

**THE EXHIBITIONIST**  
**NO. 9 / JOURNAL ON EXHIBITION MAKING / APRIL 2014**

---

**OVERTURE**

**CURATORS' FAVORITES**

**BACK IN THE DAY**

**MISSING IN ACTION**

**ATTITUDE**

**ASSESSMENTS**

**RIGOROUS RESEARCH**

**SIX x SIX**

**REAR MIRROR**

---

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

---

# THE EXHIBITIONIST



# The Exhibitionist

NO. 9

APRIL 2014

## CONTENTS



Still from Terence Fisher's *Dracula*, 1958, showing Christopher Lee as Dracula

### Overture

Jens Hoffmann and Lumi Tan.....3

### Curators' Favorites

Monika Szewczyk.....Idolizing Twilight.....5

Chen Tamir.....Liminal Spaces.....9

Hendrik Folkerts.....WACK the Canon!.....13

### Back in the Day

Inés Katzenstein.....*Experiencias 68: A Threshold*.....16

### Missing in Action

Lucy Lippard.....After a Fashion: The Group Show.....24

Introduced by Chelsea Haines

### Attitude

Massimiliano Gioni.....What I Did Last Summer.....31

### Assessments: Bergen Assembly 2013: Monday Begins on Saturday

Christopher Y. Lew.....Workers' Compensation.....37

Åse Løvgren.....More Verbs, Please.....38

Laurel Ptak.....Art in the Age of the Norwegian  
Semi-Social-Democratic-Post-Welfare State.....47

Johanne Nordby Wernø.....Love for Labor.....48

### Rigorous Research

Germano Celant.....The Territories of Exhibition.....51

### Six x Six

Ngahiraka Mason, Fionn Meade, Pablo León de la Barra,  
Filipa Ramos, María Inés Rodríguez, Syrago Tsiara.....61

### Rear Mirror

Daniel Baumann, Dan Byers,  
and Tina Kukielski.....Considering the 2013 Carnegie International.....75

Jennifer Gross.....The Société Anonyme's Dada Destiny.....75



Dedicated to the memory of  
Alain Resnais (1922–2014)

---

## OVERTURE



Jens Hoffmann and Lumi Tan

There are moments when it seems that a horde of vampires has taken over the art world, sucking from its lovely neck all the life, the creativity, the unruliness, and all the criticality, turning art into pure entertainment, commodity production, and celebrity culture. The undead are out there and, sadly, most of them do not look as intriguing and attractive as Christopher Lee on the cover of this issue.

In our perennial hope to offer some kind of antidote to whatever malady has the art world in its grip, we at *The Exhibitionist* have always struggled to maintain and declare our independence, and the contributions to this issue—our ninth—are no exception. Seeing the journal as a place to express an autonomous voice that is separate from one's institution, to be unafraid to challenge one's peers, and to create a place for ignored and forgotten histories, each contributor here acknowledges that exhibition making isn't always easy. It necessarily reflects forces of social and political influence, and the push and pull of negotiating with artists and hosting institutions. But these tensions can be productive; they can help move the field forward.

The journal itself goes through a few changes in this issue. We are introducing a new long-form section entitled **Rigorous Research**, where curators and art historians present original research on the history of exhibitions. For this first installment, Germano Celant addresses the evolution of exhibition spaces in the 19th and 20th centuries, and certain seminal exhibitions that established new standards by reacting to existing models of design and display.

This discussion continues with **Curators' Favorites**, where three curators address their formative experiences with a particular group exhibition that questioned the conventional organization of the survey show, or sparked productive exchanges between artists and curators. For Hendrik Folkerts, *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution*, curated by Cornelia Butler, shifted his perception of how a canon is formed through historical exhibitions, and revived questions originally raised by the first wave of the feminist movement. Monika Szewczyk's experience with Bart De Baere's notorious 1994 exhibition *This is the show and the show is many things* was crafted entirely through close readings of the catalogue and impressions from participants and viewers; it becomes clear that even decades later, this exhibition's particular brand of organized chaos continues to resonate, and to resonate far beyond its actual in-person audience. Chen Tamir recounts the relentless political challenges that informed *Liminal Spaces*, a project that originally aspired to take the shape of an exhibition but ended up being a series of conferences and research projects in various locations in Israel, Palestine, and Germany; its effects reverberated through the work of the involved curators, artists, and institutions for years to come.

Two curators, two different generations, two calls for independence: **Missing in Action** presents Lucy Lippard's 1967 text "After a Fashion: The Group Show," which starts as a review of *Systemic Painting*, a group exhibition at the Guggenheim Museum, but then segues into a sharp critique of the strategies of the thematic group exhibition as a form, as well as a dismissal of Minimalism's detractors. In **Attitude**, Massimiliano Gioni reflects on his much-scrutinized 2013 Venice Biennale, which presented a significant amount of outsider art alongside contemporary production. He makes a case to retire the notion of the curator as a promoter or a supporter in favor of a concept more akin to a scholar or an interpreter.

For **Back in the Day**, Inés Katzenstein reflects on the 1968 exhibition *Experiencias 68*, a landmark survey of contemporary work in Buenos Aires curated by Jorge Romero Brest. That year was a historic one worldwide, marked by much social and political upheaval, and the controversial positions taken by the young Argentine artists were no exception. A debate on the role of the artist in society continues in this issue's **Assessments**, which focuses on *Monday Begins on Saturday*, the first Bergen Assembly exhibition, which came about after literally years of discussion regarding why and how a new international biennial could function. Christopher Y. Lew, Åse Løvgren, Laurel Ptak, and Johanne Nordby Wernø—despite their various levels of distance from the event—share similar opinions regarding the socialist ideas the exhibition explored, and what it achieved with respect to its aspiration to innovate within the biennial format.

**Six by Six** returns for another round with six curators—Ngahiraka Mason, Fionn Meade, Pablo León de la Barra, Filipa Ramos, María Inés Rodríguez, and Syrago Tsiara—offering highly personal dispatches from around the globe, again demonstrating the wide range of exhibition histories that have shaped current curatorial viewpoints. This point again comes to a head in the contrasting exhibitions reflected upon in **Rear Mirror**. In our first multi-author contribution to this section, Daniel Baumann, Dan Byers, and Tina Kukielski openly discuss the satisfactions, regrets, and collective learning that happened in the process of creating the 2013 Carnegie International, which they intended to be enjoyed and interpreted by both a local and an international audience. In her text on the touring exhibition *The Société Anonyme: Modernism for America*, its curator, Jennifer Gross, speaks to the difficulties of translating the dynamism of the remarkable collection founded by Katherine Dreier, Marcel Duchamp, and Man Ray to suit the museums to which the show toured; the touring venues consistently tried to tame the idiosyncratic spirit of the first installation.

How to defend ourselves against the vampires who find the vulnerable skin of the art world so utterly seductive? We must keep our minds—and our exhibitions—nimble, complicated, and smarter than the average bear. The curators and exhibitions featured in this issue prove that this continues to be possible.

## CURATORS' FAVORITES



*This is the show and the show is many things* installation view, Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst, Ghent, 1994, showing work by Maria Roosen

### IDOLIZING TWILIGHT

Monika Szewczyk

*This is the show and the show is many things.*

Whenever I make a show, I invoke this phrase almost like a mantra. It is the beautifully blunt title of Bart De Baere's 1994 exhibition at the Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst in Ghent (a precursor to S.M.A.K., housed inside the Fine Arts Museum). Its dates are listed as September 17 to November 27, but even cursory research reveals that its temporality was anything but clear. The Belgian curator, along with the 13 participating artists (Louise Bourgeois, Anne Decock, Honoré  'O, Fabrice Hybert, Suchan Kinoshita, Henrietta Lehtonen, Mark Manders, Jason Rhoades, Maria Roosen, Claire Roudenko-Bertin, Eran Schaerf, Luc Tuymans, and Uri Tzaig) as well as two invited witnesses/critics (Roland van De Sompel and Dirk P ltau), tested an open, improvisatory, atmospheric ethos of exhibition making that seems virtually impossible to adopt as a "model" because its space-time confounds the calendars and publicity logics of most contemporary institutions. And yet, the time seems

ripe to remember, or, more accurately—as I must admit I can have no *memory* of this exhibition, which I did not see, although it haunts me like a friendly ghost—to think about it, along with the aid of the catalogue and eyewitness accounts, and to articulate the nature of its inspiration.

In his review of the show in *Frieze*, Adrian Searle struck a skeptical note: "*This is the show*. . . attempts to be more a process than a fixed and final entity," he concludes, "an organic collaboration which refutes the supremacy of authorship, and which hands the control of the museum over to the artists. This is a sham, of course, and more than anything else the show is an exhausting curatorial conceit."<sup>1</sup>

Setting aside his distrust of curatorial adventure (for now): Was it really so tiring? Searle's summation points to the fact that the (re)viewer had to do some serious work to take the whole thing in. He recalls not being sure whether to touch or interact with certain works or let them be. (OK, this is indeed something of a clich  for large swaths of contemporary art, but the clich 



*This is the show and the show is many things* installation view, Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst, Ghent, 1994, showing work by Fabrice Hybert, Suchan Kinoshita, and Anne Decock

captures both great and lame works.) To his credit, Searle's description of the cacophonous space is evocative, so that one can imagine walking through it. Projecting myself into his words, I wonder if the entrance—Fabrice Hybert's version of the hotel door in Jaques Tati's *Mr. Hulot's Holiday* (1953)—would have clued me in to the exhibition's sense of "living in a movie," which is alluded to in the catalogue.<sup>2</sup> How, then, to play a role other than that of the fatigued skeptic?

Imagine seeing the many works made on site specifically for the exhibition: Jason Rhoades's installation (which was purportedly based on the Mystic Lamb but looked nothing like the famed altarpiece in Ghent's Saint Bavo Cathedral), which, on the opening day, according to Searle, involved the artist hauling truckloads of material from one room to another. Then, close by, Louise Bourgeois's drawings of spiders and a "magnificent, haunting sculpture of a nest of gigantic arachnids" (the only work that was sent in rather than made there in the moment); early renditions of Mark Manders's *Self Portrait as a Building* project and early versions of his eerie attic figures placed on the floor; Suchan Kinoshita's furniture-like objects; fragments of Uri Tzaig's *Library*, with children's pictures that could be taken away and books that couldn't be removed; and Eran Schaerf's workstation, which reportedly evoked a storage space for the entire exhibition. Then, stepping out of the dusk of Luc Tuymans's subdued lighting scheme, which

covered the entire exhibition and cast all of the works "on the edge of visibility," and still seeing no end to the show. Rather, encountering food and drinks being served in the café (shifted from its normal location) on crockery by Henrietta Lehtonen (served, perhaps, by then-museum bartender, now director of S.M.A.K., Philippe Van Cauteren).

It would indeed have been difficult to construct a "picture" of the show, but that was perhaps the very point. I imagine that seeing any one of these works would have made my day. And seeing them together in a single exhibition would likely have left me exhausted but (I think) exhilarated by the messes, as messes are in such short supply in galleries and museums today. The place you are more likely to encounter them is in artists' studios, and we might ask if *This is the show . . .* was more like a studio visit than a museum visit.

The philosopher and curator Dieter Roelstraete, who was studying in Ghent at the time, describes the experience of seeing this show as entering an encampment. "But it was not," he clarifies, "about domicility and homeliness, nor were the artists 'occupying' the museum. You saw and heard people tinkering. There was a general sense of everything being in transit, in storage, in disarray." There was also, he notes, a palpable sense (and later reports) of conflict among certain artists who did not appreciate the spillage of others' works (and other

assorted incursions) into their allotted spaces.

The cardinal problem of any group exhibition is that it risks somehow reducing the gestures of the participating artists, or otherwise subsuming them into a curatorial conceit. How to avoid this and instead construct a space where distinct artistic energies can relate in a way that potentially renders each part more complex? The curious thing is that *This is the show*. . . attempted to do this without really declaring a theme, a common goal. The artists and the curator, and a little later the resident witnesses/critics, came together knowing that the exhibition would be improvised through a series of conversations. Instead of a theme, the very potentials—plural—of exhibition space-time were tested with great attention to different moods and modes (to invoke De Baere's terminology). I'm attracted to this fragile conceit because it allows us to think of an exhibition as an atmosphere—a place where personalities, objects, background conversations, and calendars contribute to a here and now that is strongly felt, like the weather, and can change.

Considering *This is the show and the show is many things* as something atmospheric and therefore rather virtual has something to do with not getting too hung up on appearances. Yes, this is a contradictory approach to thinking about exhibiting, showing, and (as the French term for "exhibition" suggests) exposing. I could say I am curious about the show's spirit. Or (if the "s" word makes you cringe, dear reader), I could say that thinking about this exhibition must involve a review, not only of the impressions that the works on display made on participants, visitors, and critics, but also of its driving internal debates. And its ambitions, some unrealized, which may have been difficult to detect in the moment. Playing detective 20 years later, I turn to the catalogue, which recorded these energies and impulses in various modes. The book not only refers to, but declaratively departs from, what was on view. It simultaneously reports on and forecasts the show.

*This is the show and the show is many things*  
installation view, Museum van Hedendaagse  
Kunst, Ghent, 1994, showing work by  
Jason Rhoades

The first contribution is not by the curator but by Dirk Pültau, whose skepticism surpasses Adrian Searle's by a long stretch. Pültau questions everything, from the working terminology (the "continuous present," or the "imperfective" invoked by De Baere) to the process: "I cannot stop myself from thinking why certain things had to be written or proclaimed. Even before I had read the text, I was told that there was nothing predictable in this process, that it just took place and continued after the exhibition, that everything remained open. Bearing this in mind, the text represents for me an objectification of that total mobility. Everything that escapes being labeled is here indeed sold with labels. Why?"<sup>3</sup> And, further, "You cannot give a bird's-eye view of immanence, nor can you do so without surely damaging the position you have already adopted



and rendering further discussion unmanageable. Your text scarcely does this: It speaks too much from a position of knowing.”

The text he is referring to is entitled “Modes and Moods: Antique olive 15 lower case medium,” an earlier version of which was offered by De Baere to all participants sometime in the summer of 1994. The published text constitutes a chronicle of the first collective impulses that led to the show and already forms a response by the curator to some of the artists’ advice.<sup>4</sup> Its introduction asks: “Are the artists not the museum’s most important advisors?” (This is indeed a question that should be asked again and again.)

De Baere’s text appears *after* Pültau’s critique, gesturing toward a reversal of powers alongside a reversal of chronology proposed by Luc Tuymans and partly translated into a shift of the “opening” to the end of the show’s run. Even more impactful, it seems, is Tuymans’s decision to lower the lighting scheme of the entire exhibition, an assertion of mood, where things are half-visible but seen more deeply, perhaps, which is discussed at some length in a conversation between the artist, the curator, and the two witnesses/critics toward the end of an array of artists’ contributions.<sup>5</sup>

The entire catalogue reads a bit like a captains’ log (yes, I do mean “captains” plural), as we get the sense that we are following not a recipe or a record, but a lively debate about the very nature of the show, and, by extension, art and exhibition making. And this debate (and the making of the catalogue) continued beyond the opening day. The fact that the exhibition never cohered neatly, but existed in a twilight that was both structural and phenomenal, doesn’t necessarily mean that it celebrated confusion for its own sake. Rather, to me at least, it signaled another way of knowing. The “position of knowing” is there, but perhaps misunderstood as Cartesian by Pültau.

For all of Searle’s allusions to the stupidity of Jason Rhoades,<sup>6</sup> the artist certainly knew how to produce a very specific energy, mood, or atmosphere out of a seemingly chaotic arrangement of objects. This is one of the most difficult things to pull off in an artwork. And when you try to achieve it in a group exhibition, as a curator, you might expect that an artist who is particularly good at the task might refuse to play well with the other pirates.

Antagonism (and agonism) have been advanced as a necessary condition of a collective endeavor. And, in making space for artworks to transform and to relate intimately, *This is the show* . . . tested the nerves of some of the participating artists, not to mention some critics and some visitors. But I do not wish to conclude by simply celebrating these tensions as “productive.” Rather, it is more interesting to consider the curators’ attempts to learn from artists and thereby revise the very notion of knowing.

If the show ((resonates))) today, it is in large part, I think, because it carried one of the best titles in the business. (De Baere wisely revised the original working title, “Extra Muros,” upon the advice of the artists.) “This is the show” sounds so assertive and clear and indeed knowing, but “the show is many things” allows no closure. No wonder it has motivated remakes, curatorial workshops, and other nods and bows. But if it is in fact becoming something of a model (despite, or perhaps because of, its lack of stability), it might be interesting to consider what it held up as its own metaphor. It was *not* another exhibition.<sup>7</sup> In his text, De Baere, the classically trained art historian who loves the Flemish Primitives, invokes the the Portinari Altar (ca. 1475) by Hugo Van der Goes, elaborating on how the late-15th-century altarpiece resisted the onset of Cartesian single-point perspective and instead offers “many moments of approach” and “a clarity with a sensual fullness” that “remains a proposition.”

To note this is not to say that artworks and exhibitions—or artists and curators, for that matter—should be interchangeable. But what does it mean to relax and admit that they can share intuitions?

#### Notes

1. Adrian Searle, “*This is the show and the show is many things*,” *Frieze* 19 (November–December 1994), [https://www.frieze.com/issue/review/this\\_is\\_the\\_show\\_and\\_the\\_show\\_is\\_many\\_things/](https://www.frieze.com/issue/review/this_is_the_show_and_the_show_is_many_things/).

2. See note 6.

3. Dirk Pültau, “To Bart, Roland and the Artists: Between the Process and Us, Me” in *This is the show and the show is many things* exhibition catalogue (Ghent: Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst, 1994): 6.

4. See pages 11–19. The time of this text is meticulously noted as “15th July, redaction 6th August, scrappings

[presumably the crossed out passages, which remain, but with a line through them] 22nd August.'"

5. In the conversation, Tuymans's comments offer insight into the unhinged temporality and the particular mood of the show: "I am curious, in this exhibition, to see how things interact with each other. And also how up-to-date the idea of time can be brought, as well as the idea of space—again, I'm thinking of film—how on a material basis you can give shape to something that's practically immaterial. . . . The idea is suggested of making an exhibition that is so dynamic that you have a continuous movement—and if it is not purely physical then certainly one which comes about in the mind, even also in the *parcours* people follow when they come and discover the exhibition. . . . Actually, I'm thinking of a particular period in the day, twilight. If that could be made to go on and on, it would be phenomenal: a constant twilight in the

exhibition. This will enable you to and see things properly, in my opinion, in the sense that you see things just before the point at which they disappear. The vanishing point means that you can sometimes look at something more intensively from a certain kind of depth." See pages 129–44; quotes are from page 131.

6. "Instead of the Mystic Lamb, though, we get lots of placards saying 'PORK,'" Searle scoffs, "which seems to be one of the few words Rhoades can spell."

7. While the installation of Niki de Saint Phalle's anything-but-phallic *SHE—A Cathedral* at the Moderna Museet in Stockholm in 1966, realized in collaboration with Jean Tinguely and Per Olof Ultvedt, is held up by De Baere as an example, he concludes that it cannot function as a model because the task at hand will not yield a cohesive form.



Participants in the first *Liminal Spaces* meeting, Qalandia, Palestine, 2006

## LIMINAL SPACES

Chen Tamir

*Liminal Spaces* took place from 2006 to 2007. Its initial focus was Road 60, which connects Jerusalem and Ramallah, and how it might be possible through art and culture to overcome political, social, and physical barriers created by the Israeli occupation of Palestine.<sup>1</sup> *Liminal Spaces* was not an actual exhibition, but rather a joint research project, a collective micro-residency and production platform, and a series of interventionist, site-specific conferences rolled into one. It has since permeated most of the politically engaged art in Israel and Palestine, and opened the way for experimental curatorial initiatives well beyond.

In March 2006, approximately 35 artists, activists, curators, and cultural producers of

various stripes gathered at the invitation of Reem Fadda, founder of the Palestinian Association for Contemporary Art in Ramallah; Galit Eilat, founder of the Israeli Center for Digital Art in Holon (just outside Tel Aviv); and Philipp Misselwitz, a German urbanist focusing on refugee camp cities. They rented a store 500 meters from the Qalandia Checkpoint, one of the largest checkpoints between Jerusalem and Ramallah, and spent three days there and in East Jerusalem listening to presentations by a variety of experts, including politicians and urban planners, and exploring the nearby area.<sup>2</sup> The intention was to have a gestation period of roughly eight months, after which they would convene again in Leipzig, Germany, for a follow-up conference



Participants in the third *Liminal Spaces* meeting, October 2007

and exhibition of newly created works, which would then be exhibited in Ramallah or Gaza and in Holon.

All of this, in turn, had grown out of several much looser gatherings of Israeli and Palestinian artists in 2004. They had come together as Artists Without Walls to discuss if and how they might be able to work in and through the Israeli Occupation. The meetings allowed the various artists and curators to build trust and form personal and professional relationships that last to this day.<sup>3</sup> (The only artwork they created took the form a closed-circuit video that was projected on both sides of the separation wall in the Abu Dis area of Jerusalem, thereby creating a virtual window through the wall that lasted for four hours.)

A major element of *Liminal Spaces* was its negotiation with military and political forces. The Israeli Center for Digital Art was able to work with the army to issue entry permits for Palestinian participants, many of whom had not been to Jerusalem since 2000. The Palestinian organizers, Reem Fadda along with Khaled Hourani, asked the Tanzim, the military wing of Fatah that controlled the region, for permission and protection, which they were granted.<sup>4</sup> They also sought approval from the Boycott Divestment and Sanctions movement that was coming into formation at that time. The BDS wanted to avoid the illusion of a shared or unified goal, and asked for a written statement that did not include the term “collaboration” because of its “informant” connotation (meaning, Palestinians who supply the Israeli military with information). The BDS also recommended that *Liminal Spaces* not accept Israeli funding.

The bulk of the funding for *Liminal Spaces* ultimately came from the European Union and

the European Cultural Foundation, along with two German sources: the Berlin University of the Arts and the German Federal Cultural Foundation. Support was also given by the Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst in Leipzig, Germany, where an exhibition of some of the works—or, rather, proposals or sketches of works in progress that grew out of the first conference—were to be exhibited in conjunction with a conference that would give participants a chance to meet again on neutral ground.

But there was considerable disagreement about how the project was being framed. While the German organizers took great pains to not offend pro-Israel visitors by avoiding terms such as “occupation,” Fadda, Eilat, and the other *Liminal Spaces* initiators fought to underline the anti-colonialist foundations of the project. A major fear was that it would be co-opted for the sake of a false normalization under the guise of two supposedly equal sides represented by Israeli and Palestinian artists.

In the words of Eyal Danon, curator at the Israeli Center for Digital Art, “The idea of having an exhibition abroad was too similar to European initiatives that brought Israelis and Palestinians to Europe to talk. The whole Leipzig experience was uncomfortable. We had lots of arguments. You can imagine what it was like to bring the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to Germany. When we published anything, we constantly had to negotiate the terms we were using, such as ‘occupation.’ Often, what was for the other side a huge compromise was for us not even a starting point.”<sup>5</sup>

Eilat says: “They assumed that their audiences wanted a peace project, a collaboration between Palestinians and Israelis. It’s not that good relations can’t exist between us, but we

didn't want to use art to depict bridges that don't exist, or that present an asymmetrical situation in a symmetrical way. One of our aims was to present problematic terms, not solutions."<sup>6</sup>

The Leipzig exhibition was seen largely as an unfortunate concession and made it obvious that such an exhibition in Holon or Gaza, even if successfully carried out despite the logistical challenges, would fall into the same traps, and fail to serve the goals of the project. And there were other factors that shaped the decision not to have an exhibition, particularly the changing political landscape.<sup>7</sup> As Eilat explained: "It was clear that having an exhibition in Holon when not all the artists could come, or having an exhibition in Ramallah with Israeli artists, would be very problematic. To insist on it, even if it succeeded, would create a false image of normalization, which we didn't want. The focus shifted to meetings and production."<sup>8</sup>

The next conference took place in October 2007, and, rather than holding it in Gaza, the organizers decided to examine segregation and oppression as they manifest in ethnically mixed cities within Israel, such as Modi'in Illit/Bil'in, Ramle, Jaffa, and Lod, and in the Christian Palestinian town of Taibeh (Taybeh) in the Occupied Territories. Students in the newly opened International Academy of Art Palestine joined, as well as several new participants, bringing the total number to around 80.<sup>9</sup> Among the new participants was the artist Artur Żmijewski, who later developed several projects exploring the Occupation, such as the video he made in Holon called *My Neighbors* (2011). When Żmijewski curated the 2012 Berlin Biennial, he invited the International Academy of Art Palestine to collaborate on the temporary importation and display of the massive key from the Aida Refugee Camp.

One of Yael Bartana's projects that came out of *Liminal Spaces* was *Summer Camp* (2009),<sup>10</sup> in which we see the artist turn toward a cinematic style that quotes from early pioneering propaganda, later developed in her infamous . . . *And Europe Will Be Stunned . . .* (2007–12), which represented Poland in the 2011 Venice Biennial (co-curated by Eilat). During the first conference, Bartana went for a short exploration near Qalandia with fellow Israeli artist Yochai Avrahami. They were stopped by the Israeli army and interrogated. The experience had a marked influence on Avrahami's practice. "It was obvious I couldn't make a simple work about crossing a border. [The interrogation happened on] Saturday, and on Sunday Google Earth launched in Israel and I started to map the places I had been to. Since they turned me into a spy, I thought I'd make work like a spy. The experience affected all the work I made in the years following."<sup>11</sup> A sketch of Avrahami's piece was exhibited in the Leipzig iteration of *Liminal Spaces* the following October, and the completed work was shown at the Taipei Biennial in 2008.

Other projects grew out of *Liminal Spaces*, such as Peter Friedl's stuffed giraffe, which was shown at the 2007 Documenta and consisted simply of a taxidermied giraffe; the animal had died during an Israeli military strike near the Qalqilya Zoo. The Dutch collective Superflex did several projects in and around Palestine following the conference, including organizing an appeal to the European Broadcasting Union to include Palestine in the Eurovision Song Contest. The project *Picasso in Palestine* (2011), which centered on the enormous logistical challenges in bringing a single Pablo Picasso painting to Ramallah, was conceived by Khaled Hourani and carried out in partnership with the Van Abbe-

*Liminal Spaces* installation view, Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst, Leipzig, Germany, 2006, showing Yochai Avrahami's *Rocks Ahead*, 2006



museum in Eindhoven, the Netherlands, where Eilat was by then working.

Although *Liminal Spaces* opened up many channels for collaboration, research, and exchange, it also opened people's eyes to the seeming impossibility of peace or social justice. Both Eilat and Fadda have since left the country, frustrated by the social and political impasses they faced on a daily basis. Fadda especially talks about her disillusionment following the third iteration of *Liminal Spaces*, which took place mostly within Israel proper: "I saw that Israel had its own colonial racist project to deal with, beyond the Occupation. Of course, people aren't going to look past the border because they already have tons of issues to work with at home. How do you wake up an entire society? How do you show them they have to salvage themselves?"<sup>12</sup>

Eilat continues to serve as an inspirational figure to me and several other cultural producers in Israel, and I'm sure far beyond as well. She has pioneered a shift in the Israeli art scene from a Westward-looking cultural island largely influenced by Western Europe and the United States to one rooted in the Middle East, with ties to other balkanized areas such as Eastern Europe. She accomplished this by focusing the programming at the Israeli Center for Digital Art on politically and socially engaged experimental art. I probably would never have moved back to Tel Aviv a year ago if I hadn't seen firsthand how mixing local and international programming can be so successful.

Although the mandate at the Center for Contemporary Art in Tel Aviv, where I work, is somewhat different than that of the Israeli Center for Digital Art, and the political situation has changed since 2006, I'm happy to count myself among the people who continue to benefit, though indirectly, from the important knowledge and the brave connections forged by the truly pioneering project that was *Liminal Spaces*.

#### Notes

1. I joined the Israeli Center for Digital Art in Holon (near Tel Aviv) for three summer months in 2006, between the first and second parts of *Liminal Spaces*, to fulfill my internship requirement for the master's degree in curatorial studies at Bard College. Born in Israel but raised in Canada, I always had a distant but strong relationship to my home country, and I was curious to learn about contemporary culture there. Although I wasn't directly involved with *Liminal Spaces*, the

overall programming at the center fundamentally altered how I saw cultural work and its potential to influence the world.

2. A wonderful book, also titled *Liminal Spaces*, was published in 2009 consisting of lectures, talks, and discussions that took place during the conferences. And the project's website, [liminalspaces.org](http://liminalspaces.org), has recently been restored.

3. Both Artists Without Walls and *Liminal Spaces* took form in the shadow of the Second Intifada, which began in 2000 and ended in 2005. Up until 2000, travel from one side of the Green Line to the other was much easier. People would commute to work and business was much more fluid. After 2000, the separation wall was built, effectively imprisoning Palestinians within it, while entry permits to Israel proper became, and continue to be, extremely hard to obtain. For Israelis it remains illegal to enter most parts of the Occupied Territories (except the settlements).

4. The Tanzim officials even gave the participants a tour of the area and treated them to a large lunch, during which shooting broke out at the nearby Qalandia Checkpoint.

5. Author interview with Eyal Danon, currently director of the Israeli Center for Digital Art and a *Liminal Spaces* organizer, September 24, 2013, in Holon.

6. Author interview with Galit Eilat, founder of the Israeli Center for Digital Art, October 1, 2013, in Tel Aviv.

7. Between the first conference in March 2006 in Ramallah and the second one in Leipzig in October, Israeli forces withdrew from Gaza, Hamas won the elections, and the newly formed Kadima party took power in Israel based on Ariel Sharon's unilateral disengagement plan. In July 2006, a month-long war broke out between Israel and the Hezbollah in southern Lebanon that was overwhelmingly supported by public opinion in Israel. Since the dissolution of the Oslo Peace Process in the late 1990s, and the growing militancy on both sides of the Green Line following the Intifada, the Israeli left was shrinking dramatically, and support for the Separation Wall and military operations such as that in 2006 grew drastically.

8. Author interview with Galit Eilat, founder of the Israeli Center for Digital Art, October 1, 2013, in Tel Aviv.

9. The conference was timed to coincide with the Riwaq Palestinian art biennial. Many of the international participants who were invited by the Israeli Center for Digital Art also took part in the biennial.

10. This two-channel video installation uses, on one side, footage Bartana filmed in 2006 of Palestinian construction workers and international volunteers from the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHN), who were rebuilding a demolished Palestinian house in Anata (East Jerusalem). This footage is edited to match the Zionist propaganda film *Avodah* (1935) by Helmar Lerski, showing on the other screen.

11. Author interview with Yochai Avrahami on September 24, 2013, in Holon.

12. Author interview with Reem Fadda on October 5, 2013. Fadda is now associate curator of Middle Eastern Art at the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi Project.



*WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* installation view, MoMA PS1, New York, 2008, showing Lorraine O'Grady's *Mille Bourgeoise Noire*, 1980–83

## WACK THE CANON!

Hendrik Folkerts

My initial encounter with *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* was through the exhibition catalogue. Browsing the pages of this voluminous book, I engaged with a bold and extremely exciting universe of artists that would shape my view of art history from that point on. In 2008 I visited the exhibition at MoMA PS1 in New York, where it had traveled after its first appearance at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles. The works on the pages now unfolded in actual space. I encountered heroines I already knew, such as VALIE EXPORT, Eva Hesse, Lynda Benglis, Ulrike Rosenbach, Mary Kelly, Marina Abramović, Hannah Wilke, and Sturtevant, and artists whose work I had yet to explore. Both the exhibition and the catalogue became invaluable resources for me as a student, and, later, major points of reference in my practice as a curator. They proposed questions on the basic operations of a historical survey exhibition and its relation to art history's canon, the legacy of the feminist movement, and the ontology of performance documentation—questions that as yet I have only been able to partially answer or address, but that I hope to engage with much more in the years to come.

Cornelia Butler, the curator overseeing the vast selection of works and artists that together formed *WACK!*, borrowed from the performance scholar Peggy Phelan in establishing a premise

for the exhibition, defining feminism as “the conviction that gender has been, and continues to be, a fundamental category for the organization of culture” and that “the pattern of that organization usually favors men over women.”<sup>1</sup> Butler contended that feminism should be framed as the most influential international “movement” of the postwar era, deliberately invoking the word “movement” to emphasize its connection to the verb “to move” and liberate it from any static or fixed meaning the “ism” may connote. With these definitions in place, Butler presented a staggering array of works by more than 125 women artists working in the 1960s and 1970s, mostly operating in the Western hemisphere, with some notable exceptions. Marta Minujín, Cecilia Vicuña, Sonia Andrade, Mako Idemitsu, Léa Lublin, and Nasreen Mohamedi are only a few examples of artists featured in *WACK!* whose work had long been under the international radar.

Making a survey exhibition of any historical movement, certainly one as divergent and stratified as feminism, can be a problematic endeavor, as it constructs a junction or arrangement of a variety of artistic practices along a thematic and temporary axis, thereby shaping the very conditions upon which canon building is established. Feminist artists, art historians, and curators, from the very outset, have provided one of the

most fundamental critiques of the visual arts in the 20th century, namely that Art History and its canons are based on patriarchal, exclusionary, discriminatory systems of power. In her seminal 1971 essay “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?,” the art historian Linda Nochlin challenged what was then the still-undisputed idea that the Western male viewpoint is the only possible position in the history of art: the “natural” assumption or bias of the art historian, the “normal” course of discourse, the “neutral” position of the de facto male scholar.<sup>2</sup> This sparked a still-ongoing inquiry regarding what constitutes the artistic canon that we encounter on the museum’s walls, in art history’s chronicles, and on the art market.

One of the greatest accomplishments of *WACK!* involved maintaining the critique of the canon that informed the works on display while complicating the formation of a new canon. A complete rejection of existing systems might have seemed on the surface to be the only way out, so to speak, but it is clear that these systems were and are still very much in place, and that they are certainly not exclusively bound to notions of gender. The latter problematic was addressed in both the exhibition’s premise and its execution. Although *WACK!* was not a comprehensive survey of what could be coined a global feminism, it did endeavor to include practices previously overlooked in surveys of feminism (with a capital F?) that were actually geared toward feminisms in Europe and North America.<sup>3</sup> This sensitivity toward a truly international mapping of artistic practices was admirable, though I hurry to add that it was still more an acknowledgment than a full display of global feminisms. The fact that it still felt like a feminism of a certain place was a reminder of the (in this case, physical) boundaries of the survey exhibition. And I

should stress again that Butler was not proposing this as a new canon. Rather, it was a gesture meant to illustrate the proliferation of existing artistic practices, with the aspiration of impacting the practice and discourse of art globally.<sup>4</sup>

During the period that *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* was traveling across the United States, there was a general discomfort with the term “feminism” among young artists, curators, and art historians—and, at that time, myself as well.<sup>5</sup> In my opinion, this originated from a certain detachment on the part of an emerging generation with the issues of historical feminism, and a lingering sentiment that these battles (at least in the Western hemisphere) had been fought and won. In addition, in the wake of the emergence of gender and queer studies, the feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s has become, unjustly, associated with essentialist and exclusionary “female-only” tendencies.

One could certainly argue against all the claims above.<sup>6</sup> And the fact is that *WACK!*, happening as it did at that specific point in time, did pose a number of important and timely questions. For example, to what extent can a survey exhibition imply a break in, or with, history? Framing a certain movement as “historical” may actively serve to disassociate it from present-day issues and concerns. Is there a conversation to be had between those spearheading the feminist movement of the 1960s, 1970s, and early 1980s and those who identify with feminism today? And how does a body of work that is very specific to, and critical of, the period in which it was produced relate to contemporary artistic and feminist practices? I am not arguing that *WACK!* explicitly articulated a break between historical and contemporary feminism, but rather that, as a survey exhibition, with a (necessarily) specific premise and modus operandi, it was uniquely



*WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* installation view, MoMA PS1, New York, 2008, showing work by Helena Almeida and Joan Semmel (left) and Magdalena Abakanowicz’s *Abakan Red*, 1969 (right)



*WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* installation view, MoMA PS1, New York, 2008, showing Niki de Saint Phalle, Jean Tinguely, and Per Olof Ultvedt's *Photo de la Hon repeinte* (undated)

able to bring this question to the fore, and consequently helped facilitate a conversation among parties who perceived entirely different sets of issues at stake.

Another critical aspect of the exhibition was its relation to performance and performance documentation. The importance of performance practices in the 1960s and 1970s is inextricably linked to the feminist movement. The live and bodily actions performed by women artists at that time politicized the relationship between artist and spectator. Yet what remains of these moments? *WACK!* demonstrated, albeit implicitly, how we experience historical performance art today—that is to say, how the documents and documentation of a staged live performance now serve as physical markers in space.

Exactly because of the ongoing historicization of early performance practices, there is currently much debate about the status of the document in relation to the live event or reenactment.<sup>7</sup> The performance scholar Philip Auslander asserts that the ontological relationship between the document and the performance is far less significant than the phenomenological relationship between the document and the spectator, and this was certainly apparent in the many documents I encountered in the exhibition.<sup>8</sup> The documents of the performance work of Carolee Schneemann, Lili Dujourie, Joan Jonas, Yoko Ono, et cetera, et cetera, are powerful works of art. They designate a different connection between artwork and spectator than is the case in a live setting (each scenario brings about complex temporary relationships, but of course of very different types) because they do not depend on a particular moment in time. More than mere artifacts, these documents move beyond temporal confinement and invite the spectator back in, time and time again.

As an exhibition, *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* took a position at the intersection of many important issues in curating today: challenging the format of the survey exhibition and its undeniable connection to canon building, encouraging intergenerational exchange, and aiding the ongoing historicization of live and performance art. It clearly demonstrated that while these works may be historical, they are far from “over,” and the artists’ legacies remain open-ended and intensely productive.

#### Notes

1. Cornelia Butler, “Art and Feminism: An Ideology of Shifting Criteria” in the exhibition catalogue *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2007): 15.
2. Although Nochlin’s arguments were instrumental in the advancement of feminist art and art history, they also provoked equally essentializing claims of a feminine “greatness,” which caused heated debate among art historians of the 1970s. For a clear response, see Carol Duncan, “When Greatness Is a Box of Wheaties,” *Artforum* 14, no. 2 (October 1975): 60–64.
3. See Marsha Meskimmon’s essay “Chronology Through Cartography: Mapping 1970s Feminist Art Globally” in the exhibition catalogue *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution*.
4. “Art and Feminism: An Ideology of Shifting Criteria,” 16.
5. For example contemporaryfeminism.com, initiated by Jen Kennedy and Liz Linden.
6. And I did so in my master’s thesis, “Feminist Visions: A Constellation of Difference in Psychoanalysis and Feminist Art History” (Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam, 2009).
7. For a comprehensive overview, see Amelia Jones and Adrian Heathfield, *Perform. Repeat. Record. Live Art in History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).
8. Philip Auslander, “The Performativity of Performance Documentation,” *Performing Arts Journal* (PAJ) 84) 28, no. 3 (September 2006): 10.



Oscar Bony  
*La familia obrera* (The Working-Class Family), 1968

BACK IN THE DAY



**EXPERIENCIAS 68:  
A THRESHOLD**

Inés Katzenstein

*Experiencias 68* is a key show in the history of exhibitions. It was part of a series of curatorial experiments that Jorge Romero Brest, a major Argentine critic and curator, designed to showcase the most experimental artists of the late 1960s in Argentina. Though they did not all fall into a distinct category, these emergent artistic practices, he believed, were approaching an uncertain and exciting threshold in art, perhaps even the end of art, but an end that he seemed to understand less as a silencing than as a transformation worth going through.

The artists in these three shows—of which the first was called *Experiencias Visuales 67* and then, once “the visual” ceased to be seen as central to art, just *Experiencias 68* and *69*—found not only a structure for funding, producing, and exhibiting their works, but also a curator willing to create a kind of laboratory to reflect on and theorize about the new art. The show’s presentation accentuated the attitude of experimentation and risk that the artists were beginning to take on.

The importance of *Experiencias 68* does not lie solely in its curatorial innovation. It resides as well in the dramatic and perhaps paradoxical fact that this show became the setting for a series of ideas and events that ultimately effected an unprecedented rupture between artists and institutions in Argentina. It was with this show that the seemingly fluid and mutually legitimizing relationship between the “most advanced” artists (as emerging artists called themselves at the time) and the museums that had been faithfully at their side was fractured, due initially to a specific act of police censorship but, more generally, to a growing atmosphere of dissent.

It was a politically tense time. In 1966, a military dictatorship had seized power in Argentina, and its ultra-Catholic ideology resulted in the persecution of all behavior deemed deviant. The dictatorship gave hippies haircuts



View of Florida Street with artworks destroyed by the artists in *Experiencias 68*, Instituto Torcuato Di Tella, Buenos Aires, 1968

and arrested young people for no reason except “background checks,” pursuing a policy of repression that culminated in violent attacks on university autonomy and induced hundreds of scientists and academics to leave Argentina for good.

Starting in the early 1960s, the Instituto Torcuato Di Tella—a privately run, interdisciplinary center for the visual arts, theater, and experimental music—was the indisputable core of the art scene in Buenos Aires. Its economic and intellectual investment in avant-garde art was rivaled by no other institution. At the helm of the visual arts there was Romero Brest, a critic, curator, charismatic lecturer, and professor who had held a number of high-profile positions at various institutions since the 1930s. By the 1960s, thanks to his power and determination to egg on the most provocative forces in the art world, he was seen as a visionary.

At the Di Tella, Romero Brest worked toward an Argentine art less afflicted by an inferiority complex in relation to European and North American art. To that end, he invited esteemed international critics, including Pierre Restany, Clement Greenberg, William Sandberg, Giulio Carlo Argan, and James Johnson Sweeney, to serve on the juries of the celebrated “Premios Di Tella,” or institutional prizes. He held exhibitions of crucial works by very young international artists such as John Chamberlain, Lygia Clark, Vassilakis Takis, Larry Rivers, Robert Rauschenberg, Kenneth Noland, Jasper Johns, James Rosenquist, Robert Morris, and Sol LeWitt. And he organized a number of shows of Argentine art in the United States, among them *Beyond Geometry* at the Americas Society in New York in 1968 and *New Art from Argentina* at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis in 1964.

On the local scene, his leadership of the Di Tella was extremely successful, as he combined retrospectives of major artists with projects by emerging artists that were provocative and even scandalous for the time. Marta

View of Florida Street with artworks destroyed by the artists in *Experiencias 68*, Instituto Torcuato Di Tella, Buenos Aires, 1968



Minujín, for instance, produced some of her most important environments and happenings at the Di Tella, among them *La Menesunda* (Mayhem, 1965), *El Batacazo* (The Long Shot, 1965), and *Importación-Exportación* (Import-Export, 1968). These were all works that included audience participation, hyperstimulation of the senses, and a general atmosphere of euphoria and confusion.

Despite constant attacks in the press and his own philosophical doubts about the value of this new art, Romero Brest's support grew for work that was beginning a powerful process of dematerialization, leading to a radical transformation of his original program at the Di Tella. The Institute had two annual prizes, one open to artists from around the world, and one open solely to Argentine artists. Partly because of pressure from artists who felt that the prize concentrated too many institutional resources on a single, and always hotly debated, winner, and partly because of his own sense of what the most innovative work required in terms of support, Romero Brest decided to rename the exclusively Argentine prize "Experiencias" and to distribute the award budget among an unranked selection of 12 artists.

This change not only spread out available resources more democratically, but also encouraged the creation of works conceived specifically for the Di Tella exhibition space. As the very name of the event made clear, the intent was not to support the production of self-contained, closed, portable objects geared primarily for visual impact, but to encourage work that was concerned with the perception and experience of the viewer. Romero said of the artists working in this vein at the time: "It's as if they wanted to bring art closer to life—which is the greatest desire of artists throughout the ages—going beyond the intermediary of form-symbol. . . . By formulating situations, artistic creation becomes freer. It is more directly aimed at the freedom of those who experience it. And that is a goal for any artist."<sup>1</sup>

*Experiencias 68* was riddled with conflict from the outset. Pablo Suárez,

1. Jorge Romero Brest, *Conference on Experiencias 68*, archives of the Instituto Torcuato Di Tella. See also *Listen Here Now! Argentine Art of the 1960s*, ed. Inés Katzenstein (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2004): 130.



View of Florida Street with artworks destroyed by the artists in *Experiencias 68*, Instituto Torcuato Di Tella, Buenos Aires, 1968

2. All translations in this essay are by the author.

3. *Primary Structures* was the title of a show curated by Kynaston McShine at the Jewish Museum in New York in 1966. The term was used at that time (even in Buenos Aires) to refer to minimalist art.

one of the artists invited to participate, decided not to produce the work he had initially proposed and instead stood at the entrance to the show, handing out copies of a letter he'd written to Romero Brest. The letter attacked the Di Tella, questioning its legitimacy as a venue for the production and reception of art and calling for a shift in focus toward “life” on the part of art and artists. It stated: “These four walls enclose the secret of transforming everything inside of them into art, and art is not dangerous. . . . It is evident that the need to create a useful language—a living language and not a code for elites—arises insofar as moral situations are formulated in works, and meaning is used as material. A weapon has been invented. A weapon only takes on meaning in action. In a store window display, it lacks any danger.” In closing, Suárez demanded, “Those who want to be understood must say it in the street.”<sup>2</sup>

The show, then, opened in a strange atmosphere. One of the most important figures in the avant-garde scene had issued a condemnation of the prestigious Di Tella and proposed that the street replace it as the best context for aesthetic and political authenticity. The “living language” that Suárez wanted to create took the form of a political message that set out to incite an anti-institutional uprising among the participating artists. Suárez decided to remain outside the confines of the institution to expose the emptiness of the legitimation it conferred and its inability to generate truly powerful experiences.

In sweeping terms, the works presented at *Experiencias 68* fell into two groups. The first could be described as making use of languages called, at that time, “primary structures”—though these pieces were more conceptual than formalist in nature.<sup>3</sup> Works such as Antonio Trotta's receding mirrors and David Lamelas's blank slide projections would fall into this group. Then there were the more experiential works—that is, works whose structure required the viewer to take action in order to establish a relationship or a connection with them. Works by Delia Cancela and Pablo Mesejean, Margarita Paksa,

Roberto Jacoby, and Oscar Bony fall into this group.

Pablo Suárez's dissident stance resonated strongly with some of the works in that second group: *Mensaje en el Di Tella* (Message in the Di Tella, 1968) by Roberto Jacoby included a sign condemning racism in the United States, a French telex reporting live the explosive news of what was happening that May in France, and a flyer that said: "The avant-garde is the intellectual movement that permanently repudiates art and permanently affirms history. All the phenomena of social life have been converted into aesthetic material: fashion, industry, technology, the mass media, etc." And, like Suárez's letter, the work declared: "Aesthetic contemplation has come to an end because the aesthetic has been dissolved in social life."

The other work that shifted attention away from the aesthetic object—in this case, in favor of sociological research—was Oscar Bony's controversial and celebrated *La familia obrera* (The Working-Class Family, 1968), which displayed a proletarian father, mother, and son in the middle of the gallery. The family sat on a pedestal while a recording played the sounds of their daily domestic life. In this work, Bony staged the two pillars of Western society—work and family—both as monuments and as objects on (inherently humiliating) public display. Even though Bony paid them per day as much as the husband would have received for a day's work in a factory, the artwork created a situation where the economic exchange that underlies all work was not bound to any form of productivity whatsoever. It turned the concept of the family as a moral nucleus on its head, making it into a unit that, by placing itself on display for money, prostituted itself. What does it mean for a worker to waste time in the (presumed) non-productivity of art? To be, as Walter Benjamin describes objects in a collection, "things freed from the drudgery of being useful"?<sup>4</sup> "Work" in this piece was reduced to the pure expenditure of human time "in the abstract," to use Karl Marx's term, and as such it belittled the worker's skills, suggesting an equivalence between a hour of "real" work and an hour of "non" work as dictated by an artist. In this process, the artist became a sort of shady class torturer on both sides—that is, for the worker as well as for the art audience.

But, curiously, the work that ignited the wick of scandal was not Bony's act of sociological violence, nor the catastrophic news and earth-shattering ideas voiced by Jacoby, nor the attacks in Suárez's letter. It was, rather, a work that (at least initially) formulated an innocent exercise in architecture and semiotics. *El Baño* (The Bathroom, 1968) by Roberto Plate was an empty, compartmentalized white space suggesting two rows of bathrooms, one designated for women and one for men, which viewers could physically enter. The blank walls of the work were available for scribbling. The writings, which soon included graffitied sexual comments and attacks on the government, led to a police inspection and court-ordered censorship, and, one week after the opening, access to the piece was physically blocked.

4. Walter Benjamin, "Poesía y Capitalismo," *Iluminaciones II* (Madrid: Taurus, 1980): 183.

5. Lamelas and Trotta did not sign the document of the protest.

6. "Para nosotros, la libertad," *Primera Plana* 283 (May 28, 1968): 75.

7. From an artist statement published in Patricia Rizzo, *Experiencias 68* (Buenos Aires: Fundación Proa, 1998): 69. By "obscurantism" Trotta was referring to the beginning of a period of social repression, censorship, and fear, which actually consolidated as such in 1976 with the start of the most atrocious military dictatorship in Argentine history.

In solidarity with Plate and in protest against the establishment of a moralist police state, eight days after the censorship took place, the other participants in the show, at least those who were in Buenos Aires, moved their works from the gallery to the street immediately outside the Di Tella and destroyed them.<sup>5</sup> All the major players at the Di Tella came out to explain the situation to the press and the sponsors. Romero Brest took center stage at a press conference in which he tried to frame the problem philosophically. With a sense of disconcertedness, but also of honesty and courage, he wondered aloud, "Is it important to take action at the institution, even if that action abets its destruction?" With that question, he voiced the classical paradox of institutional critique and specifically alluded to his growing sense that something was coming to an end.

According to an anonymous journalist writing for the influential magazine *Primera Plana*, "No exhibition in recent years has been so coherent with its self-destructive principles. . . . The privileging of event over contemplation, of morality over aesthetics, was operative from the outset, and that is the key to understanding the public's strange fascination with this show. . . . The triumph of a perception based on disruption was the step by which the avant-garde turned its back on frivolity and chose instead commitment."<sup>6</sup>

Antonio Trotta was one of the two artists who did not agree with the course the show was taking. "When a work of art is destroyed, obscurantism begins," he wrote.<sup>7</sup>

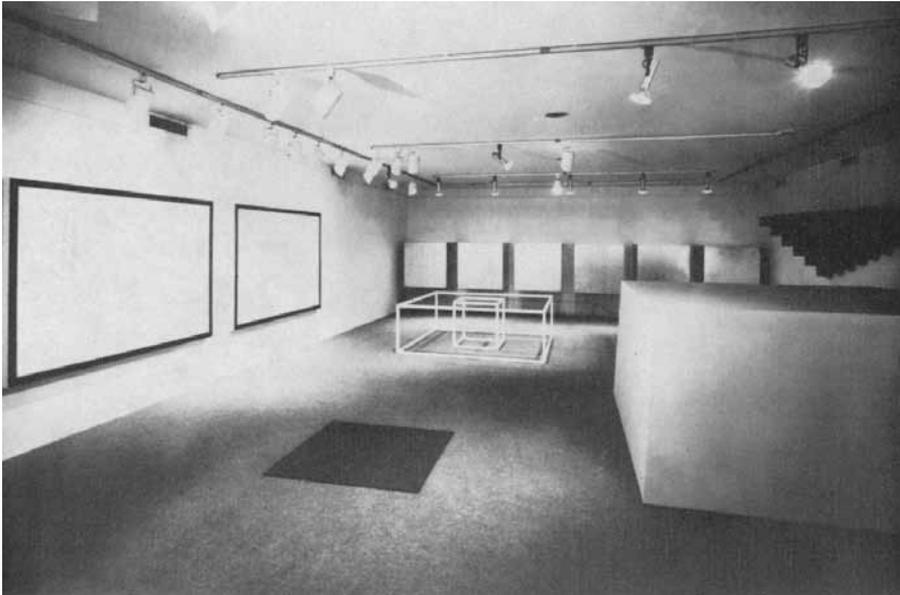
One year later, the last edition of *Experiencias* was held. There were some very strong works in that show, for instance Liliana Porter's false shadows (1968), Luis Camnitzer's *Arte Colonial Contemporáneo* (Colonial Contemporary Art, 1968), which consisted of a sign stating the title of the work located at the entrance of the exhibition space, and closed-circuit experiments by Grupo Frontera. But the institute was under pressure to cut costs, and Romero Brest boldly proposed changing the exhibition space into a television studio run by visual artists, or a research center on mass-media theory. He suggested that the pressures of experimentation would inevitably cause works of art to disappear and that, thus, the exhibition space was ceasing to be the ideal context for art and its operations. The Institute's art centers ended up closing in 1969, and Romero Brest decided to venture into a project called *Fuera de Caja* (Out of the Box), which consisted of producing art for consumption—art as design.

At the same time, the conservative political climate was giving rise to an unusual degree of radicalization among intellectuals and artists. Avant-garde artists were at the forefront of the transition from the so-called "art of ideas" to political radicalism; from criticism of art institutions to outright rupture with those institutions; from the symbolic destruction of the autonomous and bourgeois work of art to the end of the work of art in all its material forms and

the politicizing of its reception; from the art object to intervention in the mass media.<sup>8</sup> One work paradigmatic of this political radicalization was *Tucumán Arde* (Tucumán Is Burning, 1968), a famous but failed counter-information project designed by a group of artists, writers, and trade unionists whose aim was to reveal the alliance between the mass media and the government by setting up an alternative network of information between artists and union members.

The cultural and political atmosphere grew more difficult. Amid police persecution and ethical self-questioning on the part of artists themselves, at the end of the 1960s many remarkable artists left Argentina for various European cities (David Lamelas, Juan Stoppani, Alfredo Rodríguez Arias, Roberto Plate, Cancela-Mesejean, Antonio Trotta) or stopped making art (Pablo Suárez, Margarita Paksa, Oscar Bony, Roberto Jacoby). Years later, when most of them resumed their artistic practices, they employed traditional techniques, formats, and even topics, effectively renouncing the powerful public and political content of their earlier works. *Experiencias 68* was perhaps the bitterest battle in this history, the tear most difficult to suture, the threshold between two moments impossible to join.

8. I am referring to the artists who were proposing a “media art” as theorized by the brilliant critic Oscar Masotta. Media art was a proposal for an art based on the analysis and artistic use of mass media for producing aesthetic and political content. Roberto Jacoby, Eduardo Costa, and Raul Escari signed a manifesto of media art, and Masotta wrote extensively about it during these years. For more information about this, see Inés Katzenstein, *Listen Here Now!*.



*Ten* installation view, Dwan Gallery, New York, 1966, showing works by Jo Baer, Donald Judd, Robert Smithson, Carl Andre, Sol LeWitt, and Robert Morris

## MISSING IN ACTION

**AFTER A FASHION:  
THE GROUP SHOW**

Lucy Lippard

Introduced by Chelsea Haines

“After a Fashion: The Group Show” is an article by Lucy Lippard originally published in the winter 1967 issue of *The Hudson Review*, a quarterly literary magazine with a historic reputation as a major forum for emerging writers. While the text is ostensibly a review of *Systemic Painting*, a group exhibition curated by Lawrence Alloway for the Guggenheim Museum, Lippard’s analysis operates in the service of a much wider examination of the exhibitions and subsequent criticism generated around Minimalist practices at the time.

In her signature bold, clear prose, Lippard scrutinizes three 1966 survey exhibitions of Minimalist work (which she refers to as “rejective” practices): *Systemic Painting* at the Guggenheim, *Primary Structures*, curated by Kynaston McShine at the Jewish Museum, and the artist-organized *Ten* at Dwan Gallery in New York. Each of the three projects is carefully judged: The two museum surveys “included good work, but suffered from a confusion of styles and quality,” while *Ten* “did assemble works of high quality” but ultimately failed in its expressed goal as a conclusive take on Minimalism. Through these three case studies, Lippard charts the pitfalls that often occur in the organization of so-called definitive group exhibitions. She chiefly faults them for combining diverse works under a common, all-encompassing theme; only exhibiting one work per artist; and treating historical work with attenuation or altogether removing its influence from the framework of the exhibition.

Lippard also provides incisive criticism

of criticism by challenging the traditional complaint lodged at these works: that Minimalism is boring, unemotional, and overly cerebral. She deftly deflates the pervasive binary between intellectual rigor and aesthetic experience; argues that boredom often derives from not carefully paying attention to the work of art itself; and attacks the old-fashioned humanist idea that art needs to relate or refer back to the everyday world. She contends that such objections to Minimalist art stem from a stagnation and lack of fresh, independent thinking in American art criticism—a field that at that time was still almost entirely defined by tenets established by Clement Greenberg two decades earlier.

Lippard chose to never become tied to any institution, which gave her a unique freedom to break with convention in both her writing and her curatorial practice. At the time of this article’s publication, she had recently organized *Eccentric Abstraction* at Fischbach Gallery in New York. The exhibition included works by Eva Hesse, Louise Bourgeois, Bruce Nauman, and Keith Sonnier, among others, and dealt for the first time with what Robert Pincus-Witten would later dub Postminimalism. Less a movement than a new approach and attitude toward the art object, it adapted the formal vocabulary of Minimalism to more acutely personal and emotional ends. From *Eccentric Abstraction* to “After a Fashion”—just a few years later, in 1969, these new practices would serve as the foundation of Harald Szeemann’s seminal exhibition *When Attitudes Become Form*.

## AFTER A FASHION: THE GROUP SHOW

After innovation—the critical deluge; after the deluge—fashion; after fashion—the group show; after the group show (and its coverage by mass media)—criticism of criticism. These episodes replace each other rapidly on the art scene today, crowding good and bad art alike off the stage in preparation for the next act. We are now in the last phase of reaction to the current rejective, or minimal, styles. By the last phase, I do not mean that such styles are finished, but that they can soon settle into the relative calm after the museumistic storm; major artists continue to innovate within their innovation and others line up for a new chorus. In 1966–67, non-sculptural structures and structural, or “systemic,” painting will be much in the public eye. This is the fourth season that primary structures have been visible in the galleries, at least the eighth that the styles now dubbed Systemic have been around. The former were sanctified in the spring at the Jewish Museum and the latter just now at the Guggenheim.

At the beginning of every season, not only museums but galleries get the synthesizing group show fever, introducing novelties or recalling the triumphs of the previous season. A small but ambitious exhibition at the Dwan Gallery, largely organized by the artists themselves and called simply *Ten*, attempted to establish an “absolute” standard of rejective paintings and structures hitherto blurred by institutional mistakes; it did not succeed, but it did assemble works of high quality, marred by an occasional inclusion or exclusion. Lawrence Alloway’s *Systemic Painting*, a bigger show, presents a broader target. Like Kynaston McShine’s *Primary Structures*, it was a worthy project and included good work, but suffered from a confusion of styles and quality. In addition, such collections always suffer from their limitation to a single piece by each person. They would be better off with at least two works by a more discriminate choice of artists.

My dissatisfaction with the Guggenheim exhibition was based on the premise on which it was organized as well as the selection’s qualitative unevenness and the inexplicable omission of all West Coast artists (Davis, Kauffman, Irwin, Pettet, Wheeler, Makanna, for a starter). It presented neither a frankly heterogeneous group noting various directions and suggesting new affinities, nor a strictly homogeneous group noting approaches to a shared preoccupation. Very different works were massed under a common label, which implied a common theme and inspired the false assumption that all these artists do have something in common. *Systemic Painting* included at least three major directions, often opposed to each other, and still other overlapping minor directions, and the catalogue preface concentrated on historical events and critical intramuralism preceding all of these.

The first division would be “hard-edge” painting (Smith, Kelly, Huot, Fleming, et al.), a term applied to a broad area of geometric or free-form painting with a certain ambiguity between figure and ground, one or few images, two or three bright colors, and a crisp execution. (This area and its “concrete expressionist” counterpart could have been eliminated without detriment to the show as a unity or a proposition.) The second division would be structural or “primary” painting, also represented at Dwan. It has no image and is often near monotonal, or modular (based on an identical repeated unit), either colorless (Martin, Ryman, Lee) or very subtly and minutely colored (Baer, Mangold, Humphrey, Novros, Barry, Gourfain). The third is a recent offshoot of hard-edge that reintroduces bright, garish color and is fundamentally opposed to structural styles. Whereas hard-edge painting is flat and often single-imaged, and structural painting is flat and all-over, this third strain deals with a new sort of illusionism

that superficially contradicts the mainstream tendency of modern painting to assert its native two-dimensionality. The vehicle is often the shaped canvas (thirteen out of twenty-eight of the *Systemic* painters worked with non-rectangular, or multiple, canvases, and others combined more than one panel into a single rectangle).

[...]

The Dwan exhibition has been called, jokingly, an “anti-Stella show,” its absolute containment being opposed to the kind of idiosyncratic space for which Stella rejected the rejective. This is an indication of Stella’s importance to the whole tendency and of the mixed feelings his subsequent delinquency has aroused, though it should have been obvious all along that despite his statements, he was always disposed to a non-mechanical and offbeat approach. The prime prototype for the rejective vein is Ad Reinhardt, whose unequivocal art-for-art’s-sake stand and elimination of all but the square, trisected canvas made up of three imperceptibly different blacks predicted current trends to a great degree. His black painting at Dwan, one of an “ultimate” series begun in 1960, was visible to only the most attentive eye as more than a solid surface. In its apparent blankness, it stood aloof from the rest of the exhibits, demanding still more esthetically open eyes and minds than the most deadpan of its companions. Its essence is not form, nor the evocative qualities of blackness, but a pervasive black light that is steadily, dully luminous, firmly anchored to the all-but-invisible cross, or trisection, that gives the surface a necessary structure and keeps it from being just a black relief. Reinhardt’s influence on the younger artists shown here, or rather the lack of it, has yet to be fully investigated, though it is no coincidence that Stella’s early works were symmetrical, black, even at times cross-shaped (*Die Fahne Hoch*), or that he owns two Reinhardts. The Reinhardt retrospective at the Jewish Museum should cause adjustment of historical schemes that minimize his contributions over the last twenty years.

There was almost no color in the Dwan show, the work being limited to severe black, white, gray, gray metals, and white light, except for the very narrow borders of blue-green and green-blue on Jo Baer’s “blank” double canvas. Yet there was a great deal of variety, disproving the notion that all rejective art devolves to the same endpoint. Here was the real, preconceived, “systemic” group. Don Judd’s piece consisted of a row of six identical galvanized boxes projecting over three feet from the wall. Its magnificent inertia may not seem rebellious, but it is in fact a statement of opposition to the cleanly easy-to-like attractiveness provided by so much current art (witness the Guggenheim show). Judd’s refusal to relate parts to parts hierarchically, his stolid repetition, is both logical (because it looks implacably “correct” and because straight lines and even numbers give the impression of logic) and illogical (because its impressiveness is way out of proportion to its simplicity and because it is just *there*, filling space). Why should six metal boxes make any demand on our sensibilities? They are well made but not perfect, not smoothly or sensuously surfaced; they are calming, even numbing. Yet they have a candor, exactitude, visual coherence, and conceptual complexity that is as aesthetically satisfying as the most elaborately ingratiating object.

[...]

The intellectual rigor and detachment of rejective art (a term I prefer to “minimal” or “reductive” because it does not imply attrition) is a source of annoyance to more conservative, or less singly involved, critics, because the great personal commitment of these artists is a commitment to making visual objects, rather than to humanism. In the *Systemic* catalogue, Lawrence Alloway asserts the need for critics to reintroduce “other experience” into their appraisals of an art steadfastly opposed to personal interpretation, and Hilton Kramer has concluded that *Systemic Painting* is “an art for critics . . . derived mainly from an analysis of critical theory. Their physical and visual realization offers us not the intervention of a sensibility so much as the technical implementation of a theoretical possibility. The very use of a ‘system’ suggests a flight from sensibility, a conscious evasion of ‘other experience.’” He is right about the conscious evasion, but that is in itself indicative of a sensibility little understood by those who simply don’t react to this kind of work. With all due respect to Mr. Kramer’s

opinions, there is no reason why critical commitment to an art should detract from that art, or in any way suggest that the art derives from the criticism. As a matter of fact, most of the artists in the *Systemic* show do not agree with each other, or with “their” critics, on theoretical or emotional grounds, as is proved by the statements in the catalogue.

The main issue is: Why should critical commitment be interpreted as critical dominance? One reason is the intellectual quality of rejective art; another may be the fact that there has been little American art criticism of note over the last twenty years. As a result, the few good critics (particularly the only author of a sustained critical theory, Clement Greenberg) have been over-appreciated. There is no question that one of the problems facing the young or so-called “new critics” today is, as Mr. Alloway observes, a revaluation and adjustment (not a devaluation) of Mr. Greenberg’s notion of the history of American painting for the last twenty years. Yet even Mr. Greenberg owes the basis of his theories to his acquaintance with the artists themselves and his knowledge of their intentions, problems, and solutions. Given the circumstances of the New York art world today, and the art “world” in many senses *is* New York, it would be most unnatural for critics not to know any artists; those of the same generation are all the more likely to coincide in their viewpoints. The idea that the critic should have nothing in common with the artist is one promulgated by art historians more accustomed to dealing with artists who have been dead for some time. A great majority of the fundamental ideas presented by the new critics come from the artists, from their works and from constant dialogues. If the critics spend more time classifying, analyzing, justifying these ideas than the painters whose task is to provide them in visual form, that is not a matter of exerting influence. The best contemporary literature on the Cubists, for example, was produced by friends of the artists, though needless to say all the friends did not have valid contributions to make. All major critics have been partisan. Aesthetic experience can only be so objective. It should hardly be surprising that the more aesthetically attracted one is to a work or type of work, the more one seeks to explore, hopefully not to rationalize, this attraction. Without some strong commitment, criticism becomes the pedantic, review-oriented, nitpicking, wage-earning esoterica to which book and art reviewers often succumb.

The new criticism is opposed to the “review syndrome” that has plagued contemporary art writing with minutiae, poetry, fanciful journalism, social commentary, and explanations based on a vague premise of *Zeitgeist*. It is founded on the experience of looking at art objects and thinking about their achievements and effects. Ideally the conclusions drawn are readable, but not necessarily easy to read. Like the art it takes its lead from, much recent criticism does not aim to entertain or explain. Yet it is a sad commentary on criticism, and its reception outside the confines of the art world, that serious and frequently scholarly commitment to the idioms of the present is suspiciously interpreted as commercialism, chic, partisanship, academism, or an exercise in boredom. My digression on criticism may be outside the scope of an art chronicle, and can be interpreted as still more critical intramuralism. Yet one of the most depressing facts about writing art criticism today is the extremely limited audience. Artists don’t need it, the general public is too lazy, and knowledge of the contemporary visual arts among the so-called intelligentsia, the readers of quarterlies everywhere, is abysmally nonexistent. There is no reason why art should be considered outside the intellectual domain. If a certain knowledge of recent theater, fiction, film, opera, and music is considered *de rigueur* for a cultivated person, why shouldn’t it also be necessary to know the recent history and major literature of painting? Yet museums and galleries are visited for vaguely culture-seeking motives, or not at all. The art world is no more insular than any other cultural subculture, probably less so, since there is no language barrier. Supposedly all the arts are experienced for aesthetic pleasure and discussed in print for intellectual pleasure, or at least enlightenment. Yet serious art criticism cannot depend on any outside readership, no matter how “cultivated,” to know even the most basic names, facts, or categories involved.

By its very restrictiveness, rejective art opens new areas of aesthetic experience. It even tends to be overstimulating. Above all, it has to be looked at. It will not provide instant depar-

tures for the familiar picture-finding, landscape-spotting, memory-inducing that often passes for enjoyment of abstract art. Like a sky or a large body of water, one of Reinhardt's black paintings, for example, must be seen whole, as itself, without crutches of associative relationship to other objects or sights. So many viewers are lost without this crutch that the new art is often called "boring" or, at the other extreme, it is said to "test the spectator's commitment." The fact is that the process of conquering boredom that makes the pleasure of art fully accessible is a time-consuming one. Most people prefer to stay with boredom, though it does seem, in view of the deluge of recently published comment about boredom in the arts, to be a pretty fascinating boredom. It is ironical that Harold Rosenberg should be one of the most vociferous detractors of "artistic boredom" for, despite his poetic and social insights, he is well known for his frequent inaccuracies of visual observation, his lack of interest in really *looking* at anything.

The exclusion of "lyricism, humanity, and warmth of expression" horrifies Mr. Rosenberg (writing in *Vogue*). Yet do we really turn to painting and sculpture for any of these qualities? Is there any reason why the rarefied atmosphere of aesthetic pleasure should be obscured by everyday emotional and associative obsessions, by definite pasts, presents, and futures, by "human" experience? Humanist content and the need for humanist content in the visual arts in this century is rapidly diminishing; at the moment it rests with photography, film, and the stagnation of figurative art. A painting that is asked to be both a painting and a picture of something else that has nothing to do with painting per se is likely to suffer from its contradictory roles. Visual art is visual. Abstract art objects are made to be seen and not heard, touched, read, entered, interpreted. The expansion of the visual media into other areas has produced many effective results, but they have increasingly less to do with visual art and more to do with a new art of fusion.

Thus the issue of introducing "other experience" into art is, in the context of rejective styles, and for better or for worse, irrelevant. Literature, as a verbal medium, demands a verbal response. But advanced music has not been asked to explain itself symbolically or humanistically for years. Why should painting and sculpture still be scapegoats?

*A few paragraphs containing extended descriptions of specific works  
have been omitted in this reprinting of the original article.*



ATTITUDE



**WHAT I DID  
LAST SUMMER**

**Massimiliano Gioni**

The summer of 2013 was, for me, moderately psychologically unsettling. Not because organizing the Venice Biennale scarred me somehow, but because—once the critics and the public got the chance to visit *The Encyclopedic Palace*, the exhibition I curated in the Central Pavilion and the Arsenale—in the eyes of many observers I was transformed into a proponent of Rudolf Steiner’s anthroposophy, a follower of Carl Jung, a believer in Spiritualism, and a disciple of Aleister Crowley. The fact that this year’s biennale included Steiner’s drawings, Jung’s *Red Book*, paintings by Emma Kunz, Hilma af Klint, and Augustin Lesage with plentiful references to early-20th-century Spiritualism, and pastels by Crowley the magus, alongside many other objects of somewhat odd provenance, not only raised questions and eyebrows—the legendarily bushy ones of Benjamin H. D. Buchloh were apparently dislodged higher than anyone else’s<sup>1</sup>—but initiated a very interesting process of assumed identification between my supposed beliefs and the content of my exhibition. Frequently, commentators took for granted that I had chosen to include certain works or objects because I espoused the ideas or values that they expressed.

In other words, if there are Steiner drawings in a show, the curator must think that Steiner is a great artist and that his philosophical theories are not only legitimate, but to be admired and celebrated. These assumptions were made not only by the many fervid admirers of Steiner who started writing me heartfelt letters, or the various Crowley-inspired organizations that sent me magazines and catalogues—some truly interesting, others simply frightening—but also by a number of people from the art world, even professional critics.

What do such reactions say about our expectations, and the role we attribute to the task of a curator or exhibition organizer?

First and foremost, they suggest that a curator is presumed almost by

1. Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, “The Entropic Encyclopedia,” *Artforum* 52, no. 1 (September 2013): 311–17. Having quite bushy eyebrows myself, I have only the utmost respect for Buchloh.

definition to be a supporter, defender, and admirer of the works he or she puts in a show. This idea, which in my view is quite reductive and naive, has gained ground since the mid-1990s with the emergence of a generation of artists and curators who could be linked in various ways—and I'm drastically oversimplifying—to Relational Aesthetics. According to this interpretation, the curator acts a sort of agent. He or she supports a group of artists (who may be from different generations, their number and backgrounds varying from show to show as the curator's stable continues to morph and change) and exhibits them with the tacit or explicit conviction that they are "the best"—that these particular artists should be chosen over others, that they are the trailblazers, the groundbreakers, right now.

This may be an inherited notion from the early-20th-century avant-garde, or from the postwar period and its neo-avant-garde. It is a model that became dramatically widespread in the 1980s, when certain curators would preponderantly champion specific movements and tendencies. In the 1990s, a new generation of curators imposed a new generation of artists, but replicated the same relationships of complicity between curator and artist. This conception is therefore grounded in a total identification between the curator and the work of the artists he or she exhibits. It is a conception that in my opinion forces a competitive model onto both exhibitions and artworks, imposing—whether intentionally or not—the idea that an exhibition or museum is a hierarchy, a club, a mechanism of exclusion and hence of adding value, aimed at presenting the best works by the most important artists.

This model of curator-as-promoter has been joined or replaced by the model of curator-as-creator, whose job seems to be playing with the exhibition format itself, and with the rules of the artwork-presentation game. But here as well, it appears that, by tacit consensus, everyone sees the curator as supporting and admiring all the works in a show, and entrusting them all with the task of embodying a certain idea of quality.

In contrast to these two models, I prefer to see the curator as a scholar or—better—as an interpreter of the works on display. Being a scholar or interpreter doesn't necessarily imply a passive, bookish, or neutral stance toward the works, but rather a quite dynamic one, in which the very way the works are presented, the installation, the montage, the spatial arrangement and choice of critical apparatus—texts, captions, settings—provide a series of tools for interpretation, a hermeneutic space for viewers. And the viewers are invited not just to contemplate objects assumed to be beautiful or to memorize a list of names assumed to be important, but above all to ask themselves why a given artist and work has been included rather than another, and venture into a series of encounters, juxtapositions, relationships, and narratives that complete, question, and enrich one another.

The act of exhibiting thus becomes an interpretive learning process in which what is on display is the act of interpretation itself, and in which both

curator and viewer become involved as they move through the exhibition.

Unlike the curator-as-supporter, the attitude of the curator-as-interpreter requires a healthy detachment from the objects under examination. Although nowadays we live in an era of radical relativism and know that any claim to objectivity is impossible, an interpreter or a scholar is generally expected to maintain a certain distance from his or her subject of study, or at any rate can study a subject without necessarily becoming a supporter of it. To use a crude example: We don't expect a scholar of the Holocaust or of Adolf Hitler to be a Nazi. Actually, we expect a sort of balance, a scientific detachment. Whereas a curator who deals with Steiner is necessarily a Steinerist.

Thinking of curators as scholars and interpreters also means granting them room to disagree with the views expressed by some of the artworks and objects on display. It means letting them include objects and works without conferring any primacy on those objects or works, regardless of their supposed quality, for the sake of demonstration or for the sake of argument. It means letting them include certain objects and artworks because they raise questions and problems, not because they form a canon or a hierarchy.

Being an interpreter also means approaching the artworks and objects in an exhibition without prejudice, or, rather, with an awareness of the prejudices that form one's horizon of interpretation. It means putting one's ear to the work to make out what it is whispering, to let it speak without too much interference, recognizing the partiality and subjectivity of both the work and one's own interpretation. Being an interpreter means giving the work space to exist without necessarily sharing its viewpoint. It means passing on the stories the work contains without necessarily identifying with it and with them. It means being able to understand Steiner or Jung without thereby becoming their ideologues, mouthpieces, or supporters. It might even mean the chance to gently misinterpret a work, so long as one acknowledges that one's interpretation is indeed partial, and not the presentation of some definitive truth. In fact, I think today this is the most important responsibility of curators and institutions, be they biennials or museums: a systematic questioning of the accepted canons and hierarchies of art history and, by extension, truth. Or, as Manuel Borja-Villel put it in the last issue of this journal, "the questioning of a totalizing view through the articulation of exceptions and discontinuities, [through which] the very learning process becomes part of the narration."<sup>2</sup>

Of course, I've never tried to disguise my partiality—my affection, even—for the works and objects I put in my exhibitions, and for certain figures who I believe have been unfairly sidelined. But that doesn't mean I share their ideas or beliefs. Being an interpreter also means entering into an empathetic relationship with one's object of study, the better to understand it, to hear its original voice, even to help it reverberate in all its intensity. But it doesn't mean slavishly accepting it. That is the risk run by curators who turn themselves into artist promoters: that they'll become the custodians of a

2. Manuel Borja-Villel, "To Have and to Hold," *Exhibitionist 8* (October 2013): 8. A similar position is expressed by Anselm Franke in his exhibitions and in his recent contribution to *The Exhibitionist*: "New Ways Beyond Art," *Exhibitionist 8* (October 2013): 54–64 (in particular p. 57). His refusal of what he calls the "clinical exhibition" model represents a similar claim against the presumed objectivity that too often is projected onto institutions and museums. The productive confusion between artworks and artifacts that characterizes his exhibitions resonates with many ideas I am trying to put forward in this essay and in my exhibitions, particularly when it comes to exposing the implicit narratives that museums often take for granted or prefer to hide.

3. Inexplicably, among the many reviews, nobody pointed out that if the true intent of the exhibition was rigorous research, why not stage the exhibition in the original spaces of the Kunsthalle Bern, which, coincidentally, are in danger of being closed due to budget cuts and populist politicians?

4. Germano Celant is in fact an incredibly sophisticated curator who throughout his legendary career has radically reinvented exhibition formats. His 1976 *Ambiente/Arte* exhibition at the Venice Biennale deserves to be much more thoroughly studied. More recently, his *The Small Utopia. Ars Moltiplicata*, staged at the Prada Foundation in Venice in 2012, was a masterful curatorial endeavor proposing a richly complex reading of art history.

dogma and a message, messengers rather than interpreters—a job that is best left to gallerists and estate representatives.

In *The Encyclopedic Palace*, figures such as Steiner, Jung, Kunz, af Klint, and Crowley (to stick with the examples cited earlier) offered evidence of possession by images—with bodies literally becoming their medium—which to me appeared quite contemporary, as images and communication tools become ever more bodily invasive. The choice to include specific examples of mediumistic painting was also meant to foster reflection on the supposed autonomy of artworks, and of abstract art in particular. Many artists who are considered outsiders, non-canonical, or self-taught seem to share a common fate: They are not recognized as artists because their work is supposedly linked to a practical purpose, whether therapeutic or divinatory, that falls outside the presumably gratuitous realm of pure art.

In summer 2013, there was much renewed discussion of Harald Szeemann's groundbreaking methods of exhibition making. The re-creation of his 1969 exhibition *When Attitudes Become Form* staged at Fondazione Prada in Venice by Germano Celant, Thomas Demand, and Rem Koolhaas deserves a quick aside, not only because it became one of this summer's most talked-about exhibitions, but because it paradoxically proved—once again, if proof were ever necessary—that Szeemann's talent cannot be so easily emulated or (worse) sterilely repeated.

History, Karl Marx said, repeats itself, first as tragedy, then as farce. Perhaps Celant, Demand, and Koolhaas should have remembered these famous words. How sad, instead, to witness the complete desiccation of an exceptional moment of explosive creativity in the curators' transformation of the 1969 exhibition, installed in the incongruously grandiose and frescoed rooms of Ca' Corner. What was meant as a rigorous exercise in philological reconstruction appeared more like a *CSI* episode in which forensic calculations expunged any trace of life from the already stiffening corpse of art history.<sup>3</sup> The problem with the reloaded version of *When Attitudes Become Form* was not only that it failed to be an accurate reconstruction—and how could it have been, in such a different setting?—but that it presupposed an objective view of art history, in which alleged masterpieces can be ossified and glorified by restoring their original presentation.<sup>4</sup>

What the Venetian travesty seemed to miss completely was possibly the most crucial and inspiring aspect of Szeemann's legacy from the less famous but perhaps more complex period of his career, which stretched from *Bachelor Machines* (1975) to *Austria in a Net of Roses* (1996), by way of *Visionary Switzerland* (1991), *Monte Verità* (The Breasts of Truth, 1978), and *The Penchant for the Total Work of Art* (1983). That crucial and inspiring aspect was his total allergy to accepted categories of art and non-art, quality, and taste. Szeemann's encyclopedic shows were all founded on a systematic questioning of the status of the objects on display, calling upon a combination of artworks and

documents, masterpieces and found objects, often even blurring the line between original and copy.<sup>5</sup>

Of course, in the Szeemann system, the inclusion of eccentric figures and oddball objects was infused with romanticism, and he often seemed unconditionally infatuated with all the works and artists in his shows. But his most radical contribution—or at least what has served me most as an inspiration and tool of liberation—is a concept of the exhibition that, to borrow an effective wording, goes beyond categories of good and evil. A type of show where it no longer matters whether the artists on display are the best and the works the most important. An approach to exhibition making that is no longer competitive, that is concerned not with imposing hierarchies, but with expanding the art historical canon, with writing and rewriting a minor history of art. An approach to exhibition making in which artifacts and artworks serve as figurative evidence of visions of the world, traces of existential adventures, documents of cultural models and cultural imaginaries, rather than simple objects to be contemplated for their alleged beauty or value, whether monetary or aesthetic.

Poor Harald Szeemann must be spinning in his grave from the way his name is trotted out on all sides these days. And, to be honest, he certainly hasn't been the only one to envision new forms of exhibition making. This same year, another interesting paradigm has gained ground to the point that it is unfortunately already in danger of congealing into a trend. In Rosemarie Trockel's 2012 solo exhibition *A Cosmos*—masterfully curated by Lynne Cooke and presented in various iterations, the richest and most complex being at the New Museum in New York (full disclosure: I'm its associate director)—the German artist's works are accompanied by those of famous or little-known traveling companions, friends, artists, and dilettantes who shared Trockel's impatience with categories and genres.

In a similar way, Philippe Parreno opened the doors of his 2013 retrospective at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris to the works of John Cage, Merce Cunningham, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Liam Gillick, Pierre Huyghe, and Tino Sehgal. This notion of hospitality could perhaps provide a model for a type of exhibition—solo or group, it matters little—that includes works and objects of varying provenance, in a polyphony devoid of hierarchies. To welcome guests into your home, you don't have to subscribe to their views; you just have to offer a warm, clean, well-lit place where they can be themselves and express their opinions. Hosts and guests may disagree, but, to echo a famous writer (beloved to builders of encyclopedic palaces): While disapproving of what you say, I will defend to the death your right to say it. Perhaps, to take an overly romantic view, the curator's role is precisely that. Which may be the same as saying I'm a Steinerist, a Jungian, and a Crowleyite, not because I believe blindly in their ideas or works, but because I believe their ideas and works are worth sharing.

5. Szeemann played with the idea of reconstructions and remakes throughout his career, starting with reconstructed machines inspired by the writings of Raymond Roussel and Franz Kafka, which he presented in *Bachelor Machines*.

ASSESSMENTS



**BERGEN  
ASSEMBLY  
2013:  
MONDAY  
BEGINS ON  
SATURDAY**

## WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Christopher Y. Lew

“To biennial or not to biennial?” was the question proposed by the city of Bergen in 2009. While their verb choice may have been dubious, their answer in fall 2013 was a conceptually tight exhibition that avoided trendy spectacle and kept in mind its sociopolitical locale. Exhibition organizers Ekaterina Degot and David Riff—calling themselves “conveners” rather than curators—mounted a show scattered across 11 sites in Norway’s picturesque second city. *Monday Begins on Saturday*, the first edition of the triennial Bergen Assembly, was predicated on the notion of the institution—a seemingly utopic workplace where the process is valued as much as the outcome.

An undercurrent of creative diligence ran throughout the show. It was emblematic, for instance, in the performative installation *Artworks of the Future* (2013) by Mariusz Tarkawian. Working six days a week, seated at a desk in the Kunsthalle project space, Tarkawian made a series of index-card-size drawings illustrating future works by established, lesser-known, and even imaginary artists. They included a nude made by Rineke Dijkstra in 2020, signage by an anonymous artist highlighting class inequality in 2060, a two-headed satyr Matthew Barney will make in 2021, and other humorous prognostications. Presented in a grid surrounding the desk, Tarkawian’s installation envisioned a future art world engendered by the daily work of drawing.

*Monday Begins on Saturday* was structured as 11 individual institutes (Tarkawian’s project was part of the Institute of the Disappearing Future),

with each section loosely inspired by the eponymous Soviet science fiction novel by Arkady and Boris Strugatsky, published in 1964. In the novel, researchers happily toil days, nights, and through the weekend, combining magic and science to investigate human happiness. While this situation could also serve as an optimistic description of the plight of today’s creative workers, Degot and Riff preferred to draw parallels between the Soviet institutional system of the 1960s and Norway’s contemporary socialist society. They compared—occasionally with *too* much concision—two systems constructed on different foundations: one built on the backs of the proletariat, and the other on capitalist petroleum interests. Describing the sociopolitical conditions for the triennial in their catalogue essay, Degot and Riff liken Norway’s egalitarian spirit and modest demeanor to “an expensive and prosperous Soviet Union.” One of the few truly socialist nations, Norway is also a country that is integrated into global capital. It is dependent on that system as an oil-exporting nation with one of the world’s largest sovereign wealth funds.

Largely comprised of long-duration videos, the exhibition favored moving pictures that were expository in nature. Chto Delat’s new video *A Border Musical* (2013) emphasizes Russo-Norwegian connections by describing a love affair and ensuing culture clash between a lower-class Russian musician and a Norwegian from Finnmark. Taking the form of a musical, the video leaves little room for ambiguity in its depictions of immigration, love, and community. Jan Peter Hammer’s *Tilikum* (2013) presents a relationship of a different sort. The essayistic video revolves around Tilikum, a bull orca who killed his Sea World trainer and two others in three separate incidents. Teasing out connections between marine mammal entertainment facilities, Cold War research, animal psychology, and New Age aspirations to

communicate with dolphins, Hammer evokes a conspiratorial air in which applied research devolves into LSD-fueled delusions. Christian von Borries’s atmospheric video *I’m M* (2013) is what the artist calls a science fiction documentary in five parts. Its images of street scenes and independence-day celebrations in Mexico are accompanied by a moody soundtrack of beeps and drones. The scenes are decontextualized by the music, becoming both a document of a specific time and place as well as a visual essay unmoored.

Other video works—such as a history play set in Norway and the Middle East by Jumana Manna and Sille Storihle, IRWIN’s interviews with applicants for a fictitious passport, Wong Men Hoi’s meanderings through Bergen and its environs, and Ane Hjort Guttu’s interpretation of her son’s playtime as art—all play to a specific aesthetic, one that favors narrative and a certain level of didacticism. While the content of the works was timely and apt, a dry, cerebral quality ran through much of the exhibition, demanding patience and attention—evoking, perhaps, the durational experience of bureaucratic queues.

Clearly not an exhibition of art for art’s sake, *Monday Begins on Saturday* did point to the act of research as both a means and an end. The Strugatsky brothers put it well in their novel in their description of the workers:

They worked in an Institute that was dedicated above all to the problems of human happiness and the meaning of human life, and, even among them, not one knew exactly what was happiness and what precisely was the meaning of life. So they took it as a working hypothesis that happiness lay in gaining perpetually new insights into the unknown, and the meaning of life was to be found in the same process.

Pure research, thus, becomes yet another art form, a practice that continues to develop regardless of outcome. The photographs of Soviet researchers exhibited in the Institute of the Disappearing Future—scientists poring over drawings and models, or examining punch cards—depict iconic scenes from an era that could not sustain itself. Describing the realities of socialism, Degot and Riff write in their catalogue essay, “These rooms were about a system where production failed but research blossomed.” The only ones to appreciate what blossomed and bore fruit were the ones who themselves put in the work. Or, in other words, if no one witnessed the collapse of the Institute of One Hand Clapping, did it make a sound?

## MORE VERBS, PLEASE

Åse Løvgren

How to biennial? This was the frequently repeated question of a 2009 international conference that investigated the potential for a perennial exhibition based in Bergen, Norway. The conference was followed by the extensive *Biennial Reader*, which collected both previously published and newly commissioned essays about the biennial format.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the local art community in Bergen arranged several discussions, alternately investigating, criticizing, dismissing, or supporting the city’s ambition to add an international art exhibition to its portfolio of cultural institutions.

In the local debate, in which I took part, most of the art scene resisted hints from politicians wanting to make it into a provincial opportunity for showcasing Bergen artists. Rather, the hope was to find other ways of activating the local

aspect. If Bergen was to climb aboard the biennial ferry ride, it had to challenge this format and not just make another biennial in the city-branding tradition. The groundwork should thus have been laid for the possibility to begin “maturing away from exhibition/event culture and embark on moving beyond a spectacular, large-scale, international exhibition-festival,” to quote Maria Hlavajova’s essay in the aforementioned reader.<sup>2</sup>

What eventually became a triennial (and not a biennial) took the name Bergen Assembly, with a subtitle that hinted at its investigative nature: “An Initiative for Art and Research.” The advisory board chose not to use the word “curator,” but rather “convener,” and, together with public declarations that the event would gather professionals from different fields, the new institution certainly suggested that something new—not just another triennial—was coming to town.

The first iteration, *Monday Begins on Saturday*, was made by the hands and heads of Ekaterina Degot and David Riff, with the title borrowed from a 1964 science fiction novel by Arkady and Boris Strugatsky. The different sites were formulated as research institutes, taking inspiration from the novel, for instance the Institute of Political Hallucinations and the Institute of Love and the Lack Thereof. Degot and Riff wrote in the publication:

The focus was on a particular topic with a rather narrow group of artists, using the novel as an aesthetic device to take a sidelong or oblique look at the contemporary conditions under which so-called research-based practices in art operate. More importantly, and perhaps more boldly, we wanted to reveal the possibility for imagining an afterlife for dialectical materialism on the magnetic fields of contemporary art.<sup>3</sup>

As a local, it is hard for me to assess *Monday Begins on Saturday* without being somewhat prejudiced by the preparations and pre-exhibition statements. Consisting of an exhibition spread over 11 sites in Bergen (most of them white-cubish art institutions), a publication (which didn’t differ much from an exhibition catalogue), and a conference, its structures didn’t move far beyond the usual biennial basics. The rebaptizing of “triennial” as “assembly” and “curator” as “convener” became Orwellian newspeak in this regard. That said, Riff and Degot clearly stated during the opening days that what they had made was an exhibition, and, as exhibition makers, they manifested a fine touch in letting the artworks come through with their own agenda and language while conveying an urgency in their curatorial statements.

The irrational, magical, and utopian sensibility of the Strugatski novel resonated through the exhibition, which avoided the traps of merely repeating, visualizing, or ornamenting vulgarized political truths. Many of the artworks were in different ways treating contemporary sociopolitical situations while musing into the future either from a contemporary or earlier position. For instance, there was a section of six Socialist sci-fi films, the earliest from 1924. This combination of historical, contemporary, and future (!) references made the magical come to life in various productive ways. For instance Alexander Rodchenko’s documentary photos (1933) of the harsh Karelian landscape took on an almost dystopian aspect in this exhibition; some of them felt surprisingly contemporary.

Wong Men Hoi’s video *The East Is Red* (2013) was maybe the most successful example of a work that connected the different localities and histories permeating the whole exhibition. In the work, sequences showing the protagonist lost in the Norwegian mountains with his revolutionary red flag are



*Monday Begins on Saturday* installation view, KNIPSU as the Institute of Love and the Lack Thereof, Bergen, Norway, 2013, showing Chlo Delat's *A Border Musical*, 2013



Ane Hjort Guttu, still from *Untitled (The City at Night)*, 2013

*Monday Begins on Saturday* installation view, KODE 1 as the Institute of Imaginary States, Bergen, Norway, 2013, showing Maxim Spivakov's *Marks*, 2013



*Monday Begins on Saturday* installation view, Bergen Kunsthalle as the Institute of the Disappearing Future, Bergen, Norway, 2013, showing Pelin Tan and Anton Vidokle's *2084: Episode I*, 2012





*Monday Begins on Saturday* installation view, Bergen Kunsthalle as the Institute of the Disappearing Future, Bergen, Norway, 2013, showing Socialist sci-fi films (left) and Soviet photography (below)





Bergen Assembly 2013: Monday Begins on Saturday



*Monday Begins on Saturday*  
installation view, Bergen Kjøtt as  
the Institute of Defensive Magic,  
Bergen, Norway, 2013, showing  
Stephan Dillemath's *Department  
of surveillance* (2013)



Bergen Assembly 2013: Monday Begins on Saturday



*Monday Begins on Saturday*  
installation view, KODE 1 as the  
Institute of Imaginary States,  
Bergen, Norway, 2013, showing  
IRWIN's *NSK Passport Holders*,  
2007–ongoing, and IRWIN and  
NSKSTATE.COM's *Words from  
Africa*, 2007

*Monday Begins on Saturday* installation view, Bergen Kunsthalle as the Institute of the Disappearing Future, Bergen, Norway, 2013, showing Mariusz Tarkawian's *Artworks of the Future*, 2013



*Monday Begins on Saturday* installation view, Ostre as the Institute of Pines and Prison Bread, Bergen, Norway, 2013, showing Wong Men Hoi's *The East Is Red*, 2013



interspersed with interviews with activists from the Norwegian Mao-Leninist political movement of the 1970s. In the mountains, the man is passed by joggers and people on Sunday walking trips, clothed in the ubiquitous training clothes with shrieking colors as a contrast to his gray outfit. They show no interest in his endeavor; obviously there is no room for his utopian flag or social radicalism in a society where body culture and consumerism have taken over.

In a similar vein, the artist Ane Hjort Guttu stated during the conference that the conformist Norwegian post-welfare state situation is not the best environment for visionary thoughts. In the exhibition she presented, among other works, *Untitled (The City at Night)* (2013), a video that problematizes art's (lack of) interaction with the outside world and how artists relate to their public role through their works or practices. It tells the story of an artist who decides to stop exhibiting her work because of what she experiences as an unbridgeable separation between art and real life.

Another work that dealt with the distinction between art and life, and how life sometimes intervenes and changes an art project, was IRWIN's video installation *NSK Passport Holders* (2007–ongoing). The NSK State was invented in 1992 by the groups belonging to the Neue Slowenische Kunst (NSK) art collective. The state doesn't have any territory or national borders. Rather, it is a virtual state in time: transnational, spiritual, and utopian. Citizenship is open to all, and one can apply for an NSK passport through the state's website. Since the beginning of the 2000s there has been a considerable increase in applications by Nigerians, who seemingly hope to use the passport to immigrate to Europe, and the videos show interviews with some of these people. It is interesting to see how this new reception of the NSK State

project has changed the project itself from dealing mostly with a European situation and poetic utopianism to dealing with global issues of unequal social and geographic mobility, and how this mirrors historical changes in Europe.<sup>4</sup> The interviews show the “magnetic field of contemporary art” meeting with real people in urgent situations—a meeting that is simultaneously absurd, humorous, and heartbreaking.

Chto Delat presented their film *A Border Musical* (2013), set in the cities of Kirkenes and Nikel, on either side of the border between Norway and Russia, respectively. The border represents a high degree of inequality in terms of living standards. Rather than stating the obvious, however, *A Border Musical* enacts different sets of values and cultural habits, and our sympathy oscillates between the different parties, with no final moral lesson or synthesis offered. Or, in keeping with the dialectical terminology, maybe Chto Delat's video *is* the actual synthesis, the space where conflicting statements can be enacted and brought together without a final reconciliation.

Degot and Riff, writing about their encounter with Bergen, mused upon what narrative they could add to this city: “Artists are words—usually adjectives, sometimes substantives, seldom verbs.”<sup>5</sup> For my part, I would have liked more verbs in their narrative—not as in more artists or artworks, but in the sense that their endeavor would *perform* rather than *present*, and explore its own format. In the aftermath of the triennial, Bergen certainly has a lot of substantives, such as dialectical materialism, but no more verbs than before in order to imagine the world differently.

#### Notes

1. Elena Filipovic, Marieke Van Hal, and Solveig Øvstebo, eds., *The Biennial Reader* (Bergen, Norway: Bergen Kunsthall; and Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2010).

2. Maria Hlavajova, “How to Biennial? The Biennial in Relation to the Art Institution,” *ibid.*, 296.

3. *Monday Begins on Saturday* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2013): 22.

4. Meaning, from the Yugoslavian collapse and the rise of new states to an integrated EU with strong control over its borders.

5. *Monday Begins on Saturday*, 13.

## ART IN THE AGE OF THE NORWEGIAN SEMI-SOCIAL- DEMOCRATIC- POST-WELFARE STATE

Laurel Ptak

*Monday Begins on Saturday* presented difficult questions about the function and status quo of art today, while grounding this inquiry within much broader social narratives. The organizing principle, along with the exhibition's title, were skillfully lifted by curators Ekaterina Degot and David Riff from a 1964 sci-fi novel by Arkady and Boris Strugatsky, written during the height of the Cold War and parodying the Soviet research boom then in progress. The novel depicts the scientists as a motley group of state-funded researchers ceaselessly investigating eccentric things, often using bizarre methods. The exhibition asked us to contemplate the figure of the artist in parallel by problematizing the notion of artistic research. This played out in its very framework, which divvied up artworks among various fantastical “research institutes” spread throughout the city of Bergen. There were institutes of Perpetual Accumulation, Lyrical Sociology, Tropical Fascism, Political Hallucinations, and more.

The Institute of the Disappearing Future set the tone with a handful of 1960s Soviet press photographs by Anatoly Boldin, Anatoly Khrupov, Vladimir Lagrange, and others, depicting young, determined, fashionable-looking women and men hovering over desks, contemplatively working ideas and materials into plans for the collective future. The pictures read as faded propagandistic promises that scientific and rational forms of knowledge could lead to the realization of an ideal communist society, but they also invited viewers to scrutinize how knowledge might be instrumentalized today.

Two rooms away, watching Pelin Tan and Anton Vidokle's episodic, on-going video *2084*, it was difficult not to compare those faded Soviet promises to the artistic and creative forms of knowledge that are in the clutches of neoliberal capitalism today. In *Episode 1* (2012) we encounter a number of young, determined, fashionable-looking women and men from Berlin's international art scene. As they read aloud excerpts from sci-fi novels and extemporaneously theorize about art, culture, and society in the year 2084, another specter of the future springs to mind. As the city's mayor has—in reality—spelled out in his forward-looking 10-year plan, “Berlin will be the mecca for the creative class.” Lauding the figure of the artist, with all its risk-taking individualism, has been in part what has allowed the city to abolish collective forms of equity such as unionized workforces and public housing.<sup>1</sup>

The exhibition's fixation on artistic research was, in one sense, a measured curatorial retort to its larger context as the inaugural edition of a contemporary art triennial initiated by the city of Bergen and described as “An Initiative for Art and Research.” Meanwhile, across Europe, funding and educational opportunities for artists increasingly fall under this rubric of “research” in step with measures such as cultural auster-

ity and the standardization, if not marketization, of higher education known as the Bologna Process. One artist, a candidate in an “artistic research” PhD program, has articulated his skepticism and sense of what's at stake: “What kind of broader implications did [artistic research] have for art's relationship to the discourse of science, to capital, to nationalism, and the EU as a political body, and to art's conception of and relationship to itself—its own procedures, itineraries, competencies, and sense of political or cultural efficacy?”<sup>2</sup>

Rather than making us more cynical, however, the exhibition had a miraculous way of provoking the desire to imagine what spaces of artistic non-complicity might look like. This very question is deliberated in Ane Hjort Guttu's subtly powerful video *Untitled (The City at Night)* (2013). The work recounts the story of how one anonymous artist becomes entirely detached from art's social and financial order. In the video, the artist, who works at an art gallery, is traumatized one day when a homeless acquaintance of hers is ejected with hostility by a coworker. She finds herself forced to question what art's function really is and eventually settles on an extreme form of withdrawal, coming to terms with a quiet meaning found in self-expression as she continues over the years to generate an enormous archive of obsessive, abstract work, knowing that it will never have an audience.

In a memorable moment during the exhibition's opening symposium, the Oslo-based Hjort Guttu described herself as “the utmost product of the Norwegian semi-social-democratic-post-welfare state.” She recounts an entire artistic life thoroughly subsidized, replete with free education, grants, and employment within state-run institutions, providing her with the stable means to have a family, buy a home, and bypass the need for gallery representation. If one compares this to the

plight of artists in cities such as New York—the cultural context with which I am most familiar—her scenario actually has the chilling effect of seeming not far removed from science fiction.

And this is where *Monday Begins on Saturday's* most subtle and important work was done. Its audience was tasked with keeping three visions for society constantly in tension: communism's past, capitalism's seemingly hegemonic future, and the welfare state's waning present. The exhibition obliged us to think not just about what artworks and their juxtaposition might mean in the context of an exhibition, but about something much heavier: What is the role of the artist, of self-expression, and of knowledge in contemporary society? What do we want them to be, and what structures must we transform or newly imagine to get us there?

#### Notes

1. Quinn Slobodian and Michelle Sterling, “Sacking Berlin,” *The Baffler* 23 (July 2013).

2. Michael Baers, “Inside the Box: Notes from Within the European Artistic Research Debate,” *e-flux journal* 26 (June 2011).

---

## LOVE FOR LABOR

Johanne Nordby Wernø

---

The 11 venues of the premiere edition of the Bergen Assembly triennial included several artist-run spaces, a former meat factory on the city's outskirts, the Kunsthalle, and two museum wings near the central lake. All were collectively cast as one big spatial analogy to *Monday Begins on Saturday*, a 1964 sci-fi novel by the Russian brothers Arkady and Boris Strugatsky. Inspired by the book's caricatures of the Soviet Union's numerous more-or-less scien-

tific institutions of what-have-you, Ekaterina Degot and David Riff named all the venues “Institutes” of various dubiously utopian purposes, for example Zoopolitics, Imaginary States, and, lest we forget, Love (and the Lack Thereof).

Bergen Assembly had already been rigorously examined long before this first edition actually opened, most notably through the well-attended international preparatory conference of 2009, To Biennial or Not to Biennial, and the subsequent *Biennial Reader* published by Hatje Cantz in 2010. It was thus only after an art-world think tank had been called to put forward its conclusions that the city of Bergen, a municipality known for an enviably close and respectful collaboration with its own art scene (enviable in particular to those from the larger, but in this respect less privileged, capital city of Oslo), decided on a triennial—not biennial—structure, and had an artistic board invite its curators. Or “conveners,” as the Assembly terminology went.

The young institution certainly raised the stakes for itself by deciding on not one, but two challenging themes. First, on a formal level, the ubiquity of biennials/triennials. And second, on a curatorial level, the topic of artistic research. Its take on both was promising. The choice of an exhibition recurring every three years rather than every two will provide more time for reflection between editions. And its particular take on the (well-worn) angle of “artistic research” made the topic come alive in a very welcome way.

The Moscow-based curatorial team of Riff and Degot invited artists, writers, and so on to be not artists, writers, and so on, but “researchers,” in line with the novel’s cast of characters. This recasting of the venues as individual Institutes, and the curators’ stated attempt to “write” with the works of artists in space as well as with the works of writers on the page—in short, the whole transition from novel to exhibi-

tion—was nicely executed as a conceptual whole, although it was far from obvious how the works in each Institute corresponded with its declared area of research, as announced on bronze plaques at each entrance.

I’d made a second visit to the Venice Biennale immediately before going to Bergen (also for a second visit), and it may be an unfair comparison, but the selection of artworks at the Assembly did strike me as very homogenous. In particular the dominance of video work felt exhausting. For reasons still obscure to this writer, the moving image was intentionally given priority by the curators. The result of that decision was an exhibition that only a small percentage of visitors could experience in anything near its entirety. Speaking of utopias, one such dream state would be that someone with only a day or three in town—the case for most visitors—might succeed in finding the time required for such a volume of time-based work. The dominance of film and video left me enjoying the mere *idea* of many of the works in question—an idea based on written descriptions, the excerpts I did manage to see (the films thus sadly reduced to sound bites), and the general buzz among visitors. Not my preferred way to experience art.

Film and video works not to be missed (and these I saw in full, I promise) included Ane Hjørt Guttu’s two pieces. Her *Untitled (The City at Night)* (2013) in the KODE 4 museum was a slow, quiet, yet spellbinding portrait of a perhaps-random local artist working for years on a large art piece nobody will ever see, reluctant to attract attention and stubbornly defensive of her oeuvre. Works relating to ideological systems blended with those dealing with research activities, which were sometimes understood more as a visual paradigm than as knowledge production, as in Josef Dabernig’s *Hypercrisis* (2011), screened in the School Museum. In this humorous 17-minute film, a writer goes on a

dysfunctional residency in an old-fashioned facility in Armenia where artistic endeavors go unsupported by its selfish staff. Another strong work was Jan Peter Hammer’s film *Tilikum* (2013), which is about research on dolphins and orcas in the United States, all in the service of the entertainment industry.

The exhibition’s title alluded to the direction of the present state of the host nation, which, in today’s Europe, has been a much privileged and protected one. The Scandinavian welfare model is said to secure citizens from, among many other unpleasanties, seeing their Mondays begin on Saturday. Labor policies are strict, and the rights of employees are defended to what probably seems like an absurd degree to many outsiders. In their catalogue essay, Riff and Degot satirized their hosts by scoffing at the (allegedly typically Norwegian) notion of taking weekends off. Meanwhile, though, they must have known that they were running the risk of ignoring the numerous significant debates, exhibitions, and publications recently on the precarity of “flexible” artistic labor and its obvious connections to post-Fordism and exploitation. Is it really still in vogue to maintain no distinction between work and rest? Is it really heroic to be so on fire you can’t ever put your research away and just watch *Homeland* for a while? The norm of stressing how much busier you are than others at all times has become a straitjacket, and personally I find it bolder when artists and curators put their laptops away and go hiking or cooking together on Sundays.

Such an understanding of Sundays-off, however, is perhaps at odds with an opposing one (which is admittedly also a reasonable view) favored by the curators: that refusing to rest on societally designated days is a subversive act, presumably because it entails a sabotage of the rationality, productivity, and efficiency demanded by capitalist society. This conflict aside, Riff and Degot are

overall both instructive and amusing in their seemingly benevolent analysis of contemporary Norway, dubbed a “side-ways glance” at a rare remaining socialist realm, and their comparison of it to 1960s Soviet culture.

That said, the country’s first non-socialist government in a very long time was installed this fall, and the policy for arts funding immediately changed, as did government attitudes toward immigration, taxes, private ownership, and more. The onset of a new, conservative political orientation only lends accentuation to works such as Wong Men Hoi’s film *The East Is Red* (2013), shown in the Østre venue. Combining narrative fiction with a straightforward series of interviews, this Chinese artist portrays a significant generation in recent Norwegian history: the men and women who led the way when 1968 gave name to a movement. Many of these leftists, once fascinated by chairman Mao and today approaching retirement, come from prominent positions in the Norwegian media, education, and legislation. The societal changes they have witnessed over the years have been amazing. Oil was discovered in 1969, and nothing was ever the same again.

Although more restrictive with public funding, even the new conservative government has assured the people that its strong economy will keep securing not only general welfare but also continued arts funding. Anyone fearing that this Northern utopia will follow the British or Dutch into a shattering of the conditions for art production has simply read too much sci-fi.

RIGOROUS RESEARCH



**THE TERRITORIES  
OF EXHIBITION**

Germano Celant

Beginning with the earliest salons in the mid-19th century and the first Venice Biennale, methods of environmental communication have been crucial in conditioning the emotional and physical, as well as the perceptual and conceptual, consumption of art. The imaginary space reflected in the environmental context of an exhibition—the limited sphere stretching from wall to ceiling to floor in which works are installed and shown so that the public might enjoy them—is a powerful space indeed.<sup>1</sup>

Starting with the Salon de Refusés in Paris in 1863 and continuing with the Salon des Indépendants in Paris in 1884 and the first Venice Biennale in 1895, the setting and architecture in which the artworks were exhibited was a cross between a living room and an art studio. It was an “inhabited” setting, though on a vast scale: whether an industrial one such as the 1867 Salon at the Universal Exposition in Paris, or a former riding stable, as in the Palazzo dell’Esposizione in Venice’s Giardini. It contained furnishings and decor—draperies, divans—to surround the paintings, which, naturally, were framed. In the Paris exhibitions and those of the same period in Vienna and Venice, the buildings called upon to house these large-scale events tried to evoke a house of the muses, with an eclectic classical style based on grand entrances, columns, plaster, and stucco. The interiors were crafted by artisans to give them the look and feel of spacious 19th-century residences.

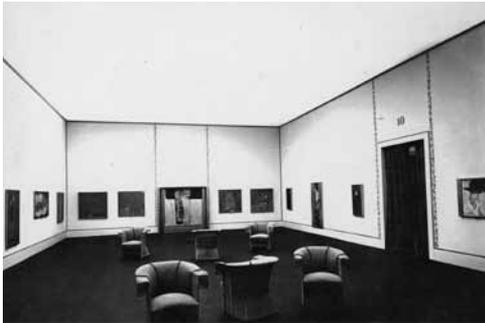


1903 Venice Biennale installation view showing the Sala del Lazio with works by Adolfo Apolloni, Honored Carlandi, and Giulio Aristide Sartorio in collaboration with U. Coromaldi, C. Innocenti, E. Nardi, A. Nuts, A. Poma, and A. Bartoli

The idea was to emphasize the regal, aristocratic aspect of the artworks,

to help them conceptually “fit in” with the homes of the nobility and rich bourgeoisie. The overall effect aimed to impress, often employing a *quadreria* arrangement in which works were closely hung side by side, above and below one another, just like the early art collections shown in 19th-century paintings. The predominant exhibition strategy for sculpture involved pedestals, and for paintings, placement at a certain height from the ground, almost always above a wooden frieze that served as a baseboard and environmental frame, not to mention a cover for the heating vents. The territory of use was delineated by this and by the molding above, which, along with the massive portals, marked the passage between the wall and the decorated, vaulted ceiling, without employing the top and bottom corners of the room in any way.

Only in the early 1900s, with the emergence of avant-garde movements such as Cubism and Futurism, did factors encouraging greater flexibility in exhibition methods (due in part to the “humble” status of artists and a need to reuse the precious resource of wall space) lead to the employment of draperies, sacking, and sheets of colored paper to protect the wall structure, allowing multiple, repeated uses at no added cost. In essence, it was a transition from an objective space—hinting at an aristocratic or bourgeois social sphere and often characterized by frivolous touches and features halfway between a bath house and a cemetery—to a flowing, embracing, impersonal space, without connotations of class or status. An increasingly neutral environment, it was thought, would not assail or impress visitors, but instead allow them to concentrate on the products on display. It was a way to avoid ideological and social associations that create a forceful, intimidating effect in favor of a more abstract space, an extension of the background for the art.



Gustav Klimt's exhibition at the Venice Biennale, with exhibition design by E. I. Wimmer, 1910

This physical extension became all-enveloping, functioning as an abstract womb, a global experience: for instance the Austrian room at the 1907 Venice Biennale, which featured the Hagenbund group from Vienna and the Manes association from Prague, decorated by Joseph Urban in pure *Werkbund* style, or the room devoted to Gustav Klimt at the 1910 Venice Biennale, with decorations and exhibition design by E. I. Wimmer.<sup>2</sup> In these two cases, the environment became “light” and luminous, with subtle, graceful decorations running across monochromic white walls.

The goal was a limpid clarity that would help focus attention on the sequences of interwoven color in the objects, paintings, and sculptures.

This was a first step toward the conceptualization of art, where movement within the exhibition space was not prompted by the decor, furnishings, or materials, but took place in a limbo. It marked the abolition of the

overflowing, overwhelming environment in which one was prompted to finger the fabric or sit down in favor of a terrain that wrapped around the visitor and yet was intangible, where the art object could visually “shine.” It moved in the direction of a framework underpinning the mental scheme, an abstract conception of looking, of perceiving. A directionless shell inhabited by things presented together, all of the same value. For this purpose, as early as 1911 in *Der Blaue Reiter*, a show organized in Munich by Heinrich Thannhauser, monochrome sheets of paper were used to cover the walls, creating a uniform background that stretched from the floor to the edge of the ceiling. This was a way of erasing the physicality and tactile, sensory nature of the visual field in order to form an aseptic, neutral vessel where the explosions of color set off by the key figures in the movement—from Wassily Kandinsky to Franz Marc—could flow freely.

Elsewhere, pictures presented themselves as tools for conveying magnitudes and distances, planes and coordinates, that were essentially rational, intelligible, and communicable, as if reflecting a science of measurement and methods of representation. In this case, space was translated into a geometric and volumetric equation, without hierarchies, as in *0.10: The Last Futurist Exhibition of Paintings* (1915) in Saint Petersburg, Russia, which included works by Kazimir Malevich and Vladimir Tatlin. Here, space was a measurement of quantity, rather than quality. What mattered was the accumulation of paintings and sculptures that “occupied” the overall environment to the point of invading the corners. The channels of interaction between viewer and art were reduced to a minimum, so that the works served to indicate distances and areas, proximities and positions. They became a consequential succession of entities that moved from the private realm of the studio into the public one of the Soviet masses to form a compact, uniform whole, pointing to a path and vision that stripped away all decoration in favor of a conceptual formulation. The intellectual value of the exhibition was also linked to the presence of texts and statements on the wall, helping to define the philosophy behind its poetic message. The system Malevich adopted to hang the paintings did not employ the chains typically used in the era, and Tatlin also did without pedestals, since his *Reliefs* were suspended in the corners, suggesting an exhibition strategy that canceled out the physical perception and weight of the object while highlighting its value as an image, free of traditional connections to the floor or wall.<sup>3</sup>

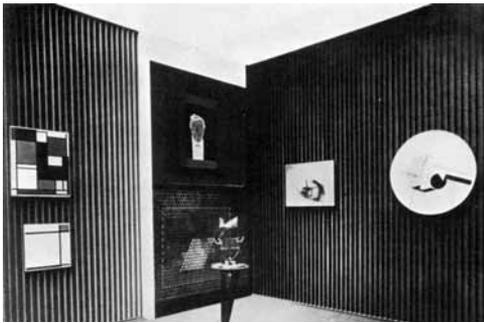
These environments and exhibition designs were part of a quest for osmosis and total fusion between artwork and architecture.<sup>4</sup> In the 1920s, artists began to seek a consonance between visual and three-dimensional practice, between interior and exterior context—home and street. Art moved into all kinds of places, from public squares to railway carriages, apartments to restaurants, clubs to bars. Initially, this took place through the visual

appropriation of walls, as in Ivan Puni's 1921 room at Der Sturm in Berlin, where the walls were covered in large shapes and numbers, with drawings and paintings set among them. Another example is El Lissitzky's total Proun environment at the Great Berlin Art Exhibition of 1923, where every distinction between the surrounding walls and the sculptural and visual elements was erased, aiming for the complete union of all components. The effect was one of total integration, in which the art melted away and spread throughout the architectural vessel.



Installation by Ivan Puni, Der Sturm, Berlin, 1921

They became one and the same, as in Kurt Schwitters's *Merzbau* (1923–43) in Hanover, Germany, or Piet Mondrian's *Salon de Madame B* (1926) in Dresden, Germany.



El Lissitzky, *Raum für konstruktive Kunst* (Room for Constructivist Art), Internationale Kunstausstellung, Dresden, Germany, 1926

In such cases, the art dissolved into concrete densities of pure color and matter; it became a hideaway, a retreat, constructed according to Dadaist or Neoplasticist principles. Eventually, with El Lissitzky's *Raum für konstruktive Kunst* (Room for Constructivist Art, 1926) in Dresden, it was transformed into a variable machine, with exhibition structures such as optically shifting walls and moving panels and showcases.

The transition away from interweaving decor and art, and then from melding together art and environment, which inevitably led to the sensual

intermingling of architecture and image, became concrete in the 1930s, in both Europe and the United States. There was a move to end the fusion and confusion between politics and aesthetic manifestation, between the sensorial order and the mental processes of art. More specifically, emphasis began to be placed not on the concrete, sensory significance of a work, but on the Platonic value, the ideal. In Europe, a figurative kind of art was favored that shunned imperfection and classicism, transmitting a very ideological sense of purity, while on American shores there was a tendency to extol artistic trends that dealt with abstract thought and the spirit, keeping a distance from political and social issues. These two poles struggled to define the social image of art in an ideological or ideal sense. They both presented a vision of worldly affairs based on the "ought" of establishing a "kingdom" of alternative truth, whether diabolical or celestial.

Alfred H. Barr Jr.'s exhibition *Cubism and Abstract Art: Painting, Sculpture, Constructions, Photography, Architecture, Industrial Art, Theater, Films, Posters, Typography* opened in 1936 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Its goal was to

present the languages of modern culture and show the prophetic, futuristic side of the early-20th-century avant-garde movements, which could be seen as revolutionary compared to the social and political ideas being advocated in Europe, specifically in Germany, Russia, and Italy. And since the vision of the future was linked to a metaphysical aspiration, an ideal not yet in existence, it was shown and exhibited in a white space, indicating a “void” that transcended all points of anchorage, whether physical and material or iconic and decorative. It was a limbo in which painted and sculpted objects could float, along with all the other languages that run parallel to art: film, music, photography, design, architecture, graphics. This marked the creation of an ahistorical dimension, the white cube, where all kinds of experimentation can be manifested and accepted, doing away with any concern for “realism.”<sup>5</sup> The museum therefore offered itself as an artificial, abstract construct in which to explore a conceptual and ideal obsession: the radical, overreaching statement of a utopian outlook, transcending the present. Here the images emerged, delineating history without taking it as a context because it was the work that was to be perceived, avoiding any



*Cubism and Abstract Art: Painting, Sculpture, Constructions, Photography, Architecture, Industrial Art, Theater, Films, Posters, Typography* installation view, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1936

critical approach. Its value derived from its universal, humanistic merit. To accentuate its positive impact, it was shown in a setting outside current events—an absolute, empty horizon—to underscore its presence.

Since its conception in about 1928, New York’s Museum of Modern Art identified this context with the aseptic, pared-down language of the Bauhaus.<sup>6</sup> Its spaces and exhibitions, such as the first one on *Cézanne, Gauguin, Seurat, van Gogh* (1929), were designed around a sequence of white walls, delimited at the bottom by a baseboard, and at the top by the edge of the ceiling, with chains hanging down for the paintings. As a whole, the environment was “emptied” of all the decorations or signs found in the exhibition settings of the 19th and early 20th centuries so that the aesthetic experience would not be disturbed by the presence of extraneous elements. It was an invitation to focus and meditate on the objects hanging there, in order to fully grasp, without distractions, the inherent idea of the artwork. It was an exercise in foregrounding the object’s power, putting aside all other situations and realities. The emptiness served as a dialectic foil for the fullness of the art. At the same time, it removed any link to the circumstances surrounding the object, any contiguous or previous historical context. It pushed away any reference to a place or time. It forced the gaze to forget, since they were devoid of any decoration, both the walls and the architecture. It seemed to suggest shaking off the very existence of the place, and, as a result, erasing one’s own body:

pure idea and spirit. One was invited to inhale the *pneuma* of art, to achieve purification.

It has been pointed out, however, that putting art into an ahistorical limbo not only makes viewers forget the convulsive, chaotic nature of everyday life, but also tends to eradicate any political or ideological spirit that might have linked the art (and therefore tainted it) to the European dictatorships of the time.<sup>7</sup> In this sense, outlining the art's presence, without letting any reference to contemporary events or the real world seep through, transformed the work into pure energy, almost a virtue on which to found a new world. The political excess that had characterized all the avant-garde movements, from Futurism to Constructivism, was winnowed out and dissolved so that the social aspect was separate from the aesthetic one, and the process of art was transformed into the pure pleasure—half meditation, half trance—of the psycho-physical experience. Suspended in a void and uprooted from any social or political terrain, art was seen only as the perceptible power of the “new.” Purged of all historical dross and chaff, it gleamed only to satisfy the person reflected in it, like an empty mirror.

And yet this attitude, which seemed to divide power from culture, was transformed into a freshly ideological tool. By celebrating the uniformity of the ideal, it tended to cancel out any other social and political diversity. The distance from society achieved by the white cube rapidly spread, plunging art into an abstract dimension and reducing it to its minimum level of appearance.<sup>8</sup> Art was thus deported from any specific place into a realm of self-representation, woven only out of stories peripheral or intrinsic to the language itself. Benchmarks of comparison could be found only within the history of the order of artistic discourse, excluding all political or social aspects. The desire for self-expression was translated into the mere exhibition of self, seeking out forms and materials to translate a personal story. This self-absorption found justification and definition only in an environment devoid of other things that could distract the attention of the viewing public. A neutral situation creates a sense of uniqueness, the first phase of qualitative enjoyment. It is a mechanism that underpins the story of “the new” because there is no comparison or correlation: A single actor appears on stage.

This univocal mode of exhibition, highlighting only the product of an individual's fancy, immediately prompted artists and architects to take a stand against the inherent danger of a language that reflected only itself, with no chance of infinite multiplication within a dynamic game of mirrors. In 1938, in the *Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme* in Paris, artists such as Man Ray, Salvador Dalí, Jean Miró, Max Ernst, Marcel Duchamp, and Oscar Domínguez blended together objects and lighting, pathways and installations, to create a single, indivisible unit. This all-enveloping experience was echoed in 1942 by the architect Friedrich Kiesler in designing and building Peggy



Installation view of the Abstract Gallery at Peggy Guggenheim's Art of This Century gallery, New York, 1942

Guggenheim's Art of This Century gallery in New York. In both cases, instead of reflecting itself in a mirror, the object became part of a narrative flux spreading out through a dance of relationships and intersections. And yet this dynamic, vital approach to exhibition making, which denied the death of context, did not reject the power of immortalizing the object by placing it against a white surface, similar to the gilded background of ancient icons. The sanctification of the artwork took root and became circular, exhibiting itself in a mysterious, timeless limbo.

For 40 more years, the neutral, abstract framework of white walls, ceilings, and even floors would be used to present objects, suspending them in the void so as to avoid all intrusions of information. In the 1970s, however, an awareness developed that the silence of the exhibition space was a linguistic tool, hence one that could be studied and analyzed, modified and altered. This move stemmed from the decisive turn taken in the late 1950s with the rise of the environment—from Allan Kaprow to Jim Dine, Claes Oldenburg to George Segal. The object was transformed into an environmental skin, a fertile womb that elicited the physical, bodily participation of both artist and viewer. This densely fluid experience called on the whole gamut of the senses: the vision, texture, and taste of one's surroundings. The active richness of this kind of context, which began to play a key role, opened up new territories in exhibition architecture, so that, somewhere in the 1950s, its extensions spread from the collector's or dealer's apartment to the artist's loft-studio.

In the 1960s, the loft setting became a widespread exhibition device in large-scale industrial spaces of spectacular capacity. Galleries in New York, Düsseldorf, Turin, Los Angeles, London, and Rome moved into abandoned factories or run-down buildings, while venues such as Artists Space or PS1 in New York were opened as alternatives to museums. A tradition was born of converting former garages (such as Galleria L'Attico in Rome), artisans' workshops (Deposito d'Arte Presente in Turin), or textile or metalworking factories (for instance those in New York's SoHo from 1970 on) to create a new kind of exhibition discourse that referred to the workplace—the artist's loft—and established a direct parallel between production and distribution. The walls were left in a rough state, and worn wooden floors took the place of the marble ones found in uptown galleries.

What remained, however, was the color white, which continued to cancel out context, sidestepping the political and ideological slant of the individual artist or of how specific themes or languages were explored. The concealing superstructures that influenced how art was perceived in an exhibition were

removed, as a statement, in 1976 for *Ambiente/Arte. Dal Futurismo alla Body Art* (Environment/Art: From Futurism to Body Art) in the Central Pavilion of the Venice Biennale. On that occasion, the architect, Gino Valle, and the curator, myself, freed the spaces of all the white fabric and wooden panels that covered the brick walls of the building in the Giardini. The removal of the devices usually used to hide the exhibition architecture marked yet another step in building an awareness of the real context, which was used by the artists themselves—including Robert Irwin, Maria Nordman, Mario Merz, Doug



Dismantling the existing pavilion to install *Ambiente/Arte. Dal Futurismo alla Body Art* (Environment/Art: From Futurism to Body Art) in the Central Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, 1976

Wheeler, Joseph Beuys, and Jannis Kounellis—to create their own sensory and perceptual environments. This emphasis on the real situation, in contrast to the spatial and temporal void, grew stronger in 1980 with *The Times Square Show*, which was held in a former massage parlor on 41st Street and 7th Avenue in New York and included the street artists Jean-Michel Basquiat and Keith Haring. Another example, in a more bourgeois vein, was *Chambres d'Amis* (1986) in Ghent, curated by Jan Hoet, who invited artists such as Giulio Paolini, Paul Thek, Panamarenko, and Luciano Fabro to show work in apartments made available by private individuals.<sup>9</sup>

The relationship between art and society—that is to say, the political and cultural significance of the artist's activity—could not be ignored by the 1991 show *Degenerate Art*, curated by Stephanie Barron at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Here, it was impossible to avoid the political and ideological connotations linked to Nazism's repressive view of the avant-garde movements of the early 20th century. The context could not be resolved with environmental sleight-of-hand, using white to reflect the absence of interpretation, without minimizing the barbarism. It was necessary to take and express a stance, as Frank O. Gehry did in his exhibition design, conveying the repression and negation that inevitably had a bearing on the exhibition of the historical artworks. They could not be seen as a utopian achievement, but rather as victims of a coercive, negative force, which weighed on the perception of the whole. The answer therefore lay in the heavy, concrete nature of the walls, which were no longer the perimeters of a limbo, and in the ghettoization—accomplished using wire mesh that evoked the fences of concentration camps—of the space in which the works were experienced. It was an initial step toward the material involvement of the exhibition architecture in how art is received and perceived. To avoid idealization, the environment had to be concrete and real, but this effect was constantly renewed by the creation of a limbo setting, albeit one with industrial connotations.

How does one escape from the trap that renders history unreal? To avoid giving the object a sacred value and instead put it into a specific historical context, one can surround it with informational content that anchors it in its time, so as to state its presence, give it a place in history, without dissolving it within a limbo. This was attempted with *Piero Manzoni* (at MADRE, Naples, in 2007 and at Gagosian Gallery, New York, in 2009), where Manzoni's works were shown intertwined with the cultural activities of other artists—for instance Alberto Burri, Yves Klein, Yayoi Kusama, and Lucio Fontana—working in the same time span, from 1957 to 1963.

Another way to achieve awareness of temporal, historical, and even physical context is to create a concrete, perceptible link between whatever is on display and the architecture that houses it. In Athens, in 2013, an exhibition titled *The System of Objects*, curated by Maria Cristina Didero and the architect Andreas Angelidakis, reinstalled part of Dakis Joannou's collection



*The System of Objects* installation view, DESTE Foundation, Athens, 2013

in the headquarters of the DESTE Foundation in Athens. Drawing inspiration from Jean Baudrillard's theories about tools of seduction in consumer society, the show presented a series of exhibition "scenarios," typifying the choice of an environment according to different methods of display. The idea was to escape the atemporal embrace of the white cube and usher visitors through a series of moments,



*The System of Objects* installation view, DESTE Foundation, Athens, 2013

or enclosures, that illustrated different attitudes toward architectural distribution.

Each setting was different in its dimensions and materials, with different consequences for how the art was perceived. The exhibition moved through hallways and stairwells, rooms and terraces, drapes and pieces of paper, metal and wooden frameworks, luminous passageways and rents in the structure. This yielded a sense of disorder and chaos. The labyrinth of materials made visitors conscious of their own position, and of their kinetic and sensory experience. Along this path, no one setting was better than another; they were all simply different. And yet the process was not subjective, since it was anchored to a design tradition that relies on a variety of three-dimensional forms, from the cube to the parallelepiped, with soft surfaces or transparent ones, made of brick or glass. The idea was to reveal the richness of exhibition options, giving different, unexpected depth with respect to the objects on display—not

to reassure visitors, but to help them become aware of the design register of the installation, which used velvet and varnish, light and shadow, airiness and solidity to influence their perception. Increasing this range of functions increased art's power to expand, riding out all these journeys through matter and space. It enabled it to construct a spatial and material transcription that was an extension of interpretation, as well as an exploration of what it means to exhibit.

*Translated from the Italian by Johanna Bishop*

**Notes**

1. Read more in Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube* (Santa Monica, California: Lapis Press, 1976); Germano Celant, *Ambiente/Arte. Dal Futurismo alla Body Art* (Venice: Edizioni la Biennale di Venezia, 1977); *Ottant'anni di allestimenti alla Biennale*, catalogue of an exhibition curated by Giandomenico Romanelli (Venice: La Biennale di Venezia, 1977); Germano Celant, "A Visual Machine: Art Installation and Its Modern Archetypes" in the *Documenta 7* exhibition catalogue vol. III (Kassel, Germany: D + V Paul Dierichs GmbH & Co KG, 1982): XIII–XXIV; and Paolo Rizzi and Enzo di Martino, *Storia della Biennale, 1895–1982* (Milan: Electa, 1982).
2. *Ottant'anni di allestimenti alla Biennale*, 63, 69.
3. *Malevich*, catalogue of an exhibition curated by Troels Andersen (Amsterdam: Stedelijk Museum, 1970): 61–63.
4. Germano Celant, *Ambiente/Arte*, 8–73.
5. Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube*, op. cit.
6. Sybil Gordon Kantor, *Alfred H. Barr, Jr., and the Intellectual Origin of the Museum of Modern Art* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002).
7. See Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1983) and Frances Stonor Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper? The CIA and the Cultural Cold War* (London: Granta Books, 1999).
8. Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube*, op. cit.
9. Bruce Altshuler, *Biennals and Beyond: Exhibitions that Made Art History, 1962–2002* (London: Phaidon, 2013).

# **SIX x SIX**

★

**NGAHIRAKA MASON**

**FIONN MEADE**

**PABLO LEÓN DE LA BARRA**

**FILIPA RAMOS**

**MARÍA INÉS RODRÍGUEZ**

**SYRAGO TSIARA**

## NGAHIRAKA MASON

*Te Māori: Te Hokinga Mai*  
(The Return Home)  
1987

Curated by **Hirini Moko  
Mead, Douglas Newton,  
and David Simmons**  
**Auckland Art Gallery,  
New Zealand**

(traveled to New York, Saint  
Louis, San Francisco, and  
Chicago as *Tē Maori: Maori Art  
From New Zealand Collections*)

*Te Māori* was a remarkable exhibition that changed the way New Zealand museums and galleries negotiated, displayed, and interpreted cultural objects made by indigenous people. The curators developed an innovative methodology for display, interpretation, and related activities that was based on the values, meanings, and philosophies of the culture being represented. Their process drew in tribal elders and descendant communities—the cultural owners of the sacred and beloved objects—not only to serve as interpreters, but also to actively participate in decisions regarding permissions for the works to travel to strange and distant places as the exhibition toured. In an increasingly globalized world, it was the first time Māori epistemology was witnessed and engaged with outside Māori settings and contexts. Māori worldviews were showcased, leading to a far greater understanding of the relationships we have with ancestral objects as ceremonial, functional, and part of living culture. On the local front,

## FIONN MEADE

**Robert Rauschenberg:**  
*A Retrospective*  
1997

Curated by **Walter Hopps and  
Susan Davidson**  
**Guggenheim Museum, New York**

By the time one made it through this Robert Rauschenberg retrospective, split between the signature uptown building and the downtown Guggenheim SoHo (a venue from 1992 to 2001), plus a separate gallery presentation of the constantly permutating *The 1/4 Mile or 2 Furlong Piece* (1981–97), it felt rather deliriously like having seen several retrospectives. The orphaning logic and destabilization of medium conventions—so prevalent in the readymade eclecticism and print-media looting of works such as *Monogram* (1955–59), *Untitled* (1954), *Bed* (1955), *Odalisk* (1955–58), and *Canyon* (1959)—made the descent through the Guggenheim’s architecture feel like some kind of cultural unburdening and overdue revelation. The show departed into sustained asides, for instance Rauschenberg’s transfer masterpiece *34 Drawings for Dante’s Inferno* (1958–60). And it also made room for excerpts from the Rauschenberg Overseas Culture Interchange (1984–91), a massive undertaking characteristic of the transnational platforms that were emerging in the 1980s and 1990s, which involved creating and exhibiting photographs, paintings, sculptures, and videos in 11 countries. Walter Hopps, in close collaboration with Rauschenberg and Susan Davidson, kept an embrace of such “counter” formats and venues present throughout the overall exhibition strategy. Letting the alarm of a piece such as *Soundings* (1968) find unexpected dialogue with the relaxed poise of the then-overlooked *Cardboards* series from the early 1970s (both were shown downtown) was a further example—one of many in the exhibition—of how a retrospective can use pivotal works rather than be bound or constrained by them, animating the right imbalance within the work itself. The retrospective exceeded and thereby evaded a falsely progressive narrative without falling into chaos or cacophony, letting Rauschenberg’s intersection of art, media, and technology provoke and echo into the next century. Another Rauschenberg retrospective

## PABLO LEÓN DE LA BARRA

**Ethnographic Galleries**  
1964  
**National Museum of  
Anthropology, Mexico City**

The Mexico City Anthropology Museum, a jewel frozen in time, hasn’t changed much since it opened 50 years ago. Its 11 ethnographic galleries—less visited than the 11 archaeological galleries—are dedicated to exhibiting the indigenous groups who survived the conquest and colonization, and who still, in one way or another, maintain their customs and languages. The groups are classified by culture, and the dioramas and vitrines display scenes of everyday life, clothing, housing, handcrafts, textiles, and religious objects. Between the ethnographic displays are murals by various contemporary artists of the 1960s. The murals were commissioned by the museum’s architect, Pedro Ramírez Vázquez, to be in dialogue with the various indigenous cultures. The artists include Luis Covarrubias, who painted a series of maps of the country; Carlos Mérida, who did a steel mural with stained-glass windows in the Huichol section; Manuel Felguérez, who made a metal screen with geometric shapes; and Mathias Goeritz, whose rope wall drawings reproduce geometric patterns from the Nayar region. Created at the same time as the Museo de Arte Moderno located across the road, these murals are, in a way, a parallel and invisible museum of modern art—one where the distinctions between the contemporary and the indigenous collapse and exist within the same timeframe.

***La Ruta de la Amistad***  
**(The Route of Friendship)**  
1968  
Curated by **Mathias Goeritz**  
**Periférico, Mexico City**

*La Ruta de la Amistad* was a sculpture project envisioned by Mathias Goeritz, a German artist exiled in Mexico, as part of the cultural activities for the 1968 Olympics. He invited 22 international artists to

## FILIPA RAMOS

*Contemporanea*  
1973

Curated by Incontri  
Internazionali d'Arte /  
Achille Bonito Oliva  
Villa Borghese parking lot,  
Rome

To be contemporary is to be underground. This seemed to be the message of *Contemporanea*, a large exhibition project (covering approximately 110,000 square feet) that took place in the empty parking lot of the Villa Borghese. It consisted of 10 sections: art, cinema, theater, architecture and design, photography, music, dance, artists' books and records, visual and concrete poetry, and counter-information. In all of them, often simultaneously, live actions of various scales took place among displays of objects and documents. The design included no pavilions or solid walls. Instead, the different sections were delineated by a complex system of vertical panels of wire mesh, placed parallel to one another at various distances, which created a grid that dictated the rhythm of the overall exhibition. The structure was a strong visual element, but one that was also traversed by the gaze. This revolutionary use of space was matched by an equally particular use of time: *Contemporanea* remained open until late in the evening. It is said that Pier Paolo Pasolini was one of the most faithful attendees of the evening film sessions.

*Alternativa Zero: Tendências Polêmicas na Arte Portuguesa Contemporânea (Zero Alternative: Polemic Tendencies in Portuguese Contemporary Art)*  
1977

## MARÍA INÉS RODRÍGUEZ

*± 1961*  
2013

Curated by Julia Robinson  
and Christian Xatrec  
Museo Nacional Centro de  
Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid

Research and archives, and archival research as an integral element of the curatorial process, have increasingly become a constant in Reina Sofía exhibitions. This archival work underscores the notion that the exhibition is a space of knowledge production, and the museum a platform for its visualization. It is within this framework that the exhibition *± 1961* was presented. It was an exercise in the microhistory of the recent past, and an extraordinary way in which to explore a moment of confluence of several different ideas, energies, and personalities from many different fields of contemporary creation. John Cage was without a doubt a main figure, for his ideas and also for his generosity as a teacher, a person, and an artist. La Monte Young, George Brecht, Yoko Ono, Robert Morris, Walter De Maria, and the superlative Simone Forti were also there, among several other personalities of that time.

*Fernando Gamboa: La utopía moderna (The Modern Utopia)*  
2009  
Curated by Ana Elena Mallet

## SYRAGO TSIARA

*Paris-Moscow 1900–1930*  
1979

Curated by Pontus Hultén  
Centre Georges  
Pompidou, Paris  
(traveled to the Pushkin  
Museum, Moscow)

*Paris-Moscow 1900–1930* was a massive, comprehensive exhibition of the early-20th-century Russian avant-garde movement, which encompassed architecture, painting, literature, music, theater, cinema, the applied arts, and even propaganda. Presented in the wake of Camilla Grey's 1962 book *The Great Experiment: Russian Art 1863–1922*, it was the first of a series of blockbuster shows that signaled the (re)discovery of Russian Modernism by the Western world, revealing convergences and divergences between Russian and French Cubism, Constructivism, and Symbolism. The fact that two years later the exhibition traveled to Moscow, giving Russians the chance to see for the first time, at home, works that had been hidden for decades, was of historic importance as well. The show created new opportunities for considering the revolutionary experiments in art and life that were buried after Joseph Stalin's implementation of the Socialist Realism doctrine.

*Dream Factory  
Communism: The Visual  
Culture of the Stalin Era*

## NGAHIRAKA MASON

the exhibition raised awareness among New Zealanders regarding the diversity of our sculpted forms chiseled from wood, bone, and stone. *Te Māori* still holds the record in New Zealand for exhibition attendance, but even more important is the fact that it can take credit for finally drawing Māori people into the museum. Almost 30 years later, *Te Māori* remains a touchstone that inspires artists, critics, historians, and curators, both indigenous and non-indigenous.

***Trade Routes: History and Geography***

1997

**Curated by Okwui**

**Enwezor**

**2nd Johannesburg**

**Biennale, South Africa**

The second and final Johannesburg Biennale closed a month ahead of schedule. The organizing entity and financial backer, the Africus Institute for Contemporary Art, folded, and the exhibition ceased to exist. Its early closure has contributed to its legend; the show was ahead of its time for the way it responded to international relations, histories, and geographies. The fact that it even occurred at all was itself a small miracle. Apartheid had only recently ended, and South Africa was straining to come to grips with its own history and the vagaries of cultural understanding. The biennial was key in raising awareness on the international art scene regarding diasporic and third-world peoples. It had enough charge in

## FIONN MEADE

is on the horizon, this time at New York's Museum of Modern Art, and it will be interesting to see how this restive precedent is taken into account.

***Instytut Awangardy***  
**(Avant-Garde Institute)**

2004–present

**Curated by Foksal Gallery**

**Foundation**

**Warsaw**

Whether it's Leon Trotsky's bullet-riddled villa in Coyoacán, Mexico, Leonard and Virginia Woolf's retreat house in Sussex, England, or the Nietzsche House in Sils-Maria, Switzerland, a trip to a preserved and thereby altered place that witnessed truly significant creative production falls somewhere between the tourist cliché of encountering a time capsule and courting the uncanny: both embarrassing and comforting to the visitor, equal parts homage and opportunism. Occupying the top floor of a 1960s apartment building on Solidarności Avenue, now maintained by the Foksal Gallery Foundation, the Avant-Garde Institute is a doubly elegiac gesture, as it was the home and studio for almost two decades of the artists Henryk Stażewski and Edward Krasiński and their partners. Stażewski, a painter and an important player in the international avant-garde scene of the 1920s and 1930s, took over the flat in 1962 and made it a social hub for meetings and cultural exchange. He invited the younger, conceptually inclined Krasiński to live with him in 1970 during the difficult sociopolitical times of the period. Upon Stażewski's death in 1988, Krasiński gradually morphed parts of their shared flat into a tribute to the elder artist and their friendship, enacting a visual archive and display. Krasiński maintained the wires and discolorations where Stażewski's paintings had hung, for example, and deployed his own signature blue tape discreetly across parts of the apartment and studio, underscoring ephemeral moments of their shared creative life and quietly resistant aesthetic dialogue. By maintaining the exactitude of Krasiński's in-the-moment, self-aware historicizing gesture, Foksal Gallery Foundation has become the caretaker of a potent site and a paradoxical testament to the local avant-garde and its contested legacies.

## PABLO LEÓN DE LA BARRA

create a circuit of monumental concrete sculptures along 17 kilometers of Mexico City's recently built Periférico, the main ring road. Participants representing the five continents included Joop J. Beljon from the Netherlands, Gonzalo Fonseca from Uruguay, Alexander Calder from the United States, Helen Escobedo from Mexico, Clement Meadmore from Australia, and Mohamed Melehi from Morocco. (Goertiz had insisted he needed a black African sculptor, but his European sculptor friends could only find a Moroccan!) The sculptures range from geometric to amorphous and are painted in bright colors. (Search YouTube for "Raquel Welch Mexico 68" for videos of her dancing in front of the sculptures wearing space drag for her 1970 TV show *Raquell*.) Recently, construction near the Periférico freeway threatened many of the sculptures, and they were moved to the Patronato Ruta de la Amistad and arranged in a cluster, which changed the intended visual and spatial experience of the sculpture route. Goertiz specifically imagined *La Ruta de la Amistad* as an exhibition to be experienced from a car in motion—a radical idea, then and now. It makes me think of other possible "sculpture routes" for today—routes that could exist on the Internet highway, or routes in the air that would only be visible from an airplane or outer space.

***Luis Barragán: Sitio + Superficie: Su obra y la vanguardia en el arte***  
**(Site + Surface: His Work and the Artistic Avant-Garde)**

1996

**Curated by Carlos Ashida with**

**Elena Matute**

**Antiguo Colegio de**

**San Ildefonso, Mexico City**

Happening in parallel with an exhibition of Luis Barragán's architectural work, this exhibition rethought Barragán through parallels with works of art. It showed him not so much as the modern architect of colored walls and serene spaces, but as an *artist* who, *through* architecture, dealt with space, light, color, perception, emotion, and mysticism, creating

**FILIPA RAMOS**

**Curated by Ernesto de Sousa**  
**Galeria Nacional de Arte Moderna de Belém, Lisbon**

In spring 1977, the charismatic art critic, photographer, filmmaker, and pioneering curator Ernesto de Sousa—a pivotal figure of Portuguese cultural life in the second half of the 20th century—organized *Alternativa Zero*, a highly experimental undertaking that became a touchstone for the history of exhibitions in Portugal. The title referenced the curator's views on the country's situation in the wake of the 1974 April Revolution. At a time when governments had very brief life spans in a country that was starting to rediscover the meaning of democracy, how to interpret such a doubting declaration as “zero alternative”? As a remark on the country's stagnation and loss of faith in revolutionary ideals, or as a tabula rasa marking the beginning of a new era? The project became both a cry of desperation and a strong reaffirmation of the inner necessity that moved the featured artists. This month-long event gathered approximately 50 participants (among them Helena Almeida, Ana Hatherly, Alvess, Albuquerque Mendes, Fernando Calhau, Julião Sarmento, and Ângelo de Sousa) and had more than 10,000 visitors. It combined concerts, workshops, performances, living theater actions, conferences, and myriad artistic proposals in a format clearly inspired by de Sousa's visits to *Documenta 4* and especially *Documenta 5*.

***Passages de l'image*****1989**

**Curated by Catherine David, Christine van Assche, and Raymond Bellour**

**MARÍA INÉS RODRÍGUEZ**

**Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico City**

This exhibition focused on Fernando Gamboa, a multifaceted figure of great importance in the symbolic construction of Mexico as a nation on the world stage. A museum director, curator, and diplomat, Gamboa put together a host of spectacular and visionary displays that brought together pre-Columbian Mexico and modern Mexico. Every detail of his exhibitions, from the opening ceremonies to the graphic design and even the installation process, became an ideological signifier, conveying a precise national imaginary. Examples include the Mexican pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 1950, *Arte mexicano, del precolombino a nuestros días* (Mexican Art from the Pre-Columbian Era to Today) in 1952 in Paris, or *Obras maestras del arte mexicano* (Masterworks of Mexican Art) at the 1958 FERIA Internacional in Brussels. Organized by the same museum that Gamboa directed in the 1970s, *The Modern Utopia* included mostly materials drawn from Gamboa's estate, some displayed in vitrines like those Gamboa used in his own shows. One of the most representative was an X-shaped vitrine that alluded to the significance of using the letter “x” in the name of the country (as opposed to how it was spelled before: Méjico). This exhibition opened the door to much critical reflection on the relationship between political power and grand cultural constructions.

**SYRAGO TSIARA****2003**

**Curated by Boris Groys with Zelfira Tregulova**  
**Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, Germany**

This exhibition documented the transition from early modernist non-objective experiments to figurative Socialist Realism. In its investigation of the formation of Soviet mass culture, it avoided the usual binary concept of a gap, or cut-and-dried discontinuity, between the two, which had previously dominated the relevant discourse. The curator, Boris Groys, selected a great number of artworks that revealed the effort to create the image of the “new Soviet man” and continue the “Great Utopia” experiment on a massive scale. Images of the Soviet leaders Vladimir Lenin and Joseph Stalin, who embodied the ideal of the new Communist life in the photomontages of Gustav Klutskis, Valentina Kulagina, and El Lissitzky, met with pillars of official Socialist Realist painting such as Isaak Brodsky, Alexander Gerasimov, and Vasiliï Iakovlev. The fact that Groys moved beyond traditional aesthetic criteria about “good” and “bad” art and inserted a consideration of the mass distribution of socialist imagery was a provocative and daring curatorial position that enriched the reconsideration of this aspect of Russian art history.

**NGAHIRAKA MASON**

its positioning of postcolonialism, multiculturalism, and globalization to make it exciting and tense. The inclusion of the Māori painters Emily Karaka and Selwyn Muri represented an exciting paradigm shift at a highly difficult time.

**Documenta 11, Platform 5  
2002**

**Curated by Okwui  
Enwezor  
Kassel, Germany**

I was taken by the spectacle and power of *Documenta 11*. The key ideas I came away with centered on 1) critical thinking and 2) inclusion. Organized as a series of platforms for critical inquiry, *Documenta 11* exposed contemporary art on the world stage in a way that hadn't been attempted before. The exhibition was pioneering for how it explored its own conceptual framework, as the platforms created, problematized, and revolutionized Documenta itself as an institution. Platform 5 was key in furthering my understanding of the relationship between contemporary art, politics, and postcolonialism, and I witnessed and enjoyed knowledge bases that reflected my own epistemology. *Documenta 11* produced new knowledge without apology and influenced future international large-scale exhibitions to become more fluid and open to wider audiences.

**The Beauty of Distance:  
Songs of Survival in a  
Precarious Age**

**FIONN MEADE**

**Hall of Northwest Coast Indians  
1900–present  
Curated by Franz Boas  
American Museum of Natural  
History, New York**

The German anthropologist Franz Boas is known for his founding role in American anthropology, especially his articulation of such influential concepts as cultural relativism, diffusion, and historical particularism. But his curatorial contributions and professional disagreements at the American Museum of Natural History from 1896 to 1907 are overlooked and worthy of further consideration, especially considering their belonging to the fertile and fraught “museum era” that still has combative and vast infrastructural influence in regard to inherited ideas of philanthropic rhetoric, curatorial intentionality, ethnographic display, and paradigms of museum education and research. While significant changes have been made to the Hall of Northwest Coast Indians since it opened under Boas's aegis, a remarkable amount of his initial presentation and curatorial framing remains. Whereas conventional didactics usually pin down an image or object, making it perform in stasis as an embedded illustration or representative configuration within a specific historical progression, the social situations of the Boasian exhibition occur *en media res*, repeated and altered through different narrativizing permutations and implied power relations, placing the viewer/student in the midst of a social fray that operates on both a functional and a symbolic level. Demanding active interpretation, the exhibits posit differences and distinctions across and within various native cultures so that affinities arise comparatively, and elicit competing, revisable, participatory interpretations. The mixed-format, research-based exhibition department that Boas envisioned, wherein more accessible exhibitions and expert-oriented displays would play off of and inform one another, lies dormant here, a case study to be reactivated and learned from.

**Rosemarie Trockel:  
Deliquescence of the Mother  
2010  
Curated by Beatrix Ruf  
Kunsthalle Zurich**

**PABLO LEÓN DE LA BARRA**

works that predated many of the Western so-called pioneers of minimal art, light art, perceptual art, and installation art. Included in the show were works by many artist friends who were influential to his practice, such as the muralist José Clemente Orozco, who made paintings of vernacular architecture, Chucho Reyes, from whom he learned the use of extreme colors, Josef Albers, with whom he shared the use of abstraction and color, and Mathias Goeritz, with whom he shared notions of spiritual and emotional architecture. At the same time, the exhibition created (without showing Barragán's work next to the artworks) new dialogues between Barragán's work and the lead plates of Carl Andre; the use of light in space by James Turrell, Dan Flavin, and Robert Irwin; the minimal furniture designs of Donald Judd; the delimited surfaces of pollen and rocks by Robert Irwin, Wolfgang Laib, and Richard Long; and the wood sculptures of Richard Nonas. Felix Gonzalez-Torres's poster-stack work “*Untitled*” (1992), bearing an image of clouds and a bird, echoed the view framed by Barragán's rooftop window, through which only the sky, clouds, and passing birds and airplanes were visible.

**Tropicale Modernité  
1999**

**Curated by Dominique  
Gonzalez-Foerster  
Mies van der Rohe Pavilion,  
Barcelona**

Like most art during the 1990s (before the Internet brought everyone in contact with everything), this exhibition I only experienced through its catalogue, a small pamphlet the size of a CD booklet. Nevertheless, it's as if I had been there: I remember with clarity the neon sign in the shape of the Japanese character for “double happiness,” the fish tank next to the exterior pool, the TV near the Barcelona chairs showing an endless jungle landscape, and the two white towels in the interior patio next to the smaller pool, facing Georg Kolbe's *Alba* (Dawn, 1925) sculpture—an homage to Felix Gonzalez-Torres.

**FILIPA RAMOS****Centre Georges Pompidou,  
Paris**

*Passages de l'image* is a landmark in the relationship between contemporary art and cinema. Presented at the end of 1989—at the beginning of the digital revolution—it signaled the arrival of a new era in which relations between photography, cinema, and art would broaden, and in which cinema would become more established in the museum. *Passages de l'image* was articulated according to notions of interruption, fragmentation, multiplication, and repetition—terms that are dear to the nature of the moving image. These coordinates determined not only the overall exhibition design but also the movement of the spectator within it. In some cases they even seemed to affect the inner condition of the viewer, as with the mirroring holograms by Michael Snow, a gesture that could be said to anticipate the simultaneous gaze of the viewing habits of the post-digital era. With more than 200 films and videos, the exhibition constantly alluded to the phantasmagoric condition of the image, also because many of the images presented in the show could only be perceived through dream and imagination, as it was impossible to see everything in a single visit.

***Travel(s) in Utopia, Jean-Luc Godard 1946–2006, In Search of a Lost Theorem*****2006****Centre Georges Pompidou,  
Paris**

At the gallery entrance, a large sign read: “The Pompidou Centre decided not to carry out the exhibition project entitled ‘Collage(s) de France. Archaeology of the Cinema’

**MARÍA INÉS RODRÍGUEZ*****Louise Bourgeois*  
1990****Curated by Peter  
Weiermair  
Fundació Antoni Tàpies,  
Barcelona**

This exhibition was enlightening in my early years, when as a young student I was looking and exploring here and there: square-eyed, round-eyed, triangular-eyed, the mind simmering, the senses attempting to grasp something of all that sprang forth along the way. In spite of having artists in Colombia as extraordinary as Louise Bourgeois—for example Beatriz González, Débora Arango, or Feliza Bursztyn—at the time no local institution had given any of them an exhibition that showed their bodies of work and career trajectories in any coherent way. This exhibition was the first I ever saw that showed works from different periods in a manner that enabled me to understand how an artist could move from one medium to another, always with the same impulse, always staying close to her personal obsessions. Bourgeois never tired of saying, “Art is a guarantee of sanity.”

***Documenta X*  
1997****Curated by Catherine  
David  
Kassel, Germany**

What most interested me about Catherine David’s *Documenta X* was the space she gave to the word and

**SYRAGO TSIARA*****Women Without Men*  
2009****Curated by Anna Kafetsi  
National Museum of  
Contemporary Art,  
Athens**

Shirin Neshat’s film *Mahdokht* (2004) was first presented in the framework of the 2004 exhibition *Transcultures*, organized by the National Museum of Contemporary Art in Athens. The work subsequently evolved, taking the form of the five-screen video installation presented in this show, which tells five parallel stories of women. It was a unique opportunity for Greek audiences to encounter and deeply appreciate the high quality of Neshat’s poetic filmic language. Neshat is an Iranian artist who has lived most of her adult life in self-imposed exile in the United States, and in this work she captures and reconstructs the experience of being caught between two cultures, a position that allows her to maintain a critical, reflective position toward the identities and the conditions under which Muslim women live today. Through the stories of Mahdokht, Zanin, Munis, Faezeh, and Farokh Legha, the artist portrays how very different women can achieve some form of freedom and independence from the restrictive bonds of Iranian society.

***William Kentridge:  
Refuse the Hour***

## NGAHIRAKA MASON

2010

**Artistic director: David Elliott  
Sydney Harbor**

To paraphrase the artistic director of this exhibition, the 17th Biennale of Sydney: “The European Enlightenment is over.” The sheerchutzpah of David Elliott! Was he positing a celebratory provocation, or (as many thought) something irritating and without foundation? Shows of this magnitude inevitably attract their share of criticism, but I was struck by the general lack of curiosity about what was behind such a provocation. To someone like me, it was both thrilling and concerning that ideas such as power, colonization, and indigent people would provoke such ire from the globalized art world, which prides itself on its tolerance and sensitivity to difference. We must stimulate optimism and critically transform thinking so we can identify the emperor, undressed as he is, with nowhere to hide. Elliott had simply recognized the obvious: that the West is not the whole world.

***Sakahàn: International  
Indigenous Art*  
2013**

**Curated by Greg A. Hill,  
Candice Hopkins, and  
Christine Lalonde  
National Gallery of  
Ottawa, Canada**

*Sakahàn* was a first. Its mandate as an exhibition presented every five

## FIONN MEADE

Rosemarie Trockel turned the retrospective gaze and the aspiration for an overview inside out here, as works in wide-ranging media from each decade of her career stood close together in ethnographic-style vitrines. Past works were “surveyed,” to be sure, but arranged as they were in Wunderkammer-like constructions, they also looked back—indeed, confronting the viewer like a tribe, refusing historical linearity in their apparition-like assembly. The swollen-head sculpture *Hydrocephalus / Wasserkopf II* (1982), for example, sat before the sleek black ceramic finish of a thirsty outstretched leg, mockingly titled *Geruchsskulptur 2* (Aroma Sculpture 2, 2006), which in turn jostled the diminutive goblin-like creature *Kiss My Aura* (2008) hunkered below the overflowing, unruly knitted work *Untitled* (1989). Archetypes of mother and father were absorbed in the angular looking-back of Trockel’s roundup, exposing the cultural codes and clichés that underscore our need for empathetic identification while also giving heterogeneous form to her diffusion of gender, ego, and character. Filtered and atomized throughout the exhibition, the liquefaction of the mother was Trockel’s versioning of self. By literally and precisely marginalizing her own works, she refused to be periodized and thereby completed, insisting instead upon boundary conditions that can be reconfigured and made cruel. From the ceramic sofa sculptures that blocked and also moved the visitor from the opening gallery into the next room, to a room that featured new ceramic wall sculptures followed by the large-scale, nearly monochromatic “knitted painting” series that preceded the vitrine interventions, to the lockdown style of collages that ran the perimeter of a back room, work from Trockel’s past decade of production insisted on a dialogical tacking between new work and returns from the past. The first of a series of retrospective inversions (it was followed by *Flagrant Delight* at WIELS, Brussels, in 2012, curated by Dirk Snauwaert, and *A Cosmos*, curated by Lynne Cooke and presented at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; the New Museum, New York; and Serpentine Gallery, London, in 2012–13), it was here that Trockel first carried forward and asserted the conceptual mantle of the late Marcel Broodthaers in her magisterial critique and inimitable toying with retrospective desires.

## PABLO LEÓN DE LA BARRA

For someone like me, living then at the periphery of the art world, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster’s small, subtle interventions domesticated and tropicalized the rational grid of modernity. They opened up another possible line of thought and action—one that allowed us to rethink other modernities. As she said in the conversation with Jens Hoffmann published in the publication, “Sometimes, modernity by itself, especially when it comes to architecture, gets too dry in its abstract intentions; but, balanced with immature desires, lots of water, and plants, it becomes something more complex and more beautiful at the same time.”

***Da Adversidade Vivemos!  
(From Adversity We Live!)*  
2001**

**Musee d’Art Moderne de  
la Ville de Paris**

***Quasi-Cinema*  
2001**

**Wexner Center for the Arts,  
Columbus, Ohio**  
(traveled to Whitechapel Gallery,  
London)

***The Structure of Survival*  
2003**

**The 50th Venice Biennale**

***Tropicália: A Revolution  
in Brazilian Culture*  
2005**

**Museum of Contemporary  
Art, Chicago**  
(traveled to the Barbican, London)

**All curated by Carlos Basualdo**

During a period of five years, Carlos Basualdo curated four influential exhibitions articulated around the artistic and intellectual ideas of the Brazilian artist Hélio Oiticica. The title *From Adversity We Live!* was based on a phrase by Oiticica; the show presented artists’ responses to the continuous social and economic crisis in Latin America. The highlight was the reconstruction of Oiticica’s *Eden* installation, which was first presented at

**FILIPA RAMOS**

because of artistic, ~~technical and financial~~ difficulties that it presented, and to replace it by another project entitled “Travel(s) in Utopia, JLG, 1946–2006, In Search of Lost Theorem.” Godard had crossed out “technical and financial,” a prophetic gesture that seemingly announced the miscarriage of the project from its very beginning. Among the outcomes would be the resignation of Dominique Païni, director of cultural development at the Pompidou. *Travel(s) in Utopia* became not only an exhibition about the making of an exhibition, but a unique manifesto about the quasi-impossibility of marrying an idea with its concretization. The show gathered a few paintings from the Pompidou collection and many excerpts of films by canonical filmmakers (Robert Bresson, Fritz Lang, René Clair, Nicholas Ray, and Godard himself), presented on LCD screens, monitors, and television devices scattered amid a chaotic and seemingly unfinished arrangement of domestic props, fake walls, electric cables, and maquettes of the show as it had initially been conceived. Brilliantly fragmentary, frustrating, and incomplete (like many of Godard’s films), *Travel(s) in Utopia* was a sort of hand grenade that exploded inside the Pompidou, and one of the most corrosive examples of institutional critique ever made.

***Animism*****2010**

**Curated by Anselm Franke  
Extra City Kunsthall,  
Antwerp**

(traveled to the Museum of Contemporary Art, Antwerp [M HKA]; Kunsthalle Bern, Switzerland; Generali Foundation, Vienna; Haus der

**MARÍA INÉS RODRÍGUEZ**

to thought. The program “100 Days, 100 Guests” was a manifesto for the diversity of thought. It ensured that art didn’t remain inside four walls, in a purely contemplative state, but rather tied into different discourses, confronted different social, political, and economic realities and situations. In an auditorium with furniture by Franz West, architects, urbanists, economists, philosophers, scientists, writers, filmmakers, and musicians were invited to discuss poetics and politics, new territories, identities in flux, and globalization. This Documenta was also significant in establishing a more horizontal set of parameters for the encounter between Western and non-Western cultural expressions. Whereas *Magiciens de la Terre* (1989) had adopted an iconic position in “opening” routes of art between the center and the so-called periphery, here that relationship took place under different parameters in which other forms of expression and cultural construction found a legitimate platform. It was a space for exchanging knowledge and meeting people.

***31 Panorama de  
arte Brasileiro***

**1999**

**Curated by Adriano  
Pedrosa**

**Museu de Arte Moderna de  
São Paulo**

Originally formulated as a sort of national salon that would reflect the most recent developments in

**SYRAGO TSIARA****2012**

**Curated by Dada Masilo,  
Philip Miller, and  
Catherine Meyburgh  
Onassis Cultural Centre,  
Athens**

When I entered this show, I was already familiar with William Kentridge’s brilliant use of film installations and idiosyncratic drawing-animations as visual vehicles through which to express anti-apartheid political views and utopian ideas. The way this South African artist appropriates and transforms the Constructivist tradition of Russian art around the period of the October Revolution had always attracted me. But having the chance to watch him in person on stage was something else! It was the first public performance in Greece of his “chamber opera” *Refuse the Hour* (2012), a work based on an installation he had presented at *dOCUMENTA (13)* (2012). Embodying the role of a storyteller, he narrated the myth of Perseus, inserting his words into a totally subversive (in terms of both content and form) spectacle that included music, projected images, dance, and opera. It perfectly epitomized his comprehensive artistic practice.

***Krzysztof Wodiczko:  
Guests***

**2009**

**Curated by Bożena  
Czubak**

## NGAHIRAKA MASON

years is to recognize and critically survey global movements and understandings related to indigenous art, moving forward into the future. It is conceptually connected to larger global movements for indigenous rights, the widespread revival of indigenous languages, and treaty rights that enable redress of past grievances with colonizers. Indigenous people are staunch advocates for envisioning better life patterns and life expectancy for future generations, and recovering and perpetuating art practices and philosophies is a necessary part of that. These motives, however creatively stated and constructed, are not yet generally popular in the mainstream art world, and thus it is up to indigenous and concerned non-indigenous curators to lead the debate and stimulate dialogue. There are still too few indigenous curators, critics, historians, advocates, or genuine and authentic opportunities to showcase *how* we are, rather than *who* we are, in the world today. The good news is, indigenous peoples are bearing witness and giving voice to our consciousness, rather than only to our struggles.

**Goldie & Lindauer:**  
**Approaching Portraiture**  
**2010**  
**Curated by Ngahiraka**  
**Mason and Jane**  
**Davidson-Ladd**  
**Auckland Art Gallery**  
**Toi o Tāmaki,**  
**New Zealand**

## FIONN MEADE

**Group Material: Democracy**  
**1988–89**  
**Commissioning curator: Gary**  
**Garrels**  
**Dia Art Foundation, New York**

This four-month exhibition by Group Material—the only entry here that I didn’t personally experience—was a collaborative effort involving many, including Dia’s then-curator Gary Garrels and the artist Yvonne Rainer. (Group Material at the time consisted of Doug Ashford, Julie Ault, and Felix Gonzalez-Torres.) The show grew out of a two-year project, eventually adopting the pace of a commercial gallery in organizing four exhibitions and related town meetings addressing subthemes of timeliness and civic urgency: *Education and Democracy*, *Politics and Election*, *Cultural Participation*, and, finally, *AIDS and Democracy: A Case Study*. The related publication, as well as the installation documentation featured in the invaluable recent book *Show and Tell: A Chronicle of Group Material*, give an initial sense of what Doug Ashford has eloquently written about as the Group Material curatorial method: “To defend the notion of an artwork as an encounter with a person and then display this encounter in the context of new politics was Group Material’s contradictory innovation, the design of a place where the self expands by rupturing in relationship to others. . . . It meant that we would have to try to invent visual solutions (to argument) that would be able to question themselves.”<sup>1</sup> Group Material’s curatorial example of institutional collaboration (including the implications for collecting practices), democratic yet agonistic processes, and countless innovations in both timeline- and chronicle-oriented historiographic formats of display (both inside and outside the gallery space) is legendary, and deservedly so. *Group Material: Democracy* exemplifies a collaborative curatorial model in need of more extended institutional presentations and critical reconsideration.

**Of Mice and Men:**  
**The 4th Berlin Biennial**  
**2006**  
**Curated by Maurizio Cattelan,**  
**Massimiliano Gioni, and**  
**Ali Subotnick**  
**Berlin**

## PABLO LEÓN DE LA BARRA

Whitechapel Gallery in London in 1969. It also included works by Francis Alÿs, Meyer Vaisman, Minerva Cuevas, and Victor Grippo, among others. *The Structure of Survival* expanded on this idea, but now researching the influence of the *favela* and informal aesthetics of artistic and social practices. I remember the simple elegance of one room: a wall with Gego’s wire sculptures, another covered with Yona Friedman’s Styrofoam packaging, and, in the middle, Oiticica’s unrealized models sitting on tables made of glass panes and concrete blocks. In *Quasi-Cinema*, Basualdo presented Oiticica’s lesser-known work made during his exile in New York in the 1970s, including the *Cosmococas* (1973), developed with Neville d’Almeida, which consisted of leisure spaces with hammocks or mattresses and slide projections showing images of Marilyn Monroe and Jimi Hendrix drawn with lines of cocaine. Even more interesting were Oiticica’s works specifically about homosexuals and transvestites, specifically the film *Agrippina é Roma-Manhattan* (1972), with Mario Montez and Antonio Dias as actors, and the slideshow *Neyrótika* (1973), showing Oiticica’s community of friends and hustlers in bunk nests he had built in his apartment in SoHo. Finally, the *Tropicalia* exhibition departed from Oiticica’s “penetrable environments” of the same name, and presented the cultural moment of resistance that happened in Brazil during the late 1960s. Its name referred to Tropicalismo, a term coined by Oiticica himself, and the show included visual arts, film, theater, fashion, and architecture. It also presented works by contemporary artists who continue and reactivate the legacy of Tropicalismo, including Ernesto Neto, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Marepe, Rivane Neuenschwander, and avaf.

**Desvíos de la Deriva.**  
**Experiencias, travesías y**  
**morfologías (Drifts and**  
**Derivations: Experiences,**  
**Journeys, and Morphologies)**  
**2010**  
**Curated by Lisette Lagnado**  
**with Maria Berrios**  
**Museo Nacional Centro de Arte**  
**Reina Sofía, Madrid**

**FILIPA RAMOS**

Kulturen der Welt, Berlin; and Freie Universität Berlin)

By proposing to examine the delineation between life and non-life on the basis of aesthetic symptoms, and to question the obsolete chasm between nature and culture, *Animism* became the right thing (literally) at the right moment. As a research project, it constituted itself at the same time as the outspread of some of the principles that informed its theoretical spine, namely the Speculative Realism metaphysical movement (which recognizes the value, agency, and independence of all manner of non-human entities, rebalancing the human and the nonhuman to fascinating egalitarian possibilities), and its various declinations. As an exhibition format, by combining the display of erudite scientific and historiographic references with a cross-disciplinary approach that was particularly attentive to the moving image and to various sorts of documentary sources and artistic practices, it heralded the arrival of an ethnographic turn in artistic and curatorial practices alike. The interests, topics, methods, and format of *Animism* anticipated many of the tropes of Christov-Bakargiev's panoplied *dOCUMENTA (13)* and the *Encyclopedic Palace* of this year's Venice Biennale.

*Pierre Huyghe*

2013

Curated by Emma Lavigne  
Centre Georges Pompidou,  
Paris

My relationship to this project is hardly expressible in words. It starts from the fact that to call it an exhibition would be truly simplistic, or would require a radical reformula-

**MARÍA INÉS RODRÍGUEZ**

the Brazilian art scene, this edition of the biennial took a different focus under the curatorship of Adriano Pedrosa. Pedrosa chose to open it up to discourses generated by Brazilian culture proper, in order to expand the idea of territory and generate a space where visitors would confront the constructions that constitute the idea of national representation and the fragility of its symbols. His proposal generated a necessary debate on the foundations of this event, a debate that asked us to think about our relationship with the outside world: the art world and the world in general. How do we perceive our culture, and how is it perceived by others? On what does the survival of what we *are* depend? The title of the exhibition came from a work by Claire Fontaine, *Mamõyguara opá mamõ pupé*, a version in Tupi (the local native language) of the well-known slogan “foreigners everywhere.” Translated into a language that has largely fallen into disuse, it marked not only a cultural conflict and acculturation generated by colonization, but also—as some unfortunate critiques of the project indicated—evidence that art can be a closed and exclusive space onto which territoriality and fear of the other are impressed.

*Montones (Heaps)*

1976

Curated by El Sindicato  
Barranquilla, Colombia

This is one of those exhibitions that

**SYRAGO TSIARA**

### The Polish Pavilion at the 53rd Venice Biennale

Meeting Krzysztof Wodiczko's *Guests* is an experience I'll never forget. As a spectator I felt a peculiar sense of being caught between visibility and invisibility, together with the nameless protagonists of the work. In Wodiczko's consciously blurred projection I could imagine, rather than recognize, the silhouettes of migrant workers washing or repairing windows, talking to one another, while remaining unknowable strangers to the spectator. Playing with the notion of the host who remains unseen on the edges of legitimacy and illegality, this work managed to grasp the ambiguity of self-identification in the migration process. Even if you think you know them, these workers remain terra incognita. There is always an obstacle that blocks real contact, such as the window that reduces the workers' ability to enter and see. The demonstration of this twofold weakness marked Wodiczko's genuine insight.

*Heterotopias: The 1st Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art*  
2007

Curated by Maria Tsantsanoglou, Catherine David, and Jan-Erik Lundström  
State Museum of Contemporary Art,

## NGAHIRAKA MASON

Historic portraits of indigenous Māori are beloved treasures in the Auckland Art Gallery's collection, which includes 63 such works by Gottfried Lindauer, an academically trained 19th-century Bohemian immigrant, and 22 works by Charles F. Goldie, a second-generation colonial New Zealander who was schooled in Paris and worked during the early decades of the 20th century. Goldie's approach to portraiture was ethnographic and highly staged, whereas Lindauer favored a dramatic use of light and shade in modeling each individual. The historical record tells us that they had many critics in their day, but the market value of their works now, and the connections the descendants have to those portrayed, reveal a different reality. To indigenous Māori, the portraits are a conduit to ancestors and are accorded the same respect as carved representations of ancestors. To its credit, the gallery seeks the permission of descendants when reproducing the portraits or loaning works for exhibition elsewhere. This practice is part of the legacy of the groundbreaking 1987 exhibition *Tē Māori*, which brought with it new modes of cooperation between museums and descendant communities.

## FIONN MEADE

The cinematic allure of this biennial, titled *Of Mice and Men* after John Steinbeck's novella, was undeniable and indelible. The various settings along Berlin's Auguststraße—including a ballroom, a cemetery, and a church as well as private apartments, horse stables, and a shuttered Jewish girls' school—configured an exhibition-as-film-set dynamic, populated with the seductive, figurative acuity of works by artists such as Mark Manders, Matthew Monahan, Rachel Harrison, Francesca Woodman, and Tadeusz Kantor. Cribbing from the dispersed urbanity of exhibitions such as Jan Hoet's *Chambres d'Amis* (1986), the stakes were heightened beyond location scouting or using the city as background. The spectral implications of World War II, the Holocaust, and the division of East and West Berlin lingered untethered as mood enhancement within the neglected patina of many of the settings. As the curator Okwui Enwezor commented at the time, the exhibition was "dazzling in its settings in desolate, crumbling apartments and an abandoned Jewish school on the potholed, charmingly decrepit Auguststraße. The curators guided viewers through spaces haunted by history."<sup>2</sup> While the placement of Paul McCarthy's *Bang Bang Room* (1992) in the former Jewish girls' school, for instance, or the presentation of Tino Sehgal's *Kiss* (2002) in the run-down vintage chic of the Clärchens Ballhaus dance hall enacted emptying-out theatrical gestures that actively held their own against that haunted patina, the decontextualized gloss of unspecified periodizing that characterized the biennial seems increasingly significant with time. Displacement and trauma were implied backdrop presences, and the works of art role-played or stood in while the viewer enacted the tracking shot.

## Notes

1. Doug Ashford, "An Artwork Is a Person" in *Show and Tell: A Chronicle of Group Material* (London: Four Corners Books, 2010): 225.

2. Okwui Enwezor, "Best of 2006," *Artforum* (December 2006): 296.

## PABLO LEÓN DE LA BARRA

The Reina Sofía's unique exhibition program, under the direction of Manolo Borja-Villel since 2008, has heavily emphasized intellectual research and critical inquiry. This show presented research and documentation regarding the architectural, poetic, and artistic drift among the avant-garde that took place in Brazil and Chile from the 1930s to the 1970s, which moved away from European and North American notions of modernity, order, and rationality to explore possibilities for leisure, playfulness, and sensuality. The show included original drawings done by Le Corbusier during his lectures in Rio de Janeiro in 1936, in which he proposed his vision for the city; Roberto Matta's architectural drawings of unrealized projects; the Valparaíso Open School's utopian community project and discovery journeys; Sérgio Bernardes's futuristic projects for Rio de Janeiro; and Lina Bo Bardi's democratic culture projects such as the SESC Pompeia, a workers' leisure center where culture and sports coexist. The exhibition foregrounded the visionary Flavio de Carvalho (1899–1973), a painter, architect, urbanist, and thinker who, among other projects, proposed to build a City for the Naked Man; built a leisure house-temple on the outskirts of São Paulo; and wore on the streets of the city what he called the *New Look* (1956), a suit for the tropics consisting of a skirt and a loose shirt, allowing for continuous ventilation. In the exhibition, the suit was hung on a rail from the ceiling in a dynamic display by Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster that moved automatically backward and forward, recalling how de Carvalho in 1931 had walked against a religious procession in the center of São Paulo.

## FILIPA RAMOS

tion of the meaning of the term, whereas to call it a magnum opus would be to signal the end of a brilliant artistic endeavor. It is hard to convey in rational, linguistic terms something that was felt in the guts before it touched the brain, something that acted on the body—tears, cramps, fever, goose bumps, pleasure, tremors—with an intensity not usually felt in an art museum. Presenting more than 50 projects and illustrating the full extent of a body of work and research that spans more than 20 years, Pierre Huyghe turned the Pompidou's South Gallery into a site of effects and affects, a synesthetic experience that summoned all our senses to deal with extremely complex and ever-changing processes. Everything seemed to be linked by an invisible thread that traced the artist's tropes, obsessions, and interests. The exhibition space appropriated a part of the street, becoming a sort of aquarium where all forms of life dwelled. Persons, animals, and plants, sounds and visions, temperatures and the different states of water shared the same space and became one. *Human*, a live white Ibiza hound with a magenta leg, materialized in front of our eyes, and in that moment, intensity became visible. We could almost touch it, for a second, before it melted into air.

## MARÍA INÉS RODRÍGUEZ

I was too young to have seen, but that I know to be foundational in the history of exhibitions. It was curated—or, rather, organized—by El Sindicato (The Syndicate), an artists' collective that established its own space in the 1970s and proceeded to generate one of the most dynamic, political, risky moments in Colombian art. *Montones* was part of a series of 26 interventions that, together, reformulated current notions of exhibiting and displaying (both the artist's and the curator's) working processes. These interventions also formed communities—not only artistic, but also neighborly—that became not only audiences but actually part of the projects themselves, activating the space and the works. *Montones* consisted of heaps of materials that were brought into the space, mostly by the artists themselves, and exhibited raw, unaltered. From these heaps they moved on to a second exhibition called *Dispersión*, which consisted of putting the heaps at the disposal of the audience. Visitors dismantled them and carried them out of the Sindicato to other spaces of reception and diffusion. The heaps thus disappeared into the city, infiltrating public and private spaces and acquiring new identities and uses adapted to their new owners. In this way the experimental art of the Sindicato continued in the same vein in which it started, using the exhibition as a dialectical space of representation and action, with artist and public playing equally important roles.

## SYRAGO TSIARA

## Thessaloniki, Greece

Seven years ago, a new experiment started in the form of the Thessaloniki Biennale, which by now has already had its fourth edition. Taking as a working platform Michel Foucault's seminal 1967 essay "Des Espaces Autres" (Of Other Spaces), the exhibition attempted to create a space where artists from diverse cultural backgrounds could exhibit together, surpassing the obstacles of the market and already-established art centers. Artists from central Asia, Latin America, the former Soviet Union, the Middle East, and Western Europe presented their works inside museums, old monasteries, mosques, the port public space, the airport, and even on the surface of the sea. It was a moment of optimism and strong belief in our potential to articulate an alternative discourse that the world needs, envisioning the new biennial as an experimental site to rethink relationships among art, politics, and the market, and especially among the art scenes of the so-called periphery. Today, Greek society suffers from the severe consequences of a global economic crisis that disproportionately affected southern Europe. The existence and persistence of the Thessaloniki and Athens biennials, despite this situation, is a sign of resistance, after all.



# REAR MIRROR



## CONSIDERING THE 2013 CARNEGIE INTERNATIONAL

**Daniel Baumann, Dan Byers, and Tina Kukielski**

**Daniel Baumann (DBa), Dan Byers (DBy), and Tina Kukielski (TK):** Our first working meeting in preparation for curating the 2013 Carnegie International was at Frieze, in London, in October 2010. After a long walk around the park, and about six more months of conversation, we'd gotten to know one another and set to work.

Over the course of three years, we opened an apartment space in Pittsburgh, where we held more than 50 talks by local and visiting artists, writers, filmmakers, and others. Visiting artists stayed there, too. We did a ton of international travel, some separately and some together. We got to know Pittsburgh and the Carnegie Museum of Art very well. We each lived in the city, in the neighborhoods of Lawrenceville, Polish Hill, and Squirrel Hill. And we worked very closely with assistant curator Amanda Donnan and curatorial assistant Lauren Wetmore.

This iteration of the Carnegie International, which lands in Pittsburgh every four or five years, is composed of 35 artists from 19 countries, an ongoing engagement with Pittsburgh and its arts community (the apartment), and two exhibitions within the exhibition: a show on the history of avant-garde playground design in Europe, the United States, and Japan (guest curated by Gabriela Burkhalter), and an exhibition of the museum's modern and contemporary art collection, tracing relationships between the collection and past Internationals and picking up on themes in the current edition. In the process of organizing an exhibition that would affect people's lives (and hopefully change their minds), we also deeply considered the potential, role, and form of the biennial-type exhibition.

## THE SOCIÉTÉ ANONYME'S DADA DESTINY

**Jennifer Gross**

*The Société Anonyme: Modernism for America* provided a unique opportunity to witness the influences of institutional priorities on curatorial practice and the shaping of art history. Primarily drawn from a singular institutional collection, it exposed sometimes-conflicting agendas through local interpretative intervention as it toured, even as its overall structure remained consistent. The exhibition traveled to four venues (the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, the Phillips Collection in Washington DC, the Dallas Museum of Art, and the Frist Center for the Visual Arts in Nashville) before returning to the Yale University Art Gallery, its originating institution, in 2012.

A modernist treasure trove assembled in the 1920s and 1930s by members of the Société Anonyme under the guidance and vision of Katherine Dreier and Marcel Duchamp, the Société Anonyme Collection was for many years an under-recognized and underutilized resource at Yale. The works were given to the university in 1941 after Dreier and Duchamp were unable to fund a museum to house the collection independently. Dreier did organize a survey from the collection on the occasion of the original gift, but in 2002, when the notion of a traveling show of the collection was conceived, the history of the organization had, remarkably, never been examined in any depth in an exhibition context.

The original institutional mandate for the traveling show was to assemble a group of "greatest hits" by artists such as Piet Mondrian and Joseph Stella that would tour the country while Yale University Art Gallery renovated its facilities. Research soon suggested, however, that a more ambitious project might reinstate the Société Anonyme to its rightful place in art history.



2013 Carnegie International installation view, showing Gabriel Sierra's *Untitled (111.111.111 x 111.111.111 = 12345678987654321)*, 2013

**DBa:** Let's talk first about what we really got "right." I am proud of how we consciously rooted this show in Pittsburgh. We took the risk to realize projects even (or because) they were not visible or understandable to a public outside the city. As an example: After visiting the Carnegie Museum, the Colombian artist Gabriel Sierra suggested painting its Hall of Architecture purple. It used to be green, but only those who'd seen it before could fully grasp the radicality of the change. It taught me a great deal about the local and why it is a "problem": It might be invisible to the global and can't be successfully marketed within the art world.

**TK:** I think leasing the apartment was rather sly and effective. It became something of a second home for a

number of us. We were hosts, cooked big meals, made tea, hung out in the back patio, and got to know some of the local arts community.

**DBy:** Our first decision, about how we would work together, was crucial, and I think it was directly evident in almost every aspect of the exhibition. We all agreed on the artist list, and we laid the show out together. There were moments when it looked like lobbying or consensus building, but we were self-aware, and tried to reintroduce true argument into our decision making. We discovered themes and repetitions by listening to one another, by arguing, by stepping back, by seeing things through two other people's eyes. This made the exhibition human. We ended up appealing to art's power to change our minds.

Thus, the show was somehow built on reception—on the ways the works could communicate among one another and outward. We figured out that we had to value communication. If a work used obfuscation, delay, and fragmentation (so many great works do), in the end we still had to articulate the value and meaning beyond those tactics of delay. It was exhausting at moments, but rewarding beyond any other professional or intellectual experience I've ever had.

**TK:** I certainly learned how difficult and how rewarding it can be to work in a team. And, with that, how a thousand ideas are better than one.

**DBy:** I can tell you that the doubt, the hard-fought ethical conversations, the playful exchanges, and the collective intuitive moments of the curatorial process actually made their way into the visitor experience. At least four people on tours asked me, "It looks like you three were having fun. Were you?" We were, indeed. It's incredible to think that this quality can be perceived by visitors.

**DBa:** I liked giving as many tours as possible to learn how the show was perceived. I also love that the first big project we realized was a playground. And that our blog shared what we were doing with the public.

**TK:** Early on, someone mentioned writing travel reports. We agreed that it was a good idea, especially when we were traveling alone, so we could "radio" back to camp. And we actually did it, at least for a while. It took discipline, but it was a very useful and thoughtful tool that I will return to again.

**THE SOCIÉTÉ  
ANONYME'S  
DADA DESTINY**

Jennifer Gross

Robert L. Herbert, with the assistance of Eleanor S. Apter and Elise K. Kenney, created the primary record of the organization and its legacy at Yale in the formidable 1984 catalogue raisonné of the collection. While Yale University Art Gallery had shared individual works through an active loan program, only two or three masterworks from the collection were ever on view at Yale in the intervening 60 years. When exhibited, these were folded into a traditional Modernist narrative—a practice that dismissed the donors' intent for the collection of more than 1,000 works to be seen as evidence of the complex and inclusive history of Modernism they had exhibited, collected, and lived.

The Société Anonyme produced more than 40 publications, 80 exhibitions, and countless initiatives in music, film, and public programming. When *Modernism for America* debuted at the Hammer Museum in 2006, it was not surprising that the airing of the Société's full range of accomplishments and the re-creation of their curatorial practices transformed the general understanding of early-20th-century Modernism. The exhibition also reintroduced numerous artists whose works had been excluded from canonical accounts of the period. The efforts by members of the Société Anonyme to avoid subjective aesthetic values radically challenged established definitions of Modernism, accounts of the theoretical and aesthetic concerns that motivated its creation, and entrenched curatorial approaches to its history and display.



*The Société Anonyme: Modernism for America* installation view, the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, 2006, showing works by Marcel Duchamp

The exhibition was designed to use the Société's own methods to address issues that—even in its own time—hampered a comprehensive understanding of Modernism. The Hammer Museum embraced the exhibition's ambition to present this neglected history clearly and fully. The art historian Christopher Bedford commended this approach in his review for *The Burlington Magazine*:

As Gross notes in the exhibition catalogue, . . . “The Société Anonyme ultimately amassed a collection that is a time capsule of modern art practice from 1920–1950, unmediated by traditional art-historical and curatorial analysis.” . . . It is precisely the broad, inclusive, and non-hierarchical net of this “time capsule” structure that liberated Dreier from the constraints that were to govern the formation of the collection at MoMA, and it is the same principle that elevates the present show above less inventive historical surveys.<sup>1</sup>

The exhibition's audiences responded enthusiastically to its insistence on representing the breadth of the Société's collection and programming initiatives, in contrast to the familiar, highly edited story of Modernism. Many observed that the Société's curatorial methods seem as radical today as they did nearly a century ago. For example, referring to the exhibition's re-creation of the nationality-based groupings in the Société Anonyme's 1926 Brooklyn International Exhibition, Bedford described the shock of its “brazen lack of organization and hierarchy” for viewers trained in “vigilant discrimination between great artists and their lesser brethren”:

To see Miró, Dove, and Duchamp mixed indiscriminately with relative unknowns such as Giovanna Klein, Laszlo Peri, and Lotte Reiniger is a lesson in the power of disciplinary history and discourse to shape the way we present, perceive, and, in fact, expect to see the art and artists of the past. The many modernisms made apparent in this gallery are evidence of the tacit but powerful revisionism undertaken by an exhibition that at first appears benign and slavishly adherent to historical reconstruction.<sup>2</sup>

Nancy Troy, in her review of the Hammer installation in *Artforum*, more directly expressed the radical implications of the Société Anonyme's version of the history of 20th-century Modernism:

**CONSIDERING THE 2013 CARNEGIE INTERNATIONAL**

Daniel Baumann, Dan Byers, and Tina Kukielski

**DBy:** I can certainly say that I learned new languages. You both talk about art differently than I do, and now some of your language is mine as well.

As far as what we wish we'd done differently, I for one wish we had found an artist who wanted to transform the outdoor sculpture court somehow. They are lonely sculptures that have begun one side of a conversation. They need antagonists, or friends.

And I think music—on its own, not just in artworks—could have found a way into the show.



2013 Carnegie International installation view, showing Nicole Eisenman's *Couple Kissing*, 2013

**TK:** Unsurprisingly, there are a few artists I regret not inviting. David Hammons is someone we discussed early on, then couldn't figure out the right approach. We thought about restaging an older work. He would have been the only repeat artist—meaning, he was included in the 1991 International.

**DBa:** To curate a group exhibition is always to regret not being able to invite certain artists. We'd decided to limit the exhibition to about 35 artists in order to represent their art with more than a few works apiece. And sometimes, as Tina mentioned, we excluded an artist who had participated in a previous Carnegie International, or whose practice was similar to somebody else's, for the sake of diversity. Other than that, I would say, in the words of Edith Piaf, "Non, rien de rien. Non, je ne regrette rien."

**DBy:** We talk so much about the museum as a public space. It's central to the idea of our show, and its potential. It would have been great if someone had offered to make admission free for the run of the International, to better test our ideas.

I'd have liked to have included one more artist, in addition to Mark Leckey and Frances Stark, who pushes the comingling of the digital and the self, and the strange relationships that result. But, happily, their works ended up being in dialogue with spaces in the museum, and with works by very different kinds of artists.

**TK:** I would have liked *more* opportunities to do that—to put artworks in immediate dialogue with other artists' works. When we did get to do it, for instance pairing the abstraction of Sadie Benning's paintings with Zanele Muholi's portraits of the LGBTI community in Africa, or juxtaposing Sarah Lucas's wild anthropomorphy with Henry Taylor's freewheeling brush, it was a surprise for everyone, including us.



2013 Carnegie International installation view, showing Zanele Muholi's *Faces and Phases*, 2007–13, and Lara Favaretto's *Jesem*, 2013

We screened several films by Kamran Shirdel, whose work is little known outside of Iran, in the museum's theater. The room is comfortable and dark, but I regret that we did not find a way to include at least one of his films within the galleries. The thin line between fact and fiction that Shirdel walks in these films also crops up in the work of Yael Bartana, Frances Stark, and Rokni Haerizadeh. We were constantly making connections between artworks and artists in our minds and in our writings, but physical juxtapositions can be convincing in ways that our words cannot.

**THE SOCIÉTÉ  
ANONYME'S  
DADA DESTINY**

Jennifer Gross

The strategy of inclusion pursued in the current exhibition itself encourages us to question the aesthetic predilections upon which MoMA's narrative was based, using ephemeral materials to reconstruct interpersonal relationships that united artists across generations and widely divergent aesthetic commitments—conjuring a flowchart that would look radically different from the one [Alfred H.] Barr created in 1936. Indeed, the present exhibition and its accompanying catalogue encourage us not simply to appreciate the alternative story of modernism revealed by the Société Anonyme, but to take the next logical step and reexamine MoMA's own early history. . . . Reincorporating these episodes into a narrative of modernism that is not structured in terms of formal coherence, established movements, or singular artistic achievements would allow for a more nuanced and stimulating account in which the Société Anonyme might turn out to play a central, rather than a marginal, role.<sup>3</sup>



*The Société Anonyme: Modernism for America* installation view, the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, 2006

In fact, the Museum of Modern Art seemed to embrace Troy's challenge seven years later by grappling with Modernism's collaborative origins in Leah Dickerman's ambitious exhibition *Inventing Abstraction, 1910–1925*



*The Société Anonyme: Modernism for America* installation view, Yale University Art Gallery, 2012

(2012). Although the structure of the exhibition adhered to a "masters"-driven narrative, its subtext was illustrated in a flowchart of relationships mapped onto the title wall. This image evoked the geographical flowchart of the Société artists' network included in the *Modernism for America* catalogue. Dickerman similarly documented the importance of the culture of creative exchange for these artists, reinforcing the idea of interwoven community as a defining force in Modernism that had been put forth in the Société Anonyme exhibition.

Given the Société Anonyme exhibition's success in Los Angeles, it was surprising, as the show traveled, to encounter in some of the subsequent host institutions a drive to erase the singular character of the exhibition and collection, and to market a traditional Modernist-master narrative. Even after the exhibition's eclecticism had been affirmed by both popular and critical reception, the curatorial premise was still in play. One museum (unsuccessfully) proposed changing the title of the show for marketing purposes to *Duchamp, Kandinsky, Léger, and Company*, a suggestion that obliterated the radically inclusive founding principle of the organization and marginalized its founder, Katherine Dreier.

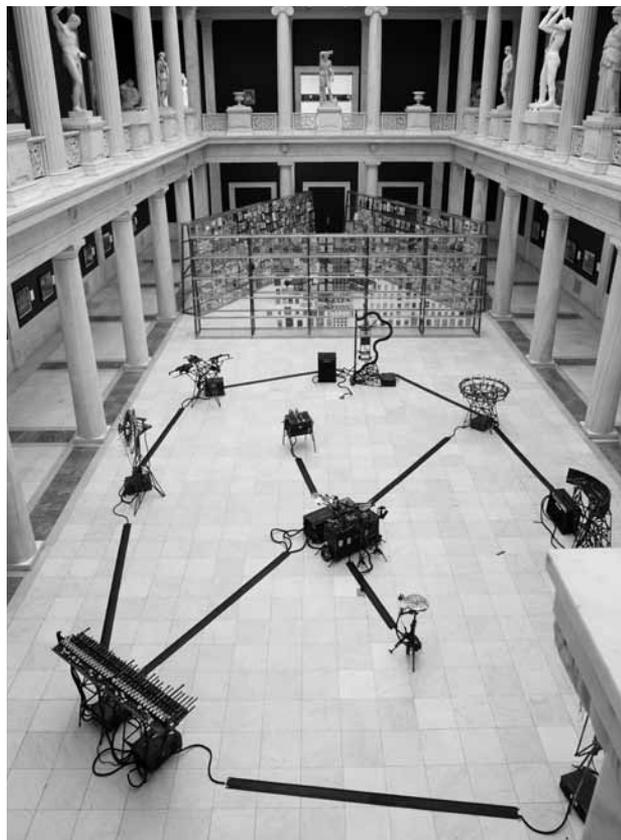
Essential to conveying the group's visionary assault on the emerging, narrow Modernist art historical narrative was the replication of its original exhibition practices—including a re-creation of Marcel Duchamp's 1920 inaugural exhibition for the Société Anonyme, down to its gray rubber flooring, Lightolier fixtures, and lace paper doilies around the paintings. Upon entering this space at each venue, visitors experienced firsthand the nuanced exchange of ideas between artists of diverse aesthetic practices that was at the heart of the Société Anonyme's mission.

**CONSIDERING THE 2013 CARNEGIE INTERNATIONAL INTER-NATIONAL**

Daniel Baumann, Dan Byers, and Tina Kukielski

**DBy:** I worry that for all of our interest in dissonance, dissidence, and the political, there is a kind of copacetic, soft hum that surrounds the exhibition, smoothing edges. A quietness. On the other hand, many people who see this exhibition are not versed in the vocabulary of contemporary art. In order to introduce conversations that we think are important today—alternative histories; gender, sexuality, and bodies; economic inequalities; various kinds of violence; a diminished sense of civic responsibility; the subversive potential of pleasure; et cetera!—the works have to speak at least some form of common language.

There is still a lot of “work” that visitors must do in the exhibition, and many layers, but without giving them a way in, it wouldn’t be possible to shift people’s thinking and propose an intellectual or psychological risk that is potentially rewarding.



2013 Carnegie International installation view, showing Pedro Reyes’s *Disarm (Mechanized)*, 2012–13 and the Bidoun Library

**DBa:** There are definitely works that are deeply political and are understood as such by visitors. I would include in this group the Bidoun Library and works by Rokni Haerizadeh, Dinh Q. Lê, Zanele Muholi, Pedro Reyes, Kamran Shirdel, Transformazium, and others.

**TK:** I agree that a lot of the political content of the show is delivered in a subtle way. In some instances, as in the *Sweet Earth* (1993–2005) photographs by Joel Sternfeld, the political is embedded within something rather beautiful. In positioning *Sweet Earth* alongside the instruments from guns project by Pedro Reyes, or the challenge to Middle Eastern stereotyping that is the Bidoun Library, I do believe that the subtlety of intent comes alive. These works are not didactic. Rather, they evoke an elegiac mood whose dissident quality reveals itself over time. This is why I find Pedro Reyes’s title *Disarm* such apt nomenclature.

**DBa:** The show is political in the sense that it is self-aware. It promotes art not as a guide, an alternative, a commodity, or a substitute for religion, but as a tool to understand our lives, the lives of others, beauty, imperfection, and places of resistance. The exhibition doesn’t show off. It refuses to speak the language of spectacle, which was our conscious decision. In today’s world, obsessed as it is with branding and promotion, that in itself is political.

**DBy:** I’m glad that we sort of rode the wave *past* the institutional embrace of performance. That wave crested, and we got off. It just didn’t make sense for the way we wanted the museum to behave among the art and the people visiting.

My essay in the catalogue, which is partially about the texture and use of the museum by actual people, actual bodies, in relationship to artworks and the institutional mission, was almost completely hypothetical. But the museum—and the exhibition—looks and feels the way I hoped it might. More than any other museum show I’ve ever been involved in, with this show, I see how the viewer completes the work. This project has made me think so much about the communicative potential of curating.

**THE SOCIÉTÉ  
ANONYME'S  
DADA DESTINY**

Jennifer Gross

When the exhibition returned to Yale to inaugurate the gallery's spectacular, newly renovated and expanded exhibition galleries, these valuable inflections were excluded from its presentation. Privileging connoisseurship over art-historical context, the gallery declined to re-create Duchamp's installation and rejected the Société's nationality-driven installation of the 1926 Brooklyn International Exhibition. The resulting installation, which featured focused groupings of works by individual "master" artists—while beautiful—lacked the dynamic aesthetic of earlier venues.

When the exhibition concluded in the summer of 2013, rather than fulfilling the Société's radical premise of an inclusive Modernism, Yale again pursued a traditional Modernist narrative, integrating selected works into its permanent collection galleries. This decision obscures the influence of the Société Anonyme even within the institution that houses and stewards the organization's history and collection.

The curatorial efforts of the artists of the Société Anonyme embodied a diverse history of Modernism and captured the full range of remarkable artistic endeavors produced during this tumultuous period. As the collection is once again subsumed by conventional institutional practice and its founders' intentions are once more largely subverted, the Société Anonyme, and the majority of the artists in the collection, await the appreciation, understanding, and scholarship they deserve.

But in the wake of *Modernism for America*, propelled by these artists' prescient ambitions for a more integrated Modernism, an incremental rewriting of the history of art has already begun. It can be seen in a number of dissertations and small-scale exhibitions, both in America and in Europe, that keep the flame of the Société's vision glowing steadily, as a challenge and an inspiration.

**Notes**

1. Christopher Bedford, "The Société Anonyme. Los Angeles and Washington," *The Burlington Magazine* (October 2006): 716.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Nancy Troy, "The Société Anonyme: Modernism for America," *Artforum International* (October 2006): 256.



*The Société Anonyme: Modernism for America* installation view, Yale University Art Gallery, 2012

**CONTRIBUTORS**

Daniel Baumann

*Co-Curator, 2013 Carnegie International; Director, Adolf Wölfli Foundation, Museum of Fine Arts, Bern, Switzerland*

Dan Byers

*Co-Curator, 2013 Carnegie International; Richard Armstrong Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh*

Germano Celant

*Director, Prada Foundation, Milan*

Hendrik Folkerts

*Curator of Public Programs, Performance, Film, and Discursive Programs, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam*

Massimiliano Gioni

*Director, 55th Venice Biennale; Associate Director and Director of Exhibitions, New Museum, New York*

Jennifer Gross

*Chief Curator and Deputy Director for Curatorial Affairs, deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, Lincoln, Massachusetts*

Chelsea Haines

*Doctoral Student in Art History, the Graduate Center, City University of New York*

Jens Hoffmann

*Editor, The Exhibitionist, New York*

Inés Katzenstein

*Curator and Founding Director, Art Department, Universidad Torcuato Di Tella, Buenos Aires*

Tina Kukielski

*Co-Curator, 2013 Carnegie International; Curator of the Hillman Photography Initiative, Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh*

Pablo León de la Barra

*UBS MAP Curator, Latin America, Guggenheim Museum, New York*

Christopher Y. Lew

*Assistant Curator, MoMA PSI, New York*

Åse Løvgren

*Artist and Curator, Bergen, Norway*

Ngahiraka Mason

*Indigenous Curator, Maori Art, Auckland Art Gallery, New Zealand*

Fionn Meade

*Senior Curator of Cross-Disciplinary Platforms, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis*

Laurel Ptak

*Director and Curator, Triangle Art Association, New York*

Filipa Ramos

*Freelance Curator and Critic, London*

María Inés Rodríguez

*Director, CAPC musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux, France*

Monika Szewczyk

*Visual Arts Program Curator, Logan Center for the Arts, University of Chicago*

Chen Tamir

*Curator, Center for Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv, Israel*

Lumi Tan

*Associate Editor, The Exhibitionist, New York*

Syrago Tsiara

*Director, Contemporary Art Center of Thessaloniki, Greece*

Johanne Nordby Werno

*Director, Unge Kunstneres Samfund (UKS), Oslo*

**PHOTO CREDITS**

pp. 5–7: Dirk Pauwels, courtesy S.M.A.K.; pp. 9–11: courtesy Eyal Danon; pp. 13–15: Matthew Septimus, courtesy MoMA PS1, New York; p. 16: courtesy Carola Bony; pp. 18–20: courtesy Patricia Rizzo; p. 38 (top): Liz Eve; pp. 40–45 and 46 (top): Nils Klinger; p. 46 (bottom): Monika Žak; p. 59: Fanis Vlastaras & Rebecca Constantopoulou; pp. 76, 78, 80: Greenhouse Media; pp. 77 and 79 (top): Joshua White; pp. 79 (bottom) and 81: Courtesy Yale University Art Gallery.

---

## THE EXHIBITIONIST

*Editor:*

Jens Hoffmann

*Senior Editor:*

Julian Myers-Szupinska

*Associate Editor:*

Lumi Tan

*Editors at Large:*

Chelsea Haines and Tara McDowell

*Web Editor:*

JiaJia Fei

*Editorial Board:*

Maurice Berger, Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, Okwui Enwezor, Patrick Flores,  
Massimiliano Gioni, Mary Jane Jacob, Maria Lind, Carol Lu, Chus Martínez, Jessica Morgan,  
Hans Ulrich Obrist, Adriano Pedrosa, João Ribas, Gayatri Sinha, Christine Tohmé

*Editorial Coordinator:*

Alison Smith

*Copy Editor:*

Lindsey Westbrook

*Editorial Interns:*

Anne Lens and Gerad Goupil

*Design:*

Jon Sueda / Stripe, San Francisco

*Founding Editors:*

Jens Hoffmann and Chiara Figone

*Printer:*

Overseas Printing Corp. / Printed in China

*Distribution:*

MIT PRESS JOURNALS

Trade Sales

55 Hayward St., Cambridge, MA 02142-1315

[mitpressjournals.org](http://mitpressjournals.org)

[journals-tradesales@mit.edu](mailto:journals-tradesales@mit.edu)

*Friends of Exhibitionists:*

Ross Sappenfield, Jack Kirkland, Luisa Strina, Julie Taubman, Outset USA

outset.

ISSN: 2038-0984

[info@the-exhibitionist.com](mailto:info@the-exhibitionist.com)

[the-exhibitionist.com](http://the-exhibitionist.com)

*The Exhibitionist* no. 9, March 2014. © 2014

