

*New Dynamics in Museums:
Curator, Artwork, Public,
Governance*

CIMAM 2013 Annual
Conference Proceedings

*MAM Rio — Museu de Arte
Moderna do Rio de Janeiro*

12–14 August 2013

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Program

Monday 12 August *A New Dynamic Between Curator and Artwork*

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Carlos Alberto Gouvêa Chateaubriand —
President of MAM Rio— Museu de Arte Moderna
do Rio de Janeiro.

Zdenka Badovinac — President of *CIMAM*
and Director of Moderna galerija, Ljubljana,
Slovenia.

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Havana, Cuba / New York, USA.

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Panel discussion

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Monday
12 August
2013

Welcoming Remarks

Carlos Alberto Gouvêa Chateaubriand — President of MAM Rio — Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro.

I would like to say welcome to all of you to our museum, to Modern Arts Museum of Rio de Janeiro. We are very happy having this meeting here, where we are sure that we're going to have very, very important decisions for the people that work with culture and for all the institutions around the world, and also to say thank you to Zdenka and for the board of the *CIMAM*, and to Inés and Jenny and to all the people that worked hard for the success of this meeting. Thanks. Zdenka, please.

Zdenka Badovinac—President of CIMAM and Director of Moderna galerija, Ljubljana, Slovenia.

Thank you. Dear colleagues and friends, as the president of *CIMAM* and on behalf of the board, I warmly welcome you in Rio de Janeiro. We are truly pleased to hold our 2013 annual conference in collaboration with one of Brazil's most important cultural institutions, MAM Rio, Museu de Arte Moderno de Rio de Janeiro.

The title of our conference, *New Dynamics in Museums: Curator, Artwork, Public, Governance*, draws attention to the increasingly changing art world, where not only different regions, but also a plurality of different agents are more and more asking for their share in decision making and in the ethical discussions on the role of the museum in society in general. What has happened since the art world became global? One of the things that have happened is that the interest of the museum professionals to know, present and collect the art of the other has increased. At the same time we are ever more aware that only accumulating knowledge and art objects is not enough. We believe in encyclopedian knowledge less than ever before, relying more and more on analyzing the forces that shape the world. Museums cannot present the world as a totality, but we can, and do, mirror the forces that shape it, and we learn about the world through self-reflexivity, through knowing how we work.

The new dynamics in museums reflect the new dynamics of the global world. More than ever before we need to ask ourselves: How do we work? How does the museum work? On whose behalf does it interpret the contents and the context? Whom does the museum address? There are many questions like these that we are going to discuss this week.

It has been a great pleasure to organize this meeting in collaboration with MAM Rio, so let me

thank to Carlos Alberto Gouvêa Chateaubriand, president of MAM Rio, and Luiz Camilo Osorio, chief curator of MAM Rio, for their commitment and all the support that we have received from his offices. I would also like to thank the Getty Foundation, the Fundación Cisneros/Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros, the Fundación Botín, SAHA Association and the British Council for their donations and grants. As a result of each, fifteen professionals from emerging economies, five professionals from Latin America, two professionals from Spain, two professionals from Turkey and one from the United Kingdom have been able to take part in the conference.

Finally, I should like to express my deepest gratitude to the institutions who have opened their doors to us. Thank you to Casa França-Brasil, to Studio Ernesto Neto and to A Gentil Carioca for generous welcoming. Thank you also to ArtRio and to PIPA Prize for hosting a lunch for all of our members. Thank you to Museu de Arte do Rio, Casa Daros, Instituto Moreira Salles, and Sivia Sintra + Box4 galleries for their welcoming, and to Anita Schwartz Galeria de Arte for the closing reception. Thank you to Museu Castro Maya and MAC Niterói for welcoming our post-conference program, and Carla Osorio for welcoming us arranging the post-conference trip to Brasilia. Thank you all for contributing to the success of this conference.

This year's meeting draws attendance from one hundred fifty leading professionals from forty countries. We have gathered an excellent group of speakers. Their experience and field of interest are quite different, and we are confident that they will generate thought-provoking debates.

As you may imagine, involvement is vital for the success of the meeting, and therefore I hope that you will actively participate in all the discussions.

At the end I would like to thank to Jenny Gil Schmitz, our executive director, and Inés Jover for their excellent organization; without their efforts this conference wouldn't be possible, so I would like really—on the behalf of the board and all the members—to thank them both for their super good, as always, job.

So, before wishing you a very stimulating and enriching conference I would like again to thank all of the colleagues who I didn't name and who contributed to this really important conference.

Keynote 1

Tania Bruguera

Biography: Tania Bruguera, one of the leading political and performance artists of her generation, researches ways in which Art can be applied to the everyday political life; focusing on the transformation of the condition of “viewer” onto one of active “citizenry” and of social affect into political effectiveness. Her long-term projects have been intensive interventions on the institutional structure of collective memory, education and politics. To define her practice she created and uses the terms *arte de conducta* (Conduct / Behavior Art), *arte útil* (Useful Art) and *politicaltiming specific*.

Immigrant Movement International

First of all I want to thank you for inviting me, especially when two years ago I said I would never show in a Museum again, so it's exciting to talk to you today, and while I am working on shows and exhibitions—that is not my work.

I feel that in museums, there is a big difference between short-term projects and long-term projects. For me, the actual conflict that might happen right now—that you confront in museums as an artist—is exactly the difference between working short-term and long-term.

As we know, the short-term that museums have solved, somehow, is the situation with the audience in which there is a very easy in a way to have a short-term relationship, where you have to condensate the experience so that the audience has a strong situation that they can process later on.

This is some of my work. So basically, what you do in this kind of presentation is more traditional, you can have a more violent—violent because you condense the experience into a very short-term situation—and you do not have all the explanation. Or you can even, like in this case, contextualize where you are, in this case it is Russia, and have a piece that talks to the people specifically, the audience specifically in the place and their own history, even if you are just a guest or you do not know enough as an artist, which is also ethically complicated, but you can manage to do these kind of formats.

Also you can have situations for example in this case, where I invited underground members to be part of the art historians' conference and you can subvert the relation with the audience. In this case, I planted people in the audience whose only indication was to not let the speaker talk, and take over. So this is kind of a change of power

relationship; what I like about this situation is that in this short-term format you can even play with art historians because at that moment nobody thought it was an art piece and the next day, the conference people were asking if that was a performance.

So with all these in-place situations, we can even go further, like in this case I was giving cocaine in Colombia. Where of course there are consequences of these kind of processes, in this case for example, the government: they were looking for me to put me in prison. But at the same time, even in the short-term projects you have to be very aware of politics. In this case for example, my responsibility as an artist was to not put anybody in trouble, so nobody at the University lost their job. I mean I took responsibility of everything. I feel like the way in which we work in politics, in the short-term situation with museums and in collaboration with museums, this has been somehow solved. It is kind of clear where are the limits, where are the dangers, where are the ethics in short-term production.

Or in this case where for example, I did this in Havana and even when you can use an art space, in this case a biennial that gives you some political freedom to do something, otherwise you would never be able to do it. Here I gave one minute of free speech. I negotiated with the institution not to censor anybody, not to put anybody in prison and it was the first time in fifty years that people were saying what they think about the government, in favor and against. Even some people went so far as saying they do not want any more Castro in the government, nobody from that family.

So I think, this kind of short-term pieces also can work with historical references that have, let's say, some long-term impact. And in that case, for example, it was very rewarding to me when I met

some of the dissidents in Cuba who, when they met me, they thanked me, because they understood the quality of performativity (needed) to do their work, after this piece.

Of course, the problem is with the artists telling the story. I think these are some of the problems with the short-term presentations. Sometimes we give too much importance to the history told by the artist instead of by the audience or the people who are involved in the process of the, let's say, consumption or developing of the work. In other cases, of course, what we can do is to have pieces that are incomplete and make the audience be the people who create the work.

So I feel like, really to be honest, even this kind of institutional critique, where do you have for example in the Pompidou: I worked with the collection, the video collection, and I sent emails to all the artists in the collection asking their permission to pirate and copy and steal the work from the collection for one week so I could distribute it in the streets for €1.

And even in those situations when it is kind of itchy because, you know, the people at the museum were nervous and asking the lawyer to come and make sure, and we even played this game where I told them you are only responsible for the 'inside' of the museum space and I am responsible for the 'other' side—so we played the game where they were not supposed to know what I was doing. So all of these things are kind of normal now in short-term pieces—I even feel that institutional critique has been 'absorbed' by the institution—in ways that sometimes work.

But I think for me the most important part, is when I do not know what art is. You know, when there is this space where you are not sure what art is. For example, I signed a contract with a friend, an artist friend, where we decided that whoever dies first, will be using the corpse of the other person to do an art piece. And of course, what is art? Is the art the contract? Is it the gesture? What is the piece going to do? Is it the process of negotiation between us? Who knows? But this is exactly what I think is more interesting in the short-term, in general, about doing art.

But of course, sometimes you hit the wall because in this kind of short-term processes, there are moments in which even if you try the hardest, in this piece that was in the Venice Biennial, you can encounter contexts that do not let you do political work. In this case, I was reading a statement about what political art is for me and how to do political art is to bring things to the farthest possible and to commit as far as possible your ideas but of course, if I had shot myself and died at the Venice Biennial who cares, it would be just a joke at a party at night probably.

So I think those, those are the contradictions with short-term projects. Why? Because there is not weight, there is always this kind of attitude that there is some lightness to the projects and where everything is taken in a way ironically or cynically.

I have been talking to a lot of people in the industry, because the art world is an industry at the moment, and I have been seeing a lot of interest in political art. And it is interesting because recently I went to the New Museum for a conference and while I was waiting I was looking at the wall and I was looking at the names of people who were benefactors or were helping the museum and in there—a very, very, very small list of artists. Yet this is one of the most political institutions in the United States from the beginning (originally), where you had a lot of artists on the board and a few people giving money.

So I feel that, as an artist, it is very hard to work in that kind of institution, where your voice is only part of a very small space. When you have to negotiate also things like the precariousness of the artist. And I want to take advantage of being here and say that, there is a big situation at the moment in the art world where artists are not taken as workers, artists are taken as, I don't know, I don't know what you guys think do we live off, but I think we need to start taking seriously the fact that artists have to be paid for their work.

When you do the budget they have to have money for, not only production or promotion, but also the fact that the artist has developed a project, taking their time, they have done their work. I had to say that because otherwise I would die. Because I know some European institutions do it, but in general I think if institutions want to be political they have to stop being political in themselves and also the way they look at artists and the way look at the work of the artists.

So I feel that right now things like what happened in the New Museum make me think, why there are not so, there not more for example in Boards, instead of rich banks and rich people who are, I mean some rich people really want to develop art but most of them really do this for vanity. Why don't you guys also have on the Boards, Art Historians, Sociologists and other people who are experts in the field—so when the decisions are being taken in museums, they are not being taken only from the economic side or the art historian side, but also taken into consideration other areas. Why? Because many of the museums right now are trying to do political art, and political art cannot be done only because somebody can pay for it, it has to be done in an expertise way, in a way that so many other elements are taken into consideration. I had to say it. Now I can continue my talk.

So I feel like the big challenge right now for

museums is the long-term projects. Why? Because long-term projects have a different, strategy, have a different way of being processed. I have done a few projects like I did a ten years' project of redoing Ana Mendieta's work. And I just talk about this because recently we have seen a re-appropriation, reenactment of performance and I feel that the long-term projects are very much linked with the way the museum has approached performance art, and re-doing and re-enacting performance art. Why?—Because they have made a translation of an image instead of the transfiguration of an experience. And I think that's one of the main problems we also have in long-term pieces.

I also did this piece for nine years, which is an Art School in Cuba for Political Art. And of course, some of the critique you have is wow—the image is always people together! Well why not. You know, this is what you do, you act together and you develop a community. So I think this idea of approaching aesthetics in a different way also is extremely important and having value to other things, other than representation. For example—and also the idea of understanding that maybe some projects are not possible to be done in the museum—as you may know. But in that case, for example, I have seen, I have experienced in New York the example of some main museums where I was extremely disappointed because they wanted to do “community art” or they wanted to “political art” and what they did basically is transport something that could be done in Manhattan to Brooklyn or the Bronx, instead of, and just the same people who go to one museum go these exhibitions, but they do not do the work in the field.

What do I mean by that? Immigrant Movement is a project that came out from something that is not artistic. So you have to understand when you do this kind of projects that the main relationship is not going to be the art history itself but something that happens outside of art and that also have to create the environment to understand the work and to process the work. Also in this case, for example, I have been doing this project for two years and a half and I have done my work yet. Why?—Because I have spent two and a half years preparing the conditions to do the work. What does it mean? Preparing the audience, the participants, the users and the people involved in the project.

So in this case, of course, it is an example about Arte Útil, I am going to talk about it a little later. So basically, the way we work in Immigrant Movement is that we use art. We do not use art as art itself but we instrumentalize art. I know it's very complicated to use the word instrumentalize, there is a lot of prejudice but we try to give art a different

meaning, a different use. In this case of course, we're trying to put together practical knowledge with creative knowledge to create political knowledge. So this is what we are trying to do. Also we are trying to do a think tank, and we try to do activism.

So one of the things that happens with these kind of projects and what happens in contemporary political art and Arte Útil is that we are in need of a new lexicon, not only new strategies on how to deal with the situation but also a new lexicon, new words that we can use so we understand that things are different, are functioning in a different way. I have suffered personally in critiques that the project has received of people trying to analyze the project with the same tools that you use to analyze an exhibition, or a sculpture or something like that. So I think this is very important.

And for us education it is extremely important because we believe in education as a holistic process in this case where art is creativity, of course. So in this case we have done this year as the main subject, we have events every day and in this case, the events every day are done just because we need to create confidence in the community: that we are there for them, you know, and trust is one of the biggest challenges of this kind of projects.

So the other thing that we have done is not to be condescending with people in the project, like “if you do not understand our history so you do not get it” but what we do is try to involve them in all the processes and try to, let's say, put them together with experts. In this case Saskia Sassen was talking with somebody who was undocumented and does not know so much about politics, so create the situation where both, “high and low”, (quote to quote) can be together.

We created a Migrant Manifesto, we do make a movement where we invite all artists to do Arte Útil events, we go to prisons, etc. We have created a campaign. This case for me is very important, in Immigrant Movement what we do is to present art to the community, we present contemporary art and public art to the community. A community that has no idea of what art is. Why? Because we talk about subjects, let's say, in this case they were worried about where, they are paying taxes and they wanted to know where their money is going and what happens with their tax money, and what we do is to present contemporary artists doing political art. It does not matter if they do not know the name of the artist, the year, the process, what kind of material they use—what it is important is for them is to open up to this kind of creative language.

But something else that was very important is that artists are being trained to produce, we are

trained to have an idea, and make the idea real, outside of our head. And that is something this community cannot do, they always have their ideas and always become fantasies or frustrations because they never realize them. So what we do is by using the tools of art to make them able to do something that they imagine. And in this case it's very simple, they put stamps on the money. And it was very complicated because I know that Cildo Meireles did that. So history-wise I was not happy with it, but it was more important that I understood that from one minute to another, you have something happening, so you gain this confidence in art.

Another example is an Art History for Stay-at-Home Moms. That was one of the most successful projects because we had somebody coming saying I want to paint the community—and we said you can't paint the community: you have to give something in exchange. And she said ok, she made an Art History with the feminist point of view, it was only for stay-at-home moms. And it was very interesting how looking at Art History and looking at the relation between the model and the gaze of the artist to a woman, not only to teach them English - they learnt English, they learnt Art History but they also learnt who they were as women. And after that we realized that there was a big problem with domestic violence in our community so we had to go to a next level.

So I think this is kind of an example of how we want to use art and Art History in the project. And of course some of the main “exhibition” (quote to quote) of the project does not happen in Museums because this is not the kind of environment we want to deal with. It happens in places like the UN, or for example Occupy Wall Street or this kind of, let's say, community that we have created around the world, of artists. Because we also realize that many artists are immigrants without rights and we want to also make them aware of that status. Because there is a fantasy of artist-artists but we are doing all this.

And of course all of this needs a lot of money and needs a lot of support and a lot of collaboration. I am very glad that for example the Queens Museum has stepped in and will work with us and committed to the five year of the project. And of course it had created for them a lot of contradiction in their own system.

I also tried to bring the project to Mexico where I did the Partido Pueblo Migrante and of course the project changed into a more political format. It was during the elections so we did this event were the "voceros", people who yell out the news, were yelling the rights of immigrants, we did of course the visits etc. and at the end we applied for (we were number 45) to be a political—a real

political party.

So I think this kind of long term pieces have the challenge of reality, they are real: they enter the realm of the real. Of course you still have these kind of symbolic elements, you know, where you use cynicism on so on, to get your work. And of course we still believe in the power of image etcetera but that is not the core of the project. Why? Because we are working with people who have a history, who have to trust the project and who need time. And I think this is the biggest challenge we have right now, working with institutions.

Ok, what we use is activism, what do we mean by that? And for example, one of the main things that we did is that we were part of the United Nations—and I think you should guys should use that too, I mean it is a very good tool—I was part of the expert group that drafted the first document on Creative Rights and Artistic Censorship which is extremely useful in case you may need in some of the countries to respond to some censorship of governments.

Ok, Arte Útil. So I realized doing my own work—part of the situation was that autonomous art was not working anymore—for me. So I came up with this idea of the Arte Útil. Why? Because—and it is in Spanish, also politically, because I want people to understand that they do not have all the information. But also because UTIL in Spanish has two meanings: it's a tool, by which you do something and is usefulness. So I think it is great. This is the symbol we use, so we put the Marcel Duchamp piece in the bathroom again.

These are the elements of Arte Útil:

1. We want to propose new uses for art within society.
2. We want to challenge the field in which it operates. I mean so many times we see art exhibitions and so on, that pretend to be civic, pretend to work with law but do not intervene in the tissue of that area, it's just a representation. So we are not into representation, we are into activation, social activation. And also we want that if somebody come up with an idea, it is as exciting for the art world as it is for the scientists or the legal teams and so on, so it has to be creative in both areas.
3. We also wanted this to be “timing specific”. And political timing specific sometimes, so it respond to the precise urgency. That means that it can be ephemeral and that means that sometimes this kind of project is not art anymore, and that is OK. You know, I feel sometimes a lot of fear that this kind of

production has to be art and we have to be so sure that is art. And sometimes it does not matter. Sometimes it's just art for a little bit—for a specific moment.

4. We also want, and this is very important, to be implemented and function in real situations. We do not want situations where it looks like it works, or we have like “ten people from the museum” posing for the photo pretending that it works. No, we want people who are outside of the art world to make it part of their own life—and to actually appropriate the project and reproduce it.
5. We want to replace authors with initiators and spectators with users. That is extremely important because when you are initiator—it entails that you are not owning the whole process—that you are just proposing something that has to be developed by others.
6. We also want to have practical beneficial outcomes for its users. We have plenty of projects that are utopic projects. We do not want utopic projects: we want to implement utopia, and therefore, it won't be utopia anymore, hopefully.
7. Pursue sustainability while adapting to changing conditions. This means that we have to understand that these are long-term projects that have to be changing with the situation.
8. Re-establish aesthetics as a system of transformation.

So the thing is, like we have of course certain hypothesis that we have to deal with. One of the biggest problems with this kind of projects is that there is a different way to look at the aesthetics. You know, aesthetics, in what we have proposed is 'Aest-ethics' so it is the ethics of, there is the aesthetics and the beauty and all everything that you want say aesthetically that is related with the ethical process that you create. So I think this is extremely important to understand because, Arte Útil is about ethics and it has to be analyzed from that point of view. And ethics is aesthetics. I am come from a communist country where you get more excited about a good gesture than a beautiful painting, so it does have this quality of aesthetic.

So if Arte Útil—of course there are many, many questions that we have and we have the questions of sustainability, we have the question of who benefits but the most important question we want to ask with Arte Útil: What For? We want to change the question of how, when, where, for "what for". What is this for? And of course, who

benefits for real from these projects. One of the things that we have realized is that Arte Útil has a lot of illegal, or we call it 'a-legal' moments. Why? 'A-legal' in Spanish means a-legal, meaning that it is not legal yet. So we work a lot with moments in which, Arte Útil wants to transform society through art, and I totally believe it's possible, even for a short moment.

And of the ways and strategies we use is precisely look at the loopholes in the law and look at what has not been yet codified and what has not been yet established legally, to work from there. So that is extremely important too.

Also it's extremely challenging—the idea of access and replication—Why? Because so many of these projects stay in a state of just looking at it and getting excited at the possibility, but they are not actually working with the people who need those projects. So we want to emphasize the need, also for museums if they want to do this kind of projects, of understanding who they have to reach and what is the work that needs to be done with the audience, in this case, the users of the projects.

And of course, there's the idea of the project's eco-system. Why? Because these are projects that need to function beyond the author and need to function after you intervene them and are taken by the people. And of course, even if in the United States they don't like this word, usefulness is an ideology. This is not a trend, this is not a new way of doing things: this is an ideology. Why? Because it is the kind of work in which the artist's 'question' is on value and it's function in society, so for us it's ideological.

I want to show you now also the fact that, Arte Útil is something that has its own history and is something that has to be taken into consideration not with the traditional art history situation but a different one. So as you can see, this is our definition: Arte Útil imagines, creates and implements for social-beneficial outcomes that make the world work differently.

So as you can see we have created here a timeline. And a timeline to understand this kind of projects has different concepts. One is the timeline of the practice itself that we can locate in the nineteenth century. Also we have the timeline of concepts, how we have dealt with the concept of this practice over time, and also some artworks. And of course we have art practices in the whole world, which is exciting, we have found a lot of this everywhere.

We want to start from people, so this is the kind of work that values creativity but also understands moments in which people have worked with the imaginary, not only when they use art but also when the use a new way of seeing things and a new way to think society. So basically this kind of

projects, are projects that entail a different way to be in society, a different way to function in society. And we have of course our examples—but we also have things that are not art related so much. I want

to stop here, although if I have not done the 40 minutes because I prefer questions and answers than talking—so if you have any questions....

Questions & Answers Tania Bruguera

Question KC: I am Kevin Consey from San Francisco. In our country, the United States, where less than 3% of the population are indigenous people, this is a country of 97% of immigrants, tell me what are your emotional experiences in working with a large population that consists primarily of immigrants who at a times are virulently opposed politically, socially and economically to the extension of rights for immigrants just like themselves and their families once were. This is something that seems incomprehensible to me but I hope you have some additional insight from the Immigrant Movement project that you can share with us. Thanks.

Tania Bruguera: Well, I think one of the contradictions right now is that the world is selling itself as global but it is limited to an economics or privileged casts. So what we are trying to do in Immigrant Movement is to try to make immigrants seen as political beings. Because when you immigrate, the first right that you are taking, you are stripped of is precisely the right to be political. You know, you become an economic asset, you become muscles, but you cannot be political. Even sometimes when you are a privileged immigrant, meaning that you have a job in a university, you know, or you have a high skilled job. I think that's our main focus and for that of course we have to do a lot of work and we are going to start in September now an activist school in the project so people understand art and activism, because for us it is very important that every member of the project also knows about art, as a tool basically.

Question ML: Hello my name is Maria Lind, I am from Stockholm, I have a question relating to authorship which is something that you would like to question and you obviously spoke about many projects throughout the presentation and you kept coming back saying "we", who are the different "was" because I do imagine that they are actually not the same.

Tania Bruguera: Well, the "we", is funny because I have changed my language before I was

"I", and I automatically say "we" and I think it's because the structure that we have created in the project was very author-oriented at the beginning because I had a very clear idea of what I wanted but at this point I am trying very hard—and it has been very hard, specially working with art world people to get away from authorship because, for example, people come and they want to interview me, and I say "no, I do not give more interviews, you have to talk to people in the community, you have to talk to other people". So it is very hard because I also feel the art world is still very personality driven, you know, because they think you are very special and at the moment, for example, we have created recently, we have mm.... it was my idea but I shared it with the people and they loved it, that we have created a committee, a council in the project. And the council is going to be basically having people in the community who want to take care of the project.

So they decide from now on, how things have to be done, like what is the.... everything! In order to be in the council you have to graduate from the Artist School. Why? Because they need to understand what it means to do art and what it means to be political and what it means to be a citizen in a way. So it is, I do not know, that's maybe why I say "we" now, because I don't feel any more that it is my project solely. We have people from the museum, we have people from the community who decide stuff. Right now, 90% of the workshops that we give are being suggested by the community—so it is something that I don't come up with any more.

And it is interesting because they want more, for example, art history: they are dying for the new one! Who would imagine that this mom looking at tele-novelas the whole day wants more art history? You know, who imagined that? And I think is because we are trying to put together these two things: like what we want to propose and what they need, but it is always based on what they need. We never come up with something, we first hear and

see what happens and then we come up with some version of that.

The other thing that is very important for us is like a PhD student can go to our workshops and be happy. Why? Because I feel one of the main problems with immigrants is that the quality of the services are crap. So we want to give the best quality possible of everything that we do. Without money of course, but we try as much as possible.

And that is another thing, for example, one big challenge is the fact that, people who do critique of the work, now I have a rule that if you want to talk about work you have to be part of the work. You have to do this kind of immersive critical criticism. Either you give a workshop, or you have to become an intern or you have to become part of the process. And sometimes it is interesting because they are very well known critics. And that's the rule, if you don't do that; you cannot talk about the work. And this is just because I feel that these kinds of projects need a different approach, not only institutionally but also in the sense of how you criticize them. It is a process; you cannot have a conclusion, because there is not a conclusion possible; there is always a process of change, where everything is changing all the time.

For example, I am doing three interviews with one student every year. And it's beautiful because you can see how everything is changing through the interview. So we did one the first year, and I had all these questions and all these things, and now she doing another one... she is from Mexico, and it is interesting to have this kind of... practice and it is a very different approach and I feel that the museum structure is not ready for that, in my experience.

I have been very lucky with the people I am working with at the moment, and I prefer that they work with philanthropists than collectors, for example. That's another problem that we had. We had people coming to our project who want to give money but they were collectors, and they always want something to take with them. And I say "no, I do not accept their money", you know, you have to work with a philanthropist that wants to change society in the same way you want to change society. That's kind of the experienced we had, not that there are many out there, not that the immigration issue is that popular either.

Question SB: Hi this is Sabrina Moura from Videobrasil in São Paulo. You mentioned that you cannot analyze this practice as an exhibition—so I suppose you cannot analyze it as an NGO either. So I was wondering in what ways Immigrant Movement is becoming an institution itself? And would you say that you are re-defining its parameters, a new framework for its understanding?

Tania Bruguera: I think, as an artist, for my

long-term projects, I have always worked with the idea of institution but I hope—and that is where I sabotage my own projects every time I feel they become an institution themselves—I try to work with the format of the institution without institutionalizing the practice. For example, right now I am doing a project at the Van Abbe and I am acting as a curator together with the team and; it's a collective decision process where we are doing an Arte Útil exhibition but it is very clear that I do not want to be curator. I just want to challenge this idea of, what is the role of the artists in art history and to create one "movement", let's say. But in this case, for example, at one point we had a crisis—we had many crises in the project—but at one point we had a crisis where people working on it wanted to become an NGO.

The reason why they wanted to become an NGO is because in the United States there is one rule for NGO, one only rule, "You cannot do politics", which made me understand very well how political art works in the United States after that. So, this is exactly the reason why I did not want the project to be an NGO. And also, for example at some point we had to decide how much do we look like with other institutions that work with immigration, and the reason is that we have the freedom.

One day—this is very quirky, but it happened, one person came to the project and said: "what I like about this project is that I feel free". And I said, what do you mean? "It's like you come here and anything can be happening and I can be myself and I can do anything I want". That's something that does not happen with NGOs, they are very specific and they have their mandate very specific. So I feel that the project needs to have enough expansion that you can all the time re-invent the project and negate your own process, in case that you need to. I do not know if that answered your question.

Question MS: Hi, my name is Meghna Singh, and I am from Cape Town. Thank you for that brilliant inspiring talk and showing your work. There is something that really concerns me, which is there is a certain language when we talk about "them", and immigrants and if you might have a kind of more global population of people moving around or that have moved, so I am just concerned about this kind of segregation which is re-created when you talk about "them" and communities and... so how does one get over with that, you know, a certain kind of connectiveness that is needed without using this language?

Tania Bruguera: You talk from an institution or from...?

MS: No, is just like in terms of a presentation, like you made this presentation, all the work that's been done, it is always "them" and communi-

ties and work coming out of "them".

Tania Bruguera: For example, one decision we have made and I was also very concerned about this is that, I am here presenting because it is an "expert" crowd and I wanted to talk about the art-strategy in the project. But we have decided recently that I do not talk about the project anymore so anywhere else that they invite us to talk about the project is somebody from the community who comes. And it does not matter if they do not know how to speak, if they are not trained to speak, it is just important that people understand their point of view. So I am, as much as possible trying to get away from the project so they can take their voice.

But I feel that institutionally it's very complicated, because it is very clear that the institution responds to other interests, not the immigrant community's interest, they respond to other interests and their board of trustees has very different interests. So I think there are moments in which it is very clear the distance and you have, as an artist to negotiate that distance. We just put them in and they have to deal with that, but that is how we are doing, the same way they are taking decisions now, is the same way they are talking about the project at the same time.

Question CD: I am Corinne Dissersens and I have a very short question. I would like to know who/ how you constructed the timeline of the historical narrative you showed us in which you inspired yourself.

Tania Bruguera: Yeah, well at the moment we have been working for a year with the team at the Van Abbe. Gemma Medina is the main researcher, she is great, Alessandra Sabatini is also working, Nick Aikens and Annie Fletcher, and of course also Charles. And what we realized is that for Arte Útil - first of all there is something that has been happening for a long time- it may have not been called that way but it has been growing from artists' interests to being in the social sphere. And we started looking at examples where people imagined society differently, and of course the moment in which we should try to implement something and imagine things functioning differently, we want to call that art as well. So we want to extend the idea of what art is. And that yeah, it's a team that has been working for a year, and we also have a timeline of exhibitions that we thought have been building up to what we are doing now. So it's a timeline of concepts, exhibitions, texts and practices. And is online if you want.

Question KCK: I am KC Kwok from Singapore and working in China. From your presentation, you have tried to negotiate some of the very difficult tensions that I believe we all face with, terms like "long-term project", "contracts",

"eco-system" sound very systematic, sound very close to institutionalization, yet on the other hand you are very critical of museums as institutions or any form of institutionalization. And this is very difficult to negotiate I suppose, and something very close to us working in the museum as well as working in the art community.

Now, how has the museum come about to absorb the kind of social "activism" that you are talking about, that it has to come some way after all that, you know, you have clarified that it has to be an essential part of museum programming now. However, you are not very optimistic in the longer term. It seems that museums will not be able to do that kind of long-term social engagement that you are talking about. Now, do you see - given a conference like this, where is a gathering of museum workers from all over the world—that it is also possible to influence, within the museum sphere, that we can expedite this progression towards more social activism within the museum institution?

Tania Bruguera: Yes, absolutely. I would be lying if I say I am a total outsider because I am here talking to you. But for example, one thing I really liked when I proposed a project to Creative Time when they called me is that is the first time the team from Queens Museum talked about the project in public they said to the press, "we do not know what it is". And that was beautiful, you know, they knew the goal, the long-term goal but they did not know how we are going to get there. And I think, my experience with many museums has been that they need certain certainty, like to be sure about what is going to happen and this is very administrative situation where you have to be clear about many things - not everybody - but many of them. And I think, first of all, this idea of uncertainty is extremely important and to jump, you know, a "phase" you say?

The other thing, for example, is that, not every museum works the same way. You know like for example, there is this museum in Poland, Museum of Modern Art that I like very much because I worked with them, and they have no space, which I love. So they actually have a project and after the project requires whatever it requires, they find whatever the project requires. And I think this is a beautiful idea because it is a mobile, a malleable format for a museum. Like many of the museums I work with, they have a place and say, "this is your room" and I am like... well I do not need a room.

So I think this idea of trying to understand that not all the museums of course are the same and to understand that sometimes you do not need - for this kind of practice - you do not need a space, what you need is a set of relationships and also the

idea of long-term is extremely important to understand in museum because yes, you can have a museum that works five years in a project, but why can we have a five year commitment to a social project? You know what I mean?

So this is kind of the thing and in the case with the Queens Museum has been very good because, and also with Creative Time, because we had a very intense discussions so I feel like I am working from the inside of the institution. So I am doing institutional critique from the inside. I am not outside saying "you did this wrong" but I am trying to go inside the structure and push a little bit, you know. And it has been very hard for them, like to pay for the space for five years has been extremely hard to explain to the board and to understand what is happening after that.

So I feel that, well for example, had recently a conversation between the Tate, Van Abbe and they invited me talk about collecting activism. I was extremely shocked. Because I said, my first questions to the institution like: if you want to collect activism—because now political is, you guys are dealing with how to deal with politics, right?—I said, are you willing to become an activist museum? Are you willing to buy an art piece that may be in not such good art but the money goes to a "good" cause? Are you going to take sides politically because you support this or that?

I mean these are all the sets of questions that I feel that art institutions have to ask itself when they are dealing with politics, political art. Not only showing trying to see the document or the photo or the video that can show you what happened but also how can you activate, in the real time, the politics that the artists wants to activate, you know? Even if you do an exhibition twenty years later, you know, and that's my critique for example with the way museums deal with re-enactment in performance, like they mostly show the image, and now you see it for real, this is the same image that you see in the photo, why do you need it in real? That's not what a performance is, that's not what politics is. What politics and performance is, is how you activate a set of relationships that make you react in certain way or makes you think about certain things that today is not the same as twenty years before.

So I feel this is the main challenge in a way because for very long time art institutions sell themselves as a-political in a way. You know, you take sides but you have to stay a little distanced sometimes, you know, in general, there are always exceptions. And I think, you guys if you want to deal with political art you have take risks, and risk your director position and risk everything you know? Because that is what politics is in a way, so it's not easy to tell you that but... and self-sabotage your

own institution in a way, for the idea. I know is not easy to hear that...

Question SW: Hi, I am Stephen Wright, I want to come back to your parenthetical comment that "artists, are workers and as such need to be paid" which is a fairly straight-forward demand that that neo-liberalism remunerate those who produce value, but is paradoxical in the light of what you said I think for two reasons.

In light of your defense of Useful Art, one could argue that there are not better way to perpetuate autonomous art. If artists were paid by art institutions they would have no compelling reason to enter in the realm of the real as you described it and secondly, because I was hoping that you would add to that, that users should also be remunerated because after all, the key site of surplus value extraction today is around usership.

Tania Bruguera: I totally agree and I am glad that you are here so you can talk also about usefulness tomorrow. One example is that, in the contract when the Tate bought the piece (details tbc) of Tatlin's Whisper, in the contract there is clause that says, "Anybody from the audience can take any sort of documentation and they can sell it for the market price of my work". Of course unfortunately I am not so expensive, but hopefully someday... The reason for that is that, I totally agree with you. If you are an artist and you work with people and people complete your work, they also have a right to be remunerated economically, they also have a right to have access to the benefits, not only the spirit of benefit but also the concrete benefit of the work. So this is a little gesture that I did trying to signal that need. And I agree, I think for example, in our project we try to pay everybody. We do not have a lot of money but we try to pay people, we try even if it is people in the community who are part of it, like for example the Artivist School we are going to give grants to people in the community who want to go and they will be paid to go to the school. I am totally with you.

And it's ironic because we are creating an industry that is very strong where you graduate so many artists every year but then there is no security for those artists, there are no jobs for those artists in the art world. Because the only thing.... I mean, some museums pay but it is always a fight, it's always a fight as an artist. Even artists like me who supposedly do not have to fight for these things any more—I always have to fight!

And for example, I have a case of Murcia and I want to say it here, that three years ago we did a project and they have not paid me yet and they breached the contract, and I've been trying to demand.... It is not the money, is just the fact that I feel violated as an artist and disrespected. I want

the money because if I had not done the exhibition they would go after me because I did not do with my contract, but for them is fine! "No, we do not have money any more" but they still do exhibitions with other artists.

So I feel there is this kind of situation where the artists have to be taken into consideration as a worker. This is our time, this is our brain and these are our ideas, and we are working for the museum when we do exhibitions. It is not like we are just there because "oh, we are going to be famous because we having a show in a museum". No, we are working for the museum when we are doing projects.

And that needs to be said because I am lucky but there are many, many younger artists that are struggling. And for example, Immigrant Movement, I wish I could be there all the time. I can't because I have to go everywhere for a hundred dollars here, a thousand here, three thousand here to find money so I can produce the project, you know. And that should not happen. Is that what you asked?

Question N.S.J: Hi I am Nicole Smythe-Johnson from Jamaica. The question I wanted to ask you is about creating the circumstances for your work. In Jamaica, I think it is easy to talk about challenging the institution but in Jamaica, we are fighting to justify an art institution at all. And there is not an acknowledged—cause maybe I do not know about—tradition for activism. So in that kind of space, I think your work is really interesting, and I definitely think that it would be really valuable in a place like Jamaica but I am kind of, where would I even start? So I wanted to know, first of all, if you have worked in that kind of place where there are not too many art institutions or any at all, and also, where you have worked, how have you gone creating the circumstances for your work?

Tania Bruguera: Well, as I said it took me two years and a half to create this. For example, when I went to Mexico I had to change the project because the project could not happen exactly the same way it happened in the United States. So I think, one of the things is the idea of adaptability to places and political—I use this term: political timing specific—which means that is an artwork that reacts to the political circumstances, understanding that they can change any time, of course.

And one of the problems probably with the idea of long-term projects is that there is a long period of time where the art did not exist, yet. I think the institution gets nervous about this sometimes. So you are creating the circumstances where you can have art happening, and art can be just maybe one day out of five years, you know. So I do not know, it depends on the circumstances, it depends on the place, it depends on the dynamics of the place.

But in this case, the first thing was trust, so the community trusts us. The second thing was to be there every day—even weekends, holidays, all the time—and understand what they are lacking—which is respect, trust and people who want to deal... For example, we do something that is very specific: everybody who works in Immigrant Movement knows that if somebody enters the door - even if they are doing a grant for a foundation- they have to stop everything. Actually one day we could not submit a grant because we were finishing and somebody came because their husband was in prison and we had to deal with that and we did not make the grant within the deadline.

So I think this is very important, you know, to understand what is the priority, you know. Also because we are like two people working there, if we were fifty people we could have done everything but we are very little group of people. So I think this is very important, to understand what is the priority and also to understand that it is a human project, it is not an art project, it is a project that is artistic because it is human, you know, and trying to create the different relationships with that, I know sounds a kind of corky but it is true.

And for us it is very important that we are not using people. I mean there are many projects that look like long-term projects, where the artist have their idea, preconceived before they arrived to the place. They do one or two trips very quickly; they talk to one or two people and they come and decide what to do and they come as an ovni as they implant their project. And everybody in the art world is extremely happy because it is for them—not for the community. You know, there is enough community work that people feel they are good people when they come, but it is not really for them, you know.

I have a friend who—I won't mention his name—he is an artist who told me once that at his project he got robbed, someone stole his equipment. And I said: "this is because people do not trust your project". We had a huge discussion. In Immigrant Movement we had an ipod for a year and a half, we do not know whose ipod that is, and like I leave my money there: it's a very safe space, so this is the main thing that we have created, it is a very safe space and everybody can be themselves. And that takes time, that takes a lot of time, you know. Thank you so much.

Case Study 1

Zoe Butt

Biography: Zoe Butt is a PhD candidate with the Centre for Contemporary Art and Politics, National Institute for Experimental Arts, College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia. Her thesis examines her experience of working with artists in China, Vietnam and Cambodia where cultural memory and historical consciousness is socially prohibitive, government censored or traumatically hidden. It will challenge the social responsibility of curatorial labor, in relation to particular artist-initiated organizations; in the role both have to play in these societies where 20th Century cultural material archives are relatively non-existent.

Sàn Art

Embedded in this statement is a question of role, purpose and responsibility. If I were to believe that curatorial practice was geared towards a catalog composed in a glass cage of arts administrators; or the hype of a Jay Z performance in the middle of Pace Gallery watching Jerry Saltz make an embarrassment of himself; or if it were to facilitate the record auction sales mentioned in the gloss of the Art Asia Pacific or Art Review, my involvement in my profession now would be null.

For the last 8 years I have been invited by artists to work with and for them, firstly with Lu Jie and his politically provocative re-revolutionizing 'Long March Project' in Beijing, China and now with Dinh Q Le and the 'The Propeller Group'; Vietnamese boat refugees who returned to Saigon to found 'San Art', a production house of knowledge and discussion re-determining local and international processes of artistic exchange. I have been drawn to the responsibility all of these artists carry, and numerous others, in re-considering their belonging; making their artistic practice an enabler of historical memory and community; drawn to their construction of 'institution' that takes the idea of an 'artwork' towards the practice of an 'art' at 'work'.

As a museum trained curator, I had the incredible luck to work on two editions of the 'Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art' project and its associated collection-building program of the Queensland Art Gallery in Brisbane, Australia. For nearly 8 years I worked closely with a number of artistic communities across the Asia-Pacific region; often on projects that were locally dangerous or culturally controversial. Working remotely, I had experienced the logistical obstacles, the effects of little infrastructure on their

end that suited museum demands; the financial hurdles in trying to maintain our presumed artistic integrity with 'material' quality and skill; and above all, being reminded how the limits of production in their local, in the artist's local resulted from a different cultural order of value and terminology.

It was and still is easy to lament the absence of a museum network and expertise with its relatively small and confused local collector base—but most intriguingly was realizing how the commissioning funds for this Triennial's art projects were integral forms of livelihood for broader artistic communities that we as museum workers, had not asked enough about, in terms of impact and function. Inside the curatorial department there would be a theoretical soccer match between the 'conceptual studies' team and the 'cultural studies' team, arguing back and forth on the parameters of reading value and meaning into a work of art as the object itself, or an interpolation of multiple social roles and influences of the artist.

When Jean Hubert Martin curated 'Magiciens de la Terre' in 1989, he changed the nature of play between curator and artwork. His juxtaposition of western fine art with that of African and Asian cultural artifact and the consequent challenges posed from his controversial art historical, ethnographic, museum perspective has long been theorized.

In many ways one might argue that the exhibition gave rise to the idea of the curator as superstar, heralding a way forward to which the scholarship and tenacity of the curator can draw new lines of aesthetic analysis. But what have we subsequently learnt from this watershed moment? How is the museum project's history of collecting

static objects and ephemeral acts engaging with the phenomena of the 'lived' archive in contexts where active cultural dialog, rejuvenating historical awareness, is considered paramount; where the focus on exhibition making as a qualifier of artistic worthiness is made difficult by a lack of space, commercial usurpation, economic limits or strict government regulation. In contexts such as Vietnam, Cambodia, China or Singapore where such conditions are variable it is the artists who act as archeologists of their own past; where traditional objects of cultural function (ie. read ethnographic) are now inflected with contemporary narratives and values. Can we re-determine the methods and terms of value that we use to assess artistic significance in order to better embrace the mass migration flows and virtual connectivity of the 21st Century? In seeking to respond to the economic interdependence of the globe and its affect on artistic production, how are our museums approaching ideas of inclusivity within their expertise, collection building and associated discourse?

As I think Tania exemplifies in her 'Immigrant International' and other projects, believing in the very real and diverse experiences of social conflict and class alienation, challenging the capitalist desire for 'universality', likewise I also ask what do I believe in. In thinking of Tania's work, one area we definitely share in common is a belief in the socio-political responsibilities of artistic communities and collective action.

Artists are crucial exponents of society, whose labor provides critical introspection into the mechanization of our lives, our attitudes and assumptions. Their images matter: their messages matter; their presence as creative progressive markers of society matter. Within political restriction, I am stunned by the level of historical excavation, collecting, analysis and near journalistic investigative processes that are undertaken by artists in the production of their work, particularly in residual colonial contexts, where their juxtaposition of differing time and little known historical consequences cunningly challenge the production, categorization and value of 'culture' on a local and international platform.

Encouraging awareness of their 'mattering' on a local level, particularly in society's where contemporary culture is perceived as a visual threat to the messages of the State, such communities are best served by an interconnected, comparative and interdisciplinary set of cultural analysis. The roles of historians, ethnographers, publicists, social workers and teachers are here transferred to the self-taught translator, the fortune-teller, the acupuncturist and the monk. In places like South East Asia, where infrastructure supporting

contemporary art production as versed abroad is inconsistent and in certain places—non-existent—it is the labor of the artist that arguably stands in as a kind of open source model for reminding a community of the interconnectivity of human action—its cause and affect.

At San Art in Ho Chi Minh City, the founders argue curatorial labor as crucial to the sustainability of their work—outlining their need of someone to write and talk about art, to give historical analysis and comparison, to facilitate and introduce an international network to the local art scene; to be a soundboard for local artists seeking critical feedback to their ideas; to be a cataloguer of their collecting of historical artifacts (which includes their amassing of the fake and the dubious); to assist in their documentation of little known interdisciplinary histories; their delivering of critical artistic discourse and brainstorming strategies of dealing with government restriction.

The Western need to categorize the labor and product of creative collaborations as that of an artist or a curator is in a curious state of flux with artist/curator/intellectual collectives like Ruangrupa in Indonesia; SaSa Art Projects in Cambodia; Green Papaya in The Philippines, Raqs Media Collective in India, Total Art Studio in China; Gallery LOOP in Korea; AIT in Japan and San Art in Vietnam... to name but a few.... These are potent examples of where artists collaborate in the making of their work with a cross-range of interdisciplinary motivators to engage their communities. It is within such contexts that the practice of collaboration is considered a medium unto itself; where the role of interpretation, typically that of the curator, is a mechanism inside an artwork's production as opposed to a practice taking place in an object's aftermath. In places such as Vietnam, the curator must carefully weigh the stage of an artwork for the way it is communicated to a public affects how the work is valued and understood.

In order to un-pack this discussion of 'the new dynamic between curator and artwork' a bit more, I would like to share a few scenarios and anecdotes of the context I currently live and work:

In 2011, Dinh Q Le, asked me to curate his exhibition 'Erasure' commissioned by the Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation, Sydney, Australia. As he is the co-founder and Chairman of San Art and I am the Executive Director of his organization, this artwork and exhibition was seen by Dinh as a unique opportunity to utilize and publicize his collection of over 180kg of pre-1975 black and white photographs from Southern Vietnam that were dramatically left behind by those who fled Vietnam as boat refugees in the face of Communist persecution. This archive is arguably the first and only archive of its kind in the world. This artwork

was also an excellent opportunity to increase exposure of San Art by arranging for it to be a co-organizer of his exhibition, thus the promotion of 'Erasure' plugged the need for the listening and visiting arts community to consider their support for you have to understand there is no financial assistance for the arts in Vietnam. All of San Art's funding comes from international sources.

The content of 'Erasure'—its subject and material engaging the complex 20th and 21st Century determinations of arrival and departure through the prism of colonial conquest; refugee and asylum seeker—is regrettably not permitted for public display by the Vietnamese government to this day. Its online presence continues to be a joint effort between myself, and Dinh Q Le. The key sponsors of 'Erasure' subsequently became San Art's first private supporters towards our infra-structural costs. Inspired by the work of Dinh Q Le and his commitment to making his artistic practice a launch pad for building his local artistic community, these private collectors are pioneers for their signing of an agreement with San Art in return for curatorial consultation on the growth of their South East Asian art collection.

Another anecdote: In 2010, during a television interview, a local reporter asked what my role was at San Art. 'I am a curator and currently Director of San Art.... I work with artists, write about art, 'create projects'. She looked at me quizzically, with one eyebrow raised 'Curator?.... oh you mean you are the stylist! I see!'. Later that same year I finally got the guts to confront a journalist on the rampant plagiarism of my press releases across Vietnamese media, frustrated with the way my writing was cut, paste and declared the efforts of someone else. In justification of her own actions, she quipped 'But why should I re-write something that has already been so beautifully written? I have no knowledge about these artworks and so can only cut and paste what you give me!'

In the Vietnamese language there is no standardized word for 'curator'. The word to this day is highly contested within the arts community. One local 'curator' terms it 'giam tuyen' which is a sino-vietnamese word, which literally translates as the one who is in control and organizes. The role of a 'curator' in the local art world appeared in the early 2000s. In Vietnam, the idea of 'art' (my thuat) is highly guarded by the Ministry of Culture, Sport and Tourism, which predominantly focuses on the mode of beauty experienced as entertainment. Couple this perception with a government suspicious of anyone practicing critical thinking, it is no wonder that fashion and music and luxury brands are the key determinant of what commands the visual cultural landscape in Vietnam. The role of discourse, the relationship between literature and

society and history, is one of the most highly guarded cultural practices in Vietnam. Consequently understanding that curators can write artworks into history is not at all understood or perceived as a necessity. Stylists rule the roost. The issue of copyright is of increasing sensitivity within the commercial world here. An artist wishing to exhibit their re-appropriation of a 1960s film epic, without the permission of the author, is not permitted. Understanding the difference between appropriation and copyright infringement is not understood.

In February this year, I curated a solo show of a local artist and friend Phan Quang. As a frustrated photographic journalist who became disillusioned with the propaganda landscape of Vietnamese press, Phan Quang's art is a cynically humorous perspective on the social contradictions of contemporary Vietnam. In the prior months leading up to this exhibition, in knowing that the content of his art would be considered politically provocative, he and I took great pains to write about his work from multiple angles. The exhibition license submitted to the Vietnamese Ministry of Culture, Sport and Tourism was deliberately vague and highly personal, with next to no analysis of each work. The press release for international audiences was considerably different, providing much more information on context and motive. An essay was commissioned for the show by UCLA Professor Nguyen-Vo Thu-Huong, which positioned this artist's work not only within the structures of a global art history, but also within the social landscape reflecting constructs of nationhood in contemporary Vietnam. Our website could only promote the text that was provided to the local authorities. Phan Quang and I jointly decided not to make public two photographs in the series, understanding their content too literal a critique of social issues sensitive to the Vietnamese government.

Upon submitting the exhibition license, six meetings took place between San Art and the Ministry of Culture, Sport and Tourism, including their lackeys, the Cultural Police. They were concerned that the general public would be offended by the image of humans within cages ordinarily holding the fowl that would be found on their kitchen table for dinner. One official even asked 'Where is the soul in this work?', to which Dinh Q Le found himself sharing the advent of 'relational aesthetics' and the impact of conceptual thinking in art (and I'm talking to 'cultural police'). This same official asked if he could return at a later date to learn more about contemporary art. San Art, as a result of these seeming positive interactions, were disappointed, but not surprised, to receive license with censorship of 8 of the 10 works for exhibition a day before the opening.

Despite this, San Art went ahead and installed the exhibition, taking photographs of the show as it should be experienced and then 2 hours before the exhibition opening, took the restricted works off the wall with a sign in each place stating 'Not allowed for exhibition'.

We also placed a copy of the government license at the entrance of the gallery (a document rarely seen by artists and the local community).

The opening was a hit. TV crews, film celebrities and an intergenerational audience turned up not at all surprised by the censorship. Many cooed over the outside bamboo installation—funny enough the government did not want any representation of the cage showing people inside them but it was considered appropriate to place the visiting audience under one.

San Art was visited the next week by the Cultural Police, who were displeased with the signs that had been placed beneath each work. We argued that as a business we had a right to communicate to our customers what had occurred to the 'product' they had been waiting to see. They were particularly irritated to see that a government magazine 'Vietnam Heritage Fashion'—the in-flight magazine for Vietnam Airlines—had given the exhibition full page spread with reproduction of all the censored photographs. They left threatening 'We have enough to shut you down'.

Engaging the aesthetic merits of the work during a public discussion between the artist and a fellow journalist it was again obvious that the social context of its censorship meant that very few were willing to engage. The senior journalist lamented the younger generations lack of will to know their past, admitting that he has trouble understanding Phan Quang's work for to him, it lacked any kind of beauty. He preferred to argue how the work reflected Vietnam's contemporary dilemmas of urbanization, saying that it pointed to a social anxiety that few were wont to discuss. As a small side note here—Recent text books that attempt to chart the interplay between local, diasporic and international artistic production in Vietnam (written by journalists) went about categorizing Vietnamese art along western lines of Pop, Abstract Expressionism and so on. In Vietnamese universities the art history curricula stops at c. 1954, visual and textual resources on contemporary culture are null; foreigners and Viet Kieu are not found as university faculty due to dismal salary rates and too much red tape to install lectureship exchange.

In late May, the director and trustees of a prominent museum based between New York and Hong Kong visited San Art. At this time, one photograph of Phan Quang was on view in our upstairs gallery. I walked them through the gallery, explaining various works. Very few eyes were

raised with the photograph of Phan Quang. At the end of their tour, the Director asked about the impact of government restriction on artistic production. I began to explain the production and consequence of Phan Quang's exhibition. Three collectors subsequently bought several of his photographs—one of them buying out an entire edition (the whole show).

Where do you draw the curatorial line in strategy between organizational-censorship and official restriction of an artwork? If artistic sustainability depends on a supportive community, how can we communicate our concerns if our tongues and pens are blocked? How can artworks be included that challenge the idea of a global art history if our artists and writers cannot be honest in their desired networks of knowledge (media; universities; publishing)? Can one argue that the social impact of a work of art is the determining value of its significance as opposed to its aesthetic merits?

Such questions have been forever present over the last 8 years of living in residual socialist contexts thirsty for capitalistic venture, working under the paranoid eye of the authorities. The greatest dilemma has been balancing the terminologies of reference and value of an artwork between local and international audiences and understanding that it is entirely my duty as 'curator' to mediate and facilitate that divide. Where the plastic arts or traditional art forms may dominate the local expectation of ideas of beauty in the local; it is the evocation of social realities that wets the appetite of the international. Where academia struggles towards a framework of a global art history; some biennale boards still label artwork of first nation peoples as 'ethnographic'.

In conclusion, artistic practice today could be considered an institution unto its own - an interdisciplinary employment of interrogative enquiry motivated ultimately by a belief in art as critical forum for social progress, fundamentally influenced by the conflicts of history; by a social need for community; by enforced or voluntary forms of movement as activist, refugee, immigrant, or victim. An artistic practice that commits itself to the building of historical consciousness is an interpretative collaborative process, where engaged curatorial labor is socially dynamic, facilitatory and affective. In Vietnam, the stereotypical role of curator as theatrical script maker in retrospect shifts to the seat of something akin to an international film producer—as commissioner; funder; interpreter; conceptual motivator; networker; political strategist—particularly as cultural infrastructure synonymous with the West is non-existent on a local level. Here, the concept of a critic, curator, historian, publicist, collector and

philanthropist are little understood; museums are for hire and tourism exacerbates an understanding of art as utter consumption.

In this context, the relationship between curatorial skill and artwork shifts for the purpose of art making is less about contributing to a presumed art historical discipline as it is to building collective cultural memory. At San Art in Vietnam, founded by artists in Ho Chi Minh City, where government officials are descendants of a propagandist regime, there is an urgent need for the practice of art and culture to be interdisciplinary and interpretable to a broad social platform in order to build and sustain a relationship to history that is critical and proactive. This desire for artistic practice to be socially relevant and substantive, suggests the artwork itself is, while critically still a set of aesthetic enquiries, is a highly sensitive 'document', translated as it is produced, conjuring a specific interpolation at times socially dangerous or culturally taboo in the local, while in others, an exoticised phenomena abroad. Friends, colleagues, acquaintances:

Allow me to inaugurate my presentation with a Carioca anecdote—we aren't just gathered anywhere, after all, but in a very particular and peculiar place, at a very particular and peculiar time, and I consider it to be one of the fundamental tenets of curatorial practice, indeed of curatorial ethics as such, that it should always be maximally aware of its surroundings, of its 'situatedness', its place of anchorage in space as well as time; it should always start from, and end with, the here-and-now—in this case, Rio de Janeiro 2013. And in this sense, I admit I am rather suspicious of the casually cosmopolitan.

Case Study 2

Dieter Roelstraete

Biography: Dieter Roelstraete is the Manilow Senior Curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, where he is currently preparing his first group exhibition *The Way of the Shovel: On the Archaeological Imaginary in Art*. From 2003 until 2011, he was a curator at the Antwerp museum of contemporary art MuHKA, where he organized exhibitions of Chantal Akerman (2012), Liam Gillick & Lawrence Weiner (2011), and thematic group shows focusing on contemporary art from Vancouver (*Intertidal*, 2005) and Rio de Janeiro (*A Rua*, 2011), as well as projects such as *Emotion Pictures* (2005), *Academy: Learning from Art* (2006), *The Order of Things* (2008). A philosopher by training, former editor of *Afterall* journal and co-founder of FR David, Roelstraete has published extensively on contemporary art and culture in numerous catalogues and journals such as *A Prior Magazine*, *Artforum*, *e-flux* journal, *Frieze*, *Mousse Magazine* and *Texte zur Kunst*.

In Memoriam Allan Sekula: Rio de Janeiro, August 2013

Friends, colleagues, acquaintances:
Allow me to inaugurate my presentation with a Carioca anecdote—we aren't just gathered anywhere, after all, but in a very particular and peculiar place, at a very particular and peculiar time, and I consider it to be one of the fundamental tenets of curatorial practice, indeed of curatorial ethics as such, that it should always be maximally aware of its surroundings, of its 'situatedness', its place of anchorage in space as well as time; it should always start from, and end with, the here-and-now—in this case, Rio de Janeiro 2013. And in this sense, I admit I am rather suspicious of the casually cosmopolitan rhetoric of globalization that is such a powerful feature of contemporary curating, as well as of contemporary art production in general—instead, I am much more interested in being local, parochial, provincial, in what has been referred to, in architectural circles, as a type of “critical regionalism.”

I am saying all this because I believe that curatorial practice does not merely involve caring for artworks and conversing with artists, but it also involves responding to, and absorbing or immersing oneself in, particular contexts, and reimagining or reconstructing particular situations.

Correspondingly, the curatorial business of building a collection, for instance (to name but one exemplary aspect of the profession), must expand its notion from that of accumulating, amassing and assembling two and three— dimensional objects to

also incorporate the collecting of contexts and situations—a museum collection is always also a collection of contexts and situations, of historical moments and memories, and in essence of the relations among all these forces.

In fact, a museum collection is a collection of such exact relations—simply put, a network, the central node of which is this or that particular museum's idea of art. Moreover, in the current economic climate of increasing financial challenges to both publicly and privately funded museums, it is also perhaps advisable for any museum to shift its focus in part from the collecting of unaffordable objects to the archiving of much affordable entities such as ideas. The museum not just as a space for, but also a repository of, ideas in other words—a point to which I will be returning later in this presentation.

Let us go back to my Carioca anecdote, which really is a case study of sorts. As it so happens, I have been very fortunate for having been able to visit Rio de Janeiro on a number of occasions now, and I count myself lucky for having had the opportunity to get to know the Rio de Janeiro art scene (or at least certain parts of it) like I did. This expertise and this experience, primarily revolves around an exhibition I organized at the Antwerp museum of contemporary art MuHKA in the fall of 2011 titled “A Rua”, a group show conceived as a survey of contemporary Carioca art as seen through the thematic prism of

the street, i.e. of street life (IMAGE).

This exhibition had been years in the making—its basic premise actually took shape in a series of conversations, first initiated in 2004, with Paulo Herkenhoff, whom I got to know through my former colleague, MuHKA director Bart De Baere—and included the work of many artists whose name should be familiar to many of you (if only because we find ourselves gathered in their hometown), but my anecdote mainly concerns the work of one of the project's better known, marquee names, namely that of Ernesto Neto.

Ernesto was one of the first artists whom we reached out to when the A Rua project started to take shape, and there were many conversations, encounters, and meetings in the course of the project's two-year preparation period—yet somewhat characteristically, it wasn't until the proverbial last minute, maybe 36 hours before the show opened or so, that any of us, members of the curatorial and museum staff, actually knew (let alone understood) what Ernesto's contribution to the exhibition was going to consist of.

He had been allotted a large circular space at the far end of the museum, and this space stood empty until two days before the opening, with no one knowing what would take place in it (or if anything was going to take place in it at all). I vividly remember the anxiety felt by all at the museum when walking by this vast void—nobody really knew what was going to happen until the artist arrived. And of course when he did, the old magic happened (I am using these very words in the full awareness of their capacity to offend) and within a matter of hours, really, an artwork had emerged seemingly out of nowhere—that is to say, out of a plastic bag full of stuff that Ernesto had brought along with him on his trip as his only set of materials, his sole toolbox.

For me, this whole affair was a very instructive, enlightening experience, and I am really only interested in curating insofar as it allows me to learn things, to be taught and instructed, enriched—by artists as much as artworks, by contexts and moments as much as situations and events. Now what this particular circumstance taught me was first of all to always trust the artist to deliver the goods. This, in the meantime, has become the basic principle of my code of curatorial conduct—I know I was supposed to say certain things about the relationship between artist, artwork and curator here, but I can only really say one thing: that it is, in the end, a matter of trust and not a matter of contracts.

This does not have anything to do, I should add here, with the persistence of the romantiizing the perception of the artist as sole creative genius and source of art, or with fetishizing the artist's

creative act as some demiurgic decision; it is much more related to the fact that as a curator and museum and/or art “worker”, I simply want to acknowledge that art inevitably starts with the artist.

Secondly, it taught me the importance of improvisation as an integral, essential element of both artistic and curatorial practice that has yet to be made into a stronger feature of institutional practice—institutions, also the very big ones (that is to say, especially the very big ones), must be made much more flexible; their architecture and infrastructure (both of the material and mental variety, of course) must be made much more supportive of, and conducive to, the very spirit of improvisation that is one of art's defining characteristics.

Because art has long ago ceased to be a mere matter of generating images and producing objects, and long since been transformed into a realm made up, in essence, of acts, actions, deeds, gestures and rumors, it is essential that the art museum, as the foremost memory bank in which the traces of this expanded realm are deposited, in turn becomes as flexible and open to improvisation, itself a site of improvisation even, as the new definition of art as such.

And I am saying all this in full awareness of the ambiguous charge of the very notion of flexibility of course; I know how strategically important a term it has become in the global neoliberal regime of precarious labor. But that is another matter, although obviously a closely related one.

In any case, to revert to my anecdote, it was just then, in allowing this to happen, in letting loose, in trusting and renouncing control, in creating space, that, first of all, the spirit of the street that is so essential to Carioca art practice in particular (but that I believe is in essence a crucial characteristic of many more contemporary art practices), was allowed to trickle into the museum—through which the museum as a social space was activated, animated, energized—and that the museum was in a sense able to forge a connection with the contemporary life-world, to become a kind of “street” itself. Here I want to insert a critical reflection concerning the optimal relationship between the museum and the contemporary life-world, as represented, in this particular case, by the “street.”

As a curator and devoted museum person (I love museums, which is why I choose to work in them, for them—they are probably my favorite social or public spaces in any city or town—along with its parks and along with its cemeteries. I could expand on the similarities between museums and cemeteries here but I wisely won't—the only thing I want to emphasize is that they are quintessentially

public spaces away from the pressures of publicity)—as a curator and museum person, I of course want the museum I work at or the exhibitions I organize to be well-attended and appreciated, I want them to be busy and lively, and in this sense I want them to be either extensions or reflections of the life that goes on outside the museum; but I also want them to be critical of the life that goes on outside the museum, I want them to be spaces that are in a sense the obverse of the world as it exists today outside the museum—I am still very much attached, in other words, to the notion of art as the negation, in essence, of everything that exists, because it is clear for all to see that what exists is, for an unacceptably large part, wrong, unjust, unethical, fucked up, if you pardon the expression.

So I believe it is important that the museum continues to be that space where the quintessentially modern idea of art as that wholly other (though not necessarily that holy other), “das ganz Andere”, remain intact—and this may mean staging a world-picture that is in many ways the opposite of the world as we know it today. Obviously, this is becoming both more and more difficult to achieve in our present situation, and therefore also more and more important to strive for—this, I believe, is one of the main reasons art, and the spaces of art in particular, remain so important and urgent today: to continue to function and live as sites of difference (true difference, not the marketable kind) and dissent. In a sense, this is exactly why I think of art as a balancing act between what is increasingly called “social practice” and the older tradition of art as an essentially a-social practice—but that, as well, may be another story altogether.

For me, art is essentially the foremost medium available to men and women today to address the complexities of 21st century existence. The museum, therefore, should be the platform for the experimental articulation of the various ways in which these challenges are negotiated—it should certainly embrace complexity as a virtue, not a vice, thus not shy away from it as something that will scare away potential visitors or audiences.

I believe people actually seek out museums, and art spaces in general, to experience complexity in a world in which that quality is in fact becoming increasingly rare. (There are people who think there is plenty of complexity to be experienced in contemporary Hollywood cinema, and I do agree that modern image technology has produced a type of visual experience unprecedented in its sophistication and avant-garde aesthetic impact, but as anyone who has seen the most recent installment of the Die Hard series will confirm, the stories behind this barrage of superhuman visual intricacy are becoming simpler by the day: mind-numbing

stupidity posing, or masked, as complexity.)

This, too, I believe, is one of the primary challenges of today’s collecting institutions—to try to somehow collect (archive, inventory, remember) this complexity, to draw it into the orbit of institutional practice and turn the museum into that particular micro-genre of public space in which this complexity can be cultivated, enhanced, experienced, shared—and it is of course blindingly obvious that the aforementioned ethos of improvisation is wholly central to the organization of such a space.

Indeed, looking back at it, I think that the most important exhibitions of the last twenty years have consisted exactly of attempts to freeze and suspend the sensation of such complexity in a curatorial construct; they have for the most part been exhibitions that looked and felt chaotic, excessive, messy, both seemingly and really confused and disordered—improvised, in short.

I believe some of the people who have organized these exhibitions are in the audience today. Anyway, it is a huge challenge, but I believe it is one that museums will have to address regardless: to become more chaotic, messier places, to self-consciously become both more confused and disordered—the programmatic embracing of confusion is a real sign of deep institutional intelligence. This, after all, is the sense in which we should understand the museum’s claim to be a place of learning, a site of research: it is a place that should not merely teach, but above all also learn itself—primarily, or in the first instance, from artists.

Flexibilization, improvisation, innovation, mobility—words with an ambivalent charge in the world of global neoliberal politics, as I have pointed out, but they are nonetheless the very key components of much contemporary art practice that museums, as institutions that are far too often inflexible and immobile still, can learn to adopt and adapt to. It really is a little bit a matter of “learn or perish.”

I want to conclude with a quick recap of my observation concerning trust. Curators and museums alike should of course not only always trust the artists they work with or the artworks they show; they should also always trust the audience, the public—above all by always believing it to be much more adventurous and intelligent than museums in particular are often ready to admit or willing to believe. Here again, we return to the curatorial virtue of complexity, which I now consider to be central to my current curatorial mandate at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, which is of course the product of a very different institutional culture—but audiences and publics, like art, I believe, are more or less the

same the world over.

They all know that when it comes to art, it is going to be complicated—and that idea of complexity, I believe, is what both the museum and

the curatorial at large should continue to safeguard and guarantee.

Thank you for your patience and attention.

Questions & Answers

Zoe Butt and Dieter Roelstraete

Question Dieter Roelstraete: I have a question, actually for Zoe, which has to do with this notion of critical regionalism, critical provincialism, or critical parochialism even, which I kind of expanded a little bit in the introduction, which I now understand was much too long winded. But you said something quite interesting about new art initiatives emerging out of the Asian Pacific region and one of the features that you singled down as defining them was the blurring of professional boundaries between artists, curators, researchers, field workers of all kinds, professionals, from you know, from adjoining academic disciplines.

Do you consider this a kind of a phenomenon that appears to be quite unique, in a way, to the region? And would you, could you kind of expand a little bit about the genesis of that particular story, in a way? How that came to pass as one of the dominant modes in the region?

Zoe Butt: I guess first I could start with the conversation that I had in Indonesia back in April this year in one of this fantastic, dirty, very messy artist initiatives that is also a gallery, it's a studio, it's a library, it's a think tank, coffee house, bar. The founder was sitting on his couch lazily one afternoon and I spent four hours talking about the genesis of and he was talking about its influences and why it was important to start this collective of interdisciplinary thinking. And he is in the room and he is struggling to remember various musicians that he was worked with or very disparate scientists that perfected his work and he yields across the other side of the room, it's like: "Yoo, what was the name of that musicologist that was working in 1966?" and someone from the other corner of the room yells out the fact.

And this situation extended for the whole hour, of his forgetting facts, and he could just yell into the room and someone would respond. And that was an incredible flow of information that I could see was a ready daily experience for Ade. And I said to him: "wow, the amount of information that I just have received in the span of one hour

from having so much expertise at your finger tips is incredible" and he said "that's the very basis of Room Grouper".*

And we went on then to... because he is an artist, he is a curator, he is a writer... and we also then went on to discuss other kinds of similar thinking other artist-run spaces in the region, of which Sàn Art is one also. And as a curator and non an artist, to come in, and I am thoroughly in awe of the amount of knowledge production that goes on in these sites and I think that the phenomena of this interdisciplinary access—it is quite prolific across the Asian region—and I would not say whether it's the same in America or Africa, but Asia is the place that I know reasonably well. And it is this knowledge production that I am fascinated with and I feel that museums are lacking in many ways actually. Because the interpretation of an artwork on a local level is inspired by so much more than just art history, in fact it is not actually inspired by art history at all. Because the indication of what an art history is on a local level across Asia is highly diverse, dynamic, confused, it is not something transparent. So therefore, this interdisciplinary need of interpretation comes because the very bases of what the artists are responding to, are not purely, or just art history.

Question Meghna Singh: Hi, this is for Zoe. Thank you so much for that presentation. So I have a question about Phan Quang. His photographs and of course a lot of them be conceived because, you know, counter-policing, you were not allowed to show them. But my question is, the only photograph we saw was the school children in the cage, and, so on your part, being the curator or the photographer, what kind of sense did you have towards the children who are being represented? Because, do they know that there will be photographs of them on the gallery wall? I mean, it is a common thing, which a lot of people have to deal with so, in one side you are talking about counter policing and on the other side, there are this people who are put in cages. And you as the curator, the artist, you have

the right to display them, you know, was their consent? Like do, do this people know that they were putting on the... [laughs] so yeah, my question was about representation and be sensitive to that.

Zoe Butt: That particular photograph I could not and did not made public, however it is the one that sold the most; it's sold out [laughs]. The idea of communicating to your subjects as to what exactly you are using them for, so whereas it is a photography piece, a film piece, your muse for a painting... communicating how culture works and what happens in terms of representation is not something that.... Phan Quang would not have gone to that school and he would not have taken a big cage and children would have jumped out excitedly and said "wow" and then he would have had children running and they would love the idea of having a photograph taken, they would not have considered the forward meaning of what that might mean in retrospect for this kids.

I mean, I have a really interesting case in Beijing working with Xu Zhen at Long March, I do not know if you are aware Xu Zhen he is a very prominent prankster in the Chinese contemporary art landscape and we worked on a project called "The Starving of Sudan" where he employed a Nigerian woman based in Guangzhou and asked her to place her three-year old in the middle of a room to re-enact Kevin Carter's photograph, that won him that.... What is the name of that photographic prize? ... yeah, well I have a mind black, well Kevin Carter won a very prominent photographic prize, and he was re-enacting this whole stage and as gallery, curator, contracting this women to put her child in place for a performance that lasted, was supposed to last a month, six hours a day, in the middle of winter, in Beijing, is freezing and he is naked, and just with a little cloth around him.

And it created a huge conversation inside Long March, funnily enough the women in one end and the men in another, arguing whether or not this was permissible. I thought highly uncomfortable having a mother that over the child regularly, is like: "sit, don't move", and she was sitting on the site and then constant streams of Chinese public taking photographs. So I had numerous examples where I have been tested on how far to go as a gallerist, as a curator when you're commissioning subjects to be a part of an artistic project, how far do you go.... It is interesting because there was interest in taking this project of Xu Zhen to London; needless to say work-health and safety regulations would not allow it.

So one of the brilliant things I do find about working in Asia is—I talked to Tania earlier about how can we do exhibitions that put glass on the floor and there is not big issue—there are still

ethical concerns that are not hard enough and the question is then, what happens when this is taken into international stage cause if it they just relate the local, the debates would not appear, at all.

Question DO: Hi this is Didem Özbek from Istanbul. I have a question to you as well. I want to learn through your experience as the person in between the artist and the artist-run space. As a professional, what is the ideal for a person in your position both for the artist, for you as the professional director and the artist-run space, to like program, to communicate?

Zoe Butt: I would say right now for San Art my goal is to have a completely local interdisciplinary team who are mentored by artists—which is the board of the organization. And as a professional curator I am less inclined to focus on exhibition making and more inclined to focus on being knowledge links, producing the knowledge links so most of the programming I do at the moment is educational. I am moving more and more away from exhibition making because I feel the whole trend in history of exhibition making in Vietnam is not understood, it is not a value marker for an artistic practice.

And I think as the director right now I am much more interested in community, in creating networks, and building—this may sounds cliché - but building friendships. It is through friendships that in a lack of the supportive network, in a lack of finance, things can continue... and maintaining social activities such as talks, discussions, workshops, dinners... that is the kind of curatorial practice in my context that is absolutely essential.

Question ML: Maria Lind: Dieter this is for you, I would be curious to hear some example of how you perform improvisation, flexibility etc. in your current position?

Dieter Roelstraete: There's not many American colleagues in the audience today, actually just one. Well, first of all I should say that I chose actually to speak about my curatorial past, these projects, well certainly this project dated two years back because in a sense I have been in the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago for a year and a half which I realized is not enough to actually call it my institution home yet, and you know, one of the things I am looking to do there... I mean, it is not a fight but it is a challenge, I do kind a feel that I have some way of contributing to certain aspects of the institutional culture in an American museum. I mean I am not going to be naïve about the level of my impact.

You know, I am currently working with an artist, Goshka Macuga, Polish artist who is known for her institutionally specific work, you know she is someone you would invite and the first thing she would ask is the key studio archive, and the number

to the safe, where all the institutions kind of less savory secrets are kept. And I have no way of knowing of course, how new this is to my new institutional environment but she is an artist who is known to produce work that very, kind of directly addresses political issues and political situations and political kind of questions.

And, you know, I was struck in fact, I was doing a show with her, and I was struck by the fact that my new, that this new world of mine, still has a great deal of resistance to this type of work that is so kind of directly political in its subject matter, not in its application, not in its intentions, but in its subject matter. You know, I was struck for the resistance that I felt in fact, not on the part of the institution or of the audience but you know, but just kind of the general impression that was made "oh really, that political are we going to go, that militant... is that what the museum should do?"

And in this sense, what I am interested in doing in this new position is kind of stretching, is kind of expanding the notions a little bit of possible and acceptable art practice for this kind of very established institutional context. Because of course, the museum of contemporary is big, you know is one of the biggest museums of its kind actually, focused on the collecting and exhibiting of contemporary art in the (United) States and so a major institution which I can't expect to be as flexible as I sometimes hope. But I think that curatorial work is there to kind of try to slowly, 'processually', insert proposals that really test the boundaries a little bit.

And I have to say that the show, my first exhibition at the MCA, was a show of Goshka's work which I was incredibly happy to see so well received in Chicago's very substantial artist community. So there was a real sense, I felt in that reception, there was a demand for those exercises in kind of stretching the boundaries of curatorial programming, museum programming.

And improvisation is... this Brazilian show (well not, not a Brazilian show at all) this Carioca show, this Rio de Janeiro show I did in the Museum of Contemporary art of Antwerp in 2011, I then already realized that there were few places in the world that would allowed this kind of a freedom to some of the artists involved.

And is hard to imagine the MET ever doing anything of the kind, you know ever trusting an artist to show up thirty six hours before the opening with a plastic bag full of things that probably would not make to pass the health and safety regulations... but I think it is still incredibly important for the Met and its survival to actually be able to also accommodate those important impulses in artistic practice. So I'm kind of here more to make a plea for improvisation as curatorial virtue than actually

report on its implementation already, so go and improvise!

Well first of all thank you for having ideas, because it is quite rare to have ideas so it is a real pleasure. And my question has totally to do with the same issue, flexibility, improvisation and your good irreverence towards the canon. My question is, flexibility, improvisation and irreverence towards the canon can be a kind of action, a way of action for as you said, for embracing the complexity and expanding the borders but it can be also, exactly the same behavior can be present in actions that denial totally the complexity. So I am sure for you know that, is nothing new what I am saying but I would like to listen a little bit more about that. Because flexibility, improvisation, etcetera is part of the dominant mode of subjectivation in a way. So how could you describe this difference please?

As I said, when you kind of hear these buzz words: flexibility, improvisation, mobility, malleability, adaptability.... everything that starts with this basically and you know if difference, so those are key terms to unlock the language of neoliberal economics. So many people, look at Boltanski is probably the most important one—have kind of traced the history of, or have traced the tragic scenario of how art really basically, or certain kind of parts of art rhetoric have paved the way of global acceptance of these modes of operating as economic, of this economic rationale.

Of course, this is something that I am also aware that, art has to be very... you know, of course, the art world has to be very conscious of its role as this test, as this laboratory of certain kind of new economic realities. And actually, what I think it is very interesting is that in the last of couple of years, the last five years, actually since the global financial crises of 2008 there have been a lot of exhibitions that have dealt with the crises, you know with the labor as a topic. So there is no shortage there of self-awareness in the art world really but you know, of course, many of these projects have taken place in smaller artist run centers, in kind of more independently operated venues and you know, very rarely in museums, in big museums that you know, that are a anxious about the complexity of the questions that are raised by addressing those various issues.

And so, maybe I wanted to add something that.... You know, mobility, malleability, I mean, all those things are also incredibly overrated. Mobility is, of course, produces its own kind immobilization, you know, everything is mobile, this computer and my phone and everything else and me, but you know, they always need to charge, they always need cables, that kind of, anchors to the world, you know. And I think that, you know, a mobility or stasis, and silence and quiet and actually dead, are

also important characteristics of museum work.

And that's something I lost a little bit but when I talk about how the museums should reassemble life, but at the same time, also kind of not denied or ignore it really but oppose, or present a picture, an oppositional picture then of course, for me the most inspiring metaphor is that of the museum as a cemetery. Because it is the quietest and very often the nicest place that we know in contemporary cities and contemporary urban environments.

You know I've to other conferences where I said this before and it did went down well, so I might want to ask you to keep it secret... [laughs]. But mm. you know, so I think it is a kind of a matter of guarding the balance between the embrace of all these virtues of 21st century subjectivity while also being maximally aware of the extent to which they can be incredibly easily manipulated to work for the system that, you know, this museum is totally posing an alternative. So yeah, lots of work, lots of philosophy...

Question ZB: So my question is... this concept: is it possible for museums to go beyond producing exhibitions? If you believe in the collection of relations is the forward step for a museum, what kind of activities does it look like?

Dieter Roelstraete: Maybe I'll answer just by way of a little proposal for a task case. You know, many museums facing very grim financial prospects that mean that you know, one of the things that need to go out of the window is exhibition programming. So, you know, worrying about over-production of exhibitions may perhaps be no longer very necessary. And you know, I think that there is just too much, of course going on, we all know, you know, the art market, art fairs, biennials and all that. And what this has done, what this kind of economic downturn has done in many museological contexts is it has basically forced museums to look back into their history.

You know, we do not have a million dollars for this Olafur Eliasson show that I wanted to do all my life so instead let's look at what happens in the museums in 1973 or in 1988 or whatever happens to be the fancy. And that in particular raises the challenge of producing still exciting visual experiences, which I think is an important part of what we do. So this is the museum as the repository of historical relations and spatial relations and how you actually make that visible. Some museums, and the Van Abbe is a good example, I think, have made major steps towards this exact kind of project of a very dynamic mapping of their own history, which allows some kind of activation that was not always associated with the very notion of collection, because always it always sounded so dusty and dead.

Question ZB: I quite like your idea, like this idea of collecting relations because I find that this is the context of Asia. It is a cultural context, there are memory is built according to your relationship to someone or an experience you had in the past. What concerns me about museum building in Asia is that they are copying the West very much, in the development of their departments, in their acquisition, collection policies... and I wonder how much openness can be found in Singapore and Hong Kong right now, and plus in Hong King, the National Gallery Singapore, SAM in Singapore, and you think about how are programs going to be created and different kinds of collections going to be supported to mirror the context where we are, so I found your idea was quite interesting.

Tuesday
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Keynote 1

Stephen Wright

Biography: Over the past decade, Stephen Wright's research has examined the ongoing usological turn in art-related practice, focusing on the shift from modernist categories of autonomy to an art premised on usership rather than spectatorship. More recently, his writing has contributed to the growing body of extradisciplinary research on contemporary escapology, theorizing practices deliberately avoiding ideological, institutional and performative capture by the conceptual architecture inherited from modernity. This line of enquiry challenges the assumption that art be understood as either ontology or as event, raising the prospect of an art without objecthood, authorship or spectatorship, that is, of a "coefficient of art" deliberately withdrawn from the event horizon. His texts may be found on the collective blog n.e.w.s.

Making Way for Usership

As this year's conference themes under the auspices of "New Dynamics" make clear, there is an evident desire to rethink and to repurpose the conceptual architecture of the contemporary museum from top to bottom, and more specifically of the conceptual edifice of curatorship. Call it a "need", acknowledge that such conceptual retrofits come with their share of anxiety -- but there can be no doubt that a shift is afoot. That desire no doubt stems from an experience of crisis, but institutions have long remained in denial about crises (concerned, no doubt, by what some apparently call "vertical dignity").

You may have noticed in the description of today's debate that a question is raised about how museums can come to recover their "vertical dignity", which I take to be a bit of a red herring as it is not something that I would want to provide an answer to. But rather than remaining in denial about these crises, rather than harnessing that critical energy to move forward, so this conference certainly stakes out a challenge. Of course, since the crisis is by no means confined to museums, the reconfiguration needs to draw upon diagnostics of the situation beyond the museum's walls. Specifically, expert culture—by which, under that heading, I think we can definitely put curatorship, amongst other things—has reached an impasse across the board as it has come up headlong against a more intensive and more expansive form of cognitive relationality and profane subjectivity, and what I broadly refer to as usership.

Nothing in the museum's conceptual architecture has prepared it for the usership challenge: curators care and users (from the perspective of

expert culture) do not so much use as they misuse... As the museum loosens its grip on expert privilege and Kantian autonomy, what is to be done to stop it from lapsing into user-driven demagoguery on the one hand or becoming just one more pluralistic display case of market society on the other? That's kind of how I break down the two poles of the crisis, the two dark tones. And in response to that, two heuristic possibilities come to mind: perhaps rather than seeing usership on the one hand and the imperatives of market society on the other as the bogeymen of the museum's "vertical dignity"—those two strange bed-fellows that would break down the "vertical dignity of the museum"—, we might better analyze them as embodying powerful instruments of estrangement—throwing into question the museum's spontaneous self-understanding, offering a foothold in elaborating new practices of de-subjugation. Powerful instruments of estrangement and de-subjugation: that sounds like the kind of museum I want to use!

Conferences like this are opportunities for making broad, and bold, conceptual proposals. And occasions for trying out heuristic diagnostic tools -- because only the basis of a renewed analysis of the situation can these proposals really develop as something other, and more, than mere addenda on the existent. So my approach here will be two-tiered. On one hand, I will propose that curatorship needs to make way for usership as a form of engagement with art that both neutralizes and overcomes the existent oppositions between curatorship-spectatorship, laying bare the terms of their antinomy. On the other hand, I will try to deconstruct the consensual and misguided critique of

neoliberalism that has become the "spontaneous ideology" of the contemporary global intelligentsia who are wont to muster it to disqualify usership and cling to entrenched expert privilege. It's not that I'm siding by any means with neoliberalism, but I think that the type of critique of it only serves to shore up already deeply entrenched expert privilege and it's ultimately a losing bound. New dynamics and languages of observation cannot afford to fall back on traditional schemas of collective norms.

Museums are of course sites of many modes of relationality. With the "deactivation of art's aesthetic function", we can observe that artist talks, panels, reading rooms, documentation centers no longer so much serve to enhance exhibitions as the showcase par excellence where art "takes place" where it is activated, performed; increasingly, they displace and even replace exhibitions, which become just one more option amongst others for the activation and performance of art. Of course that's a huge critical problem to crises for the physical architecture of spaces where art takes place. Some artists continue to make objects in keeping with the aesthetic paradigm of art; but many more only do so because the architecture and infrastructure of museums—the physical architecture, to be sure, but even more so, the conceptual architecture—encourages them to format their work in this way, often against their emergent intuitions.

Some museums, and some art-critical ideologues, have tried to square this circle by introducing the concept of "participation", a defanged category often fattened up and readied for market with adjectives like "free". "Free participation", I'm sure you read that in gallery guides. Usership, on the other hand, although it might seem to be a synonym of participation is not broadly admitted in the conceptual lexicon of museology—or indeed anywhere else in expert society. Because usership names a broad category of political subjectivity that has emerged in our society over the past ten or fifteen years, and stands opposed to three deeply entrenched conceptual institutions in our society: spectatorship, expertise, and ownership. To which, for the purposes of our discussion today, we can add the transversal category of curatorship—the expert desperately seeking to mediate between the imperatives of ownership and the hobbled desires of spectatorship, however "emancipated", it may be described in the works of some writers. Usership names a category of engagement, of cognitive privilege (if one may call it that), of those whose repurposing of art is neither that of a spectator, an expert nor an owner.

Let's take an example: Curatorship, broadly speaking, has accustomed itself, and indeed the rest of us as well, to seeing art in terms of "event".

Exhibitions, publications, manifestos, movements, artworks -- indeed, art itself -- are seen as events. It is perhaps this masculinist, nominative notion of art as event that is most conclusively challenged by the everyday perspective of usership. Since events never exist in the present, but are forever on the horizon, or ontologically stable in hindsight, to premise curatorship of them is to accord oneself the luxury of being able to contemplate them or wait for them to occur –, to "own" them, as that despicable saying goes. Usership shares none of this outlook; users always and only play away games—they don't have their own field. And yet they can't wait for the event; events are for owners, and the users know that, no matter what, it will never be all theirs.

These insights into perspectives that appear self-evident are made possible only from the point of view of usership. The challenge for museums, and curatorship, is to come to share those heuristic viewpoints, rather than seeing usership as the unwashed category of the Other. In that respect someone reasonably asked me: what spectatorship is to the event, usership is to what? And the answer to that question is: the everyday—because without an understanding of the everyday there would be no way to account for the occurrence of the events at all. And it is this deep churning and grinding away in the shadows of events that usership takes place. And that's what gives usership an emancipatory potential and makes it a dialectical category—because it gives it the other side of the sword—it also is a potentially instrumentable category.

This is the critique of course made from the perspective of expert culture: "users are not to be trusted because they're vested with self-interest". This is also what would distinguish usership from that other great universalist collective subject—known as the proletariat. The proletariat had that worm's eye view on history, and gave it that unique perspective that both made it powerless and empowered it as the only potential agent to change society: "We are nothing, let us be all", as the International says. Usership is absolutely not this type of category. Usership, as I say, always plays on the other team's side. But at the same time they can't wait, they cannot afford to wait for that moment of transformation.

That opening up to usership (which of course becomes urgent in an era of user-generated content and value, and where usership has become the primary site of surplus value extraction in 2.0 capitalism) will be my proposal. But that proposal needs to take account of its own conditions of historical possibility. Usership is very much a double-edged sword: what is the other edge? The crisis (ah yes, the crisis!) offers an opportunity to

rethink the conceptual edifices and vocabularies inherited from the twentieth century. And, parenthetically, about the question of vocabularies, I think that what I'm talking about here today is an example of a much broader problem.

Ultimately the problem that we are facing intellectually is that we need to rethink our conceptual lexicon. Because the paradox is that the lexical toolbox is not incomplete, it's certainly not empty. In fact it's perfectly full and the tools are in perfect working order. There's no problem. We have words for everything. They're just the wrong words for the emergent intuitions, which they can only designate by twisting them and formatting them in a different way. So, for example, when we spontaneously suppose that a synonym or the name for the relationality to words are "spectatorship" or "the public" or "the audience" and so on, we are making extremely profound normative judgements, and that type of vocabulary which we inherited from the previous century, and which worked perfectly to describe the artistic intuitions of that century, are deeply failing now to name these types of relationalities and new types of productivity and so on.

But just what kind of crisis is this? With respect to the challenges facing curatorship, it is certainly fruitful to insist upon the epistemic and conceptual underpinnings. But in and of themselves, these would never have pushed institutions toward such a fundamental overhaul. It is not even just an economic crisis—it is the crisis brought on by the triumph of neoliberalism and the advent of free-market society; that great transformation that took place some years ago and that hasn't yet moved towards the end-point of its agenda. Regrettably, though understandably, neoliberalism has become the catch-all term that we tend to apply to everything and everybody we really, really dislike. Institutions, political agendas, even individual behaviors, inasmuch as we find them particularly uncongenial, are apt to be stigmatized as infected by the neoliberal logic that has upturned the way our world has always functioned, reconfiguring the relationships between the individual and the collective, shaking all the institutions upon which it is founded (the State, the school, the family, the law and of course the Museum).

A lot of attention has been devoted to this subject, but regrettably it has produced an unforeseeable consensus—eliminating cleavages between otherwise very disparate political sensibilities—around a basic lamentation: neoliberalism has eroded the logic of "community" in the name of individuality and particular self-interest, which of course is why usership can so immediately be described as embedded with neoliberalism. By this logic, disinterested spectatorship, as Kant put it, and it made it the complement to this notion of

purpose / dis-purpose, and the autonomous museum of which it is a linchpin, has yielded to, for instance—usership.

A whole vocabulary has been developed to describe this situation, whereby what is seen as negative is anomie, deregulation, disorder, the breakdown of society, and what is to be done is the restoration of social bonds, and giving meaning to collective institutions. But speech acts of this kind describe literally nothing; they establish an ideology and cosmovision—one which has put progressive theory in the most crippling of all possible situations: that of talking the talk of order, of the State, of regulation, of normativity—an utter inversion of its historical values. This is a situation we should never have found ourselves in; one that we need to break free from immediately; but one that was brought on by our absolute un-readiness to contend with the originality of the neoliberal revolution.

In the same years that he was formulating his thoughts on usership (for instance, in *The Uses of Pleasure*, the second volume of his *History of Sexuality*), Michel Foucault undertook a thorough analysis of neoliberalism in his 1978-79 seminar famously published under the title *Birth of Biopolitics*. Many commentators have sought to describe Foucault's interpretation as testimony to a liberal turn in his thought late in his life. And to be sure there is an evident fascination in his analysis for neoliberalism as a body of thought that breaks with any existent paradigm, defining the market-form alone as a valid framework. He painstakingly dissociated neoliberalism from conservative or reactionary ideologies; he relativized the concept of freedom (and consequently of "natural law") in neoliberal thought, insisting that the key concept was plurality, not freedom—which is very important as well when we see how that might play itself within the aesthetic decision-making in museums—and the market-form was the only mode of regulation suited to the fundamental diversity of contemporary forms of existence. But where was Foucault going with this and how can it help us make room for usership?

Take the infamous claim: "Society does not exist", that many read as a kind of battle cry against socially inspired institutions and reforms; or more precisely, a performative statement of neoliberalism's utopia. In another respect, it is a terse expression of the very type of perception that Foucault was seeking to put forward in his analysis of the increasingly local, sectorial, differential, partial forms of power struggles—including those waged in the name of users of institutions or services –, that could not be subsumed to broader more totalizing, or universalist models, and indeed could only gain visibility in distinction to them. In

virtue of this "specific visibility", and the plurality of struggles, Foucault put forward the figure of the "specific intellectual" as opposed to the universal intellectual (a figure well known to Marxism, psychoanalysis and of course art criticism) whose self-styled role it was to clarify particular struggles in the name of Justice, the coming Revolution, Historical process, always with capital letters.

Foucault refused this permanent temptation to resignify, recode and recolonize sectorial struggles through unitary discourses. This is what we might describe as Foucault's radical pragmatism—and it is what links his interest, or fascination, with the heuristic power of the neoliberal paradigm to his theorization of the category of usership. Because no theory—contemporary theory of usership, although it's a dramatically undertheorized field—can afford to sideline Foucault's important work on that subject. Quote from Foucault: "Intellectuals have grown accustomed to working not in the "universal", the "exemplary", the "just-and-the-true for all", but in determinate sectors, in those precise spots where they are situated either by their professional conditions of work, their conditions of life (housing, hospital, asylum, laboratory, university, family or sexual relations). They definitely gained a far more concrete and immediate awareness of the struggles. And they encountered problems which were "specific", "not universal", often different from those of the proletariat or the masses."

This leads us directly to the usership challenge to contemporary curatorship. But it should be clarified immediately that Foucault's scepticism toward totalizing theories and the experts that determine them is anything but depoliticized. His whole point was to free thought from the myths and attitudes, the mythologies that inhibited it from being at once radical and effective (obsessions with coherency, collective values, and so on) by preventing it from grasping struggles in their singularity. And in that respect, it is a starting point for reinventing a politics of emancipation. In the same way, his reconstruction of neoliberalism was not an end in itself -- though he was probably so astounded by its radicality, that he vacillated between shock and awe. He suggested that we see in the fictional character of "homo economicus" a powerful device of denaturalization, forcing us to break with analyses that are nothing but pleonasm of the world itself.

It is a strategy, a theoretical practice that makes it possible to see what institutions like museums might look like if in lieu of expert culture and the upholding of "vertical dignity", they dared to make way for usership. Usership of course, as Foucault sees it, and as he describes it in *The Uses of Pleasure*, is that space of play that exists

between an extremely codified existence and the uses, the way in which those norms are actually embodied and played out. It's, as I say, a kind of profane subjectivity, and indeed, usership is synonymous with profanation, because as one of Foucault's greatest and most successful disciples has argued, Giorgio Agamben, the notion of profanation means quite simply restoring something which had been removed to the realm of the sacred, restoring it to the realm of usership. And of course this is nowhere better dramatized, in a certain sense, than in the spirit of museology.

What would a museum premised not on curatorship but usership actually look like? Would it be vandalized? That's the fear. You let the users in and they'll misuse it, they'll abuse it. I'm not discounting this fact. How could the differentiated interests of the community of users be reconciled or even coordinated? Because we're not talking about a class that has a universal point of view and a definable self-interest, we're talking about a cluster of users. What would be the meaning of such a museum be? And what would the owners think? These are all fascinating questions, but funnily enough we don't think to raise them with respect to, say, language itself, though in his user-based theory of language, Ludwig Wittgenstein famously and quite definitively demonstrated that there is no meaning whatsoever in language outside that which the community of users negotiate collectively. There is no correct use outside collective usage. And we don't describe this as a neoliberal conception of language.

Aren't museums great mansions of language, which though they have served to house spectacle, events and celebrate ownership, can only be meaningful (that is, full of meaning) by making way for usership? So I hope we'll have some opportunity now for some exchange around these ideas.

Questions & Answers

Stephen Wright

Question Dieter Roelstraete: I really liked the point you made about, according to you, figuring new types of relationality, and, a brief introductory question perhaps on my part: I'd like you to talk a little bit about the relation really between usership and consumership—so use and consumption—and how do you understand these overlap and diverge. And then another thing, just a remark: I don't know where I read this, a little while ago, or just heard it somewhere, but it seems the number of slight 'vandalism' cases or damage inflicted on artworks has gone up quite dramatically in museums around the world since the advent of the touchscreen.

We're accessing so much information today by a return to tactility, you know, touching our screens and I thought it was a kind of an interesting paradox because, of course the tactile seems so incredibly primitive—but if it again becomes the channel through which we access information, then obviously touch is going to return as a very important sense in the experience of the world, including museums and one of the things that I found interesting about that incident is that, museums certainly should be aware of the fact that we are that, 2.0 culture or 2.0 capitalism is a much more sensuous one than a previous stage. That's just a kind of anecdote that maybe could float around a little bit, but in the first instance I'm interested in your reply to this notion of consumership.

Stephen Wright: Right. I've always thought that it would be paradoxical and eminently unfair for expert culture to, within us consumer society, to stigmatize people for being consumers. But that's somehow part of the vertical dignity, I think, of expert culture: is to use every means possible to dismiss usership and to describe it first of all as a form of consumerism, but that was actually quiet brilliantly challenged, a generation ago, by Michel de Certeau, who in his work around consumerism showed that consumerism was anything but a passive form of relationality, but something which was itself very productive of meaning.

I think that, we can make the question a little bit nastier by describing usership not in terms of consumerism but in terms of 'prosumerism'. Because, after all, that's the way... A prosumer is a kind of a consumer who is actively complicit in creating the consumerist subjectivity, from which value can then be extract. So first of all you produce the value and then you have it self-extracted, in a certain respect. Yeah, that's true: that the usership emerges at the moment that 'prosumerism' does, and I think that, to come to the second

part of your question, in a 2.0 Culture there is that overlap, and I think that's what makes usership also an interesting dialectical category. But I think the real debate is: what will 3.0 Culture look like? It's not so far away, but right now it exists in the form of a public debate, and I think that these thoughts here on usership, and of course certainly the debate on escaping the capture of 'prosumerism' is definitely part of that debate.

Question Nicole Smythe-Johnson: I want to say first that I think it was a really, really interesting talk. Unsettling—but in a good way. It's something that I often think about in terms of trickster narratives, or trickster politics. I don't know if that's something near or familiar with the whole idea of radical pragmatism. That's another way of thinking about it. My question though is: there are two things that you said about usership, that I was hoping you could unpack. The first thing is: you said: what spectatorship is to the event, usership is to the everyday. If you could just talk a little bit more about that. And you also said a number of times that usership cannot wait, cannot afford to wait, and I find that really interesting. I think I know what you're saying but I would like if just could expand on that a bit.

Stephen Wright: Maybe it would be clearer—the relationship between usership and the everyday—as it opposes disinterested spectatorship with respect to the event. Let me say this first of all: the notion of disinterested spectatorship emerges in Kant's political writings when he talks about the importance of having a distance towards political events, and the event that he chooses is the French Revolution in order to better evaluate it, so the perspective of the participant would not provide any kind of quality insight, politically speaking for Kant. It was only this form of disinterested spectatorship that would provide that. That's extremely well analyzed, by Hanna Arendt in her writings on Kant's political theories. Perhaps I should have said this: the perspective of usership is a southern perspective. It's a southerly perspective as opposed to the more northerly perspective of expert culture. And I say that in an attempt to de-territorialize, or sunder from its geographical fixings, this notion of North and South, and to make it into a kind of a political opposition.

Usership is inherently embedded in relations. There is no such thing and there cannot be a notion of disinterested usership, nor is usership about the production of events. In a sense it's about escaping that kind of performative capture and working within the everyday, because as I mentioned and

you point out, there is this sense of an 'urgency'. Users intervene in those situations where—they speak out—in those situations where things become intolerable. But where the intolerable necessitates immediate kind of action: action that, even if we're not talking about very, very dramatic events. We're just talking about everyday events. But where there is no time to follow the logic provided by expert culture but to grapple with and tackle those issues in a very kind of hands-on way, tactile way, on the ground.

It seems paradoxical to say that is linked to a kind of cognitive privilege, but there is a privilege, or there is at least a kind of an epistemic insight in that, that expert culture itself can never possess. The expert, the urbanist who works for the city hall and decides the bus route number 481 must go on this exact route because that's, after much study, is exactly the route that would be more useful for the passengers. That expert, despite her best intentions—there is always something that he or she cannot know about the person who every morning at five thirty, gets on that bus to go to their work. So, in a sense, it's that perspective from which usership speaks in its subaltern voice.

Question Charles Esche: Thanks very much. I want to try to pick up or, perhaps pause on one sentence that you said which, I think, maybe was slightly quickly said, at least to me. Which was that you said at one point that art's aesthetic function was deactivated, or has been deactivated, which is quite a grand statement to make in a group full of museums, and it's well-worth imagining as well. My question really relates this idea: the function that art has, and in a sense, what function does art have under a regime of usership, because in some ways we switch the question of the function from the work, which is then enjoyed, in disinterested spectatorship, by the viewer, to the user, containing the agency, in a sense, the agency to make use of these things. But these things, being art, also have a particular agency, and that agency is traditionally aesthetic, which has been deactivated. So therefore, what is the... what is the usability, the function, of the art under this regime?

Stephen Wright: Great question! I'll better write it down so I'll make sure to answer it... To say that the art's aesthetic function has been deactivated of course is not to say that... Let me qualify it this way: it obviously hasn't across the border been deactivated—"l'oin s'en faut" you know—it's aesthetic function seems or appears to be continuing to triumph. But what is the type of user-driven practices that are not premised around spectatorship and event, almost inherently have deactivated their aesthetic function, it seems to me, and that aesthetic function, of course, has been taken up, right across the border, by many other forms of

social processes. It's been taken up, famously by the entertainment industry and advertising, but there's even an, you know, an anesthetization of... the aesthetic function place a massive role where used to be specific to art, and exclusive to it, in some respects, has become extremely generalized.

Now, that becomes an option in art, but an art that is not premised on spectatorship, has no cause to activate its aesthetic function. Of course, there are aesthetics that are attached too, but the aesthetic function of art has been put into parenthesis.

Now, maybe we need, in this case, to look very quickly at a couple of examples. What practices are premised on usership? Because we're not talking here about useful art, but art that engages with the usership. Well, those practices, immediately or at this point in any case, are not taking place within the performative framework of museums, so there are not being framed as art. In fact their coefficient of artistic visibility is negligible. Only when they are re-territorialized into a museum, they are activated as art, their specific visibility—to use a term that I used in the paper—, their specific visibility... parenthetically: Donald Judd talked about specific objects in the 1960s—and I think that is a way to transcend the opposition between sculpture and painting, and I think that today what has been transcended through the question of specific visibility, which has become, I guess, the nuts and bolts of art, is this question of art's aesthetic function. How is something, under what conditions of possibility of use is something perceived as art?

So the question your asking then is: what use is that?, what does art actually bring to the conversation?, what does it bring to the table?, why shouldn't it just be a house-painting outfit? Why wouldn't it just be someone holding political office? Why wouldn't it just be an absolutely wonderful online archive? Why does it have to be both the thing and the proposition of the thing?

Well, I think that the answer to that question is that otherwise, we will lose art altogether. I think that one thing that's implied by this... and I think that may be it's a more massive statement than to say that art's aesthetic function has been deactivated, it's to say that... you know, art has this types of practices of escaped ontological capture as art. They are no longer ontologically art. They have a certain coefficient of art, to use an expression that was once coined by Marcel Duchamp, in a different sense. So the question is not so much is it or is it not art. So then we can't even really say, what is its agency as art, but how much art is there? What is its coefficient of art? How much art are we talking about here? What is that specific injection of art? And that has enormous consequences in terms of...

I think this is what protects these types of practices which have escaped a certain kind of, provisionally, escaped that kind of institutional capture, and have penetrated the realm of the real—to use an expression that Tania Bruguera used yesterday morning —... penetrated the realm of the real, dropping their coefficient of specific visibility as art, but in order that they're not be just new fangled forms of altruism, which has really played this participatory aesthetic, relational aesthetics, that had a triumph about twenty years ago, where artists were bringing, you know, the good word to the poorest of the poor, invariably. In order, that art not fall into that trap, in order that it engage in the realm of the real on an equal footing, it needs to... I think escape, it needs to deactivate that aesthetic function and it needs to deactivate that ontological stability. But it's a big question.

Question Kian Chow Kwok: I think you really have hit the nail on its head by saying that defensiveness of museums, in the way a museum is predicated on these tripartite relations of ownership and its particularity, and of course expertise, which is often expressed as curatorship. So this is the foundation of the museum, and museum is being very defensive now because this is reduced to an expertise, that is not recognized as such, in the neoliberal economy. My main question here is: by shifting this to a notion of usership, does it really change the regime of the, the way the legitimacy of museums can be constructed, within any community? Now, this leads to the question of neoliberalism, where perhaps in a European perspective and so on it is seen very much as that extreme form of liberalism. whereby this erosion of the community, and therefore, you know, individual liberty but more intense economic liberty is taken as the most important.

However, we are also seeing the emergence of liberalism that emphasizes on the role of collectivity, liberalism that emphasizes on governmentality as opposed to an opening out of 'economic freedom' or. So, what that translates into the museum's development now, will be that... the kind of legitimacy that a museum is predicated on, fundamentally does not change. Because, if is not collection, it becomes events; if it is not spectacle then it becomes experience, you know, it goes on and on—you do not change the fundamental relations between the function of a museum within a social context.

So therefore, how do we argue if we forgo the kind of expertise or, whatever museum foundation that we are talking about and—in saying that we now move towards usership—which is very much understood as a computer term in general usage—which is about system. You are a user of a system and therefore you return to the social

structure and social system, and we're looking really at neoliberal government mentality, a kind of new centralism that is just imagined. It does not fundamentally change how a museum will operate in the new neoliberal world. I don't know how you'd like to respond to that. Thank you very much.

Stephen Wright: Well, I think if I agreed with you—that there was nothing that we can do, that ever change the operations of museums—I wouldn't have accepted this invitation, so I can't say that I agree with you. Although... and I gave an example of usership around 2.0 Culture, which is of course is associated with digital culture. I think primarily when I think of usership I think of usership not of a system but of language. I think of users as users of language. And if you wanted to say, I mean there will be in keeping with your argument, that no matter what you do with language it's still language.

That's in a way true but nothing much it's been said because there is an incredible diversity of things that can be done within that house of many mansions which is language and its usage. So, of course, I would stick to my claim that by making way for usership a very substantive change would be made actually in the operations, and I think what you called the effectiveness, of museums, because I don't see it as that sort of attempt to square the circle by bringing in, participation, getting people involved and so on. It's not about that, it's making way for something that is a very powerful and potentially very dangerous form of subjectivity, collective subjectivity itself.

So, I think that it's something that is entirely different than anything that has been tried in the museum. I didn't get into the history of ideas that are the building blocks of these conceptual edifices. But I think that I mentioned in passing two of them: the notion of a purposeless purpose and the notion of disinterested spectatorship. Those premised the way museums operate, the way the system is. Now, usership challenges directly both of those, because it challenges something that it's based on 'purposeless purpose', because it's entirely premised on purpose, and it directly challenges disinterested spectatorship, because it's interested and it's not spectatorship. So, the institutions are going to shake it, going to scramble things up and I can't see how that would just be tantamount to allowing—more it changes more it's the same. I think that would actually bring about a kind of a fundamental shift in relations.

And just let me add perhaps... that it's only reasonable to make that shift at a time where more and more artistic practices are taking place outside—not only outside the museum but outside the performative framework of art as such —, and so unless we want to lose those practices to

posterity, some ever has to be made to accommodate them, and not merely to capture them but to offer them some form of attraction.

Question Luiz Guilherme Vergara: I really appreciate your presentation and it followed-up very well with Tania yesterday, with 'Aest-ethics', and I think it's a great contribution for us to think in terms of this change. I'm interested in—when you mention that culture, 2.0 Culture—and other examples you bring. It seems like we are struggling in a kind of still binary thinking. 2.0 could be like a binary thinking. It's always something against the other something. And so... the usership is a great way to synthesize the death of the author, or the of making a 'plura-author', which is interesting too, and brings back what do you brought with Foucault in "Freedom and Sovereignty".

So, what I would like to—maybe it's part of our tension of this moment—to move on beyond dichotomy to what could be called 'tripartite ethics'. And the tripartite ethics could be an offer for, still, we are interested in the kind of experiences, events, of purposeless purpose, and we still need this kind of combination, which is purposeless purpose, you know, is in the everyday life... How to bring this to the moments, events...

So when you also criticize the sense of event in the way it creates spectatorship and not usership. you also brought the sense of meaning—language inside, within the users and community. So, the tripartite, this ethics or that could offer a sense of of creativity, and a sense of, heterogeneity and solidarity. So, that's what may be the 3.0 Culture. How to move beyond this kind of trap all the time, into the timer we "are", always defending something new against the other. And the tripartite, you know, it's a little bit of Foucault in the micropolitics, a little bit of Michel de Certeau as you referred, it's a kind of a creativity in the land of the everyday. And how we—our culture is already offering possibilities for that being in a kind of a reverse of causality between de-territorialization and re-territorialization all the time, micro-events or micro-geographies, inside and outside the museum.

Stephen Wright: Thank you for the comment. It's kind of a continuation rather than a question. But, I'm entirely with you when you recognize that usership is one of those attempts to breakdown the binaries in which we find ourselves confounded. Perhaps I should have insisted on that more, but thank you for doing it, is that... Usership names not only the category of what would be place spectatorship: the category of the public. It encompasses also... it breaks down the dichotomy between production and reception, and it names, if you like, the community of the stakeholders in art's existence, those people who are part of the art-sustaining environment.

And so, yes, artists... are very much users of art, as we all are, although of course to say that today, to say "yeah, I'm an art user", it's ok to say you're not art-lover, but to say you're not art user, of course smacks of philistinism, which only serves really to underscore the lingering aristocratic values that are perpetuated by the art critical establishment. As for the... your tripartite ethics... sure, I mean, why not? I don't want to, you know, riff on that right here, but I think that the three points you make—creativity, heterogeneity and solidarity—are really key components of what usership is. Foucault, in a kind of an offhanded remark, mentioned that we're all governed—and as such—in solidarity.

So, was a kind of a relationship to power, and that was made in the context of his discussion of usership, one of those extremely heterogeneous categories. As for creativity, that's a term... perhaps I'd be a little bit more cautious about, because it may be that, when I said that art is deactivated as aesthetic function, I think it's also, probably quite definitively, renounced being the site of creativity, a sort of 'par excellence' in society. I think these types of practices that are usership-oriented, or usership-driven—3.0 art—are, in a sense, de-creative rather than... So I might add de-creativity to that tripartite analysis.

Case Study 3

Rodrigo Moura

Biography: Rodrigo Moura is a curator, editor and art writer. He is deputy director of art and cultural programs and curator at Instituto Inhotim (Minas Gerais, Brazil) since 2004, where he played an important role in the acquisition of works by artists such as Artur Barrio, Ernesto Neto, Iran do Espírito Santo, Jorge Macchi, and Victor Grippo, among others. In the collection development of Inhotim, he also prioritized the acquisition of works by younger artists, such as Alexandre da Cunha, Marcellvs L and Mateo López. In 2010, he curated the Miguel Rio Branco solo pavilion in Inhotim. For Inhotim, Moura commissioned new site-specific projects by Jorge Machi and Rivane Neuenschwander, opened in 2009. He was an assistant curator (2001-2003) and a curator (2004-2006) at Museu de Arte da Pampulha, in Belo Horizonte, where he organized solo shows by Damián Ortega, Ernesto Neto, Renata Lucas, José Bento and Fernanda Gomes, among more than 20 solo, site-specific and commissioned exhibitions. He also coordinated Bolsa Pampulha, a grant program devoted to young artists.

Claudia Andujar

Good morning everyone. It's a great pleasure to be here this morning with you. Thank you so much to Ivo Mesquita for the warm introduction. Thank you so much, *CiMAM* team. Jenny, and thank you so much Zdenka, for the kind invitation. It's such an honor to be here speaking to you today.

So I decided to follow Dieter a little bit in terms of improvisation and I abandoned the very sort of predictable, in a way, paper that I had prepared beforehand for you today, and I decided to speak about the same project, but more from an improvised perspective. So this may or not take twenty minutes of your time, but I'm looking forward for questions and answers, because I decided today to talk about a project that is in progress and this is just another kamikaze aspect of my personality, so this is... I will introduce you... Actually this is the very first time that I'm speaking in public about a project that I'm working on, for maybe three years now, with a photographer based in Sao Paulo named Claudia Andujar, that some of you may be familiar with, some of you may not be familiar with... Anyway, she has just now a few works in display at the Museum of Modern Art, next door, so that's also a good chance to see her work, both in the collection show and the first-floor show.

So, I will start with some biographical notes about Claudia and then I will show you a little bit of her work and talk about how I've been structuring the project for her permanent pavilion in Inhotim, which is this project that I brought to you today, and then hopefully I can speak a little bit about

Inhotim as a whole or how this particular project relates to the collection, to the building of the collection, to the themes that are very important to the collection, and then I really look forward to hear from you.

So I'll start with a little epigraph: "There are no static myths". Claudia Andujar was born in Neuchâtel, Switzerland, named Claudine Haas, on June 12, 1931—although some records give the date as the 6th of the same month—the daughter of Siegfried Haas, a Hungarian Jew, and Germaine Guye Haas, a Swiss Protestant. The family soon moved to Oradea, in Transylvania, then after years of Hungarian domination, they incorporated to Romania under the name of Nagyvárad. It was there that the couple had met a few years before, when Germaine had arrived there to work as a governess in the house of the Siegfrieds family. In Oradea, Claudine had a happy early childhood, with memories of Gypsies and their bears, sweet pies and music. Those years were interrupted by the conflicts between her parents and their separation. Her childhood idyll declined even further with the growing threat of the Nazi pogroms, which in 1944 resulted in the deportation and murder of her father and his entire family, in the Nazi concentration camps. In the company of her mother and stepfather, Claudine revisited and came to live in the house of her father's family, in one of the most haunting moments of a tumultuous biography intrinsically linked with the history of the 20th century. When she entered the house, the table was

set, untouched. Her relatives had not had the time to prepare for their departure.

With the imminent arrival of the Russian troops in Oradea, Claudine started a long process of relocation. First, the girl accompanied her mother to Vienna, where the latter fell sick and Claudine reported daily to the Gestapo. They ended this several-month-long trip in the natal Neuchâtel. However, the Hungarian Claudine did not adapt to the Swiss lifestyle and after two years set off for New York in search for new opportunities, following her paternal family's trail of emigration. The American dream began in the house of relatives in the Bronx and eventually led to the tightening of her interest for art, beginning a career as a painter, and also to her marriage to a young Swiss-Spanish man, Julio Andújar, whose surname she kept. Meanwhile, Germaine went to live her American dream in other latitudes –her mother –, having arrived in São Paulo on a yet undetermined date. In 1955 Claudia Andujar boarded a ship bound for that same South American city, to meet up with her mother. In Brazil, Andujar continued with her vocation for art, specifically through photography, which she worked with throughout a career of nearly fifty years. She has lived in Sao Paulo ever since.

So I want to show you this first image. This is the cover of *Realidade*, it was a Brazilian big reportage magazine published throughout the '60s and part of the '70s. In late 1970 Andujar had her first contact with the Yanomami Indians while she was working on a large report for *Realidade* magazine. One of the images produced during her trip was the cover for the magazine's 67th issue, but the story also marked the end of Andujar's career as a photojournalist. This initial episode developed into an intense experience of living among the Yanomami, which resulted into an archive of thousands of images made throughout the '70s and led to the artist effective political engagement with the indigenous cause in regards to rights to land and traditional culture.

So, this is another publication also from the early '70s. It's a *Time Life* book, published in 1973, in which Claudia collaborated with a few chapters on nature, on landscape and nature of the Amazon. So this one is like an entry page. And this is the first book that was published after this long immersion among the Yanomami Indians that happened between 1971 and 1977, roughly. Actually this is sort of a legendary book that was an artist book, and was actually the result of collaboration between Andujar and George Love—then her husband –. And, so these are some spread views from the book where you can see both, the work of Andujar and the work of George Love. So she mostly concentrated in photographing traditional

life and he concentrated in photographing nature and landscape.

That was the first time she actually published any of this work in 1978, since she was basically living inside, in the Brazilian state of Roraima between 1971 and 1978, so this was the first time that it seemed to circulate, and in the interim, after she published the magazine cover for the first time in 1971 and this book in 1978, those were the years she started to take more often and longer trips to the Yanomami population, first in the state of Amazonas, then in the state of Roraima; first with a Guggenheim fellowship that allowed her to go on a funded fellowship to do this first work in '71-'72, then she returned again with a renovation of the same fellowship, and then after '74 she started to be there for longer sojourns until she was actually, not really asked to leave, but kicked-out from that part of Brazil by the military dictatorship under the accusation she was a CIA spy... So these are some single images from the book.

This is another book published in the same year by Andujar. This is a solo work by her. It's called *Yanomami*, also published by the same publishing house, where she concentrated in portraiture, in portraits of this indigenous population. So after that, after publishing these two books in the late '70s, actually she started to—and after being not allowed to go any more to live among the Yanomami—she promoted a quite radical shift in her practice, and she started to be an activist for the indigenous cause as I said before, by basically creating one of the first NGOs to work specifically with a campaign to create a national park, which was something that didn't exist before, that was called CCPY –Comissão pela Criação do Parque Yanomami –, and this is an example of the bulletin they published for many years.

This is actually where she was mostly making her photographs circulate then. So following the 1988 Brazilian Constitution, which changed the regulatory mark for indigenous rights to lands in this country, Claudia, Carlos Aquino and the other collaborators set themselves in an even stronger campaign to create the park—Parque Yanomami –, which eventually happened in 1992. So, this is a leaflet, the cover image of a small pamphlet that was published on the occasion of an exhibition in 1989 at Museu de Arte de Sao Paulo (MASP) that was called "Genocídio do Yanomami: Morte do Brasil"—I think it translates itself –, and, so this was also... I think it's very interesting to see how she was making these images circulate and how she was not really—her name doesn't appear on the cover—so you can see that it's actually signed by the NGO. And this is how this piece that I didn't bring unfortunately, is the first systematic approach that she did in re-photography in her

archive in the late '80s by using color film and different sources of light, and she created a multi-screen installation that basically is the first attempt not also to re-photograph the archive, but to tell a narrative, a long narrative from her very beginning documenting traditional life and then to her activism, which is really mixed at a certain point and it's like the two sides of the same coin.

So this is another image from the same pamphlet. This is David Copenahua, a Yanomami, which was band in a merging leadership to this struggle they had for land, so... I'm showing this because it's how I started the research. It was really through the publications, and I think the publications are quite a telling, on how this practice comes from the field of documentary photography, or photojournalism if you will, to political engagement, and then to a reconstruction of this archive and different, like say, applications of this archive, both in favor of political causes, but also, as we are working in Inhotim—I'm not leaving this outside, of course –, to create an art pavilion, a permanent pavilion, a permanent collection of her work.

And this is where maybe I should make a little pause and tell you a little bit about how we've been structuring this project, which is basically... Well, everything is based on her archive, on this archive that comes from the early '70s to the mid '80s, mid to late '80s, and a little bit of early '90s. And, as some of you may know, in Inhotim we work on a commission to create new art projects and this was not very different, with this excessive material, because most of this material was never published before or printed before or exhibited before.

Since the early 2000s there have been important initiatives to make her work circulate more in Brazil. Certainly Galeria Vermelho in São Paulo has played a major role on that, and also Pinacoteca do Estado, where Ivo Mesquita is the director and was then a chief curator, organized her first exhibition in 2005. But anyway, this work has circulated very little and the idea behind the commissioning was to create a solid and ambitious body of photographs, of photographic prints that would constitute the permanent collection of her work in the collection of Inhotim, and that was where it all started, and that eventually led to the idea of creating a permanent pavilion to exhibit this collection.

But, of course, we're talking about printing five hundred prints, a hundred and thirty-five prints of color photographs, and the other ones, the black and white ones, so... Of course, such a pavilion could never be able to show the totality of this collection, so there was also a technical reserve, created for this part of this pavilion. The architectural design was delegated to a young practice

from Belo Horizonte, Arquitetos Associados, and complementing the permanent exhibition it's also the goal of this project to encourage and promote loans of this work for temporary exhibitions and to other museums. So we basically worked on a commission basis with Claudia that would entail a reinterpretation of her archive, but also to create a narrative that would somehow tell the story that I'm trying to tell you here today.

So, I prepared just one image from each of the chapters that we are separating the work into, and I'm sure these are very partial relations, it's just the way we found to navigate this vast archive. But, of course, as we created these categories, as we created these chapters, we also created a way to tell the story.

The exhibition would start with nature and landscape photographs. This is from a massive series that she did for the Time and Life commission—it was of course a commercial commission –, of aerial views of Rio Negro, in the state of Amazonas, and, so those were like these abstract compositions where she tried to guess forms in the way light was reflected on the water.

This is a little later, also aerial views from the Labrado region of the state of Roraima, in which she shows to be very interested in this idea of, sort of attributing animal qualities to vegetation and landscape. This is from another vast body of work of which we're printing around twenty-five photographs and it's a documentation of the flora.

So, when we think about Inhotim, we see a big potential for this project to really work as an interdisciplinary project and with a major education vocation, where contents from art, but also from the sciences, could be applied to this work and to the discussion with our audience.

This is from the very first role of film she shot in the Maturacá, the first Yanomami community she visited... This is from an on-going series of portraiture and body details of particulars. I think as she became very familiar with the life there, she became more and more interested in the bodily expression of this people and what it had of very particular, so she dedicated a great deal of her work to do body images. This is from shamanism. This is a Reahu... This is of course something she photographs a lot.

I'll just go through the images. Actually I had brought something very nice to read to you, from Claudia... And of course these categories didn't exist as such in the archive, and this is what makes this project very exciting, because we created this together and they existed in the work, but they were not completely spelled out. So there's a vast documentation of traditional knowledge happening in domestic situations in the communal houses in the Malacas, and of course weaving is a big part of

it.

There's so much more I wanted to say... This is from the Contact, which is another very important vein of the work... This is an army base in the north of Roraima... These are just writings that she would find along the road, and this is a big collection of documentation of signage of shops that would buy gold from illegal mining in Boavista, the capital of Roraima... And this is another writing, and it's the first graffiti that kids would do when they were getting alphabetized for the first time... And these are maps from the illegal mining.

And now we have to go, so I hope we can talk about this later, so thank you so much for your attention.

Case Study 4

Ravi Sundaram

Biography: In 2000 he founded the Sarai program along with Monica Narula, Jeebesh Bagchi, Ravi Vasudevan and Shuddhabrata Sengupta. Sundaram has co-edited the *Sarai Reader series*, *The Public Domain* (2001), *The Cities of Everyday Life* (2002), *Shaping Technologies* (2003), *Crisis Media* (2004), and *Frontiers* (2007). He is the author of *Pirate Modernity: Media Urbanism in Delhi* (Routledge, London 2009). *No Limits: Media Studies from India* has been published by Oxford University Press in December 2012. His writings have been translated into many languages. Sundaram's current work is on contemporary fear after media modernity. He has been a visiting Professor at the School of Architecture and Planning, Delhi, Princeton University, Johns Hopkins University, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor and the University of Oxford.

Intimating a post-national public: Sarai

In 2002, one of the many exhibits that curious visitors encountered during Documenta 11 was an installation called Opus, from India. Opus or Online Platform for Unlimited Signification, was a collaborative software programme whose design was inflected with the radical network utopianism of the free software community. Thus Opus' conceptual thrust summarised this well:

Opus enables you to view, create and exhibit media objects (video, audio, still images, html and text) and make modifications on work done by others, in the spirit of collaboration and the sharing of creativity. Opus is an environment in which every viewer/user is also invited to be a producer, and a means for producers to work together to shape new content. You can view and download material, transform it and then upload the material worked on by you back to the Opus domain.

With a specially created licence, Opus sought to open critiques of authorship, and models of property in the art world. A special OPUS initiated conference in Documenta 11 in July 2002 debated intellectual property, authorship and the art market. Emerging well before the like-everything frenzy of Web 2.0's soft liberalism, and the interface driven creative capitalism of today, OPUS was seen as a political-aesthetic intervention. More than anything OPUS was a public announcement of a new inactive in Indian contemporary art

OPUS was produced by the Raqs Media Collective who were co-initiators of Sarai a new

programme in Delhi, India. OPUS reflected the design of the Sarai initiative, which departed from many elements in India's postcolonial archive. The Sarai design was a self conscious departure from three constitutive elements of the postcolonial archive: the national allegory, the ruined museum, and an elusive public.

In the Indian elites embrace of Western modernity, beginning from the 19th century, there was always an anxiety, an imagined loss of a cultural past, demons thrust aside. This was what one writer called the unhappy, consciousness split consciousness of Asia's modernity, eager to join the West while glancing anxiously at its own, defeated residues. The cultural policy of the Indian regime after 1947 was filtered through nationalist pathologies of a fractured citizenship, a pathology further strengthened by the Partition of colonial India in 1947. The post-independent state sought to monopolize all institutions of cultural production, and set up an elaborate patronage system, many of which continue to wreck our lives in different ways. The old official model saw art and culture as vehicles to groom populations into a new national-cultural citizenship. Art and cinema were mobilised for their pedagogic and affective possibilities, managed by a host of intermediate state institutions. As an object of therapeutic culture and nurture by the state, the elusive national public became a project of permanent deferment—a category of both yearning and fear by state elites.

This anxiety crippled the public museum

from the outset. The National Gallery of Modern Art's unhappy and patchy trajectory since Indian independence in 1947, allegorises its still-born nature. Until globalisation and the Asian boom opened the floodgates after 2000, most private contemporary art museums remained signatures of the bourgeoisie's own modesty.

The main implication of all these post independence moves was to set up the state as the only authentic filter for any cultural politics. This led to the familiar critique of postcolonial reason by post independence writers: the regime was exorcised for an incomplete modernity, or berated for not intimating a genuine public sphere. A good part of this climaxed around the time of the public sphere discussions in the West. In his classic book the *Phantom Public Sphere* the writer Bruce Robbins summarises the mood at that time: "the list of writers that announce the decline, degradation, crisis or extinction of the public is long and steadily expanding. Publicness, we are told again and again and again, is a quality that we once had but have now lost and that we must somehow retrieve." The critique of postcolonial reason in India produced what the philosopher Wendy Brown calls a "wounded attachment." A dramatisation of the failure of the postcolonial State, only seemed to confirm its status as only reference as a possible cultural guarantor of public culture. In every sense this was a police order of culture, with careful location, place and language of alterity marked out. Only authorised interlocutors counted in the language of public culture.

Much of this was swept away by the forces of globalisation from the 1990s. Globalisation in India produced a new technological infrastructure. Much of this was based on proliferation and dispersal, low-cost, informality, piracy and indifferent to the rule of property and capital. Vast new networks emerged lined by low cost technological infrastructures—this was common in India as in the rest of the postcolonial world. This was a post-medial world, where large populations generated new multiplicities. All over the postcolonial world a new media geography has altered the image of the population, first theorised by Foucault in his *College de France* lectures.

These massive expansions of the newer media infrastructures have thrown the old control models of the regime into disarray: this is a population of potential media producers, not just an uneducated mass to be nurtured by the state for a 'genuine' enlightened citizenship.

In a recent essay the curator Irit Rogoff deploys the philosopher Michael Feher's notion of non governmental action to artists and political action occupying infrastructures. In the postcolonial contexts like India with modest state

economies, globalisation built a new technological infrastructure for artists and disrupted the old power of cultural elites. Here Documenta 11 marked a watershed in acknowledging this transition, all the Indian artists emerged out of this new technical infrastructure: video, photography, new media. And all had little connection to the earlier models of patronage and alterity produced by the older postcolonial archive.

Of these Opus represented a new technological sensibility, and a recognition of the dynamic potential or network collaboration. Much of this was developed in the design of Sarai, set up by a collective of 3 filmmakers(now artists), and two academics in 2000.

Sarai began its existence as a programme of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS). Founded in 1964, the CSDS is one of India's best-known independent research institutes, and has housed prominent dissenting intellectual voices.

Sarai's aim was to set up a public research and practice space on new media and urban life. The model argued for public, open models of collaboration as a way to address the new agendas of creativity and research and aimed to bring together people from diverse backgrounds, including artists, urban and media studies scholars, media practitioners, programmers and designers, and social activists. Present here was a strategy of conceptual proliferation, where the old institutional sites were bypassed, by building research/practice networks of distribution. Circulation was inflected with a production force, with new attachments and rescensions. The 'public' of Sarai ranged from art practitioners, students, scholars, and activists, people from working class areas where our labs are active, and ordinary citizens from all walks of life.

The setting up of Sarai as a collaborative research practice space was both a significant innovation and a calculated risk. Sarai's innovation was its attempt to transcend the classic divisions between the university and the city, between scholar, activist and artist, as also suggest an open collaborative model borrowed from the free software/open source movement that could disrupt traditional hierarchies of knowledge. Sarai's experiment in the year 2000 was to intimate a new public that emerged as a by-product of the changes globalisation period—a 'public' that is still in formation.

This was a design of distributed practice, that was post national, and comfortably international. The old pathologies of nationalism had no place in the international collaborative models after new media. Despite its strong local model Sarai's collaborations and discussion lists had almost fifty

percent international participants.

The design of distributed practice sought to transcend the dual crisis of the still born museum and the aporias of the old critiques of postcolonial reason. This design took technological infrastructure seriously, as a pragmatic and porous site for the deployment of new potentialities.

It is important to set this design in the framework of larger 20th century discussions of art and technology, and the post new media discussions in the 1990s, all of which the Sarai design overlapped with. As we are all familiar in the Artwork essay Benjamin speaks perceptively about the 'extension' of modern media after the arrival of print, with public forms of writing. "Thus," said Benjamin, "the distinction between author and the public is about to lose character." He cited particular practices of modernist and avant-garde art as evidence of a shift to a "play-form" of technology, the ability to engage with advanced technology in a nondestructive, sensory-reflexive, and collective form. Further, technology could generate a "therapeutic detonation" of mass psychoses, a radical sensory release. Benjamin's 'gamble with technology' as Miriam Hansen calls it, was set aside when postwar media industries seemed to integrate and normalize the very technologies in which the Artwork essay had placed so much hope.

Suddenly, with the arrival of technologies of video and new digital media in the 1980s, Benjamin's arguments in the Artwork essay seemed to resurface once again. Digital media's flexibility reveals an agnosticism about mediums, formats, delivery mechanisms, multiple screens and objects. With low cost production and parallel distribution circuits set in motion by video, the utopian energies that Benjamin had ascribed to cinema in the 1920s seemed to resurface once again with the new media experience. In the more optimistic readings of the 1990s, a global community of user-producers would share alternative content through peer-to-peer networks. User generated media would operate as a critical, creative resource for the present. Two decades later, it is clear that many of these yearnings, not unlike Benjamin's own hopes on cinema, have been proven to be largely overoptimistic.

The Sarai design in 2000 did not see new technologies as a redemptive hope, nor necessarily intimating a possible counter public. Rather technological infrastructure in a non western environment like India opened new conditions of possibility and insubordination to be grasped and articulated.

Added to the existing infrastructures new support systems were set up. In the first place the design supported a new network, by small grants and research support.

Sarai supported a new network of 400

independent researchers, artists and students all over India through fellowships and small grants. These infused energy into the network of collaboration, and concurrently generated a new archive as they deposited their research materials into a shared site.

There were critical reflections on the nature of the contemporary moment, by holding regular screenings and discussion of curated programmes of contemporary art, documentary and experimental films and video, and by acting as a convivial context for online and offline conversations through discussions, mailing lists and blogs in English and Hindi. In the early years of 2000 all this was very new.

Sarai produced media (video, audio, print, web) and contemporary art works, CDs, radio and software. Works produced at the Sarai Media Lab were regularly been exhibited in several international venues such as Documenta 11, and the Venice, Liverpool and Taipei Biennales.

Sarai produced 27 high-quality print publications, including books, in English and Hindi, with the flagship Sarai Reader series and Deewan-e-Sarai series, seeing print runs of 5000.

Apart from the print publications, Sarai has also produced 5 low-cost print packages (stickers, postcards, do-it-yourself broadsheets) with wide circulation in working-class neighbourhoods in Delhi, through a variety of other portable and flexible media forms such as handcarts fitted with sound systems that turn into an 'appropriate technology' neighbourhood radio transmitter, to wind-up 'bioscopes' that integrate moving still images and sound in an engaging manner. Approximately 35 media and contemporary art works were produced at the Sarai Media Lab.

The distributed design worked with free software, drawing as in the case of OPUS from the GPL licence.

Lets return productive proliferation inherent in the design. The OPUS licence had stated what it meant by a rescension:

Any work created through a modification, adaptation, addition, or use of an existing work within the OPUS project shall be considered as a Rescension. Each rescension shall stand in relational autonomy to every other rescension, and it shall not treated as a replacement of another work even if it modifies the reading of another work it shall instead have the status of an individual work created through an interactive process with other works.

Much of this work emerged after 2000 as a large public secret, with no large event-scenes in the public media, but articulated through multiplying publics online and offline. This was an a-visible rather than an invisible strategy, deliberate in the

design.

Proliferation made possible unauthorised interlocuters, signally new languages of disturbance and insubordination. This disjunction between a police order of culture, against creativity, and the articulation of unauthorised speech and practice may draw comparisons to Ranciere's writings. In fact it was Ranciere's Proletarian Nights, rather than his aesthetic writings that was known at that time to people in Sarai and appreciated.

More significantly the Sarai design did not draw from the debates on the publics and counter publics, nor European models of alterity, it was a specific intervention to address and seed multiplicities from a distributed model. The public realm in India faces a permanent crisis with neo liberal regimes, the still born public museum remains so. The model of distribution has influenced new art initiatives like CAMP in Mumbai, with its PADma initiative, and it is here that the future theatre of the postcolonial public will lie.

Questions & Answers

Rodrigo Moura and Ravi Sundaram

Question RM: I have a question to you about application, I guess... I couldn't follow everything because of language... But I thought it was extremely interesting and I was really struck by that diagram that you showed first and... I was just thinking in terms of my work. You know we are a very young museum and we come from a private collection with a public mission, since the beginning—but trying to more and more think itself as a museum, or one of the components of a bigger project that is very museological, in terms of holding a collection and showing this collection and, of course, research would be a very strong component—although we're not quite still there. So, I was just wondering in terms of your experience in collaborating with other institutions if this is something—because of the multiple connections, as far as understood—also to fund research that it's not directly connected, but it feeds a chain, so to speak? Can you talk a little bit about this?

Ravi Sundaram: I think our model was not to fund production. We funded research, because research was a very big point in the art and film-making and creative community. And the idea, you know, we addressed research, we weren't dealing with many institutions in the early years. We were part of an institution. We just gave money out to people who applied interesting ideas and created... You know, we gave a space, and producing an archive was part of this project. You had to make a new archive, and I think that was the key. So, institutions—we collaborate with a lot of institutions now—but the institution was not a site available for us then, specifically in India, and I would imagine many parts of the post-colonial

world.

Question RM: But I was not so much thinking about your platform, funding institutional research, but maybe collaborating in terms of the tools—your organizational tools, the methods and how do you encourage research and how do you identify what's relevant—do you know what I mean? The application of a model, rather than... Is there something you have collaborated with an institution in this sense?

Rodrigo Moura: No, no.

Question: I have a question for Rodrigo: What was the reason for which Claudia Andujar was not allowed to return to the Yanomami after she left? And then, the other question is: How would you compare the work of Claudia Andujar with other artists that at the time, more or less at the time, like Juan Downey or Lothar Baumgarten also worked on similar subjects with similar media?

Rodrigo Moura: That's very interesting. Of course I got to know the works of the three of them at the same time more or less, and I think there are different aspects. I think in Lothar's case—the works I know —, I think he really comes from an anthropological language, and I'm thinking on pieces like Unsettled Objects, where, you know, he talks from the perspective of collection, of the status of objects, of collecting... And, Juan Downey's work I'm not super familiar with but as I understand it... So, just to conclude with Lothar, I think that in pieces like Fragmento Brasil he's also trying to combine materials from three sources, like the drawings that the Yanomami produced, the photographs he took and the details from Eckhart's bird paintings... So I don't know, I think there's this idea of more mediation with other cultural sources.

With Juan I don't really know his work so well. I know a lot of documentation but sadly I didn't see the show that Julieta González curated in Mexico, but I know it from literature and I think there's this idea of giving the camera, you know, like sharing the platform of the image, that I think it's something very interesting.

There's a whole emergence of an indigenous cinema in Brazil, with *Vídeo nas Aldeias*, of course, but I think with Claudia there's a great deal of reinventing the documentary practice, I would say. Through the process of doing this work with her I found myself very interested in these subjects and I ended up curating a small group show as part of the *Salón Nacional* in Colombia that opens in less than a month: we assembled a group of contemporary artists and artifacts and indigenists... In the same show I collaborated with a friend anthropologist and we interviewed many artists about this, and something that came about in the interview with Claudia was—and this is why I also started with the biographical notes—is that she's always trying to create a rapport with her own identity and her own story, so she always says that when she's photographing the Other she's actually photographing herself.

And the first question about why she was not allowed to return... I think because she was very traumatized to start with. And this is part of the interview I brought and maybe I can try to read it—where she compares the weaving that she photographed in the Malaca—you know, that photograph I showed with the two ladies weaving, with her own embroidery apprentice when she was living in Transylvania. And she was trying to compare and create a dialogue again between her biography and what she was then photographing.

But with the episode of her leaving Roraima it's a traumatic thing. I think it was a traumatic thing for her for many years, and then of course she eventually returned, but then she had a different agenda, which was not to photograph anymore. So she came really to organize local supporters for the CCPY, and then that became, that fructified in the creation of an indigenous association, Hutukara, to which she still dedicates and donates part of the revenue of her work, including the fee she received from *Inhotim* to work in this project. But then it was a different agenda. And then, just to mention this, in 2010, when we were starting to work on this project, we went together, she returned there after eleven years and she re-photographed Yanomami again, for the first time in eleven years.

Question: Hi, this is a question for Rodrigo. I'm interested in what kind of a critical or criticality does the museum or a curator like you adopt when you're looking at someone's body of work, which is

looking at people through an ethnographic lens. We saw some of Claudia's work, and some of the portraits on body details, it's very problematic, and it's clearly through an ethnographic lens. So, you have that curated in your museum, so...

Rodrigo Moura: Yes, I guess in terms of the museum itself where we work... I would say that her work brings a great deal of criticality, being a museum that is very 'trended' by mining activity, and this is a very important element in the whole narrative that is told there. I share your concerns about how the body is portrayed, but I think maybe if you see more images maybe you would have a different opinion about what you would call problematic, that I'm not sure of. But yes, there's an ethnographic lens through her work, but also think that by working closer to the Yanomami she also incorporated something from their culture, which I think is very visible in the images of the rituals, for instance.

Question: Hi, I have a question for Ravi. In knowing the legacy that Raqs Media Collective and Sarai have ... I was one of the first users of this writing in the early 2000s... I'm thinking about how the Raqs Media Collective and Sarai made up an extra-disciplinary or inter-disciplinary network on the creation of documents and performances and happenings and, at times, what some may traditionally call art works. I'm thinking of the vast amount of knowledge that has been produced and has interpolated into major museums such as the Global Museum project. I'm just wondering, considering the conversation about usership and the aestheticization of practice, how you perceive your material being collected. What's your opinion of a museum signing to an archive like Sarai and whether you think this is something that needs to be done? Now you talk about a mass public being produced but wasn't it properly with the press? So, if you could answer some of that.

Ravi Sundaram: It's a good question, but people are already archiving the work we've done... one of the challenges when you set up something like this is: when you claim or even want to intimate an archive, you have no control over it, particularly the terms through which you are setting this up, because it's moving away from traditional models of archive building. In our terms, at one level it's a 'secure' archive, but everyone has access to it. The texts you produce have no copyright. They circulate. Everything is circulated—the works are circulated. Some people have displayed them a spot on exhibitions and it entered their archive, it comes back to us. So it's a very tricky... In a sense it's a very nebulous border. It's a very, very nebulous border, and I think precisely because we took new media seriously. We come out of that environment, and this is very important in the

post-colonial context where infrastructure really comes after globalization in a very big way. It's a very bizarre thing in the West, you know, there's neoliberalism, there's no public institution in India at all. The State represents 6 percent of production. There's a very problematic scenario, so you have these new infrastructures and new media... So, intermission of the archive is an acknowledgement that you have no control over it, and we're very happy with it.

Question: Hi, I just want to expand on the previous question concerning the Andujar archive, just in terms of photography and the history of photography and representation—in terms of romanticized subject and exoticizing—and for which kind of audience, because I think some of these essays were for Time Life. To what degree do these photographs reinforce the myths that the West has of the Other? How much of this is actually her own initiative, and how much of it was commissioned? Thanks.

Ravi Sundaram: Yes. The Time Life images are just a... actually it's unedited material of nature and landscape, so there's no traditional life documentation that was commissioned by the Time Life. But also, I was thinking about the previous question, and I think there's something that is extremely important in Brazil at the moment, which is the risk of a big retrocess in terms of legislation. So I was thinking there was a criticality on centrality—I think it's quite relevant that you could bring this into discussion with this kind of weight in the museum arena—because it's not something that has been very visible. Basically there's a big threat in terms of legislation, and this is something highly problematic about this government, because it's a so-called left-wing government that it claims to have a platform of inclusiveness, and it's just by supporting "desenvolvimentismo"—'developmentalism'. It's just basically throwing the 1988 constitution to the garbage.

So I think also in terms of criticality—I'm sorry I don't answer from a history of photography perspective—but I answer from the perspective of today's news, and I think this can play a very strong role in the culture of this country.

Panel Discussion

Moderated by Luiz Camillo Osorio, with Ivana Bentes, Marcus Faustini, Lia Rodrigues and Jailson de Souza.

Biographies

Luiz Camillo Osorio, Chief Curator at MAM Rio, Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro and Professor at the Philosophy Department, PUC-Rio, Brazil.

Ivana Bentes, professor researching cinema, new media, culture and communication at the School of Communication, UFRJ. Professor with UFRJ's graduate program in Communication, her research currently focuses on issues related to global peripheries, the becoming of aesthetics in digital culture and cognitive capitalism in the fields of media art, art and activism and collaborative networks.

Jailson de Souza e Silva is Associate professor at the Universidade Federal Fluminense, founded the Favela Observatory of Rio de Janeiro and was Secretary of Education Nova Iguaçu and Executive Secretary of the State Department of Social Welfare and Human Rights of Rio de Janeiro. He has published many research papers in Urban Studies and Policies, specializing in the following topics: social, slums, suburbs, violence, education and drug trafficking.

Marcus Vinicius Faustini is a theater director, filmmaker and writer. Among other influential initiatives on the field of culture, Faustini created the Agência de Redes para Juventude [Youth Network Agency].

Lia Rodrigues, choreographer, founded the Grupo Andança in 1977, before joining Maguy Marin's company in France. In 1990 she created the Lia Rodrigues Companhia de Danças in Rio de Janeiro and is artistic director of the Festival Dança Contemporânea since 1992. Her work takes its base in the relationships woven among the women of the favelas, in public hospitals, as well as with children on the outskirts of society.

NB. The transcript has been adapted from the simultaneous on-site translation (Portuguese-English), with notations of translation failures. 'Favela' has been transcribed throughout the text with a capital.

Museum is the World

Luis Camillo Osorio: Good afternoon. Well, it's a pleasure to be here. I'm going to make a very brief introduction for this panel discussion on the local context. This round table was planned before the protests and the political uprising last June in Brazil, and the following uprisings, specially in Rio, that is carry on until this day—yesterday we had another protest in front of the Palace of the Governor.

But the idea of this round table of showing this local context is to bring artists, theorists,

activists, that have been working in Rio and Brazil—basically in Rio but also in Brazil—to create different networks of, not only art production, but networks of contacts to bring regions of this city that have been on the margins to dialog with the mainstream art culture political context. So, this has been happening in Brazil for quite a while, at least more radically since Lula's government 2002 to nowadays, and Gilberto Gil's, Ministry of Culture of Lula for its governing period that fostered these networks through the cultural

points that were disseminated in Brazil in regions that didn't have any access, not only to bring them some more information, but to let them produce their own material, to let them create their own symbolical production.

And all these four friends here have been taking part in this reality in the last ten years, at least. So, apart from that, the title I've chosen is a phrase from Hélio Oiticica, "the museum is the world", and the idea of opening up this art space to a broader space of creation and production. And, although the museum is the world, not all the world speaks fluidly English. So, they didn't know that it was supposed to be speaking in English, there was a misunderstanding... But, as we are in Rio, and there's always a solution, we have to improvise, and my dear friend Jessica who is an English speaker living in Brazil for quite a while...

Jessica Gaughan (Translator): But not a translator...

Luis Camillo Osorio: Not a translator... but an educator that worked with us here and coordinated our educational program for three years, so very close to what is going on in the museum and with all these friends here. So she will help with translation. I'm going to make quick introductions following here the sequence. Marcus Faustini. He's a writer, a playwright, a political actor and he created, some years ago, what is called Youth Network, an agency for youth networks that goes to these marginal parts of the cities to get to know what are the demands of these people, especially the youth people, and try to create the possibility of them to generate their own desire of production. This agency has been very successful the last years and so he's going to explain a little bit, in his five minutes, what he's doing.

Then, Ivana Bentes. She's a film theorist. She teaches at the University, the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. She's been researching on global periphery, and also very much linked with these cultural points that were created by Gilberto Gil, and is very much aware of this cultural social political situation that is happening in Brazil nowadays.

Then, Jailson de Souza is also a professor at another Federal University in Niterói and sociologist: he created, a few years ago, the Favelas Observatory, which is a sort of alternative school and a place at Favela da Maré in Rio, and in this school they have trained, for instance, more than 500 children with photography skills and they have this very successful school there for photographers, for artists, for people from this community to get to know with these possibilities, new possibilities that they have a way out.

And the last one here is Lia Rodrigues,. She's a choreographer, a very important Brazilian

contemporary choreographer. She has her own company. She collaborated and worked with Maguy Marin in France. She also organizes the Panorama da Dança, which is a contemporary festival in dance since the nineties. For twenty years I think, that put Rio in contact with great networks of choreographers around the world, very contemporary choreographers. That was very helpful to the whole scene of dance in Rio and Brazil for these last twenty years. And she created in a community in Rio, at da Maré too, her studio, her workshop for her group, and also developed there a place to bring these people to the possibility of creativity, a new part of producing with their bodies, which are something that is always put aside or seen as a dangerous part of the life, which she brought to a creative part of their lives—their own bodies.

So all these four, they'll speak very briefly, we have only one hour and we want, at least, a little bit of debate. Jailson will start because he has another talk this afternoon, at two o'clock. So we are a bit late... So he's going to start. Unfortunately he won't be able to stay to the debates, but if you have any questions just give it them me and we'll send an e-mail to him and he will kindly answer, I'm sure. So, I don't want to take time anymore and again to thanks Jessica for this new position.

Jessica Gaughan (Translator): Very improvised... if the English speakers in the audience want to flinch, feel free.

Jailson de Souza: Good afternoon. I'm sorry I don't speak English, but I think that is not the most important issue in this event. One of the things that it is really important is the notion of democratization of the arts and the notion of "museum is the world" as one of the most important questions that I think is part of this debate.

This is a very important event to bring different people from different aspects and different worlds and different contexts all over the world together. The majority of people don't have access to English, like Faustini and myself, who come from popular origins, from the context of the Favela. There's not a context to learn English in public schools. So, there is the notion... that translation of course is expensive, but this actually means that that level of money means the majority of young people don't have the possibility to participate in these kinds of events because they don't speak English.

I come from the Favela, the Maré Favela, there might be more than 130,000 people living in Maré Favela, which is where I work. There are four fundamental themes to our work in the Maré. The first theme is to form, to educate people, essentially to give them the ability to be able to intervene and interject in city life. At this particular moment, in the political context in Brazil, this notion of really

teaching people the ability to be able to transform in a political way an aesthetic way, in the context of their life, is really important.

One of the things that is really important, is that they don't work out of this idea of a civilization. The importance of really giving young people the opportunity to create their own methodologies, their own transformations, their own practices... That will be more and more able to transform the life of the city.

Another of the things that is most important is to try to give people, young people, mobility within worlds, within the city, so mobility is a key word. So, mobility is not only a physical one. It's very important...that the notion of mobility is metaphoric and literal in very different ways.

So, the notion of educational mobility is really central to our work and we come from Maré Favela—there are very few people that even finish high school, let alone, go to university and become professors like ourselves. And, obviously, culture mobility is really important, just as it is economic and social. And the fundamental thing, in relation to all of these other mobilities—is also symbolic mobility.

In Brazil 50,000 people per year, are assassinated. That is about 130 people per day. And why do people value the life of black and poor people living in the Favelas less than the middle class? In Lula's administration 20% of the number of assassinations was reduced: Twenty per cent of that number was black (Negro), but this increased by twenty three per cent of black (Negros) people being assassinated. When there is the word "Negro" in Portuguese encompasses mulato, black... very different kinds of origins.

So what does art have to do with all of this in relationship to the symbolic? And that's where it becomes really important in relationship to try to figure out new ways to work with this context, where people are ignored, they're not listened to, they're killed.

The investment is to produce new actors in the Favela context: Artists, intellectuals, people that can work in and research for that context. So the question I want to leave for everyone with is: What are you doing within the context of your own countries to democratize the arts, to create access?

The context in that sense is that more and more people and young people are becoming, particularly in the current context, that has allowed for multiple different protests and energies and more and more people from peripheries and Favelas are being involved and this, which really creates new models and new understandings of what it means to be in the city and what it means to have ownership of the city.

Learn Portuguese!

Ívana Bentes: I'm going to pick up on some of the themes that Jailson spoke about, and just also look at some of the images of Brazil in terms of how often they are... some kind of subverted and perverted notions and ideas that are projected about Brazil in a global context.

So, in a sense it's a sort of... a kind of perverted postcard because now Brazil is this kind of laboratory for... kind of very new things that are going on in relationship to resistance against capitalism. To a certain degree the Favelas are in a sense museums of capitalism. They're a sort of... of all the different inequalities and problems that exist in relationship to capitalism are represented and lived in the context of the Favelas.

At the same time it's also one of the places where the most interesting of what we'd call symbolic capital is really happening in the context of Brazil. Focusing again on the context of symbolic capital in the context of the Favela, just how those sub-contexts of poverty have this incredible ability to resist capitalism with really creative different strategies and creative ways of living, working, thinking and making. So, the part of the context of the poverty in Brazil is also this image that's promoted about Brazil internationally but it's also part of the contradiction in terms of... and it's also part of as a center of creativity.

So it's an amazing moment to really see how the context of these places, symbolic capital on the context of the Favela is really being an opportunity to change the image of what is "sold" in an international context. There are a lot of images of this production it's very much played into the media and it's circulated and it seems to be present and alive, but at the same time it needs, it currently needs to can have a more transformative dynamic in place because the notion of that sort of really symbolic capital that's been challenged within the Favelas, isn't happening.

A sense of that is really a kind of battle around this symbolic capital. Who owns it and who intellectualizes about it? And who produces, thinks about it in the different contexts? The notion of *Museum Is the World* is also connected to the university. I'm working in the university and then so how can that play and resonate in that context. I'm referring to the notion of 'Pontos de Cultura', which were set up by Gilberto Gil in very different places throughout the country as a kind of places as "Quick Centers"—or small centers of creativity. So rather than try to take a large center you create small centers in different spots. It's a kind of a way to massage the cultural context of the place.

So, we need... not only to think about the notion "the museum is the world" it's not just about bringing the world into the museum as a commodity

or in the university, the notion...The notion to radicalize... the idea that museum is the world. So the notion that trying to value the languages that are produced in the everyday context, out there in the world in the Favelas, with indigenous peoples. So it's not just about bringing these different people and different subjects into the museum as a commodity, as a work, as a group of people.

One of the things—is the importance to stress the very different people and actors that are working in different contexts out in the world, in the Favela—who are producing their own languages that question the idea of the work—they're questioning your practices, they're questioning the idea of the commodity, in all different frames. So art is actually a great place for the battle, because it's the place of that sort of luxury of capitalism.

So I'm interested in seeing how the museum can be a context to bring that discussion about capitalism in the sense of being a luxury, a grand luxury item, how can that dispute be a really vital and energizing debate, and how... if we can manage to sort of conquer the possibility of this debate in the museum context, we have an opportunity to be able to sort to make a point.

This is one of the strongest points of battle. It's to sort of dispute or battle—this sort of luxury of a kind of cognitive capitalism that a lot of young people in the Favelas are trying to fight—where art is kind of the main product, so they're really trying to attack that notion.

Marcus Faustini: Thank you very much for the possibility to be here and the invitation of Luiz Camillo and to *CIMAM*. It's a pleasure to be here.

Given the context of the seven minutes, I'm going to try to throw out three different ideas: three pearls of thought to really nurture the debate: superficial...it's more superficial because it's not profound, because profundity is a myth. So, I prefer the multiple possibilities of connections and superficiality than the profound and deep expression of the self. I come from a poor family. My grandmother had eighteen children and I am the only person, the only grandson, the only grandchild that had any interest in art. So I had the challenge of being a sort of a young poor urban artist engaged in art, and the challenge of a prejudiced situation that exists in Brazil, in reference to what constitutes art.

My own trajectory is in terms of how I was able to articulate paths into different art worlds, and how other artists that I knew were more talented and more informed in different ways... how they were having difficulties being able to enter into these worlds. So, I want to talk about the specific contexts of how I imagine that artistic production can take place in the current contemporary context.

Jessica Gaughan: Everybody here is very brilliant and very poetic in terms of how they speak, so it's really quite difficult to jump in here.

The vast majority of this kind of popular art—the notion of the art of the Favela is often seen as a commodity... it can be seen in particular ways. What I'm interested in, is how you may be able to see a young person from the Favela as a curator, a young person from the Favela as an artist in an exhibition and not seen and constructed as a commodity.

So I decided to create a method. In my own mind the notion of an artist is not just to produce works, it's also about producing and making methods. So this is a great frame: just a moment, because I'm a terrible maker of objects. So, I'm interested in creating methods that would engage other people to create their own context. This methodology is to listen to a thousand and two hundred young people from the Favelas. Listen to their ideas, and give them means to be able to produce their ideas.

So the notion of this idea: how can you open up a software of creation, in the sense that the young people in Favelas, become their own protagonists, their own actors, their own critics... They are essentially moving the process of production forward.

Jessica Gaughan: I'm really glad to know his work because otherwise I think I'll be completely lost.

One of the fundamental aspects of my methodology: it is really to start with the idea of an inventory, and to encourage people to create an inventory of their own place. And it's through the idea of creating an inventory that creates the relationship between the person who is making those choices and the place and their own context. This gives them the power to be able to do that. That's fundamental in relation to your methodology, and also how you could see this in connection with the museum. Because a museum, of course, is a sort inventory of practices in the museum, collecting these very different forms of analysis... that have a lot to do with these kinds of strategies.

The focus is a starting point in terms of differentiation between the folkloric and the contemporary... and one of the reasons for that, is very pragmatic in relation to how often the contemporary context is often better funded: it is often seen with more value, and so it's not devalued in the same way that sometimes the folkloric is. So I potentially use the notion of the contemporary as a means to be able to really take the idea of this inventory and its practices to make a political statement.

I am working now on forty projects, there are forty young people making projects throughout

the city. One of the elements of these projects is to bring in the idea of creating galleries in the houses of people that are living in the Favelas.

I also won a reward to do these projects and to take some of this methodology that I'm now implementing, to London and in Manchester. I am making a specific critique on the notion of diversity, of cultural diversity, that in-itself creates these (types of) ways to locate poverty in different places and ways to locate and name different types of things —while a lot of these young people there are trying to work outside of this context and to create their own forms and their own ways of making and thinking, and critique.

Lia Rodrigues: Hello. So I'll try to give you a break and I'll speak in my wild English, Brazilian-English. Camillo, thanks for your invitation and thanks to everybody for this. I've prepared a lot of papers but the time is very tight so I'll try to speak shortly.

I am an artist. I am part of this luxury art: the artist, but I'm not luxury at all. And all of this money that comes to contemporary art maybe doesn't arrive for dance, at least in Brazil. That's why I'm working for the last years with money (specially) from France and Europe. As Camillo told you I am a choreographer, dancer, from the beginning. For the last thirty years, I've been running my dance company in Rio de Janeiro and also this festival but at a certain moment, in 2003, I had a lot of questions around the public, and why I was doing contemporary art only for a very specific public, and I was interested in dialog with other parts of the city. So, through my dramaturgist, Silvia Soter, I met an NGO called Redes de Desenvolvimento da Maré—in the same Favela as Observatório de Favelas is based. It's a huge Favela, the largest in Rio de Janeiro.

I think you pass through this Favela when you arrive in Rio. It's between the International Airport and the city center. I met this extraordinary woman called Eliana Silva, the Director of this NGO, and we began together to imagine what was our dream to put in motion a project that could make a dialogue between a contemporary project of art and a social project. Only questions—not a project that we wrote about and settle: "Let's do something, very practical also"—. So, I walked around this Favela for eight months looking for a place, and I found a huge warehouse with 1200 square meters, and 15 meters-high. It was a very huge space, completely abandoned. Eliana and I were thinking that what was necessary—at that moment—was to create an art center in this place. We saw this amazing place that I will show later, and decided let's do it, but was completely destroyed.

So we got money from my own dance company, with my tours around Brazil. I worked very hard for this, and also money from my co-producers in Europe, and also the money from Redes, so we began, step by step, to repair this place a little bit. We built a stage and I began ... I moved there with my dance company, and I began to give classes for the people from the Favela, for everybody that approached, for free. The next step was, this center, what's inside to this art center? We had a lot of meetings with the population, associations from the different areas of the Favela: a theatre class, we invited people, also a lot of parties, different things inside.

Now, two years ago, we decided also to create a dance school, because dance is what I think I know. So I decided to build a dance school two years ago. In this dance school we have now 300 students and 50 students are young people from the popular areas and they have special education with four hours a day of class. The last year we worked together with modest companies. This center—the Centro de Arte da Maré—I think it's a place of meeting. It's not something that is closed. The idea is not yet finished. We are building, day-by-day, with our experiences.

I'm not a theorist. I also work more in this practical way. I've been there for the last ten years. I think I'm still beginning and it's not easy for an artist to balance this creation, because I also have my work. Now I'm completely in a new creation—the premiere will be in November—so it's very difficult to create this balance between what I do as an artist and what I do as a citizen—I don't know if this word is correct. But sometimes there is a kind of struggle in these worlds, and I live in the middle of this struggle. Well, maybe this makes me more potent to try different things—also in my work— but also in building this place or this art center. So I'd like to have time to show you.

It was like this. No words, just.

I'm not an expert, but I made the planning of this building to have daylight. We had only five men, no engineer, nothing... just to build this. I love this part. This is my stage. Our stage, let's say. In one day, we made it. This is the premiere of one of my pieces.

I wanted to finish with this. This was in July, the demonstration in Maré, and this are the students from our school. They prepared a performance, together with the young people from the photography project. For me to finish with this image is to finish with this connection with art, life, Society, everything... This is, I think, a beautiful end. Thank you.

Questions & Answers

Ívana Bentes, Jailson de Souza, Marcos Vinicius Faustini, Lia Rodrigues and Luiz Camillo Osorio

Luiz Camillo Osorio: We have, I think, seven minutes for Questions & Answers, to keep the seven as a mystical number, thank you everyone, and especially Jessica, for your hard work.

Question: inaudible

Luiz Camillo Osorio: Yes... One of the projects that Faustini mentioned—these galleries in the Favela—was a collaboration with us at MAM. He came with this proposal because the people of Huaré, which is another Favela in Rio, wanted to create an art space. And so, to make this agency, to make it feasible he came to us here in the Museum and said: "ok let's try to create a space there". Instead of bringing them here, let's take the works there. So it was a negotiation. We took some works by Artur Barrio and Chelipa Ferro and a performance artist too, and these works were taken to Huaré—to some chosen houses in the community and they were exhibited and they were, in a way, the museum, and the people from the community went to see them, and the owners of the houses there were quite proud of having the works. With the sound piece by Chelipa Ferro, the owner of the house was absolutely kind and nice and she loved the work. She knew how to speak, she created her own narrative about the work and it was quite fantastic: this one is one of the examples.

During the protests, up until June we created here in the museum, what was called MAM da Rúa, which was a series of debates—because we had, here by chance at the same time—the proposal of Charles (Esche), dealing with art and politics in the sixties.

So we made some debates bringing contemporary artists and artists from the sixties and political activists and people or political theorists and people to the debates.

They were happening on Wednesdays in June and July. And well, this is part of what we did. And well we had the Núcleo Experimental de Educação e Arte here in the museum. Jessica was one of the coordinators with Ileana Vergara who's now the Director of MAC Niterói, and they implemented a lot of works in collaboration with the Observatório, some groups from Faustini and other social movements in the Museum during those two years and a half.

Question Nicole Smythe Johnson: I have two questions: One is for Faustini, and it's about creating or inventing a place as a methodology that

you use with your students and I was wondering if you could talk a little bit more about that. And the other question is for Ívana Bentes and I wanted to ask if you could talk a little bit more about "symbolic capitalism", which is a phrase that I use a lot, but I just want to be sure that I understand what are you referring to.

Marcos Vinicius Faustini (Translation from Portuguese): The notion that many young people come from a culture,—it's an oral culture—it is a culture of the body. So the notion is invest in that and to emphasize the potentiality of that. So, instead of creating two sorts of contrasting forms of education—where one situates the young person as having to learn something in a kind of particular way—and another, in the other extreme, that everything that they do is great, we find that on both sides there's a kind of disempowerment.

So the focus is really trying to encourage people to... create their own interest and their own methodologies in relationship to producing their own ideas. And so... one of the things they work with, is this idea of "inventory", and one of the things they start up doing is showing different artists whether it's in literature. or whether it's in different kinds or forms of popular art, or different contemporary artists, different forms of art with the idea of inventory.

Translator: I'm beginning to think that we should have some kind of translated text that we could share with everyone—about some of Faustini's methodologies.

Translator (for Marcos Vinicius Faustini): But he's really talking about shifting a way from this notion of the subject as passive, as opposed to the subject as active. He wants to really try to give the possibilities to people being in control of their own production, being in control of their ideas, that they can really sort of move forward their own languages. And one of the ways of doing that, is how that process is through the idea of maps and inventories, just to create this notion that art can simply create tools that can engage people—to a certain degree—but can also empower their relationship to their own place and context.

So one of the things is to try to move away from this idea—that the creative process comes from within—that it's something very much self driven. So, one of the notions of working with inventory, is these kinds of practices. There are

multiple practices. There are cabinets of curiosities, ways to show... There are multiple ways of creating by collecting, by creating your own inventory.

One of the things that's really fundamental to this methodology and this process is not to wait until the end at the final presentation: that the notion that all the young people working simultaneously, will be doing their draft inventories—and they will come to the present.

There will be a critique, there will be a discussion.—this notion of constant making-presenting—is really fundamental to this sort of methodology.

Luiz Camillo Osorio: Getting a quote from Lygia Clarke, this is “a state of art, without art”. So I think what he (Faustini) is in doing, as a methodology is to appropriate this idea of creating states of art without art.

Translator (for Marcos Vinicius Faustini): But I also think it's the idea of using these forms and maps and inventories. To a certain degree they're very direct tools, but they're also very 'personalizable' tools. So it's very effective for an individual to be able to map of all the different houses, or doors of houses in the Favela, as a very concrete sort of idea. But in the process of actually doing these inventories—in the process of actually doing these maps—they discover their own interests and they discover their own possibilities, and that's kind a fundamental part, too.

"So he gives a very concrete example, in terms of how this could be a political process: There was one young woman that did a map of all of the white men that she'd been with." This is one way of really connecting the relationship... very personal, but it also becomes very political...

Ivana Bentes (Translation from Portuguese): She's going to talk about some issues of cognitive capitalism and symbolic capitalism and talk through some ideas: Aesthetic capitalism, cultural capitalism, immaterial capitalism. The artist who is a model of Fordist capitalism: the artist as a possible model to be work within capitalism and against capitalism, at one point being an example of Fordist capitalism in terms of creativity. But now there's a multiplication of production processes.

The notion of how this sort of artistic processes and practices —how they proliferated in a symbolic way, in a cultural way, and a broader way—so when I buy an i-Phone I don't just buy something to talk. I buy something that enables me to communicate in multiple different ways. It's also a symbol. It's also a possibility to make interventions.

In terms of this notion of radicalization, this idea that "Museum is the World", she's just

interested in talking about the connection and the points of culture, these small culture centers... So how can this create possibilities that bring artists to these contexts: where they can work with different kind of languages?, where they can work with different kinds of contexts? Where there are no contexts... where people aren't objects... They become a sort of more creativity “with” and they co-create an aesthetic language together.

So this dialogue goes two ways. Bringing the artists into the cultural centers to work with people and the notion of co-creation and collaboration in different kinds of "Indigenous" Favelas—different kinds of contexts –but also bringing people into workshops and spaces – where artists themselves are coming from. So, there's a kind of an exchange happening.

So thinking about that desire of a Biennial concept... that concept that can map the production of these kinds of small cultural centers, what the artists are doing in those centers and how they are working. Where the city is the place of creating aesthetic languages.

Luiz Camillo Osorio: Well, that makes a circuit and that's an invitation for the curators. With that we have finished. Thanks very much.

Wednesday
14 August
2013

Keynote 3

Paulo Herkenhoff

Biography: Paulo Herkenhoff (Cachoeiro de Itapemirim, ES, 1949) is the cultural director of the Museum of Art of Rio—MAR, art critic and curator. He directed the National Institute of Fine Arts Funarte (INAP, between 1983 and 1985). Was chief curator of the Museum of Modern Art in Rio de Janeiro (1985—1990) and director of the National Museum of Fine Arts (2003—2006), general curator of the 24th International Biennial of Arts of São Paulo (*Antropofagia*, 1998) and curator of The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA / NY). Some of the exhibitions he has curated are *Guignard e o Oriente: China, Japão e Minas* (Instituto Tomie Ohtake, São Paulo, 2010), *Guillermo Kuitca* (Museo Reina Sofía, Madrid; Museum of Latin American Art of Buenos Aires, MALBA, 2003), *Tempo* (MoMA, New York, 2002), *Cildo Meireles, geografia do Brasil* (Museu de Arte Moderna Aloisio Magalhães, Recife-PE, Museum of Modern Art of Bahia, Salvador, 2002), *Arte brasileira na coleção Fadel: da inquietação do moderno à autonomia da linguagem* (Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, 2002) and *Trajatória da Luz na arte brasileira* (Instituto Itaú Cultural, São Paulo, 2001). He has lectured at universities in several continents, and has published articles in various magazines, catalogs and books of institutions such as Tate Modern (London), Centre Georges Pompidou (Paris), the Museum of Modern Art in Paris (Paris), Fundació Antoni Tàpies (Barcelona), among others.

Between Santa Croce and Santa Cruz

I would like to express my appreciation for the invitation to be here, *CIMAM*, and for your presence and patience but I must advise you that one day I went to speak in Madrid, when I arrived they gave me a very pompous table and chair, they turned out the lights and just a light on my paper and as I read, usually my voice gets very boring and it worked that way and it got more boring but also sudden I understood I should communicate in another way, mind to mind, and after certain moments, no words were necessary and then, I slept at my own conference.

Why is Santa Croce closer to Rio than Santa Cruz? This is a question that I think MAR asks itself, all the time, our group there. Of course, it creates the grounds for the platform for the institution. But let's say that MAR started initially as a host for private collections, and it would not have a collection of its own, therefore, it was a cultural center with the name of Museum. And one of my first tasks there was to get away from the syndrome that somehow afflicts Brazilian system with lots of institutions which actually act like a cultural center instead of as a museum.

So go back to the principles of ICOM. Museum as an institution that collects, makes the registration, conservation, study, research, does exhibition, publish, communicate and educate, itself

before anything else. But to start to speak about MAR, I might say that maybe we do not have a project, because we believe in not knowing the Georges Bataille process of approaching reality, the symbolic world, we also believe in intuition, we believe in that kind of ignorance that Rosenberg suggested that the universe was not able to provide to artists. And we believe most of all that we all learn together as we build the museum, as a collective task.

The museum can never be the task of only one person. So we intend to be a museum more of ideas than actually things that could be the idea of fetish of power of the institution. I ask you a question, what is the difference between a cat and a brick? You through both on the wall and the one that says: "miaow" is the cat. So in MAR we are very open to suggestions, we receive people all the time and we through proposals on the wall, those who stick and remain glued there, remain as ideas, one day they might go back. The one that falls down and starts to move, they become projects. But those people who come everyday for suggestions, they are the one that are shaping the museum. This is a public museum and we feel that should be shaped from the outside to the inside and then go back again toward society. Therefore, we are happy to be all the time being submitted to

proposals we immediately transform in social demands.

The history of the museum goes back to five years ago. The Mayor of Rio Eduardo Paes, understanding that the city needed to finally address some of the problems, urban problems of the city, and we say that in the last years beside the issue of urbanism in the sense of public housing, there was always the call for a transformation of the old port, the destruction of the highways that cut downtown and the lack of good architecture in Rio for the last forty years.

And I must say that in those years, there has been in the twentieth century, we have seen Philippe Starck, Norman Foster, Zaha Hadid, Calatrava, Diller & Scofidio, if we speak of the foreigners... so we should first consider the idea of architecture and the urbanization of that area. And the Mayor thought that the door that connects the old center of town and the new port should be presided by two museums: one museum for art and the other museum for science: the Museu do Amanhã (the Museum of Tomorrow) and that those two institutions should be dedicated to public education. So he invited Fundação Roberto Marinho, which might be the largest private institution in Brazil regarding education, heritage and it's really an amazing institution that has brought five million people to finish their secondary school, that had abandoned and they came back to school... in other words, it is a real transformation.

Fundação Roberto Marinho had been engaged with six museums which they built and institutionalized. The first one was in Tiradentes, the two next ones were in São Paulo, which are very successful, among the most successful museums in Brazil which is The Museum of the Portuguese Language and the Museum of Soccer, and one in Recife about frevo which is the carnival music of the city. The three museums in Rio are MAR, the Museu do Amanhã that I have mentioned and the Museum of Image & Sound, dedicated to music and literary life in Rio.

Our architects Bernardes and Jacobsen and I like to say that our costs were very modest, in four years we spent something that could be compared with the cost of two biennales, and therefore, it is a museum that is poor in terms of materials, it did not take money from other cultural institutions because the museum was built with funds coming from the transformation of the port, from SEDUR which is the company connected to that.

The other aspect that I would like to mention to you is that our museum is the first institution-cultural institution in Rio—which is administrated under the system of social organization, which is a law, a federal law from 1998 which allows the city

in an administration level to contract, to establish a contract with a cultural institution that will be in charge of administrating an institution. You receive a certain sum of money every month, and in exchange that institution has obligations, mandatory obligations, for instance: you accepted to bring one hundred thousand children a year to the museum; you can bring one hundred twelve thousand children but not eighty thousand.

So it is really a contract, and if the Mayor wishes to abide the law, he signs this and there is no way the public budget is smaller etcetera... it is an obligation. This system has been used in São Paulo for a long period now and two of the very best institutions of that kind in the country, Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo—and we have the honor of having here Marcelo Araújo who is the Cultural Secretary of the State of São Paulo—who has really known how to use the new legal tools to create the most active museum in this country. And the next one is the Symphonic Orchestra of São Paulo, which is today a world-class orchestra.

This said, I would say that the next step is to mention here the fact that the School of the Gaze (*Escola do Olhar*), was first an idea of José Roberto Marinho, the President of Fundação Roberto Marinho, and the name was given by the artist Vik Muniz who was to be its first director. Muniz' project was initially to have a course with MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), with one room only, and only when we started really to think the museum in this building, the entire building became the school.

But again let's think about Santa Croce and Santa Cruz for a while. The Basilica de Santa Croce in Florence: it is said that it has the hands of Brunelleschi in its project, and it has works of Benedetto da Maiano, Canova, Cimabue, Donatello, Giotto and others, and it is the place of burial of Michelangelo, Galileo and Machiavelli. Florence is a very important touristic destiny to Brazilians who are opinion makers, middle class, etc, high class... Brazilians of middle class they never miss a museum abroad—not in Brazil. So Santa Croce is something not to be missed if you go to Florence.

What about Santa Cruz? Santa Cruz is a far away section of Rio, one of the farthest on the western zone of Rio. Its history is as old as Rio. Rio was officially founded in 1565 and Santa Cruz founded in 1567. It was the most prosperous farm in town, with thousands of slaves, its school of music was the first conservatory of music in Brazil, its chorus and orchestra was integrated by slaves as well. The old convent was converted into the site when the King of Portugal came to Brazil, Santa Cruz farm became the summer palace for the King. The last meeting between the Prince Pedro and José Bonifácio, discussing the advancements

towards the independence of Brazil happened in Santa Cruz: he was in his way to São Paulo, at the moment the independence was sealed. Santa Cruz has a splendid bridge from 1752. In Santa Cruz was the first office of the post office in the capital after the central one; one of the first telephones to be installed in Brazil. Santa Cruz was the first farm to receive Chinese in its country for planting tea. It has still today a hangar for zeppelins, one of the very few zeppelin hangars. It has industry and a very active cultural life by its own and the samba school, Academia de Santa Cruz.

But material life in Santa Cruz is very hard. The index of human development for 2000 it was the 119, the worst one, among the one hundred and one sixty sections in town. So this is instrumental for us at MAR: we have to work with the poorest areas in town. We are initiating a process now with Maré, which will be the same process we do in other projects. And here we are speaking about a museum that's very much interested in the violence of poverty.

Rio is a very strange city. No one goes to Santa Cruz. Rio is a city that most of the time bets on the failure, institutional failure, failure of institutions. We know that Brazil needs to rethink its museological paradigms and this has started to happen. I would like to mention three museums that we are in a way, keeping, outside of Rio, keeping an eye to: the first one is Pinacoteca do Estado which I mentioned already, the other one is Inhotim; most of you have already been. Inhotim is a unique experience that is also different from Pinacoteca, which at the roots of its recent transformation was very much closer to the project to dislocate the cultural center of the country to São Paulo instead of Rio.

Otherwise, President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, could have financed the recuperation of the National Museum of Fine Arts instead of giving money to the State Museum, which belongs to the Union. I think the fact—which is part of the internal colonialism in Brazil—should not be used against the paradigms that Pinacoteca has established as the possibility of this country having a serious museum on all levels that the museums should place. I think Brazil has money enough to finance an institution that is as powerful as the Pinacoteca but should have not forgotten the National Museum of Fine Arts.

Inhotim as you know, the adventure, the mania of Bernardo Paz, but let's say again, what is the rule when you are using your own money and if you have a dream? And of course, Inhotim now becomes for the country, with this combination between avant-garde and splendid nature designed by man and the museum has finally entered the imaginary of the whole country. I think Inhotim is

the first museum to enter the imaginary of the whole country. I do not see any other museum with this force and power.

And there is a museum which is struggling to keep the pace and to get the space it needs, this is the Museum of Contemporary Art of USP (Universidade de São Paulo), MAC has been always my model, even when I have worked at MAM in the 80's after the fire, constituted the library, reestablished a collection here and curated the structure, a technical structure. MAM and Araci Amaral was the source of inspiration, and if I have done anything meaningful in my life, it was through those institutions.

So then I would come to issues that we ask at MAR. What is the origin of a certain crisis in the symbolic life of society today? Beatriz Sarlo, the Argentinian scholar, thinks that part of that is a reflection of the crisis of the school.

Schools are no longer at the center of symbolic life of communities. They still can be in the center of the children but not of the communities. Of course, this was written fifteen years ago before the web went through the life of children, but this brings us to the issue: Can the museum help to restore the place of schools in the symbolic center of a city? When I say museum is not a museum but museums in general terms. This is an issue that we ask frequently and our task at MAR regarding this aspect is that—because we are using public municipal funds—we have a budget in this aspect of 6 million dollars a year—we should think that this is money should return more than that in terms of education, and that's our task.

The financial cost has to have a symbolic and educational result. And the only way to give a specific answer is to think education as a heavy issue—as I will come back later. But also we think that we should be very aware of the art of society, starting with certain images.

Catarina de Anchieta, Orbison, Bruno—who lives nearby the museum—and Ulises from Botafogo. Catarina de Anchieta is 75 years old, she has hired a Combi with some friends of her age; the Combi broke when she came. She lives near Santa Cruz and when she arrived at the museum she did not pay attention to the architecture. She asked a question to the guards and then she runs. The fact was that, the Combi broke; it took three hours for them without going to the toilet so they rushed, but you get the right information, was the museum clean? And after she left, she was asked what did you feel about the museum? She said, I loved it but I did not see anything about Anchieta, and Anchieta is part of town. So we have to give an answer to that. And we are planning that the answer will be to have a television on the floor dedicated to Rio and the children and an adult type

the name of the school—and that they appear as a part of the landscape of the city. This will take us two or three years to get all the schools to be done.

Orbison lives far away from Catarina his grandmother, he lives in Triagem, a very violent favela that has not been passed by the UPP. He is eleven years old, he has flunked once or twice, his mother is sick, and he does not know his father. He is looking at drug dealing as a possibility to help his mother. But he is afraid that the pacification process that is going on might give him trouble when police come and overtake that area that now belongs to the drug dealers. And he wants to come to MAR. His school has no money to come here. But if he gets here, what would be his relationship to this museum? The museum is not going to change his life, because I think no one can change other one's life, but we can give people tools to change his or her own life. So what are the responsibilities of this museum regarding Orbison?

Bruno came, he lives nearby, on a Sunday morning he came again to the museum, because he belongs to the society of neighbors of MAR, he brought this three teenager children, his wife was left at home to cook. And he discussed the exhibition Rio while he went through and at the end he said, "I loved it but I cannot see any slaves and black". So we have changed the exhibition in order that Bruno and other people can have an answer. Our exhibitions are never finished. They can go on, they can change if they feel an art piece is badly hung or is not working well...

And Ulises from Botafogo, comes for the third time to the museum and now he brings his father. He wanted the book about the museum and there is no book about the museum. And he says his teacher needs more information about the museum. So this is again a task, Ulises is middle class, if you want to think of the social arch, the geopolitical aspects, the symbolic life of the city, put art at this point of the symbolic center of the city, we have necessarily to think of the public sphere.

My dream of a seminar is to put together Habermas and Klug to have them fighting and bringing ideas on how to deal and bring the museum to the public sphere. Again, in the geographic aspect, MAR is a local museum, suburban museum, peripheral museum, an extraterritorial museum. It is local; this word gives people a certain fear when a person is very metropolitan, universal, cosmopolitan. We are local because it's the locals who are subsidizing this museum. But if we are good for ourselves, our knowledge of ourselves, it might be a good experience for our visitors who are most welcome. But we have to understand the space of the citizen and the nature of the space.

And this is Milton Santos, a Brazilian

geographer. MAR is suburban, suburbs in Brazil are the opposite of certain towns in the United States. Suburbs are the areas that are far away, they do not have the services necessarily—they are not updated, except now that the web is changing things—but suburban in Rio is a pejorative—peripheral. Santa Cruz is a peripheral region. And so that is part of our task. But also we understand that MAR should be extra-territorial. Because even though it is financed by the city of Rio, but those who live around the bay of Guanabara, who have the privilege or the condemnation to live in the great area of Rio de Janeiro, those all are Rio and they are all welcome to be present there.

Maybe the museum has occupied a void in the city because we understand that a large, a very meaningful portion of our visitors are peripheral, are suburban, they come from places that are very far away. And in a way, a very large proportion has never been to a museum in their entire life. So MAR is a museum that is relational in the context of Rio. We are open to act with other institutions like we did with MAM several, a few times at least bringing Farocki to be presented here, or helping with a seminar about art and education.

But we feel that collecting in Rio is in a very touchy moment. Brazilian art market is outrageously expensive, as you all know. Brazilian artists might be selling nowadays half of their production abroad, not here. The two main collections, admirable collections—unless there is a recent move—the Chateaubriand collection at MAM and the Satamini collection at MAC Niteroi they are not given, there are on loan. And to our point of view, this is a dangerous process because it makes the city feel that it has a strong group of artworks in public institutions but nothing guarantees.

The museum thinks that to run an institution like this, it should run as a social technology. You now know how to deal with society, you know how to manipulate society but we also know how to create, to plan comprehensive experiences. So it is not a museum of events, it is a museum of process, it is a museum of services, and we work with programs and diagrams. The idea that is strong, transformed into process, becomes a program if its target is a large portion of society in a long-term run. And it is a diagram in a point of view, if we are thinking of a project that could be just a sample, not a token but a sample.

As an aspect for a diagram, I present our work with pregnant teenagers, which we work with a psychoanalyst society, we are not dealing with all the pregnant teenagers in Rio but we are establishing an experience, what is the role of the art in the process of preparing a child to be born? Or empowering a poor girl whose pregnancy was not

expected or who is not supported by the family? Etc. What is the role of art, the symbolic power that art could have there?

If you have questions on what I am saying, the two curators of the museum, Clarissa Diniz, which is our curator for exhibitions and the collection in the museum and Janaina Melo, who is the curator of education, are here and they will help me with the answers. We all know that museums have to invent themselves continuously, including a museum that is only open for five months. It should not be a self-contemplative institution. We have some targets; we know that democracy is to be tolerant with intolerance.

It is a risk, of course, but that is transparency in social life when many people have so-called "agendas", personal projects, party rules, and etcetera. We also avoid the missionaries that think of art to save souls or their own souls; we also do not want explorers of the symbolic 'plusvalia', the professionals of the 'miserability'. MAR is for everyone and we are looking for instance, for artists qualified by their own capacity to express symbolically rather than for their social origin. But if we have to risk, to commit mistakes, we would rather have those who are under little support. Because for MAR we understood right from the beginning, dealing with those situations of social difficulties, that to have limits is always a challenge to transform them into something potent.

So our platform is related to values and priorities by the society in Rio. Education is considered the first priority in Rio, housing, security, health, environment, sustainability, or employment including accessibility. It is a question of policies and ethics, how should they meet? Accessibility for instance is something very complex. We are preparing for instance a room to discuss blindness; it is not a room for the blind. It is a room for the blind, to discuss blindness, walked by blind people, etcetera but guides will be blind.

Accessibility in our museum is for everyone, either everyone can go or no one goes. Accessibility should be also intellectual and social. And this also is an aspect that regards hiring people. We are very well respecting what our legal and humanistic obligation, for instance. The region of the port is, has one of the highest rates of unemployment in town. Obligation is to hire a 10% but we have hired 20%. We have very clear that we should to establish a presence of Afro- Brazilian in all levels. But we do not say this publicly except for an audience like this one that is technical because we are hiring people for their quality. And this is part of the challenge to go there, and to find and to recognize the quality, of people with physical problems; our architect has lost her hands and feet two years ago. So it's about a museum that really

should be a mirror of the city and society.

There is also our program with environment, which the Ministry of Environment in Brazil wants to develop with us as an example to be trained in other places. We have to avoid the stigmatization of the poor as the source of all kind of problems, of trash in the city. Housing. We had the first opening show was about the right to have a house. The way they experience in Rio has been through since the war, has been in a way avant-garde in the country and we are focusing more on urbanism than on architecture in this respect.

We are not taking exhibitions from abroad for the next years. We have to prove, to try, to see to understand how the work functions, how the public flows in the museum, what is the functioning of air conditioning etc. But now we know that we have an excess of security people and we are starting to substitute guards for educators. We, in terms of security, we had the first discussions on working with minors in conflict with the law, we had the first meetings to discuss the what is the role in prisons? The answer was: the role of art.

So for instance, if your group, if your gang is called commando vermelho, let's work with the phenomenology of the red. If your gang is called the third commando, let's work with the phenomenology of the thirdness, peers and others. Health: I have spoken of the access of life but we are also preparing the first island that which will be in a cancer hospital in the children's ward and we will have part of our collection there. So education goes to these aspects. It is a pity that CECA (Committee for Education and Cultural Action), the ICOM committee did not allow us to present our program.

But is this a museum or a school? Is this is a school with a museum inside, or it is a museum with a school? You do not want to answer. MAR is the museum and it is the totality. And we have a march for education, on one side, we have the public municipal system of Rio. The city of Rio has one thousand and seventy four schools, eight thousand art teachers, five hundred and seventy thousand students. Those are the first target of our museum, we do not know blockbusters; we want to work with the schools.

On the other part of art and education, we are working with the post-graduate center of the University of Rio with some perspectives which are seminars, we brought Didi-Huberman, Rancière, we are bringing Agamben, and others but the main task there is to bring transformation into the formation of art teachers for the students. So I think we can go back to the agenda and proceed with the questions.

Questions & Answers

Paulo Herkenhoff

Question: We thank you for a very informative presentation. I think you brought quite a few questions that ring a bell for many institutions leaders when it comes to economy and collections. I want to go back to this idea of education, because I want to challenge you a little bit to talk about what you do with education practically that differs from other museums.

Paulo Herkenhoff: Well the first issue is that, we have a specific mandate, and we have to deal with art and education in the schools of the city of Rio. This means, we have to understand this challenge in the terms of number of schools, understanding that education is very slow, education is very hard and education has profound problems.

So when I mentioned that we want to help universities of Rio to change their *licenciatura* on Art, which is the university-level that prepares teachers, this is because we want to work at the root of some of the problems, because teachers get bad formation. Universities are now asking us to do that, because we have worked on these other projects with them and now they understand that we are really working with focus. Then, implementing programs that understand what we have to do. We have to receive seventy thousand children in the first year, one hundred and thirty thousand in the second year of functioning, and we are looking if we can receive two hundred thousand children in the third year.

So this is to reach the children. But how will those children arrive to the museum? They should arrive prepared. So we are offering courses for three thousand teachers a year preparing material. We are establishing a task force for the issues of the technology in the museum. Working with the most advanced engineering system in this country and their laboratories.

And how that can help? Having worked with the city science and technology agency so as in one year we can start having enough programs for all the schools that have a video screen. How do we do the process of evaluation? It is not statistics—it has to be qualitative. So we have the help of the Institute of Mathematics, not for statistics but for quality, with help from the Fundacao Joao Roberto Marinho, whose director for education was the assistant of Paulo Freire, the educator of Brazil.

The task is emancipation. So this is something we feel and we are very open to proposals and criticism regarding that aspect. And for instance, we are having seminars on education, a seminar on accessibility, on what is the place of a very young child in the museum? But the most

important seminar that we will host this year is called, “from the walls to the web”. Children have their body within four walls but their mind is in the web. We found out through this proposal that we are the museum of the twentieth century; we are not yet the museum of the twenty-first century. We are preparing this task force for technology how to include games and other media into the educational and art appreciation process. So it is very important to understand that for instance, curatorship is very linked to education.

And that includes guides who are coming from favelas, and they have the chance to have in the museum educational possibilities. Next week, Universidade das Quebradas, which is a very important initiative of the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, is going to install itself in our museum. Universidade das Quebradas is a university devoted to kids from the peripheral sections of town—they are artists, activists, producers of culture etcetera. And this university is about giving them during one year a formation on art appreciation, on initiatives, etcetera.

So this is part of our way, but of course we are very young, we are six months not six months yet of work, so there is a lot to fix, to find out, problems to understand, dialogues to be developed, and the issue of agenda is very important. So we have an international agenda to play. But for instance, what’s going to be the world soccer cup in Brazil? What are they doing? They are doing an exhibition on armadillo, the animal. Because the animal will be designed, the armadillo that becomes a ball, a sphere will be the design of the World Cup. So they are discussing the environment, they come from the driest areas in Brazil and how the armadillo was, plays a symbolic role in the life of the natives.

But that region, the Caratinga, is the region of the cinema novo in Brazil of a very powerful literature in the modernist period. So we are dealing with this issue of living under very harsh conditions, adversity. And the fundamental aspect to choose the armadillo, was that because in the state where the, an experience has found out a research that the poor child knows only half of the vocabulary of a middle class child, and that’s determinant for the entire rest of their lives, the poor children. They will never be able to understand a manual, read the news, etcetera.

Educational authorities are developing in the Caratinga—a harsh region, very very poor—a project of development of vocabulary and we are

going to work with them on a project that asks, Can art help children to enhance their vocabulary? That's a project that will take one year to develop and then three years to fully test because if it can, we can apply it to the rest of the city. There will be diagrams and then it can become a program.

I would like to mention that our educational project was initially planned with MoMA, ten years ago, this issue of working with the whole city. We are now planning with Proa Foundation in Buenos Aires, a course on curatorial work for Latin America. But also collecting is a way of studying, of education; we have for instance a collection of zero, zeros. A collection of infinities—because those are some aspects of modern mathematics—which some day we will apply to education. We are working for instance, on a collection of photography on the flesh and the stone, the Sennett book on the life in cities in the western world, we work very deeply with Afro-Brazilian culture, we are establishing a Judaica group, we have acquired our first Islamic work—might be the first Brazilian art museum to have an Islamic art piece.

So our museum's educational project includes a new idea of curatorship, which is social curatorship, which are the groups that will make a curatorial work more potent besides historians and art critics: teachers, people from the community that live in certain situations, children? And also the other way that we are working is sort of working Brazilian history as a need to review modernity, a work for with the body, the history of urbanism in Rio ... but coming to regions of Brazil for instance, what to do with the art from the Amazonia?

In three years course, you will have a group of exhibitions, cinema screening, conferences that will discuss the history of violence in the Amazonia as seen by the arts. Or what is to live under precariousness? So it's a museum where we detest blockbusters and we love education. Thank you.

Case Study 5

Samuel Sidibé

Biography: From 1971 to 1980 he studied in France. He has Master's Degree in Art History and Archaeology and a PhD in History of African Societies. Dr. Samuel Sidibé, since 1987 is the Director of the National Museum of Mali. From 1994 to 1996, as associate curator of the Niger Valley exhibition, he managed the itinerancy of this exhibition which has been presented in Mali, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Mauritania, Guinea and Niger. Samuel Sidibé collaborated with ICOM and UNESCO in a crusade against the looting of archaeological sites and illegal trafficking of the Malian cultural heritage. He contributed to raise awareness both at the national and international levels about the necessity to protect cultural heritage. He has been one of the founder members of AFRICOM and member of the Board of this organization. Mr. Sidibé is the Director of the 8th Rencontres Africaines de la Photographie. He received the Prince Claus Prize in 2006, and is also Officier dans l'Ordre des Arts et Lettres (France).

The National Museum of Mali

The changing role of museums in contemporary society over the past 20 years has significantly impacted the work of curators. From institutions basically dedicated to research, conservation and scientific presentation of the collections at the origin, museums have become spaces whose quality is now evaluating its openness to society and its various audiences.

To do this all means are good: the importance placed on events, diversification of artistic and cultural programming (exhibitions, conferences, various shows) targeting public, educational activities, intense marketing, etcetera.

The curators are now asked to justify their professional effectiveness by their ability to make the museum an attractive space for the public. The number of visitors has become an obsession.

Meanwhile the resources allocated to museums by governments reduce regularly. The Conservators need to find new resources to ensure the development and sometimes the survival of their institution. Hence the development of commercial activities, opening of shops, restaurants, product production, privatization of certain areas has been a major task of museums. This intrusion of the commercial in the museum is always one step closer to the cultural enterprise. But the resources generated by the only commercial activities are not sufficient to ensure the development of museum activities.

To achieve the renovation programs, to organize exhibitions or artistic events of magnitude, the Conservators are required to solicit sponsors,

private or public.

This "project culture" as Menger (1997) says has a significant impact on the activity of preservation. It consumes time and energy and requires a conservative relational capacity that does not necessarily. Any record of the grant application requires the creation of sometimes detailed records, solicitation of sponsors and partners, and ultimately when it works it is necessary to implement the project sometimes under enormous complexity of financial and administrative procedures and then the justification for the grant with the development of detailed reports.

This change in the governance of museums has significantly changed the job of the curator. The diversification of the museum's mission, the need to find the necessary funding to the development of the institution have consequences for a significant increase in administrative and management tasks at the expense of scientific activity of the conservator who no longer has the continuous time for the inventory and research activities on collections fortiori to make publications.

But we should add that the scientific expertise of curators is challenged today with the proliferation of exhibitions and museums that cover many themes, sometimes remote scientific expertise of the curator. He no longer alone has the skills to deal with all of his collections. The increasing intervention of a large number of players in museum activities (designers, communicators) tends to reduce the weight of the Registrar

in the decision making.

In such an institutional environment that de-specializes "désécialise" Conservators in scientific expertise, it is more relevant than ever to consider the new dynamics in progress and provide answers to the new challenges facing the Conservators/Curators.

Obviously the challenges are variable and responses that can be made are also variable depending on the institutions, their size and the environment (for example type of governance or country) in which they operate. A museum curator who runs small-scale regional or local level, working with a small staff will be faced with different challenges and bring different responses from those of a major national museum with an international scope. This may also be different if it is a private museum for example.

I base myself on my personal experience as director of the National Museum of Mali for over 22 years to outline a perspective.

When we took the direction of the National Museum in 1987, the institution had been provided in 1981 of new premises with a French grant. These premises, quite logical at this stage, had focused on the functions of conservation reserves, restoration workshops, library services. The public functions were limited to two showrooms of 200 m² each one devoted to temporary exhibitions and the other to the permanent exhibition.

Although these premises were found too small after 10 years of operation, they have provided the basis for a collection development and documentation of large-scale heritage strategy. The collections have been enriched with many field missions on textiles, pottery, musical heritage, jewelry etc ... and the creation of intangible heritage with audiovisual database.

This positive development of the research and conservation, has paradoxically highlighted the weakness of the institution in its dealings with the public. Reserves are filled with assets that the public could not see. 400 m² of exhibition did not allow to present to the public its heritage which everyone agreed in saying that it was rich and diverse. The need but also the demand of a greater social visibility of the museum became more and more evident.

This need became so essential when in 1993 we presented in Bamako the exposition the Valleys of Niger. Valleys of the Niger is an archaeological exhibition of the results of archaeological research in six countries through which the river with as central theme as the looting of archaeological sites. This exhibition was shown in Paris in 1991 and was circulated in a reduced version of the six African countries. While in Paris, she was featured on more than 1000 m², in African countries, it was

presented as 400 m², the maximum available surface in Bamako.

The success of the public exposure of Niger Valleys worked as a detonator. The National Museum could not continue to operate as before. The demand for greater opening of the museum to the public had become an obvious necessity.

Therefore it became imperative to find ways to expand the museum to allow it to present the diversity of Malian cultural heritage, taking into account contemporary art and culture as an essential part of Malian culture. It was also necessary to create public services and make it more attractive institution.

A renovation and expansion was developed which obtained financial support from the state, the European Union, France and other partners. The purpose of this extension, as I said, was to enable the institution to better meet the expectations of the public, by diversifying the range of cultural offer and taking better care of the need for a more diverse presentation of the Malian culture. It was also to make the museum a showcase presentation of Malian culture for the country's international visitors.

The architectural program was to significantly increase the exhibition space (400m² of exhibition space is increased to 1600 square meters with three dedicated to the permanent exhibitions and a 700 m² dedicated to temporary exhibitions) to create public services (shop and restaurant). In a 2-hectare garden which offers visitors a unique setting in Bamako, are presented the models of architectural monuments of Malian heritage.

The implementation of the renovation and the expansion of the museum was due to a change in the status of the museum, from an attached department of the state to an autonomous public institution. This change was seen as a strategy to give the museum renovated and expanded a greater opportunity for its cultural development. Autonomy is supposed to give the institution a greater flexibility to enable it to fulfill more effectively its new missions, but beyond this opportunity there is no doubt that change is part of the more general context a culture of economic liberalism that has spread in Africa over the past 15 years.

The state provides an annual grant that covers the basic operation of the institution. It is to the head of the establishment to find the necessary resources for the development of the institution's activities. As shown, this double development of the National Museum is right at the heart of the problem that occupies us here.

I must admit here that we did struggle to achieve this status. The previous status was not satisfactory in terms of resources and in terms of

the autonomy of action. The budget allocated to the museum allowed just to cover salaries, electricity and administrative operating expenses. No budget for acquisitions, conservation and exhibitions (all that had been done in this area was the through external partnerships). In addition, the proper management of the institution was impossible because financial decisions are made daily by a central authority by definition very far from the daily concerns of the service.

With the new status, if we found a range of more shares, consideration has been an exponential increase in management tasks (budget management, personnel) and administration at the expense of science. This massive influx of administration and management, added to the tasks of planning, fundraising and implementation of projects has imposed on us a model of entrepreneurial management far removed from our initial training. The museum has become a cultural enterprise where the functions of conservation, education and research by the force of things was sidelined. The public became king, to conquer and keep it must constantly new activities designed to seduce. And it's expensive. We need to create resources and constantly seek funding.

Fortunately, so far things have worked with relative satisfaction. The museum, with the resources it generates (around 100 to 150 000 euros) and finance it generates has diversified its programming. With three permanent exhibitions, temporary exhibitions, programming, school visits, and organizing weekly (every Thursday) free musical concerts, (we start sessions children's story when the crisis erupted) image the museum has evolved positively among the population. Due to the quality of the premises of the museum, the museum hosts many private events.

The tourist has also adopted the museum. It was in the exhibition, the quality of places and the reputation of the restaurant. As for politics, they became proud of their institution. The museum has become a must for official visitors.

This relative success is still fragile as fundamentally linked to the availability of non-stable resources. We experienced the fragility of the situation with the crisis that Mali has known now for 18 months. The state has reduced by almost 30% the grant and the bilateral cooperation because of the coup in March 2012 suspended their cooperation. With the absence of foreign visitors, revenues have plummeted drastically.

This has led to painful adjustments. Fortunately, some partners that are not subject to political rules of the states helped us solve some difficult problems in particular security.

But let us close this parenthesis—over the

past 10 years, we are aware that promotional activities of the institution took precedence over research and collection management. But how successful is the implementation of such a diverse cultural program without compromising the original functions of the museum to preserve knowledge and study collections?

Based on my experience, I propose the following lines of thought, and it is on this that I will conclude. We start from the premise that the diversification of programming, the increased administrative and management tasks, the need to seek funding for projects do not allow the Conservator head of the institution to develop only its scientific functions on which he bases his professional legitimacy.

He is no longer in a position today to be one leader on board. It must be able to run a network of skills that are either internal or external to the museum.

Museum curators do not always have the skills to cover all scientific fields covered by these collections or exhibition projects. Collaboration with skills outside the institution is useful to make exhibitions, publications or research collections.

The National Museum in 2005 has experienced this type of collaboration with the temporary contemporary art exhibition Contact Zone, by using independent curators N'Goné Fall, Rachida Triki and Bisi Silva, based on a concept that we defined and for which we have obtained funding from the European Union. This collaboration, the first of its kind for the National Museum was the perfect illustration of the contribution of external expertise can bring to the production of knowledge in the museum. The love of photography works on this scheme.

The conservator should be able to search and develop partnerships, both at national and international level. Cultivate collaborations with museums and academic institutions that share the same professional interests can pool resources enriching programming.

Before concluding I'll show some pictures of the National Museum for those who do not know it. Thank you.

Case Study 6

Joanna Mytkowska

Biography: Joanna Mytkowska is a curator and art critic. Studied in Warsaw University in 1988-1994. Since 2007 she has been Director of the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw. Formerly she worked as a curator at the Centre Pompidou, Paris. Also a co-founder of the Foksal Gallery Foundation, where she worked from 2001–2007. In 2005 she curated the Polish Pavilion at the 51st Venice Biennale, exhibiting *Repetition* by Artur Zmijewski.

The Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw

Thank you very much for this presentation. Thanks for inviting me and thanks for your kind interest in the case of the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw. The relevance of our case, in the frame of the discussion about new dynamics of the museum, it's based on our experience—this story which was already introduced that we are fighting to have a building—but that's led us to be involved very much in the local politics and, in the end, forced us to remodel the practice of the museum.

I don't want to say that we would—by “we” I mean the team of the museum, because the team working is quite important in our case—that we would not work on remodeling museum practice if it would be in a different situation but, of course, in our case we have (we can say) no choice since we were forced to work differently. I have to give you, very quickly, a couple of facts to give you a context to the whole story and I'm sorry because some of you already heard the story many times. I have the feeling that I'm repeating constantly.

So, the museum was established in 2005. We are a federal governmental institution, but the city of Warsaw was in charge to build the building. This idea to build the museum came out just after Poland joined the European Union in 2004 and it's supposed to be paid with European funds and that was also the project which was linked with the general policy of the modernization in Poland.

And that's why, I guess, this idea of how Poland should be modernized it's one of the reasons of the problems with the erecting of the museum.

But just I wanted to stress that the name is linked with the grandiosity of this project. We are obviously dealing with contemporary art, but the name was given to the project in the very beginning, before we could reflect that issue. And

then, our location is quite important. We are located at —our future location—because we are the museum without a space; we are working in temporary spaces. So, it's the very centre of Warsaw, marked with this historical building from the Stalinist era. That red spot is the lot for the museum and it's the centre of the city.

So, I also wanted to show you a few images of the centre, because Warsaw is generally a nice city but the centre is an exception... but it's of course symbolic that since 1989 there is no political vision, social energy and ideas about what to do with the centre. So, it's the historical traumatic remains of the huge building, which for younger generations it's just a wild creature and for the older generation it's still overwhelmed with emotions. Around the area, there's spontaneous parking, there was a spontaneous bus stop and this is also, sometimes this is the place where demonstrations are taking place.

But most importantly what I'm showing now are riots linked with the process of modernization. Because this place, for ten years after 1989, was a place of a spontaneous street market, and when we joined the European Union the City Government violently removed street vendors from that location. So, in 2007 the City Government together with the museum—the former director of the museum—announced the international competition for the building, which was won by a young swiss architect Christian Kerez, very respected amongst architects. But what is important in that context it's that the museum was planned as quite a big building: 35.000 square meters, with 10.000 square meters of exhibition spaces.

This is the rendering, the entry of Christian Kerez. He won with this project, which is quite

impressive... as an architectural project. I have to say that I admire it. It's structurally a very clear project of a building, which consists on one idea: its concrete envelope is covering the whole spaces with this transparent glass ground floor, giving certain openness to the building. But that competition provoked an enormous public discussion that was probably the most active public debate on culture after 1989. I have a few press cuts, like comics, drawings, on what the reaction was.

So, basically this competition divided the art community and community in general. It seems that people expected something completely different, something which could symbolically correspond with the Palace of Culture. That was one part of the discussion. The other part it was not really articulated and expressed, as a desire. How the museum should look like? What is the museum for? what kind of building is the best for the services that people expected?, and, what is the centre of Warsaw? And, finally, this debate was really ongoing for more than a year. Everyday more and more arguments... more and more aggressive... and it seems that was, in fact, one of the most important discussions. What is going to be Poland's modernization? And Christian Kerez also, who, to certain extent, is the victim of that – he was an architect who entered a sort of cultural clash—so he didn't expect it and he wrote a book, which is published, and the title of the book tells a lot about what was the atmosphere around this competition.

So, the competition provoked... or somehow put a light on a conflict that was already there, but this discussion helped to articulate the conflict. Then, this situation, discouraged the Government of the city, and they were not really eager to continue. Plus, there were a lot of problems with management—budget was not balanced—and another issue linked with the fact that that was a quite pioneering project, one of the biggest investments into culture. So, finally this project ended up in a total catastrophe. The City Government was almost about to resign and finally they fired Christian Kerez and this building will never be completed, as we can say now.

But then my new team of the museum appeared on the picture and we took this task, a sort of a kamikaze task, to rescue the project. Now, of course, I'm talking from the perspective of six years, but then we were rather acting with intuition more than with clear ideas about how we could solve that situation. But the first decision we made was to make this discussion public. So, we didn't negotiate with the Mayor or the Minister of Culture secretly, specially since at the time cultural organizations and institutions were not really treated as partners. We made the whole discussion public,

and that was an enormous relief, and also gave us credibility, and very quickly we became a sort of a centre of a public debate on the direction of the modernization. Specially, of course, in the cultural field, but then we also felt that we were completely into local politics. This is our task and we didn't want to avoid that task.

But we had to reformulate museum practice, which was easy, because we didn't have a space to fill with projects, so it was obvious that we had to look for a sort of alternative activities. Also the team in the beginning was extremely small. Seven people started; now we are twenty-five. So, of course we were debating, but I don't mean that we wanted to torture people with constant debates. Our debates were, from one hand, about everyday practice of the institution. From the other hand, we were well prepared and we used our knowledge and competence on contemporary culture. So, mobility, networking, mixing experts from different fields... but also the aesthetic part of the discussion. We knew about the power of paradox or looking at things from a different perspective, comparing the same issue in a different geographical location and so on and so on. That let us offer a very interesting and also involving program. Plus—we were a very hot subject—so that was the issue! We didn't have to invent the issue.

That was, of course, the most important factor. Then we had a format that we invented, which people loved, like a department of proposals. We were discussing subjects with whoever would come and propose, but we were very careful not to discuss "for nothing" so we were always trying to have a representative of the authorities to respond, and then we were trying to change the discussion, leading to legal solutions. So, that was the main issue. I will mention just a few—in some we were leaders and in some we were only partners or participants. The most important was the program of the development of culture in Warsaw for the next twenty years, which is sort of successful at the moment.

Then we were in the discussion on the participatory budget for the city of Warsaw and from other fields that were more national issues. We were involved—or were one of the initiators—of the movement called Citizen of Culture. That was from one hand, to raise the national budget for culture up to one percent of the national budget. But the most important issue was that we were stressing a new role for contemporary culture in education, obviously, but also in the necessity to encourage the access to the tools of contemporary culture as one of the most important factors that are building contemporary societies. That was, to a certain extent, quite successful.

We managed to sign an agreement with the

Government under which the budget will be raised and the programs—and the distribution of money into that field—will be also introduced. Part of that success is that at a certain point we got a budget for collecting, because in the beginning our institution didn't have a budget for collecting... So that definition of the collection as a tool for social education led us to convince the Government to collect international contemporary art in a sort of organized way. So, four Polish museums got the possibility of regular collecting with a pretty decent budget. What I want to say is that those discussions were not just to fill up our space or to create our activity, but that were always designed to achieve certain solution that would be socially valid. So that was, especially in the beginning, the key activity of our organization.

Then, most specifically, we were very dedicated to the local politics in the city of Warsaw. We had a special program, very active for five years, which is called Warsaw under construction. Then, of course, we were working a lot not having space, so in the public space. I would like to show you, if you want, quickly, one example of that. We were not giving up the hardcore art-historical activity, but this emancipatory way of thinking about social issues, about politics, led us also to a different model of working with the art-historical duty of the museum.

Finally, if a founding myth of this institution is social conflict and the museum being part of it, and the other founding myth of the museum is the artist who engages—in different ways, sometimes artistically, sometimes more directly, politically—into social transformation and emancipation., and that, of course, was quite natural because a huge group of Polish artists who define Polish transformation. But that national or local Polish experience very quickly became only a sort of initiating moment. We were working with many artists, and I will just mention a few projects.

So, of course the museum looked like that, a gathering of people... On the first slide you can see a beautiful cardboard, a very temporary auditorium designed for us by the Slovenian artist Tobias Putrih. We could use whatever space—not just that space—it was varied. We wanted to place ourselves into a historical and geographical context and that was the result. I will not comment or analyze the projects—we don't have time for that.

We were addressing urgent issues and what you are seeing... You can see, on that slide, a copy of the hands of a statue of Jesus Christ, which is a copy of the Jesus Christ from Rio de Janeiro. So, the one in the same size is in a tiny town of Poland. We could show in the museum just the hands because of the size of our temporary space, but the issue was a new national art. We recognized this

production around national symbols that is, somehow, animating much more social energy than any other project in the field of contemporary culture, not even to mention art. So we invited people who many known institutions perceived as the "other" side. And, again, we didn't want to show it as a curiosity or we didn't want to discuss it as a dangerous phenomenon.

We rather used our skills coming from contemporary culture to analyze the sources and initiate a dialog. This was one of the most intense discussions we ever had, which doesn't mean that the discussions were happening in the museum. They were normally very present in the media and so outside of the museum. We became so confident in our abilities to participate in public discussions that we even started to export that format and for two months part of the museum staff moved to Moscow and we established this institution in absolute collaboration with our Moscow partners Ekaterina Degot and David Riff. This project was made in the frame of a big governmental cultural program linked to the politics of the European Union, when there was a lot of money to spend to promote Polish culture, and we didn't want to promote it in a sort of ordinary way, like making a show on Polish art or whatever. We wanted rather give the tools that we invented.

We wanted to reformulate cultural politics, with which, of course, we were not happy. But I mention this project because taught us very quickly that we are very local and that the mechanism that was functioning well in a local situation—when also these projects that we can call, quoting Tania Bruguera, long-term projects, were functioning because we had trust, we had credibility, we had a lot of people involved—in Moscow, obviously, didn't give a result. We couldn't solve any issue... We didn't manage to change the way they select the curator of Moscow Biennale—that was one of the issues of that project. Anyway, also under construction was this research and a sort of activist based project dedicated to the city of Warsaw with many, many issues, from protecting modern heritage to social housing. It also has the format of an exhibition, which we were doing in different locations.

But what is maybe the most interesting is that we were in a group of pioneers on that subject. Now there are hundreds of organizations dealing with city politics, so we don't have to continue that. We were already working more on visual, a sort of advertising in the city of Warsaw. The case of working in public space—so this is the project by Pawel Althamer—in fact a monument, a public monument. This is the sculpture, the portrait of a local band in the suburban part of Warsaw, which Pawel completed with a group of local people, and

they decided that they want to commemorate this guy, who died recently, and this sculpture was installed on the street, on the place where the guy used to appear often. That provoked an enormous discussion. What is a public monument? What is public? What does it mean commemorate? There was also a lot of critic around. Not all the people from the neighborhood were happy with the presence of this sort of character. But this sculpture became an icon of our collection, so now we have two copies of it. The original is on the street and the copies in the museum.

From a more art-historical activity we were in those years working on several historical projects dealing with the reinterpretation of the local art history. One of the most complex was the exhibition on Alina Szapocznikow in our tiny, modest space. We did a group show to compare the artist with other female artists of her time. But the main issue is that we wanted to introduce a different discourse around her, so being the artist that was very well known mostly as a pioneer in female art, and then as a pioneer in expressing the issue of the holocaust. The side effect was a huge international success of that artist, who until then was local. So we had the occasion to curate the show at WIELS with Elena Filipovic and with Connie Butler in MoMA.

So, the second myth of this organization is those artists who engage in cultural and social transformation. I cannot mention many projects but that's the main issue, that's the main subject, which helped us to organize the first show of our collection, which we open in May this year. We have for three years a new temporary space, a former furniture shop, so we'll use this maybe... Mention also that the title of the show, *In the Heart of the Country*, is of course a linked to the Defilad Square, the place where the museum is going to be built one day, maybe. That's the place that we recognize as a sort of centre of the discussion about Polish modernization.

So, in the centre of the space we've placed the auditorium since debates are so important for the institution. We play with the transparency so the exhibition is very visible from the street and, of course, the projects are the most important. I have no time to explain but I will just name some. So, this is Yona Friedman, who is dealing with the idea of a sort of organic mental architecture, which doesn't need the building.

We also included some quite huge paintings by Polish artist Rafal Bujnowski, who is dealing with those never-finished dreams of modernization.

Of course, this is an important moment as it's the first show of the collection. We are showing around 150 works by 85 artists. That's what we managed to collect in the last three years. And, just

to give you an idea about what kind of projects we perceive as emancipatory, is the project by Sanja Ivekovic. She was dealing with the history of women in Polish opposing solidarity, because most of the men in the eighties were arrested. They built underground states. They, in fact, created, somehow, this form of the opposition, but they disappeared from public life in 1989, and Sanja Ivekovic was one of the first to point this issue.

One of the big projects we were involved in, and co-produced, was that project by Yael Bartana, which was presented in the Polish pavilion (of Venice) two years ago. So, projects... We have to unfortunately give up... The last one is by Pawel Althamer again. I will only mention this: this is the group of figures which he made after the famous Ilya Riepin painting, but we are carry not a boat but the model of Christian Kerez, a building, so this is a sort of homage to that story. There are several other projects, including a fantastic project by Goshka Macuga.

Conclusions. We've learned a lot during this process. We are now just about to start again the process of building, we hope, our future building of the museum. We are not going to focus on the building as a final goal, so we are going to continue with our activities. The building is going to be much smaller and we want to include experience of how our institution functions. So, this is the functional plan we've prepared for the future architect. The auditorium is going to be in the middle. We want to have a so-called reaction gallery, a gallery in which we can have—very quickly organized projects, which will be a sort of reaction to urgent issues with research in relation to the archive. We want a very small administration and a collection gallery in relation to this public square. No foyer, if possible. This is the sort of direction that we gave to the architect. Thank you very much.

Questions & Answers

Samuel Sidibé and Joanna Mytkowska

Question Bartomeu Mari: We have a very short Questions & Answers. But I'd like to ask you both how do you deal, how do you conciliate the demands for a local representation and the aspirations of an international repercussion or outreach of your activities.

Samuel Sidibé: How do we conciliate these two things: I think, of course the museum, any museum, should be open to different types of public. For Mali, for instance, as I told you, the questions of exhibition are not the main focus for public, and I would say that this is clear; this is clear in Mali. So, what we are trying to do and what we understood, what we understand now, is that we have to create new type of activities that could be very, very important. The question of immaterial culture, the question of contemporary culture, is something...—I think that through this channel we can have the local public.

Of course, the question of history, the question of art, is, to me, something important, but it is clear that this is something that we have to manage on the long term. This is clear to me, because even... I'll take the example of the Rencontres Africaines de la Photographie. We organize the Rencontres de la Photographie, and we have a lot of problems to involve a lot of local public on this event. Sometimes they say: "ok, this event is for an international public. Why do you use so much money for this event?" and I say: "ok. Probably you're right, but the future is to allow local public to understand art, to educate on art". The museum alone cannot do it, but I think that we have to educate people on this kind of topic and try to find activities to fit better with the interests of local public.

Joanna Mytkowska: We are working very locally, but this is not an obstacle to be attractive for international public, if I understand your question properly. If you are locally successful, well defined –usually those projects have a universal quality, I would say. But the main thing is that I think that we are very, very local and also with the public we are quite successful. We feel the support of the public, the support of the local artistic community, and we are not afraid of making projects that are complex, even hermetic. If we feel that that's not attractive for the public, we work on the programs that can make them more attractive. So these are the tools, the strategies that we are using.

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