

CIMAM 2006 ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
CONTEMPORARY INSTITUTIONS:  
BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE  
**23-24 NOVEMBER 2006 – TATE MODERN, LONDON**

A two-day conference examining the influence, consequences, advantages, and/or drawbacks of the increasing intermeshing of public and private interests in and on museums around the world

23 - 24 November, 2006 – Tate Modern, London

*CIMAM 2006 Annual Conference. "Contemporary Institutions: Between Public and Private" 23 - 24 November, 2006 – Tate Modern, London. A two-day conference examining the influence, consequences, advantages, and/or drawbacks of the increasing intermeshing of public and private interests in and on museums around the world [published on the occasion of the 2006 CIMAM Annual Meeting, 23 - 24 November, 2006 – Tate Modern, London]; edited by Kathy Douglas with the collaboration of Pilar Cortada; sessions transcribed by Mireia Bartels.*

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## **WELCOMING REMARKS AND INTRODUCTION**

### **Nicholas Serota, Director, Tate Gallery**

Ladies and gentlemen, I am Nicholas Serota, Director of Tate, and it is both an honour and a pleasure to welcome you to London and take the chair of the 2006 CIMAM Conference. It is an extraordinary privilege for Tate to host this conference along with our partner organisations in London. It has been, I think, twenty-three years since CIMAM visited London, and a great deal has changed in that time. We are thrilled that you are here, and delighted that so many people have come from across the world and that we have such a large representation from so many countries.

I would like to begin by thanking Alfred Pacquement, who will speak after me, and the Board of CIMAM for the extraordinary work they have done in organising this conference. As you will see from the distinguished list of speakers, artists, writers, theoreticians and museum curators, they have put together a really remarkable series of discussions over the next two days. I also want to thank particularly Pilar Cortada and Sheena Wagstaff, who have been the principal organisers of this event, and Sheena will also speak in a moment.

I think it is fairly clear that, in Europe at least, museums of modern art have never been more popular, more visited, and nevertheless paradoxically more uncertain about their future. Uncertain in the sense of their finances, uncertain in some cases, I would argue, about their mission, uncertain about exactly how they should be governed in the new world, as they become more and more dependent on private-sector finance of many different kinds, whether it be sponsorship, donations, or income earned through tickets sales at the box office. Most of the museums in Europe are in a very, very different position from the one they were in when we last met in London in 1983. That is why it is such a significant moment at which to be discussing the subject that we have before us over the next two days. Of course it is never very straightforward; it is not a case of simply saying, 'Public good, private bad.' There are far too many publicly funded institutions that failed to deliver or to live up to their mission, and there are plenty of very good private institutions that do remarkable work, many of them represented in this room, making significant contributions to the discourse about contemporary art that we find across Europe, America and elsewhere in the world. But nevertheless, I think there is a very profound sense that the tectonic plates are shifting, and the balance between the public and the private is changing. Twenty years ago (and this is a

generalisation, but I think it is broadly speaking true) there were many functions, activities, programmes that would have been regarded then as the prerogative of public institutions. The production of authoritatively researched catalogues, commissioning artists to create works: these are activities that were undertaken in public institutions, and rarely in commercial galleries or private institutions. Commercial galleries very seldom produced important catalogues twenty or thirty years ago. Today, every commercial gallery commissions curators, in this room and elsewhere, to write essays for big, heavily researched, often promotional but nevertheless valuable, contributions to the discussion about contemporary art. And the same is true when one visits the galleries themselves, not only across the world but even in London, where the scale of the gallery and the ambition of the exhibition in some instances outstrips what is possible in a public institution in terms of size, in terms of reach, in terms even, sometimes, of close collaboration with the artist. So I think it is a very critical moment for us to be discussing how we respond to these changes, how we consider the strategies for both public and private institutions as we move forward into the twenty-first century. And I look forward very much to hearing the contributions and being involved in the debate.

And now I am going to invite Alfred Pacquement, President of CIMAM, to speak to you, and we will then move on through the day. But thank you all again for coming to London.

**Alfred Pacquement - President, CIMAM**

Thank you, Nick. It was in fact timely to come back to London twenty-three years after the last CIMAM conference here. It is true that the city has changed a lot, and this building where we are is a magnificent proof of that change. Another change since twenty-three years ago is these terrible machines (pointing to his mobile), which I suggest that we switch off for a few hours to be quiet, and discuss and listen.

I am extremely happy to open this annual conference of CIMAM, and of course above all I would like to thank Tate, its director Nicholas Serota, Vicente Todoli, director of Tate Modern, and Sheena Wagstaff, Chief Curator and active member of the board. They have allowed this event to take place in one of the most prestigious modern art museums in the world. It is a recent project which has proved a tremendous success,

and CIMAM could hardly find a better place to debate again this year museum issues, as is our role as an international organisation.

To make this event possible, we have received a lot of support. Above all I would like to thank our patrons who are involved in the activities of CIMAM. Many of them are here at this conference today, and I thank them for their presence and support. I would also like to thank the sponsors of this conference, Sir John and Lady Ritblat, the Arts Council of England, The Getty Foundation and the Henry Moore Foundation. They have permitted this conference to take place in perfect conditions, I hope. I would also like to thank the institutions that are going to host us during these two days: Parasol Unit, the Whitechapel Art Gallery, the Camden Art Centre, the Serpentine Art Gallery and Liverpool Biennial, for those of you taking the post-conference tour. And again, as Nicholas Serota said, I want to thank Sheena Wagstaff and Pilar Cortada very sincerely for the efforts they have put in to make this event possible.

Together with the board, we have chosen as a general topic the central question about public and private, a major dilemma for institutions at the moment. The majority of us work in public museums or public art centres, meaning that we are supported by government, cities, regions, public administrations. But we also have colleagues with a similar mission who work in private institutions, sponsored by individuals, by corporations, by foundations. The particular case of America, where museums are private, depending on the Board of Collectors, but have a public role in cities where they are often the only art institution, brings yet another category to mind. All these institutions co-exist, share programmes, co-produce exhibitions, enter into contact with the same artists to build projects, and develop collections in the same field. We will listen to individuals representing them during this conference. All are faced with the same issues: the economy of the cultural machine, finding the right balance between artistic matters and public consideration, and between independence and the coherence of their cultural aims.

In a time when the role of the museum in the city has evolved to deal more and more with so-called cultural tourism, can we preserve its previous missions: access to knowledge, education, pleasure, emotion in front of a work of art, preservation of the past, and an introduction to the present through collecting and archiving? Do the public or private sponsors who support the museums keep these in mind as a real priority, or

do they attribute to the museum other missions, such as a communication impact for their own prestige and power, media effects, opportunities of social events for a selected public, economic influence, etc?

We curators and museum directors are well aware that the museum is no longer a place exclusively reserved for culture, but is also an instrument of power. We are not fooled by this evolution of the museum, and must try to act within its contradictions. The positive aspect of this development is, of course, that the museum is open to new categories of public – multiplying, for instance, education classes of all kinds. The democratisation of the museum is a fact, even if the lower classes are still under-represented. But why, and how, does that affect the programmes? Politicians and sponsors use the museum as a tool, but the museum needs them to survive. Can the museum survive in this new climate, where the top prices in the art market are often seen as a more efficient measure than the criteria of art historians and curators, especially in the case of contemporary artists?

CIMAM has always openly shared its ideas with important collectors, such as those who support our organisation as patrons, or of course the many who participate in our museums as donors, lenders or sponsors. Some are here today, and I want again to welcome them and thank them for their presence and continuous support. The commitment by collectors is not only necessary for the artist, but affects, as we all know, the museum collections, which are largely built through private initiatives, whether the works are eventually given, lent or disposed subject to specific conditions. But we all know that the world is changing and that the floods of money in the arts, and particularly in contemporary art, bring new attitudes and new pressures from the art market. Art is a matter of speculation more than ever: buyers venture into the games investment firms play in this category, and a London newspaper could write last year about 40,000 collectors, enthusiasts and speculators converging on Regent's Park to snap up the work of 2000 of the world's top artists, spending £26,000,000 in the process. As we know, public collections, even the largest ones like Tate or Centre Pompidou, cannot compete with collectors, who seem ready to buy or invest enormous amounts in art: \$1275 million in auctions in New York this week alone. In a world where a work of art is often seen in economic terms, can the museum maintain its position? With all the questions now being raised about our everyday activities, how can we maintain a critical approach in a situation which demands that we compete and deliver

financially? We have invited curators, collectors, artists, institution directors, and a very broad international panel of lecturers – whom I thank for responding to our invitation – to give their informed opinions on these matters. Obviously private initiative is necessary, especially when the public domain is absent or powerless. But there are common rules to follow in addressing the community, for the sake of the art and the artist.

Last year, when we opened the CIMAM conference in Sao Paolo – the very day we opened it – we learnt of the death of Edy de Wilde, former director of the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam and a founding member of CIMAM. A few weeks ago, we suddenly learnt of the death of Pontus Hultén, former president of CIMAM. As you all know, Pontus was director of several important museums, among them the Modern Art Museum of Stockholm, Musée National d'Art Moderne du Centre Pompidou in Paris, Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) in Los Angeles, Palazzo Grassi in Venice, Kunst-und-Ausstellungshalle in Bonn and the Jean Tinguely museum in Basel. He was a museum director close to the artist, close to the collectors, for whom the financial value of the artwork and the economy of the project were never the ultimate criteria, the public's expectations never a reason for programming exhibitions. Although, in his own words, the public was the fundamental reason for the museum to exist he said, 'A museum director's first task is to create an audience that trusts the institution.' Pontus knew how to combine public success and artistic accuracy. This led him to organise "The Hon" in Stockholm or the Crocodrome in Paris, as well as great historical surveys such as Paris-Berlin, Paris-Moscow or the Futurist Exhibition in Venice. He was an example of the independence and creativity of the museum curator, and we should all be aware of his attitude. Pontus was a role model, and I think, because of his commitment to CIMAM and his overall position in museum directorship, he deserves that we dedicate this conference to him. Thank you.

## **CONFERENCE OVERVIEW**

### **Sheena Wagstaff – Chief Curator, Tate Modern**

Good morning, everyone. My name is Sheena Wagstaff and I am the Chief Curator here, and I would like to add my thanks to those of Nick and Alfred to you all for coming on this rather brisk autumn morning to debate the hot topic of the position of Contemporary Institutions: Between Public and Private.

I am sure that every member of this audience has already debated aspects of this question with as much passion as the CIMAM Board members did when we were determining one of the most urgent issues we all think about, and negotiate on a daily basis in our work. The questions we have posed for our speakers touch on some of the more obvious challenges or dilemmas faced by the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, as has already been mentioned by Nick and Alfred. There are of course many others. I anticipate with pleasure the gauntlets I know some speakers will be flinging down for us to pick up in this tournament of vigorous intellectual duelling.

It is certainly a trigger point for heated discussion amongst the curatorial team here at Tate Modern when we talk about how to respond through our programme to the rapidly shifting relationship between audience, learning and art – in a balanced and ethical equation with the twin market forces of corporate and political imperatives. I think it is true to say that even a couple of decades ago, there might have been general consensus within the museum community about what many considered an insidious growth of what I facetiously term ‘corporate creep’. However, the way we have now come to reconsider that old polarisation – on the one side an alliance of corporate sponsorship and media, and on the other a league of enlightened curators and critical theorists – has necessitated a much more subtle, complex and sensitive negotiation with both existing and new means of financial support.

The world has also changed dramatically in that intervening period. In the UK, the burgeoning appeal of art and growth of cultural literacy (Tate Modern would modestly claim to have stimulated some of that shift!) and also in part of the cause of it – has created a social dynamic matched by the internet generation’s expectation of more sophisticated and greater choice of self-led projects. There is a growing demand for more active and creative engagement with the world. And artists, often the harbingers of societal shifts, have long understood that art can be a catalyst for a creative process on a larger, public scale. Changes in artistic practice mean that a project is not only what might be put on display: audiences might also witness or trace the process of its creation to engage with it on a number of different levels.

The shift from consumption to participation has been described by politicians, critical theorists, curators (and the BBC!) as a renewed form of democracy. I know that some of our speakers will be addressing this topic later. In the meantime, one of the most

popular secular and social gathering places in London, Tate Modern's Turbine Hall, has often been described as offering a democratic communal experience through the agency of some extraordinary installations by Louise Bourgeois, Juan Muñoz, Anish Kapoor, Olafur Eliasson, Bruce Nauman, Rachel Whiteread and now Carsten Höller, none of which would have been possible without substantial sponsorship. Each has engendered a broad public and popular engagement with the work as well as its intellectual and artistic underpinnings. One of the most memorable was Eliasson's "Weather Project" three years ago. Using three simple elements – a huge half-sun made of low-sodium metal bulbs, a mirrored ceiling, and mist machines – he intended to create an installation that would hold up a mirror to the institution, reflecting on the ways in which the museum influences or mediates the experience of art for its audience. At the same time, he was aware that by taking on the commission, he was complicit with the museum's agenda. It had an immediate and massive popular effect, and at the same time raised ideas about the notion of the spectacle as well as urgent debates, internally and externally, about the issue of cultural value and how it is, or can be, assessed beyond the imperative of tangible attendance figures. In some respects, Eliasson's project, along with the others to varying degrees, functioned as a metaphor for the intellectual and ethical framework for both the programme and the museum itself. It demonstrated that accessibility can allow an encounter with the work of art that goes beyond its initial effect to access deeper levels of engagement.

I think I'll leave it there! And now it is my great honour and pleasure to introduce the keynote speaker, Andrew O'Hagan. Andrew was born in Glasgow in 1968. His first book, *The Missing*, was named an International Book of the Year in the Times Literary Supplement, and subsequently made into a film by Channel 4. His novel *Our Fathers* was shortlisted for the Booker Prize and the runner-up for the James Tate Black Memorial Prize for Fiction. In 2003 he was named one of the twenty best British novelists by *Granta*, and was given the E.M. Forster Prize by the American Academy of Arts and Letters. His most recent novel, which came out just a couple of months ago, is *Be Near Me* and I highly recommend it to those of you who have not read it yet. He is also a contributing editor to the *London Review of Books* and writes for the *New York Review* and the *New Yorker*. He has been a visiting professor at Trinity College, Dublin, a writer in residence at the Hayward Gallery in London, and in 2000 was made UNICEF's first Ambassador for Literature. And, as some of you know, he has been very involved with the visual arts, in and out of London. I was fortunate enough to be

part of the audience, some time ago now, at the Whitechapel Hospital, where he posed the most amazing response to Gregor Schneider's project that Artangel created in the East End of London. It was an astonishing, compelling and deeply memorable evening. Please join me in welcoming Andrew O'Hagan. Thank you.

## **KEYNOTE GENERAL SPEECH**

### **Andrew O'Hagan – Writer**

Thank you very much and welcome to the conference. It's a great pleasure for me, someone who considers himself an outsider to this world, to be able to rush in and say a few words to you. They are going to be a very few words. I've been told to speak for about twenty minutes.

I'd like to begin at the very beginning, if you don't mind. The house I grew up in had no art on the walls. I say no art, but there was a picture above the fireplace and another one above the sofa, each of them very powerful mass-produced images by Vladimir Tretyakov. The one above the fireplace was called 'The Weeping Boy', and it seemed very private and very personal to all of us in the house. We didn't know what kitsch was in Glasgow in those years, at least we didn't, and we didn't know much about irony. 'The Weeping Boy' invited some sort of private communion and exuded, as far as I remember, a strange sort of wonder. The work above the sofa was called 'The Green Lady', another popular framed image available at the time in most British department stores. She was the heart and soul of modern mystery to us. She looked away with that burden of sadness and misfortune. Such a burden we couldn't tell. But there she was, in the living room, the living space, with us there too. Nobody ever discussed these pictures and eventually they were put in the bin, thrown out with the trash. Whatever we preserved of them was kept in the haphazard museum of our own hearts, you might say, and I still miss them. When I eventually made it to an art gallery it was to the one at Kelvingrove in Glasgow, and it housed something which I thought at the time was much more clichéd and inferior to the work of Tretyakov: Salvador Dali's famous painting *Christ of Saint John of the Cross*, a sort of aerial view of Jesus Christ as he hangs on the cross. I think I must have thought it clichéd because I grew up Catholic, and images with that tone, if you like, if not that style, were to be found in even the least conspicuous churches in the land. In time, I grew to love the Dali, of course.

The journey towards loving it was also, now that I think of it, a journey away from the mass-produced, almost pre-conditioned emotionalism of the supermarket paintings and to a love of the Dali's boldness. More than that, it marked a growing love for an institution, the Kelvingrove Art Gallery, which by having such a picture made one feel that the world's riches – that is to say, its deepest imaginings – weren't custom-built for the great museums of Paris, and London and New York only, but were sometimes available to be hung in other places, places we knew and breathed in. That me made me feel rather enlarged; to think that our eyes and our capacity for wonder was just as valuable as anybody else's capacity for wonder and eyes. And it made many of us feel that the public space was being protected by intelligent and careful people. Those who ran the Kelvingrove Art Gallery, for instance, knew the value, it seemed, of proximity, of closeness and the power of intimacy when it came to the placing of art.

Now, there was a feeling in those days, in one's living room as much as in one's nearest gallery, that a little elitism was good for the soul. Everybody could own a Tretyakov, but that didn't stop one from feeling that the 'Weeping Boy' was somehow one's own 'Weeping Boy', different from everybody else's by virtue of what we bestowed on it. It was the context, being utterly specific: our family, its connection to that image, seemed to carry a specific meaning. We felt natively elitist about the power of our cheap painting, I have to say, and when you visited the gallery there was the knowledge that the Dali was a painting that people could only afford collectively; its value was beyond the reach of nearly everyone who might look at it. Its monetary value, that's to say. But that was part of its glory, in that space. The point is that neither at home, nor in the gallery, was the experience to do with consensus. Everybody was allowed to feel like an elite unto themselves, and that felt a very human thing to be and to want to be: an elite unto oneself.

We now live in the era, of course, of fake consensus, or phoney populism, a condition in which galleries and homes have seemed to succeed best where they manage feelings of non-difference. The use of public space, which is never separable these days, of course, in the mind of the media, from the use of public funds, is too often promoted, in my view, even if only subconsciously, as an occasion for the erasure of private passions and the usurping of the concerns of discrete individuals, almost always to be replaced, in each case, by a banalised, compromised, de-personalised, corporatised and very often logoised vision of groupthink, a pattern of work and space

which is not about private wonder, or even about personal interpretation, but about the fulfilment of a consensual brief.

We can walk from room to room, walking as a person, and discover language, humanity, uncertainty, form, anxiety. Often now we can walk as a ghost between those rooms, a ghost in the machine, if you like, with a phantom identity, a kind of holograph of a sentient person, just wishing one could be more present in the midst of all this blockbusting collective energy. One can't see the art, very often; one can only see oneself at the outer edge of it. And that rings out a new kind of mystery to be experienced by people in the public art space: five words – what am I doing here?

I would like to believe that museums and their staff could be among the great protectors of the public space. Their role has increased, and so has their meaning, potentially. They would protect it in the name of contemplation and imagination and difference. Also, in the name of independence, protecting it from the unruly decimations of commercial ambition alone. People who make art viewable and meaningful have always been influenced by the hopes and dreams of salesmen, of course, and they've always given into them at the peril of public-spiritedness. At the very moment that many museums with their corporate partners speak of democratising the institutions and empowering the community, they are in fact diminishing the possibility of single human responses by gigantically glossing the work and forcing difference out the window. Mass commerce is fashion with no sense of style, and once the rooms of your museums have become advertising hoardings, with no embarrassment about how the work itself, indeed, or the new life given to it by curators or critics, may, if left to less popularising devices, actually ridicule the servility of these marketing efforts. Left unchecked, sponsorship, a bit like populism and its tabloid forms in Britain, will actually de-imagine what is new and progressive. De-imagine it.

It's already begun to do so in the book market and the television world and in the cinema. The art world was always thought to be the last bastion, perhaps, of difficulty and strangeness. But the global market is, of course, making every metre and inch of your beloved spaces into a simulacrum of genius and money. The forbidden and the taboo will survive, so long as there are media pundits to berate them. But what of the smaller skills and the finer fabrics? Is there another conversation that will seek to

remember them, once the media carnival and the salesmen have moved on to the London Olympics or to Ipod movies?

A living museum must surely see itself as a locus of argument. A breathing art institution is not a lock-up, but a moveable feast. I say it might be among society's...you might be among society's protectorate, yes, for it gives credence to the notion that the past and the present live through us, not us through them. They have no meaning outside what we imagine for them, the past or the present. Profit and loss melts into air, but the narrative of human engagement does not, unless we allow it to or force it to.

Our buildings are beautiful, like this one, but sometimes they're beautiful according to the degree to which they repel the despotisms of ideology and passing trade. It's not simply a matter of refusing the barbarians at the gate, but of making the presence of the barbarians at the gate part of the story of the public space itself. Our era is experiencing a crisis in its understanding of the sacredness of the public sphere. From Berlin to Babylon, the idea that money can free human minds seems eloquent, whilst the planet warms and the media ignore the news.

The public sphere may soon be hostile to a person alone, and that means the museum space as well as the high street. One person is increasingly nothing. Whilst a massive person is a consensus and an opportunity, one person is a nothing. Walking in Kelvingrove all those years ago, I was free to imagine. I was encouraged by the curators, by the staff, to imagine that every nook and cranny of that museum was made over time to await the arrival of my own eyes. Everybody felt that. Discretely, one at a time, we felt that. One person at a time was more than enough, was all the world. But now the business of looking is too often part of an electoral system. We're voting with our feet, we're told. We are legislating with our eyes. We're not 'ennobled'; we're 'enfranchised' in the new language. We're not 'gifted with something'; we are 'accepted' as part of a community.

All the hidden energy in our culture at the moment is going into reforming our notion of togetherness. We go to galleries not to experience civilisations, but to show we are civilised. We enter through the quarters of art not in order to remember lives and efforts and genius, but in order to be remembered in the estimation of others for the quality of

our visitations. All our efforts aspire to a condition of togetherness that we don't actually wish to bear. Our times are defining a notion of community which denies eccentricity, dislikes outsider-ism and the power of aloneness, but has nothing to replace it with except nationhood, as presently being distilled with blood and the planes of Iraq. 'You're either with us or against us,' said that famous man, in a milestone statement of our times. It describes the intellectual temperament of the period, I believe, as much as Margaret Thatcher's 'There is no such thing as society' once defined a period, or John Major's 'It's time to condemn a bit more and understand a bit less' – perhaps one of the most fantastic deployments of the English language I could easily imagine – all the way down to Tony Blair's mantras about the 'People's Princess'.

You're in the business, of course, of looking and thinking, and remembering and renewing – and these are not great times for those actions. But that struggle in itself can define a sort of greatness, and a historical one at that. The business of looking, alone, has become an almost primal theme of our time. Technology has made it so, and might explain so much of what I've said: the loss of self in the face of that great notion of value which is now placed in the idea of 'the public'. The public has been made new by broadcasting technology and the Internet, of course. We're part of a vivid comentariat –everyone is – but one that is brutally craftless, untrackably careless. There is very little that cannot be watched now, so we must ask, where does that leave the idea of privacy and the public space, if no privacy is actually recognised and the public sphere is a kind of informational delirium? And we might ask the question, is it part of that delirium to watch everybody, watch ourselves watching everybody else, but to see nothing? In other words, at its worst, is our modern way of watching just a way of not seeing anything?

Let me take this question of public life on in a personal way. I spent the first of my teenage years living in the grounds of an approved school, a place that faced on to a ruined castle said to have given a night's shelter once to Mary, Queen of Scots – the fleeing queen was never there at all, of course, but people preferred to think that she had never left; every castle in Scotland seeks to have its part in Mary's story, and her eyes were felt to burn from the high window. Looking at the ruins, I always hoped that Mary would just speak some of her great last words from the darkness, perhaps to me. I believed she was there, and there was something of us all there in those eyes of hers that seemed to make a ritual of watching in the night.

The school was full of delinquent boys from Glasgow, and what I remember most about them is the sheer depth of their wish to be remembered, not to fade into the shadows of a social system they couldn't properly see or understand. Sometimes I would meet these boys when I parked my bike at the edge of the playing fields. Each of them was pale, nervous, often tearful, and they looked into the orange blur of the housing estate behind the castle as if contemplating one of the world's grand promises. 'They can't forget me,' one of them said, the red-ash pitch blazing under his sandshoes.

'They won't,' I said. I wasn't sure what he meant.

'Oh aye, they will...forget me,' he said, 'and that makes me want to kill somebody.'

The boys were locked in at night and, after dark, over the barking of dogs, they would stand at the windows in their pyjama tops and football scarves and shout surnames into the trees: 'Robertson! McCauley! O'Dwyer! Stenhouse!' They had children's voices. They had spots and hostile memories, and had the beginnings of moustaches, but it was their eyes I can't forget, up at the windows. They hated their immediate confinement. But more than that, they hated being away from the world at large. They couldn't bear the thought of life passing them by, of other people being remembered and spoken about and them forgotten in an Ayrshire borstal at the edge of the green belt. In conversation, they seemed bugged by questions of reputation: 'Do people know who I am? Do they know what I did?' And you could see that each was obsessed with the problem of having no real past to speak about.

That was 1980. The boys would talk about being photographed and written about or even drawn by court artists, anything to bring them into what they considered to be the everyday, the glare of reality and normal life. Some of them had kept the newspaper cuttings describing their crimes and they took pictures of one another, delighted with themselves, and would gather round to stare at the results. They would swap these pictures and pin them up and show them to any girls who were adventurous enough to come near the school.

It would take me years, years, to work it out. They didn't want to be a temporary part of some temporary experience. They wanted to shine, those boys. And something very

compelling in them yearned for recognition, something very modernly compelling. They wanted to watch and be watched. Most of them weren't homesick, or just lonely. They didn't want to go back; they wanted to go forward, outward, upward, in fact, to an idea of some home that was larger and more spectacular than could easily be imagined.

One night, our house was robbed. You'll be relieved to know they didn't steal the Tretyakovs. I woke up in the night to see one of the boys leaning over the bed, taking a Polaroid camera from the shelf above my head. He smiled at me and took the camera for himself. When he left, I turned into my pillow and could smell glue in the air of the room. I knew I would miss the camera. I loved it. But I knew he'd have better use for it.

My first book was called *The Missing*, and I started writing it in my head, the very second I saw the video footage of the Liverpool toddler, James Bulger, being led away by the two ten-year-olds who would become his murderers. There was something familiar about those boys, their jackets, their haircuts, their way of inclining their heads to one another as they walked, their furtiveness, their loitering with intentness, which seemed to jar for me the almost deranged intentness of the baying public that year, 1993, watching later via the arcade's cameras, wishing to catch them *just* as they set out on that terrible journey. The public's imagination was drawn into the very moment-by-moment experience of an abduction. The pictures, of course, were used everywhere, not least by the tabloids, who asked, of course, for vengeance against the killers, and a mythological power grew around one particular image: James Bulger, between the two boys, being led away. People were shocked by it, but they were also dazzled, and that dazzling lives with us still. They wanted to see deeper and deeper into the grain of the picture, and many spoke of wanting to reach right inside the scene, as watchers, and interrupt the action about to take place. The video camera and videotape made ordinary things re-watchable, made single moments suddenly un-fleeting. I remember the term 'freeze-framed' coming into being, and I suppose I found the subject of my book in considering the parts of ourselves that lie at the edge of recordability, out of the frame, missing from view, but even so, absences that had become increasingly present in our experience of life.

I felt for the boy being led away, but also for the boys leading him; and I believed there was not only a terrible death beyond what we could see there, but lives too, the life of a community and the failings of a welfare state. Venables and Thompson, the two

murderers, re-enacted something that day. They played out a fantasy of watching and being watched. Much of what they did – ‘Let’s steal a kid,’ Thompson said – was based on a fantasy drawn from a home video they’d seen together, *Child’s Play 3*, a story about a psychotic killer doll that is endlessly brought back to life.

I should just say, as a sub-note to that, that there was some disquiet and, indeed, some argument, when the case came to trial in Preston Crown Court, about whether the boys had actually watched this film. I discovered from family members that not only did they know the film and had watched it, but they knew it frame by frame. Venables later spoke constantly of the dead child reviving. He didn’t really know how to believe in death, let alone morality. The video fantasy was not allowed to serve in mitigation at the trial, although it was suggested that the boys had tried to insert stolen batteries into James Bulger. Again, at the trial, when that was revealed to some of us off-camera, we thought that was an absolutely crucial piece of defence evidence that wasn’t used by the defence, I think for fear that it would upset the public too much.

It was a sorry time in Britain. No-one seemed ready for modernity. Not the modernity which includes forgiving those boys for a terrible act. But being told by the Prime Minister to ‘stop understanding and start condemning’ was a new experience. None of us could save those boys from their terrible actions, and soon enough the moral aphasia of Venables and Thompson was mirrored by that of the press, much of which, like the boys, was acting out a bad dream of vengeance, based on something they had watched on a videotape.

The trial was a fantasia of retribution, and in an act that amazed other Europeans the press corps on the last day of the trial managed to persuade Mr Justice Morland to release the boys’ names and photographs, thus bringing the matter back to where it all began: photographic images rolling at the heart of anxiety and people mistaking the process of watching for the machinery of thinking. The tabloids re-made themselves that day; their dark-hearted blend of fake populism, as I’ve said, moral hysteria, witch-hunting glee and life-devouring incomprehension, all of which made the country swoon with piety and self-righteousness.

Some years later, when the boys’ case was brought before the European Court of Human Rights, the judges expressed themselves baffled by the trial, thinking it unruly

in its modernity and its use of imagery, its rapidity, its carelessness, its showbiz-iness. It was, they said, a trial that risked the court presenting the appearance of an exercise in vindication of public outrage. Public and private, the theme of this conference, came into a full, blazing, white-heat glare.

Nowadays, in certain Liverpool pubs, you can find people who'll show you a new image, downloaded and printed from the Internet. It's an image of one of the boys as he may look now. Vengeance is evergreen, and the regulars know by heart the image and they watch the door.

I don't mean to mash all these thoughts, as Dr Johnson once said, into a school and call it an academy. But I believe people in Britain experienced an entanglement with technology and art and reality during that trial that had an effect on the nation's character. Many of the great tabloid-frenzied dramas to follow were, at an early point, enlarged in the public's consciousness by closed-circuit television or amateur cameramen. It has become one of the great visual themes of our time.

Princess Diana caught in the lobby of the Paris Ritz minutes before her death, O.J Simpson's 'live' escape in the white Bronco. The Omagh bombing was enhanced as a terrifyingly real tragedy when home footage appeared. The drama of Holly Wells's and Jessica Chapman's disappearance in Britain was heightened when closed-circuit television footage appeared of the girls crossing a sports-club car park in Soham at precisely 6.17 pm. These images have a very different bearing from reconstructions and reported events. They give the viewer the *frisson* of reality unfolding in real time. It's changed everything. The production values are authentically low. People like it that way; the blurrier the picture, the sharper the moment.

By September the 11<sup>th</sup> 2001, of course, the taste for improvised, participatory reality television had grown sophisticated. Hundreds of people filmed the destruction of the Twin Towers, as well as the ensuing panic. Although the disaster first brought excess and then a strangeness to the yearning for reality, people found the replayed image of the planes going into the buildings mesmerising and the CCTV footage of Mohammed Atta at the airport frightening. But, by general agreement, images of people jumping from the towers were completely hidden away. The Naudet brothers, who'd gone inside the towers with hand-held cameras, later deleted from the soundtrack the noise of

bodies crashing to the ground. Again, it was said that the September the 11<sup>th</sup> footage was like watching a movie spectacular. Everybody said that. Something that was beyond belief.

But what were our beliefs to go beyond? Later it became clear that what was being watched was a movie that not only heightened reality, but made it, finally, unbearable. 'Human beings can only bear so much reality,' said T.S. Eliot.

In America it wasn't the Bulger case that started the process. It happened two years earlier with the home-video footage of the Los Angeles Police Department officers beating Rodney King, the time code and the video burning into the night: 000002:14: March 3<sup>rd</sup> 1991. But by the end of the 1990s we'd become used to the business of watching the world as it was happening. Even missiles had cameras on them. And it became a morally alarming aspect of our viewing culture to travel down with a guided bomb as it sought a particular Iraqi building, our viewing pleasure concluding with a gratifying fuzz of destruction.

The hour in 1960s' America that connects most profoundly with the consciousness of our own time is not the hour of My Lai or Jimi Hendrix playing his guitar at Woodstock, or of Khrushchev's visit to Hollywood, or Neil Armstrong's bounce on the moon. It is Abraham Zapruder's home movie of President Kennedy's assassination, a concatenation of live seconds that changed the public imagination, perhaps, allowing through its innocent portholes a loud proclamation about the end of private life and the power of public death.

Several crucial seconds of Zapruder's film, the most gruesome ones, were hidden, of course, by the FBI for years. But that kind of hiding is becoming difficult since the end of the age of secrecy and the coming of the World Wide Web. When you type the words 'people jumping from the Twin Towers' into a search engine, it immediately takes you to dozens of pictures of victims plunging to their deaths. The first website to appear also offers a picture of someone who's landed on the pavement, as well as forcing a link to a pornography page. That's how it works.

This is now an aspect of one's consideration of reality, the public and the private space. The watchers are perhaps the best-served community on Earth; people who

watch, people who know how to do little else but watch. This would in itself be less striking, with the easy availability of the extreme images merely good news for people with strange interests, but it seems to me that if these are strange interests, then they're ones that bear a disconcertingly close relation to the interests of the culture at large. We're all watchers, and reality has moulded itself to our hungers.

In this country, at least, CCTV now stands in some significant measure for the old-fashioned virtues of community. It stands for security in any sense people might have, and that they are part of a common zone, a place that is made finite and free by virtue of being subject to 24-hour surveillance. The United Kingdom has the highest density of CCTV cameras in the world. Since 1994, the British government has spent over £205 million on cameras and it's probably doubled since that period. Double again. They've supported 1400 projects involving CCTV, far more than any other country in Europe. We are the most watchful society in Europe.

It's easy to imagine how this works, London now being the most watched city on Earth, I mean. To give you an idea, there are 96 cameras in Heathrow, 35 in Oxford Street, 260 at the Houses of Parliament, 1800 covering the main railway stations – several hundred cover this embankment – 500 covering the central line of the subway network alone, as many as 100 in each of the major museums, at least 2 and sometimes 50 in every shop in every street. It's now possible to spend a day in London being digitally photographed from the minute you arrive to the minute you leave, as each of you will have been today and perhaps are being now.

An atmosphere of watching and being watched is now chief among the spirits of the age, in conclusion. And this is no longer a factor in the minds of security firms, government agencies or witnesses standing in the streets. It's increasingly a matter for every element in a living democracy, not least the curators of looking, the thinkers of the visual. We are all, as good citizens, expected to regard this as a great duty of freedom, to watch and to carry a personal torch in opposition to the threatening dark wherever that may be seen to exist. America's new Department of Homeland Security is now fully abreast of what this might mean, more fully abreast than most citizens or most artists, in fact. It's not Orwell's Big Brother, the outmoded model whereby the State watches the citizens, but US Home Guard, upper case 'h' and 'g', something both discreet and infinite, where citizens will watch each other and watch other citizens on

the Internet to ensure that the State's enemies, the un-watching, are captured before they can act. That's its stated goal.

There's a neo-Hobbesian view of how finely to check what is nastiest and most brutish in a world where men with box-cutters can change everything: a leviathan of eyes, looking, watching; a sovereignty of the watchful; a notion of power that is kept in place not merely by the collective will of the people, but by the people's careful and unremitting observation of the forces that could undermine it. This is the new model, one that can both guarantee, and indeed constitute, the security of governments against the terroristic instincts of the ungovernable; a leviathan that becomes a panopticon, a single all-seeing eye, understood at last to be a manifestation of the populus's gaze.

It is in this context that the art gallery and the museum, those great, perhaps increasingly totemic, zones where the private and the public must meet and must think, would become central to our notion of how we experience life and death. The commercial side of the museum's existence will not end, of course, but will only deepen, and it will take both judgement and belief to prevent it from displacing artistic efforts. And that, in the end, is what we must organise to deal with in the present era, it seems to me, at least. The diminution of the gallery space is a terrain of moral argument and active difference. By preserving these heavenly places for that purpose, we may be preserving ourselves from what is worst, the very worst: our instinct to kill the thing we love and fear the freedoms of the imagination. Thank you.

## **SESSION 1**

### **Introduction**

Robert Storr – Commissioner of the 2007 Venice Biennale, Dean of the School of Art, Yale University

### **Panellists**

Michelangelo Pistoletto – Cittadellarte, Fondazione Pistoletto

Dr. Harald Falckenberg – Sammlung Falckenberg, Hamburg

### **Response**

Robert Storr

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Robert Storr**

I'm going to start my introduction, since we're running a little bit late. I will not introduce myself, simply say I'm Robert Storr and I do a lot of stuff. I'm going to introduce the speakers. They're well known to you, I'm sure, if not personally then by reputation, but just to give you some orientation to the kinds of projects that they do that are relevant to what we're going to talk about.

Michelangelo Pistoletto, of course, is one of the most renowned artists internationally, from Italy, and has been involved in a whole host of activities, beginning early on as a painter but now largely diversified. And I notice here – which I had not known – that he's been given an honorary degree in political science, which means he trumps all of us in many things.

But in any case his principal project, these days, or at least one of them, is his own foundation in Biella, in Italy, which involves a variety of programming, educational, artistic and other kinds of programming. And having taught for many years, having been involved in all kinds of initiatives and interventions in public spheres, he now, in a sense, is working with the raw material of his own institution.

Secondly, Dr Harald Falckenberg,, on the other side, has also been involved in cultural activities for many years, particularly in the Kunstverein in Hamburg, but is now the director and the mind and support behind the Kulturstiftung Phoenix Art, which is a forum for contemporary art, open since 2001, so now in its fifth year of operation. He collects artists in depth, and works with their materials. Just to name a few of them:

Öyvind Fahlström, Hanne Darboven, Otto Muehl, Peter Weibel and others. And this programme is now involved in a very large space, in which he can orchestrate or work with this collection. It has also been shown outside his own home base at the Maison Rouge, in Paris, under the direction of Antoine de Galbert – also a private institution, one of the relatively few operating in Paris. Which already suggests that there's a chain of private institutions which collaborate with each another, as well as this public-private thing we're primarily addressing.

And last but not least, Theodora Vischer, the director of the Schaulager in Basel, comes from another sector entirely. She was originally an art historian, trained in Basel, but her thesis on Joseph Beuys was first published in Germany. She has also been involved also for many years – seven all told – at the Museum für Gegenwartskunst in Basel, before becoming director of Schaulager. She is also involved particularly in monographic exhibitions, focusing very intently on specific artists, including Gary Hill, Ilya Kabakov, Robert Gober, Andrea Zittel, Katharina Fritsch, Matthew Barney, Elizabeth Peyton, Carsten Höller, Fischli and Weiss – who are here of course in the Tate exhibitions now – and so on down the line.

Her exhibition programme and activity revolves around the Schaulager, the creation of the Emanuel Hoffman Foundation, which is of long standing, and the first space of its kind not designed as a forum *per se*, nor for the public, but identifies itself as being for a specialised audience and for students. So already the constitution of the different institutions is differently conceived and executed, and that is what I think we'll talk about. So I guess, maybe we should start with Mr Pistoletto.

## **PANELLISTS**

### **Michelangelo Pistoletto**

I am very happy to be here, and very honoured to address this delightful meeting. Of course the theme is private and public institutions, museums and collections. I do not know if I will be useful to you, but I will speak about my personal experience as an artist who is not only engaged in individual work, but also in collective activities.

At the beginning of the 1970s I also made a very small collection of arte povera, of the friends of arte povera, and that was a creative experience for me too – not only something external, but something very close to my desire to experience creativity at

different levels. But also I did something more collective in the time, because I founded the Cittadellarte Foundation in Italy, which is a collective entity, and probably the reason I was asked to come and talk with you here.

My personal work is based, as you probably know, on the mirror. The mirror is the basic element of my work. In it we have two things: the individual identity, because without a person you don't have a mirror; without us, the mirror doesn't exist. But at the same time, the mirror gives us the vision of the world, of what is around us. That is probably why my work has developed not only its individual identity, but also in the larger context of what life is, and what art is in connection with life.

So, the mirror has individuality and involvement with work. Another thing that I think you have to talk about is spirituality, which is at the same time individual and collective. For me spirituality has a very important meaning. Something to consider, because contemporary art in the 20th century has taken spirituality beyond the dimensions of any religious or political dogma. Abstract Expressionism raised the autonomy of art to its maximum through the use of subjective signs; many and various events contributed to that. But as a specific demonstration of what I'm talking about, take the moment when the autonomy of art was identified with the individual act of the artist. That was the point where I started to work, at the end of the 1950s, and it seemed to me necessary to change the autonomy of art from subjectivity to objectivity, to engage in society without losing autonomy. This was the main problem for me, and still is today, even more so: how to bring art into society without losing the autonomy of art itself. So for me the task was to transfer the meaning of the mirror, which is in itself objective and at the same time reflects life, from virtuality to activity, to the practical interaction of art and life, art and society. So for me it was important to think that it was not enough to change the aesthetic in order to change the situation, but it was necessary to put aesthetic and ethic together, to bring an idea of ethics into the work of art. And that is why I started the Cittadellarte project.

Cittadellarte is organised on the basis of a work I did: the division and multiplication of the mirror. The idea was that the mirror divides and is looking into itself, not just looking at the viewer or making the viewer part of it; the mirror reflecting and reproducing itself. So two pieces of mirror to see each other and produce a third mirror, and another mirror inside that, like human cells which divide and re-divide until you have a body. I

used the same system for the organism Cittadellarte. We split the concept of unity into different nuclei that we can call cells, in order to create a body, and we call these different cells offices. Each office has a different connection with a specific area of social life. We have art and economy, which is also related to ecology, because we think that economy is a very important point; everything is related to the economy. For me spirituality and economy have two very important roles in society. We have created in the office of economy something we call the 'bank of human values', in order to bring attention to the human values and see how the economy can support their evolution. The office of communication is particularly active in spreading the knowledge of free software, to free the utilization of the creation. Of course we have created what we call the centre of humanistic spirituality (because I don't like the word secular; I prefer humanistic spirituality and multi-confessional), where we discuss the potential of modern art, contemporary art, as a vehicle for spiritual results. We have the office of production, whose motto is 'each product brings social responsibility', where we work with different enterprises trying to help them develop a consciousness of what their product can be, so the product can also become a medium for transmitting the creativity that is creative responsibility: the product today can be very negative if it is only going into the consumerist system. So art can also change society through products.

We still see many artists working by criticising society. We did a show two years ago called 'Criticism is not enough', because I think it is time to propose things, rather than criticise them. Criticism is very well paid by the consumerist economy, but it is possible to create situations that bring solutions, and this is why we work in a collective way in Cittadellarte. We have also created the university of ideas, with young people from all over the world, from different cultures, different religions, different taste, different love, different smell, and we work together on projects based on the engagement of art and social responsibility. We work together for some months, and afterwards we keep in touch through the internet, and keep making projects, so every year more people are active in this university of ideas, making projects. In this way we are trying to create a network with other institutions, other people and groups that are interested in participating in this work of interaction and social transformation. Thank you.

**Dr. Harald Falckenberg**

That was a very interesting lecture, although I don't agree with your major point, the view that the artist is not so much there to criticise, but to harmonise. I have a totally different opinion. I think one of the big things about modern art, about modernism and postmodernism, is the criticism of systems, having creativity against regulations, even though modern art has, naturally, failed really to change society, because as we know, the power of art is too small. Yet postmodern art is so diverse and plural, that you can hardly get an overview of what is happening, and cannot really see where it will take us. Nevertheless, it is true that both these big movements of the 20th century have the basic idea of criticising the society of the past, the society of representation, and demanding autonomy, as you said. And no amount of harmonisation will do much good, I think. But what was very good about your lecture, and what I totally agree with, is that you spoke about art and artists. And when you look at the discussions about the new museum over twenty-five years, with I think hundreds of conferences and so many books about it, you hardly read a word about art. You read about functions, how to get visitors and run education programs, and ultimately to do workshops, but the art has been somehow forgotten. And therefore I am grateful that you put the art at the heart of your lecture. Art means, in the sense I used it, to have a point of resistance against something. Michel Foucault described it very well, I think. The 19th century was governed by the idea of history – Hegel, Marx – history provided a certain wrap, and the 20th century, as you said, gave up this idea; Michel Foucault said they thought in rooms, in spaces, in territories, in levels. And that is a very important. If you want, as I do, to exhibit modern art, you have to make the rooms according to these ideas. That means you have to have open rooms; you have to connect the multifarious different positions of modern art, and you cannot fix them in any one place. You see, painters wanted to get out of the two-dimensional, into the third dimension, and into the fourth dimension with media art, so one of the major requirements of modern exhibition rooms, or exhibition rooms for modern art, is to open them to all these diverse positions. And I think this is also a requirement for museum directors. If you look at most of the new museums, they're a catastrophe. They are built by architects who don't even think about art, but make rooms that are glorious neoconservative statements, and then they suddenly want to show modern art. It's impossible. So my position would be think a little bit more about modern art, accept the failure, and think a little about the utopia. What is the desert when the last little flower dies? It will be a total desert. This, by the way, is Pontus Hultén's message, his famous sentence to the

revolutionary students protesting in May 1968, 'Power to fantasy' or 'Fantasy to the fore'. It is a good message, to my mind. And thinking of failure, you may also consider this famous sentence from Winston Churchill: 'Success is to go from failure to failure without any loss of enthusiasm.' Thank you.

**Theodora Vischer**

*(did not authorize to publish her session)*

**RESPONSE & QUESTIONS**

**Robert Storr**

Actually we are back on time, which is wonderful. We are actually ahead of schedule, which will mean that we will have more time for conversation and exchange.

My role here, I have been learning since I arrived here this morning, is to be both introducer and respondent, and I gather also to speak a little bit about my own experience. So I will try to do a combination of exposition and response in an equally efficient timeframe as my colleagues, so that we can get to a discussion amongst them and then with room as a whole.

I should say first of all that I am honoured to be here. This is my first CIMAM conference. I am ashamed to say that I have not been to one before, but I belong to other spheres and somehow that one never intercepted with them. But it is very interesting, since I know half the people in the room, and we all know each other, seemingly. The existence of such forums – and this is a word that has come up already once, and I would like to underscore in every possible way – is the point of contact with people who are indeed facing similar circumstances and in their own local situation may feel somewhat beleaguered by forces larger than themselves. It has been said earlier on that the private initiatives – artist-driven in one case, collective-driven in another or in two others – have a special relationship, and that is true. But it is ultimately also very much in the public sphere, and for some reasons that I will point out, including private institutions insofar as they overlap with the public sphere, that many of the issues have to be settled. And I would like to at least partially speak up on behalf of professional curators in that context, and underscore that their role is in fact not to be the hand-servant of artists, not to be the hand-servant of collectors, not to be the hand-servant of cultural bureaucracies, but also to be the synthesisers and critical

analysts of a whole set of circumstances in which they have limited but absolutely indispensable authority and power.

The relation of public and private is very different between Europe and the USA and between the rest of the world and the USA. But the differences are beginning to narrow, creating situations where things are somewhat more comparable. I recall, I don't know how many years ago, it was probably about seven or eight, going with Jurgen Harten to a meeting held in the conference room at the top of the Dusseldorf Art Academy, when the first perceptions of how different cultural policies would be in Germany after reunification began to come to light. My German is limited, but sufficiently clear to understand the corporate names bandied around frequently in conversation with a note of alarm, as German cultural institutions, which were some of the most productive, interesting and open institutions on the level of publication, of exhibition, of public access, and so on, were now to be completely swallowed by Pepsi-Cola, British Petroleum, etc., etc., etc. I was not quite so alarmed, but I could understand their reasons.

My experience is indeed to work with the alternative model, which is the American model of many, but not all, of the large institutions devoted specifically to modern art. Modern art museums have a special status. In America, the big, comprehensive museums of art history were very often municipal, but the modern art museums were usually created by private individuals in some combination, either with their colleagues or with the urban government. But they very much remained within the private sector in terms of many of their policies, their exhibition programs, and so on. And the Museum of Modern Art, where I worked for twelve years, is probably the paradigm of most of the American models. It is indeed a private institution to this day; it has relatively little public money, and most of what it gets now comes from educational sources and a variety of other functions, but its basic collecting, exhibition practices, and so on, mostly come from the private sector. And one looks at the state of American museums in this respect with increasing interest in what the divergences might be, and where different kinds of opportunities exist. And I just want to address a few of them and a few of the problems that I see in a kind of loose way.

In New York you have the Whitney Museum of American Art, which was a private initiative; you have the Guggenheim Museum, which was a private initiative; you have

the Museum of Modern Art, which was a private initiative – but not, in this case, by a single or pair of forceful collector-curator combinations, but actually of a somewhat larger group. Four, actually, a director and three private patrons, but they quickly diversified to cover a lot of different interests that fed into it. These institutions have, as I say, their own history, and I don't want to get into it now, but they are quite distinct from the idea of a museum founded in a city for the sake of modern art, for which the sources are public and the feeder system is also an educational system, usually via national universities, etc., etc. The possibilities implicit in a private initiative, when it becomes not a private collection per se but a generalized museum of modern art, can be looked at in the diverse ways that the Guggenheim, the Whitney and the Modern have developed, with the Modern being the only one that has truly tried to be a broadly based institution devoted to the entirety of modern art, as opposed to the Guggenheim, which started out as an institution devoted to abstract art primarily, the Whitney, which is still wrestling with what it means to be American (and parenthetically, I would say that what it means to be American is to be born in the western hemisphere, and the Whitney's future, I think, lies in recognizing other parts of it to the north and the south). Now in terms of private institutions that are founded by a single patron or single visionary curator, or the combination of the two, difficulties immediately arise when the patron or the curator either part company on what they think is important, or die, in which case they leave it to the hands of the next generation of patrons and curators. We see this happening over and over again, and we see it most pointedly now in the situation of the Dia Art Foundation, which was truly an extravagant patrician-utopian gesture. I believe very often utopias are founded, strangely enough, by people of means, and so utopian projects can be utterly idealistic and fascinating, but they do not necessarily survive the ideas of the founders, or the fortune of the founders, once those have departed from the scene. And the Dia Art Foundation is now enormously rich in potential and in its collection, but without a home in New York, without a clear sense of its direction, without a clear sense of how such an institution can pass from a few hands, or one hand, into the kind of economic structure in which, almost necessarily, responsibility for it curatorially and on the patrons' side is going to be spread out among many hands. Which is just to say that the lifespan of private institutions, unless they are very heavily endowed – and I mean super-heavily endowed – will always mean that they will eventually become public institutions. There is no single fortune rich enough, not even the Rockefellers', to sustain a museum of modern art any longer, or even a relatively more focused collection. Those who create

private institutions must either commit themselves to the idea that they will in fact endow it for the next hundred years, or else they must themselves think about the inheritance of their institution as it passes to other hands curatorially and to other pocket-books on the patron side.

Another example in Europe would be the Louisiana Museum, and what has happened since Knud Jensen died, and even before he died. That institution was very much the creation of an extraordinary individual – I knew Knud, by the way, but in my former role as an art handler rather than as a curator, so I knew him as a humble guy on the wall, but I knew him. And I understand that this has been a very difficult transition, from the time when, number one, he understood that he had to pass it on, to, number two, the point when he died and it had to be passed on. So this is not just an American problem.

In terms of the public sphere, the question is how the curator remains a primary force in institutions, not institutionally speaking below directors, nor simply at the whim of a particular directorial initiative, but more particularly, the curator's status in relation to those other forces which grow ever more powerful: marketing, fundraising (which are not the same thing), and also education, because in as much as education is a positive side of museums, when education is important to the populist aims of marketing or to the particular aims of education, it can become terribly snarled up. And after all, it is the curators who have the primary responsibility for interpreting works of art. Those curators who do not care to speak to their educators should be chastized regularly by their directors. On the other hand, they should of course also retain their voice, and not simply be treated as specialists whose words will then be entirely reinterpreted in the dumbed-down language of education or salesmanship or the buttering-up language of fundraising.

Collecting and collections. It was said by Bill Lieberman, long time curator at MoMA and later curator at the Metropolitan Museum, that what curators did was collect collectors. There is a certain truth to this, and since I have been involved in the process, I am no virgin. And moreover, it can be a lot of fun. I spent a good deal of time when I was at MoMA reading the novels of Balzac and others who described the salon and the social milieu of the XIX century. I found them very helpful. I read them as comedies rather than tragedies, and I thought of myself in that interesting relationship to people who belong to a different class than I, who have different interests than I, but

we all find ourselves at the same dinner table and we are essentially talking about the same things, though from different points of view. Here again, curators, and directors in alliance with curators, have to make very clear rules, however. It seems to me that this is a different problem from the one presented by the private institutions, but I again am more concerned with the public, and with the passage of public to private. In relation with the big museums, or even the middle-sized museums, devoted to a broad-base of modern and contemporary art, one rule is that the private collections shall not become the chapel; that you don't accept a collection into a museum on condition that it be curated henceforth or installed henceforth in the way that it was created by its collector – which is a delicate issue, because in many cases the collector was in his or her own terms a curator of some genius, and therefore you also don't want to have their accomplishment simply dispersed at random into a large omnibus entity. How one periodically shows the collection made by a collector, and in other cases shows the art as it relates to the broader art history, is a problem I don't have a solution to, but it seems to me that it is a problem in many cases. And it is a problem which, like everything, will produce better results when the curators actively negotiate with collectors in advance of that moment when both of them disappear, so the ground rules for the next generations will be quite clear in this regard. What one doesn't want to do is build a series of crippling wings and attach them to the existing museums of modern art. It also has to do with the borrowing and lending practices, and it also, by the way, finally has to do with acquisition and deacquisition. In terms of borrowing and lending, one of the problems with many of the smaller institutions that are the creation of individuals is that they are often not inclined to lend very much, or they tend to lend on terms which are entirely a reflection of their own vision of what these works of art mean, which is not necessarily the vision of a particular curator, or a particular artist even, in the presentation of their work. How can one develop relationships where the private sector institutions with a clear vision understand that this clear vision will obtain within the confines of their institution, but not be exported as a necessary aspect of the same work of art moving into another context? I think one of the theories that many collectors have, that many artists who create institutions have, is that the work will be distorted from their understanding of it. And there is no doubt that bad exhibitions frequently do distort art. But I am utterly convinced that works of art are far more powerful than we think they are; they survive even the worst mistreatment, as long as this mistreatment is temporary. And therefore they will return to the collections whence they were originally lent intact, and can be recontextualized again some other time.

Again, curators should be chastized when they do bad things, but they should not be executed or excommunicated, and the works of art should not then also be in a sense excommunicated from the general commerce and discourse of art, which is the nature of the temporary exhibition. Also in terms of the deaccessioning, and I will look at MoMA's example here, I am very, very conservative when it comes to the deaccessioning. I think the frequent de-acquisitions now by all kinds of museums is mostly a mistake. It is partly a mistake precisely because, if you understand that most of the collections we have in museums have in turn been the collections of individuals, they represent the strata of taste in a particular period, a particular episode, and one of the things that museums show is how taste developed in a particular place, cultural moment, historical and political circumstances, and so on. So in addition to the intrinsic value of works, there is the value the collection has in the development of the history of that institution, and therefore I would say that one should be very audacious in acquisition and extremely conservative in de-acquisition. On the other hand, covenants of gifts made by patrons to museums which absolutely restrict de-acquisition, I think, are an equally bad thing. And I will give again a particular case in the Museum of Modern Art history. D. Lilly Bliss, who gave the first works of art to MoMA at a time when it saw itself as a Kunsthalle rather than as a museum, made no restrictions whatsoever on acquisition and de-acquisition. Elaine Dannheisser with whom I work, made no restrictions when she gave us a very large body of works of contemporary art. But there was an understanding, not just tacit but explicit, that one would not do certain things. One would not trade the historical for the contemporary; one would not trade off the last work of a given artist; one would not trade, basically, to do anything other than to improve within the existing range of work, with a better work by the same artist, or a lateral work that would shed some light on that aspect of our history. Yet again, I'm against the idea that you jettison people who fall out of favour, because they're quite likely to come back into favour some other time, and against the idea that an artwork is just an interchangeable asset that you can move around the way you would move, say, a hedge fund.

I've talked about exchanges. I've talked about collections. I would just mention one other aspect – and this came up this morning, when I was speaking with a colleague from Russia. It is very important that the large-scale institutions that have a certain kind of stability and prestige stand first in line, rather than last in line, in the defence of small institutions when they are attacked for the content of their exhibitions and of their

programs. This is experienced repeatedly in the USA. The slowness with which the big museums in America responded to the challenges of Mapplethorpe, and a whole of other circumstances, is very much against their own long-term best interest. And if there is a public and private exchange here, it is very often semi-private or seat-of-the-pants operations that take the first heat when something new comes into circulation and offends somebody, and they're known to be small, which means when government comes down on them hard they are generally inclined to back off or disappear. The big institutions, as I say, should be there from the first moment and should raise their voices in common cause from the start. To take something apart in order to better understand it is also very often to take it apart in order to better construct it, and much cultural critique, I am sorry to say, is made by people who have never worked in institutions, and do not understand that institutions are also in the process of making something, even when they are remaking something that is old. A lot of cultural critique benefits from the fact that it is done from the position of the university, which is never subject to cultural critique from the same people, or virtually never. I think those of us who are engaged in taking things apart should look at all the cultural institutions – the universities, the museums, the market and so on – and realize that we are all part of the same problem, on the inside of the same problem, and what we should particularly do is build alliances rather than treat one or another part of the system as its lowest common denominator. People who make cultural analyses should also be made responsible for imagining what kind of non-utopian, but feasible, imaginable, real institution can be made from the pieces available, and defining what pieces might be brought into play that are not currently available. But simply taking apart existing museums in the name of late capitalism, the vaguest possible use of that term, or taking apart the market as if they were not also a part of market themselves, is naïve and self-congratulatory.

I would say another thing, and it is that the curator in this context is an educator. I am not of the belief that museums should be temples to a particular idea, or to a particular sacred view of art. I do not believe that they should be treasure-houses either. And I do not believe that they should be seminar rooms. I think the over-didactic use of museums recently is a serious, serious problem, and here again I think this is something Harald Falckenberg spoke of. At the same time, though, a curator is an educator. In part, again, they are involved in a dialogue with the designated educational system within a university. In part they should be, and I think this

happened to the Tate. It is now happening more, they should be in dialogue with other members of their staff, so that if you move forward with a program everybody who is there to deal with it and also defend it is able to interpret it from an artistic point of view, rather than simply say that this is a corporate, or an institutional, or whatever kind of mandate. The art is something that everyone who works in an institution has in common. The reason for being there is the art, and their understanding therefore should be a shared and ideological understanding.

This also hooks onto patrons. It is my experience that there is a dramatic shift in the patron system in the USA, from essentially an old philanthropically oriented generation of wealthy families and individuals to a new generation of patrons who have made money very, very rapidly, have barely had time to count it, much less think about how to use it, and are in desperate need of a dialogue about how that should be done. Many of them are immensely proud of how rich they have become, and they need gently to be let down from the high of having done this, and gently informed that the way in which they made their money does not necessarily apply equally to the ways in which they might spend it on behalf of institutions. And it is important, in this context – and I go back to Balzac and Stendhal and the rest – that you sit at table and listen. Sometimes you listen until people run out of conversation so you can intervene; sometimes you listen because you actually learn something. But in any case, one of the things curators must do is educate the patrons about how to do what you or they think they wish to do in a manner that will, number one, truly have the result that is desirable, not to the curator or to the patron, but to the work of art, and, number two, if possible actually enters into the social and cultural dialogues Michelangelo spoke of.

People commonly say that the public is now simply the target for being sold an idea or being sold a product. Here I would like to offer some vernacular experience. I come from a culture where we have been watching too much TV for too long, and if indeed TV had such a deleterious effect everyone would be brainwashed, I have good news. The good news it is that if you go to a bar, or sit in a middle-class or a lower-middle-class home in America, people watching TV talk back to TV. They do not simply swallow whole the bullshit that they are fed. In fact they have such an intimate relationship with TV that they talk to it like a member of their family with whom they disagree. And I think that one should, rather than conclude that we are all working with the sort of mass audience that is completely malleable in relation to media and

propaganda, understand that they are not completely malleable, and that if you get a word in edgewise that says something interesting, something entirely surprisingly and positive might result from that. I will give you two artistic examples. One artistic example is Bruce Nauman.

Bruce Nauman took the media of advertising that was neon and used it to say philosophical things and ask philosophical questions. He can do this because of his understanding, a subtle understanding, of how you can go in under the radar of certain kinds of cultural prejudices by using the means that are misused by commercial interests. Felix Gonzalez-Torres did the same thing with billboards. Further evidence of the good news is Sophie Calle's project *Fantôme*, which was first shown in le Musée d'Art Moderne in Paris, and then restaged at MoMA. Sophie would ask people about what they remembered about a work of art that was no longer on exhibition, and then would put up on the wall graphic images, which were their memory sketches, plus texts which were excerpts from their interviews about those works of art. And what was interesting in MoMA, when we did it, was that the people interviewed – everybody, from the cleaner who every day saw this object in relation to housekeeping duties, to the guards, to curators, to administrators and so on – lo and behold, it seemed as if none of them had ever read the labels we took so much care to put next to the artworks. The ability to project wildly, to create a kind of Freudian rush act, meant each individual's experience to the work came out immediately. However painstakingly I had explained how historically something came to be, or someone else had explained semiotically how it fed into the systems of meaning, people would find their own meaning, exactly in the manner that it was erased earlier on. So between TV and Sophie Calle and Bruce Nauman and others, I think we can say that the art museum is a place where forums, rather than merely preaching or displays, where forums really exist. They are the public libraries of visual culture and the debating societies of visual culture. And as long as private institutions and public institutions understand that that is their primary function, then there is great deal of room for optimism.

I would simply conclude by saying that the main argument floated in post-modern critique for years now over the idea of aura, proposed by Walter Benjamin, should I think now be re-examined in light of the practices of institutions. Benjamin's idea, written in the advent of the catastrophe of the Second World War, was an extremely pessimistic view that the thing that connected individuals in unique moments of time, in

unique places, to unique works of art, would be totally destroyed by their reproduction and dissemination by mass media – in his case not just mass media, but politically motivated propagandistic sources. I think we find actually that museums, public and private, are in the position to prove – and again Sophie, Bruce and others are examples – to prove that aura still exists. That it is the place, be it the Schaulager where you gain access occasionally but have an intimacy which is rare, or other private institutions, the place where an individual not pre-screened, not pre-determined, not pre-psychologised, not pre-sold, will come and make contact with the work of art that will actually change their life.

So with that, I would like to just turn to my colleagues and ask them a couple of questions. A number of themes came up, and I would like to sort of at least pinpoint and then, as quickly as possible, have the conversation move away from me. One of them is that we are in the presence of three types of institution. One is the creation of an individual collector, another the creation of an individual artist, and the third is the collaborative enterprise of generations of collecting and also of the art-historical understanding that Theodora has brought to it. And I would like if we can to talk a little bit about the differences in their nature, in their evolution and in their prospects. Do they actually converge at some point? Or do they remain parallel but separate or possibly even on divergent tracks? I would like to come back if possible to the issue of archiving, because archiving is something that has come up a good deal lately. I think that Harald is also interested in the question of how one protects, preserves and archives collections, and it is the nature of contemporary art that a great deal of what we collect is of that kind. Whereas before one might collect paintings, or photographs, or distinct objects, or even prints, now we collect fanzines, we collect videotapes, we collect all kinds of extremely fragile if not ultimately perishable objects. So how can the collecting of contemporary art in its ephemeral states be continued, and the information and spirit behind it, which does not entirely survive without the object, preserved? How can it be done, and how do the private and public institutions share this responsibility?

**Harald Falckenberg:** That's interesting. In Basel you see more an archive; my place would be more a living theatre, and that is a difference. And you can learn from both, from one in this way and from the other in that. I think the best museums should have a mixture of both. When I said something about critique and culture, I don't criticize the

museums; I want to make that clear. But I think you would agree that critique is a major part of our culture and a major part of emancipation and autonomy, so it too has to be encompassed in a collection of modern art. The criticism in modern art is mostly displaced, in all museums worldwide now, in shows but not in the collection, and so I spoke a little bit about the collection. That was a statement I wanted to make.

Now, one of the things you said I totally agree with is that the collector shouldn't play a big role. A collection, and most people don't realize this, starts at one point and definitely finishes at one point. It may be that you have no more money, or that you lose your energy, or you die, and that is a good point. And sometimes there will be collections, like in the Hitchcock movie *The Trouble with Harry*, where you have this dead man nobody wants to have. They pass it over to the next one. I think this is somehow the idea of a collection cause nobody really wants it, although some want some parts of it, clearly. So I don't at all believe in the repudiation of collections. If I go to the Foundation Maeght for instance, it is a deep horror for me. I come into a place, which is perhaps the most beautiful place in the world, with the best artworks, you may presume, but somehow it is frozen in the late 50s and early 60s, and this is something I would not really want for my collection. So it should pass over to somebody who does something else with it, but it should not disappear. If I feel I have to be responsible for something it is only for the artist, not for artworks. Look at Gombrich's famous first sentence: 'In history there are no artworks, there are only artists.' And that means, in the case of Modernism, you have to look for the attitude of the artist behind the artwork.

**Theodora Vischer:** I liked it when Michelangelo Pistoletto mentioned that criticism should not be less interesting than solutions. I think that is very important, because the situation is so difficult that a big machine like a museum cannot change in a short period of years. But the most important thing is that there are many individual initiatives or proposals for solutions, because there is not just one solution. And I think this is really what has to be done, and to be discussed also. That is what is fascinating. In our situation, where we have to move, we have to try out things, we have to fail: failure exists too. So I don't think, and probably you didn't mean this, that the kind of initiatives which really try something out should set out with the prime purpose of lasting for eternity. For such initiatives the main thing is to be good and to bring ideas and partial solutions.

**Michelangelo Pistoletto:** The phrase itself, contemporary art, means not only to be here close to something that is happening today, but also carries the consciousness of the present. And putting things without any connection together at the same time does not make the present. I think art cannot stay outside of life, outside of the society, and say we are perfect, we are the best, we are very pure, we are very nice, we are very good. I was speaking about spirituality. There is a spirituality that was created by the individual himself as an artist in the 20th century. There is the autonomy of the art. We have to capitalise on that new capacity of imagination, interpretation and capacity of looking into life, into ourselves. Not only into individual selves, but also into the psychological dimension of the society of today. And this is why it is important to not make the museums or collections as cathedrals that bring new form of religions. Even religion was engaged in the society, in the economy, in the public structures and in politics. This is why I think this new concept of spirituality free from dogma can really have a very important base in the history of modern times, that we can experience and see through museums and contemporary art, because they are documents of the incredible evolution of humanity in the 20th century. But now we have to take another step; we have to look into the problems of society today, and not think that the solutions will come from the governments, from the powerful, from the growing conflicts between religions and so on. I think art has to take responsibility and look at the world, and create communication between artists who have propositions and institutions that want to make propositions. In this way I don't see any conflict between private and public, individual or not. But we need to have, I think, a common perspective today.

**Harald Falckenberg:** That is what I said. If you start from the art, you have a good position to begin partnerships. Because if there are partners that only want to use the museum and the art for their own purposes, than you just say no. And there are many enterprises, companies, that are very nice and don't make any conditions on that. If you see big private collectors, you have one of the big ones here in London, who really combine business with art, then I would say keep your distance from these collectors. If you take the big French collectors, the two big ones, I don't know what would happen with the latter, but the first one's connections with the art market are so obvious! One of the big problems of the future will be what the big auction houses will do with the market. Perhaps they will start to buy galleries; perhaps they will hire scouts to look for the latest trends, for young artists – and finally, you all saw today nearly \$1 billion

changed hands in the auctions of just the last few days. We will face, very sadly, I suggest, a totally new dimension. And I can say, I will be in opposition to it.

**Robert Storr:** In relation to criticism, I disagree with Michelangelo. Critics are not terribly well paid, and there is a wonderful work by Louise Lawler which consisted of a photograph of the auction for a Warhol painting that just said underneath, "Critics should be better paid since a Warhol is worth millions of dollars." I think there is an important thing on the critical side. Increasingly now you have critics and historians caught up in relations with the commercial side which are unclear. Now while I have written catalogue essays for galleries, I never wrote one for when I was a museum curator. There was an absolute line between what you did as a curator and what you did in the private sector: before and after being a curator, but never during. And I think that when one crosses that line, one has almost no defence against the cynicism that breeds in the general public, who begin to think that actually museums, after all, are operating as vehicles of institutions. I think there is another side of this addressed to our historical community a little bit: increasingly in auction catalogues you get essays written by art historians, or by recently graduated art historians, which are full of reproductions and fascinating archival information in detail, and in many ways I prefer them to the kind of art history written nowadays, which is primarily theoretical and lacks such information. But the problem, of course, is that at no point can the young art historian say, 'Actually, this is about a third-rank example of this particular artist's work.' In asking whether the auction market is again devouring part of the private sector, or the independent sector, let's call it, I would like to ask Michelangelo a question about this. I remember years ago touring the Burri Foundation, with Burri and I have been to a number of museums of individual artists, and I am interested that you did not create such an institution. How did you approach this, since there are not many precedents – or any, that I can think of – for an individual artist creating an institution that is as broad-based as the one you have.

**Michelangelo Pistoletto:** The institution I created is for me the continuation of my work, a part of the work, not outside the work. It is something I did without asking for any public or private support. Just as I did my mirror paintings, buying stainless steel. People would tell me that I was rich, as I had the money to buy that material, but I had to buy it, it was just what I needed. So now I need to do something as Cittadellarte because it is work, it is not for me something outside of the work. As I said before,

when I bought some of my friends' artwork, it was because I needed to do that. A collection is a creative act for me because I need it. So now that little collection is part of Cittadellarte. Before I did not want to put any of my work inside Cittadellarte, but now I understand that it is necessary to have at least a little part dedicated to my previous work and also to my work of today, because then the evolution is more understandable. Not to make a monument to myself, but to make something that is possibly educational.

**Robert Storr:** Do you think of the display of that work within Cittadellarte as the paradigm of how you would like your work to be shown in other locations, or it is simply one of the possible solutions?

**Michelangelo Pistoletto:** Yes, it could be, yes.

**Robert Storr:** So, listen up out there!

**Michelangelo Pistoletto:** I don't want to be absolute, you know?

**Robert Storr:** I think at this point, since we have only about five minutes – I might stretch it a little bit into the lunch hour but not much, we should open it up to the floor and see what anybody has to say.

**PA Member 1 (Gijs Van Tuyl):** I'm Gijs Van Tuyl, director of the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, and I really appreciate what Michelangelo said about bringing - as he put it - art into society without losing its autonomy. I wonder if you do that by interaction, or by supporting or undertaking certain projects in order to create social transformation. Doesn't art lose, at a certain point, its autonomy and its power – let's say lose its face – or its appearance or aesthetic qualities? If you go too far using documentation or forms which don't have a real aesthetic power, how can art survive as an autonomous species?

**Michelangelo Pistoletto:** You need to have a precise goal that shows the necessity of your action. For example, there is a big difference between art and design. When you make a design, you make it for a specific need: material, reproduction, multiplication;

you have all these different calculations you have to work with and you put your creativity into that.

But art, for me, always has to carry a message. So when I speak about spirituality, it has to carry a message that is philosophical and cultural; that brings into consideration art history. You have to consider the history, and bear in mind that whatever you do will change the situation creatively and spiritually. That is the same spirituality that has been created, for example, by using objects, no?

It's like the moment people said, 'Oh! It's not art any more if you use' – I don't know, a bottle of Coca Cola? Finally, I understood that Coca Cola was probably neither the problem or the solution, but something in between. And I think art is always in between. It's always about perspective, and I think that today it is again necessary to have a humanistic perspective, as probably existed in a completely different way in the Renaissance which created it.

But now we have evolved, and have to reconsider a perspective that can put the human being, or its problems, at the centre of society again. But this new responsibility, which we never thought that would exist before, is what justifies the route of making art interact with different systems of organisation, life organisation. But you have to have a goal. You have to have something you work for.

That is art. Art is a centre of transformation, not something that is transformed by itself or by society. Art does not, cannot any more, as it did before the 20th century, serve other ideas. Art has to give meaning to the central conception of intellectual procedure.

**Robert Storr:** Jorge?

**PA Member 2 (Jorge Helft):** I have two questions. First of all, let me state that I'm totally against devolving more and more responsibility for the financing of culture to private hands, and I think that governments should have an obligation, as they do to cover the cost of justice or defence or education, also to cover culture, or a large part of it. That's where I stand philosophically.

I have two questions. We, as collectors – as Rob so clearly stated – will lose our grip on our collections, either when we get tired of them, or when we get too old, or die; all things which might happen; dying is the only one which is certain, and I think we have to live with that! Nevertheless, there are collectors throughout the world whose input has been greater than ours. Ours has been selection, has been conservation, has been to show a certain view, a personal view of art, of our country or of other countries, which, will pass, and will be forgotten.

But if you take inputs as powerful as Dr. Barnes, one of my great passions since I was ten years old – and now I'm over seventy – has been to go and see – with all its failures, all its mistakes, all its ambiguities – to see art presented the way he thought about it, the way he wanted it, which is in itself a tremendous cultural statement. Which because of money, because of the lack of government support, will probably be in a large part destroyed. How can this be avoided, is my first question, in the case of collections which are much more meaningful as a whole than as parts?

My second question is, in the major museums, because of the public – and I realise it's an obligation – works of art are so heavily protected that we are losing a great deal of personal engagement when we look at them. I'm thinking, primarily, of glass. Take the two magnificent Braque cubists here at the Tate, where the sensuality of their surface is now behind glass, and we're almost back to an image which could almost be in an art book or on a television screen. How can this be avoided, at least, for the lovers of true art?

**Harald Falckenberg:** How that is to be avoided – that's one of the reasons there are private museums. If you see for instance the MACBA in Barcelona, two big glass walls and two big columns, and there was the museum. Very funny!

But there is this enormous pressure on the museums, from the politicians and from the visitors as well, because most of the visitors clearly still think in the representative ideas of the 19th century. Take the big MoMA show in Berlin: that was the idea. So this, I think, should not be criticised. It is just a matter of fact, and I think we can't change that. We can only do our job, and we as individuals should respect – I think "respect" is a good word – museums. And the museums have to respect the artist, not to make glass walls, yes? And that's it. So, I think there's no answer to your question.

**Robert Storr:** Franz?

**PA Member 3 (Franz Kaiser):** My name is Franz Kaiser. I'm director of exhibitions at the Haags Gemeentemuseum, and I'm referring to the same phrase of Michelangelo's that Gijss referred to: bringing art to the people without losing its autonomy. I think to some people that would seem like a contradiction in terms, because they think art can only be relevant to society if it loses autonomy and criticises society.

But I think it all depends on how you define autonomy. If you define it more in the sense of the Marcuse piece by Robert Barry, 'a place to think, to be free to think,' it's something else. And everyone else who has ever worked in the museum knows that a museum is certainly not autonomous, in the sense that you have to deal with all kinds of pressures and the most difficult thing is – and I think this is one of the key issues of the theme of this congress – how to preserve this kind of autonomy. Whether it's possible to deal with things in another way than our society is usually used to dealing with them, through knowledge and by way of personal experience, and preserve the legitimacy of this kind of autonomous space.

Today you have to legitimise the museum more and more by quantification in terms of visitor numbers, of high prices achieved. And so I think a big question to address in this congress would be how to preserve this other form of autonomy, an autonomy that is a free space to deal with art in a spiritual way, in a contents way, in an emotional way, in an individual way.

**Robert Storr:** I'll just speak up and wind up, because I think we're now at 12:55, which is ten minutes over our allotment. This maybe slightly digressive, but I hope not. Again, I think one has to look at the role of the curator now in this arrangement. If the role of the curator is to educate colleagues, to educate the patron support networks, to educate the general public, etc., then in tandem with museum directors and the designated people within different spheres of their organisation, they're also negotiators.

And, since autonomy does not exist as an absolute, or at least only in rhetorical, philosophical dialogue, autonomy is always relative to those things which encroach on

autonomy. And in order to retain autonomy you have to first of all know what the thresholds are, past which you will not go. You can't go into a negotiation with a greater force if the greater force knows that you will yield here or there or some other place.

You cannot go into a negotiation with the greatest power, if they do not respect the authority that you represent within your domain. And I would say a positive version of this would be good. People should increasingly treat curators as professionals. Criticism of the curator has gotten to the point where the curator is now a caricature of what good curators have always been and are now, and reduced to a kind of agent of money or an agent of government, or a flatterer of artists, or what have you.

A curation, or organisation of exhibitions – they're not exactly the same – is a profession. It is a discipline. It requires very specific skills, although no single curator has them all in equal proportion. But that has to be given some dignity and some therefore authority. I think curators who give away their authority are largely the problem, too. And they do it in two spheres: they tend to borrow their authority from somebody else. For example, a curator who becomes too closely associated with a particular philosophical discourse, to the point where they no longer have a voice of their own from within their practice, are only representing ideas that are mega, greater, blah blah blah.

The other side of it is to think that they're artists. If a curator does not respect their own profession and thinks that they, as a curator, are really the same thing as an artist, they're first of all making a categorical mistake in a philosophical way, but they're, secondly, publicly devaluing the thing that they do. So I would think we're at a point where we can, in a positive way, redefine curatorial jobs and their allied roles, because not everybody is looking after a collection in the proper sense of that term. If we can give that some dignity, some specialised knowledge, some standards ethically, politically and so on and so forth, then curators, again in alliance with the designated institutional powers of directors and so on, could be very tough negotiators.

And I will simply say from my own experience that in the Museum of Modern Art, when I arrived at it at any rate, the patron class, the public officials and so on who had to deal with the Modern, were very respectful of curators because they were respectful of

Alfred Barr, they were respectful of Dorothy Miller, they were respectful of a certain tradition. And that's in jeopardy and it has to be won back.



## **SESSION 2**

### **Introduction**

Hans Ulrich Obrist – Co-Director of Exhibitions and Programmes and Director of International Projects, Serpentine Gallery

### **Panellists**

Amalia Perjovschi – CAA/CAA (Contemporary Art Archive / Center for Art Analysis)

Dan Perjovschi – CAA/CAA (Contemporary Art Archive / Center for Art Analysis)

Guy Schraenen – The Archive for Small Press & Communication (ASCP)

Claire Hsu – Executive Director, Asia Art Archive

### **Response**

Hans Ulrich Obrist

**Sir Nicholas Serota:** Ladies and gentleman, I want to welcome you back this afternoon and to hand the chair to Hans Ulrich Obrist, who will introduce the session both as chair and as respondent. Hans Ulrich.

## **INTRODUCTION**

**Hans Ulrich Obrist:** Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. It's a great pleasure and a privilege to moderate this afternoon session today. Maybe a very few words of introduction here. I think, looking at this very big topic of the public and the private, it's important to kind of think about the forces of globalisation, which obviously affect every field, and I think also in very strong ways affect the field of museums.

Forces of globalisation – as Edouard Glissant (the great poet, novelist and theatrician) shows us very often – lead, through homogenising forces, to the disappearance of difference, and for that very reason he introduced the notion of 'mondialité'. Mondialité would be a global dialogue which actually does not reduce difference, but produces difference, and in this sense is very different from a homogenising globalisation.

I think it's interesting also, that we had a discussion about this very point, how globalisation affects the art world, the other day with Peter Fischli. And Peter Fischli was telling me that he thinks there really is no such thing as a kind of homogenous art world, but he thinks the great thing that about the art world is that there are these parallel universes, these kind of parallel worlds.

I think we're very lucky this afternoon to have three very, very different points of view, actually, all three founders of new models and new institutions somewhere between art centres and archives, who I think contribute greatly to this diversity, which is so necessary in the art world. And I think we should start right away with our first speakers. I'm extremely happy to introduce Amalia and Dan Perjovschi, both very well-known and highly influential artists in Bucharest. They have been an incredible force on the Bucharest art scene, triggering so much energy among young artists over recent years, and besides their activity as artists, they're also the founders of the Contemporary Art Archive/the Center for Art Analysis CAA/ CAA, which is focusing on art theory, art practice and cultural studies as well as critical theory. It's a very comprehensive and international database, as they say, a voice-activated capsule of knowledge – hence the idea of knowledge production – a frame and platform for empowerment of dialogue and communication.

Particularly interesting is their definition of themselves and their institution as being dissident, not with a double-ess but with a double-zed, from 'dizzy'; dissident in terms of a critical attitude in a context of consumerism and intellectual stagnation. So very welcome, Amalia Perjovschi and Dan Perjovschi.

## **PANELLISTS**

### **Amalia Perjovschi**

I will present my archive, actually twenty years of its history and, of course, its context. Because nothing is accidental. The first context was the communist one. What you see here [she is illustrating her talk with slides] is a picture of Europe at night, and one of those black holes is Romania. There aren't that many mountains there; we should be a little enlightened! But from 1980 till the 1989, we were in the dark, each year darker and darker.

Now here is the dictator's palace, on which building started in 1984. He was building huge, while the food stores were empty. But not only the food stores; the libraries were empty too. We were lacking information. We were lacking a lot of things, not only food, but you know, information is food for your brain. We were queuing for hours, often overnight.

We had to move from normal houses into these apartment blocks; it was a very highly controlled society. It was very cold, and we tried to adapt, to find solutions. In 1985, we organised – when I say ‘we’ I mean I and Dan – meetings in our apartment, at the border with Hungary, up in the north of Romania; informal meetings – what we would now call brainstorming meetings – because I was really curious how others were doing, how they were pursuing their profession in this context. I had the feeling that I was being pushed to make art in a way I didn’t want, but I didn’t know how to do it differently.

In 1987 I started to study at the art academy in Bucharest, and I said, ‘No way. This is another high school for art.’ So I established an experimental studio in the art academy. In parallel with my academic studies I was creating my free space.

And then in 1989 there was the revolution. We were on the street, revolting. In 1990, the new power was established, and from that moment we had to fight each day for a democratic society, institutions, practices and so on. This is an incident from May 1990, when the president at that time, a former Communist, brought in the miners to smash everybody who looked intellectual, wearing glasses, or jeans, or long hair or whatever, because we were destabilising the new power.

The 1990s were also the time to travel. What you see here are exhibitions I saw in Europe and the United States from 1990 till 2000, when I printed out this montage. I selected what I liked, trying, of course, all the time to analyse what I was seeing. And also the trips were for me an opportunity to collect images, books, postcards, plastic bags. So the archive, more or less, is a kind of museum in files out of your museums.

In 1991, we received – were very lucky to receive – a studio right in the art academy of Bucharest. But you saw: we’d revolted; we’d held a lot of meetings and street protests. The studio was no place to create objects or whatever. It was somewhere we went full of nerves and frustration, so we were talking more than we were producing anything. And our studio was totally free for everybody and everything.

In 1996, we declared our studio open to the public for a week. Actually, we were really curious just to see what ‘public’ meant: who is ‘the public’ when we use this word? We

didn't arrange anything, and lots of people came, sneaking around, checking everything. It was very interesting for us.

Over a period we have hosted all kinds of events. One was a live transmission from our studio on art education issues. And because we had already been very critical and we got tired of mentioning the same things, we invited a new generation, who were very critical at that time in the art academy.

We were also talking about contemporary art museums with curators, journalists, artists, even some foreigners, creators and so on, in 1990. Here [slide] with curators and artists from Austria, Vienna; or [slide] with a very mixed group from England, Germany and so on; or again [slide] with Germans and Austrians on a fact-finding trip in Romania. Or [slide] presenting *biennale* and *documenta* to students from the theoretical department of the art academy.

In 1997, we were invited to teach at Duke University and I said, 'Oh, it's odd to teach Americans, who know so much, and not do something at home.' So that was the moment when I came back and organised everything I had collected over the years, those seven years from 1990. And I organised it in files, so it's a museum of images and texts.

The first exhibition I did with a small selection from my archive was based on 150 slides as my budget was zero. That exhibition was actually framed to present other specialists from different fields, like a former dissident, a psychoanalyst, a homoeopath, a criminologist and so on, because art is not isolated.

And, yeah, talks with artists and art critics. 1998 was also the year I printed the archive's first newspaper, with a dictionary of contemporary art terms, chronology of socio-political and cultural events since 1945 which had shaped contemporary art. That was mostly about installations, and the second newspaper mostly about performance art, the third about photo-media art. And the theory: how to look at an artwork, what criticism means, about institutions.

In 1990, I thought I should make things make sense. I was so obsessed with recuperating the knowledge I was missing, that I became kind of bulimic about it and,

in a way, I had to structure. Not just for myself, but always, everything I did, I did for myself first. I wanted to know, I wanted to understand, and that was when I switched from the archive. And also because I get so bored of hearing 'archives, archives, archives.' So I said, 'OK, I don't want to have an archive, but, since I have a history, I'll switch to a centre of art analysis.'

And working with those materials – because my archives are not just books or files and so on, but a combination of all these – I felt like a detective of art history, at least in my context. I started to discover things, to see connections and a lot more. And here [slide] I have thirty-five pages of art history of modernist style today, which I consider as my museum. I mean my context or professional frame, one which I relate to when I have an idea or want to propose something.

Workshops [slide] . We started to tour the country, talking with students of politics or architecture and so on. We would always invite interesting locals, if we knew of some interesting points of view.

My latest exhibition was in 2000 with the archive in Bucharest, and was about visual identity – but really what's behind the visual identity of institutions, concepts and so on, so actually it was more about related issues.

In 2000, we were moderators for three hours on Romanian television. Again, very lucky [slide] . And on that occasion I did everything I could to transmit 'national', because it was national: Saturday, from 10 to 1, so even those who didn't want to see or hear anything about contemporary art were obliged to, if they kept the television on. I distributed information, the main information from the archive.

The new context was a transition to consumerism and everything you've all seen, but let's say a little bit wilder [slide] . And this same building [the dictator's building], since 1994, houses the parliament. Totally wrong. I mean, I cannot believe in a power who wants to run the country from the same building as a dictator! They are dictating to us again.

But even worse: they bought all the intellectuals – you know, writers, artists, curators, art historians, everybody – establishing the Museum of Contemporary Art, the National

Museum of Contemporary Art, in the parliament building. The way in which this was done, the location, and the message of these museums are totally wrong. Of course, I have a lot of axes to grind, and will say very briefly that the symbol of a dictator cannot be the symbol of my future at least.

And you know what? It's funny. If we take into account the 'butterfly effect', very soon I'm afraid you too will have museums in your parliaments, and then maybe you will understand better what this means and how dangerous it can be.

They opened it twice: in 2001 for local elections, and in 2004 for general elections. And once again you felt the 'power' in insignificant things like details, decoration and so on.

The museum director's argument is that the new generation doesn't care. I'm afraid that's why we ended up having fifteen years of Communism, because maybe our parents were younger and wanted to enjoy themselves; to have a car, a house or whatever. But then, when they realised what was happening, it was too late. And I saw other, younger generations, besieging this palace, protesting for access to the secret service files. From 2005, the archive is in quarantine; it's sick because I am sick of everything that happened.

But I don't give up. So, in a way, now's the moment for reshaping, re-orientating. I believe that I did what I had originally planned, on a course that always was and will be flexible, organic, growing out of problems and needs and contexts and so on. Now I know for sure it would have to be inter-disciplinary, more and more transparent, and public. So, if we continue to invest our money, that's how it will be.

But it's travelling in a kit format, by invitation, and based mainly on the idea of being a detective; I transfer the curiosity to the public. So the public touch my replicas sometimes, or multiples from my collection, like *Air du Paris* or Duchamp and so on, reading the labels, taking them out of their plastic cases. They enjoy it a lot.

A wonderful exhibition, in which I was very happy to be included, was 'Interrupted Histories', because it was talking finally about what I was feeling. And I'm interested in timelines, I'm interested in visualising the dynamics. What kind of ideas were happening when? For me, the most important thing is to make sense.

## **Dan Perjovschi**

I've always said that this archive is a voice-activated installation, as you saw, and it's also like an open source. And when I remind you of the names this institution has had over time, I think that's very relevant – it's like open studio, archive, analyse, detective, dissident, quarantine, inventory.

The institution was private, went public, and now it's private again. It's a small one. It's very near you. It's a very mobile institution, and it's giving something very important nowadays: it's giving valuable time. Lia is able to speak to you for a whole day. And I think the fact that somebody nowadays is willing to be like a sparring partner for young artists is very important.

Now, because I'm not – this is Lia's project and I'm a kind of supportive, more like a back-up singer – it's my duty to say thanks to CIMAM and to the people on the board for inviting us for this conference, and thank you, to Tate, too, for hosting us here. It's a great privilege to be asked to address to you all. And because Lia's made a passionate presentation, I want to give you like an easier – not easy, but different – understanding of the facts she raised.

So, this is who I am [slide]. I came from a failed ideology into a beautiful – I can't describe how beautiful – utopia [slide]. And I come from a place where power is mediated by distance [slide]. And as you saw in Lia's presentation, it's all about that sort of equilibrium and balances and proportions [slide].

And I think this is a critique to the curators [slide].

And this is a critique to the artists [slide].

And this is about the emphasis on the public [slide].

And this is about the structure of power [slide].

We can list collections by galleries, no? But I, we, also much admire the institutions, because they, the institutions, are also elements which structure the scene. And I know museums are not always in a an easy situation, and they sometimes face very big problems [slide].

So, because we live in the kind of world where the poor listen and the rich speak [slide]. And we are in the kind of society where if I want to go to buy a banana, and I end up buying everything except the banana [slide].

And just to finish on a optimistic note, when I entered the UK yesterday – and you should know that last month's big tabloid story was about the Romanian workers coming to invade you here, so, I expected a bit of unpleasantness – but instead of being hostile, the passport control officer asked me, 'What are you doing in the UK?' I said, 'I'm attending a conference at the Tate,' and the guy said, 'Are you an artist?' and I said, 'Yes.' And the officer just asked, 'What's your media?'

Thank you.

**Hans Ulrich Obrist:** Many, many thanks to Amalia and Dan Perjovschi. I have now the great pleasure to introduce our next speaker this afternoon, Guy Schraenen, who is advisor and independent curator, and also founder of the Archive for Small Press and Communication, known as ASPC. He was actually involved, from 1966 to 1978, in Galerie Kontakt; he then founded Guy Schraenen Editions (1973-8); ran the archives base in Antwerp from 1974 to 1992; has been a radio producer and is an advisor to many museums. Welcome to Guy Schraenen.

**Guy Schraenen:** To start, I will quote this sentence of Winston Churchill's somebody mentioned this morning: 'I will go from field to field, but with enthusiasm.' So I will divide my speech into three parts.

First, a short history of the archive. I started in 1966, as you said, with a gallery which was an absolute failure, because it simply didn't work and we had no visitors. In ten years I didn't manage to sell one painting. So I decided to create a publishing house; I published, in five years, over fifty books; I printed around five hundred copies of each, and managed to sell, I think, between three and five copies of each. So that was also a

failure. But one thing wasn't such a failure. The idea behind publishing was to get out of the gallery system, because as I had no buyers – and also no audience – I thought for the same investment, physically and mentally, it's better to have publications; at least they have their own life afterwards. So I searched everywhere: all the addresses I could find, all over the world, of small publishing houses and self-published artists. And I mailed – at the time postage was very cheap. I could mail, all over the world, between a hundred and a hundred and fifty copies of each publication, just with the book in a stamped addressed envelope, and no other commitment or requirement.

The strange thing is – which with hindsight doesn't look so strange, because all these people were dealing with this kind of attitude, were in the same position – that there was no real interest in it. But after a few months, every day the post office delivered to my home big sacks of books from all over the world. So from the gallery (because at first I produced publications by the same artists I was exhibiting in the gallery), I went over to publishing, and after this failed too I decided to concentrate my efforts and energy on collecting publications from other publishers. And in 1974 we really gave it a structure as an archive, as a public space – even though it was private – and showed our first exhibition, which was called 'Text Sound Image Small Press Festival'.

Because in the beginning, my idea was to collect all the types of publications which were at the time free or very cheap. Even later, when I was building up the collection and until seven or eight years ago, when I sold it, my prime idea was that I only wanted to collect things that were very cheap, even though in the 1990s some of the pieces became very expensive. For example, the wooden 'Intuition' boxes that Beuys made in Germany were initially 10 Euro; now you'd pay between 1500 and 2000 Euro, but originally it was meant to be a very cheap publication. So I really devoted my archive to this field.

Also, in the beginning, the idea was only to have publications and documents published by the artists themselves, or by artists' initiatives, or by similar small publishing houses or very small galleries, because at that time you had galleries who were not so much interested in money as in showing art – which is a big difference, of course, from the situation today.

The archive was getting bigger and bigger, and when sold about seven years ago, it had together 50,000 pieces, ranging from books and records to multiples, postcards and invitation cards. So everything in it, the idea was, gave a complete view of the world outside the traditional art world.

One thing I want to say. Everybody thinks this is absolutely cynical, but I assure you it's not: of these 50,000 pieces I collected, I like perhaps fifty. For me, that wasn't important. Of course, if the piece also had quality, that was interesting, but what fascinated me was collecting symbols of the freedom of the artist, as opposed to the power of money or of institutions. So I still collected these after I developed the archive and, for example, bought all the books by artists like Sol Lewitt even once they were published by big publishing houses or museums, because initially they were a real part of what they call the 'underground'. Which I don't believe is underground, because when you look at the art scene it's like an iceberg: 10% above the surface, what the people see, is the art market, but the real creativity is in the 90% we don't see. Because art, the real attitude of the artist, comes out of this 90% under sea-level. And I think this is obvious about art.

It's different today too, because what I'm speaking about, of course, is a situation created in the 1960s and 1970s. When I sold the archive to a German museum, they decided to put on an exhibition with a kind of overview of the different categories in the collection. The exhibition was called 'Out of Print' and subtitled 'An Archive as Artistic Concept.' This was a complete mistake, because when I gave them the title I made a slip of the tongue and said 'Archive Artistic Concept'. The next day I went to the director and said, 'This is quite wrong. It's an archive as political concept.' The problem was that it had already gone to press, so the title stayed.

And what I want to come back to is that in this context the political attitude of the people who were in there was also very important, because in the 1960s you had a radical change in the functioning of the art scene; with inter-media art, and artists separating themselves from the normal gallery art of the time, of the *École de Paris* and painting, the artist had to find new ways to show things. And you then have the possibility for them to create their own spaces, but also they took over the power of publication, which was the most important thing for me. Because until 1960, when there was a book, there was always a writer or a poet involved, plus a graphic

designer. But from the 1960s artists broke this rule and started making their own books, choosing the paper, the print, the content, and they even sometimes wrote their own text. They no longer needed the dictatorship of the word by writers. And this created a real split in the publication system, which I think was very important.

Unfortunately, now we are going backwards again, with many books of texts and images – because we are in a very different market, we could say. Which is, more or less, was what I wanted to say about the archive.

I know I wasn't asked here just to speak about the archive, but I can't help it. Sorry. I will now speak about other things.

We are talking about public and private. I was a private collector. I knew that one day the collection would get so big that it would probably have to go to a official institution. I calculated when I started collecting these documents that what I was doing was important. I was convinced that it was; when you have different ways of functioning in the art world, you also have to preserve the memory of that part, or it will disappear. The higher the quantities of a published work – I was only interested in published works – the cheaper the price, the less of it lasts over time. Because if people pay a lot of money to buy something, they keep it; when they are given something, the chances are high that it totally disappears. So I thought it was really important that somebody, somewhere, keeps all the things museums throw away.

Many people think that I am – this has been said a lot – against institutions and museums, which is absolutely not true. But I think private individuals have a totally different role to play from that of institutions. The work I did when I created this collection of publications, which I sold six years ago for what was then considered a high price for a collection of printed and published works, today already seems very cheap. I think it has more than doubled the price since I sold it.

Another thing is that, given I worked on this archive from *circa* 1965, let's say, until 2000, if they had put one museum employee to do the same job, it would have cost much, much more. I don't think it's the role of a museum to do this work, and I don't think it's interesting for them to do it, and I don't think they have to take that risk. I think

those who risk buying contemporary artworks should be private individuals, and I think museums should always buy too late, never too early.

Look at what happened with the *Trans-avanguardia* and *Neue Wilde* and things like that, when some museums sold works to buy that junk. But where is it today? They'd have done better to buy something more expensively later than to buy it now. I also think it's not the role of museums to exhibit contemporary art: there are special institutions and private galleries to do that, and the risk is one for private galleries to take. And if no private galleries do – well, a society gets the art and the culture scene it deserves, so I don't think... We have to get out of this, because it's getting too much; it takes too much time and energy for institutions to take care of art of today.

I travel around Europe a lot, and go to many museums, and when you see what condition the collections are in today, it's an absolute scandal. Because museums now are becoming exhibition factories, and have no time to take care of what they're really for. A museum is a cemetery of art, with wonderful tombs which we should take care of; we have to take care of these collections, not to produce work to support the art market. Because I think this is also a very, very big problem; that because the museums support the art market, we've arrived at a situation where the prices of artwork rise too quickly, and what happens then is that we don't have young collectors. Young collectors can't buy art today because the prices go too high immediately.

A second thing that happens is that art goes straight from the ateliers into storage rooms. Collectors today buy art like putting money in a safe. They're not interested in art – they're just using art, and using museums to raise the value of their collections, which is a very dangerous fact. Are we dealing with art today, or are we dealing with the invention of artistic projects?

I want to end with another problem, which I think is the responsibility of the museums. When you see museums' art shops – when you see a space like Centre Pompidou with a part of a department store, or the museum shop here at the entrance of Tate Modern, I think it's an absolute scandal. Because people go round the museums, then they go and buy all this junk, packed in a bag which has 'Tate Modern' or 'Centre Pompidou' or 'The Museum of-I-don't-know-what' written on it, and they get the idea that because they bought it in a museum, this object is endorsed by the museum.

I think this is really cheating people. It's stealing their money. Instead of educating them, you push them down and down and down. And when I say this to museum directors, they say, 'Yes, but we need the money.' I think that's also a lie. They need visitors, because they are under political pressure to have more and more visitors, and without the money from renting space to these museum shops, they could stage one exhibition less a year. But this running after public... Nick Serota said this morning – understandably proudly – that there are now six million visitors a year to Tate Modern. But I think this means absolutely *nothing* if of these six million visitors, perhaps five million are absolutely uninterested in art, in the art scene; they are going to see an event.

Art today is 'pure showmanship'. People don't go to museums to see art; they go to an event they can talk about tomorrow with their friends. It's impossible that in twenty years so many people have raised so much interest in art. The museums are lying to themselves – but they need this public, because if museum directors don't do this today, they'll lose their job tomorrow, because there are hundreds of other curators and future museum directors waiting to take their jobs in the art industry.

Thank you.

**Hans Ulrich Obrist:** Many thanks to Guy Schraenen. I now have great pleasure in introducing our next speaker, Claire Hsu. Claire, after studying art history in London, decided to return to Hong Kong to become co-founder of a new institution, the Asia Art Archive –AAA – in December 2000: an incredibly necessary institution. When I started to work in Asian art in the 1990s, there was no such archive. So an incredibly missing institution has been invented, and since 2000 the AAA has really developed into a very dynamic archive, by not only developing the archive in Hong Kong, but also networking with many other archives all over the world, creating links between them. Welcome, Claire Hsu.

**Claire Hsu**

Thank you very much, CIMAM, for this invitation, and our hosts, the Tate. It's a real privilege to be here today to introduce the work of the Asia Art Archive.

Museums, both private and public, exist in abundance in Asia, but, for the most part, the idea of what a museum is, what it is for, is a recent construct. The museum is a space still undergoing considerable negotiation, especially with regard to the current state of art production, which ranges from the exhibition of contemporary art and international biennials to the trade in all manner of art objects.

The codes and the objectives observed by museums in Europe and the US, for example, are not necessarily shared by most museums in the region. The word 'museum' is used freely to describe a variety of different spaces.

Consider the term 'Dirty Yoga', which is the title of this year's Taipei biennial. It's meant to signify how ideas morph as they travel globally. It's also a reference to the trend of yoga centres popping up in cities all over the world: yoga centres which purportedly offer classes having something to do with yoga, but they're not quite authentic yoga classes. Perhaps we can apply this term to describe museums in the region. While 'dirty museums' might come across as a bleak way of describing the situation of art museums in Asia – and there are, of course, exceptions – the notion of a 'dirty museum' candidly points to the fact that while we all feel the need to build museums, some vital ingredients have been overlooked.

The list of lacks is long. There is a lack of professional training amongst museum practitioners, a lack of development of collections in exhibitions, and a lack of funding. Moreover, museums in Asia face a major hurdle: for the most part, there isn't a museum-going culture there. Museum-going isn't among Asians' favourite pastimes; instead, eating and shopping top that list.

It is not only in China – where it was announced last year that a hundred museums would be built in Shanghai by the time of the World Expo in 2010 – that the forces of globalisation can be seen in the changing role that museums in the 21<sup>st</sup> century play. The allocation by governments of resources to building major cultural facilities represents a new trend, where art museums are seen as a necessary status symbol of a truly world-class city, a phrase, and an aspiration, that has been adopted by cities across Asia, be they Hong Kong, Bangkok, Singapore or Kuala Lumpur.

Cultural tourism and the economic benefits associated with this, spawned by earnings, are the desired goals, to emulate the Bilbao effect. One would hope that there are lessons to be learnt from existing cases in the region, where many museums are struggling to survive due to a lack of government funding, especially in an environment where private and corporate funding for the arts is not well developed. One of the most obvious examples of this in the region is, of course, Japan. It is the most developed in terms of art infrastructure, with more municipal and private art museums per capita than any other country in the world. The majority, built during the economic bubble of the 1980s, are struggling with the long-term costs even of keeping the lights on, let alone offering thoughtful programming or building collections. This has resulted in cuts in funding across the board, the declared decision to privatise the management of public institutions, and many museums relying on blockbuster shows for their survival. At the same time, Japan is a country which offers a hope of what future museums in the region may look like, with some of the most exciting and thoughtful platforms for exhibiting contemporary art.

Under the directorship of David Elliott and now Fumio Nanjo, who will be speaking tomorrow, the Mori Art Museum is regarded as one of the most, if not *the* most, successful examples of a private museum in the Asian region, and is being cited as a model by city planners in every major Asian city. The success of the Mori Museum can be attributed to a number of factors: the vision to integrate it as a key component in the Roppongi Hills development; the financial commitment by Mr Mori; and his foresight in appointing the right team to steer and build his vision. We need to be wary of this model, however, as its fault lies in its reliance on a sole source of funding – and one can only wonder how long one person can foot the bill. Running a successful museum is very expensive, as we all know.

The Fuokoka Art Museum, on the island of Fuokoka in Japan, stands as an example of a museum that has taken on a commitment to examine actively its position within the region as a gateway between Japan and the rest of Asia. Set up in 1999, after a series of large-scale exhibitions focusing on modern Asian art that began in 1979, it is one of the only museums in the region systematically to build a collection of contemporary Asian art and undertake in-depth research and exchange through its triennial and residency programmes and workshops.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, which opened in 2004 under the directorship of Yuko Hasegawa, seeks to present a new model for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The museum was conceived to democratise art by opening the gallery to as broad an audience as possible, through the design of the building and by re-thinking the space of the museum as an extension of the multiple personalities that use it and are represented there.

While the driving forces behind these three museums are very different, I cite them as examples because they all share something in common: they all have a clear and distinct vision and mission. Their missions may be different: for the Mori it is to create a platform to present contemporary art through private initiative; for Fuokoka, to create a gateway between the island and other Asian cultures; and for Kanazawa it is to present a new model of museum in the way it actually gauges its audience. Having a clear mission is one of the most basic important components in building a successful museum, yet it's astounding how often this requirement is often overlooked in the region.

While museums in China have provided important platforms for exhibitions – such as the Shanghai Museum of Art with the Shanghai Biennial and the Guangzhou Museum of Art with the Guangzhou Triennial – these are sporadic at best. There is little evidence of any serious questioning of their role or position within the greater framework of the development of contemporary art nationally, let alone regionally. Well, this can partly be attributed to a clear lack of a clear mission and funding. It also lies in the differing notions of private and public, something that is only being casually addressed. The boundaries between these spaces are constantly shifting, with privately run museums at times offering more autonomous space for the public than public- or state-run museums.

There also seems to be a lack of serious consideration of who exhibitions are for. While we need to question the current mindless approach to museum-building, with resources being poured into bricks and mortar, there is at least a considerable investment and recognition of contemporary art at government levels – and this is an important first step in itself. Also the opportunity to build something now, free from historical baggage, could be exciting and challenging.

Hong Kong, a special administrative region of China, where the Asia Art Archive is based – and my home – has since 2001 been caught up in a lengthy discussion with the government about allocating a major piece of land on the harbour for museums and performing arts venues. Fraught with controversy, twists and turns, the original plans to build four museums as part of the district, in partnership with a private developer, was withdrawn, and a committee set up to re-evaluate the four proposed museums – originally one for design, one for contemporary art, one for the moving image and one for printed matter, totalling 75,000 square metres.

I am a member of the twenty-person committee, and after many months of debate we're in the final stages of presenting this paper. It proposes that we move away from the four separate museums and head towards a single centre for visual culture, focusing on the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries; a centre that recognises the increasingly blurred boundaries between the different disciplines and encourages cross-dialogue between visual art, design, film and popular culture as a starting point.

Unlike the concerns that may be voiced in other parts of the world during a similar exercise, it is interesting to note some of the major debates that arose out of this one: the positioning of Hong Kong with regards to China and Asia; the inclusion-exclusion of print in the way visual art is read globally; the relevance of the terms 'modern' and 'contemporary' in the history of visual art in Asia; and the positioning of this centre within the existing cultural ecology.

While there is a long way to go before this project is fully realised and we rely on a number of factors – strong leadership being key – the process in itself has been important. It has forced us to examine all these issues in depth, many of them specific to Hong Kong, to arrive at a model we think viable to address both the local and the global community.

Out of this process has come the realisation of the urgency of investigating the role museums in Asia play in their relationship to other cultural entities. Where museums have failed to bridge the gap between art and society, individual initiatives, independent spaces and community-based projects have been very successful in contributing to the building of an alternative art infrastructure over the last couple of decades. The energy and force driving this region is creating the conditions for some of

the most innovative, creative production of our times. These are being manifested in multiple ways and forcing us to re-evaluate what contemporary art in fact means.

It is some of these smaller-scale projects – rather than the museums – that have been able to offer a platform for analysis by building regional networks. However, even these are limited, and the lack of serious documentation and scholarship in the field is still glaringly obvious. It is in this context that I would like to introduce the Asia Art Archive, which was set up at the end of 2000 out of personal frustration, when I couldn't get information on contemporary art from mainland China while carrying out my research in London in 2000. It has since evolved into a project that has generated a collective awareness of the urgent necessity of the documentation, interpretation and dissemination of knowledge in the field.

The archive now offers one of the most comprehensive and most publicly accessible collections of material relating to contemporary Asian art in the world, with over 22,000 items, including ephemeral, multi-media and published material. Our facilities are free and available to all via our website and physical space.

One of the features that distinguishes an organisation like the Asia Art Archive is its independence from institutional structures or programmes. While there are cons to being independent, the freedom that comes with this both provides flexibility, and forces you to be constantly self-reflexive. Documenting contemporary developments is very different from documenting the past, and this is something that needs to be reflected in the attitude of the organisation.

While the actual physical material that you find in the AAA is what you would expect to find in any library or archive – exhibition catalogues, books, periodicals, videos – what is remarkable is the energy and possibilities that are being created as a result of bringing all this material together, both conceptually and physically.

In the ability to respond to the shifting role of the archive as more than a static collection of material, a place of silence, to one that is active, engages, creates a network and offers new interpretations, we believe that by starting from the physical collections, through our website and in-house projects, we can play a major role in the generation of new ideas and research in the field. In-depth research and critical writing

is something sorely lacking in Asia, with few individuals in the field venturing out of their comfort zones, and the majority of texts regurgitated or quickly thrown together. There is an overwhelming sense that everything is about today, and today is not being seen as the foundation for the future, both near and distant, nor in the context of history, again both recent and long-term.

One of our main areas of focus is to build up a collection of primary source material, which is why we have actively been producing video interviews with individuals in the field, documenting research trips, conducting research trips and travelling to document exhibitions and events from our base in Hong Kong and through our network of seven research posts throughout the region. We are allocating resources to locating and identifying rare material, which is in danger of being lost, in most cases slowly decaying in a forgotten cupboard. A current project, for example, is a travelling documentary exhibition, which will look at the development of contemporary art in China in the 1980s, to offer new perspectives into how this period is read – crucial for an understanding of what is happening today.

A registered charity in Hong Kong, we are supported by an annual government grant, which makes up 25% of our annual operating budget, with the rest coming from private and corporate sponsorship. It always comes as a surprise to people that the AAA is able to attract such a wide group of sponsors; for we are, after all, an archive, a word that will in most cases induce a series of yawning fits. It is for this very reason that we must always think of interesting ways to present our holdings to a wider audience, especially in this day and age where everything competes for attention. This is where our programmes have become important, and we actively organise talks, lectures, workshops and symposia. At the same time, mass accessibility to our collections is something that is only just becoming possible...

It is difficult not to get caught up in the current frenzy for contemporary art from Asia. Prices for Chinese and Indian art have broken all previous records, there are at least a couple of new international biennials every year, and exhibitions of Asian artists are being included in major museums around the world. Add to this the allocation of resources to build a LOT of museums across the region.

While all of these factors may be construed as evidence of a new intellectual “global” framework, the fact remains that representation of contemporary art from Asia, outside Asia, has been largely superficial. And inside Asia, resources and energy need to be invested beyond bricks and mortar, if a meaningful global discourse can be built. And this can only really happen, once a meaningful regional discourse is developed.

The challenge of engaging in the contemporary is to understand who our contemporaries are. Who are our neighbours in geography and history? How will superpowers like China and India engage the region, rather than just the West? How, for instance, is the 19th century European museum becoming a default model for modern art museums in certain parts of Asia?

## **RESPONSE & QUESTIONS**

### **Respondent: Hans Ulrich Obrist**

Many thanks to all our speakers. I'll make a few short remarks and then address a few questions, and hopefully we can then open up the discussion to all of you. I think, as we heard this morning and again this afternoon, the challenges to public institutions are many, ranging from the homogenising forces of globalisation, or the risk of them, to political or economic pressures to, obviously, a more and more competitive environment, with a greater number of private museums – not only that, but also galleries having bigger and bigger spaces, almost museum-like spaces. Also factoring in all their catalogue production, etc, etc, I think there are many challenges.

Nevertheless, I must say that I remain very optimistic in terms of the idea which I think very often still goes under-acknowledged: the amazing variety of production within our cultural system of public institutions. There are mega-producers; there are micro-producers; there are multinational institutions, but there are also the *Kunsthallen* and the *Kunstvereins*. There are art centres. There are archives. I think there are many, many different ways of making things public.

Thinking about this conference and the topic of private and public, and wondering if it was a dichotomy or an oppositional point or an oxymoron, I thought that maybe it would be interesting is to talk a bit about David Deutsch, the Oxford physicist and philosopher, who, in quantum computers and physics, developed the idea of the parallel universe.

It's a rare case for me, David Deutsch's book, *The Fabric of Reality*, when a book is no longer a source of mere quotations but becomes a kind of a tool box. And I think *The Fabric of Reality* is a really great tool box for many, many questions about art museums' curating today.

*The Fabric of Reality* was published in 1997, and one of its key questions is whether reality can be produced. Deutsch stated: 'The whole of reality, including the multi-verse' – he uses here the concept of parallel reality as a multi-verse, which actually the English science fiction writer Michael Moorcock had already anticipated in his science-fiction book and including in some sense all the production, all the creation, that has ever happened and will ever happen in the multi-verse, is in some way already there.' Deutsch says that the trouble is that the physics-driven answer doesn't explain the fact that there is a vital distinction between knowledge that was already there, but merely transformed into a new form or revisited, and new knowledge, which was being created. And that sort of distinction is, for him, key.

It focuses our attention on what Deutsch calls 'the vital distinction between that which was already there and that which actually seems to have metamorphosed into a new form, and on the other hand, that which is truly new.' And I think what is interesting in relation to this idea of the parallel universe is that if we look at the idea of the knowledge that was already there, and the new knowledge being created, it leads us to a museum idea which has a lot to do with Pontus Hultén, who was already mentioned by Alfred earlier today. And Pontus Hultén always said that the museum should be about time storage and, at the same time, also a laboratory.

And for me, growing up in Switzerland, visiting the Kunsthalle Zurich, Harald Szeemann's celebratory exhibitions would have been meaningless if there hadn't been Giacometti, and Giacometti would have been meaningless if there hadn't been those extraordinary exhibitions. So both had time storage and a laboratory. And if we think about it, and I think that's one of the really interesting things about the field of museums, there is such an extraordinary toolbox in terms of memory. Pontus Hultén is a great example. But we can also go further back in history and re-visit Willem Sandberg to the source, Pontus Hultén also mentioned a lot, the great Alexander Dorner, who ran the Hanover Museum in Germany in the 1920s.

And I want to talk a little bit about Alexander Dorner. I think it's interesting we sort of memorise, or talk about memory in relation to such pioneering museum models, in terms of contributing maybe a little bit to a protest against forgetting. Dorner's museum model from the 1920s remains unbelievably accurate and sort of interesting, I think, for our discussion.

Now, in Dorner's manifesto, later formulated in a book, *Ways Beyond Art*, he says the museum should be in a permanent state of transformation, oscillating between the object and the process, and having multiple identities; the museum as a pioneer, being active and not holding back; the museum based on a dynamic concept of artistry. The elastic museum; meaning flexible, a place in an adaptable building. And last but not least, the museum as a bridge, built between artists and a variety of scientific disciplines; the whole idea is that we can't understand what forces are effective in current visual production if we don't examine other fields of life and of knowledge.

I think this is also very interesting in relation to collection – and the three presentations showed us there are many more things to be collected than just objects: objects, quasi-objects, non-objects. In addressing the role of contemporary institutions and collection, I'd like to emphasise Felix Gonzalez-Torres, who, in many conversations I had with him, always insisted that the institution has a long-term obligation to care. So it's not just about acquiring an object or quasi-object or non-object, but about having an engagement with it. As Felix always told me, it's like flowers; if you don't tend to them, they die.

Recreativity is creating a new landscape. I think it's difficult to envisage an entirely new landscape within the fabric of today's contemporary art institutions, but I think we can say this: in discussing the state of our museums and institutions, we should really widen the question of collection and relate it less exclusively to objects. As Marcel Broodthaers said, one possibility is the objects, but they're surrounded by many other possibilities which are worth exploring.

We could think of this, too, as a quest for sustained funding, and ultimately a simultaneous quest to better integrate the different circuits that comprise the contemporary art world. But before concluding on that, I'd like to mention one example

of an art practice we can't collect, but which I think is extremely interesting in relation to our production now, [...] which I'd sort of define as a respite from the art world circuit, but not as a complete denial, but as another circuit altogether – which isn't to say the wires don't cross. But as Richard says, we have been working with the idea of not having expectations or a time frame, thinking of the land as a garden, or a tree in a garden. The idea is that the growth and cultivation is a long-term, self-sustaining condition. Nietzsche said: 'One of the main reasons for me to be involved in a different circuitry is the necessity of pursuing time'; so the necessity of pursuing time is the main reason for being involved with a different kind of circuit.

Maybe, to conclude, I should reiterate the idea of starting a quest both to better integrate the circuits that compose contemporary art work, and preserve their character and fundamental integrity. Perhaps through doing so we could avoid stereotyping institutions as all of a kind, and tying them to uniform profit-centric blockbuster mandates, and maybe contribute somehow to the idea of producing different models. Thank you.

In terms of the questions, many fascinating issues have come up in the three presentations this afternoon. I think one of the things to start with is this whole idea of links between institutions – obviously we have more and more co-operation and collaboration between institutions, and I want to ask both Amalia and Dan and also Claire how, in relation to their archives, co-operation with other archives and museums worldwide happens, and how the relationships are structured. And I want to ask Guy Schraenen how he managed to negotiate for a small institution to become part of a bigger one, as happened with his archive in Germany. So, I don't know who wants to start. Maybe Claire?

**Claire Hsu:** Yep. Sorry, the question is how do we engage with other archives and communicate with them?

**Hans Ulrich Obrist:** Yep.

**Claire Hsu:** We don't. There was a slide earlier that showed a workshop we organised last year called *Archive and the Contemporary*, because there are very few art archives in Asia. So one of the ideas was to try and give people the tools to bring them

together, try and encourage them to set up archives in different countries throughout Asia, and to begin discussing some of the issues around that. So we organised a workshop to which we invited over 30 participants from archives outside Asia as well, and spent two or three days debating these issues.

We're currently mapping both public and individual archives throughout the regions – even if someone has, you know, a cupboard in their home that they're not willing to give up yet! We're putting together internal lists so we can begin mapping where different resources exist.

One of the key points is not to duplicate what other people are doing. And there are such limited resources that collaboration is the key to our work.

**Dan Perjovschi:** Well for us, collaboration was absolutely organic. Like, there were times there were not enough books in our country, so if you had a book, your first thought was how to share it. So you lent the book to somebody else to read, and then you could talk about it. So this was the principle of collaboration, and we collaborated with everybody, especially the independent spaces in our country, because they needed the information more than the established ones.

**Amalia Perjovschi:** In a way we created more independent points of view.

**Dan Perjovschi:** And the rest is like exchanging good information. That's how Lia started, when all's said; because we kept getting stuff, like books and catalogues and whatever. It started from there: it gave a kind of a background for raising criticisms or contradictions. And I want to preserve that niche.

**Amalia Perjovschi:** But I want to say here that I wasn't interested in quantity, only in quality. I'm very selective and, to be honest, the collaboration I was hoping for wasn't really happening, if you know what I mean.

**Dan Perjovschi:** That's the feminine view, but sometimes we're just like pirates. If we know that someone interesting is coming to Bucharest, we just kidnap that person and match him with some important local people in our studio. We simply don't have the money to pay for them to travel to us specially.

**Amalia Perjovschi:** To collaborate you need to a good structure, a lot of money and so on. We didn't earn any money.

**Dan Perjovschi:** It's like what we showed you in the first slide show. It was too expensive to bring actual works, but we could bring images. So it was like finding solutions, getting by.

**Hans Ulrich Obrist:** And how do you now see, in terms of both your very active archives – then we'll move on maybe to a question for Guy – the future, both in Bucharest and Hong Kong? Is it that they stay autonomous, or become part of a bigger structure?

**Dan Perjovschi:** We won't sell it!

**Amalia Perjovschi:** No, to be honest...

**Dan Perjovschi:** A negative answer!

**Claire Hsu:** We can't sell ours.

**Amalia Perjovschi:** No, I'd say that if somebody wanted to buy the archive to keep it up – I mean, if somebody were so creative, I'd go for it! And...

**Guy Schraenen:** One piece of good advice: never give it...

**Dan Perjovschi:** ...away?

**Guy Schraenen:** No.

**Hans Ulrich Olbrist:** And that leads me directly to my question to Guy Schraenen. Because you decided to sell your archive, and actually not only to sell it, but also to make it part of a bigger museum, a bigger institution, which is a kind of an institution of different archives. So could you tell us about how this process happened, and if it was positive for you? It would be interesting to hear.

**Guy Schraenen:** It was positive because I got the money. It was negative because, first of all, I worked for many, many years on that archive. I told you I was exchanging a lot with my own publications. I was given many things. But in the end I was buying very expensively, even things I didn't like, because I had this idea – like a stamp collector – that I wanted to have all the books by, for example, Boltanski, so I started buying books by Boltanski I didn't like for a lot of money. But I wanted them in there for completion.

Mainly for this personal reason, and also because it was too big to manage alone, I decided to sell. Plus I had more and more requests for loans from museums; but I only gave loans when the whole exhibition came from me. And also I had more and more requests from art students to come and study it – and I had a very, very bad relationship with art students! Art students and art historians have misappraised my work for forty years, so I think the young generation of art historians will tomorrow misappraise people who try to do the kind of work I was doing. So I don't want to have any contact with art students. So this too was a reason, one of several, and also the archive was so big I knew one day it would end up in a museum.

How did it happen?. In 1988, I think, Thomas Däker from the Neues Museum in Bremen asked me to develop a project for the museum, which didn't yet exist and had very little budget. I built up a concept in which for the first time books or publications by artists were an autonomous part of a museum. Because before we had always graphic cabinets in museums, independent of the collections of paintings or sculptures, and I thought it was important to have a specific department. So I made contacts with museums to sell it.

But as I had already worked with Bremen for eighteen years, I have to say it was a moral problem for me to sell it to Germany. Because I wanted to reach out to Eastern Europe or to Iberia, because for political reasons these two parts of Europe were disconnected from the art scene at the time. They couldn't buy these publications, nor swap them. I know, because I travelled a lot in Eastern Europe, that some people have some books here, some there – it's the same in Portugal or Spain – but there's nothing systematic.

And for many other reasons: Germany had big collections, including some of the things I had; over time I had lost the two collections I had in Eastern Europe; I had no collections in Spain or Portugal like I have today. So it went to Portugal. I had an offer from a university in the United States, which I refused because I refused to go to the United States.

And I had an offer from France which was interesting, but I didn't accept because they wanted to split the collection into different parts: one with Ministry of Culture; another part would go to *Bibliothèque Nationale*; another one to Pompidou; another one to Marseilles. And I thought, forget it, because the overview of the kind of media my collection was dealing with was only really interesting if everything stayed together. So I accepted Bremen's offer, and it went from there.

So, if you have just one second more, today any artist who has ten books thinks he has an archive, because people think if they call it an 'archive', artists will immediately send them books to be included in it.

When I started my archive in 1960, there were three. One, a real example for many of us today, was a certain archive from Stuttgart, but this was founded more or less ten years earlier, and also dealt with real – between brackets – artworks, such as paintings or installations or sculptures. And the same time as I started my archive – exactly the same time, by chance – Maurizio Nannucci started an archive in Italy, and Józef Robakowski started what he called the Exchange Gallery in Łódź in Poland.

And then for years nothing happened, and only many years later came this kind of trend of archives – even museums would have an archive. The archive is something very specific and I think, in the art world, it's really dealing with a very specific idea of the late 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s.

**Hans Ulrich Obrist:** Whenever I see Eric Osborne in London it reminds me of the necessary protest against forgetting. So I wonder if today we can maybe contribute a tiny bit more to this protest against forgetting? It would be really great to hear from all four of you what were your role models, or triggers or catalysts, to create your art centre or archives in the first place. What got you started?

**Amalia Perjovschi:** I told you already. I was protecting myself and my future. I wanted to create something I needed and nobody else provided. But also I remember a woman who worked in a public library, and after I had worked there for some days, she started to bring me forbidden books – and I was so happy! You know?

**Dan Perjovschi:** Writing in Romania was censored. It was...

**Amalia Perjovschi :** during the Communist times ...

**Dan Perjovschi:** ... not public ...

**Amalia Perjovschi:** ... and her gesture meant a lot to me.

**Dan Perjovschi:** I don't know. We appropriated the name 'archive', which wasn't very good because in our own context, an archive is something dead. So there's death. We've been exactly the opposite, being alive. The idea was just to use it, to use the knowledge to create another kind of knowledge. So for myself, everything I saw around the Archive or the Centre for Art Analysis was fuelled by our own artistic activity, our own contacts. Everything relevant or interesting I saw, whether from a big institution or a very small one, was relevant, not as a model, but as something to pay attention to. Like today. No?

**Hans Ulrich Obrist:** Claire?

**Claire Hsu:** I have to say that I'm a sort of an accidental archivist. Don't know how it happened and turned out. I wonder. But I would say it was probably a lot to do with meeting artists and coming across the artwork in Asia and really being inspired by how they were able to address things that were happening in the region, and really trying to, on one hand, record these things, but also trying to disseminate some of this to a wider audience, the widest audience possible.

And then there are probably a few personal factors that come into play as well. I was a very neat child who always labelled everything, and also perhaps because I come from different nationalities and have lived in different countries, running an archive in Asia

has allowed me to be a sort of mediator as well in a way, bridging different experiences together.

**Hans Ulrich Obrist:** And Guy?

**Guy Schraenen:** My models were, first, my own mistakes, because from one mistake to another I built up my own model into a strategy of doing things in the art world; and, second, which is very far from the theme, my real model was Henri Langlois, who was creator of the *Cinmathèque* in Paris, with the idea of keeping everything, but selectively. And I, as I told you earlier this afternoon, collected everything I could find in the field I was interested in, without categorising the quality of the pieces. Of course, with the material of the archive, I organised over 100 exhibitions. I wrote all the texts for my catalogues.

So you can see from that what I prefer, but I thought it was equally important to keep everything. And the idea came out of Langlois's idea for the Cinemathèque he founded in Paris.

**Hans Ulrich Obrist:** My last question to all of you, and then we open it to the floor. Could I ask you all if there is an unrealised dimension of your archive, if there's some dream?

**Amalia Perjovschi:** I don't have big dream because, more or less, in one way or another I've done everything I wanted to do.

**Dan Perjovschi:** I think it's, like, currently an image of broader public access. That worked, more or less, in our studio, but although nobody who knocked at the door was turned away, it was still a kind of limited access. So it was this idea, like you (*turning to Guy Schraenen*) to start the lecture with failures: we've also failed a lot, for example we could not access grants or support from the State or elsewhere. But this somehow, amazingly, gave us the freedom *not* to do something, like we could just forget about this institution for a while, or whatever.

And I think what is very important for us, and I hope we can keep it on the way, is the following. We come from a society which was heavily censored. Everything was

censored – public space, even your private life – and now we realise, seventeen years later, that another kind of censorship is coming in. People either don't want to risk their jobs, or don't want to be critical because it's the only institution in their country, or don't want to jeopardise their position or relations with the curator. So, like, this is our project - to keep our freedom, to keep our safety, to be able to do this. To say, 'No, we never set foot in that contemporary museum, because it's dead.'

**Claire Hsu:** I would have to agree with Amalia. I'm very lucky in the fact that my dream has been realised, and I think one of the satisfying things is that it's not just my dream any more. Also, well, my dream would actually be to have some more time to read everything that's in the archive. I don't get to do that much, though!

**Guy Schraenen:** For a long time I had a dream which is not possible any more. It was when these archives were constituted in the 1970s – there was the Nannucci archive, my archive, the archive of Robakowski in Poland, and one or two others. A large part of the contents of these archives was the same.

But these archives are, I think, artworks of the 1970s. They were built up in a similar way, and it was very interesting to see each of our different connections and interests through the parts of the archive which were similar. And for a long time I dreamed of finding a huge building somewhere, you know, and on each floor there would be one of these archives. And people could look at them like they look at paintings in a museum; they could see how the same material was collected in different ways, and what those ways were, because none of us had studied to classify things, so we had of course built them up but each of us could easily find the material.

Since my collection went to a museum in Bremen, there are five people taking care of the primary classification, and when I go there, I can't find a single thing! When I had it, I didn't mislay one item. I don't say they do it badly, but they have a system I don't understand, and the big problem – I saw this when I visited the archive of Hans Sohm, in Stuttgart, after his death – is that they can't deal with the material any more, because they don't have any connection to it. Hans Sohm collected each piece during his life, one after another, so he knew where to find everything. Because although it was not under a logical classification, he could find it because he knew that X was a friend of Y, and that he..., etc., etc. But he couldn't set up a system for finding things in his

collection based on that process. And I think it would have been wonderful to have these different archives in one building, where you could see how these relationships worked.

**Hans Ulrich Obrist:** Thank you all very much. And now we can open it up...

## **OPEN TO THE AUDIENCE**

**Hans Ulrich Obrist:** And now we can open it up. Are there questions? Yes?

**PA Member 1 (Penelope Curtis):** I think, if we had more time, it would be interesting to talk more about why you chose the word 'archive', because in some cases it seems you could have chosen the word 'collection' or 'artwork' or 'library', especially in the case of the Asia Art Archive. It seems in many ways a library.

But I don't think we have time to look at the derivation of the word 'archive', and why you've chosen to use that word and how it relates to the collections you have. But my particular question was for Claire. Could you just explain how the Asia Art Archive is funded, and what its longer-term future might be? And, you know, are there other staff who would look after it? And is there a professional organisation in terms of who manages it, or is it your own artwork?

**Claire Hsu:** As I said in the presentation, we're a registered charity in Hong Kong, so we have to submit an audit report every year. Every single penny is counted. And so the collection actually belongs to Hong Kong, as such.

We get the maximum government grant, and the rest comes through private and corporate funding, so we have a fundraiser every year. Similar to a museum, I think; you know, we have multiple sources of funding.

In terms of long-term goals, yes, this is an archive that has to be around for generations and generations, way after me or any of the board members or anybody who is involved today. So we are setting up a basis on which the work will be continued. We're actually moving to a new home in January; we've run out of space where we currently are. And we're very lucky in the support that we get.

Sorry, what was the last point? (*laughs*)

**Amalia Perjovschi:** Why we chose the name archive, I can answer that for you. In my case, when I was growing up in the town where I was born, Sibiu, in the middle of Romania, I passed the town archive almost every day, and I always wanted to go there and see what it was and so on, but it was always closed. So.

And somebody gave me what may be an interesting explanation. Somebody talking about my archive and so on said, 'Hmm, but it's funny. You go backwards. You don't have an institution, you have an archive.' And so, in a way, I think it's not an accident. It's something connected with my memory and not having access or whatever. But also connected with the institutions I would like to categorise myself with.

**Dan Perjovschi:** And it was, it was also something against amnesia, the erasing of history, because we passed this kind of transitional time. People neglect what was. They forget. They don't want to know. So it was also a way to say, 'This is history; contemporary art *has* history.'

And we are talking of a kind of post-impressionist context, so we had to introduce these terms, and back them with some history. That's archive. And it's changed now. Now we use this all these terms like analyse and, you know, detective, and this kind of...

**Guy Schraenen:** Yes, I think what he says is absolutely correct. It's about keeping the memory. And archive, in my case, was also because I was dealing with, at the beginning, mainly paper, and with information that could be, hypothetically, complete one day, like an official archive about births, or about deaths, or about the buildings of the city? And I think it has to do with keeping this memory topped up, which is a big difference between these kinds of archives and museum collections. You can never, in a museum, be complete. You can't have all Rembrandt's paintings, but you could have prints of all Rembrandt's paintings. So this makes these archives a different thing, the possibility of being complete. And it also gives the bureaucrats a label for these collections.

**Hans Ulrich Obrist:** Are there other questions? ... If there are no more questions, I would like to thank very much our four speakers, Lia, Dan, Claire and Guy. I would also like to thank CIMAM and Tate and all of you. Thank you very much.

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## **SESSION 3**

### **introduction**

Ralph Rugoff – Director of The Hayward Gallery

### **Panellists**

Dr Julian Stallabrass – Reader at Courtauld Institute of Art

Fumio Nanjo – Director, Mori Art Museum

Marysia Lewandowska – Artist, collaborating with Neil Cummings since 1995

Neil Cummings – Artist, collaborating with Marysia Lewandowska since 1995

### **Response**

Ralph Rugoff

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Ralph Rugoff**

Good morning everybody. Welcome back to CIMAM 2006. I'm Ralph Rugoff, Director of the Hayward Gallery, and I'm the respondent for the panel this morning. We've got a very interesting panel, with an artist, a writer and academic, and a museum curator and director. Since we're in a museum I always say artists first!

Let me introduce Neil Cummings and Marysia Lewandowska. They've collaborated together as an artistic team since 1995. Typically, their projects focus on the relationships between art institutions and the political, social and economic spheres, and they have a longstanding interest in looking at public art collections and archives.

Dr Julian Stallabrass is a writer as well as a photographer and lecturer. He's a reader in art history at the Courtauld Institute of Art, and the author of many books, including *Art Incorporated*, published by Oxford University Press in 2004, and *Internet Art: The Online Clash Between Culture and Commerce*, published by Tate in 2003.

Finally, we have Fumio Nanjo, who as well as being deputy director was recently appointed Director of the Mori Art Museum in Tokyo. Over the past twenty years, I'd say Fumio has been one of the leading curators in Japan, and among many, many projects he has been commissioner of the Japan Exhibition at the Venice Biennale in '97, commissioner of the Taipei Biennale in '98 and co-curator of the Third Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art in Sydney, as well as a member of the selection

committee of the Sydney Biennale in 2000. And, I suggest, these are just a few of the things he has done. He was also recently director of the Singapore Biennale, and has worked as an independent curator and written a book called *From Art to the City*, describing his experiences.

So, here's Julian, the first speaker. Thanks.

## PANELLISTS

### Julian Stallabrass

Thank you, Ralph. I'm going to talk about the branding of the museum, and the fundamental question I want to ask in this talk is: what does the branding of the museum do to critical thinking about works of art?



And I want to take the Tate as an example here. This slide is a little nod, actually, to Neil and Marysia, who've also photographed Tate sugar packets. I want to take the Tate as an example because Tate Modern, in particular, is the most successful and professional institution in this area. And it's taken a lead in branding, and it's also, of course, been spectacularly successful,

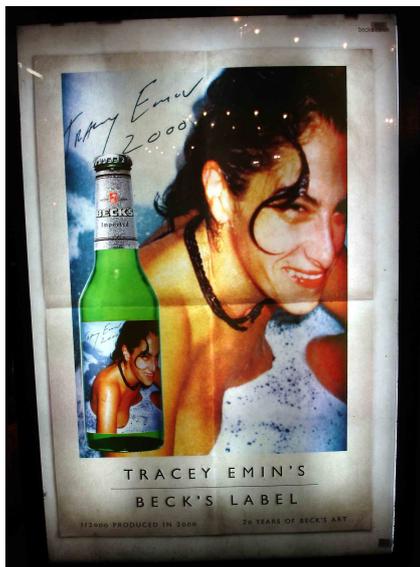
more than even the Tate itself anticipated, in attracting visitors.

This talk shouldn't be seen as Tate-bashing. It isn't. It's simply that this institution offers, I think, a particular vision of the future for the museum, and in a way one can look to the Tate just as Europeans used to look to the United States to glimpse their future as modern consumers.

Now the Tate was re-branded – or Tate, I should say, the definite article being abolished in the process – by the Wolff Olins branding agency and consultancy in 1998. And I'm sure you're familiar with many of the components of this brand. The name of the institution is a complete change, from 'The Tate Gallery' to 'Tate', with its various different manifestations – Tate Modern here. It was allied to particular slogans

at the launch of Tate Modern, ('Look Again, Think Again'). There are logos, which are very carefully designed, and variable in blurriness and colour, and can be rendered in positive or negative lettering. There's product design, which if one thinks about what product design means in relation to the museum, would encompass curation, curatorial statements, fonts, banners, exhibition titles, etc. Take the title of the Tate's recent photography show, 'Cruel and Tender', for example. It's fundamental meaning seems rather hard to grasp; it's provocative, but at the same time a little vacuous, and perhaps that's not an accident. Even the Tate hang – what's come to be accepted as the traditional Tate hang, which is very generous with the space given to works – has become part of that product design.

And then, and not thoroughly separated from this, there's the packaging, which may include the architecture, the museum itself, the Paul Smith uniforms for the front-of-house staff, and so on. And then, of course, there is advertising and marketing, which in Tate is very extensive.



And all these, of course, are allied to cross-marketing. There was a great deal of merchandising at the launch. Six million coffee cups were produced bearing the word 'LaTate' – not a great pun – in Coffee Republic cafés; there were alliances with B&Q, the do-it-yourself store, to produce Tate paint, and there are many other examples you can see in the Tate shops. And there's also the issue of sponsors: UBS, Unilever, the various alliances with companies over the Turner Prize. And, of course, the other thing that's going on here is that the artists themselves are brands, more

or less consciously: here you can see one of Tracey Emin's ventures with booze companies, in this case Becks.

This slide shows Claude Closky's comment on artists as brands. I don't know how many of you have been to his website, but it's has some very interesting work, and he has one page simply called 'Links' – and as you can see, down the left-hand side there

are lots of famous artists' names. If you go to them they take you to company sites. Clicking on 'Billingham', for instance, will take you to a business page selling camera bags and camera vests. So the point is made, of course, about artists as brands.

And indeed movements can become brands too, when they are marketed by the branded museum. I think the worrying thing about this is that the brand is a fundamentally affirmative device. Wolff Olin's aim in 2000 was to project, 'an open, modern, forward-looking experience which is as much about entertainment and enjoyment as it is about culture and art'.<sup>1</sup> And if there's an implied opposition there, I think it's a rather telling one.

And this professionalism and affirmative character must always be visible, or the brand becomes somehow damaged. The brand is, in a sense, an assurance to the consumer of consistent quality. That's its utility. And I think we need to think through what that means for art institutions. The glow of affirmation that surrounds the brands extends to everything.

Naomi Klein, in her justly renowned book *No Logo*, talks about why the 1990s industry became so fixated on branding.<sup>2</sup> It's not that brands were new, but that much more money was spent on marketing and advertising by companies than had been in the past. And she connects that to outsourcing, particularly of labour, saying that what happened was the links of trust and loyalty that had often existed, in particular with local industries, between the producer and the consumer had been broken. As the workforce was, as it were, exported, fewer and fewer people were both the makers and the consumers of a product. And so the way to overcome that was to focus on branding and advertising.

And I wonder if there's a similar divide between producers and consumers in the modern museum? The old model was founded on the illusion of, at least, a coherent national culture and a class of cultured types and opinion-makers, a class of cultured types and opinion makers. (It is satirised in the Rowlandson I am showing.)

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<sup>1</sup> Wolf Olins, press release, 'Wolf Olins Brands Tate', 16 June 2000; cited in Christiane Charlotte Hille, *The Art Museum as a Brand*, MA Dissertation, Courtauld Institute of Art 2002, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Naomi Klein, *No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies*, Flamingo, London 2000.

And one might say that this has been eroded by various forces. Certainly by traditional mass-culture and consumerism of the globalised, transnational kind; by consumer micro-identities; by the idea that we are all urban social beings without any fundamental centre of identity, but are created from moment to moment by our various desires, which are, of course, played on by consumer society. And then there are also the issues of mass tourism which the museum has to deal with; with immigration, with identity politics and multiculturalism; all these producing the erosion of identifiable national cultures.

And this is one of the things that the globalised art world celebrates. Of course there are many sort of salutary elements to this development. I don't want to mourn this passing of an integral national culture at all. An example of the shift was the transformation of the Turner Prize in 2000 at the point when they opened it up from being a prize for British-born artists to a prize for anyone who worked here; a very, very different thing (the British Art Show recently followed suit).

And then there are also state demands, of course, especially in the UK, for audience-widening in terms of class, ethnicity and so on. So a return to the former condition would be a Canute-like gesture, and not one to be recommended. But, nevertheless, I do think that this idea of an integral connection with a like-minded audience has been lost. And the loyalty, even of cultured middle-class audiences, is not guaranteed in this new scenario.

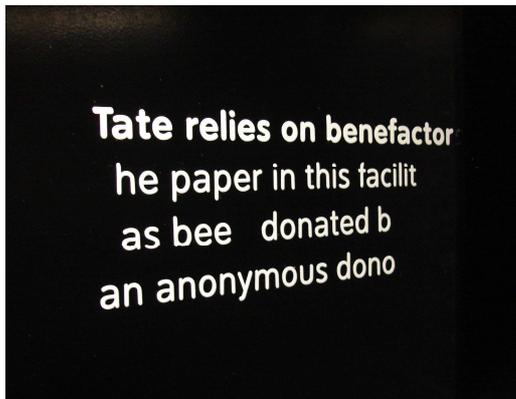
Nick Serota has written – very rightly, I think – on the fragility of this new alliance between a broad public and a contemporary art world. He was writing at the time of the furore over Tracey Emin's *My Bed*, on display at the Turner Prize in 1999, which got a great deal of very critical press attention. And one might think, later, about the pretty appalling reaction to the Momart Fire, when a large number of very interesting works were destroyed, including some of the most significant works of the young British artists. This was celebrated in many sections of the press, even the middle-class press, right?

So the capture of this wide, divided, mobile and diverse audience, demanded by the government, has been based on the commercial status of the brand and its marketed products, and that seems to be the museum's best strategy in this situation. But in

branding I think there's some conflict with the museum's educative role, which should involve critique, self-critique, discrimination, complication. Advertising and branding are good at none of these things, nor do they seek to be. Indeed, they're inimical to it. Indeed, any form of critical thinking could be seen of as brand erosion.

As to brand marketing in the consumer society, the identification produced by branding is shallow, precarious and ambivalent. It contains little deep trust, is easily damaged, and a large dose of hostility goes along with it, which has to do with a feeling of being manipulated. In other words, I think there's a cynicism which surrounds all commercial culture, and there's a danger that this gets extended to art.

In pushing the brand too far, in other words, there's a danger of reaction and, indeed, of erosion of the brand. If you go to the Tate toilets, you'll see that there's been some sort of visitor action on some of the sponsors' statements.



What might resolve this cynicism? I think more open criticality and self-critique on the part of the institution; an opening up of a distance between the institution and its product, which would then seem less like a product. As I say, a more genuine educative role – but this seems to be the very thing that is denied by the mechanistic branding used to reach the public.

OK. Now I'm not sure if Robert Storr's here, but I'm aware that I'm just being one of those dreadful academics he describes who criticise institutions without any kind of solutions and, of course, never think about criticising one's own institution either. Actually, there's a rather wonderful book by an academic, Bill Readings, called *The University in Ruins* which does this very beautifully; talks about the culture of excellence and its vacuity, which is also a matter for museums to consider.<sup>3</sup> So here are a couple of possible, tentative recommendations.

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<sup>3</sup> Bill Readings, *The University in Ruins*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1996.



I think part of this is about a failure of imagination, which can be seen equally in the BBC, a state-funded institution – taxpayer-funded, in other words – which nevertheless, adopts the deeply unpopular apparatus of advertising itself by displaying logos over programmes, trailers, interrupting programmes with banners and split-screens, etc. – the examples I am

showing you here are all actually drawn from a website which objects to those very practices.

These are commercial devices which are forced on commercial channels by competitors, by the need to retain an audience to get that kind of flow of television that retains viewers through the hours. But the BBC ought to be free from this. It fails to understand that it has an opportunity to make a better and more popular kind of TV viewing, and I think something similar can be said about the museum too. It's a matter of realising that to behave professionally is not always about behaving like the most efficient business, but may mean carving out a space against such practices.

It's also, of course, fundamentally to do with money. If the state is serious about the benefits of art as a true counter to business culture – in other words, as offering something that the general run of commercialised mass-culture cannot – then it *must* provide museums with funds sufficient to free them from having to act like businesses. And museums collectively, I think, should demand that it does.

So that's all I have to say. Thank you very much for listening.

### **Fumio Nanjo**

So thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to talk about the situation in Asia and museums in Asia. My English is not so good because, as was said when I was introduced, I was involved in many projects in the last twenty years, so I did not have enough time to learn English.

So, please excuse me, but here I have prepared some images for the Asian situation. Also, the issue of public and private was not so interesting for me, because I don't know what it leads to, where it takes us. Because, you know, and it's not because I work for a private museum, I really don't know what it means.

But anyway, observing the situation in Asia can maybe bring us some insight, hopefully, and this is what I've prepared. So, in a sense, a huge wave of museum building and new biennales has already hit Eastern Asia – Eastern Asia means China, Japan, Korea and Taiwan, usually. But maybe this wave is also going to hit South and South East Asia. So to think about public and private in that chaotic situation, first we should ask some questions:

What is the uniqueness in Asian museums? Is there any difference? What is the Asian factor in it, if there is one? Who is investing so much money for museums and biennales in Asia?

Museum-building is always linked to the culture of tourism and urban planning, so there's always some kind of intention behind it. Well, this is a list of museums built in the last three years: the Mori Art Museum was built in 2003, opened in 2003; Naoshima Benesse Museum was already functioning, but they built a new wing called the Chichu Museum; Leeum in Seoul, by Samsung; Kanazawa, as already introduced by Claire yesterday, but I just mention; the National Museum of Osaka was opened in the same year as those museums; Shanghai Contemporary Art Museum opened this year; and the National Museum in Singapore opened this year.

And what I know about the next few years is that the National Art Centre, Tokyo, is going to open next January, and Suntory Museum will open in 2007 March in Roppongi, very near to the Mori Art Museum. And another design museum is also going to open near the Mori Art Museum. The new National Museum in Singapore is planned, maybe opening at the end of 2008. A Contemporary Art Museum in Beijing is also planned, Shanghai is planning, and then a central academy in Beijing is also planned, and under construction. And then just mention that the West Project will house a museum, maybe.

So I'll just review those museums to start with, because I know that many of you have already visited these places, but I guess some of you haven't.

[With slide illustrations]

This is Benesse, opened in 1991 by Mr Fukutake. At the beginning it was a very small building, designed by Tadao Ando. But they had only 17 hotel rooms and a small space for art, as a museum.

Then, in 2004, they opened Chichu Museum. 'Chichu' means 'underground' and this building is, basically, buried underground. And the space only shows three artists. One is James Turrell, and he made three permanent works in the building. Another is Walter De Maria, and he made an incredibly spiritual space with a huge wall of sandstone. And the last one was Claude Monet. So they tried to combine modern and contemporary in the museum to attract more audience.

This is a plan of all the parts of the museum. Upper right is the name of the sculpture exhibition I curated in 1994, and it's a big pumpkin, by Yayoi Kusama. The image on the lower left is the next building, a hotel built in the second stage of development. This year they opened a part of the hotel building, and now they can accommodate more than 100 people in the new building.

Lower right is a reconstructed old shrine by Hiroshi Sugimoto, which features very beautiful glass steps from the shrine. This is a new project by the museum, and it's ongoing; Mr Fukutake is buying up all the town houses in the town of Naoshima, and he invites some contemporary artists to make a special installation in each house. So the left side is Tatsuo Miyajima and the right side is Rei Naito.

And the Leeum, made by three architects: Jean Nouvel, Mario Botta and Rem Koolhaas. And the museum is a very – how do you say? subtle way of putting Korean artists alongside very famous international artists, modern and contemporary. So the lower left is by Do-Ho Suh, which looks like armour but is made up of thousands of small metals, and the right side is Mark Rothko and Damien Hirst.

So even the Leeum is a private museum. It is playing the role of, kind of representing national interest, maybe. And Rem Koolhaas is showing a new wing, which is used for temporary exhibitions and children, artworks for children.

The Mario Botta space, the lower two images, is the exhibition space. It's too dark, so I could not take photos. But it's still a spectacular building.

And then Kanazawa. Yuko Hasegawa left yesterday, but she has made a very beautiful, very fine exhibition for the inaugural exhibition. And some of the works in the galleries are permanent, and some are temporary, so it's a kind of very interesting mixture of permanent installation and temporary installation. And also she invited many Asian, African and South American artists, together with very famous Western artists; trying to make a very fine balance between those artists.

And then this is the Mori Art Museum, which I have to talk about – if I don't, they won't have me back! So this is the building, Mori Tower, at the centre of Tokyo, and the top of the building was converted into the museum, and our space is 2000 square metres. And these are just a very limited selection from recent exhibitions in the last three years. The right one is a big installation by Yayoi Kusama. The left side is actually in to show the museum, with two escalators going up to the floor for the inaugural exhibition, titled 'Happiness', curated by David Elliott. He's here today. So he established this museum as a very important, kind of central, museum, in Japan and internationally – maybe the best-established museum now in Japan, so I thank David.

And in 2004, at the same time as Leeum and Chichu Museum, the National Museum of Modern Art was opened. This is designed by Cesar Pelli, and the space is again underground, but it's quite big space. And, yes, basically, they're showing Japanese contemporary artists.

And this is the most recent museum opened, in July this year. It's in Aomori prefecture, in the city of Aomori, and designed by Jun Aoki, who used to work for the Arata Isozaki. And it's quite a big museum, 10,000 square metres inside, but most of the spaces are also underground. And as a special character in the exhibition spaces, he's using mud on the wall. Of course, it is fixed by chemicals, but it is trying to give a

particular atmosphere to the space. Many people are criticising it, but it sometimes works quite well.

And also the architect built a space, a small corridor, behind the wall of each of the exhibition spaces. So actually technicians can go into the corridor and fix wires, electrics and, sometimes, fix heavy works on the wall from behind. So that is quite a new idea for exhibition spaces, I think.

But at the same time, Nara Yoshitomo organised his own exhibition in a building near Omari city, a huge red-brick building. Of course, it's a private initiative, but he created a city inside, and all the houses contain his works. So it's kind of a huge individual show. But he spent two months to build and install the works in that space. Because it is private and because it is just by his initiative, he could spend two months closing the space for his exhibition. For the Mori Art Museum that is not possible.

This is a new national art centre in Roppongi, which is just a 10-minute walk from Mori Art Museum and is designed by Kisho Kurokawa. And it's going to open in January next year. The space for exhibition is 10,000 square metres, and basically it was originally designed for renting space to various artists' associations, so they did not have any curators. But there was so much criticism they finally hired a few curators, and they now have some budget to do their own shows, so it's getting better. But the spaces are huge, and they can process 200 trucks behind the building per day. There are many truck bays behind. So they can split the spaces into many different exhibition spaces.

This is the National Museum of Singapore, opened in, I think, November of this year. And this is the Bangkok Metropolitan Museum, which is now suspended. Because I asked Apinan about the situation yesterday, and he told me that since the *coup d'état* everything has stopped. And the government opposes the renovation, so he doesn't know when it will be completed. But it's already half done.

This is Shanghai Museum of Contemporary Art, opened in September 2006 and run by the Samuel Kung Foundation, which came from Hong Kong. And this is a private museum, the first private museum authorised by the city of Shanghai.

And this is another museum under construction for Shanghai, Zendai Himalaya Center. The architect is Arata Isozaki, and it's going to open in 2009. And it's being built and will be run by a property developer, so the right side of the building is a tall tower, which is used for five-star hotel, and on the left, some boxes, just like small boxes, on the top will be used for artists and creators, and the exhibition space is half of the ground floor.

This, again designed by Arata Isozaki, will be the museum for the Central Academy of Fine Art, Beijing, and it's going to be opened maybe next year.

And then the biennales. This year we had so many biennales in the Asia-Pacific region! So I'll just show you some images of Singapore Biennale.

The Singapore Biennale comprised 16 exhibition venues. This is the City Hall, one of those venues, covered by a pink board, the work of Takafumi Hara. Hara interviewed people from different walks of life and various cultural backgrounds living in Singapore about their beliefs and values. The artist projects those statements accompanied by illustrations inspired by the interviewees onto the façade.

And this is inside the City Hall. The upper two images are actually inside the former Supreme court room, and the installation was made specially for that room. This building will be a museum after 2008, I heard, and already the board is appointed.

I also placed a number of art works within a selection of religious sites, with the aim of cultivating thoughtful and unique encounters between historically important spaces of belief and art. Like a prayer carpet by Xu Bing lying on the floor of the Buddhist temple, abstract forms painted on the floor of the Sultan Mosque, projections by Jennifer Wen Ma in the Christian church, or some painted sleeping figures crowding the roof of the Temple dedicated to the god Shiva.

And then Tanglin Camp, a former military camp, housing de works of forty artists. A facility which used to be hidden from the eye of citizens, is actually open to the public for this biennale.

And the National Museum, which after 3 years of major renovations and expansions, it will reopen in December. Luckily, I could use the usable surface space for exhibitions and events during the biennale. So this is a work by Hiroshi Sugimoto, a multipart photography of "The Last Supper". And [slide] some other tworks placed in the museum, particularly fragile works, paintings and photographs, and also media art. So the museum is different from other spaces in that respect.

I also used other public spaces, including Orchard Road, a public park, etc, etc. At the same time the Singapore Art Museum, shows a more historical exhibition titled 'Telah Terbit (Out Now)' on South East Asian art practices during the 1970s, curated by their curator, Ahmad Mashadi.

And finally VivoCity, Singapore's largest shopping centre, designed by Toyoo Ito, commissioned various art works as part of the Singapore Biennale 2006, the only art pieces of the Singapore Biennale that will be displayed permanently. . So biennales can also leave some works in the city. So I wonder. All these factors are public-private spaces and funding from public sectors and private sectors, sort of a cross-section relationship, and for whom? So, I think all these things are not easy to separate, actually, now.

And the distinctions between the pure mission of public and subjective attitude, or private, are no more clear. And even private spaces and funds can serve the public responsibility well. But at the same time there is always some economic and political intention behind it. And no museum or biennales can now exist without that. So, using this opportunity, curators and art professionals are sort of obliged to address the project of the right direction for art and more democratic purposes, I think. And the solution for each project has not really, the same answer, I think. Always you have to ask, what kind of museum fits this place, this society, this city and now?

And the solutions must all be different. And in this way, I think, public and private should be considered in each different culture and city. So, I think to answer these questions, the discussion of CIMAM will be very beneficial.

Thank you.

## **Marysia Lewandowska**

This film playing is called *Screen Tests*, and Neil will talk about how we made it – and in what context – a little later. But before that I want to say something more generally about our practice. I came to London from Poland in the late 1980s, and began working with Neil in 1995, so over ten years ago, and in our collaborative practice we have a long-standing interest in public archives and collections.

We think that the site of our practice didn't really exist before, so we have always created it through research. And the reason, obviously, that archives and collections are interesting to us is that they are these places where exchanges are made between people and things.

Our first very long-term research project was a book – unattached to any other event or exhibition – called *The Value of Things*, which was published in 2000. And we, truly, researched for about five years a parallel history of the public museum and the department store, using Selfridge's, the first purpose-built department store in London, and the British Museum, and really looked at how these institutions formed us as modern individuals.

In 2001 we completed two years of research at the invitation of Tate Modern, which was called 'Capital'; it was commissioned by senior curator Francis Morris, and also involved the Bank of England. What that was about was trying to – well, we researched the structuring of financial and cultural economies through a very particular gesture, which is the reciprocation implicit in the gift. And as we know, all cultural institutions are really run on gifts, while all financial institutions are run on debt. And as part of the project we produced a limited edition print (although we never specified how limited it was), at both institutions, Tate Modern and the Bank of England Museum. And this project continued for about eight months.

Then more recently, again out of an interest in something that may not already exist as a collection or archive – as, you know, working with museums is a very long and complicated process, and takes a lot of goodwill and patience – we initiated a research project which in fact took me back to Poland at the time when I lived there. And out of that research we made a project called 'Enthusiasm', which was first shown in Warsaw at the Centre for Contemporary Art, at Ujazdowski Castle in Warsaw in 2004, and later,

really due to a very amazing response from Iwona Blaswick, at the Whitechapel; and later Kunst-Werke and the Tàpies Foundation all collaborated in staging different editions of that project.

What it was really about, those two years' research, was the remnants of amateur film clubs which existed in Poland, attached to factories in the former regime – well, under Communism. We tried to find the films made by workers at that time. And, of course, all this material was totally – well, it wasn't really valued by anyone except the people who made the films. So we felt there was this whole cultural production excluded from official collections or institutions, pretty much for two reasons, probably: one, they were films made by amateurs; and two, they were made under communism.

And now the project is really complete in some ways, by having been shown in diverse institutions, we've created an online archive, which is [enthusiastsarchive.net](http://enthusiastsarchive.net). So, really, because we relied so much on the generosity of the film-makers, who simply wanted to see those films again and gave us pretty much everything, we thought it would be good to negotiate with them that these films will now be available under the creative commons' licences online. So, if you like, we've already used the films in our projects, and now others can use it for something else.

And recently, really through the 'Enthusiasm' project which initiated an archive, we also became interested in archives in a more profound way. And it was very interesting for us to hear yesterday how Claire talked about establishing Asian Art Archive, and, of course, what Dan and Lia are doing in Bucharest to – as Lia put it – really try to preserve something, and save memories from being lost.

And archives have an increasingly powerful grip on the reproduction of culture. The French philosopher Jacques Derrida diagnosed a virulent archive fever at work in his famous book. And there's an astonishing growth in digital databases of images and information through databanks and image libraries, which is not always public knowledge, and it's increasingly commercialised through the growth of intellectual property regimes. And of course we are all implicated in this.

And public collections of art in museums and galleries actually store most, probably up to 80%, of their collections at any one time. So again there is, you know, a question of

how much of it we ever see or have access to. The collections in Britain at least can never let go of their accumulated material, so they can never deaccession. But public archives, like public collections, are built on the property of multiple authors and previous owners. Unlike a collection, an archive designates a territory and not a particular narrative, and that's a very important distinction. I know yesterday there were some question about why we call certain things 'archives' or 'libraries' or 'collections', and I think that distinction is crucial.

In other words, there is no imperative for the archive to display or interpret its holdings, and therefore meanings are up for grabs. So it's a discursive terrain. There is a creative potential for things to be articulated, not already authored as someone's, let's say, the curator's, narrative, or as someone's property. Which means that interpretations are invited and not pre-determined, which may be why there is a creative space many artists and others are responding to. And that's really the raw material of our culture. And it's also important to say that in our practice we are very interested in working with what already exists, and trying to understand under what conditions it came to existence and what value it may have beyond history. So it's really about how to bring objects and images to relevance again.

And I would just like to say as a closing remark before Neil takes over, that maybe, as Sheena suggested in her introduction, our attention has also shifted from consumption to participation.

### **Neil Cummings**

OK, can we have a tiny bit of sound? Thank you.

That was just to show you that there is sound in both films. So I'm going to explain a little bit about the films you're watching. They were commissioned by the British Art Show Six, which is a five-yearly exhibition that takes place here in Britain and is intended to be a survey of contemporary British art. It's co-ordinated here by the Hayward Gallery in London, but it tours to four British cities which compete to host the exhibition.

So we were commissioned by the curators, Alex Farquharson and Andrea Schlieker, to make a new work, which is unusual for the British Art Show: they usually exhibit

existing artworks. We choose to collaborate with two other artists Eileen Simpson and Ben White, and together we began to research the four cities for the British Art Show: Nottingham, Bristol, Manchester and Newcastle.

And we realised that each city hosts the Regional Film and Television Archive for the region of Britain that they're in. So we contacted each archive about the possibility of using some film material in their archive, and said we wanted to make a new film from this material, so asked if we could use out-of-copyright film – what's called 'orphan film', film-material that you don't know who the owner is, or material that is already in the public domain. And like other collecting institutions, these archives are publicly funded, which means they get public money to run and they rely on donations from generous individuals, from bequests, from gifts, and from local companies and local TV companies to give them material.

So we tried to make our intentions clear to these archives. We also said we wanted to use out-of-copyright sound and spoken words, from the British Library or the Library of Congress to make a new soundtrack for each of the new films that we were proposing. We've had some experience of working with archives before, particularly on 'Enthusiasts', an earlier project in Warsaw, that also toured as 'Enthusiasm' to London, Berlin and Barcelona.

For the British Art Show, we'd said we'd make a film from the film material in each city and would add the film to each location on the exhibition tour. We also said that if we could find enough money we'd like to produce a DVD of our films - the new films we were making - but we also suggested we'd like to include the archival source films and audio, because we've been interested for some time – and Michelangelo Pistoletto mentioned this yesterday – in free software. And we were using, if you like, a free software model of releasing a work of art, by including its 'source' code.

Free software is enabled by something called an 'open-content licence' or a 'copy-left licence'. What these licences do is they act as extensions to copyright. They extend certain rights to others to use, modify and redistribute the appropriately licensed material. At the heart of these new kind of licences, is a kind of viral intention: and it's this, that as a user of open content licensed material, you must in turn, pass on (through your new work) those rights to use, modify and redistribute to everyone else.

So, rather ingeniously, what free software has done and what the licences enable, is the building a new kind of public domain, or public realm, where the artwork or material cannot be re-enclosed and cannot be re-appropriated as property, through copyright.

So we made this clear to the archives from the beginning. We intended the release of the DVD with our new films, and the 'source' material to open up a kind of discussion in collecting institutions about the nature of public archives; what does it mean to say that something is 'public'?

There's a growing interest in the public domain and the public realm, and of exploring new models of creative practice. As a contemporary artist, what kind of practices can we use to continue and enrich, creativity itself?

The first public archive, in Newcastle, which was the first place on the exhibition tour, after several letters and telephone calls refused point blank to have anything to do with our project. The second archive, in Manchester, were happy for us to use some archival material, but they made us sign a contract where they tried to stipulate what we could and could not do with that material; they said we could show it in the designated exhibitions of the British Art Show, but once the exhibition was finished we must cease from showing the work.

So imagine doing that with a book. Imagine lending a book to someone and saying, 'Ah, er, on Friday you have to give it back, you are not allowed to make notes from it, and you're not allowed to lend it to anyone else.' So rights are being claimed over digital material that we would not consider with other kinds of public material or 'content'.

The film you saw earlier is called *Screen Tests*, part of our contribution to the British Art Show, its made from film material from Manchester, and is set in the Manchester School of Art during the period 1929 to 1934.

Now copyright, as I'm sure you're all only too well aware, is based on restriction and rights of exclusion. And through the fixed term of copyright exclusion, creative work is removed from the public domain, which denies any legal possibility of the work's creative re-use by others without express permission. You have to ask permission in

writing and, depending on the whim of the copyright holder (or the authorized curator), you may or may not be granted access to that material.

Now there's a logic, of course, in copyright when it's applied to owners and authors of physical material goods, a logic of scarcity and a bounded relationship between people and things. This much I can understand. But this logic dissolves when it's applied to media made for reproduction, like film or immaterial goods like ideas, information, or previously distinct material translated into digital code, which is endlessly replicable, at marginal cost with no appreciable loss of quality.

So as I mentioned earlier, most public media archives are assembled from donated material. Gifts. And these gifts are usually accepted with the agreement that the management of the copyright embedded in the material is assigned to the archive. Or, as we discovered, even though we found film which was out of copyright, the nitrate and celluloid – so, this is a hard thing to understand – the material the film is stuck to, the nitrates and celluloid, belong to the archive. So even though the 'content' of the film is in the public domain, some archives claim property rights over the physical substrate, and deny access

Some archives, of course, attempt to use access rights to generate income, to fund their activities, which is fair enough. But the people they sell these rights to, or on-sell their reproduction rights, tend to be commercial broadcasting corporations; consequently, one minute of film time can cost £3,000. That's often a standard fee.

Effectively, our moving-image cultural history, our public film and broadcast culture, is being expropriated from the very people who paid for its production. People like me, and you. It's like charging tens of thousands of pounds to visit a museum or gallery.

So we suggest that there is a conflict blossoming at the heart of culture, a conflict convened around the private property rights that subsist in materials stored in public archives. And *Screen Tests*, the films that you were watching, set out to try and explore this conflict while enriching rather than depleting the public domain.

By using an 'open content' license for *Screen Tests*, we tried to contribute, rather than remove material from the public domain. And as the Arts Council funded the *Screen Tests* DVD we decided to freely give it away to visitors during the British Art Show.

The Manchester Art Gallery – I'm sorry, the archive in Manchester whom we worked with, who we had signed a contract with, when they realised we'd raised money to make the DVD, finally understood the implications of what we were doing – we were going to give away three old bits of film from their archive! And they then tried to rescind the agreement in the contract that we'd signed with them. They bullied us. They refused to negotiate and they threatened legal action if we released this DVD with 'their' film material included. We then had to go an intellectual property lawyer to defend our case. And it was proven – well it wasn't actually proven, because it never went to court – but our advice from the lawyer was that we were within the terms of our contract to include the film material on the DVD.

In the end we decided not to include the Manchester 'source' films, because we didn't want to antagonise the archive: we wanted to test, and make a point about the changing nature of the public and the public realm. So there's no Manchester 'source' material on the DVD.

In contrast, the archives in Bristol and in Nottingham were extremely helpful, extremely happy to participate in the project, and made all their film 'sources' readily available.

OK, I'm sorry, I'm conscious of running out of time. So through founding the Enthusiasts archive that you can find online, and through this project *Screen Tests*, we simultaneously wanted to stimulate a discussion about what constitutes the public function of collection institutions. In an age characterised by relentless privatisation, what is their public function? Is it to collect, store and protect artefacts, or is it to vividly re-imagine their public function, by allowing access and encouraging people reuse that material?

Those of us in Britain are conscious there's a huge amount of publicity at the moment for something called Web 2.0, which is basically recognising that users are driving the content on the World Wide Web, through copying, modifying and redistributing. Things

like Wikipedia, or YouTube or Flickr, where the content is being driven by the public themselves.

And also we want to challenge the notion of creative practice, to replace artistic exchanges facilitated by restriction and by artificial scarcity with those of generosity and collaboration. So thanks to the generosity of anonymous donations to these archives, thanks to the British taxpayer, we're able to give you – I'm sorry, we only have a hundred left, but as you leave after the end of this session, a hundred people will be able to pick up the last remaining copies of *Screen Tests*.

Thank you.

### **Ralph Rugoff**

We covered a lot of very different ground here, and rather than try to summarise I think I'm gonna try to take it further, and see where we get some connections that might bring us back to some common reflections.

Julian, I was very interested in your discussion of the Tate brand, and the question that kept coming to my mind was, how much does a brand frame our experience of looking at art? And I kept thinking, there were some famous market research experiments on brandy in the 1930s in the United States, where for example they would pour one brandy into five very differently designed bottles, each labelled as a different make, from one that would be very inexpensive, something a drunk in the street might have in his pocket, to a very, very high-end brandy: and it was the same brandy in each bottle. But the overwhelming response of people who tasted these was they described extremely different sensations and tastes for each bottle. And they always accorded pretty much by the look of the bottle: the cheap bottle really tasted awful and the, the really fancy bottle was sublime.

So, I mean, this has now led to an industry where, say, breakfast cereal companies design the box and the name of the cereal before they actually figure out what the cereal in the box is going to be. But there's something, I think, very profound about this fact, and that is, you know, how much of our experience is actually created by our interpretation. We're always gauging what the package around something is before we experience what's in the package. And a museum is a type of package, and a brand is

a type of package. So I'm wondering if you can talk about how the Tate brand ends up impacting on people's experience of the museum.

**Dr Julian Stallabrass:** Yeah, I suppose what worries me about the uniformity of the brand is the very fact of its consistency, the fact that it is indeed a wholly-designed image package, which extends right through to the fonts that you see in the catalogues and on the walls. There's something about that which sits very uneasily with the character of modern and contemporary art in particular, which, as we all know, is highly various, disputatious, contentious, oppositional, often radical, and so on. That's what worries me; that the effect of branding may be to blanket all of that in some kind of reassuring culture of essentially vacuous excellence, yeah.

**Ralph Rugoff:** But do you think that if you experience, say, an exhibition at the Tate as opposed to an unbranded museum, you could imagine the people having a really different encounter at each?

**Dr Julian Stallabrass:** Yeah, I can, and I think the other thing is the branding extends to the whole thinking about the institution. It, you know, may well extend to the kind of exhibitions it puts on, the kind of interpretations it offers of particular kinds of work. With branding goes a whole particular ethos, a kind of comfortable professionalism, I suppose. So it's not just that one might see the same show differently in an unbranded museum, but that a less-branded museum – we don't want to be thoroughly utopian about this – a less consistently branded place might also be able to offer other different sorts of experience too.

**Ralph Rugoff:** OK, I lived in Los Angeles during the 1990s and, at one point, in Hollywood. A park was opened, or wasn't actually opened, called Metro Park. And Hollywood, despite having some glamorous associations, is not actually a very nice neighbourhood and the city was faced with a problem: if they opened this small park, they knew it would be overrun with drug addicts, and that families wouldn't use it; it would become a place for homeless people and people taking drugs.

So they decided not to open the park. And what they did is they built the park and they kept a fence around it so that families could enjoy it by looking at it through the fence. Now, absurd as this was, it reminded me a little bit about what Andrew was saying in

his keynote speech yesterday, wondering what kind of experience the blockbuster, conveyor-belt type of museum offers. Where's there a place for some kind of individual curiosity and wonder and encounter? Or is it again this kind of virtual experience of a museum and art, where you're outside on the other side of the fence?

And at the Tate, since we're here, as you know, I think about the Wrong Gallery, which was a private and very experimental place in New York City where very unusual events would happen: one artist's contribution was to have someone come and smash the window once a week for a month.

And now it's installed in the upstairs gallery here, with a big text next to it explaining how subversive this work is, obviously whatever subversive power it had, its power of surprise, is immediately gone. But here's a question for Marysia and Neil: just in terms of thinking about open-source ideals, is this an appropriation of the Wrong Gallery? I say 'appropriation', even though I know the Wrong Gallery team is still involved. Is it really kind of an act of open-source culture in some ways? That it can just move in here and somehow take a different form?

**Marysia Lewandowska:** Well, I think it kind of relates to something that I also felt, maybe, about listening to a lot of contributions yesterday. There seems to be this fantasy – a fantasy very much played out in a museum – that there is somehow the 'right' way of displaying the artist's work, and somehow if we could really find that way, that is what the artists would be most happy with. I think that fantasy is really very strongly connected to – well, I suppose the museum culture. So if we think the Wrong Gallery –as you are suggesting – has lost its radical power...

**Ralph Rugoff:** Its Wrong-ness.

**Marysia Lewandowska:** ...it's Wrong-ness in this place, because it's such a right place, at the same time I think there is a risk of thinking it could only work under the original conditions. But the museum is a different condition, and it is important that it is here because otherwise, for most people, it wouldn't even register. So there's also, I think, another function, which is to remind us, and to create like a discursive space. Maybe things are merely documents here, but they are important ones.

**Dr Julian Stallabrass:** It's a question, too, of not only protection, but also the role of propagation in the museum. I mean, to go to Ralph's point, if you try to take that thing out of here – I mean, not physically, but if you were to copy it and try to reproduce it somewhere else or disseminate pictures of it on the web – you'd be in trouble, right? So it's that sort of question too, I think.

**Ralph Rugoff:** I mean, thinking about what is really the difference between public and private institutions, one key thing that came to my mind is the quality of the experience around the presentation of art, the kind of support that a museum – a public museum – traditionally gives in terms of providing scholarly publications, educational outreach at different levels, lectures, talks. These are things which obviously commercial galleries are not interested in. But I wonder about the role of the private museum, which doesn't have the same public mandate, in a sense, to reach an audience on all levels, and I was wondering, Fumio, what your experience has been with that?

**Fumio Nanjo:** Well, I don't see so many differences between private museum and the public museums because even private museums, in Asia, always try to reach the maximum different type of people, and also we want to expand the audience, so we try to educate them through catalogues and education programmes, public programmes. And ultimately we're doing almost the same as public museums. So our mission is actually similar to public museums, I think. We're not trying to make a profit; we're losing something like, I don't know how much, ten million dollars per year. So we lose. We can never fill this deficit. So better just to think about how to use it, you know?

**Ralph Rugoff:** And yet if museums are losing money like that, why do you imagine that there are so many museums being built all around Japan and Korea? I recently read a figure that China expects to build 3000 museums in the next ten years.

**Fumio Nanjo:** I don't know who really considers the real reasons, but of course, it's the same for museums, biennales, triennials and so on; always there is a kind of driving force, and often for maybe political or, I don't know, economic reasons. And I think the culture industry is usually losing money, but other sectors profit.

You know, usually business is one-way: you give something, and then you get the return. But the culture business doesn't work like that: you give something and you

don't get back anything, but someone is getting some profit from it. So, let's say, you know, as a more concrete explanation, that our museum is on the top of a building; and this building has offices, hotels and shops, and even nine movie theatres. The museum is losing money. But if we attract many people, maybe they spend some money in other places, like a restaurant or shops, something like that. So we're meant to stimulate this flow of people. So we lose, though as a total system we gain. And I think if you're having a museum or biennales in a city, the city can profit from it somehow, economically and politically.

**Neil Cummings:** But, I guess, for me, this is like a new constitution of a public. It's not a European sense of the public. It's a public convened around shopping, which is not a tradition of the public we have here in Britain, Europe...

**Fumio Nanjo:** Actually, who is the public? Everybody has some different reason to come to a museum, right? What is a pure public? I just wonder.

**Ralph Rugoff:** I think that's a very good question. I think there are obviously different kinds of publics, and I know there was a kind of group of architects in the US, who were advocates of the mall as a great public meeting place and the agora of our time, right, a place where people would come together and exchange not just money, but ideas. And yesterday I was thinking about the difference between Tate Modern and a big shopping mall. And I felt that this was like an intelligent shopping mall; that it was a slightly upscale, culturally, shopping mall. But a lot of things were the same, though that wasn't necessarily a bad thing. I mean, I think a lot of public institutions may have something to learn from the Frieze Art Fair. And we may look down our noses at the proliferation of art fairs around the world, and there are lots of reasons to do so, but at the same time I don't think we should ignore the excitement that an event like that generates, the interest in art. They have 40,000 people who would show up for an exhibition over four days, something which I think most of us would be very happy with if it happened in our institutions.

But is it something about the nature of marketplaces and people's interest in marketplaces that the public institution has traditionally removed itself from? At the same time, removing itself from the excitement – in the sense of participation – that

they give people, whether it's a boot sale or a flower sale or an arts sale? Anyone like to speak about that?

**Neil Cummings [to JS]:** Is that another question for you?

**Dr Julian Stallabrass:** I don't know. I think I just don't like shopping very much. My general experience of shopping malls is not one of huge excitement; I'm not sure about you. And even at the Frieze Art Fair I find it's a pretty alienating experience in lots of ways, partly and precisely because of those 10,000 people who are flocking there with you, I guess.

Yeah, there's a definite choice to be made here, and I suppose that's part of what I was saying; that the museum can absolutely embrace commercial culture and commercial techniques of selling itself, and become more and more like an intelligent mall. That's right. If it does so, I think it's fair enough to say it will also make less demand on public money. If what it's doing is what the rest of commercial culture is doing, if what you're showing has the same status as a well-designed pair of Nikes, then, you know, you have to accept the consequences of that.

I do think, personally, there may be another model here. And the difficult thing Fumio asked, indeed: what is a public? Can you constitute a public position to that? One which is not based on some no doubt illusory integral idea of a national culture, but are there intellectual models, for instance, which you can follow? One might think, perhaps, of Hardt and Negri's book *Empire*, which considers what a public might look like which accepts its diversity but also accepts, at some other level, its unity, and how does that public behave? What are its ways of co-operating with each other? What are its ways of handling cultural material?

And that, of course, gets essentially back to Marysia's concern about ownership, re-use; about public participation in culture, fundamentally. And about the great paradox of contemporary culture, which has been vastly undermined on the Web too; you know, there's all this stuff out there which is ubiquitously pushed at us – Disney movies, McDonalds adverts, whatever it is – but all this stuff is also protected from our interference.

**Fumio Nanjo:** If there's a commercial museum you don't like, you don't have to go there, right? So maybe there are artists who are very good artists but they're not interested in being in the system of gallery and museums, so they're just hiding somewhere and making some good works. The audience is saying if they're not interested in those systems and commercial advertisement in the intellectual arena, they don't have to come.

So I think it's a matter of educating people. If they have a good standard of judging things, you know, it doesn't really matter. Some people run the museum, maybe partly commercially or maybe purely publicly, and some people like it, and they come. But the matter is for each individual's decision and judgement, I feel. And also, you were talking about branding and also copyright issues. And copyright issues I don't really understand, because copyright is trying to protect the mere profit or income of the creators. But if the person is very public, you know, you can just give it away, an open source, like Linux, you know? And then if everyone does it, it's not an issue. You're always willing to get back some profit from what you did, so the system was created, but now it's bankrupt, I think. Someone should think about a new system for copyright, or that protects the creators. Because in this Internet world, you know, you cannot protect the original idea always in monetary terms.

So I think all these things are now shifting and changing, and the notion of public is also changing. And I don't know what is right, but I think each individual should have a very strong sense of his or her own decision and standards.

**Ralph Rugoff:** Marysia?

**Marysia Lewandowska:** But I think there's a distinction to be made, and that has been a theme running through this morning, between profit and benefit. And I think that is really about how does the public benefit. Because that is a very different idea from how does someone profit from something in which, either as an individual or as part of a community, that person has already invested. And how have they invested? Through what? And how can they participate? Because simply going to museums is a complex experience, and that's why it's exciting.

But the example, I think, of Frieze Art Fair is an interesting one, because the excitement is not just because there are financial exchanges – that is, if you like, the main function of a trade fair, even one dealing with art – but that there are lots of other things going on at Frieze Art Fair which are actually the very things that go on at Tate Modern: film screenings, discussions, radio programmes, you know, all kinds of spaces where it is not simply about exchanging goods, but about exchanging ideas.

So creating an environment in which that's possible – well, you know, sometimes that happens in a complex way in a museum, and other times it happens in other places. And if it does happen at Frieze Art Fair, that's a benefit to the public, if not a profit to the galleries.

**Ralph Rugoff:** OK, one last thing, which is just that we use this word 'public' – which is a word we associate with democratic values and idealism in a way – but what if we described public institutions as 'government institutions'? It doesn't sound quite as noble somehow, because we often have a mistrust of governments and we realise that governments are interested parties. The word 'public' makes us think that somehow this can be a neutral institution.

**Neil Cummings:** Maybe it's just in the States that you don't like the word 'government'.

**Ralph Rugoff:** Well, I was talking with Dan yesterday; I think that there are a lot of places that don't trust governments, not just... It's true; in England the governments do actually deliver something.

The other thing I was thinking of is simple questions of access. We think if something's public we have free access: the streets are public, so we can walk down them for free. But I could go to a kind of museum-quality Francis Bacon show at the Larry Gagosian Gallery in London for free, and I could find there a wonderful triptych that was loaned by the Tate. If, in the future, a Bacon show comes to the Tate in London – and I think one is planned – I will have to pay to see that show. So which is the private place and which the public place? It's open to the floor if anyone wants to. Yes, right here...

**Ralph Rugoff:** It's open to the floor if anyone wants to. Yes, right here...

**PA Member 1:** I've found this is a very interesting consideration of Fumio, who actually launched it. What is the difference? And I think we had some sort of an answer yesterday, because, I mean, indeed there is not much difference in the daily practice, but the question arises when the one who founded the private-run museum passes away. Who takes it over? And then I think the problem arises from the difference that Fumio defined very rightly, I think, that what we are talking about is an institution or place where you give something away without getting any immediate return. But there are some others who have, may have a return. And that may be a starting a point for defining 'the public', those people who do get a return.

And maybe you'll think about it.

**Fumio Nanjo:** But if it's so-called cultural tourism, it's the local tourist industries who get benefit, profit from it. So it's not simply public, right? There are some sectors that can gain and can lose. But I think you cannot really form a truly pure public system so why is the British government running the Tate Gallery? They think they see some merit in it. That's why it's here. So, sorry...

**Ralph Rugoff:** You speaking at the back, was that?

**PA Member 2 (Elizabeth Ann Macgregor):** Just a couple of points following on from Julian. First of all, the question of branding in relation to a lack of self-criticism and dialogue; I think that's probably an issue to be the raised with a lot of institutions, whether they brand themselves or not. So I don't see the link between being branded and the impact on the education or the self-reflexive nature of the institution.

And, secondly, I'm the director of the MC in Sidney and my institution is one-third public and two-thirds private, and I don't know if your answer that the State should fund it really holds up. I don't know how many politicians you've had the pleasure of talking to. I wish we lived in a culture where politicians think culture should simply be funded. Sadly, we don't.

I think, ultimately, one of the things that we should be considering is we are dancing to the tunes of a number of different masters. We have to think about what it the government wants from us; we think about what sponsors want from us; we think about

what private individuals are asking of us; and, ultimately, it is a question of balancing those things together and trying to come up with an ethical position where you continue to promote and work with the artists and put forward ideas and engage in all the dialogue and engage with that wider audience.

So it's a very complex question and I don't think you can just stand up and say, 'The State should fund it, and that's the answer, because then you wouldn't have to have branding.' Because the world has moved on and we live in a much more complex society than we might all wish. We all, I'm sure, in England look back with fondness to a time when we didn't have to consider issues like sponsorship, but sadly that's the reality we're living in and we should just get on with it and talk about how we can actually maintain our integrity and our positions while doing it. What actually matters is what we put on and how we engage with that audience.

**Dr Julian Stallabrass:** Yeah, well just getting on with it without thinking about the contradictions of the practice that you're involved in is not good enough, I don't think. I think obviously the State demands different things of cultural institutions in different countries, and this has come through very clearly in what Fumio's been saying. Here, at least, the State is currently demanding of institutions that they engage with as wide a public as possible and broaden their audience. And, you know, there are financial penalties for those who don't do that, who don't meet those government targets.

The implication of that, I think, is that something is on offer in these institutions which, again, is different, distinctly different, from what you find in a shopping mall, and has a different kind of social effect. And it doesn't seem to me too terrible a thing or too ambitious a thing for institutions who are labouring under that state culture – it may well be different in Australia, I'm not sure – to demand more of the State. That is, you know, in other words to ask the State to be more consistent about its own policy, about the consequences of its own policies. And I think that if museums did that collectively then they might have some power in the situation.

That's not the only thing that I was saying either, and I know that, obviously, governments can be intransigent. After all, you know, we lived under Thatcher here for so long, who was the architect of the situation in many ways. And I say the other thing is that, even with the space that you have at the moment, there may be ways of – as,

well, with my example of the BBC – saying that there may be more imaginative ways to depart from commercial culture and that there is no need, necessarily, to jump with both feet into it.

**Ralph Rugoff:** Rob?

**PA Member 3 (Robert Storr):** I wanted to say primarily that I'm not a fan of brands at all. I think it's extremely problematic what many museums now produce as a source of ancillary income, because I *do* think it affects how what they do otherwise is perceived. But really to conflate the Frieze Art Fair and what goes on in a well-run museum is beyond belief. A serious exhibition in a museum like the Tate is simply not consumption. And an exhibition that juxtaposes – as upstairs in the premier collection – Peter de Francia, Leon Golub, and –what's his name? The French socialist-realist artist whose name's got away from me... Taslitzky, I think it is. An exhibition of that kind is at one end, and then someplace else you find the minimalists. It is simply not a matter of pure consumption.

To underestimate the audience and underestimate the art because you only look at the packaging is – I think – to make a terrible mistake that curators don't make.

**Dr Julian Stallabrass:** Well, I certainly didn't want to equate the Tate and Frieze Art Fair. I don't think I said that and I certainly didn't, well...

**Ralph Rugoff:** I don't think he said that either, Rob. You may have picked up something I said; I said I think we might have something to learn from...

**PA Member 3 (Robert Storr):** But I'm just saying it was sort of said they are somehow all of the same category, and they're really not. That you're actually producing exhibition programmes as part of your selling function is a development which I think is both interesting and positive. But to begin to treat the museums as if they're sort of edging in the other direction in equal measure is, I think, a mistake.

**Ralph Rugoff:** Hmmm.

**Dr Julian Stallabrass:** Yeah.

**Ralph Rugoff:** I didn't think anyone was doing that, actually.

**Julian Stallabrass:** Just a word, actually; sorry, could I just say a word about the business of universities? It's that there's a big difference between the way patents are handled and the way copyrights are handled. Anything I write, I have copyright over if I choose to exercise it, or I can choose to surrender it. It's a slightly different model, I think, than this very dangerous thing that you were suggesting that MoMA and Tate were cooking up together.

**PA Member 4 (David Elliott):** David Elliot head of the Istanbul Modern Art Museum. I think it's very useful to think about the separate areas of what's public and what's private. But sometimes I get a real echo that we're back in the 1930s because, to me, it's really what the museum does, not where it gets its money from, that's important. I've always drawn the line at war criminals, but I'll take the money really from anywhere to make the exhibitions, to show the collections, to buy the art that's necessary. And the idea is your aim's public, your ambition's public, that's what's important.

And then, picking up on what Rob was just saying. I mean, I think that very often the problem is not the public – and there's a difference between public, as in government or this ideal sphere which we hold so holy, and 'the public': we're not quite talking about the same thing – but I think very often the museums are the problem, rather than the public, because there's sometimes the sub-text that we think the public personally don't like contemporary art and what not; secondly, that there a bit stupid, but when you give them the chance, when you open things up, they come. And they're a bloody sight more intelligent than we think they are. There's this feeling very often that art's good for you. And it isn't. It's potentially life-transforming; it could be wildly enjoyable; but it's certainly not good for you. It may be *good*. That's something else.

So there a lot of this kind of nannying idea about curatorship, about museums, which, to me, sometimes gets inscribed in this whole idea of 'the public', of 'public', of trying to nurture, to bring up – educate – people, somehow, to make them better. And I get a bit edgy when this comes into the discussion.

**Ralph Rugoff:** Well, maybe, I think maybe we've got time for one more question. Gosh! I'm overwhelmed (looking at the audience). Who really, really wants to ask me a question?

**PA Member 5 (Olga Sviblova):** We should also discuss what do 'public' and 'private' mean when we discuss where we'll raise money. For example, I'm Olga Sviblova, director of the Moscow House of Photography, and we're one of the most visited places; we have a several times more public than the New Tretiakov Gallery, although it's only in the last five years that we have had our exhibition space. But, of course, every public museum now uses sponsorship. It gives us money, but it gives us the freedom and it gives us limitations. And, sometimes, for example, it only depends on programme-planning, what we offer our public, because private museums and public museums show the same shows. We showed in Moscow the same exhibition that was created by the Guggenheim Museum, which is private. So there is no difference between what you show, how you raise the money

Both of them they give us some kind of freedom and some kind of limits. For example, when you have money from a sponsor, you can't show controversies. Our last biennial had controversies, which were very important, but sponsors didn't want to deal with controversies. But if you proposed to them trips, they would like to support them, so with the money from trips you can cover controversies. In public institutions you can deal with controversies. For somebody who deals with private sponsors you do the trips. But if you mix the programme-planning and if your programme is open to different classes of public, you can be sure you will be the winner.

So I think that the question we're discussing is just about our own needs. We were born with the idea that a public museum is something special, unquestionable; we can't touch private money; we are special; we are free; we are beautiful. It's not like that.

So, we're all in the same position; it's just a question of what message we would like to send to the 'public'. And a museum is not something like a castle; it must be more organised, so we need to rethink how we work as government institutions.

**Ralph Rugoff:** OK, we've been given an allowance of an extra ten minutes. You know, I'm kind of sorry.

**PA Member 6 (Jaroslav Andel):** I'm Jaroslav Andel, director of Dox Centre for Contemporary Art. I have a question whether the issue isn't also the context, how we set up the whole system. And what we can see is systematic instrumentalisation of art, by all sides; from the government and the corporate sector. I think this is a problem because art, in this way, is robbed of something essential and fundamental.

**Ralph Rugoff:** Yeah, I think that's a problem we're seeing in all areas. You know, in Britain we've just had the Storm Report on global warming, and rather than recommend that we save the environment because it's a good idea, they recommended that we save it because we'll save money if we take action on it now. Yes.

**Marysia Lewandowska:** That's a very important concern, I think, and it's a concern that does go back to 'money is something which ties you'. And I really think one has to, as an artist or any other professional, ask whether, you know, in the situations we are in, we have to exercise some power and freedom. And in the situations into which we're forced – which is, I think, what you're talking about, where those artists and their artworks are used for a lot of different things – we must, I think, as artists, still believe that you cannot get involved in certain situations, because you will never get out of them with integrity.

So, you know, the word 'integrity' sounds good, but there are consequences for every action that an artist takes from the very beginning. They go to a particular art school. They enter a relationship with a dealer. They court a critic. They are courted by a critic. You know, these relationships are powerful and real; and they make artists, but they also break artists.

And I think, you know, you've got to be aware of these things. You cannot simply say, 'Well, as long as you give me money I'll make a great work of art for you.' That just doesn't work.

**PA Member 7 (Anton Herbert) :** I'm sorry about this. I'm really surprised, Nanjo, really. My name is Herbert, Anton Herbert. Where is the utopia? Wherever it is, maybe museums should invest in utopia and not so much in grants and in other aspects. I

think that speaking of the public, where is the respect for the public? Where is the individuality? Where are the individual people who come to a museum to learn something, to see something and to dream?

And I must say I'm very, very surprised at this turn of events. I've heard wonderful things; I've heard some very banal things too, I must say. And also, about private and public: I think that private and public are completely separate and have nothing to do with each other, nor should have anything to do with each other. I think that the private structures should do what museums cannot do, or would want not to do and have no opportunity to do. I don't think they have the same agendas, so I don't think that private, rich structures should do the same programmes as a poor museum does. I'm afraid this provides an opportunity for different levels and different possibilities, when it should be more about creativity and utopia. Thank you.

**Ralph Rugoff:** Lars?

**PA Member 8 (Lars Nittve):** Thank you. Well, first, of course, I think that we should remind ourselves that most of the public museums in the US actually are private, which of course makes the whole thing a bit complex. But I was going to continue a little along the route that I think Marysia brought up – that basically, nothing you do in this field, I would say, and not only as an artist, is neutral.

Maybe I'd slightly counter David Elliott's 'I'll take the money as long as it doesn't come from war criminals,' because I think that the *raison d'être* behind each operation creates some sort of framing, which actually also affects the experience of the work of art and so forth. I was just thinking about three of the museums that opened in Japan in 2004: you have the new building in Naoshima on the island; you have the new Mori Museum; and you have the Kanazawa 21<sup>st</sup> Century Museum.

On the one hand you can say that the private museum on the island in Naoshima, maybe that's where you have the museum experience that comes closest to Andrew O'Hagan's teenage experience of the museum in a private institution, I should think. On the other hand, you can say that the Mori Museum and the Kanazawa Museum basically have roughly, I would say, more or less the same amount of visitors, theoretically, and I think they could basically put on the same kind of shows.

And yet I think the public experience in those two museums seems to be distinctly different. In the Mori Museum, first of all, you're aware, I think, of the fact that it's the creation of a very famous businessman. It's in the top of a tower. You pass through the shops and the malls and all that when you go there. I mean, it's a very clearly framed experience.

And the Kanazawa museum, on the other hand, is sort of a distinctly democratic building, to start with. It sort of sits flat. I mean, there's no threshold, even a physical threshold. You enter from three different points into the building and these three points point in different directions in the city, which actually stand for different aspects of the city class-wise and so forth.

The educational programmes differ widely, even though both have educational programmes, and I think that if you go and see the same show in the Kanazawa or in the Mori Museum, you have a distinctly different experience, actually. It doesn't have to do with branding, because both museums work quite heavily with branding in terms of logos and merchandise and so forth, but it has to do with – I think – a perceived *raison d'être* in the museum. Why do they exist? Why are they there? And that's part of the architecture, the whole sort of orchestration of the experience, and that affects what you see.

I'm not making a judgement of whether what you see is better in the one place or the other. I'll leave that to you. But there's a distinct difference, and I perceive the Kanazawa Museum as a clearly public-service museum in a sense. I mean in the almost sort of British sense that it's there for the public. I don't get that experience, even though I can get a great art experience, in the Mori Museum. There is a difference.

**PA Member 9 (Marjorie Allthorpe-Guyton):** I think it's clear from our presentations that in our heart of hearts we acknowledge that the institution, whether public or private, is wholly compromised. Where I think the failure of the museum, the art world, lies – and there is an enormous opportunity here – is that we lack an independent writer. We have critics, we have academic contributors to this debate, but the real – I think absolutely crucial – issue is public value, what we mean by public value.

I was at a seminar this week at Downing Street on the creative industries, which is a major focus of this government in Britain. The only speaker who addressed the question, –as it was totally hijacked on issues of intellectual copyright by the Chief Executive of EMI, – was the writer Will Hutton. Now Will Hutton said very much the core thrust of what Neil and Marysia were opening up, and he is an economist and writer of one of the most seminal texts, *The State We're In*.

If we have to rely on somebody completely outside the field of the arts to say the kind of things our art critics and our academics should be saying, but not in the self-referential journals and vehicles that they currently use, then we are missing an opportunity. And I think what we lack are critics and writers who are prepared to take the public stage in the broadcast and wider media to raise some of the issues that Julian raised and Marysia and Neil have raised, and which I think we poised with a kind of comprise of integrity and values, to use this opportunity. And I don't see those writers in the field currently.

**PA member 10 (Anda Rottenberg):** Well, I wanted to mention the situation which was touched on yesterday by Rob Storr. It is the situation about property and the money payer, if it is state or private money, which brings the present situation to the brink of censorship in many cases, especially in Eastern Europe recently. The thought there is an argument that in public institutions the taxpayers' money should not be spent by the artist and curator in ways that may offend the public, whereas in private spaces you don't have this type of censorship; you have the power of money, but it affects things in another way. So the question is how to find out the third way, which would defend the artist and the curator from two different powers, both the public having this taxpayer power, and the power of money as money. This was the question, please.

**Ralph Rugoff:** I think my response would be: 'The question is, how do you win the trust of a public to support that art, rather than feel offended by it?'

**PA member 10 (Anda Rottenberg):** It's not *my* problem. It's *the* problem. Many, many times we have had this very problem with Robert Mapplethorpe.

Anyway, the outcome is that one cannot spend the taxpayers' money to offend the public's feelings. Of course, it goes together with the personal feelings of the viewer,

who is not forced to go and see the show, but however it happens, for the public institution, which was regarded for quite a long period as something which was pure, non-profit-making, it means only looking at the public's value in the situation it is in now. In a way, it should be replaced by the private institution, which can do what the public one may not. This is the question.

**Ralph Rugoff:** Does anyone want to address that one? Do we have a question, one last question up here?

**PA Member 11 (Kwok Kian Chow):** Yes, I'm Kwok Kian Chow director of the Singapore Museum. I think on the Mori Art Museum, that was introduced as an example of a private museum, there is always the element of maybe, in this case, the chairman or, you know, the senior management having an interest in art. So there is probably an element there beyond the usual corporate logic of sponsoring whatever activities that corporation wants in order to get the profit that would fit logically with that corporation. Unless, of course, the corporation is one that is involved in art banking. Otherwise there is always that added element of a certain member or, you know, component of the senior management wanting to promote art.

I think the key issue we really want to deal with is that, whatever components of a society, be they government, public sector or private sector, continue to hold the responsibility for cultural development – and there art is a very important area, you know – will provide an opportunity for development.

Now I have been involved with training art museum professionals in China, and having just come from that training session a few weeks ago, then, you know, being here in London, I feel that actually there isn't really a great difference in terms of the ultimate interest of the public sector, or for that matter aspects of the private sector, in that sense of social responsibility in cultural development.

The real difference in Asia is really museology. The museological background is a very different one. Traditionally, art museums have been initiated by artists and artists' communities, and these have been historically the cultural activists in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, who have initiated the art museums and wanted the art museums to be display areas, display venues for the artworks. Now whether or not this is a phase, in the current

situation this in a sense has been challenged. The artists' communities in Asia, being themselves established, no longer represent the full spectrum of cultural development we are seeing; you know, what we would consider as a kind of social responsibility for cultural development.

Now what is really, really interesting in the Chinese case is that it is the government that wants to help local art museums develop some international standard in museology, so that such museum practices, the new practices, could kind of transcend the old practices, the older form of museum displays; you know, areas for artists who, historically, have been components of cultural activism. And this new kind of social responsibility could transcend the traditional model, and this is the real challenge, you know, being faced by Asia. Now in...

**Ralph Rugoff:** Can I just say, one more minute, OK? Because we've reached our break time.

**PA Member 11 (Kwok Kian Chow):** OK, this is getting too long, is it? OK, maybe I would just like to conclude to say that the matrix we are talking here, in terms of public and private sector, is a very complex situation, and we often believe we are all aiming for some social responsibility for cultural development. Now it could be from the public or the private sector, but my point is that the Asian situation is very different because of the museological tradition and, therefore, it is necessary for us to look very specifically at a local context. Thank you.

**Ralph Rugoff:** OK, thanks a lot. Thanks to all my panellists and to CIMAM and to everyone in the audience for all your questions.

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