAK in Utrecht, Witte de Witt in Rotterdam, Kunstverein Munchen, the Macba in Barcelona and more recently the Van Abbe Museum in Eindhoven.
[54] Nina Möntmann, "The Enterprise of the Art Institution in Late Capitalism", in: eipcp (ed.), transversal online journal <http://eipcp.net/transversal/0106/moentmann/en> (26.05.2008).
[55] Chantal Mouffe, The Democratic Paradox, London 2000. p.13.
[56] Ibid.

[57] See Jorge Ribalta, "Mediation and Construction of Publics.The MACBA Experience", in: <http://www.republicartnet/disc/institution/ribalta01_en.pdf>.
[58] Nina Möntmann, "The Enterprise of the Art Institution in Late Capitalism", in: eipcp (ed.), transversal online journal <http://eipcp.net/transversal/0106/moentmann/en> (26.05.2008).
[59] Claire Doherty, "New Institutionalism and the Exhibition as Situation", in: Adam Budak and Peter Pakesch (eds), Protections: This is not an Exhibition, Graz 2006, p. 172.
[60] See Nicholas Bourriaud, Relational Aesthetics, Dijon 2002, p. 20.
[61] See <http:// www.bak-utrecht.nl> (26.05.2008).

lectures, screenings, workshops, conferences and so on. Production happens alongside or within the presentation and reception is dialogic and participatory. Discussion events are rarely at the service of exhibitions, either they tend to take the form of autonomous programmes, or else exhibitions themselves take a highly dialogic mode. Within this multifunction institution, catalogues are often abandoned and many institutions publish instead journals, which enable communication within a second, remote audience. [62]

Charles Esche, director of Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, argues that the new institution could be understood as a "forum of possibility where things can be imagined otherwise". [63] In his view, this 'possibility' lies within the art field more than in other fields and the 'creation of possibility' has to be found within the existing structures, i.e. within the art institutions:

"Now, the term 'art' might be starting to describe that space in society for experimentation, questioning and discovery that religion, science and philosophy have occupied sporadically in former times. It has become an active space rather than one of passive observation. Therefore the institutions to foster it have to be part-community centre, part-laboratory and part-academy, with less need for the established showroom function". [64]

In describing art's place in society, Esche, evokes what he identifies as an increasing 'permissiveness', even promiscuity, in art's capacity to take on activities that fall under other categories and that counters "the increasing specialisation of society in other fields". The response he calls for, is thus to "create the institutions and devices that can respond to this permissiveness, physically creating those spaces, times and meetings of possibility that the art and the society of today seem urgently to require". [65]
It follows that art's permissiveness does not equate practices where 'anything goes', but rather precision of looking into other fields of knowledge as a means of forming a critical position. Through 'permissiveness all established bodies of knowledge emerge as open-ended and established methods of representation are replaced by experimental ones.[66] This requires an understanding of the institution as a place that not only fosters curiosity, but allows for uncertainty, ambiguity and doubt, and thus understands knowledge as a constant state of process.

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3. Knowledge production and critical thinking through contemporary art and exhibition practices

This chapter will attempt to unravel how exhibitions in the field of contemporary art practices can be interpreted as generating forms of knowledge. I will be asking: what does it mean to 'read' a display of works of art and what forms of knowledge are imparted by this reading? What is the difference between rational knowledge, scientific knowledge and knowledge generated by art? What is the role of the artist? How does the conceptual and mediating role of curating contribute to connecting art and knowledge production?

Visual art is often described as something that cannot be translated into written format and reaches far beyond what could ever be articulated through language alone. The purpose is therefore to question whether or not we can interpret the material of exhibitions as if it was a series of signs and signifying practices and how these compare to other forms of knowledge.
Knowledge in creative practice is increasingly seen through the process of creating, mediating and encountering art rather than in any perceived final form. This means that notions of audience, dialogical modes of address, difference and experience have become the new coordinates. Through their practices, artists and curators challenge audiences to question existing systems of meaning and draw upon tacit and embodied tools of interpretation in the encounter with contemporary artistic forms.[67]
Simon Sheikh, similarly to Esche, argues that today's dematerialisation and expansion of art practices are reflected in a certain openness with regard to their object of knowledge and an interdisciplinary approach:

"In contemporary art practices we can see a certain 'permissiveness', an interdisciplinary approach where almost anything can be considered an art object in the appropriate context, and where more than ever before there is work being produced with an expanded praxis, intervening in several fields other than the traditional art sphere, touching upon such areas as architecture and design, but also philosophy, sociology, politics, biology, science and so on. The field of art has become a field of possibilities, of exchange and comparative analysis. It has become a field for alternatives, proposals and models, and can, crucially, act as a cross field, an intermediary between different fields, modes of perception and thinking, as well as between very different positions and subjectivities". [68]

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[62] New institutional' journals include Kunstverein München's Drucksache, Shedhalle's Zeitung, CAC Vilnius' Interviu, CAC Bretigny's L'Ed, Arteleku's Zehar and Kiasma's Kiasma.
[63] Charles Esche, "What's the Point of Art Centres Anyway? Possibility, Art and Democratic Deviance" <http://republicart.net/disc/institution/esche01_en.htm> (26.05.2008).
[64] Ibid.
[65] Charles Esche,"Temporariness, Possibility, and Institutional Change", in: Simon Sheikh (ed.), In the Place of the Public Sphere? Berlin 2005, p.138.
[66] See Sarah Pierce, "A Politics of Representation", in: Peter O'Neill (ed.) Curating Subjects, London 2007, pp. 159-173.

[67] Marc Dion and Carsten Höller, for instance, produce artwork that consistently blurs the boundaries between natural history, art, and science, and questions the classification systems placed on objects by professionals and institutions, inviting viewers of their work to be an active audience.
[68] Simon Sheik, "Spaces for Thinking. Perspectives on the Art Academy", in: Texte zur Kunst, No 62, June 2006, p. 3. <http://www.textezurkunst.de> (26.05.2008).

It is my purpose in this part of the study, to examine ways in which we might articulate the connection between art and knowledge and the implicit notion of art, not as an object of knowledge, but as its producer - art as a way of knowing- as well as to examine whether art, as a speculative field, can serve as a counterpoint to the dominant economic and political frameworks and act as an intermediary between different fields, modes of perception and thinking.

This will require revisiting theories of knowledge in the context of art and within the context of cultural capitalism and the so-called 'knowledge society', as well reconsidering the role that art plays and could play in contemporary society, exploring the transformations and processes developed around - and through - both artistic practice and its reception today.

3.1. Current articulations of the notion of knowledge production through practices of contemporary art

If art is said to produce knowledge, to what kind of knowledge do we refer? What is knowledge?

As mentioned before, definitions of "knowledge", "objectivity" and "truth" have been questioned throughout the twentieth century, with many voices arguing for the inclusion of non traditional and unclaimed systems of knowing. Although new movements in the creative disciplines have disrupted traditional understandings of knowledge and knowledge production, the query as such might be ultimately unanswerable.

Already in 1979, Jean-François Lyotard predicted that the status of knowledge would be inevitably changed by the development of the postmodern economy, where knowledge would become a form of an informational commodity to be bought and sold, indispensable to productive power:

The relationship of the suppliers and users of knowledge to the knowledge they supply and use is now tending, and will increasingly tend to assume the form already taken by the relationship of commodity producers and consumers to the commodities they produce and consume – that is, the form of value. Knowledge is and will be produced in order to be sold, it is and will be consumed in order to be valorised in a new production: in both cases the goal is exchange. Knowledge ceases to be an end in itself, it loses its "use-value". [69]

Against the background of globalisation and the information age, the term 'knowledge production' itself implies a "certain placement of thinking, of ideas within'

the present knowledge economy" and in order to counter the notion of knowledge as a key commodity, Simon Sheikh suggests that one should move instead, "beyond knowledge production into what we can term spaces for thinking". Whereas knowledge is associated with disciplinary structures and thus "inscribes you within tradition, within certain parameters of the possible [...] thinking is... meant to imply networks of indiscipline, lines of flight, and utopian questionings". [70] The notion of thinking is not equivalent to knowledge. Knowledge, being what you already know, what you have learned limits the realm of what is possible. Thinking, on the other hand, understands knowledge as a constant state of process that cannot be maintained and circulated through normative practices, and is unproductive instead of productive and commodifiable. Therefore, if we view art production as knowledge production, and if we focus on art as a place "where things can happen" rather than "a thing that is in the world", one should rather refer to artistic practices as 'ways of thinking' and to art institutions as 'spaces for thinking' that allow for the creation of different imaginaries and subjectivities, through a thinking that is unproductive.[71] It is also, in this line of thought and based on the assumption that art generates other forms of knowing, a kind of 'non knowledge' by opposition to economic knowledge, that the use of the expression 'knowledge production' shall be understood throughout the present study.

3.1.1. Art as a 'détournement' of knowledge systems: xeno-epistemics

The art historian and theorist Sarat Maharaj, who has a significant body of work on the discourse on art and knowledge production, has argued that artists contribute to the production of knowledge in ways that are faster and more lateral than any academic model, as well as being broader and more direct than political discourse. With speed and insight artists can identify new trends long before they are articulated in mainstream debates or uncover secrets that have barely emerged in public consciousness. [72]

In his view, the type of knowledge that visual art generates cannot be compared to the knowledge provided by logical-mathematical models and propositions of the so-called exact sciences and therefore, must be differentiated from economic knowledge: "visual art as knowledge production has to be distinguished from not only knowledge transfer but also from knowledge economy – media communication

[69] Jean Francois Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge (1975), Minneapolis 1984, p.5.

[70] Simon Sheik, "Spaces for Thinking. Perspectives on the Art Academy", Texte zur Kunst, no 62 June 2006, p.8 <http://www.textezurkunst.de> (26.05.2008).
[71] Simon Sheik, "Talk Value: Cultural Industry and the Knowledge Economy", in M. Hlavajova, J. Winder. B. Choi (eds), On Knowledge Production: A Critical Reader on Contemporary Art, BAK Utrecht 2008, pp.182-197.
[72] See Sarat Maharaj, "Xeno-Epistemics: Makeshift Kit for Sounding Visual Art as Knowledge Production and the Retinal Regimes", in: Documenta XI Catalogue, Kassel 2002, pp. 71-84.

circuits, info-infrastructures that are tied up with intensive copyright, patent and data control right down to genetic codes".[73]

Maharaj, who is also an expert in Marcel Duchamp's work, also believes that the type of knowledge that plastic arts generate, does not deal with a retinal experience, since the cognitive experience is not a neutral depiction of a given 'out there' but a construction. Duchamp distinguished between two opposite types of seeing experiences: the retinal, where seeing is taken to be an affair purely on the eye surface and nerve endings, and a kind of seeing that involved the brain – the constitutive activity of the visual cortex in producing what is seen and where the eye is an active participant in constructing what is seen. Duchamp approach sketches a kind of 'somatic seeing' that is an actual sight-touch-embrace of what is seen.[74] This vision of knowledge as an integral system, as a whole in which mind and body merge, counters the Cartesian separation between the intellectual and the sensory.

For the possibility of knowing something without going through a logical reasoning process – what we normally call intuition – Maharaj uses the expression 'xeno-episteme'. 'Xeno' means in Greek strange, foreign, other and 'episteme' means knowledge. This expression integrates both the idea of specific cognitive production and the search for a type of knowledge open to contradiction and difference, and not based on rational and empirical criteria. This new mode of xeno-epistemic knowledge could, in his view, be identified with the type of cognitive experience that is articulated in contemporary visual arts. By opposition, he considers rational knowledge as a binary structure of thought that is based on the confrontation of opposites (bad vs. good, man vs. woman, black vs. white, compatriot vs. foreigner) and denies the possibility of third vertices that break with the binarity. Concepts murder the life of realities, locking them up in codified systems and thus have, in his view, a 'xeno-cide' nature.[75]
In this context, Maharaj[76] also refers to philosopher Henri Bergson, who attempted to redefine the relations between science and metaphysics, intelligence and intuition, and insisted on the necessity of increasing thought's possibility through the use of intuition, which would be according to him, the only way of approaching a knowledge of the absolute and of real life. Because of his criticism of intelligence,

which he considers a practical faculty rather than a speculative faculty, he makes a frequent use of images and metaphors in his writings, in order to avoid the use of concepts which, according to him and similarly to Maharaj, fail to touch the whole of reality.[77]
The role of intuition in the development of thought has also been a concern in Walter Benjamin's work. In his 1917-1918 paper, "On the Programme of a Future Philosophy", Benjamin inquires into the possibility of opening up, modifying or otherwise adapting the transcendental structures of intuition and understanding such that they could enable the unanticipated, the unforeseen and the unpredictable to effloresce within their closed constellation. In this, he shares a concern with what cannot be captured adequately by the categories of conceptual representation, with everything that exceeds the circumscribed closure of knowledge.[78]

Art is a 'détournement' of knowledge systems and it is not its task to replicate pre-given theories, argues Maharaj. It produces ideas, but the feel, thinking and knowledge antennas are totally different from the ones of other discursive modalities. Art generates other epistemological machines, other forms of thinking. This means that there are other modalities of seeing, thinking, feeling and perceiving that bypass the 3D[79] model of knowledge systems, and in which the visual interacts with the acoustic, tactile and somatic register. These modalities enable both other forms of knowledge as well as knowledge about the other.[80]
Artists often focus on information and subjects that are not privileged in the dominant discourses of politics, economics, or history, giving this 'non knowledge', a new life in the context of artworks that make use of intricate narratives and complex image composition. Yet artist's diverse methods in dealing with (non) knowledge do not amount to a simple 'visual representation' or clarification of the unknown. Instead, artists themselves often work in a space between rationalization and intuition, planning and contingency, exposure and concealment. In their diversity and heterogeneity, these forms of 'knowledge/non-knowledge' retain their

73   Sarat Maharaj, "Unfinishable Sketch of An Unknown Object in 4 D: Scenes of Artistic Research" in: Annette Balkema, Henk Slagger, Artistic Research, New York 2004, p.44.
74   Ibid p.54.
75   See Sarat Maharaj, "Xeno-Epistemics: Makeshift kit for Sounding Visual Art as Knowledge Production and the Retinal Regimes", Documenta XI Catalogue, Kassel 2002, pp. 71-84.
76   See Alejandro del Pino Velasco, "Summary of An Unknown Object in Uncountable Dimensions: Visual Arts as Knowledge Production in the Retinal Arena, A Presentation by Sarat Maharaj", in: M. Hlavajova, J. Winder. B. Choi (eds), On Knowledge Production: A Critical Reader on Contemporary Art, BAK Utrecht 2008, p.136.

77   See Henri Bergson, Creative Evolution (1910), University Press of America, 1983.
78   See Walter Benjamin, "Programme of the Coming Philosophy" (1917-1918) transl. M. Ritter, in: The Philosophical Forum, 1983-84, Vol. XV, no 1-2, pp.41-45.
79   There are three conventional spatial dimensions: length (or depth), width, and height, often expressed as 'x', 'y' and 'z'. 'x' and 'y' axes appear on a plane Cartesian graph. In the 3rd dimension, typically a 'z' is used for processing "depth" in imagery. The fourth dimension is often identified with time in physics, and as such is used to explain the non-Euclidean space-time used in Einstein's theories of special relativity and general relativity.
Around 300 BC, the Greek mathematician Euclid undertook a study of relationships among distances and angles, first in a plane (an idealized flat surface) and then in space. An example of such a relationship is that the sum of the angles in a triangle is always 180 degrees. Today these relationships are known as two- and three-dimensional Euclidean geometry.
80 See Sarat Maharaj, "Xeno-Epistemics: Makeshift Kit for Sounding Visual Art as Knowledge Production and the Retinal Regimes", in: Documenta XI Catalogue, Kassel 2002, pp. 71-84.

critical potential and alternative content, because of its ambiguity or indecisiveness and not, as in existing knowledge systems, because of its authoritative 'truth'. [81]

Olaf Nicolai, "La Lotta" (The Fight), 2006
Taxidermised hide, horn, polyester, electric heating

Olaf Nicolai's is an example of an artist who uses and 'abuses' sources of information, reconfiguring images and objects of entirely different categories.
In his work, Nicolai often uses everyday objects and cultural products as well as historical references, combining current questions in politics and contemporary culture with a wide-ranging interest in the natural sciences, architecture, aesthetics, iconography, and history. Focusing on the construction and exploration of new aesthetic contexts, he often plays with the difference between naturalness and artificiality, using fable and absurdity to question and change the parameters of a given system. For instance, "La Lotta" (2006), an installation work in which a black unicorn lies on the floor in a peaceful posture, with head raised – the animal feels alive to the touch, warmed to a temperature of 43,3 degrees, which is the point at which the human body stops functioning, where death begins – is a good example of his belief in the truth of contradictions and exceptions.
"Nicolai performs a role as a researcher and combiner – states Charles Esche – a turner-upside-down-of-things to see what they look like from another angle, and ultimately create new modes of visibility".[82] In his work, one gets the impression that he simply looks around at what is already there and gives it a little more consideration, alerting us to the fact that there is enough potential in the everyday life to give us insight and intelligence. Nicolai himself notes that it is the knowledge of how things are, that gives you insight about how things might be.[83]

[81] See BAK< http://www.bak-utrecht.nl/?&click[id_projekt]=38 > (26.05.2008).
[82] See Charles Esche "Re-perceptions" in: Parkett, No. 78, Zurich 2006, p. 87.
[83] See Olaf Nicolai, Show Case, Nuremberg 1999.

As Vincent Pécoil argues, "Nicolai proposes the idea that artistic work, far from being an innocent formal game, could be a method for engaging with forms, thereby offering a possible definition for today' s art. If concepts are tools and philosophy the box that contains them (as Deleuze and Foucault termed it), art can be viewed as the practice of living in forms, and works of art as specific exercises". [84]
Nicolai has continuedly worked on the question of the politics of form and colour [85] and, in his most recent installation "Considering a multiplicity of appearances in light of a particular aspect of relevance. Or: Can art be concrete", these key elements of his work are made visible.

Olaf Nicolai, "Considering a multiplicity of appearances in light of a particular aspect of relevance. Or: Can art be concrete?", Gallery Carolina Nitch, New York 2008

Conceived by the artist as a single work, the project consists of 16 colour prints on custom painted walls and 400 colour books displayed on tables across the room. Prints and books were done as high-quality Iris prints with the artist randomly feeding different colours one at a time into an offset printing machine. The mechanical movements of the printing make the resulting colour mix on each sheet a unique, never to be repeated print. This rarely used process - unlike most commercial printing – allows pure colour printing without any dot screens. The 16 framed prints represent the first 2 and final 2 prints from a double-sided printing series of 400 sheets, thereby showing the significant changes in the colour mix during the entire printing process. The remaining print run of 400 sheets is split up and made into 400 unique 64-page colour books. Though the prints show noticeable differences, the general impression at first seems to be one of standardized colour repetitions.

[84] Vincent Pécoil, "Inside the Outside" in: Parkett, No. 78, Zurich 2006, p. 79.
[85] See "Pantone Wall" (2000) and "Combinations" (2002).

By radically focusing on the specific technique of Iris printing, Nicolai expands his research into the 'politics of forms' and into the significance of political statements: Iris printing, rarely used today, was often applied in the 1960s and 1970's for radical political flyers.

It is also not just the title of this installation that is intense, but also the experience of it, of colour itself. Colour is turned into a tangible, touchable object: a book. White cotton gloves were laid out, so visitors could carefully leaf through the pages of hundreds of books, in hundreds of chromatic combinations, and thus being led to a kind of psychedelic experience. Through this excessive use of colour, he also makes a statement about the role colour plays in the fashion and design industries, the trend setters of good taste and acceptable aesthetics in our contemporary societies, "where every simple form and every colour is likely to refer to a brand". [86]

Artists do not deal with the reality but with its representation, they are not engaged in illustrating facts but in creating interrogative works. While they are agile in their searching for clues and sharp in their observations of everyday life, artists are not necessarily the ideal agents for proving arguments or consolidating new social structures. As philosopher Jacques Rancière has noted,

"[…] artistic phenomena are identified by their adherence to a specific regime of the sensible, which is extricated from its ordinary connections and is inhabited by a heterogeneous power, the power of a form of thought that has become foreign to itself: a product identical with something not produced, knowledge transformed into non-knowledge, logos identical with pathos, the intention of the unintentional, etc." [87]

Or to use Sarat Maharaj's rhetorical question, "could it be that the artist's 'lack of competency' [for practical reasoning] is index of quite another think-read-map – more in tune with non knowledge?" [88]

3.2. Art and its position within other disciplinary knowledge systems: interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity

Thomas Hirschhorn, as many other archival artists, however disparate their work might be in subject and appearance, seeks to make historical information, often lost or displaced, physically present, exposing different audiences to alternative archives of public culture. Or to use his own words, while referring to his practice,

"[t]o connect what cannot be connected" and to use the "[l]aboratory, storage, studio practice, [...] to make spaces for the movement and endlessness of thinking [...]". [89]

Hirschhorn has divided much of his practice into four categories: 'direct sculptures', 'altars', 'kiosks' and 'monuments'.

In his monument "24 h Foucault" [90] built in the form of a classroom, library and auditorium, visitors were given the possibility to participate in conferences, view and consult a multitude of books, rare videos and audio tapes from radio or television programmes, photocopy for free the documents on display, as well as drink a 1 Euro vodka at the Foucault bar. With its limited duration and excessive amount of available information, this 24h experience managed to convey in an excessive and idiosyncratic way, the sense of urgency that is articulated in Foucault's thought. Hirschhorn's "24 h Foucault", as Clémentine Deliss argues, uses the exhibition format as a location for open-ended research and activates a " form of education [knowledge production] that is dissonant and anti-systemic yet imbued with the wish to forge new concepts and forms of inter-human currency". [91]

To a certain extent, Hirschhorn's work and this project in particular, can serve as a model for the application of anarchist epistemology of Paul Feyerabend, as argued by Sarat Maharaj while referring to Hirschhorn's previous 'monument' projects, since experimentation is an integral part of the exhibition and elements of chance and entertainment are incorporated, turning it into a polyvalent and generative situation.

As Maharaj further explains, Feyerabend, in his proposal of an anarchist (or Dadaist) epistemology, saw a "cognitive production model in art that can serve as a reference for the development of scientific knowledge, since it incorporates elements of irony and entertainment and is not limited to following logical and rational structures". [92] He believed in a methodological mishmash of ironic, experimental strategies, ludic modes, reversible states, 'contradiction', non-binary, non linear associations, and paradoxes. [93]

René Descartes' "Discours de la méthode" ranks among the most famous texts in modern age, since it lays the basis for the development of scientific and

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[86] Vincent Pécoil, "Inside the Outside" in: Parkett, No. 78, Zurich 2006, p. 79.

[87] Jacques Rancière, The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible, New York 2004, pp. 22-23.

[88] Sarat Maharaj, "Unfinishable Sketch of An Unknown Object in 4 D: Scenes of Artistic Research" in: Annette Balkema and Henk Slager, "Artistic Research", New York 2004, p.49.

[89] Thomas Hirschhorn, "Interview with Okwui Enwezor", in: James Rondeau, Susanne Ghez (eds), Jumbo Spoons and Big Cake, Chicago 2000, p. 32.

[90] Thomas Hirschhorn, "24 h Foucault", Palais de Tokyo, 2004.

[91] Clémentine Deliss, "Explore or Educate?" in: Peter O'Neill (ed.) Curating Subjects, London 2007, p. 91.

[92] See Alejandro del Pino Velasco, "Summary of An Unknown Object in Uncountable Dimensions: Visual Arts as Knowledge Production in the Retinal Arena, A Presentation by Sarat Maharaj" in M. Hlavajova, J. Winder. B. Choi (eds), On Knowledge Production: A Critical Reader on Contemporary Art, BAK Utrecht 2008, p. 137.

[93] See Sarat Maharaj, "Unfinishable Sketch of An Unknown Object in 4 D: Scenes of Artistic Research Art Research" in: Annette Balkema and Henk Slager, "Artistic Research", New York 2004, pp. 39-58.

philosophical theory. Descartes philosophy, elaborated on the method of deduction as a means to arrive at conclusions, is suspicious of sensual knowledge and postulates instead reason as a certain source of knowledge.

Since Descartes, western thought has developed from this distinction and separation between intellect and intuition, but after the second half of the 20th century, this divide has begun to crumble, and in the sphere of science itself, many critical voices, such as Thomas Kuhn and Paul Feyerabend, "started to question the supposed neutrality and universality of scientific rationality, as well as the methods of scientific discovery". [94]

In his treatise Against Method, Paul Feyerabend considered explanatory, asystematic methods as truer as to how scientific inquiry and research happens and believed that science could contribute more effectively to the progress of society if it made use of an anarchic methodology. [95] The 'scientific fact', he argues, is assembled in the course of the argument, in sorting out the pros and contras of the data. And, to pursue with a larger inquiry, a science research programme has to settle on what is a 'fact', which is decided according to the most coherent evidence, leaving things subject to several interpretations and depending on changes in contexts. The art practitioner, on the other hand, is not so constrained. Whereas the scientist is bound to produce results which can be subjected to a special form of logic and verification, the artist has greater freedom to speculate and the work produced is more likely to represent a process of questioning than the presentation of any (however theoretical) answers. The formulation of the question is more valuable (artistically) than any answer could be, because it leaves room for the viewer to move around in and to interrogate the work from their own point of view.

3.2.1. Linking art and science

Contemporary artists today, instead of working within disciplinary boundaries, seem particularly drawn to collaborate with other domains of knowledge or disciplines (such as architecture, history, philosophy, sociology or science). Interdisciplinary practices in contemporary art suggest a mode of intervention into other disciplines that is both based on affinity and exclusivity.

In the context of explorations and exchanges between science and art, it is worth to mention a two year project launched in 2006 by BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, in cooperation with the Dutch Organisation for Scientific Research (NOW), with the

title CO-OPS "Inter-territorial Explorations in Art and Science". [96] The project investigated the relation between contemporary art and science, and comprised seven teams consisting of scientists and artists, who collaborated on a specific topic that, up until then, they only studied from within their respective domains. The main questions examined were, namely, which new insights might be generated by linking artistic-reflective thinking and scientific-analytical thinking? Which (reflections on) processes of knowledge production emerge when artists and scientists cooperate in solving research questions? The emphasis thereby was on the research process and the purpose was to stimulate the articulation of new theories in the sciences by initiating research between the various art and science 'territories'. The collaborations between artists and scientists took on the format of a laboratory study in which the public was considered an active partner in a process of interaction and exchange of ideas and their work was presented in different locations (museums, public institutions, internet), in a variety of forms (debates, cultural events, performances, exhibitions, symposia) and in a number of cities in the Netherlands. [97]

Since the end of the last millennium, an increased number of artists see in the natural sciences a source of inspiration for their work and use scientific jargon, scientific forms of illustration, or create unconventional models.

While constructing observation posts for insects, attempting to communicate with frogs in open laboratory situations or arousing feelings of happiness among participants in experimental settings, contemporary artists reflect on and transform the natural sciences from their own, taking at times a critical standpoint and, at the same time, challenging their claim to universal validity and objectivity. [98]

To investigate this phenomenon, the Neues Museum Weserburg Bremen organized in 2007 an exhibition with the title "SAY IT ISN'T SO". [99] The concept of the exhibition, following the current trend in discourse, was not to create a museal event limited to the art world, but rather a research project resting on many communication forums, lectures and conversations with artists. The artistic strategies used were those of affirmation, fact, and irony and in the process artists never set themselves up in judgement of the sciences. As it is mentioned on the exhibition website:

[94] Alejandro del Pino Velasco, "Summary of An Unknown Object in Uncountable Dimensions: Visual Arts as Knowledge Production in the Retinal Arena, A Presentation by Sarat Maharaj" in M. Hlavajova, J. Winder. B. Choi (eds), On Knowledge Production: A Critical Reader on Contemporary Art, BAK Utrecht 2008, p.137.
[95] See Paul Feyerabend, Against Method, New York 1975.

[96] For more information see www.co-ops.nl
[97] See BAK< http://www.bak-utrecht.nl/?&click[id_projekt]=38 > (26.05.2008).
[98] See, for example, reference to Carsten Höller's work further in this part of the study.
[99] (2007) SAY IT ISN'T SO. Art trains its sights on the Natural Sciences. In cooperation with the University of Bremen. Curators: Peter Friese, Guido Boulboullé, Susanne Witzgall. Participating artists: Brian Collier (USA), Mark Dion (USA), Galerie für Landschaftskunst (D), Henrik Håkansson (S), Frank Hesse (D), Carsten Höller (D), John Isaacs (GB), Christoph Keller (D), Szabolcs KissPál (H), Gerhard Lang (D), M+M (D), Carsten Nicolai (D), Olaf Nicolai (D), Nana Petzet (D), Theda Radtke (D), Tyyne Claudia Pollmann (D), Hannes Rickli (CH), Hinrich Sachs (D), Conrad Shawcross (GB), Herwig Turk / Günter Stöger (A), Judith Walgenbach (D).

"SAY IT ISN'T SO sees itself as a multimedia exhibition [with] laboratory-like installations, test settings, archives, photographs, and video works in which the focus is on art as an experimental system, as a transformation of scientific issues, but also as a sensorial, aesthetic event. By familiarizing themselves with scientific thought patterns, experimental procedures, and methods of communication and representation, the participating artists are capable of placing these on a new level of reflection. By enabling scientific models of thought to be experienced from what art considers a crucial aesthetic distance, they subject these models, which are bound to trust in science, to a necessary revision". [100]

Unlike previous projects and symposia on 'art and science' aimed at discovering similarities between art and science or forcing a dialogue between the 'two cultures', this exhibition attempts to "demonstrate that contemporary art is in no way aligning itself or becoming taken up with science, but rather is positioning itself beside science with a scrutinizing eye". [101]

Scientists are also beginning to understand their disciplines within a cultural context and to critically examine the underlying conditions of their research. More and more scientists are slipping into the role of the artistic experimenter, who investigates a scientific field and understands his works as 'epistemic objects', or the scientist who, like the artist or the philosopher, revaluates his previous practice.

Carsten Höller is a good example of what has been said above. Before dedicating himself to art, Höller worked as a scientist and the originality of his approach is no doubt influenced by his scientific background. This has allowed him to bring together art and science in a manner that gives his installations a very distinctive character and many of them can be seen as an opportunity to question epistemological suppositions of science. For instance, in his "Laboratory of Doubt" [102] he questions the reliability of experimental results, and speculates that results may cease to be experimental when they are represented as finished outcomes. Höller proposes instead experiments in stasis, in which the "aim is not to intervene", thus making a statement against the overemphasis on empirical findings and positivist notions of pre-given norms to which practice has to conform.

Carsten Höller, "Laboratory of Doubt", 1999

His aim in designing those experiments is to examine and transform the audience into subjects of a series of perceptual or psychological experimentations. Drawing on our presumed certainties, he stresses that what is important is not to be uncertain, but rather to seek uncertainty:

"Doubt and its semantic cousin, perplexity, which are both equally important to me, are considered unattractive states of mind we'd rather keep under lock and key because we associate them with uneasiness, with a failure of values. But wouldn't it be more appropriate to claim the opposite – that certainty in the sense of a brazen, untenable assumption is much more pathetic? It is simply its association with notions of well being that gives affirmation its current status. What needs to be done is to sever the association between affirmation and well-being". [103]

Carsten Höller, "Key to the Laboratory of Doubt", 2006

As is usual in contextual art, Höller's installations cast the audience in a crucial role; its participation is not merely expected, it is a vital part of the work, which could not exist without it.

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[100] See SAY IT ISN'T SO <http://www.nmwb.de/nmwb_eng/1tp_ausst.php?ausst=18> (26.05.2008).
[101] Ibid.
[102] The "Laboratory of Doubt" (1999) was an installation where a Mercedes-Benz station wagon equipped with a pair of megaphones on the roof, was intended to disseminate doubt without transposing it into images. "However overnight the tires are stolen. Not knowing what to say 'to spread doubt' adds speechlessness to immobility. A failure to implement doubts seems the only solution to avoid certainty about doubt itself. The project goes on, the car is still in use, becoming slowly a monument of uncertainty". In: Register, Fondazione Prada, Milan 2000 (unpaginated).

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[103] See Feed Magazine, 1999, www.feedmag.com/art/re_hoeller.html, from a conversation with Hans-Ulrich Obrist and Carsten Höller.

Höller's "Laboratory of Doubt" was made for the exhibition "Laboratorium", which was curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist and Barbara Vanderlinden, in 1999 in Antwerp. The exhibition linked art and science through the association commonly made between the artist's studio and the scientist laboratory as workspaces of invention. Scientific researchers and contemporary artists were invited to talk about their studio, about their science laboratory and through these exchanges different interdisciplinary collaborations, different laboratories took place in Antwerp. Bruno Latour curated a show within the show, and his idea was based on the table top experiments: a series of public lectures and demonstrations where scientists, artists and architects publicly presented either a new or an old experiment.

Interdisciplinarity was also emphasized by the exhibition catalogue[104] with theoretical and practical writings from artists and scientists and an open-ended compendium of exhibition documents and project findings. The intentionally chaotic presentation of the part concerning the artist's contributions and their project findings "emphasized processes of discovery that occur as works are juxtaposed [...] rather than an easily legible final product".[105]

By considering the museum as the key location to do a show about laboratories, and by creating archives out of great volumes of information, the curators not only adopted a self reflexive approach, but also questioned notions about the total autonomy of certain fields of practice.[106] Also, the use of the idea of experiment to link both art and science methodologies, shares the desire to change present conditions, since it implies the idea of testing the past in order to learn something new. Or, as Hal Foster notes, referring to experiment as the primary procedure of contemporary art, "[t]he purpose of the modernist work is to test the limits of its meanings and the understanding of its viewers over and over again".[107]

"Laboratorium", Antwerp,1999

[104] See Hans Ulrich Obrist and Barbara Vanderlinden (eds), Laboratorium, Exhibition Catalogue, Antwerp 1999.
[105] Eva Diaz, "Experiment and the Tests of Tomorrow in: Paul O'Neill (ed.) Curating Subjects, London 2007 p. 94.
[106] Ibid pp. 92-99.
[107] Hal Foster, Design and Crime and Other Diatribes, London 2002, p.121.

As we have seen, artists increasingly collaborate with other disciplines, consider their activities as a form of research, make use of other bodies of knowledge and a wide range of media. This results in complex interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary art practices that often go beyond visual language alone, containing diverse disciplinary influences, perspectives and ideas.

An example of interdisciplinary practices can be found in the works of India based Raqs Media Collective.[108] Raqs is a collective of artists, who work in new media and digital art practice, documentary filmmaking, photography, media theory, research, criticism and curating.

Their work locates them along the intersections of contemporary art, historical enquiry, philosophical speculation, research and theory, often taking the form of installations, online and offline media objects, performances and encounters.[109] For instance, their project OPUS (Open Platform for Unlimited Signification, 2001 onward) is an online digital commons for sharing creative work, and an example of a genre of New Media art projects that create an environment where artists submit their work and, in doing so, contribute to a larger *Gesamtkunstwerk*. A complex and ambitious project with utopian aspirations, OPUS encourages artists and authors to upload their own original source files to appropriate media objects found within the system (including images, video, audio, text, and software code). Participants may then produce what Raqs Media Collective calls 'Rescensions' by remixing or otherwise altering these found sources and contributing their new works back into the OPUS system. Raqs uses genetic inheritance as a metaphor to describe how source files ('parents') and derivative works ('children') are related. As they write on the OPUS website, "A Rescension is neither a clone, nor an authorised or pirated copy nor an improved or deteriorated version, of a pre-existing text, just as a child is neither a clone, nor an authorised or pirated copy, nor an improved or deteriorated version of its parents".[110]

With its emphasis on appropriation, collaboration, and sharing, Opus is inspired by the free software movement and is an attempt to create a digital commons in culture, based on the principle of sharing of work, while at the same time, retaining the possibility of maintaining traces of individual authorship and identity.

[108] Raqs Media Collective was founded in 1991 by three artists: Monica Narula, Jeebesh Bagchi and Suddhabrata Sengupta. Based in New Dehli, India it is one of the initiators of Sarai: The New Media Initiave (www.sarai.net), a programme of interdisciplinary research and practice on media, city space and urban culture at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Dehli. Raqs is best known for their contribution to contemporary art and presently participate as co-curators of Manifest 7, the European Biennal of Contemporary Art in Italy (Summer 2008).
[109] For more information see <www.raqsmediacollective.net> (26.05.2008).
[110] See <http://www.opuscommons.net/templates/doc/index.html> (26.05.2008).

3.2.2. Artistic research and the expansion of contemporary art practices

Contemporary art practices are expanding and often in these dematerialized or re-contextualized art practices, there is a notion of experiment and research invoked, that has the potential to breakthrough the dichotomy of practice and theory and to develop new modes of knowledge production. As Maharaj notes,

"Unless we are alert to the transformation of the concept and what we understand as "visual art," we shall not be able to grasp changes even within what is still conventionally referred to as visual art. There is much activity in India, China, Africa that is radically interdisciplinary. It deterritorialises received concepts of art. Groups working on the Internet or with film, video, performance, and other practices are involved in modes of knowledge production that often have oblique relations to the visual. They amount to spasmodic events that are rather different from what passes as visual art in the museum-gallery system. Are such practices more like research machines through which social, political, visual, statistical, epidemiological data are telescoped? These are visual-intellectual evolutions that cannot be reduced to constructions of the art system. What we call art activity is expanding, extending, transmogrifying in the global contemporary setting". [111]

But what is the specific meaning of research and experiment in the context of art? Artistic research seems to encompass in it everything: processes of making artwork, art practices that take the form of laboratories and test experience, modes of thinking through the visual that are with, against or beyond academic methods, thinking-doing as visual art practices vis-à-vis other knowledge systems. One could argue that art practice as research is an intensification of everyday experiences from which new knowledge or knowing emerges.
According to artist photographer, Lisl Ponger, research as an artistic strategy is about one way of approaching art making, one position among many, implying the critical acquisition of knowledge in particular areas and its artistic transformation. In her view, the artistic research process, interactive in nature is, up to a certain point, a non linear process, similar to systematic, scientific investigation:

"The definition of the field of knowledge, the methods of collecting information, the kinds of information collected and where it comes from are all open-ended. As are the connections made between different nodes of information. What is important in this first stage is the process of investigation itself. After a while, continuous immersion in the chosen material enables certain interesting problems to crystallise and may also suggest methods of materialising them in order to produce images relevant to a debate or to formulate pertinent questions that need asking requires knowledge [...] It often appears that, having started from one position, the world itself insists on connecting us up to everything else from that (temporary) starting point. A spider's web of interrelationships. The real creative work usually takes place at times and in places unrelated

to the research and reading-walking along the street or lying in bed half asleep. Ideas come unbidden and, when the idea is good, it feels sometimes as if it had been there all along waiting to be discovered [...] one of the interesting features is how various 'levels' of information may find themselves in the same category – a scientific study of stereotypes along with a matchbox from Sweden and Korean stick-it notes bought in Senegal, for instance". [112]

Artistic research is often motivated by emotional, personal and subjective concerns; and operates not only on the basis of explicit and exact knowledge, but also on that of tacit and experiential knowledge. To some extent, as Simon Sheikh points out, "research has even superseded studio practice". Artists are increasingly researching projects, not only to make site-specific works, but also time and content specific works. Here, "form follows function, and the materialization of the work is decided upon different parameters than in historical studio practice".[113]
It seems that in such art practices, what is important is the issue at hand rather than the end product of an art object.
For example, Julie Ault and Martin Beck, who share certain working methods, develop their projects, whether individually or collaboratively authored, from a research process within which themes are defined, and not out of a studio situation. They investigate the particulars of a situation, of a site, how the space looks, how it functions, what kind of discourse it puts forward, etc. It is then from these parameters, that they develop the project. [114]

Studio practice has of course not disappeared, what we presence today instead, is an expansion and coexistence of several conceptions of art practice. This expanded field of art practices is currently labelled with a variety of names: socially engaged art, community based art, experimental communities, dialogic art, participatory, interventionist, research based, relational, contextual or collaborative art. Many artists do not distinguish between their work inside and outside the museum or gallery, and even "successful figures like Francis Alÿs, Pierre Huyghe, Matthew Barney, and Thomas Hirschhorn have all turned to social collaboration as an extension of their conceptual practice".[115] Huyghe and Philippe Parreno, for instance, for their collaborative work in progress, "No Ghost Just a Shell", bought a manga character, a girl named Annlee, from a Japanese animation company, and invited artists to use it in their work. Through the process, the artwork became,

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[111] Sarat Maharaj,"In other words" interview with Daniel Birnbaum in: Art Forum, Feb.2002
<http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0268/is_6_40/ai_82800088> (26.05.2008).

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[112] Lisl Ponger, Tim Sharp, "Imaginative: Research as Artistic Strategy" Berlin 2004 (DVD).
[113] Simon Sheikh, "Talk Value: Cultural Industry and the Knowledge Economy" in: Maria Hlavajova, Jill Winder, Binna Choi (eds), On Knowledge Production: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art, BAK Utrecht 2008 p.195.
[114] See Julie Ault, Martin Beck "Exhibiting X: Methods for an Open Form", in: Critical Condition. Ausgewählte Texte im Dialog, Essen 2003. p. 379.
[115] Claire Bishop, "The Social Turn: Collaboration and its Discontents," in: Artforum 44, no. 6, 2006, p.181. or <http://artforum.com/search/search=%22Claire%20Bishop%22&sort=newest> (26.05.2008).

a kind of a chain of pieces, a dynamic structure that produced forms that, at the end, became part of it.[116] As Hal Foster notes, today, we witness a promiscuity of collaborations and a promiscuity of installations, where installation is the default format and the exhibition the common medium, and discursivity and sociability the main concerns in the new work, both in its making and in its viewing.[117]

3.2.3. Collaborative and collective art practices

The reason for the growth in collaborative and collective art practices, as Esche argues, may precisely be because of its scarcity in most other areas of society. Art often works countercyclically, expressing desires that are not easily articulated elsewhere. We could speculate that collective creativity is the normal artistic response to a moment of extreme individualism.[118] This reiterates what Okwui Enwezor had already argued in his article "The Artist as a Producer in Times of Crisis":

"[…] If we look back historically collectives tend to emerge during periods of crisis; in moments of social upheaval and political uncertainty within society. Such crisis often forces reappraisals of conditions of production, revaluation of the nature of artistic work, and reconfiguration of the position of the artist in relation to economic, social, and political institutions. There are two types of collective formations and collaborative practices […] The first type can be summarized as possessing a structured modus vivendi based on permanent, fixed groupings of practitioners working over a sustained period. In such collectives, authorship represents the expression of the group rather than that of the individual artist. The second type of collectives tend to emphasize a flexible, non-permanent course of affiliation, privileging collaboration on project basis than on a permanent alliance. This type of collective formation can be designated as networked collectives. Such networks are far more prevalent today due to radical advances in communication technologies and globalization". [119]

In relation to this context of collective and collaborative practices, Claire Bishop argues that "the social turn in contemporary art has prompted an ethical turn in art criticism" [120], since artists are increasingly judged by their working process, in terms of good or bad models of collaboration, rather than by a discussion of the work's conceptual significance as a social and aesthetic form. As she further states, "good intentions shouldn't render art immune to critical analysis" and artists and collectives shouldn't be merely praised for their authorial renunciation. Collaborative practices should instead "address this contradictory pull between

autonomy and social intervention, and reflect on this antinomy both in the structure of the work and in the conditions of its reception".[121]
Having in mind the proliferation of contemporary art practices described above, what new concept of the artist might be necessary to encompass today's diverse kinds of art practices?

3.3. The role of the artist and the conceptual and mediating role of curating in the knowledge production process

What is the role or function of the artist in society? What role does the artist play in the construction of other spaces and subjectivities?
If we see artists as 'knowledge producers' can they also be defined as intellectuals, as theorists?

Today, some forty years after Roland Barthes' "Death of The Author",[122] the critical debates of the 1960s and 1970s dealing with the status of the artistic subject, have lost none of their controversial quality.[123] Quite the contrary, since modernist concepts of autonomy, authority and authorship are undermined, the unity of the artwork and the status of the author are radically called into question and continue to provide a privileged field of reference for contemporary artists and theoreticians. According to Foucault the author function differentiates and classifies the work, and any potential reconfiguration of that function is directly related to reconfigurations of discursive institutions surrounding it.[124] This means, that the artist (as a knowledge producer) is dependent on the apparatus through which he or she is threaded namely, his position in relation to economic, social and political institutions. In this sense, we might thus consider both Walter Benjamin's notion of the author's commitment under certain social conditions and Roland Barthes' notion of the active reader of the work as text, as attempts to reconfigure the artist's (author) function.[125]

[117] Ibid.
[118] Charles Esche, "About exhibitions, Modest Proposals and Possibilities" in: Prelom Magazine interview <http://www.republicart.net/disc/publicum/sheikh03_en.htm> (26.05.2008).
[119] Okwui Enwezor, "The Artist as Producer in Times of Crisis" 2004 <http://www.16beavergroup.org/mtarchive/archives/000839.php> (26.05.2008).
[120] Claire Bishop, "The Social Turn: Collaboration and its Discontents," in: Artforum 44, no. 6, 2006, p.181. or http://artforum.com/search/search=%22Claire%20Bishop%22&sort=newest> (26.05.2008).

[121] Ibid.
    In chapter 3 of the present study, I shall give examples of exhibtionary practices that inscribe themselves into this category (Julie Ault/Martin Beck, Carsten Höller, Ann-Sofi Sidén).
[122] Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author" in: Stephen Heath (ed.), Image, Music, Text, New York 1977. In this essay, Barthes argues against the belief that the author is a unifying and sole creative source for the meaning and value of a unified work of art . In here, he postulates that "a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination" and that "the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the author" (p.148).
[123] See Chapter 1, "Institutional Critique and After", references to authorship and artistic production.
[124] Michel Foucault, "What is an author?" (1969), reprinted in Language, Counter-Memory, Practice, New York 1977, pp.113-138.
[125] See Simon Sheikh, "Representation, Contestation and Power: The Artist as Public Intellectual", in: eipcp (ed.), transversal online journal <http://eipcp.net/transversal/1204/sheikh/en> (26.05.2008).

Presently, in the field of art, we find ourselves confronted with the complex interplay of conflicting positions in which interpretation, presentation, production and conception mutually interact, in which numerous agents are involved and in which artists assume or are ascribed very different roles and functions.

Regarding the question of the role of the artist in society, of what an artist might be, Irit Rogoff prefers instead to raise the question of what a theorist might be, thus demonstrating how inextricably linked these existences and practices might be:

"The old boundaries between making and theorising, historicizing and displaying, criticising and affirming have long been eroded. Artistic practice is being acknowledged as the production of knowledge and theoretical and curatorial endeavours have taken on a far more experimental and inventive dimension, both existing in the realm of potentiality and possibility rather than that of exclusively material production. [...] Now we think of all of these practices as linked in a complex process of knowledge production instead of the earlier separation into to creativity and criticism, production and application. If one shares this set of perspectives, than one cannot ask the question of 'what is an artist?' without asking 'what is a theorist?'" [126]

Similarly, in an interview conducted in 1977, entitled "Truth and Power", Foucault advocates in place of the definition 'universal intellectual', who is authorized to dispense truths, the concept of the 'specific intellectual', who is not a 'great writer' or 'genius', but 'a savant or expert' with a 'direct and localized relation' to knowledge.[127] The specific intellectual represents a 'new mode' of the connection between theory and practice'. [128]

Simon Sheikh suggests another definition namely, the artist as the 'public intellectual', who produces publics "through the mode of address and the establishment of platforms or counter publics".[129] As he further explains "(a)ll exhibition making is the making of a public and the modes of address can be viewed as attempts to represent and constitute a specific collective subject".[130] Since we cannot any longer speak about an homogeneous public sphere, but instead of the public sphere as being fragmented, "as consisting of a number of spaces and/or formations that sometimes connect, sometimes close off",[131] and because neither the work nor the spectator can be formally defined, we witness an expansion of different modes of address, different strategies in exhibition making and curating:

"Just as there is no complete, ideal work there is no ideal, generalized spectator [...]. This means, one the hand, that the artwork itself (in an expanded sense), is unhinged from its traditional forms (as material) and contexts (galleries, museums, etc), and on the other hand, is made contingent on a(nother) set of parameters that can be described as *spaces of experience*, that is, notions of spectatorship and the establishment of communicative platforms and/or networks in or around the artwork that are contingent on, and changing according to different *points of departure* in terms of spectatorship.... We can, thus, speak of three variable categories, that, in turn, influence the definition of each other; work, context and spectator. None of which are given, and each of which are conflictual, indeed agonistic". [132]

How does then the conceptual and mediating role of curating contribute to connecting art and knowledge production? What are the implications this would have on the entrenched division between thinking and making or thinking and doing?

Curatorial activity corresponds in manifold ways to the dissolution of uniform models of authorship, in favour of more open perceptions of artistic subjectivity. While in a situation of clear professional differentiation, the curator position is supposed to serve the ends of artistic expression, the blurring of curatorial and artistic realms dissolves both the unity of the art work as well as that of the artist subject.

According to curator Charles Esche, the curator is responsible for the attempt to realize 'possibility' that has been created by the artwork. It is therefore, in some ways, a second order function but nonetheless necessary for the artwork to do what it can do to its full potential. So, curating is not really about collaborating with an artist, but taking the artwork and adding a context and a set of conditions for it to be encountered.[133] The potential for conflict arises around the question of who can claim to produce meaning, and artists often argue that they are being denied the power to determine the appearance and the contextualization of their works.

The blurring of boundaries between artists and curators had its origins in two key developments from the late 1960s. On the one hand, as already mentioned before, Conceptual Art and so called Institutional Critique directed the focus from object based art, to an art with a relational and discursive constitution. On the other hand, parallel to the emergence of the artist-as-curator a new profession began to form, that of the free lance curator: Harald Szeemann was the first Documenta curator in the history of exhibition to set an overarching theme to which the artists had to subordinate themselves. [134] Parallel to this, the massive expansion of the art

[126] Irit Rogoff, "What is a Theorist?" <http://www.kein.org/node/62> (26.05.2008).
[127] Michel Foucault, 'Truth and Power', Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-77, Brighton: Harvester, 1980, p. 128.
[128] Ibid p.126.
[129] Simon Sheikh, "Representation, Contestation and Power: The Artist as Public Intellectual", in <http: www.republicart.net/disc/aap/sheikh02_en.pdf> (26.05.2008).
[130] See Simon Sheikh," Constitutive Effects: The Techniques of the Curator" in: Paul O'Neill (ed.) Curating Subjects, London 2007 pp.175-185.
[131] Simon Sheikh, "In the Place of the Public Sphere? Or, the World in Fragments" (2004). <http://www.republicart.net/disc/publicum/sheikh03_en.htm> (26.05.2008).

[132] Ibid.
[133] Charles Esche, "About Exhibitions, Modest Proposals and Possibilities" interview in: Prelom Magazine <http://www.republicart.net/disc/publicum/sheikh03_en.htm> (26.05.2008).
[134] See Beatrice von Bismarck, "Unfounded Exhibition: Policies of Artistic Curating" in: Matthias Michalka (ed.), The Artist as…, Vienna 2007, p.31-44.

market by the 1980s, together with an increased interest in 'Art Theory' also played a significant role in the emergence of the curator. Art shows had to illustrate a theme and someone had to author and organize these theme shows: this person was the curator. [135]

Although the momentum in artist-curating can be traced back already in the 1980s – with artists such as Julie Ault and Group Material, Martha Rosler, Barbara Kruger, Fred Wilson and also many other artists linked to Institutional Critique,[136] it is not until the 1990s, that it became a standard practice in the cultural field for artists to take over various tasks that were once reserved to the curator, but also with art critics and theorists, philosophers and sociologists pushing into this field.

Much of contemporary experimentation in exhibitionary form is linked with the critical context of the post-Enlightenment 'crisis of representation', since it is no longer possible to claim that one can represent neutrally, objectively or impartially. As we have seen, earlier in this study, all representations are socially, politically, ideologically, and institutionally mediated. Therefore, exhibitions must be understood as sites for cultural mediation, and mediation as a process that, to a certain degree, constructs that which it mediates. This shift from representation to mediation has led to two different models in curating strategies. On the one hand, 'hypermediacy' in which the processes of mediation are accentuated and where media are used to reference other media. On the other hand, 'immediacy', in which processes of mediation are suppressed or concealed. This is evident, for instance, in object based exhibition models, where contextualising information or narrative interpretation is to a greater or lesser extent, suspended. In many exhibitions, though, the two mediation forms co-exist, putting the accent on both the political and aesthetic dimensions of the display.

As Beatrice von Bismark notes, "[c]uratorial acts intend to bring the various determinations of the individual elements with which they work into relation with one another, generate processual events that are set in motion by way of relational tensions and crises, acts of reception, or the mobility of what is collected".[137]
It follows that exhibitions are no longer merely conceived as a medium for representation and transfer of pre-formulated knowledge, but instead, become a medium for 'enactment', a space of encounter and experience that activates and generates other forms of knowledge. This development in exhibitionary practice is commonly referred as the 'performative turn' and carries with it different notions of audience, difference and experience.

[135] See Robert Garnett, "Art After the Didactic Turn" <http://magazines.documenta.de/frontend/article.php?IdLanguage=1&NrArticle=959> (26.05.2008).

[136] See Jens Hoffmann, "The Curatorialization of Institutional Critique", in: John C. Welchmann (ed.), Institutional Critique and After, Volume 2 of the SoCCAS symposia, Zurich 2006, p. 325. Notable among these artist-curated exhibitions that began critically to engage with the art institution and the exhibition system, are the shows by the collective Group Material at the Whitney Biennals, Americana (1985) and AIDS Time Line (1991), as well as Martha Rosler's "If You Lived There..." (1989), Barbara Kruger's pioneering "Pictures and Promises: A Display of Advertising, Slogans, and Interventions" (1981) and Fred Wilson's "Mining the Musem" (1992) at the Maryland Historical Society in Baltimore.

[137] Beatrice von Bismarck, "Unfounded Exhibition: Policies of Artistic Curating" in: Matthias Michalka (ed.), The Artist as..., Vienna 2007, p. 39.

4. Exhibitions as spaces of experience:
selected experiments in exhibition making

Exhibitions are social spaces where meanings, narratives, histories, and functions of cultural materials are actively produced. Exhibition making, as a practice, entails the bringing together of unlikely assemblages of people, objects, concepts, ideas, texts, spaces and different media, whose main purpose remains to make visible that which is otherwise invisible, to make tangible something intangible. All exhibition making involves dealing with processes and contexts and the process itself of assembling the components of a display maybe also understood, as Anne Lorimer argues, as a process of discovery, in which the exhibition takes on a life of its own, leading to unexpected encounters "that go beyond what could have been thought out beforehand, and thus offer new forms of knowledge".[138]

Today, advanced artistic practice, always proceeds in an installation fashion, keeping the surrounding space in mind. The use of space is often closely linked to Michel de Certeau pragmatic approach: space is an effect of the activities that influence and even determine it. Space is thus understood in terms of active utilisation, of actualisation of the ambivalences and internal dependencies that arise in the very use of it, just as when a word is articulated it acquires layers of meaning through its specific context.[139]
The contextual and ephemeral practices of Julie Ault and Martin Beck illustrate what has been said above, since they produce temporary exhibitions and projects, rather than lasting objects and seek to engage the visitors both visually and spatially. Julie Ault sees the exhibition "as a medium, and a composition that is articulated with objects and information. [This] articulation entails aspects of ephemeral display, including lightning, context, placement, and spacing, elements that create a structure and an environment".[140] "Outdoor Systems, indoor distribution" (2000) is an example of Julie Ault and Martin Beck's collaboration. The project was realized in Berlin, at the Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst (NGBK) and the concept was about articulation and enactment of space in the fields of architecture, urbanism and design. The visual approach, is described by the artists as follows:

"We installed a corridor-like entrance, which opened into a far view of the gallery, with wallpaper showing pictoral and diagrammatic representations of a city, thus suggesting one of the key topics elaborated within the exhibition - perspectives of and onto urban space. To establish a ground for

Outdoor Systems, indoor distribution, we applied a multicoloured paint treatment that covered the majority of the gallery's floor extending toward the back of the 150 foot long space where it crew up the wall. The painting treatment pattern was abstracted from an aerial photograph of a complex highway interchange cluster in Los Angeles. Reminiscent of optical/spatial experimentation begun in the 1960s (later termed supergraphics) the treatment metaphorically superimposed the gallery's space with the space of an interchange, which suggested continuous movement throughout. Video projections directed on walls as well as on a structural column, and overlaid with two and three dimensional ingredients, including temporary display structures, coalesced into thematised arenas within which topics were elaborated. We considered the show to be three dimensional montage composed of images, films and videos, graphics, publications, fixtures, photographic backdrops, and texts, which we manipulated, superimposed and put into dialogue". [141]

Using a multiplicity of presentation techniques, urban and architectural constructions and a three dimensional montage, Ault and Beck, guided visitors through the space setting the audience into discursive as well as physical motion. In so doing, they conceived engaging ways of bringing the viewers deeper into the contents and contexts of the exhibition, and thus of questioning the conditions and possibilities of exhibiting. As they further explain, "we want spatially and visually to engage, to intellectually engage, and to take into account all the different layers of what looking at art or looking at an exhibition can involve". [142]
The dynamic that results from curatorial strategies such as practiced by Ault/Beck do not only represent a continuation of site-specific modes of working, but also go beyond this, since they place the accent even more emphatically on processuality, contingency and the generation of space.
The project was conceived as "if the space itself would be a testing ground for how certain spaces can be constructed and how that process can be shown within the format of an exhibition".[143] Thus, by bringing the various elements with which they work into relation with one another, they generate processual events that are set in motion by way of relational tensions and crises, and acts of reception. [144]
Ault and Beck collaborative practice is aimed at producing exhibitions which self-reflexively consider the contexts from which the artworks originate, as well as the new contexts created by/in the exhibition. In this, they exploit ways through which experiential and visual engagement with art can connect ideas, and provide tools for access to information and critical thinking. This kind of exhibition practices are based on collaborative processes, and intricate webs of conceptual connectedness, and therefore should be understood "as counter positions to academic curatorial or exhibition-making practices, which are centred around strictly defined art historical methods, linearity, master narratives and upholding

[138] Anne Lorimer, "Raising Specters: Welcoming Hybrid Phantoms", in: Sharon Macdonald, Paul Basu (eds), Exhibition Experiments, Oxford 2007, p. 200.
[139] See Michel de Certeau, The Practice of Everyday Life, Los Angeles, 1988, pp.115-130.
[140] Julie Ault, Martin Beck "Exhibiting X: Methods for an Open Form", in: Critical Condition, Selected Texts in Dialogue, Essen 2003. p. 379.

[141] Julie Ault, Martin Beck "Exhibiting X: Methods for an Open Form", in: Critical Condition. Selected Texts in Dialogue, Essen 2003. p. 380.
[142] Ibid p. 381.
[143] Ibid p. 380.
[144] See Beatrice von Bismarck, "Unfounded Exhibition: Policies of Artistic Curating" in: Matthias Michalka (ed.), The Artist as…, Vienna 2007, pp. 39-41.

divisions between art and artefact 'high' and 'low', practitioner and spectator".[145] For Ault and Beck, exhibition-making is also understood as being a means for proposing complexity through their conceptual and aesthetic choices and the narratives that they intertwine.

Julie Ault, Martin Beck, "Outdoor System, indoor distribution", NGBK, Berlin 2000

Experiments in meaning making, as the one described, that question the idea and practice of exhibition itself, seem to be present in many artistic practices, with an increased prevalence of the so-called 'reflexive' and 'meta exhibitions'.[146] The range of aspects of exhibiting that have been subject to reflexive strategies is extensive.

In dealing with questions of engagement and representation, many contemporary artists are inspired by ethnography and draw on ethnographic methods and practices.

To a certain extent, Ann-Sofi Sidén's work on prostitution, "Warte Mal!", is an example of this, since she relies on ethnographic engagement with the sex workers, but goes beyond this, questioning complex issues such as voyeurism, realism and genre. Ann-Sofi Sidén belongs to a generation of artists who uses performance and film as essential components of their work. Her portrayals of the human mind resemble research projects into the history of mentality, where the recurring subjects are vulnerability, exposure, surveillance and control. Concepts such as normality, abnormality and grasp on reality are central in Ann-Sofi Sidén's works. Being constructed in a way that puts the beholder off balance temporarily, they seem to be aiming to disarm our constant need to control, or perhaps even to 'survey', the situations we are exposed to. In her work, she seeks out the hidden conflicts and frictional zones of our contemporary power structures.

"Warte Mal!" is a video installation about the German-Czech border region. Following the collapse of Communism and the opening of the borders in 1989, a new business sector developed at this geopolitical intersection: mass prostitution. The city of Dubi seems to exist almost entirely for the sex industry, with prostitutes playing their trade along an extended red light district/highway. Hundreds of women from all over Eastern Europe work there as prostitutes, attempting to halt passing cars by shouting 'Warte Mal!' (Wait a minute!). [147]

For this project, Ann-Sofi Sidén spent a period of nine months in Dubi, creating a dense portrait with her hand camera, which is composed of various filmic components. Throughout 1999, Sidén documented her stay through photography, a written diary and a series of video interviews with the players in the business of prostitution: clients, police, pimps and the prostitutes themselves.

The work is a cross-section, where the different formal modes of expression enter into an interaction, resulting in a multitude of perspectives and focal points that captivate us and unveil a closed, secret world that otherwise remains hidden.

The installation architecture has a maze-like intricacy, with side-rooms containing booths where the interviews play back-to-back, one girl, pimp or client per booth. To watch these video portraits visitors have to sit inside cubicles that suggest peep-show booths, with the exception that here they are exposed to each other through transparent walls. Since everything is on display, there is a voyeuristic sense of intimacy and at the same time, unlike so many 'reality TV' shows, a sense of distance, in that you are always the outsider, something Sidén acknowledges and forces you to be aware of.

Ann-Sofi Sidén, "Warte Mal!", 1999-2005

The installation structure, a kind of a hall of mirrors, in which visitors are reflected and implicated in the issue of prostitution, also questions the audience role by bringing into view the ambiguity of the position of the audience as consumer's of

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145   Julie Ault,"Three Snapshots from the Eighties" in: Paul O'Neill (ed.), Curating Subjects, London
     2007, p.8.
146   See Sharon Macdonald, Paul Basu (eds), Exhibition Experiments, Oxford 2007, pp. 1-24.

147   See Ann-Sofi Sidén, "Warte Mal!", Exhibition catalogue, Wiener Secession, Vienna 1999; see
     also the installation review by Rachel Withers at the Hayward Gallery (2002), in: Art Forum, April
     2002 <http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0268/is_8_40/ai_85459305> (26.05.2008).

other people's lives and by questioning the nature of our relationship to the people we watch.

"Warte Mal!" employs the visual language of investigative journalism or even home video, and is structured around a series of interviews that appear to be unedited and even unmediated. As opposed to academic and documentary work, where the person who records is normally left out, giving a sense of objectivity to the work, Sidén appears in the exhibition as a participant in the lives she records. Her diaries play up a wall detailing her time in a motel where rooms are hired by the hour, revealing her relationships with the people she meets. By placing herself and her relationships within the frame of the camera and the exhibition space she cuts through the pretence of "an academic eye objectively recording facts [...] and undermines the objectification that occurs on confessional TV".[148] She is able to do so, because "Warte Mal!" being an exhibited artwork, allows for the eye of the artist to be central in the observation. Thus, in so doing, she uses art as a critical tool to question the supposed objectivity through which reality and truth are constructed. Also, by exposing different layers of representation, built around the various portrait accounts, sometimes contradictory, and the absent experiences that are not placed on film, the final version of truth never appears, making impossible a single organised view of the situation.

The fact that "Warte Mal!" has now been shown in a large number of institutions around Europe,[149] also demonstrates that an experiment can remain experimental and meaningful in all contexts or when it is repeated. Repeating exhibition experiments in different contexts may bring them to new audiences, and altered contexts may turn out to have results that are more novel than expected.

Ann-Sofi Sidén, "Warte Mal!", Video, 1999-2005

148 Clare Carolin, Cathy Haynes, "The Politics of Display: Ann-Sofi Sidén Warte Mal!, Art History and Social Documentary", in: Sharon Macdonald, Paul Basu (eds), Exhibition Experiments, Oxford 2007, p. 159.
149 "Warte Mal!" has now been shown at the following institutions: Secession, Vienna (1999); Moderna Museet, Stockholm (2000); Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (2001); Hayward Gallery, London (2002); Kölnischer Kunstverein , Cologne (2003); Baltic Art Center, Gotland (2003-04); BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht (2004).

Experiments in exhibition making as the one described are intended to be troubling in meaningful ways and, in the process of producing something new, seek to unsettle accepted knowledge or status quo.

This is also the underlying idea that seems to run through all of Carsten Höller's work, regardless of what form it has taken over the years, namely to trouble and play with perception and thereby induce doubts about the constructed character of reality. Höller's installations often referred to as 'contextual art', demand from the audience a personal implication and a mode of involvement that goes well beyond simple contemplation. He wants people to feel confused and to begin to have doubts about what they normally take as reality and to make them perceive the world from different perspectives. His recurrent interest in the idea of 'doubt' is taken to its extreme in the project, "The Baudouin Experiment: A Deliberate , Non Fatalistic Large Scale Group Experiment in Deviation" that took place inside one of the orbs of Brussels's Atomium, in 2001. He describes the project as follows:

"From 10.00am on 27 September until 10.00am on 28 September 2001, the space will be closed to the outside world. Public access will be denied, and the inhabitants will be allowed to cease their normal activities. They will do nothing at all, and they will do it collectively.

The necessary infrastructure such as furniture, food, sanitary installations and safety measures will be provided. Though no particular programme or means of entertainment will be suggested, participants are free to bring with them what they wish. Essentially, the experiment will be to experience what happens when people are freed from their usual constraints and yet collectively confined to a particular space and time.

The Baudouin/Boudewijn Experiment will not be documented by means of film or video; the only 'recordings' will be the memories of the participants, and these will be disseminated through the stories they may tell after the event. The experiment will thus be completely unscientific, since objectivity is not the aim. Rather, it will be a unique opportunity to experience together the possibilities of escape from one's daily routine, to participate in a unique event with an unclear outcome.
[...] The Baudouin/Boudewijn Experiment will collectively 'deviate' from their everyday lives and roles in a certain space and time. As if interrupting the continuous line of their existence, they will suspend their activities to include an alien moment of 'not doing'". [150]

The experiment was inspired by the late H.M. Baudouin, King of Belgium, who was declared incapable of governing the country for twenty-four hours, on 4 April 1990, in order to allow an abortion law of which he did not approve to be passed. Höller's experiment reveals the constructed character of social reality. Since nothing that occurred in the Atomium was recorded, the experiment survives only in the memories and narratives of the participants. Through the very diverse

150 Carsten Höller's description of the experiment available online, but also in: Carsten Höller, "The Baudouin Experiment: A Deliberate , Non Fatalistic Large Scale Group Experiment in Deviation" (2001), in: Claire Bishop (ed.), Participation, London 2006, pp.144-145.

narratives of the participants, multiple accounts of the experience are made visible, thus highlighting the discursive nature of what is usually taken as 'objective' and the fact that what we take as reality is a construct. His aim is not to produce objective results or scientific knowledge, nor is he trying in any way to offer a form of entertainment, but instead to trigger an immaterial story that will take a life of its own and develop out of his control. This open-ended aspect is recurrent in the unscientific nature of all his experiments. He has often declared that he is interested in setting up situations allowing the audience to experiment with themselves, to explore the 'unknown'. What is at stake here is the creation of a unique opportunity to experience with others the possibility of getting away from what you usually are "suspending [your] activities to include an alien moment of 'not doing'". This refusal of everyday production is, according to Chantal Mouffe, a powerful symbolic act, one that plants seeds of resistance in the minds of the experiments participants. She writes:

"Once people stop taking for granted that their current mode of existence is the only possible one, their consciousness opens up to a new set of possibilities; they realize that another world is possible and that other forms of subjectivity are available. By destabilizing the common sense that has been established by the neo-liberal consensus, those experiments can contribute to undermining the view of the world propagated by hegemonic capitalist forces". [151]

In this, Chantal Mouffe recognises the work's potential to enact social change, and because of its subtleness and sophistication, it is more effective than direct action artistic practices. Similarly, Claire Bishop claims the Baudouin Experiment "as an act of profound inaction, or passive activism – a refusal of everyday productivity". She interprets this as a refusal to instrumentalise art in compensation for some perceived social lack and places the work within a "tradition of highly authored situations that fuse social reality with carefully calculated artifice". [152]

Carsten Höller, "Baudouin Experiment", Atomium 2001

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[151]   Chantal Mouffe, "Carsten Höller and the Baudouin Experiment", in: Parkett 77, Zurich 2006, p. 56.
[152]   Claire Bishop, "The Social Turn: Collaboration and its Discontents," in: Artforum 44, no. 6, 2006, p.181. or <http://artforum.com/search/search=%22Claire%20Bishop%22&sort=newest> (26.05.2008).

In practices such as this, it is not just a matter of creating new situations or forms of presentation, but rather to risk assembling people and things with the intention of producing differences that make a difference, without having a previous idea about what the outcome might be. The experiment is also as much about 'not knowing' as it is about 'knowing', since it arouses suspicion about the 'objectivity' of the results provided by the multiple accounts of the situation by the participants, leading to a proliferation of competing 'truths', and ultimately questioning our illusory securities. This experiment, being an example of critical intervention, demonstrates art's power of subversion and potential for generating critical thinking.

The main issue behind these experiments has been to reconfigure the way in which exhibitions work and to question dominant systems of representation. Rather than simplifying complex realities, the focus lies more on how to engage with complexity, how to create a context that will open up dialogue and debate, and above all how engage with audience participation.
But experiments can also go wrong and if experimentalism is to continue to trouble in meaningful ways, needs to be contextualized, analysed and troubled itself, and thus not be exempt from critique. Also, in relation to such experimental practices, there may be illusions of laying bare mechanisms or producing new knowledge without actually doing so. These raises important questions about reception, since even if people are all brought together to witness a particular event, this obviously does not mean that they see the same thing or draw the same conclusions. While studies show that there is always scope for readings beyond anticipated, it is also clear that visitor readings are produced in relation to complexities of the exhibition's syntax, assemblages, spaces, and certainly, the extent to which visitors are sufficiently provoked to experiment.

According to Claire Doherty, the 'exhibition as situation' requires engagement between artists, curators and audience and a thorough understanding of the aesthetics and processes of engagement, as well as a critical approach to the "essentialising of site and community in context specific projects".[153] The question being, how to engage with the audience, without privileging the social over the visual, "since curators interested in dealing self-reflexively with the structures of mediation inevitably end up privileging and creating an artificial demand for art practices engaged in those same questions". [154] Besides that, the consideration here is not simply how the artists and curators may have limited the participants, but also how the nature of the social interactions may have been predetermined. Also as Hal Foster notes, "as with previous attempts to involve the audience directly

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[153]   Claire Doherty is refering here to Miwon Kwon's study "One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art".
[154]   See articles by Alex Farquharson and Paul O'Neill in Art Monthly nos. 269, 270, 272, 2003-04.

(conceptual art, for instance), there is a risk of illegibility, which might reintroduce the artist as the principal figure and the primary exegete of the work". [155]

Neverthless, and bearing in mind all the risks, over recent decades, different contemporary art practices have transformed our perception of what it is to be an audience, demanding a mode of involvement that goes well beyond simple contemplation, and requiring instead a personal implication. Conceptual artists who have been involved with 'Institutional Critique' of the museum and the spaces of display have made us conscious of the numerous powers and forces at play within the fields of display. Other, more performative practices, have shown us that the sites of display can produce new subjectivities and new modes of knowing. In this vein, Irit Rogoff, considers Hanna Arendt's notion of 'spaces of appearance' helpful, since it articulates a similar notion of participation or explicit appearance:

"Action and Speech create a space between the participants, which can find its proper location almost any time anywhere. It is the space of appearance in the widest sense of the world, namely the space where I appear to others as they appear to me, where men exist not merely like other living or inanimate things but make their appearance explicitly." [156]

The relation between art and such a 'space of appearance', Rogoff notes, lies in the recognition of art as a open interconnective field, that offers the possibility of engaging with it as a form of cultural participation, as opposed to a form of reification, representation or contemplative edification. It follows that, "the engagement with 'art' can provide a similar space of appearance to that described by Arendt, [...] by seeking out, staging, and perceiving an alternative set of responses". Besides that, as she further argues, the 'act of looking away' from the objects on display, might have a potential for rearticulating the relations between creators, objects and audiences. 'Looking away' may be understood as an alternative form of taking part in culture, and at times "can free up a recognition that other manifestations are taking place that are often difficult to read, and which may be as significant as the designed objects on display". [157]

But can artistic practices still play a critical role in contemporary society, where artists, curators and museums have become part of the culture industry?

The argument that 'critique' can become a reified practice that serves the needs of capitalism has been extensively described by sociologists Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello in their book "The New Spirit of Capitalism". [158] Boltanski and Chiapello locate two general types of critique against which capitalism has been judged: the social and the artistic. While they claim that a revived social critique

emerged in the 1990's, they consider artistic critique to be undermined and call for a renewal of both sides of the critique of capitalism with a view to informing a transformation of the system to ameliorate the excesses of neoliberalism. Their view is rather totalizing, in that they consider capitalism able to absorb and neutralise any kind of dissent or criticism to the system. Or, to paraphrase the authors, "artistic critique" of capital has been integrated in capital itself. [159]

Similarly, philosopher Paolo Virno [160] sees post-industrial production as the development of capital that has included "within itself linguistic experience as such". [161] By this he means, a process based on communication and language games, without a necessary end product, that requires from the worker virtuosity and skills of a performative and political kind, rather than technical knowledge. By considering communication as "the queen of all productive forces", Virno further remarks that "[t]he intermingling of virtuosity, politics and labour has extended everywhere", [162] and thus within the industry of communication, the artist (and the curator) play a role model for contemporary production, rather than a counter model.

As we have seen in this study, by means of examples of different art practices, art has not lost its critical power. But what is needed in the present context, is to envisage different strategies of making a difference and to widen the field of artistic critique so as to intervene directly in a multiplicity of social spaces. As Isabelle Graw rightly remarks,

"[...] if we question the dominant canon or attack current consensus or insist on criteria other than economic interests, or refuse under-developed notions of criticality, or point to how critique can become instrumentalized, or step out of what Bourdieu called the "space of possibilities"... we can open up and shift the horizon of how the possible is actually constituted". [163]

This is also the direction increasingly taken by a generation of artists that refuse to work within the traditional realm of the artist, and mix conceptual art with a multiplicity of other approaches, in order to deconstruct the dominant systems of representation and to put existing techniques to different uses. Art can create the necessary conditions that will cause us to stop and think differently about the things we encounter everyday, and certainly "one thing art can still do is to take a stand, and [...] this in a concrete register that brings together the aesthetic, the cognitive and the critical". [164]

[155] See Hal Foster, "Arty Party" in: London Review of Books, vol.25, no 23, 2003.
[156] Hanna Arendt, The Human Condition, Chicago 1968, p.198.
[157] Irit Rogoff, "Looking Away" in: Gavin Butt (ed.), After Criticism, Oxford 2004, p.119.
[158] See Luc Boltansky, Eve Chiapello, The New Spirit of Capitalism, London 2005.

[159] See Luc Boltansky, Eve Chiapello, The New Spirit of Capitalism, London 2005, especially the chapter "The Test of the Artistique Critique", pp.419-482.
[160] Paolo Virno, A Grammar of the Multitude, Semiotext(e), New York 2004.
[161] Ibid p.56.
[162] Ibid p.59.
[163] Isabelle Graw, "Beyond Institutional Critique", in: John C. Welchmann (ed.), Institutional Critique and After, Volume 2 of the SoCCAS symposia, Zurich 2006, p.148.
[164] See Hal Foster, "Arty Party" in: London Review of Books, vol.25, no 23, 2003.

5. Conclusion

The purpose of this Master Thesis was to examine in what sense the museum or the art institution could become a public space responsible for stimulating and housing knowledge production and critical thinking in and through contemporary art and exhibition practices and thus, to reflect on the position of the art institution and the potential of art, as knowledge producer, at the beginning of the 21st century.

The point of departure was to analyse the power and knowledge relations that have characterised the structures and exhibitionary strategies of the museum since its birth and throughout the 20th century, as well as to examine how art and critical art practices, as well as cultural theories contributed to a re-examination of its role and function in society, and ultimately to a redefinition of the museum concept.

To reflect on what museums could offer society, requires an understanding of the reasons why they came into existence in the first place. As we have seen public museums, as an enlightenment project, were conceived both as an educational and disciplinary space and served as validation of the bourgeois universal and ideal values and visions, from which all citizens should potentially benefit. Art was seen as a noble and uplifting thing that would mould social behaviour and introduce civilisation to those that lacked it. The coherence in the selection of what was considered important and of value and, by default, what was not, was demonstrated as much through exclusion as inclusion.

Throughout its history, from the renaissance and baroque curiosity cabinets, to the enlightenment museum, up to the modern educational institution, the museum has always been an 'extra' ordinary space, a ritual and cult place where art and visitor met through a distant almost religious relation.

Many critiques have contributed to undermine the enlightenment and bourgeois conceptions of the museum, however, the museum today, does not seem to have clearly articulated a new mission in response not only to criticisms, but also to its possibilities.

One of main reasons for the crisis in which the art institution finds itself, is due to the fact that it did not succeed in articulating the 20th century developments in the field of art and the consequent changes in the concept of art. The expansion of the art practices, which had already begun in 1910 with Marcel Duchamp and continued throughout the 20th century, definitely changed the art concept of the bourgeoisie by breaking with the 'genius cult' of the artist and the idea of a closed an unified work of art , as well as with the former distance between art and life. Since 1960 and 1970s, new art forms developed that directed the focus from an object based art to an art based on ideas and with a discursive and relational

constitution. The autonomous art object became an open-ended processual art practice and the activities and contexts that participate in the production of meaning were made a component of the artistic practice. Also, different understandings of the public sphere and the structure of public spaces were brought into the museum debates.

After the "March in the Institutions" progressive curators, theorists and artists reacted with their work to the changing developments by trying to build alternative institutions. In the early 1990s, a proportionally small advanced segment in the art institutional field, develops away from the closed museum archive concept, in an attempt to follow the expansion of the field of the art practices, through the development of dynamic institutional models and experimental exhibition strategies, reminding us more of laboratories and experimental spaces, and thus contributing to far reaching changes in the relations between art, the institutions and the audiences/viewers. The art institution becomes a meta-museum, a self-reflexive and active institution, more conscious about its social and cultural role, in that the object of its work is no longer only art, but the art institution itself and its relations with art and the audiences.

Exhibitions, being one of the main vehicles for artistic production, through which knowledge production critical thinking is developed, are no longer merely conceived as a medium for representation and transfer of pre-formulated knowledge, but instead, become a medium for "enactment", a space of encounter and experience that activates and generates other forms of knowledge.

Within this expansion of the artistic practices and the shift of the museum concept, not only the function of the curator changes, who is now asked to add a context and a set of conditions for the artwork to be encountered, but also the positioning of the audience/viewer, who is asked to experiment and participate in an active way. This does not mean, however, that the audience/viewer needs to direct participate in the artistic practices, as in the case of performance, but instead that the audience/viewer is taken out of its passive consumer role, and becomes active, drawing its own thoughts and conclusions through the temporality of the event of the exhibition or the display. Such exhibition practices, where the audience/viewer is asked to engage with complexity through conceptual and aesthetic choices, are deliberately difficult environments, and thus not oriented for masses of visitors. This does not mean, however, that they are oriented towards an elite group, but rather that they demand from its audience/viewer qualities and competences that have become rare in our times, such as curiosity, and the will to seek for ambiguity, uncertainty and doubt.

Both the 20th century and the millenium transition period, produced a variety of new forms of artistic practices, that offer new possibilities to artistically engage

with reality in a richer and more differentiated way. One of the biggest changes lies in the close relation between everyday life and art. Many artists integrate elements of everyday life and subculture phenomena into their artwork, reproducing daily actions like "ready-mades", in order to change the perception and consciousness of the participants. The artwork is seen as dynamic and ephemeral and is experienced in a temporal and social process, similar to everyday experience. Today, artistic practices imitate, invade, and intervene in life in many different levels.

In the face of these developments, the art institution has to run fast if it wants to keep up the pace with an ever expanding art territory. In order to survive, it needs to understand the artistic expressions of its time, to feel the pulse of the present, and to critically analyse and test the past, in order to imagine and speculate about the future. It needs to become a place for exchange and interaction for people and information, a place with many possibilities for meaningful encounters, cooperation and production. Since the 1990s, both artists and curators are well aware of the role art plays in speculating about our thinking and imaginative capacities which, to a great extent, have become paralysed through the continuous information flow of the mass media. With its increased permissiveness and interdisciplinary approach, art as a speculative field, can serve as a counterpoint to the dominant economic and political frameworks, and act as a cross field, an intermediary between different fields, modes of perception and thinking, as well as between very different positions and subjectivities. Through art, art institutions can also become spaces for social negotiations, as well as for reflecting on social changes if, by allowing the same space for rival positions, views and opinions, and by placing them next and against each other, they recognise difference and dissonances, as creative forces that have the potential to make existing conflicts productive.

To achieve this, the institution has to be open to a constant questioning of its own position, through a regenerative process triggered by the confrontation with different groups and participants. An institution as such is, after all, more interested in producing knowledge, meaning and critical thinking, then in typology and classification.

The potential and richness of contemporary art practices, should bring the art institution to constantly redefine its function in society, in order to engage with difference and create new subjectivities and imaginaries in the world. This requires criticality, a permanent critical dialogue with the institutional structures, towards turning the art institution into an exhibition space that encourages new forms of thinking and learning, rather than knowledge transfer. Since there is no outside anymore, instead of reinventing new institutions, what is needed is to change the existing contemporary art institutions from within the existing structures.

This approach is certainly complicated by the current entrepreneurial notion of museums as places for public diversion and mass entertainment, where activities are increasingly driven towards income producing targets and where quality and success are measured through numbers of visitors and not through the actions to which visitors can be engaged with and the reflexive possibilities that can be offered to them.

Art institutions should be different from other public places dedicated to consumption, where displays serve one single end, individual purchase, and thus limit the possible effect on our imagination and thinking. Also, if we value art in terms of its power of subversion and potential for generating other forms of knowledge and critical thinking, because of its ambiguity and not, because of its authoritative "truth", as in existing knowledge systems, all bodies of knowledge emerge as open-ended, and any established representational forms are replaced by experimental ones. This implies an understanding of the art institution, as a space for "unproductive" thinking that not only fosters curiosity through experiments, but allows for uncertainty, ambiguity and doubt, and thus understands knowledge as a constant state of process – a permanent laboratory of doubt.

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Education

DATES (FROM-TO)	**October 2006 - October 2008**
NAME OF INSTITUTION	University of Applied Arts, Vienna, Austria
TITLE OF QUALIFICATION	ECM – Exhibition and Cultural Communication Management, Master of Advanced Studies (MAS)
DATES (FROM-TO)	**April 1995 - June 1995**
NAME OF INSTITUTION	Royal College of Art , London, United Kingdom Photography – Project development Scholarship from Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation
DATES (FROM-TO)	**1991-1994**
NAME OF INSTITUTION	AR CO – Centro de Arte e Comunicação Visual, Lisbon, Portugal
TITLE OF QUALIFICATION	Complete Studies Plan in Photography
DATES (FROM-TO)	**1983-1985**
NAME OF INSTITUTION	Friedrich-Wilhelms Universität, Bonn, Germany Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin, Germany
TITLE OF QUALIFICATION	Postgraduate Studies in International Politics
DATES (FROM-TO)	**1976-1981**
NAME OF INSTITUTION	Universidade do Minho, Braga, Portugal
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Experience in Artistic Practice

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

1998	"Memento Mori: Nine Busts", PhotoSynkiria, Kalfayan Gallery, Thessalonica, Greece
1997	"Memento Mori: Nine Busts", Photography Archive of Lisbon, Lisbon, Portugal
1995	"Without title", David Hockney Gallery, Royal College of Art, London, United Kingdom
1993	"Without title", Galerie "Die Unterirdische Tante", Berlin, Germany

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

1996	"3 Photographers, 3 Cities: Berlin, New York, Havana", Casa dos Crivos, Braga, Portugal
1996	"3 Photographers, 3 Cities: Berlin, New York, Havana", Galeria Diferença, Lisbon, Portugal
1995	"Flüssiges Licht", Photogalerie Mandala, Berlin, Germany
1994	"Sem título", Graduates Exhibition, ARCO, Lisbon, Portugal
1993	"Sem título", Bienal de Vila Franca de Xira, Vila Franca de Xira, Portugal
1993	"Rituais", ARCO, Lisbon, Portugal

Experience in Curatorial Practice

2007-2008	"Ich bin keine Küche. Gegenwartsgeschichten aus dem Nachlass von Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky", (16 curators ECM project), Ausstellungszentrum Heiligenkreuzer Hof, Vienna, Austria
2004	"Henrique Manuel, fotografias", Photography Museum, Braga, Portugal
2003	"Henrique Manuel, fotografias", Photography Archive of Lisbon, Lisbon, Portugal

Work experience

DATES (FROM-TO)	**1994 - Present**
NAME/ADDRESS OF EMPLOYER	Cedefop - European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, Thessalonica, Greece
TYPE OF BUSINESS OR SECTOR	European Union Agency
OCCUPATION OR POSITION HELD	Project Manager - Graphic design and promotional activities

DATES (FROM-TO)	**1990-1994**
NAME/ADDRESS OF EMPLOYER	Cedefop - European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, Berlin, Germany
TYPE OF BUSINESS OR SECTOR	European Union Agency
OCCUPATION OR POSITION HELD	Free-lance translator and international conference terminology expert

DATES (FROM-TO)	**1986-1989**
NAME/ADDRESS OF EMPLOYER	European Commission of the European Union, Brussels, Belgium
TYPE OF BUSINESS OR SECTOR	Translation Service
OCCUPATION OR POSITION HELD	Translator

Language skills

MOTHER TONGUE	Portuguese
OTHER LANGUAGES	English, French, German, Greek, Spanish