ONCURATING

Issue 33 / June 2017
Notes on Curating
www.oncurating.org

documenta

Curating the History of the Present

Edited by
Nanne Buurman & Dorothee Richter

Contributions by
Anna Sigrídur Arnar, Angela M. Bartholomew, Beatrice von Bismarck, Nanne Buurman, Anthony Gardner & Charles Green, Ayse Güleç, Kathryn M. Floyd, Walter Grasskamp, Kristian Handberg, Dorothea von Hantelmann, Susanne König, Vesna Madžoski, Nina Möntmann, Philipp Oswalt, Dorothee Richter, Elpida Rikou & Eleana Yalouri, Nora Sternfeld

Contents

documenta: Curating the History of the Present

by Nanne Buurman & Dorothee Richter

In his text, "Modell documenta: oder wie wird Kunstgeschichte gemacht?," included in a special issue on *documenta* for the journal *Kunstforum International* that Walter Grasskamp edited on the occasion of *documenta 7* (1982), he cites documenta as an example of how art history is produced. In it, he not only describes the ways in which exhibitions contribute to the making of art history but also observes a change of heroes from artists to curators, providing a foundational narrative of curatorial and exhibition studies that has proven to be extremely influential. In fact, its English translation, "For Example, documenta, or How Art history is Produced," published in the anthology *Thinking About Exhibitions,*[1] has meanwhile become canonical itself, so much so, actually, that many contributors to our special issue cite it in their essays. Thus, "For Example, documenta" can be taken as an example of how *exhibition history* is produced. Considering the fact that he stresses the importance of installation and provides very convincing examples of how curatorial stagings produce meaning, remarkably little attention has been paid to display in the general writing about documenta.[2] This was also reflected in the proposals for contributions for this issue, many of which focused primarily on artistic contributions or curatorial concepts but–with a few exceptions–less on the materialization of the installation of the shows themselves. Nevertheless, it is extremely important to critically examine the politics of display and the discrepancies between curatorial claims and the realities performed in the shows, not least because–as many contributors eventually selected for this issue call to our attention–these claims and performances are usually ideologically charged, as they have always been informed not only by artistic trends and cultural developments but also by socioeconomic and geopolitical contexts.[3]

Ideologies and Geopolitics

A number of the contributions dedicated to the early documenta editions remind us of the first *documenta's* role in West German reconstruction, re-education, and nation-building, which, after after World War II, the Nazi regime and its infamous exhibitions of so-called "degenerate art" has to be seen in the context of the Federal Republic of Germany's integration into the Transatlantic West during the Cold War. In his contribution to this issue, "Becoming Global," **Walter Grasskamp,** for instance, argues that despite ostentatious PR emphasis on internationality, the first four documentas were in fact quite German, Eurocentric, or later North Atlantic in terms of statistics and staging, while he also problematizes the notion of national representation. In "d is for documenta," **Kathryn M. Floyd** discusses how the first *documenta* (1955) was branded in terms of internationalism by developing a corporate identity whose design features, as she argues, are exemplary of the international style with its streamlined aesthetics contributing to glossing over **ideological** discrepancies within Western capitalism. As **Susanne König**'s comparison of the first *documenta* with the *Allgemeine Deutsche Kunstausstellung* (1946) nine years earlier in Dresden makes obvious, a pluralistic all-German selection of abstract and figurative styles that had characterized the "first all-German exhibition" gave way to an increasing privileging of figurative art in the East and of non-figurative art in the West of Germany with the intensification of the Cold War after the founding of the GDR (East German Democratic Republic) in 1949. In this light, documenta initiator Arnold Bode's dedication to primarily expressive modern art and his art historian co-curator Werner Haftmann's promotion of "abstraction as a world language," a slogan devised for the second *documenta*, may be read as an ideological affiliation of documenta with the "free West," where artistic liberation from naturalist representation was considered as an expression of individualism, whereas (socialist) realist art was regarded as "unfree" because it did not cut its ties to extra-artistic reality.[4] The marginalization of realist tendencies in the early history of documenta may

thus also be read as a de-politicization of art, with documenta nevertheless serving political functions despite, or rather because of, this denial of politics. As **Vesna Madžoski** argues in her reprinted chapter "Ghostly Women, Faithful Sons," documenta as a spectacle has been a disciplinary institution and consensus machine, in which women only played a minor role, whereas the men in charge maintained all authority. According to her, despite challenges from student protesters at *documenta 4* (1968) or Harald Szeemann's radical change of focus with *documenta 5* (1972), documenta remains an appeasement apparatus that turns visitors into consumerist subjects even as late as 2007 with *documenta 12* taking a more or less explicit feminist stance and reserving central roles for women (so far, it is by the way also the documenta with the highest proportion of women artists).

Methodologies and Epistemologies

To come back to the question posed above: What could be the reasons for the lack of attention to display? Surely, access should no longer be a problem since the documenta Archiv's digitized collections of photographs of most documenta exhibitions are now online. Could the reason be an art-historical methodology that–despite interventions by museum-, exhibition-, and curatorial studies as well as by visual culture and sociology of art–is still largely trained to look at clearly bounded individual artworks, verbal documents, or historical contexts, but not as much at multi-medial and multi-dimensional curatorial constellations? Or is it the shift of attention from working with pictorial materials to more theory-based approaches that is responsible for this lack of attention? Admittedly, particularly with a large-scale recurring exhibition, such as *Biennials, Triennials, and documenta*[5] it is difficult to construct and define the object of research, to draw the line around what is of interest and what isn't. This is particularly the case in the expanded field of curating and exhibition making, in which classical reception aesthetics have been extended by post-representative approaches to curating and the curatorial.[6] These call attention to exhibitions as not only culturally, politically, and socio-economically situated, but also to their role as social spaces themselves, as arenas where multiple agencies interact. In her contribution "Plunging into the World," **Nina Möntmann** traces this understanding back to the 1990s and emphasizes the political potentials of an increasing convergence of art world and real world insofar as curatorial and artistic practices can serve as time machines that help to construct alternative imaginaries to the contemporary neoliberal and neocolonial conditions. Similarly, the newly appointed documenta professor **Nora Sternfeld** proposes, in the English version of her "inaugural lecture," a research perspective that is situated *in medias res,* that acts in the middle of things, in the post-representational space between representation and presence, between the inside and outside of the institution, assuming a para-sitical position towards documenta understood as a "Para-Museum of 100 Days," which is itself implicated in social conditions and power relations. In "Thinking the Arrival," former documenta guest professor **Dorothea von Hantelmann** argues that with his contribution to *dOCUMENTA (13)* (2012)*,* Pierre Huyghe challenged what she considers to be the "ontology of exhibitions," i.e., a modernist teleological notion of progress and subject-object opposition, that, she explains, is under suspense in "Untilled," which instead adheres to a post-anthropocentric logic of association, networking, and compostation and thus intervenes into the usual fast-forward mode of exhibition visits by inviting visitors to linger and get involved in the mattering of the site rather than assuming an objectifying critical gaze. In different ways, all three of them thus stress that the polarity of critical distance and affirmative participation, imagined as a binary between mutually exclusive positions, is no longer epistemologically tenable for the study of exhibitions, or documenta in particular.[7]

If we look at the history of documenta, discussions have notably quite often oscillated between the polarities of critique and affirmation of the status quo, distance from and immersion into reality, social relevance or *l'art pour l'art*, autonomy and heteronomy. As Harald Szeemann wrote in 1974 in his proposal for a "Museum of Obsessions" (with which he applied for artistic directorship of *documenta 6* that went to Manfred Schneckenburger in the end), "Too much has recently been written about art's social relevance or its necessary inutility."[8] After Szeemann's unsuccessful attempt to include art from the GDR in *documenta 5* in 1972, which had been turned down by the East German officials who were worried that the realist contributions would be "othered" along the lines of trivial art and art by the mentally impaired–what today would be called "outsider-art"–, the first and only showing of GDR artists took place in 1977 during *documenta 6*, where they were juxtaposed with self-reflexive meta-painting.[9] Whereas *documenta 5*, with its concept of "Questioning Reality–Pictorial Worlds Today," had performed a sort of realism insofar as it had pulled down the walls between art and non-art practices, or, between art and life, with the "Media Concept," *documenta 6* propagated

reflections of art's mediality rather than its participation in reality.[10] **Anna Sigrídur Arnar's** contribution on "Books at documenta" illustrates this. She shows how at *documenta 5*, books had been staged as usable things that could be handled and read, whereas at *documenta 6*, they were in many cases "metamorphosed" into untouchable art objects and displayed in vitrines that kept visitors at a distance. This inoperation also partly characterizes the latest curatorial engagement with books at *dOCUMENTA (13)* and *documenta 14* (2017), where they were/are significant building blocks of artistic and curatorial agendas. The perceivable shift from an idea of participation in reality at *d5* to a reflection of reality at *d6* illustrates one significant characteristic of the history of documenta since 1972, when Szeemann introduced a thematic approach to exhibition-making: the explicit conceptual distancing of artistic directors from their predecessors, which also becomes obvious, for example, if one compares *documenta 12's* reflexive approach to the declaredly post-critical stance of *dOCUMENTA (13)*.[11]

Agencies and Historiographies

In many cases, these claims of rupture, however, over-exaggerate differences at the cost of attention to institutional continuities.[12] This principle of innovation is also inscribed in documenta's rules and regulations, which since 1972 postulates for a new artistic director to be selected every five years, who is then expected to come up with something new. Particularly in the media reception of documenta, each new edition is hailed for its innovative potentials, often declaring things as new that had been there before (perhaps because they would otherwise not be "newsworthy"). Declaring newness is, of course, a good marketing strategy, therefore many proclaimed "first times" of documenta are in fact not really first times, but rather means to attract attention and suggest singularity. Thus, certain patterns of critique that keep reiterating old clichés have become canonized, particularly regarding the persona of the artistic director or curator, who is generally accused of over-staging and willful domination of artists.[13] Yet, also the more serious writing on the history of documenta frequently uses heroizing rhetoric that hails Arnold Bode and Werner Haftmann as exceptional founding fathers, with many other great men, particularly Szeemann, to follow in the genealogy of visionary game changers. But this personalization, subjectivation, and author-ization of curatorship, identified by Grasskamp in 1982 as the "Heldenwechsel" (change of heroes) from artists to curators, has also been scrutinized more critically. documenta and the discourses surrounding it have indeed been quite important in developing and discussing the topos of the curator as an author, at least in Germany.[14] In 2000, for instance, **Beatrice von Bismarck** analyzed the reciprocal appropriation of curatorial and artistic authorship in Daniel Buren's *Exposition d'une Exposition* at *documenta 5*. In "The Master of the Works," the new English translation of her text for this issue, she calls attention to how Harald Szeemann staged himself as *primus inter pares* in a photograph that shows him on the last day of *documenta 5* and that he included in a little booklet titled *Museum der Obsessionen. with/by/on/about Harald Szeemann* (1981). Szeemann's strategy of self-musealization has proven to be quite successful, as both the photograph and the topos of the curator as a meta-artist have since become icons, or even archetypes of curatorial and exhibition studies, which are reiterated again and again. Therefore, in a revised version of the article "CCB with...," developed between 2013-2016, **Nanne Buurman,** for instance, compares Szeemann's self-staging in *Museum of Obsessions* to that of Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev in *The Logbook,* the third part of the *dOCUMENTA (13)* catalogue. She scrutinizes not only the shifting (bio-)political implications of curatorial self-stagings against the backdrop of changing socioeconomic conditions, but also the role of gender for performances of curatorship in neoliberal regimes of value production, also discussed as immaterialization or feminization of labor.[15] **Dorothee Richter,** who had observed the gendering of Harald Szeemann's pose in the abovementioned photograph from an iconographic point of view in 2012, picks up on these questions in her contribution "Being Singular Plural" and extends the scope of her analysis to representations of the curatorial subject at *documenta X, 12*, and *(13)*. Such repetitions and citations of given tropes, of course, contribute to the making and re-making of a canon and hopefully thereby also to queering curatorial authorships, by re-framing them differently.[16]

The tension between repetition and difference is performed in this issue on two levels: on the one hand, it is identified as a driving principle of documenta as a *recurring* large-scale exhibition that reinvents itself every five years (thus not quite being a biennial) and that has recently celebrated its 60th birthday in 2015. On the other hand, beyond the history of documenta itself – an institution that is characterized by continuity and change, stability of the institution and temporariness of its individual realizations–*recurring* motives also manifest themselves in its reception and thus also permeate this

issue with many intriguing cross-references between contributions (watch out for ants!). But needless to say, every historiography or edited volume has its blind spots: in this issue, for instance, you will learn very little about the 1980s editions of *documenta 7* (1982) and *8* (1987), which may be due to the fact that the respective curators Rudi Fuchs and Manfred Schneckenburger did not pick up on the thematic outlook of their predecessors, but instead staged relatively conventional shows, both low on theory but with the difference that *d7* returned to the aesthetic ideals of autonomous art, whereas *d8* featured more politically charged works.[17] Moreover, even though, with our call for papers, we attempted to solicit a multiplicity of trans-disciplinary and transnational voices, the vast majority of the proposed texts were by Germans or German speakers, as is our selection. This may, of course, have to do with the fact that documenta is an institution inextricably entangled with German history, society, and cultural identity, but also perhaps due to the channels and networks though which we distributed our CFP and invited contributors. Like *H-ArtHist*, documenta may be more provincial than we are generally accustomed to think–although, of course, from its point of departure in Kassel, it has managed to expand its geographical frame of reference over the years. Nevertheless, according to our contributors, it is doubtful whether this means that it has really become a "global exhibition," whatever this might mean exactly.[18]

Globalization and (de-)Provincialization

Despite the founders' dedication to "internationalism" (see Grasskamp's and Floyd's contribution) and the only slowly increasing admission of artists from around the world, which was boosted by end of the Cold War and the Fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 (remember, Kassel was only some 30 kilometers away from the inner German border and played a significant role in the showcasing of the Western way of life), the presumption that there could be a truly global perspective nevertheless must seem rather totalizing, universalizing, or Eurocentric, since exhibitions as well as the knowledges they produce and the world-pictures they present are always situated.[19] After the first acknowledgement of globalization during *documenta IX* (1992), the attempts to include art from beyond Europe and to engage with postcolonial theory were most notably advanced during *documenta X* (1997) and *Documenta11* (2002) by Catherine David and Okwui Enwezor, respectively. In their contribution, **Charles Green and Anthony Gardner** pose the question of how far the curators' engagement with globalization turned documenta into a "Post-Northern Exhibition" and of how far Enwezor's promises of pluralizing and diversifying both artistic and curatorial authorship were attained. Has the deterritorialization of documenta–the new convention to add satellites in places beyond Kassel (and in Kassel's underprivileged areas) that started with Enwezor's five "platforms" in Berlin, New Delhi, St. Lucia, Lagos and Kassel (and the Hirschhorn project in Kassel's Nordstadt), picked up by Christov-Bakargiev with her outposts in war-ridden Kabul and in Alexandria and Banff, and most recently continued with Adam Szymczyk's decision to create a double of documenta in Athens–really contributed to decolonializing and provincializing documenta, or are these instances of an export of a successful European model abroad? In other words, how much are these measures unintentionally reproducing the existing power relations?

Perhaps it comes as no surprise that this year's *documenta 14* is not free of accusations of being neocolonial, as **Yalouri and Rikou** report from Athens, where they are members of the Athens Art Observatory's project "Learning from documenta" that critically engages with the nexus of knowledge and power inherent in *d14*'s concept of *Learning from Athens.* As they argue, there are links between the romantic ruin aesthetics and contemporary crisis tourism–recurring motives in the complicated German-Greek relationship not only since the most recent European debt crisis, which raises the question of who learns from whom and to what ends. Already in 2013, **Ayşe Güleç** had called attention to the potentials and pitfalls of "learning from the Other." Like Yalouri and Rikou, she is writing from the perspective of participant observation adopted from the social sciences and anthropology. Her text, "Learning from Kassel," reprinted here reflects on *documenta 12's* engagement with local communities in a migrant society and on *dOCUMENTA (13)'s* failures to build on that local knowledge in its public programming, and may have well served as an inspiration to Adam Szymczyk's working title *Learning from Athens.* The decision to hold *documenta 14* in two cities in overlapping timelines, by the way, was explained as having the goal of "unlearning," decolonizing Eurocentric knowledge and responding to the current crisis of democracy by transplanting part of *d14* to the place where this concept originated. Whether this decentering of a monocular perspective from Kassel to a binocular one supplemented by Athens, this schizophrenic double vision, may undo neocolonial and neoliberal power relations between East and West, North and South, and contribute to disman-

tling global hegemonies, as intended, or whether it turns out to be a neo-Orientalist exoticization of the crisis-ridden Other within Europe, as some critics claim, remains to be seen. What may be said is that it follows the new convention according to which every artistic director seems to feel responsible to broaden documenta's scope and to explore venues beyond Kassel–while the institutional structures of documenta itself and the logic of growth not only in terms of geography, but also in terms of multiplying the number of artworks, the visitor numbers, and the budget, seem to go more or less unchallenged. The exception to this was perhaps *documenta 12*, which, apart from the globe-spanning network of magazines, remained rooted locally in Kassel, and which, with its concept of the *Migration of Forms*, attempted to interpret transculturality not in an expansive way, but as linked with the transformative potentials of aesthetic experience, a proposition that was received very controversially.[20]

Temporariness and Contemporaneity

This expansion of geographical scope in the history of documenta was related to a contraction of the time frame covered. While the first *documenta* (1955) with its motto "art of the twentieth century" spanned half a century, the second (1959) with the motto "art since 1945" covered fifteen years with some retrospective parts, and the third one (1964) more or less claiming to focus on the present and its prehistory, many of our contributions touch not only on documenta's temporariness as a recurring exhibition but also on the notion of the contemporary. **Philipp Oswalt,** for instance, compares documenta and the Bauhaus as institutions that were dedicated to building "Orders of the Present," which had similar conceptual, organizational, and educational agendas, encountered comparable challenges, and also witnessed some overlaps in terms of membership and design despite their different life spans. **Kristian Handberg** calls attention to the fact that the director of Louisiana Museum in Copenhagen, Knud W. Jensen, experienced a "Shock of the Contemporary" when visiting *documenta II* in 1959, which inspired him to show a selection of works from *dII* later that year after documenta had closed and to reorganize his museum as a popular attraction, with historical contextualization of contemporary art. In "Installations Everywhere," **Angela Bartholomew** describes *documenta IX* as a "labyrinthine exhibition" of lost oversight, a labyrinth of installations, in which visitors were no longer sovereign subjects but got lost in the spirit of the time when, three years after the victory of capitalism in 1989, according to artistic director Jan Hoet, "Everything was available." As one may learn in Handberg's contribution, the idea of labyrinthine exhibitions already had been fashionable in the 1960s. And even as early as in the 1950s, Werner Haftmann in his introduction to the catalogues of *dI* and *dII* discusses the problem of lost oversight, which he relates to the difficulty of dealing with contemporaneity without historical hindsight.[21] Thus, perhaps *documenta 12* was right in posing the question, "Is Modernity our Antiquity?"[22] As already mentioned, **Möntmann** draws on more recent discussions around the contemporary to argue for the potentials of documenta as a time capsule haunted by the legacies of colonialism but with the potential to imagine an alternative world order to the neoliberal and neocolonial and to open up new vistas to the future. The structural conditions of instability responsible for the historical amnesia of documenta as a temporary institution–a "museum of 100 days" as it was dubbed by Haftmann at the occasion of *documenta III*, or an event (a notion that has become popular since the unrealized first concept of *documenta* 5) that is reinvented every five years with an entirely new team–are conditions that, **Güleç** claims, are partly responsible for the difficulties of learning from former documenta generations, and that will hopefully be reconfigured by the new documenta institute that is currently in the making and has the potential to bridge these gaps.

Résumé and Outlook

Many of our texts, in one way or another, thus call attention to documenta's contribution to constructing a "history of the present" (Foucault), and it is exactly this presence that also poses a challenge to the research of the more contemporary documenta editions. In a 2009 paper titled "To Be Continued: Periodic Exhibitions (*documenta*, For Example)," Grasskamp provides a "making of" the abovementioned special issue *Mythos documenta. Ein Bilderbuch zur Kunstgeschichte* (*Mythos documenta. A Picture Book on Art History*), recalling his experience of sorting through the as yet unsystematized, unsorted, and unindexed collection of exhibition photographs of the first six documentas in the *documenta Archiv* in Kassel in 1982, thereby "discovering a new topic": the "pictorial history of exhibitions."[23]As we can read there, his work is focused on those editions of documenta that he did not see as a visitor himself (the first – fifth documentas), his writing thus always constituting a historical reconstruction mediated by archival materials such as concept papers, newspaper clippings, and most prominently the installation photographs that allow him to witness the respective

documenta editions through the eyes of others. This puts him at a historical distance from the object of research, a retrospective position of overview that sorts through the images and allows the researcher a sort of Malrauxian reconstruction of documenta as an imaginary museum.[24] By saying this, we do not mean to diminish his pioneering work to bring to light hitherto neglected images of the exhibition. Rather our aim is to call attention to how much changed research paradigms of participant observation, the understanding of exhibitions as social spaces of encounters, and curatorial studies' indebtedness to cultural studies and visual culture impact the research on documenta today.

We thus would also like to acknowledge how the various documenta editions have inscribed themselves as traces in our memories and subjectivities. Having worked at *d11* as a guard and *d12* as an art educator, having spent weeks at *d(13)* in Kassel and returning with fresh impressions from a week at *d14* in Athens, Nanne feels she can no longer assume a Malrauxian position of distance, a disembodied gaze on a compendium of images that–though it may be unsorted–is finite. Working with the marvelous possibilities of the digitized collections of the documenta archive online, she realized that her access to the historical material is on the one hand much more distanced than, for instance Grasskamp's hands-on and on-site engagement with the stacks of material photographs in the 1980s, while, on the other hand, she was directly involved bodily and institutionally in the more recent editions of documenta, which she is researching. Or Dorothee, recalling the joy, the scopic and intellectual *jouissance* (if there could be such a thing) of entering the documenta hall at *documenta X*, of encountering the acknowledged position of a theoretical discourse in space, something with which as a young curator she was herself engaged in her curatorial practice, of fueling the connection of actual political activities with the cultural field, of discussing formats and publics, of scrutinizing digital realms.

Like any other exhibitionary and educational institution, each documenta proposes specific paradigmatic models of the subject and power constellations, which in each case function as appeals to the visitors.[25] These paradigmatic models of the subject operate in the political sphere: they give us a sense of how we should function as male or female citizens, they propose modes of order, they subtly convey constellations of power–in short, they communicate conceptions of race, class, gender. Between the opening of the Athens part of *documenta 14* and the Kassel part, we are dealing with the last corrections of this issue. For Adam Szymczyk and the co-curators, it was obviously a major concern to position this documenta in two interrelated financial situations, and to emphasize their underlying power relations. The aim of the curatorial team is to turn "documenta 14 into a continuum of aesthetic, economic, political and social experimentation."[26] Szymczyk describes the ongoing severe changes between 2013 and 2017 as follows:

> We have witnessed–both locally and globally–the implementation of debt as political measure, the gradual destruction of what remained of the welfare state, wars waged for resources and the market, and the resulting multiple and never-ending humanitarian catastrophes. This darkening global situation has leaned heavily upon our daily (and nightly) thinking about, and acting on and for, documenta 14.[27]

Against the uncanny background of post-democratic societies, populist megalomania, and alternative truth scenarios described by Szymczyk, it is urgent once again to open vistas to an alternative future. Surely, curating the history of the present may contribute to this endeavor to move beyond the global capitalist status quo and the neo-fascist perversions it engenders, but "learning from Athens," or "learning from documenta" cannot be but first steps of a challenging journey to come.

Notes

1 Walter Grasskamp, "Modell documenta oder wie wird Kunstgeschichte gemacht?," *Kunstforum International, Vol.* 49, 3/1982, April/May, pp. 15-22. A revised English translation was published as "For example, Documenta or How is Art History Produced?," in Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, and Sandy Nairne, eds., *Thinking About Exhibitions*, Routledge, London, 1996, 2.Ed. 1999, pp. 67–78.

2 For exceptions, see Harald Kimpel, *documenta. Mythos und Wirklichkeit*, Diss. Univ. Kassel 1996, DuMont, Cologne, 1997; Nanne Buurman, "Exhibiting Exhibiting. documenta 12 as a Meta-Exhibition," in *Kunsttexte,* No. 3, October 2016, idem., "Angels in the White Cube? Rhetorics of Curatorial Innocence at *dOCUMENTA (13)*," *OnCurating,* 29, Special Issue "Curating in Feminist Thought," ed. by Elke Krasny, Lara Perry, and Dorothee Richter, Zurich, May 2016.

3 See also Oliver Marchart, "Hegemonic Shifts and the Politics of Biennialization. The Case of documenta (2008)" in Elena Filipovic, Marieke van Hal, Solveig Øvstebø, eds., *The Biennial Reader: An Anthology on Large-Scale Perrenial Exhibitions of Contemporary Art*, Hatje Cantz, 2010 and Dorothea von Hantelmann, "Notes on the Exhibition", *dOCUMENTA (13) 100 Notes/ 100 Thoughts* Series, No. 88, Hatje Cantz, Ostfieldern, 2012.

4 See Werner Haftmann, "Malerei nach 1945," in *documenta II*, M. DuMont Schauberg, Kassel, 1959, p. 15. Exhibition catalogue.

5 See Anthony Gardner and Charles Green, *Biennials, Triennials and documenta: The Exhibitions That Created Contemporary Art*, Wiley-Blackwell, Boston, 2016.

6 See, for instance, *OnCurating*, ed. by Dorothee Richter; *Ausstellungstheorie und Praxis* series, ed. by schnittpunkt/Nora Sternfeld et al., seven volumes, 2005-2016; *Cultures of the Curatorial* series, ed. by Beatrice von Bismarck et al, three Volumes 2012-2016; Jean-Paul Martinon, ed., *The*

Curatorial: A Philosophy of Curating, Bloomsbury, London/New York, 2013.

7 For different ways of relating art and reality today that feature discussions around *dOCUMENTA (13)* in particular, see also Lotte Everts, Johannes Lang, Michael Lüthy, Bernhard Schieder, eds., *Kunst und Wirklichkeit Heute. Affirmation – Kritik – Transformationen*, transcript, Bielefeld, 2015.

8 Harald Szemann, "From the first Draft for a Museum of Obsessions," in *Kunstforum International*, No. 21, 3/1977, n.p.

9 See Gisela Schirmer, *DDR und documenta. Kunst im deutsch-deutschen Wiederspruch,* Reimer, Berlin, 2005.

10 See also Maria Bremer's recently defended dissertation thesis on *documenta 5* and *6,* Freie Universität Berlin, 2017.

11 See Nanne Buurman, "Angels", "Exhibiting Exhibiting," and "White Cube-Pink Cell. Spatial Politics at *documenta 12* and *dOCUMENTA (13)*," paper delivered at the University of Copenhagen, June 2014.

12 In her dissertation, Maria Bremer argues that while historigraphy tends to highlight the significance of *documenta 5* for the development of contemporary art, *documenta 6* which tends to get less attention, may have been even more influencial as it managed to silently implement the norm of criticality and media-reflexivity that has remained influencial until today.

13 Dirk Schwarze, *Die Expansion der documenta-Kritik. Eine Ausstellung im Spiegel der Presse*, Vol. 16 of "Schriftenreihe zur Kunstkritik," Walter Vitt, ed., Steinmeier, Nördlingen, 2006.

14 See for instance the special issues of *Texte zur* Kunst: Texte *zur Kunst* Special Issue "documenta,", 2. Jg., H. 6, June, 1992; *Texte zur Kunst*, Special Issue "The Curators," June 2012, 22, 86. See also Barbara Paul, "Kuratoren und andere(s). documenta und Männlichkeitskonstruktionen," in: *k60. Forum - Freunde und AbsolventInnen der Kunstuniversität Linz.* Linz, 2007.

15 See also Nanne Buurman's more recent text, "Vom Gefängniswärter zur Heilerin. Kuratorische Autorschaften im Kontext vergeschlechtlichter Ökonomien," in *Kritische Berichte,* 4, December 2016, in which she discusses the shift from disciplinary societies to societies of control corresponds with conceptualizations of the curator as a prison warden (Smithon's critique of cultural confinement at *documenta* 5) to conceptualizations of the curator as a healer (as Christov-Bakargiev was dubbed during *dOCUMENTA (13)*.

16 For exhibitions as orders of knowledge, see also Katja Hoffmann, *Ausstellungen als Wissensordnungen. Zur Transformation des Kunstbegriffs auf der documenta 11*, transcript, Bielefeld, 2013.

17 See, for instance, Harald Klimpel, *documenta. Die Überschau,* Dumont, Cologne, 2002.

18 See, for instance, Hans Eichel, ed., *60 Jahre Documenta. Die lokale Geschichte einer Globalisierung*, Siebenhaar Verlag, Berlin, 2015.

19 See Nanne Buurman, Sarah Dornhof, Birgit Hopfener, Barbare Lutz, eds., *Situating Global Art,* transcript, Bielefeld, forthcoming 2017.

20 See, for instance, Barbara Lutz "Curating Transcultural Encounters at *documenta 12,"* in Nanne Buurman, Sarah Dornhof, Birgit Hopfner, Barbara Lutz, eds., *Situating Global Art*.

21 Werner Haftmann, "Einleitung," in *documenta,* Prestel-Verlag, Munich, 1955, pp. 15-16, Exhibition catalogue, and idem., "Malerei nach 1945," in *documenta II*, M. DuMont Schauberg, Kassel, 1959, p. 12. Exhibition catalogue.

22 See also Vera Lauf, *Moderne Aneignungen. Zur Kritik der Modernen in der Kunst der Gegenwart*, Silke Schreiber, Munich, 2014.

23 Walter Grasskamp., *To Be Continued: Periodical Exhibitions. Documenta for Example*, Tate Papers, No 12, *Landmark Exhibitions Issue,* 2009.

24 Annette Tietenberg, "An Imaginary Documenta, or, the Art Historian Werner Haftmann as an Image Producer," in Michael Glasmeier and Karin Stengel, eds. *Archive in motion. 50 Jahre documenta.1955-2005,* Steidel, Göttingen, 2005.

25 See, for example, Tony Bennett, "The Exhibitionary Complex," in Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, and Sandy Nairne, eds., *Thinking About Exhibitions*, pp. 81-112.

26 See Adam Szymczyk, "14: Iterability and Otherness. Learning and Working from Athens," in Quinn Latimer and Adam Szymczyk, eds., *The documenta 14 Reader,* Prestel, Munich, 2017, p. 22.

27 Ibid., p. 23.

d is for documenta: institutional identity for a periodic exhibition

by Kathryn M. Floyd

Every five summers, Kassel, Germany is covered over with signs and advertisements for what is billed as the most significant periodic exhibition of contemporary art: documenta. [fig. 1] The publicity for the thirteenth edition in summer 2012 managed to attract over 905,000 visitors to this small Hessen city where they viewed hundreds of works by 194 global artists in ten venues and additional public spaces. Organizers dubbed the unassuming branding device commissioned for this enormous blockbuster a "non-logo." Instead of producing a unique signet or single wordmark to distinguish the event from its twelve predecessors, the Milan-based firm Leftloft developed a "visual grammar" for writing the name in an infinite variety of typefaces. The rules dictated that the name be written with "a lowercase 'd' while the rest of the letters will all be uppercase and followed by the number thirteen in brackets."[1] The resulting wordmarks,[2] including those used for official publications and signage [fig. 2], conveyed *dOCUMENTA (13)*'s "pluralist, imaginative, and cumulative" character, and required "active engagement, attention, and a certain amount of extra time on the keyboard."[3] This challenging, inexhaustible, and flexible functionality mirrored the exhibition's enormity, which exploded its typical boundaries in a display of global art spread out not only across the city, but also across the globe.[4]

1

2

Leftloft's non-logo also suggested the nature and history of the documenta institution, itself a "grammar" whose regularized five-year cycle, location, and focus on contemporary art are rewritten with fresh leadership and artistic content twice a decade. The design also acknowledged the series' history by maintaining the lowercase "d" from the wordmark for the inaugural 1955 edition, a groundbreaking survey of international modern art. documenta's original logotype, the name of the exhibition simply lettered in a form of Azkidenz Grotesk, appeared on the catalogue cover and publicity materials, like the official poster whose only image was a large letter "d." [fig. 3] Variations on this modernist wordmark, especially with the lowercase "d," have become standard elements in the branding of documenta's subsequent editions from the second *documenta* in 1959 to this year's *documenta 14*. And while *dOCUMENTA (13)*'s insistence on typographical diversity might seem a richer celebration of the series' multiplicity in comparison to the original logo, the austere 1955 design nevertheless embodies a complexity and flexibility beneath its simple surface. Like the first *documenta* itself, an enormous survey of modern art

from 1905 and 1945 that was displayed in a ruined but rehabilitated museum, this wordmark drew together threads of a postwar conversation about aesthetics and ideology, style and commodity culture, nationalism and internationalism, and history and progress in a single, multi-coded sign. Informed by its 1950s context, documenta's first logo also proved a highly adaptable framework, a grammar even, for marketing this periodic exhibition into the future.

3

documenta 1955: event as design

A number of forces shaped the first *documenta*. Now a well-told story, the history of this recurring exhibition finds its origins in a city reduced to rubble in 1943 [fig. 4] and in postwar West Germany's subsequent struggle with a difficult past and the promise of a "miraculous" new economy.[5] As Walter Grasskamp importantly articulated, the first *documenta* was also bound up with the rescue and repurposing of the international avant-garde, which had been denigrated, expelled, and destroyed by the Nazis beginning in the 1930s.[6] documenta's nascent periodic format–it is likely that its founders intended a kind of series from the start–was, like all recurring exhibitions, originally born from nineteenth-century displays of mastery and progress, such as academy salons, world's fairs, and universal expositions, that have now evolved into the many biennials that drive innovation in contemporary art, cultural tourism, and urban renewal.[7] Kassel artist, designer, educator, and documenta founder Arnold Bode (1900-1977) tied these political, economic, artistic, and historical threads together. His concept for an ambitious international exhibition of modern art that would rehabilitate the art historical past, make a significant statement about Germany's postwar return to the sphere of international modern art, and rejuvenate Kassel's local economy, provided the final spark.


4

Bode, a Kassel native, former Kassel Kunstakademie student, and member of the Kassel Secession, taught painting in Berlin before his career was cut short by the events of 1933 and he returned to Kassel. With the help of his brother, architect Paul Bode, he took on "anonymous" work designing packaging, furniture, and exhibits for trade shows and industrial exhibits.[8] These modern displays however, were not his first exposure to the world of innovative exhibition design. He helped organize three contemporary art exhibitions in Kassel in the 1920s and attended the Paris Exposition in 1937. After the war, he visited the Venice Biennale and the influential 1953 Picasso exhibition in Milan's ruined Palazzo Reale where paintings such as *Guernica* (1937) projected out from the walls on systems of metal wires and scaffolding.[9]

These events and experiences coalesced in his 1954 concept for a postwar "große internationale Ausstellung" (large international exhibition) of modern art.[10] Organized by a self-appointed local committee, sponsored by the city of Kassel, the state of Hessen, and the federal government, and supported by international art dealers and German corporate sponsors, documenta, unlike the Venice Biennale, harmonized its diverse contents through aesthetic and formal concepts, rather than by national affiliations or art historical movements. The first *documenta* in fact comprised a wide constellation of synthesizing approaches and arguments about unity and connectivity across traditional borders of art, politics, and culture that fit the country's new democratic and capitalist interests.

The *Bundesgartenschau* (Federal Garden Show), a trade show slated for Kassel in summer 1955, provided the immediate impetus for carrying out Bode's idea. Like documenta, which would become its pendant, the *BuGa* also linked aesthetics to practical aims through its focus on landscape design, horticulture, and urban revitalization.[11] In 1954, Bode used the upcoming event to pitch local officials on the idea of a parallel exhibition that would advance similar goals through the fine arts. The first *documenta* would join the ideal with the functional, as well as the historical with the contemporary, by creating something "useful" out of the histories and forms of modern art. It fulfilled, in Bode's words, "urgently necessary" ("dringend nötig") local, national, and international goals, focused on creating connections among individuals, geographies, histories, and nations. The event was to be "for artists, to create closer contact with foreign culture; for the state of Hessen, to emphasize the regional significance of the Garden Show; for the federal government, because the idea of a common European art as a sign of the pan-European movement can prove to be a unifying force."[12] But while it began as an accompaniment, documenta soon surpassed this role. Its curatorial program, unique design, and rare convergence of "high-quality" works[13] eventually attracted over 130,000 visitors.[14]

Bode's team of artists, art historians, critics, businessmen, and city leaders established under the name The Society for Twentieth-century Western Art, worked quickly and efficiently to carry out this ambitious plan.[15] They separated specialized tasks, from curatorial work to financial and logistical labors, like a modern corporation. A "study group" devised the first *documenta* edition's theme and content. They organized a half-century of modern art to create an ideal, international art historical genealogy that linked postwar modernism to its prewar antecedents. Approximately 600 works from Great Britain, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Germany, and the US by Expressionists, Cubists, Futurists, and Constructivists like Kandinsky, Picasso, Matisse, and Arp hung together with recent work by Baumeister, Moore, Winter, Vedova, and others. Social realism and Berlin Dada, along with styles linked to political radicalism or totalitarianism, were omitted. Instead, through visual juxtaposition and formal correspondence, the 1955 *documenta* rewrote the contemporary modernists of the present moment not as offspring of the immediate (and fascist) past, but of the international prewar avant-garde. They therefore reauthored Germany's relationship to progressive art, part of a broader postwar effort to fashion a "usable past." This narrative idealized the 1920s and the Weimar Republic as the real precursors to the Federal Republic and its "economic miracle." Totalitarianism was a tragic detour on the nation's true evolution to democracy.[16] *documenta*'s display of modern art signified freedom, individuality, and universality and signaled the desire to return to its rightful place in the fold of "Western" culture.

The committee's selection of artworks that embodied these ideals and goals began with art historian and committee member Werner Haftmann (1912–1999), whose *Painting in the Twentieth-Century* (1954) became the committee's unofficial guidebook.[17] Haftmann, and the group, especially favored the elementary, concrete, "universal" languages of geometric and lyrical abstraction, autonomous art whose "new critical relationship to visible reality," in Haftmann's words, embodied the complexities of the long modern epoch. The styles of "our time" were no longer shackled by fixed, visually mimetic relationships to objectivity or "truth," associations perverted by totalitarian art.[18] Thus loosened, modern art's independence and subjectivity made it universally human, a common language to connect artists across national and cultural boundaries. Even if they refused to replicate their world mimetically, works like Oskar Schlemmer's *Quiet Room* (1925), Max Bill's *Construction* (1937), and Henry Moore's *King and Queen* (1953) expressed a new kind of "truth" as the material documents of the modern *Weltanschauung*.

The first *documenta*'s exhibition design also manifested similar unifying strategies by colliding architectural elements from a liberal historical moment with those of the postwar era. Contempo-

rary materials suggesting capitalist innovation resurrected the Enlightenment-era Museum Fridericianum, designed by Simon Louis du Ry (1726-1799) for Landgrave Friedrich II's (1720-1785) cabinets. Opened in 1779 as the first purpose-built public museum, it served this function until 1943 when bombs devastated its evacuated galleries.[19] Bode's team partially reconstructed the museum's shell, whitewashed its brick interior, and hung the space with colorful, temporary wallboard and translucent plastic sheeting provided by Göppinger plastics and other businesses with which Bode had been connected through his wartime design work.[20]

In the museum's attic, photographs of modernist architecture by Walter Gropius, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Frank Lloyd Wright, and others served as the first *documenta*'s "epilogue" and depicted the useful application of the abstract forms expressed in the paintings and sculptures below.[21] But despite Bode's career, which engaged both fine and applied arts, this display was the only specific exhibit of modern design at the show. The first edition of *documenta* did not incorporate the applied arts, a history in which Germany had played a key role in the twentieth century. Examples of Bauhaus housewares, de Stijl furniture, or Swiss graphic design, for example, were not, despite their centrality to modernism and the historical avant-garde, staged as objects of display. Instead *documenta* merely evoked these histories through the abstract forms of its paintings and sculptures, or the inclusion of specific artists, with which they were closely associated. Modern design at the first *documenta* instead remained firmly ensconced in its functional roles as exhibition hardware, café furniture, catalogues, signage, and other ephemera.

But from the broadest perspective, the unifying principles and connective strategies of the entire *documenta* enterprise might in fact define the event as a monumental example of German design. Like a Bauhaus teapot or a mid-century "kidney table" ("Nierentisch"), the exhibition harnessed abstract forms to produce something useful beyond the circumscribed world of fine art. Its lofty educational, political, and cultural goals and its advancement of unity and universalism were one useful aim. Organizers also tasked the event with tangible urban progress. Just as the itinerant Garden Show generated jobs, tourist monies, and permanent green spaces when staged in cities like Hanover (1951), the first *documenta* accelerated efforts to rehabilitate Kassel. The exhibition also sought to improve Kassel's cultural standing. German tourism was on the rise, but Kassel, a central railroad hub now near the border with East Germany, had never been a real draw for the cultural traveler. Unlike Berlin or Munich, it seemed to lack distinct artistic and cultural traditions, an assumption Bode used to the show's advantage. It therefore became necessary for planners to motivate visitors to consider the city a true destination, not just a stopover.

documenta required a promotional identity that synthesized its broad concepts and unifying aims. It should signify progressive content, but also imbue its new narratives and innovative forms with prestige and authority. Most of all, it had to set *documenta* apart from similar exhibitions without repelling visitors who might still be unsure of modern art. While the international names "Europa" and "European Art of the Twentieth Century" were initial ideas for a title, the committee soon turned to Bode's unique solution "documenta" and shunted "Art of the Twentieth Century" into a subtitle.[22] The choice of a distinct proper name established "documenta" as a true brand, not just an exhibition title. It possessed a flexible, adaptable quality and sounded historical and modern, German and universal, cultural and capitalist all at once. And, when expressed in a modernist typeface, it resonated with both fine art and commodity culture and signified *documenta*'s status as "good design" as a logo befitting a useful, efficient, high-quality, and ultimately reproducible event.

documenta: name as logo

documenta's proper name derived from the nominative plural of the Latin *documentum* (from *docere*, "to teach") and suggested a variety of useful documents, official papers, archival materials, and objective evidence. Tied to classical education and the "Western tradition," the Latin origin lent prestige, quality, and authority to the show's reframing of modernism. Like visual abstraction, Latin also signified international ties and a shared language, history, and values. And, when written out, the name expressed an anti-nationalistic attitude; while "documenta" sounded like the German *Dokumente* (documents), the word had in fact been stripped of its national characteristics by shifting the German "k" to the Latinate "c," and the plural "e" to "a."

The name declared the exhibition a showcase of key documents and examples, not arbitrary, minor, or local specimens of modern art. Haftmann and Bode celebrated creative freedom, but like other art historians, understood individual expression as embodying or "documenting" an artist's modern

world. As Haftmann wrote, "The profoundly revolutionary developments in painting, which set in about 1890, cannot be viewed apart from modern mankind as a whole, whose situation they illustrate."[23] Conversely, Nazis like Alfred Rosenberg exhibited modernism as material evidence of the corruption of German culture during the Third Reich. Displayed in "chambers of horror" like the 1937 *Degenerate Art* exhibition, modern art's expressive forms became "proof" of the diseased elements infiltrating pure German culture. Articles and announcements for these exhibitions used the term "Dokumente" or "Kulturdokumente," not "Kunst" (art), to describe work deemed Jewish, Bolshevik, or foreign.[24] "documenta" subtly rehabilitated this term, reauthoring formerly "degenerate" art into legitimate cultural history.

"Documentation" also described an open category. With no limit to the themes, narratives, or concepts a document can record, the title provided an infinitely adaptable framework that might summarize a variety of modern styles, artists, and subjects under its moniker. But this flexible, streamlined descriptor also readied the exhibition for potential reproduction, like so many modern products entering the growing West Germany market. In fact, "documenta" could have been the name of a mass-produced commodity or international corporation. With its hard consonants and final "a" ending, it emulated the brand names of household goods, appliances, and building materials, like "Recta-Form" or "abstracta."[25] The "a" ending, popular in the 1920s and 1930s, and again in the 1950s, was related to the modern practice of acronymy often used to fashion company names, many of which ended in "AG" for *Aktiengesellschaft* (a public corporation). *Ufa*, for example, began as (the Latinate) *U*niversum *F*ilm *A*G. Trade show names often ending with "Ausstellung" (exhibition) were similarly constructed. Cologne's 1928 *Pressa* (*Internationale Presse-Ausstellung*), *grafa* (*Graphische Fachausstellung*) for the 1930s Swiss printing fairs, and *Constructa*, the 1951 Hanover Building Exhibition where Bode designed the display for the firm *Korrekta*, are just three examples.[26] The German habit of contracting words also produced a-endings; Leitz camera became "Leica" and *Bundesgartenschau* (the Federal Garden Show), *BuGa*. The creation of new words to brand corporations, products, and events underscored these businesses' innovative qualities.

The names and trademarks of the first *documenta*'s corporate sponsors like Göppinger plastics, Eternit AG, and Siemens-Schuckertwerke appeared at the back of the exhibition catalogue. *documenta* owed much of its success to these industries to which Bode had become connected through his earlier design work.[27] This experience no doubt helped him understand the power of coherent corporate identities. In the burgeoning economy, a business's need for a cohesive persona was a cornerstone of the growing profession of marketing. As companies expanded into multinational corporations or global conglomerates associated with multiple products, diverse services, and far-flung locations, they required identities that fused their expansive structures. Institutional characteristics were communicated through distinct brand names and integrated promotional programs of coordinated logos, wordmarks, signets, and typefaces. Multinational corporations located themselves not in specific spaces like a local storefront or factory building, but in a flexible, transportable, reproducible and, perhaps ideally, ubiquitous set of images and concepts. With the need to define unified corporate identities from diffuse practices and products, the professional graphic designer who could conceptualize and construct memorable, unified branding schemes became an essential figure.

documenta had much in common with the modern corporation, from its organizational structure to its negotiations with industry and government agencies to its merging of local economic and cultural concerns with a global purview. The 1955 *documenta* team instrumentalized high-quality "commodities" (artworks) for their cause and merged a diverse range of "products" (the artists, styles, and histories) under a common concept. Just as the installation was organized under harmonious aesthetics, *documenta*'s branding scheme had to summarize its complexities into an attractive, meaningful identity. The planners chose to harness the impact of the show's flexible, multivalent title, which they formed into an equally functional logo.

documenta: text as image

The full meaning of "documenta" can be understood only when the word is visualized. The organizing committee therefore selected a textual wordmark as the exhibition's logo. The typographic design and publicity program, by Bode, Heinz Nickel, and Ernst Schuh, all colleagues at the Kassel *Werkakademie,* underscored, but also expanded, the word's many associations. A condensed, bold version of the Akzidenz Grotesk typeface, it spelled out the name in lowercase characters and was used on letterhead, posters, signs, brochures, tickets, and other publicity

materials. Records reveal almost nothing about the design team's deliberations about the logo itself or their plans for its use. But to understand the choice one might consider conventional solutions they bypassed, in particular the use of pictographic symbols or visual imagery.

Images associated with place have long been employed to promote large fairs or international exhibitions; they ground ephemeral events in their locations and reveal the tourism and urban development motivations so often behind event organization. Venice's winged lion of St. Mark has been the signet for the Biennale since 1895. The first *documenta*'s designers, however, eschewed local icons, selecting, for example, neither images of the famous Farnese Hercules monument that overlooks the city from Kassel's Bergpark, nor images of documenta's main venue, the Museum Fridericianum. The symbol of the powerful hero at rest might have been too politically or historically suggestive. Similarly, the neoclassical museum, while its status as a provisional ruin became a significant element *within* the exhibition design itself, might have signified only the past, not continuity with the present. Most important, for international audiences with whom organizers hoped to communicate, the Fridericianum's image, like the city itself, was unremarkable and essentially unknown. Kassel was no Paris or Berlin. Bode, however, embraced this undefined, peripheral status, writing in 1954:

> Kassel lies in a border zone. [It] was totally destroyed and is actively rebuilding. It can be an example thirty kilometers from the border [with the Iron Curtain] ... Kassel is not burdened by artist groups and political-artistic linkages ... Kassel doesn't want to build on old traditions ... but rather wants to create ... a new living tradition, whose basic idea is ... expandable.[28]

The logo designers' decision to forego all pictographic imagery, whether realistic symbols or abstract motifs, may seem odd for an event that asserted visual art's power. But at *documenta*'s celebration of the international and universal, imagery might have inadvertently advanced one style, movement, or media over another. In the wake of German fascism, which had relied deeply on visual symbols that identified absolute power or absolute powerlessness, emblematic imagery of any kind might have simply proved too problematic. Whether the committee considered such issues can only be surmised. What is certain is that their selection of a word-image cleverly produced an economic, tautological (therefore modernist) visual identity: a text-based logo that signified what is usually textual–a "document." This literalizing design choice also affirmed the show's titular description of itself as truthful, material, and "real" and maintained the name's flexibility as a reproducible framework by refusing to associate it with specific stylistic content. The wordmark allowed documenta to be defined and redefined, produced and endlessly reproduced in a functional and efficient manner.

The official 1955 *documenta* poster illustrates the logo's typical use. Composed on a grid, the composition features a large lowercase "d" in bright blue that fills the left half of the sheet's white field. The full wordmark appears at top right, in smaller black text. Below, the subtitle is repeated in French, English, and Italian in an unjustified column ranged right. It also appears (or perhaps disappears?) in German within the large initial's bowl and ascender. Posters were printed with blue, red, or yellow "d"s, expressing the primary colors. Meeting minutes reveal that the committee, working with a limited budget, chose two-color printing over four-color to reduce costs. A June 22, 1955 invoice from a local printer shows that 1000 "d" posters (200 yellow, 300 blue, and 500 red) on heavy 84 x 199 cm paper cost a very reasonable 675 DM.[29]

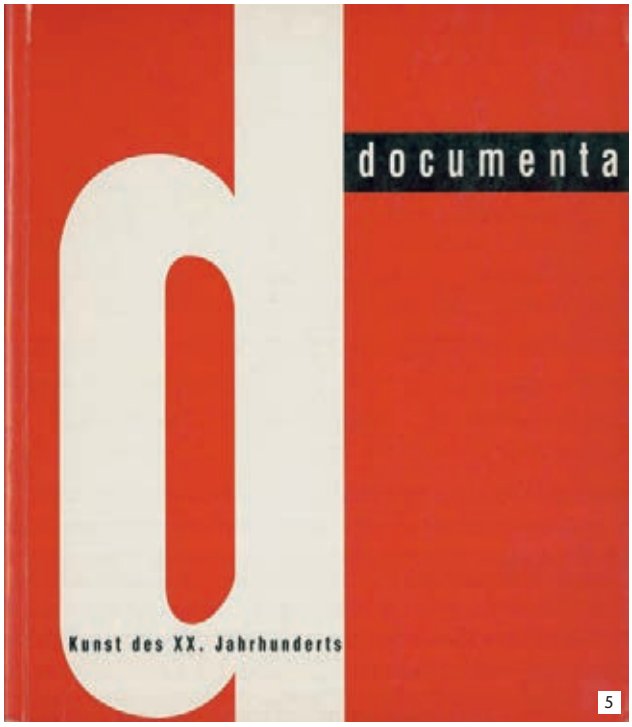
The wordmark's typeface clearly recalled prewar progressive art and design, especially the Weimar-era International Constructivists who embraced geometric shapes, primary colors, and economic elements like sans serif typeface. Prewar designers employed or developed modern fonts like Akzidenz Grotesk or Futura (Paul Renner's typeface and another "brand" ending in "a") to produce and communicate efficiency, rationality, and universalism. Jan Tschichold famously argued in his treatise *The New Typography* (1928) that type and design must represent its time and culture.[30] For the technologically driven modern era, he advocated efficient, sans serif typefaces for Roman letters, rather than ornamented national scripts like the gothic German Fraktur (later revived by the Nazis) to communicate legibly across national borders. To further economize and universalize, Tschichold also encouraged the exclusive use of majuscule or minuscule characters and the rejection of national idiosyncrasies, like the German practice of capitalizing a noun's first letter.[31]

The typeface Akzidenz Grotesk, while first created in Germany in 1896 for commercial (*Akzidenz*)

printing in the 1920s and 1930s, was similarly praised as clean and efficient, but not excessively austere. Like Futura, it was associated with the avant-garde, although not exclusively. It appeared in Wassily Kandinsky's 1913 book of woodcuts *Die Klänge* (*Sounds*) and Theo Van Doesburg's 1920s ads for Fagus Shoes. However, it was most closely tied to iconic Swiss designer Max Bill who studied at the Bauhaus in the late 1920s before moving to Zurich. He used the typeface continuously from the 1920s into the 1950s. Incidentally, in 1955, the year he was selected to lead the Ulm design school, Bill's geometric sculptures, not his design work, were exhibited at *documenta*. [fig. 4]

The manifestation of *documenta*'s logo, in particular its initial letter "d" in exhibition ephemera, further emphasized connections to prewar movements like International Constructivism and its institutions, like the German Bauhaus. [fig. 5] Despite the significant differences between the two typefaces, one can't help but note, for example, the strong visual resonances between the first *documenta*'s poster and Herbert Bayer's proposal for a "universal" lettering system for the Bauhaus as published in 1926 in the journal *Offset: Book and Advertising Art*. A large red letter "d" is presented next to the smaller, complete alphabet as an example of the "optical effects" of scaling up Bayer's rounded lowercase letters. [fig. 6] While Bode, Haftmann, and the *documenta* team remained committed to notions of "fine art" and omitted such examples of prewar modernist graphic and industrial design by Bauhaus practitioners and others from the exhibition itself, their concepts and goals nevertheless paralleled the Bauhaus's use of abstraction to advance ideals like social harmony and universalism, as well as utilitarian applications in education and industry. The important early history of modernist design was indeed present at the exhibition, but it remained tethered to its utilitarian duties instead of being transformed into a museal object.

While the team's Akzidenz Grotesk wordmark and its use in publicity materials conjured up the history of the Bauhaus, closed in 1933 by the Nazis for its radical politics, not, as is sometimes assumed, for its streamlined modernist aesthetics, both the *documenta* logo and its Constructivist associations were also entirely "on trend" in 1955. By the 1950s, the Bauhaus, as a concept, had been stripped of its revolutionary affiliations and troubled history, and had been rewritten as a style or "brand" that signified innovative, sophisticated design and high-quality products vaguely evoking an idealized notion of prewar liberalism.[32] The history of the Bauhaus's alternative educational program, radical politics, and revolutionary architecture and design were smoothed over into a simplified notion focused primarily on the school's renowned fine, rather than applied, artists, like Kandinsky and Klee, whose autonomous and free-flowing abstract forms became the forerunners of contemporary abstract painting but also inspired popular midcentury design like West Germany's trendy *Nierentisch* (kidney table) style, an organic look named for the rounded furniture and affordable plastic objects it produced.[33]



International Style graphic design, often identified with Switzerland, the home of so many of its famous practitioners, was, like the *Nierentisch* trend, another midcentury mode derived from prewar art.[34] It shared with *Nierentisch* its roots in Constructivism and the Bauhaus, but was not so much a new interpretation inspired by these forerunners, but instead a direct and continuous reformulation of earlier practices. The movement retained many of its prewar formal principles, and the careers of some artists like Max Bill actually bridged the gap between the pre- and postwar worlds. Their designs took from prewar Constructivism an emphasis on rational, spare compositions defined by a grid and a legible informational aesthetic that, although sparse and clean, was never as austere as some of the early twentieth-century examples that inspired them. The differences, in

fact, are quite subtle. International Style designers often used imagery, like photographs or arrangements of abstract shapes that were, like constructivist posters and book covers, often asymmetrical and included elementary colors and forms. International Style designers also regularly chose Akzidenz Grotesk and other sans serif fonts, but articulated their typographic elements with less geometric rigidity.

Gradually, modernist styles became associated more with the principles of so-called "good design" and efficient, innovative industry than with the radical avant-garde or revolutionary Marxist and Communist origins from which they once sprang. This process of de-politicization reached its apex in the postwar period, where modernism's neutrality and simplicity were instrumentalized by the era's growing consumerist and corporate culture. Like *Nierentisch*, the new graphic design retained a vague anti-fascist character–the memory of its suppression by totalitarian forces lent it this quality–but its sense of "freedom" became more connected to the innovations of the open market and the unfettered growth of international corporate culture.[35]

6

Most important, International Style design became a significant force not only for postwar advertising campaigns, but also for creating unified "corporate identity programs" for large international concerns and conglomerates. The International Style and its principles signified everything these organizations wished to communicate about themselves, especially that their products and services were advanced, fashionable, and high quality. The use of progressive but also historically tried and true forms expressed that their innovations were stable and trustworthy. The spare economic style centered mainly on text, basic geometry, and often photographs conveyed a sense of the literal, the objective, the truthful, and the legible. Elementary shapes, colors, and typefaces connoted a universality that showcased the corporation's global purview and broad appeal. Most important, the clean logos, simple designs, and coordinated materials for diverse and growing companies like Deutsche Bank, Philips, Geigy, and others, expressed the notion that these enormous, complex organizations were at their core universally relevant, coherent, and reliable. The minimal aesthetic masked their complex, diffuse systems that in later decades would only grow in scale.

The *documenta* logo and design program, like the exhibition itself, served to create another bridge between a liberal prewar Germany and the postwar present. This linkage is achieved through a kind of double-coding embodied in the wordmark and its manifestation. On the one hand, it could be read as a reference to Weimar-era German design, suggesting a Constructivist or Bauhaus example chronologically aligned with the paintings and sculptures on display. While functional design was not shown at *documenta* 1955, the poster, so similar in style to Bauhaus examples, stood in for this omission while fulfilling its job as a utilitarian "document." On the other hand, the design program could also be read as an example of current midcentury International Style graphic design, a mode closely linked to postwar commerce and industry, in particular to international corporate culture. Perhaps the first *documenta*'s greatest achievement, summarized in its name and logo, was not its lofty ideals of unification and harmony across artistic, historical, or political borders, but the way it reauthored avant-garde art, design, and visual culture, and in the process authored itself, as relevant, useful, and necessary in the postwar present. The exhibition proposed that modernism should not only be understood for its own sake, but that it might find value as a "usable past" with contemporary applications not only for young artists, but also for postwar urban renewal, cultural politics, consumer culture, and international industry.

conclusions: logo as institution

Periodic exhibitions like documenta and other contemporary art biennials are by definition diffuse, yet permanent institutions. Held together by their "grammars" or frameworks, not their complex or diverse contents, they are defined by their fundamental linking of the past to the present and future in a chain of unique but connected events. Unlike museums and other art institutions, their "permanent" identities are embodied in their histories, temporal structures, and traditional frameworks,

rather than in fixed architectural structures, organizational hierarchies, or aesthetic concerns, which are often ephemeral or unstable. The original *documenta* logo, and the "grammar" of the lowercase "d" are one small, yet impactful element that creates a kind of visual "location" and institutional continuity, and therefore ongoing identity, for documenta. Its simultaneous evocation of these fundamental characteristics of the periodic exhibition reveals the complexity beneath its seeming simplicity.

Contemporary art, which documenta now purports to survey every five years through the eyes of a new artistic director and curatorial team, is a constantly changing category driven to constant "innovation" by the forces of neoliberal capitalism that make up the "global" art market. documenta and other periodic exhibitions in many ways represent themselves as hollow vessels in this system, cyclically filled, emptied, and refilled, with the newest contents that emerge and enter its networks. The flexible signifier of the documenta name and logo, too, appear as a kind of blank slate, underscoring the institution's self-image as a stable framework for infinitely unstable contents; in later years Bode aptly described documenta as a "Museum of 100 Days." The wordmark maintains both the word's (and the institution's) presence and materiality, while conserving an unending flexibility that insures that documenta remains ever "expandable." In this way, like all good design, it can be produced and multiplied, made and remade, defined and redefined, endlessly, and in an efficient, functional way.

Over the decades, documenta's lowercase "d" has repeatedly served as a site for the expression of the series' Janus-faced embodiment of tradition and innovation; some documenta curators have played on its history, while others have overtly rejected it.[36] In either case, its influence looms large as a framework to be reckoned with one way or another. This year's *documenta 14* will maintain the lowercase "d" in its design program and promotional material. But unlike many previous documenta curators, Artistic Director Adam Szymczyk has selected a visual image, the Owl of Athena, to be the primary identifier of the show. *documenta 14* is already breaking through some of documenta's other traditional structures and historical boundaries; for the first time the exhibition will be "split in two"[37] and will take place in partly overlapping time frames in two cities–Kassel and Athens, Greece.[38] But even these "innovations" will no doubt be subsumed into the constellations of historical continuity, endless multiplicity, and constant expandability that documenta–name, logo, event, and institution–embodies.

Notes

1 From http://www.leftloft.com/project/2207/documenta-13-identity. Accessed 05.11.2013.

2 Leftloft describes their work for documenta thusly: "For the 13th edition, curated by Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev and devoted to the theme 'Collapse & recovery,' our work was driven by one certainty: when it has to do with the art, the design must be able to step aside and become a transparent container that enhances the content. We did not build a visual identity, but an analytical grammar that describes the project and structures it as an invisible skeleton." See http://www.leftloft.com/case-study/documenta-13. Accessed 03.01.2017.

3 From an April 19, 2010 press release from the documenta organization, available at www.d13.documenta.de.

4 *dOCUMENTA(13)* produced smaller exhibitions, talks, and workshops in Canada, Egypt, and Afghanistan. See *dOCUMENTA (13) Das Begleitbuch/ The Guidebook* (catalogue 3/3), Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern, 2012.

5 There are many historical analyses of documenta's origins and history, but the best comprehensive history of *documenta* remains Harald Kimpel, *documenta: Mythos und Wirklichkeit* (Cologne: DuMont, 1997). Another excellent history can be found in Ian Wallace, "The First documenta, 1955" in *dOCUMENTA (13) The Book of Books* (catalogue 1/3), Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern, 2012.

6 Walter Grasskamp, "'Degenerate Art' and Documenta I: Modernism Ostracized and Disarmed" in Daniel J. Sherman and Irit Rogoff, eds., *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1994, pp. 163–194.

7 Although *documenta* 1955 diverged significantly from the nationalist and imperialist frameworks upon which earlier biennials were based (most notably, its rejection of nation-based categories), the recurring format, formally established in 1959 at *documenta II,* but which many experts believe was Bode and the committee's intention from the start, is often linked to these eighteenth- and nineteenth-century forms that purported to visualize and materialize historical positivism and cultural progress. There are numerous sources on the biennial format. See, for example Filipovic, Elena et al, *The Biennial Reader*, Hatje Cantz and Bergen: Bergen Kunsthalle, Ostfildern, 2010.

8 For more on Arnold Bode see Marianne Heinz, ed., *Arnold Bode (1900-1977): Leben und Werk*, Staatliche Museen, Kassel, 2000.

9 Photographs by Magnum photographer Rene Burrí of the 1953 Milan show provide vivid evidence for the influence of the exhibition on *documenta* 1955.

10 Anonymous, untitled publicity piece dated February 14, 1955, documenta Archiv, documenta 1, Mappe 8.

11 For more on the German Federal Garden Shows see Chapter 2 of Andrew Theokas, *Grounds for Review: The Garden Festival in Urban Planning and Design*, Oxford University Press, Liverpool, 2004, pp. 28-95.

12 "Sie wird aber immer nötiger: für die Künstler, damit für sie der Kontakt mit dem Ausland immer enger wird, für das Land Hessen, um die überlokale Bedeutung der Gartenschau zu unterstreichen, für den Bund, weil der Gedanke einer gemeinsamen europäischen Kunst im Zeichen der Europa-Bewegung einende Kraft beweisen kann." The original text of the so-called 'Bode Plan' is found in the documenta Archiv, documenta 1, Mappe 8, but there are various drafts and related exposés in the files. The text (and discussion about the Bode Plan) can also be found in Heiner Georgsdorf, ed. *Arnold Bode: Schriften und Gespräche*, B & S Siebenhaar, Berlin, 2007, pp. 50-55.

13 The word '*Qualität*' appears numerous times in various exposés and organizational materials for *documentas* 1955 and 1959. The idea of bringing important works of art by well-known artists to Kassel was a cornerstone of the committee's plans.

14 See Roger M. Buergel, "The Origins" in *Archive in Motion: 50 Jahre/ Years documenta*, Michael Glasmeier and Karin Stengel, eds., Steidl, Göttingen, 2005, p. 171.

15 An undated report about the exhibition, completed after the close of *documenta* 1955 explicitly notes the importance of teamwork and collaboration that might not have been overtly apparent: "Der Plan der Ausstellung, der Entwurf und die Bauleitung des Innenausbaus ist von Arnold Bode. Hier aber sollte ausdrücklich gesagt sein, dass die 'Documenta' ein echtes Team-work gewesen ist, und dass die selbstlose und unermüdliche Mitarbeit aller Beteiligten unerlässlich für das Gelingen war, auch wo sie nach aussen nicht in Erscheinung trat." See report in Documenta Archiv, documenta 1, Mappe 8.

16 The literature on postwar Germany's negotiation of the past is vast. For a recent survey of these issues in art, see Stephanie Barron, et al. *The Art of Two Germanys: Cold War Cultures*,Harry N. Abrams, New York, 2009.

17 Originally published as Werner Haftmann, *Malerei im 20. Jahrhunderts* (2 vols.), Prestel, Munich, 1954. Citations here refer to the 1965 English edition. Werner Haftmann, *Painting in the Twentieth Century*, transl. Ralph Manheim, Praeger, New York and Washington, 1965.

18 Haftmann, vol. 2, 8-13. The team used "der Kunst unserer Zeit" (the art of our time), "Stil unserer Epoche" (style of our epoch), and "Kunst der Gegenwart" (art of the present or "contemporary art") interchangeably to describe the show's contents.

19 James Sheehan, *Museums in the German Art World: From the End of the Old Regime to the Rise of Modernism*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000, pp. 36-39.

20 For a discussion of documenta as an immersive sensory space, see Charlotte Klonk, *Spaces of Experience: Art Gallery Interiors from 1800 to 2000*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London 2009, pp. 173-189.

21 Harald Kimpel and Karin Stengel, *documenta 1955: Erste Internationale Kunstausstellung – eine fotografische Rekonstruktion*, Edition Temmen, Bremen, 1995, pp. 138-141.

22 See various letters and texts in documenta Archive, documenta 1, Mappe 8.

23 Werner Haftmann, "Preface to the German Edition," trans. Ralph Manheim, *Painting in the Twentieth Century*, Vol. 1, Praeger, New York, 1965, p. 10.

24 For a detailed history of the Nazi exhibitions of "degenerate art" see Christoph Zuschlag, *"Entartete Kunst": Ausstellungsstrategien im Nazi-Deutschland*, Wernersche Verlagsgesellschaft, Worms, 1995.

25 As Lutz Jahre writes, names like "Nivea," "Tempo," or "Constructa" met the needs of the postwar German economy: "If you were searching for a forward-looking name, you went with something that sounded international... It was especially popular to tack on an *a*, which according to psychologists of language makes a word sound more optimistic to German ears." See Lutz Jahre, "Curators and Catalogues: In the Documenta Reading Room," in *Archive in Motion: 50 Jahre/ Years documenta*, Michael Glasmeier and Karin Stengel, eds., p. 46.

26 Karl Oskar Blase, another designer from Kassel wrote that the name "Constructa" had thrilled Bode and he always suspected that this influenced "documenta." For more on Bode's designs for *Korrekta*, see Bettina M. Becker, "Vom anonymen Raumgestalter zum prominenten Designer," in *Arnold Bode: Leben und Werk (1900-1977)*, Marianne Heinz, ed., pp. 46-53.

27 For more on Bode's relationship to these companies and its importance to documenta, see Alfred Nemeczek, "Archäologie im documenta-Urgestein – Glanz und Elend des Gründervaters Arnold Bode," in *Arnold Bode: Leben und Werk (1900-1977)*, pp. 14-16.

28 "Kassel liegt im Zonengrenzgebiet. Kassel war sehr zerstört und baut aktiv wieder auf. Beispielhaft kann es wirken, den Europagedanken in der Kunst 30 km von der Zonengrenze entfernt der Welt ins Bewusstsein zu rufen. Kassel ist nicht belastet durch Künstlerbünde und politisch-künstlerische Verflechtungen, die sich störend auswirken müssen. Kassel will nicht an alte Traditionen anknüpfen, wodurch die Gefahr von Parteienstreit zu befürchten ist, sondern mit dieser Ausstellung eine lebendige neue Tradition schaffen, denn die Grundidee ist – wie angegeben – aus baufähig." 'Bode Plan', documenta Archive, documenta 1, Mappe 8.

29 Documenta Archive, documenta 1, Mappe 9.

30 See Jan Tschichold, *The New Typography: A Handbook for Modern Designers*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1998.

31 Tschichold would also later come to see how these principles of efficiency and unification might also be used to, as Johanna Drucker writes, "mask, shield, and conceal many contradictions in texts, images, and communication more generally" and could be "deformed" in service of "concealing...the structures of economic power in corporate, state, and military production." See Johanna Drucker, *The Visible Word: Experimental Typography and Modern Art, 1909-1923*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1994, pp. 244-245.

32 For an overview of the reception of the Bauhaus during and after World War II see Rainer Wick, "Preliminary Remarks on the Reception of the Bauhaus in Germany" in *Teaching at the Bauhaus*, ed. Rainer Wick, Hatje Cantz, Ostfidern-Ruit, 2000, pp. 302-337.

33 See Paul Bett's important analysis of postwar design and the *Nierentisch* style in his *The Authority of Everyday Objects: A Cultural History of West German Industrial Design*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2004.

34 For a history of International Style design see Richard Hollis, *Swiss Graphic Design: The Origins and Growth of an International Style, 1920-1965*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2006.

35 For a discussion of the neutering of the revolutionary power of prewar modernist typography and graphic design in the postwar period, see Johanna Drucker's discussion of "the demise of typographic experiment" in which she describes how innovative typography became "well-behaved elements of the corporate machine, and the advertising profession became a most efficient partner in the business of promoting consumption as an effect of seamless images and a smoothly functioning ideological apparatus." See Drucker, *The Visible Word: Experimental Typography and Modern Art, 1909-1923*, p. 245.

36 For a short survey of the different identity programs for documenta 4-11, see Stefanie Herbst, "Meaning Communicated: Documenta Design between Convention and Transmission of Values in *Archive in Motion: 50 Jahre/ Years documenta*, pp. Michael Glasmeier and Karin Stengel, eds. pp. 62-65.

37 Brian Boucher, "Documenta 17 Goes to Athens, Splits Self in Two" *Art in America* (October 7, 2014): http://www.artinamericamagazine.com/news-features/news/documenta-17-goes-to-athens-splits-self-in-two. Accessed 4.3.2017.

38 The idea of "splitting" the usual Kassel summer event into two urban locations (and the expressed ideas of political borders, migration, and the breakdown of center/periphery models of "globalism") is also represented in the design of the *documenta 14* website. A jagged white line dividing a solid black field, like a crack, coastline, border, or boundary, is the first image to emerge when the website opens. See www.documenta14.de.

Captions

1 Signage in front of the Museum Fridericianum at documenta, Kassel, Germany, 1955, Werner Lengemann / © documenta Archive

2 Leftloft's "non-logo" for dOCUMENTA (13), 2012, Courtesy of Leftloft Milan

3 Poster for documenta 1955, © documenta Archive

4 Max Bill's *Konstruktion* (1937) installed in room 14 of the Museum Fridericianum at documenta 1955, Erich Müller / © documenta Archive

5 Cover of the catalogue for documenta 1955, © documenta Archive

6 Herbert Bayer, Design for Universal lettering, page 399 from *Offset. Buch und Werbekunst*, 1926, Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin / © 1926 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn

Kathryn M. Floyd is Associate Professor of Art History at Auburn University in Auburn, Alabama. She teaches courses in modern and contemporary art, as well as in the history of the arts of Africa and the history of photography. She has BA degrees in Fine arts and Anthropology from Vanderbilt University, an MA in Art History from the University of Georgia, and a PhD in Art History from the University of Iowa where her dissertation "Between Change and Continuity: documenta 1955–2005" won a Graduate Deans' Distinguished Dissertation Prize in the Humanities. Before coming to Auburn, Floyd worked at the International Dada Archive at the University of Iowa Libraries and served as Visiting Assistant Professor of Art History at Skidmore College. In 2017 she received the Auburn University College of Liberal Arts Teaching Excellence Award. Floyd's research is concerned with the history of art in twentieth-century Germany with a specific focus on the history and historiography of art exhibitions and their mediation in catalogues, installation photographs, and film. Floyd has conducted extensive research on the history of *documenta*. Her current book project explores a set of installation photographs of Wilhelm Lehmbruck's Expressionist sculpture *Kneeling Woman* (1911) taken at different modernist exhibitions in Germany and the United States, from the Armory Show in 1913 to the first *documenta* in 1955. She also recently served as guest editor of a special issue of the journal *Dada/ Surrealism* that explores the history of avant-garde art exhibitions.

Bauhaus / documenta: Orders of the Present

by Philipp Oswalt

Bauhaus and documenta are both globally established brands that represent a liberal, cosmopolitan, innovative and modern Germany, a fact acknowledged far beyond their respective disciplines by a wide international audience. The civilizational catastrophe of National Socialism acts as a frame of reference for both of them. It is an important part of our present-day picture of the Bauhaus that it was closed down by the National Socialists and that a great number of its protagonists were forced into exile. The first *documenta*, however, builds on this narrative of the avant-garde as a victim of National Socialism, because it stands for a return of the art outlawed by the National Socialists. It explicitly pursued the challenge of contributing, with an artistic re-education of sorts, to the reconstruction of a liberal democratic society. The Bauhaus plays an important role in this educative endeavour.[1] The works of almost a dozen Bauhauslers–students as well as teachers–are shown in the first three documenta exhibitions.[2] Moreover, the iconography of the first documenta exhibition may be interpreted as a scenographic analogy: the staging of the main staircase in the Fridericianum resembled the scene of the *Bauhaus Stairway* in the painting that Oskar Schlemmer had painted to mark the closure of the Bauhaus Dessau in 1932.[3] Also, the typographic designs, such as the lower-case letters and the use of modern sans serif fonts, render connections visible. The original logo of the *documenta Archiv*[4] is, furthermore, a variant of the Bauhaus logo of square-triangle-circle in the primary colours red-yellow-blue[5].

Beyond this connection in a cultural narrative, the two projects or institutions would appear at first glance to be fundamentally different: a school for applied design versus an exhibition series of visual art. In spite of these differences, this text pursues the hypothesis that both projects have in some respects a quite fundamental kinship, which, first and foremost, governs their role and impact in the societal discourse. This kinship becomes obvious in the following aspects: first, both projects are heroically articulated attempts to formulate and shape a new beginning after a societal collapse (1919/1945). Moreover, both projects see themselves as explicitly non-elitist in their desire to reach beyond a specialist audience to a wider public. They wish to influence society and in doing so pursue emancipatory goals, which are also accompanied by educational ambitions. Furthermore, both projects are based on a curatorial concept, in which in each case a temporary artistic director develops the overall presentation concept in dialogue with a council of other creative artists (the Bauhaus masters' council or exhibition committees), which includes a number of heterogeneous and also often renowned artists who enjoy a large degree of autonomy. Finally, both are thus subject to change, which ensures their continuous updating and renewal. While both projects are rooted in locations outside major cities, in places regarded as provincial, they both nonetheless have an exceptional international mass appeal with respect to contributing authors and reception. Proceeding from these cornerstones, the parallels between the two projects may be narrowed down to the following four domains:

Chaos and Order

1919 and 1945 mark societal watersheds in Germany: the reconstruction of society after the defeat and collapse of a monarchistic state on the one hand and a totalitarian state on the other. In the cultural projects of Bauhaus and documenta, change and new beginnings are articulated with great pathos. After the collapse and destruction of the old order, each of the founding fathers[6]–Walter Gropius and Arnold Bode–seeks to formulate a new world view. During a period of confusion and schisms, dis- and re-orientation, they seek to create a new social order for the modern age. These are at any rate the effective founding myths today, even if, especially in the case of the Bauhaus, and in spite of the avant-garde rhetoric, there are major continuities and lines of tradition on which the projects build.

For Walter Gropius, "The *idea* of *today's world* is already recognisable, its shape still unclear and hazy" (1923).[7] To actualize this idea and give it coherence was to be the Bauhaus's task. In 1929, Hannes Meyer, the second Bauhaus director after Gropius, speaks of the artist as "the creator of order".[8] This all-encompassing aspiration becomes particularly evident in some of the activities of the Bauhaus. With the *Bauhausbücher* (Bauhaus Books), László Moholy-Nagy, at the behest of Gropius, seeks to collate and order all the thinking of his time–in science and technology, economics and religion, art and politics. His aim is to give "with the sum of books a genuine overview of the time, our time".[9] The same applies to the expansive programme of guest lecturers and lectures at the Bauhaus. Thirty years later for the first documenta, Werner Haftmann speaks of the "visual expression of the contemporary conception of the world" .[10] In modern art, as Haftmann claims in 1959, "The contents, conceptions and aesthetic desires that define contemporary man's relation to reality and life have found their form."[11] And this was valid for all peoples worldwide who had achieved self-determination, because "the same way of looking at the world and perceiving reality [...] that the modern way of living sustained in science, technology and economics" were condensed in comparable artistic forms of expression. The aim of documenta is "to show this broad development in as comprehensive an exhibition as possible."[12] Both the teaching programme of the Bauhaus and the exhibition concepts of documenta thus embody orders of knowledge that, with nigh encyclopedic ambition, inventory, compare and organize the relevant contemporary movements.[13]

Inherent to this is the pedagogical ambition to educate and train the modern man. As Walter Gropius states in 1923, in reference to the Bauhaus, "Its responsibility consists in educating people to recognize the basic nature of the world in which they live, and in combining their knowledge with their imagination so to be able to create typical forms that symbolize this world."[14] And his successor Hannes Meyer writes in 1929, "Thus the aim of all bauhaus work is to bring together all vitally creative forces so as to give harmonious shape to our society."[15] documenta, too, should, as Werner Haftmann states in 1955, "[...] be of public value. [...] Its ideal scenario–admittedly not achieved–would be of great importance to the spiritual wellbeing of the nation."[16] For *documenta IV* of 1968, its founder Arnold Bode is even more explicit: "Art is also becoming more political, it is contributing to the enrichment and transformation of consciousness. The artists, to date the outsiders of society (Klee: "Uns trägt kein Volk" (We are not supported by a people)) will, we hope, soon stand at its centre to assist in its transformation. [...] Information is central for documenta; it is inherent to its educational mission; it is a didactic exhibition."[17] The emancipatory objective of both projects is based on the belief in progress that originates in Western thought, by means of which, through the modern development of culture–including the possibilities of the modern sciences and technologies–art, design and society as a whole evolve to a higher, more progressive stage of development. While the Bauhaus takes a significantly more technological and scientific approach to the modern everyday living, the first three documenta exhibitions, inter alia with the path to abstraction, formulate the narrative of an artistically progressive idea.

Canon and Dissolution

Bauhaus and documenta are "laboratories" in which boundaries are dissolved and the familiar everyday world is abandoned in favour of experimentation with new practices. The boundaries between art and the everyday world become hazy and are at times dismantled. Likewise, the conventional institutional frameworks and the established understanding of roles are abandoned, and new artistic forms of expression and media are introduced[18]. These dissolutions of boundaries are public manifestations exemplified by their festive character–the Bauhaus parties on the one hand, and documenta as a "buoyant summer festival"[19] on the other: both are temporally and spatially limited, playful, often also ostensibly naïve experiments. As catalysts, eccentric figures and radical new thinkers such as Hannes Meyer (Dessau 1927–1930) or Joseph Beuys (Kassel 1964 et seq.) play a major role. The institutional instability, while not always desirable, is pivotal to the radical character and, therefore, success of the experiments. The Bauhaus had to move locations twice over fourteen years and was compelled to re-establish itself each time after its closures in 1925, 1930 and 1932. documenta began as a project that evolved from a loose group in a four- or five-year rhythm, which became constitutive for the constant change of curators from 1968 onward. As Arnold Bode summarised in 1968, "The documenta therefore cannot become a museum, because four-year-old concepts do not have to be implemented a second time."[20]

Nonetheless, the dissolution of boundaries is accompanied by a claim to legitimacy that results in a canonisation of creative production. In spite of the protagonists' commitment to the character of a

permanent experiment, both projects have led to new canonisations. Their influence, which is asserted in the reception, is effected not only by size and presence, but also in the coupling of design and theory, production and education, by exhibitions, discourses and publications, that is, in the combination of multiple channels to produce one total experience. This forms a diffuse canon of heterogeneous consistency, without a pre-packaged formula: a collection developed and structured from a subjective-partisan standpoint that assembles contemporary positions and validates them as relevant through presentations in teaching curriculums and events, in publications and exhibitions.

Provincialism and Internationalism

Whether Weimar, Dessau or Kassel, there is a curious contrast between the locations of each institution and their respective presence on the international stage. But it is only in a small city that a major cultural project can shape and redefine its location. Perhaps it is precisely this provincialism that facilitates, even fosters, internationalism. Both institutions rule out a national perspective from the start and form unusual spaces of post-national, international cultural production.[21] The participating artists and designers come from numerous countries, in the first instance mainly from Europe, but also from North America and the Far East. The staff of the Bauhaus was unusually international and included teachers from Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, Russia and the USA, later also from the Netherlands, Denmark and Croatia; the student body was even more diverse, with students also from Japan, Palestine, Iran, Turkey, Poland, Lithuania and Czechoslovakia.[22] The first *documenta* in 1955 brought together artists from almost all the European countries; *documenta 5* saw an increase in artists from the USA and Japan, who were joined from *documenta 9* onward by artists from South America, Africa and Asia. *documenta 11* chose its first non-European artistic director, Okwui Enwezor, who then also realised parts of his *documenta* outside Europe.

The first Bauhaus book published by Walter Gropius in 1925 takes the programmatic title *Internationale Architektur* (International Architecture). In 1926, Hannes Meyer wrote, "Constructive form is not peculiar to any country; it is cosmopolitan and the expression of an international philosophy of building. Internationality is a prerogative of our time."[23] Arnold Bode spoke of "world art as a goal"[24] (1968), and earlier still (1964), Werner Haftmann had stated, "The idea of the documenta has a supra-national character. And while this is not always fully appreciated, the documenta is the only exhibition in the world that has absolutely no national ambitions, and rejects any influence from national committees and associations. It is no more than the reflection of the insights of a group of knowledgeable and independent spirits into the nature and state of the contemporary art in the world."[25] Contrary to the claims they make for themselves, both projects are, however, far from universal, but are instead influenced by a European way of thinking and seeing to which they ascribe a universal value. With the concepts of "international architecture" and "world art", an approach that transcends an a priori progressive, national thought pattern veers into a rash position that is Eurocentric and ignores other perspectives and cultures, which then also proved to be increasingly problematic in the more recent documenta exhibitions.

The combination of internationalism and provincialism is moreover characterised by local tensions. Both cultural projects are largely enclaves of newcomers who are in touch with their local contexts only to a limited degree and who are on the contrary embedded in globalised cultural production. At the Bauhaus, which was in fact founded not entirely from scratch, but from the merger of two existing schools, Walter Gropius quickly divested himself of the teachers there. Also, only a small proportion of the students came from the region.[26] documenta, initially launched by local protagonists in Kassel, largely detached itself from its local networks with Arnold Bode's departure in 1968.[27] The Bauhaus, at least in its Dessau period, was for a time integrated locally through the making of design products with and for local companies and the city of Dessau[28]; with documenta, this local integration occurs primarily through the influx of visitors from the region.[29] The relationships of both cultural institutions to their respective contexts are, however, characterised by a mutual sense of alienation, which is also frequently articulated in critical statements at the local level.

Staged and Attacked

Whether Bauhaus or documenta, both projects invest a significant proportion of their energy and resources into the staging of ideas and works. Their respective founding fathers were outstanding networkers and communicators, who were deeply committed to the effective placement of their respective projects on the public stage. The Bauhaus presented its work from 1923 in a series of exhibitions[30] and intensified this practice with the creation of the advertising

department in 1928. It is indicative that the first Bauhaus building–the *Haus am Horn in Weimar*–and the best-known Bauhaus product–the Wagenfeld lamp–were first designed and made for an exhibition. The Bauhaus products are far less oriented towards utility than is generally supposed; rather, they were supposed to symbolically showcase and demonstrate a modern standard of living. And documenta is more than a collection of modern works of art, which for that matter are also increasingly made for the very purpose of being exhibited. For the first documenta exhibitions, Arnold Bode used artworks as materials for realising his scenographic concept, for instance, to create a tension between the contrasting poles of modern art and wartime ruins, or to experiment with spatial arrangements. Irrespective of how dominant a role the scenography plays, this staging–along with the spatial constellation of the overall exhibition, such as Catherine David's parcours for *documenta X*, or specific key works–plays a critical role that became an important part of the exhibition experience.

These intended forms of communication are pitted against diverse controversies and conflicts that have had no less influence on the history of the exhibition's reception.[31] The heterogeneity and polyphony of the positions within the projects on the one hand and their often intentional crossing of boundaries on the other promoted these cultures of dispute. They not only generated public attention, but also sharpened the objectives of the projects. Internal conflicts and external attacks contributed to their reputations, even though the later aggressions also sometimes took on a destructive character. For the Bauhaus, the internal conflicts about the teaching concept, for instance, between spiritual and constructivist ideas, between functionalist and artistic approaches, were just as influential as the political attacks from the right, ongoing since the foundation of the school, which resulted in its repeated closure, for the final time in 1933 by the Nazis. documenta–effectively a flagship of a society that perceives itself as liberated and modern–has to date, despite various attacks, never been effectively endangered; nonetheless, its development has also been influenced and fostered by internal conflicts in the art world, e.g. the protest at the press conference at the opening of *documenta IV* and public controversies such as Walter de Maria's *The Vertical Earth Kilometer* (*documenta 6*, 1977). It is only in the interplay of planned scenography and unplanned conflict that we see the emergence of the new orders of knowledge, viewed here as important dimensions of both projects.

Conclusion

Although a school for applied arts and crafts and a series of high art exhibitions differ fundamentally from one another, this comparison reveals significant parallels between the two, especially with regard to the social function of each project. Their relevance resides above all in the fact that they offer orientation for a modern society in a globalised world frequently perceived as confusing, in other words, they project orders of the present. In her book *Ausstellungen als Wissensordnungen* (2013), the art historian Katja Hoffmann has already referred to the role of art in creating order, based on the example of *documenta 11*:

> Exhibitions operate in cultures as organisations of knowledge. They order objects in a specific systematized way. They refer to historically established interpretation models and collect and contextualise objects. They update traditional bodies of knowledge, but on occasion also conceive alternative interpretations of once authoritative knowledge. [...] They construct influential interpretations and offer a range of interpretations of historic events.[32]

This ambition does not, however, merely apply to *documenta 11*; it influenced documenta from 1955 onwards and, in other ways, also the Bauhaus. This ordering function is integral to the social relevance, reception and potency of both projects. The projected orders, however, are not abstract models, but express an approach that pursues the tradition of the European avant-garde and that–despite all inherent contradictions–is indebted to and reproduces, continues and updates its canon of values: the emancipation of society and the individual, the orientation towards new forms of knowledge and technologies, the questioning of traditions, norms and prevailing power relations, the search for the new, etc. The later documenta exhibitions have progressively turned towards the inherent contradictions of this canon of values and expounded on these, without questioning it *in toto* or abandoning it.

Thanks to Martin Groh, Harald Kimpel and Jan Wenzel for important suggestions and pointers and Birgitt Jooss for her support for a planned joint project on the subject.

* Translated from German by Rebecca Philipps Williams

Notes

1 In this, documenta follows Ludwig Grote, who as early as 1950 inter alia with his exhibition *Maler am Bauhaus* in the Haus der Kunst, Munich, boldly built on the time before 1933, and who, by dint of his exhibition politics, had a great influence on the post-war reception of modern art in West Germany. Werner Haftmann refers to him by name in his introduction to the catalogue for *documenta 1955*: Werner Haftmann, introduction to *documenta, kunst des XX. jahrhunderts*, Prestel Verlag, Munich, 1955, p. 15. Exhibition catalogue.

2 These included Josef Albers (d1, d4), Mordecai Ardon (d2), Max Bill (d1, d3), Lyonel Feininger (d1), Wassily Kandinsky (d1, d2, d3), Paul Klee (d1, d3), Gerhard Marcks (d1, d3), Georg Muche (d1), Oskar Schlemmer (d1, d3) and Fritz Winter (d1, d2, d3).

3 Thanks to Harald Kimpel for this reference.

4 It was used until March 2017.

5 The logo was designed by the former director of the archive, Hubertus Gaßner, in 1961. Also, the catalogues of *documenta I, II, III, IV* and even VIII used the same graphic language.

6 Significantly, only fathers can be mentioned here. Apart from a few exceptions in the later Bauhaus years, only men worked as teachers ("masters") and, in the case of the documenta as well, it took 40 years before the first woman was appointed as artistic director, for *documenta X* in 1997.

7 Walter Gropius, *Selected Writings,* Vol. 3, Probst /Schädlich, Berlin, 1987. The text begins with the cited passage.

8 Hannes Meyer, "bauhaus and society" (1929), in *Buildings, Projects, and Writings*, , Arthur Niggli Ltd., Teufen, 1965.

9 Lázló Moholy-Nagy in a letter to Theo van Doesburg, 26.7.1924, cited in Alain Findeli, "Lázló Moholy-Nagy und das Projekt der Bauhausbücher," in *Das A & O des Bauhauses: Bauhauswerbung: Schriftbilder, Drucksachen, Ausstellungsdesign*, Ute Brüning, ed., Bauhaus-Archiv, Leipzig, 1995, p. 24.

10 Werner Haftmann, introduction to *documenta, kunst des XX. Jahrhunderts*, p. 18.

11 Werner Haftmann, introduction to *Malerei nach 1945*, *II. documenta '59. Kunst nach 1945*, M. DuMont Schauberg, Cologne, 1959, p. 12. Exhibition catalogue, Vol. 1.

12 Ibid., p. 15.

13 This interpretation emerges in the discussion in the scope of a workshop on 6.12.2016 in the documenta Archiv with author Peter Bernhard and Martin Groh, Annemarie Hürlimann, Birgit Jooss, Harald Kimpel, Annette Kulenkampff and Jan Wenzel. Coming into play are references to Michel Foucault, *Die Ordnung der Dinge*, Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1971 (*Les mots et les choses*, 1966). The author subsequently came across the dissertation of Katja Hoffmann, who had previously put forward such a hypothesis for *documenta 11,* which is discussed towards the end.

14 Walter Gropius, "Idee und Entwicklung des Staatlichen Bauhauses zu Weimar" (1923), in *Amtsblatt des Thüringischen Ministeriums für Volksbildung* of 24 January 1923, No. 1, 1923, reprinted in Wahl, Volker: *Das Staatliche Bauhaus in Weimar. Dokumente zur Geschichte des Instituts 1919-1926*, published by the Historische Kommission für Thüringen (Große Reihe, Vol. 15), Böhlau, Cologne 2009, 280–288 (English translation from Hans Wingler, *Bauhaus*, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 1969).

15 Hannes Meyer, "bauhaus and society."

16 *documenta, kunst des XX. jahrhunderts*, p. 18.

17 Arnold Bode, "documentadocumenta," in *documenta 4*, Druck + Verlag GmbH, Kassel, 1968, p. 12. Exhibition catalogue.

18 Exemplary for the Bauhaus: the foundation of the photography workshop in 1929; for documenta: Fluxus, happenings, the art of the mentally ill and non-art at *documenta 5* (1972).

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid., p. 13.

21 This occurs under different conditions and to some extent with clear instances of ambivalence. On the one hand, documenta explicitly rejects a national perspective, as shown here; on the other, it is also to be understood as a national re-education project for post-war German society. Significantly, the President of the Federal Republic of Germany is the patron of the first three documenta exhibitions.

22 In 1929, 30 of the 170 students were foreigners. See advertising leaflet of the Bauhaus Dessau: *Junge Menschen kommt ans Bauhaus*, 1929, p. 44.

23 Hannes Meyer, "The New World," in *Buildings, Projects, and Writings*, Teufen A/R Schweiz, Arthur Niggli Ltd., 1965.

24 Arnold Bode, *documenta 4*, p. 12.

25 Werner Haftmann, introduction to *documenta III. Internationale Ausstellung*, Vol. 1: *Malerei und Skulptur*, M. DuMont Schauberg, Kassel/Cologne 1964, p. 17.

26 In 1929, just 8 of 170 students at the Bauhaus Dessau came from Anhalt, i.e., less than 5%. See advertising leaflet of the Bauhaus Dessau: *Junge Menschen kommt ans Bauhaus*, p. 44.

27 See Philipp Oswalt, Carola Ebert et al., *DocumentaEFFECTS: Was macht die Documenta mit der Stadt?*, ISP Fachbereich ASL, Kassel, 2007, p. 24 et seq. Catalogue and audio guide.

28 In doing so, however, the Bauhaus entered into competition with local architects, which led to new conflicts. See in this regard especially Walter Scheiffele, *Bauhaus, Junkers, Sozialdemokratie: Ein Kraftfeld der Moderne*, Form + Zweck, Berlin, 2003.

29 At *documenta 12*, there were some 100,000 visitors from the region, approximately 14% of the total. See, for example, "Documenta 12 endet mit Besucherrekord," *Der Tagesspiegel,* 25 Sept. 2007.

http://www.tagesspiegel.de/kultur/documenta-12-endet-mit-besucherrekord/1051376.html

30 Bauhausausstellung Weimar 1923, Bauhausbauten Dessau 1926 as a building exhibition, Wanderausstellung 10 Jahre Bauhaus 1929/30, German section of the Salon des artistes décorateurs, Paris 1930, Deutsche Bauausstellung Berlin 1931, etc.

31 See, Philipp Oswalt, ed., *Bauhaus-Conflicts: 1919–2009; Controversies and Counterparts*, Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern, 2009; Harald Kimpel, *Aversion, Akzeptanz:* öffentliche *Kunst und* öffentliche *Meinung: Ausseninstallationen aus documenta-Vergangenheit*, Jonas, Marburg, 1992.

32 Katja Hoffmann, *Ausstellungen als Wissensordnungen. Zur Transformation des Kunstbegriffs auf der Documenta 11*, transcript, Bielefeld 2013, p. 13.

Philipp Oswalt, architect and writer, born in 1964 in Frankfurt am Main (Germany), lives in Berlin. From 1988 to 1994, he worked as editor for the architectural journal *Arch+*. In 1996/97, he worked for the 'Office for Metropolitan Architecture'/Rem Koolhaas in Rotterdam. Visiting Professor for Design at the Technical University Cottbus (2000-2002), and Professor for Architecture Theory and Design at Kassel University (since 2006), Oswalt won the international competition for the design of the memorial site of the "Former Women's Concentration Camp Ravensbrück" in 1998 (Phase 1 realized). Initiator and Coordinator of the European Research project 'Urban Catalysts' (2001 – 2003) on temporality in urban space, financed by the European Commission ('City of Tomorrow' programme). Chief Curator of the international research and exhibition project 'Shrinking Cities' for the German cultural foundation (2002 – 2008), and co-curator of Volkspalast 2004 (cultural use of the former Palast der Republik Berlin). From 2009 to 2014, he was director of the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation, and is the co-initiator of project Bauhaus.

documenta in Kassel and the Allgemeine Deutsche Kunstausstellung in Dresden: A German-German History of Interrelations

by Susanne König

This essay compares the origins of the first *documenta* exhibition in Kassel in 1955 with the first great postwar exhibition in the Soviet Occupation Zone (German initials: SBZ), the 1946 *Allgemeine Deutsche Kunstausstellung* (*General German Art Exhibition)* in Dresden. Due to the ideological and geopolitical divisions between Eastern and Western Germany, the history of German art in the 20th century has not always been viewed as a German-German history. This is attested by exhibitions and catalogues which, although supposedly dedicated to 20th-century German art, in fact merely discuss the art of the West.[1] My approach here, in contrast, recognizes the intertwined character of the histories of the two Germanys and thus subscribes to a methodological approach in contemporary history that acknowledges the impossibility to study the one without the other.[2] Accordingly, I concede, the exhibition practices in the two sister states cannot be fully understood in isolation from one another. This insight is especially important with regard to the documenta series, which has always been understood as a cultural and political platform directed at the East. In the following, I will argue that the basic practices and concepts of these two series of exhibitions held in the two German "front-line states" of the Cold War were interrelated in many ways despite the opposition between world views and ideologies.[3]

By the time *documenta* first opened its doors in Kassel to a total of 130,000 visitors on the occasion of the first *National Garden Show* in 1955, the former Soviet Occupation Zone had already witnessed three editions of the *Allgemeine Deutsche Kunstausstellung* in Dresden since 1946 [fig. 1–4]. Both shows followed similar objectives: the rehabilitation of modern art that had been banned by the Nazis plus an overview of the latest art trends.[4] A comparison of the exhibition locations shows Dresden in particular to be the best choice for rehabilitation, as the first exhibition of

1

the *Degenerate Art* tour had taken place here in 1933.[5] The *Allgemeine Deutsche Kunstausstellung* took place in the Town Hall, in the building at Nordplatz in Dresden-Neustadt/Alberstadt, concurrently with the exhibition *Das Neue Dresden* (The New Dresden), on the reconstruction of the city. Like Dresden, Kassel too was a historically significant place. Owing to its central location, it had been not only a German railway hub, but a centre of the armaments industry as well. During the war, 80% of the building stock was destroyed, and because of its newly marginal location the city had greater difficulty in recovering compared with other German cities. The *Federal Garden Show* consequently came to this city primarily as a stimulus for economic development.[6] Its former arms industry made Kassel a particularly suitable place for rehabilitation. The two important major exhibitions in East and West thus took place not in central German art metropolises like Berlin, Cologne, or Munich, but rather on the outskirts, as it were, in Kassel and Dresden. By 1955, however, ten years after the end of the Second World War the first *Allgemeine Deutsche Kunstausstellung* had already developed into a series of exhibitions occurring every three to five years, while the first *documenta* nine years later did not assure continuation of the exhibition every four or five years yet. Despite these differences in timing, it is nevertheless worthwhile comparing the two exhibitions, which would become influential series of recurring exhibitions, due to their significant political, conceptual, and organisational parallels that I describe in the following.


2

Cultural Political Agendas

Exhibition activities in Germany resumed surprisingly soon after the German surrender on 8 May 1945. The Hamburger Kunsthalle, for example, opened as early as 2 December 1945 with the exhibition *Masterpieces of the Kunsthalle: Painting of the 17th and 19th Centuries* in the improvised rooms of the art dealer Louis Bock & Sohn.[7] Located in the Soviet Occupation Zone, Dresden at this time was under the Soviet Military Administration in Germany (SMAD). In line with a very liberal arts and cultural policy, the aim of the SMAD was to convince bourgeois citizens and intelligentsia in the Soviet Occupation Zone, as well as in the Western zones, of the superiority of the socialist model of society. At the time, openness and tolerance characterised the practice of Soviet cultural officers and the German cultural officials in the Soviet Zone. Their goal was to build a united socialist Germany under Soviet hegemony.[8]


3


4

The *Allgemeine Deutsche Kunstausstellung* was to take stock of modern and contemporary art in all of Germany during the 20th century, while other exhibitions in the Soviet Zone featured mainly local and regional artists.[9] As with many postwar exhibitions, the activity in this exhibition aimed at rehabilitating art that had been ostracized under National Socialism. For political reasons, banned art became a mark of quality and was considered as worthy of exhibition *per se*. The exhibition was to "send powerful artistic impulses throughout the entire country"[10] and thereby inspire future art trends. Instead of

calling for a radically new beginning, the exhibition was to integrate and build on artistic traditions prior to National Socialism. It was characterized by a practice of a pluralism of styles, with the aim to allow for liberal and free artistic creativeness. In both the Eastern and Western zones of occupation, "being free" meant that artistic work could develop without political regulation and thus free of fascist, militaristic, and anti-democratic ideologies. In the Soviet Zone, notably, concepts such as humanism, democracy, and anti-fascism were not only widely used in spoken and written language, but in some cases used synonymously with socialism.[11]

Rather than forcing a break with the past, the Cultural Alliance sought to resume a continuous development of German culture without disruptions, a culture whose humanistic heritage had supposedly merely briefly been interrupted during the National Socialists' regime. This intention was reflected by the *Allgemeine Deutsche Kunstausstellung*'s concept of displaying the works of the Classical Moderns not only for the sake of their rehabilitation, but also to demonstrate the continuity of this tradition. The exhibitions were accordingly promoted as re-education and democratisation measures, since "genuine art [can] become an important means of political education".[12] The ideologically charged nationalist concept of "German art" was left unquestioned, though it should be noted that the West also referred to many exhibitions in this unconsidered way.[13]

Like the Dresden exhibition of 1946, the 1955 *documenta* focussed on modern art of the first half of the 20th century. [14] Here, too, the point was to build on the prewar tradition of modern art to rehabilitate art banned by the National Socialists. A major difference between the two concepts was the national scope of modern and contemporary art in Dresden as opposed to an international orientation in Kassel. With his list of artists, the exhibition organiser Arnold Bode's goal was to demonstrate international solidarity and thereby underscore affiliation with the West. In his account of the first exhibition, Bode initially only formulated a desire for an autonomous exhibition: "The point of the exhibition is to display only masters whose importance for the present is indisputable following strict selection criteria, with a few crucial works by each artist of the highest quality. [...] This consistent one-sidedness alone should enable this exhibition to stir the greatest interest". [15] Later Bode would call attention to the geo-political context of *documenta's* cultural-political argument: "Kassel is the German city predestined for such an exhibition. Kassel lies near the border between the zones, was very much destroyed in the war and is very actively engaged in reconstruction. Manifesting the idea of Europe in an art exhibition thirty kilometres from the zone border is an exemplary act". [16] A request for support to the Federal Ministry for All-German Affairs accordingly described Kassel as a "city in 'borderland situations' facing the East",[17] in line with the overall political situation. In 1955, the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) under Konrad Adenauer pressed forward with integration into the West: the FRG joined NATO and the Christian Democratic government hoped to isolate the German Democratic Republic.[18]

In his opening speech, curator Werner Haftmann (1912-1999) noted in conspicuously apolitical terms that *documenta* would have nothing to do "with propaganda for or against anything", it having been created "for each and every one of you–as an individual"[19] but promotion of individualism was, of course, in a way also propaganda of the Western way of life. For Harald Kimpel, the early documenta exhibitions clearly played a role in the East-West confrontation and occurred in the context of the cultural-political reconstruction of the FRG, although we must still ask to what extent state support also called for this orientation.[20] While both exhibitions thus followed the agenda to rehabilitate art formerly persecuted by the Nazis, they were different in so far as the Dresden show's national all-German scope represents the general political hope for German reunification, while *documenta's* Western internationalist programmatic nine years later bears evidence of the Cold War antagonisms. The comparison of the two exhibitions in the East and West shows just how similar the two concepts actually were, in wanting to rehabilitate the art ostracised under the National Socialists and in seeking to connect with contemporary art prior to the Third Reich. Both exhibitions sought to express their ideas of freedom and democracy through the diversity of a stylistic pluralism. Nevertheless, as I aim to show in the following, the exhibition organisers seem to have reached their limits in failing to give due attention to the critical and political art of the Weimar period. At nearly ten years apart, the two exhibitions do reflect their different historical periods, however. While shortly after the war, attention focussed on the overall German question, as was reflected in particular by the all-German concept in Dresden, the Kassel exhibition emerged at a time when the Cold War had already reached its high point. Here, the exhibition aimed above all at underscoring adherence to the West, as

the exhibition sought to express in its Western, international artists' programme. As we shall see, later the *Third German Art Exhibition* in the mid-1950s also embodied the GDR's alignment with the East through works of Socialist Realism.[21]

Organizational Structures

A comparison of the organisers of both shows reveals that neither of these large-scale exhibitions could have been conceived or financially borne by any single institution. Both needed different sets of supporters that had to work together. The *Allgemeine Deutsche Kunstausstellung* was organized by the State Administration of Saxony, the Dresden City Council, and the Cultural Alliance for the Democratic Renewal of Germany. It was most likely initiated by Herbert Gute, a cultural official of the Saxony State Administration and member of the Cultural Alliance, as well as painter and graphic artist. The art historian Will Grohmann represented the Dresden City Council.[22] Back in the 1920s, he had already worked on behalf of modern art as a journalist and author and as an organiser of the *International Exhibition in Dresden* (1926), and after emigrating to the West in 1947, he notably also participated in working committees of the second and third *documenta* exhibitions and the Biennales in Venice.[23] His involvement is exemplary for the close personal ties between the exhibitions. The Cultural Alliance for the Democratic Renewal of Germany, represented by Eva Blank, played an important role in the postwar period in the East and had the following agenda:

> Destruction of Nazi ideology in all areas of life and knowledge. Struggle against the intellectual initiators of Nazi crimes and war crimes. [...] Formation of a national united front of German intellectual workers. [...] Rebirth of the German spirit in line with a militant democratic world-view. [...] Rediscovery and promotion of the liberal humanist and truly national tradition of our people. [...] Incorporation of the intellectual achievement of other peoples in the cultural reconstruction of Germany. Initiation of an understanding with the cultural bodies of other peoples.[24]

The exhibition was accordingly organised by the *Land*, the city, and the Cultural Alliance, with the costs of 225,175 Reichsmarks being borne by the SMAD.[25] In comparison: even though the first *documenta* was a personal initiative by Arnold Bode, this large-scale project was also co-organised by the private association *Abendländische Kunst des XX. Jahrhunderts e.V.* (*Western Art of the 20th Century*) and state bodies. The city of Kassel acted as the financial supporting organisation, while patronage was provided by German Federal President Theodor Heuss, who as an accomplished art historian also helped set up the financing channels.[26] The Federal Government and the city of Kassel each added 50,000 Deutsche Marks while the exhibition received 100,000 Deutsche Marks from the State of Hesse.[27] The largest organisational difference between the show in the eastern and that in the western parts of the country was that the *Allgemeine Deutsche Kunstausstellung* was conceived as a sales exhibition. Of the 597 exhibited works, the authorities of the Soviet Zone purchased works mainly in an expressive-representational style, with a total value of 334,230 Reichsmarks.

Even if the funding for both shows thus lay in the hands of the respective occupying power, the selection of works was left to art experts. In Dresden, the jury of the *Allgemeine Deutsche Kunstausstellung* consisted of two art historians (Will Grohmann and Dr Gerhard Strauss), eleven artists (Herbert Gute, Herbert Volwahsen, Karl Hofer, Max Pechstein, Hans Grundig, Wilhelm Lachnit, Eugen Hoffmann, Bernhard Kretzschmar, Edmund Kesting, Karl Kröner, and Karl Rade) and one economist (Eva Blank).[28] Many members of the jury were active in various cultural institutions, as head of the Department for Visual Arts art in the Central Administration for Popular Education (Strauss) or as Vice President of the Cultural Alliance (Hofer).[29] It is striking that the jury comprised representatives of different artistic disciplines so as to ensure a heterogeneous exhibition. The jury members were advocates of abstract and nonrepresentational art (Grohmann and Kesting), expressive-representational art (Hofer, Hoffmann, Kretzschmar, Pechstein, and Volwahsen), and finally politically committed art (Gute, Grundig, Lachnit, and Strauss).

A tendency towards expressive-representational art predominated among these representatives, which would also be reflected in the choice of the exhibited works. The artists no doubt selected the works according to their own artistic preferences and practices. In particular, all jury members had been victims of Nazi art policy: prohibition of work and exhibition (Grundig, Hoffmann, Kesting, and Pechstein), dismissal from employment (Grohmann, Hofer, and Pechstein), inclusion in the *Degenerate Art* exhibits (Grundig, Hofer, Hoffmann, Kretzschmar and Pechstein), arrest (Grundig, Gute, Hoffmann, and Lachnit), and detention in concentration camps

(Grundig and Gute).[30] This jury's selection ensured a heterogeneous and diverse programme covering art from all parts of Germany, particularly the inclusion of modern art that had been declared "degenerate" under the Nazis. In his opening speech, Herbert Volwahsen made clear that the exhibition would also serve as propaganda for an all-German solution, emphasising that the displayed works came from the German territory overall.[31] Grohmann had personally travelled to the Western occupation zones to perform the unconventional act to transport works in his private van across the border. British authorities denied him the 60 to 70 works from the British zone, however, a circumstance that was not brought up in further discussion and thus not historicized.[32]

In contrast, despite its initiation by a private person, the artist and designer Arnold Bode, the first *documenta* was also supported by the expert committee consisting of Alfred Hentzen, Kurt Martin, Hans Mettel and Werner Haftmann.[33] In his book *Die Malerei im 20. Jahrhundert* (*Painting in the 20th Century*),[34] the art historian Werner Haftmann had already formulated his main thesis of the dominance of abstraction over realism, which Kimpel found implemented by the concept of the first *documenta*.[35] The 1955 Kassel exhibition was the starting point: it showed figurative and abstract art works with a little dominance of abstraction. The organisation of both exhibitions shows clearly the great importance of individual curators, juries, and expert committees. In Dresden, all members of the jury had been victims of Nazi art policy which was supposed to guarantee a high quantity of Nazi-banned art in the exhibition. In Kassel, Haftmann used documenta to visualise his idea of abstraction as world language (of the West). But the organisation of both exhibitions also shows the different role of the collective and the individual. In the *Allgemeine Deutsche Kunstausstellung*, the collective work of the jury becomes a symbol for socialism. In contrast, celebration of individual achievement became a symbol of the West, which explains why Arnold Bode stood in the foreground of the organisation.

Conceptions and Selection

The particular selection of artists in the two major exhibitions underscores both the similarities and differences between the sister countries. The *Allgemeine Deutsche Kunstausstellung* displayed 597 works (236 paintings, 69 sculptures and 292 works of graphic art, plus photography by Edmund Kesting) from altogether 250 artists. According to Kathleen Schröter, the artists came from the Western and Eastern German occupation zones, with over half of the works originating from the relatively smaller and less populated Soviet Zone. A fourth of the artists came from Berlin and Dresden. Of the 250 artists, 27 had previously been included in the *Degenerate Art* exhibition, which had comprised altogether 110 artists. Their 92 works made up less than a sixth of the overall collection. This figure must be put in perspective, however, for it indicates little about the actual number of formerly ostracised artists, which was far greater than the number exhibited here. These artists suffered under National Socialism in different ways, ranging from occupational and work bans to persecution, exile, arrest, and even liquidation in concentration camps. Schröter has discerned a certain ambivalence in the exhibition's treatment of the Nazi era in the case of the works by the two sculptors Richard Scheibe and Georg Kolbe.[36] Both artists had exhibited works at the Nazis' *Große Deutsche Kunstausstellung* (*Great German Art Exhibition)* (1937 – 1944) at the Haus der Kunst in Munich, while at the same time the Nazis were having some of their works removed from public view. But here again, it is unclear why these works were removed, whether it was for artistic reasons, because of the content, or for just organisational reasons.

Governed by a stylistic pluralism, the Dresden exhibition comprised a variety of styles of the 20th century: Late Impressionism, Expressionism, Bauhaus, New Objectivity, Surrealism, politically committed art, and heavily abstract, nonrepresentational art. Surrealism, abstract, and constructivist art constituted a minority, but were present nevertheless. Naturalistic works as had been preferred by National Socialism and exhibited in the *Große Deutsche Kunstausstellung* (1933-44) in Munich were also on hand, albeit few in number. Dadaist works were absent. While works by artists of *Die Brücke*, for example, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner's *Frau vorm Spiegel (Woman before a mirror)* (1915), a movement founded in Dresden, were conspicuously numerous, works by members of *Der Blaue Reiter* group were missing. Therefore, Russian artists, such as Kandinsky, Jawlensky, and Werefkin, as well as the Germans Münter, Marc, and Macke were absent. Paul Klee was exhibited, for example, with his work *Influenz (Induction)* (1932), however. Yet, Rhenish Expressionism was not represented.

It remains unclear whether the absence of these works had anything to do with the concept of the exhibition, or whether they simply could not be procured. Works for sales exhibitions were difficult to

obtain on loan, and the years following the Second World War were a time of shortages. Altogether, more works from the Classical Moderns were exhibited than from contemporary artists, and an expressive-representation style prevailed among the paintings. This slant was in keeping with the general preference of the postwar period, however, which had little interest in nonrepresentational painting. In terms of content, few artists addressed National Socialism or the years of the Second World War. Central works on the First World War were however included, such as, for instance, Otto Dix's triptych *Der Krieg (The War)* (1929–1932), Hans Grundig's *Abschied (Farewell)* (1936) and Lea Grundig's *Abschied (Farewell)* (1937).[37]

While the Dresden exhibition presented a selection of all-German artists, *documenta* identified itself with the Western international scene, so that the catalogue lists 670 works by 148 artists from seven different nations (Germany, France, Italy, Switzerland, Great Britain, USA, and the Netherlands). The catalogue notes that the artists were classified not according to country of birth, however, but "according to their degree of impact on their native or host countries following their political emigration from Russia or Germany".[38] Today's customary classification according to countries of birth would have put altogether sixteen countries on the list, including Greece, Austria, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Tunisia, Hungary, Denmark, and Belgium.[39] Focussing on the places of work thus generated a list of the major Western nations, while a list with places of birth would have also included Eastern countries like Russia, Spain, and Portugal, the latter two still dictatorial nations in the 1950s. The arbitrariness of this approach is shown by the example of Chagall, who was equally active at several places, namely Russia, Germany, and France, but who is listed under France. Another example, the German Joseph Albers worked for a long time at the Bauhaus before emigrating to the USA in 1933, and is listed as an artist of the United States. On the other hand, Paul Klee is Swiss, participated in *Der Blaue Reiter* exhibition, and worked at the Bauhaus. He too emigrated to Switzerland in 1933, but is listed as German. Especially interesting in the comparison with the Dresden exhibition is that the Russian-born artists Kandinsky, Gabo, and Jawlensky are also listed as German owing to their activity in Germany, although they were not exhibited in Dresden because of their origins, like many other Russian artists who, although active for many years in Germany, were also not exhibited.

While the exhibition organisers of the first *documenta* use the proximity to the GDR as a cultural-political argument for obtaining public funding in 1955, the very absence of GDR artists indicates the progression of the Cold War following the staging of the *Allgemeine Deutsche Kunstausstellung* in Dresden in 1946. Only two artists were exhibited who had lived in the Soviet Zone or GDR after the war. On the other hand, Karl Hofer was exhibited with works from before the end of the war, and the catalogue did not refer to his initial relocation to the East. Bernhard Heiliger had also initially resided in the Soviet Zone after the war but had emigrated from the GDR to the FRG in 1951. He, too, was exhibited with later works. Although the 1955 *documenta* exhibition took place nine years after the *Allgemeine Deutsche Kunstausstellung* in Dresden, works that had been created before 1945 predominated. According to Wollenhaupt-Schmidt, nearly 60% belonged to classical modernism and over 40% were works after 1945.[40] If we consider, however, that 60% of the works spanned a period of forty-five years, whereas the 40% represented merely 10 years, we see that contemporary art had a much stronger presence. But even if many artworks came from the last ten years, they were mainly works from established artists who had also worked before 1945.

Wollenhaupt-Schmidt also finds the art styles before 1945 to be better represented than those after 1945.[41] Expressionism, especially representatives of *Der Blaue Reiter* and *Die Brücke* (German as well Russian artists), Fauvism, Cubism, Futurism, De Stijl, Bauhaus, New Objectivity, Dada, and Surrealism were thus exhibited. Many of the exhibited artists had been formerly limited by work bans, exile, and persecution. Some important figures were left out entirely, however, such as Alberto Giacometti, René Magritte, and Marcel Duchamp. Walter Grasskamp draws particular attention to underrepresented German-Jewish protagonists of modernism, such as Otto Freundlich and Gert Wollheim.[42] Harald Kimpel notes that works of the 1920s with their socially critical character were filtered out and realistic art disregarded.[43] For example, Georg Grosz, John Heartfield, Hannah Höch, and the ASSO Group were missing. Charlotte Klonk also notes that representatives of socially engaged art, such as Russian Constructivism, Dada, and the Bauhaus, were left out either wholly (Russian Constructivism) or in part (Dada and the Bauhaus), although she concedes that Bode's staging of the exhibition spaces tied in with Bauhaus ideas.[44] In Martin Schieder's view, the art of the Weimar Republic was not rehabilitated at all, with "merely two harmless portraits" from Otto Dix being shown.[45]

Schieder also sees the exhibition as stressing both a "pro-European" and an "anti-Communist line of attack".[46] But also the selection of artworks after 1945 did not include all aspects of contemporary art, for example, the work of the new American artists. In the comparison of the two exhibitions, it is striking, however, that a series of Western artists whose work had been shown in Dresden in 1946 was also exhibited at *documenta* in 1955: Barlach, Baumeister, Beckmann, Blumenthal, Dix, Feininger, Fuhr, Heckel, Heiliger, Heldt, Kirchner, Klee, Kokoschka, Lehmbruck, Marcks, Nay, Pechstein, Ritschl, Rohlfs, Schlemmer, Schmidt-Rottluff, Trökes, and Winter.

In terms of display, the two exhibitions differed particularly in their presentations of the works. The few accounts in the daily press describe the Dresden presentation as conventionally dwelling on styles as opposed to issues.[47] Works by realistic, abstract, and surrealist artists were thus displayed in different booths. *Die Brücke* artists even had their own room. In contrast, the presentation of the works in Kassel mixed different kinds of styles and put the paintings on steel rods in front of sponsored black-and-white plastic foil. The exhibition display of the first *documenta* had an entirely new character and would later influence many exhibitions such as the Venice Biennale.[48] A quick look at the reception of the two exhibitions reveals the difference in response to the *Allgemeine Deutsche Kunstausstellung* by the press on the one hand, and by the public on the other. Even if the press did not give rave reviews of the exhibition, its evaluation was generally positive.[49] One of the few exceptions is Carl-Ernst Matthias, who called for directly understandable popular art and thus anticipated the political interests of later years.[50] A survey revealed that about two-thirds of the visitors disapproved of the exhibition. They found "Expressionistic and abstract art in particular"[51] incomprehensible. The following comment gives an indication of how much taste in art was still National Socialist in character: "If the German people have been deprived of this sort of art for 12 years, we can only say that we've missed nothing."[52] *documenta* also received mainly positive reviews in numerous press reports.[53] A visitor survey was not conducted in this instance, but we know that many visitors of the following exhibitions of *documenta* were not convinced about the exhibition.

Conclusion

After the Second World War, the *Allgemeine Deutsche Kunstausstellung* in Dresden was the first as well as last all-German exhibition.[54] It concluded with the Saxon Artists' Congress (26–30 October 1946), in which Soviet cultural officer Tiulpanov, head of the Information Department of the SMAD, held a speech. Whereas until then, the SMAD had not intervened in the exhibition concept, the visitors' survey now seemed to give a welcome argument for taking Soviet art as a role model. The following editions of the *Deutsche Kunstausstellung* thus slowly evolved more and more into exhibitions primarily of Socialist Realism. The founding of the GDR on 15 May 1949 changed the political situation, even if this did not have an immediate impact on the *Zweite Deutsche Kunstausstellung* (*Second German Art Exhibition)* (10 September–30 October 1949). The organisation of the second Exhibition lay in the hands of the two painters Gert Caden and Karl Kröner.[55] It is striking that, still at that time, of the 319 artists, 166 came from the GDR and 153 from the FRG. The proportion of Western art thus increased compared with the first exhibition. Likewise, relatively few substantive or formal demands from the *Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands* (Socialist Unity Party of Germany) could be discerned as yet. Such guidelines were evident only in the assignment of several large-scale mural works. For the first time, the artists' collectives were commissioned to create works in the style of Socialist Realism. The subjects were to be chosen from proposals by the Exhibition Committee–subjects that would bring the artists to working-class people's issues. Progression of the Cold War and the incipient dispute between Formalism and Realism then brought to light the cultural-political control by the Party for the first time explicitly in the *Dritte Deutsche Kunstausstellung* (*Third German Art Exhibition)* (1 March–25 May 1953).[56] Clearly formulated guidelines, as well as a jury representing Socialist Realism, helped implement the overall concept, which also included verification of the ideological dispositions of the artists. The political orientation of the *Dritte Deutsche Kunstausstellung* thus presented not only a contrast with the first edition of this exhibition series but also with the *documenta* exhibition of 1955.

In the history of documenta, interest in GDR artists was expressed for the first time by Harald Szeemann, when he unsuccessfully tried inviting several GDR artists to *documenta 5* (1972). Manfred Schneckenburger was the first to have success in this endeavour, when he exhibited twenty-five works from six GDR artists at *documenta 6* (1977)–under strong protest from the Western art scene.[57] Willi Sitte commented on the GDR artists' interest in documenta as follows, demonstrating how much each of the two sister countries followed the activities of the

other, however good or bad the evaluation: "We've always been interested in *documenta*, it affected us from the outset, less so later on, of course, after it became more and more abstruse".[58] After 1989 and the unification of Germany, many public and academic debates started on the question, in how much art created in a repressive political system like the GDR could be art or qualitative art; often the judgement depends on the distinction between "corrupted" state sponsored art and "subversive" oppositional dissident practices. Now, more than twenty-five years later, art from the GDR has become an interesting subject for art history.

Notes

1 See *Deutsche Kunst im 20. Jahrhundert. Malerei und Plastik 1905 – 1985*, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Prestel, Munich, 1986. Exhibition catalogue.

2 See Frank Bösch, "Geteilte Geschichte. Plädoyer für eine deutsch-deutsche Perspektive auf die jüngere Zeitgeschichte," in *Zeithistorische Forschungen/ Studies in Contemporary History*, online edition, H. 1/2015. Accessed 01.03.2017. http://www.zeithistorische-forschungen.de/1-2015/id=5187, Print pp. 98–114.

3 After the Second World War, Germany was divided into four zones: American, French, British, and Soviet Zones. The Soviet Zone was connected and oriented to the East and the three others to the West. These four zones existed until the foundation of FRG in the West and the GDR in the East in 1949. In the time between 1945 and 1949, an all-German solution war favoured by all parts of Germany.

4 See Kathleen Schröter, "Kunst zwischen den Systemen. Die Allgemeine Deutsche Kunstausstellung 1945 in Dresden," in Nikola Doll et al., eds., *Kunstgeschichte nach 1945. Kontinuität und Neubeginn in Deutschland*, Böhlau, Köln et al, 2006, pp. 209–238; Ruth Heftrig, "Narrowed Modernism: On the Rehabilitation of 'Degenerate Art' in Postwar Germany," in Olaf Peters, ed., *Degenerate Art*, Prestel, Munich, 2014, pp. 258–281; Kurt Winkler, "Allgemeine Deutsche Kunstausstellung, Dresden 1946," in Michael Bollé, Helen Adkins ed., *Berlinische Galerie: Stationen der Moderne – Die bedeutenden Kunstausstellungen des 20. Jahrhunderts in Deutschland,* Berlinische Galerie, Nicolai, Berlin, 1988, p. 352 –377; Gerhard Panzer, "Die Vision einer gesamtdeutschen Kunst. Allgemeine Deutsche Kunstausstellung Dresden 1946," in Gerhard Panzer and Rüdiger Hurrle, eds., *Getrennte Welten. Formen des Eigensinns*, Das Wunderhorn, Heidelberg 2014, pp. 27–35. See also the virtual reconstruction of the exhibition http://willgrohmann.de/reconstructionexhibition.php?lang=de

5 See Herbert Volwahsen, "Eröffnungsrede," in Landeshauptstadt Dresden Stadtarchiv, Akte 4.1.4-993 (pp. 211–214), p. 212.

6 See Grasskamp, "documenta. Kunst des XX. Jahrhunderts," in Bernd Klüser and Katharina Hegewisch, eds., *Die Kunst der Ausstellung. Eine Dokumentation dreißig exemplarischer Kunstausstellungen dieses Jahrhunderts*, Insel-Verl., Frankfurt am Main, 1991, pp. 116–125, p. 116.

7 See Ute Haug, "Getreuer Statthalter in schwerer Übergangszeit," in Julia Friedrich and Andreas Prinzing, eds., *"So fing man einfach an, ohne viele Worte" . Ausstellungswesen und Sammlungspolitik nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg*, Akad.-Verl., Berlin, 2013, pp. 72–81, p. 79.

8 See Manfred Jäger, *Kultur und Politik in der DDR 1945–1990*, Wiss. und Pol., Cologne, 1994, p. 8.

9 See Gabriele Saure, "Ausstellungen zeitgenössischer Kunst in der SBZ 1945–1949," in Martin Papenbrock, *Kunst des frühen 20. Jahrhunderts in deutschen Ausstellungen, Teil 2., Antifaschistische Künstler/ Innen in Ausstellungen der SBZ und der DDR,* Verl. und Datenbank für Geisteswiss, Weimar, 2001, pp. 17–36.

10 "[...] starke künstlerische Impulse über das ganze Land ausgehen" (translation by the author), Herbert Volwahsen, "Eröffnungsrede," p. 213.

11 See Schröter, "Kunst zwischen den Systemen," p. 221.

12 "[...] echte Kunst zu einem bedeutenden Mittel politischer Erziehung werden" (translation by the author), Herbert Volwahsen, "Eröffnungsrede," p. 213.

13 See the following exhibitions, *Deutsche Kunst der Gegenwart*, Baden-Baden, 1947, *Deutsche Malerei und Plastik der Gegenwart*, Cologne, 1949; see also Jutta Held, *Kunst und Kunstpolitik 1945–49. Kulturaufbau in Deutschland nach dem 2. Weltkrieg*, VAS, Verl. für Ausbildung und Studium in der Elefanten Press, Berlin, 1981, pp. 304–361.

14 See Harald Kimpel, *Documenta. Die Überschau. Fünf Jahrzehnte Weltkunstausstellung in Stichworten*, Cologne, 2002, p. 14f.

15 "Die Ausstellung sollte nur Meister zeigen, deren Bedeutung für die Gegenwart nach strenger Auswahl unbestreitbar ist, jeweils in wenigen entscheiden Werken von letzter Qualität. [...] Mit dieser konsequenten Einseitigkeit allein wäre diese Ausstellung in der Lage das höchste Interesse zu wecken" (translation by the author). Bode: I. Exposé über eine Ausstellung in Kassel 1955, undatiert, documenta archiv, Kassel, Nachlass Bode, Mappe 16, quoted from, "Dirk Schwarze, Arnold Bode und der Impuls zur documenta," in Marianne Heinz, ed., *Arnold Bode. Leben und Werk (1900-1977)*, Edition Minerva, Wolfratshausen, 2000, pp. 24–29, p. 24.

16 "Kassel ist die deutsche Stadt, die für eine derartige Ausstellung prädestiniert ist. Kassel liegt im Zonengrenzgebiet, ist sehr zerstört gewesen und sehr aktiv im Aufbau. 30 Kilometer von der Zonengrenze entfernt den Europa-Gedanken in einer Kunstausstellung zu manifestieren ist eine beispielhafte Tat. " (translation by the author) Bode 1954, quoted from, Charlotte Klonk, "Die phantasmagorische Welt der ersten documenta und ihr Erbe," in Dorothea von Hantelmann ed., *Die Ausstellung. Politik eines Rituals*, Diaphanes, Zürich, 2010, pp. 131-160., p. 141.

17 "[...] als Stadt in 'Grenzlandsituationen' gegen den Osten" (translation by the author), Harald Kimpel, "Standortbestimmung und Vergangenheitsbewältigung. Die documenta 1955 als 'Staatsaufgabe'," in Julia Friedrich, Andreas Prinzing ed., *"So fing man einfach an, ohne viele Worte" . Ausstellungswesen und Sammlungspolitik nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg*, pp. 26–35, p. 35.

18 See Harald Kimpel, *documenta. Mythos und Wirklichkeit*, DuMont, Cologne, 1997, p. 132.

19 "[...] mit Propaganda für oder gegen etwas", "für jeden einzelnen von Ihnen – als einzelnen" (translation by the author) Werner Haftmann, "Über das moderne Bild (1955). Eröffnungsrede zur Ausstellung 'documenta' Kunst des 20. Jahrhunderts am 15.07.1955," in Evelyn Haftmann, Wouter Wirth ed., *Werner Haftmann. Das antwortende Gegenbild. Ausgewählte Texte 1947-1990*, Hirmer, Munich, 2012, pp. 31-40, p. 40.

20 See Kimpel *documenta. Mythos und Wirklichkeit*, p. 132, and Kimpel "Standortbestimmung und Vergangenheitsbewältigung," p. 30.

21 See Halbrehder, *Die Malerei der Allgemeinen Deutschen Kunstausstellung*, Peter Lange, Frankfurt am Main et al.,1995, pp. 71–87; Tino Heim, "Ein Pyrrhussieg des Sozialistischen Realismus. Die Dritte Deutsche Kunstausstellung und das Scheitern einer kulturpolitischen Ambition," in Karl-Siegbert Rehberg et al. ed., *Abschied von Ikarus*, Walther König, Cologne, 2012, pp. 132–137; Tino Heim, "Der kurze Aufstieg und lange Fall der ersten '„Leipziger Schule'" – Die Dritte Deutsche Kunstausstellung 1953," in *60, 40, 20 – Kunst in Leipzig seit 1949*, Museum der bildenden Künste Leipzig, Leipzig, 2009, pp. 54–58. Exhibition catalogue; Dagmar Buchbinder, "Die Dritte Deutsche Kunstausstellung 1953 in Dresden – Malerei als Teil der Kunstpolitik in der DDR" in der Vortragsreihe der Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv, Accessed 05.03.2017. https://www.bundesarchiv.de/imperia/md/content/abteilungen/sapmo/vortragsreihes-tiftung/vortrag_buchbinder.pdf.

22 See *Allgemeine Deutsche Kunstausstellung, Dresden 1946*, Stadthalle Nordplatz, Landesverwaltung Sachsen, Kulturbund zur Demokratischen Erneuerung Deutschlands und der Stadt Dresden ed., Sachsenverlag, Dresden 1946. Exhibition catalogue.

23 See Anke Dietrich, "Rehabilitierung der Moderne. Will Grohmann und die 'Allgemeine Deutsche Kunstausstellung' 1946 in Dresden," in *Zwischen Intuition und Gewissheit*, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Sandstein, Dresden, 2013, pp. 101–107. Exhibition catalogue.

24 "Vernichtung der Naziideologie auf allen Lebens- und Wissensgebieten. Kampf gegen die geistigen Urheber der Naziverbrechen und der Kriegsverbrechen. [...] Bildung einer nationalen Einheitsfront der deutschen Geistesarbeiter. [...] Neugeburt des deutschen Geistes im Zeichen einer streitbaren demokratischen Weltanschauung. [...] Wiederentdeckung und Förderung der freiheitlichen humanistischen, wahrhaft nationalen Tradition unseres Volkes. [...] Einbeziehung der geistigen Errungenschaft anderer Völker in den kulturellen Neubau Deutschlands. Anbahnung einer Verständigung mit den Kulturträgern anderer Völker" (translation by the author). For the principles of the cultural association, see Andreas Trampe, "Kultur und Medien," in Matthias Judt, ed., *DDR-Geschichte in Dokumenten. Beschlüsse, Berichte, interne Materialien und Alltagszeugnisse*, Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, Bonn 1998, pp. 293–362, p. 315.

25 See Letter from Herbert Gutes to SMAD on 5 July 1946, Hauptstaatsarchiv Dresden (SächsHStA, 11401, LRS, Min für Volksbildung, Nr. 135), Kostenaufstellung der Allgemeinen Deutschen Kunstausstellung vom

14.10.1946, StadtA Dresden, Dez. Volksbildung, Akte Nr. 189, Blatt 30, quoted from, Schröter, "Kunst zwischen den Systemen," p. 214.

26 See Kimpel, *Documenta. Die Überschau*, p. 11.

27 See Harald Kimpel, "Warum gerade Kassel? Zur Etablierung des documenta-Mythos" in *Kunstforum* No. 49, 1982, pp. 23–32, p. 33.

28 In addition to the jury there was a working committee consisting of the following individuals: Hans Christoph, Fritz Duda, Dr Eberhard Kretschmar, Erna Linke, Dr Fritz Löffler, Eva Mattausch, Hansheinrich Palitzsch, and Herman Schulz.

29 See Corinna Halbrehder, *Die Malerei der Allgemeinen Deutschen Kunstausstellung/ Kunstausstellung der DDR 1 - VIII*, p. 28.

30 See Schröter, "Kunst zwischen den Systemen, " p. 216.

31 See Herbert Volwahsen, "Eröffnungsrede," p. 211.

32 See Halbrehder, *Die Malerei der Allgemeinen Deutschen Kunstausstellung*, p. 29.

33 See Kimpel, *Documenta. Die Überschau*, p. 11.

34 See Werner Haftmann, *Die Malerei im 20. Jahrhundert,* Prestel, Munich, 1954.

35 See Kimpel, *Documenta. Die Überschau*, p. 22.

36 See Schröter, "Kunst zwischen den Systemen," p. 224.

37 Ibid.

38 "[...] je nach dem Grad ihrer Wirkung ihren Heimat- oder Gastländern im Zuge der politischen Emigration aus Russland oder Deutschland zugeordnet" (translation by the author). *documenta*. 15 July to 18 September 1955, Kassel, Prestel, Munich, 1955, p. 27. Exhibition catalogue.

39 The following artists would have had to be correlated with the following countries of birth: Greece (Giorgio De Chirico), Austria (Ludwig Kasper, Frantisek Kupka, Oskar Kokoschka), Portugal (Marie Hélène Vieira da Silva), Russia (Marc Chagall, Naum Gabo, Alexej Jawlensky, Wassily Kandinsky, Antoine Pevsner), Spain (Juan Gris, Julio Gonzales, Joan Miró, Pablo Picasso), Tunisia (Antonio Copora), Hungary (Zoran Music, Victor Vasarly), Denmark (Richard Mortensen), and Belgium (Gustave Singier).

40 See Ulrike Wollenhaupt-Schmidt, *Documenta 1955. Eine Ausstellung im Spannungsfeld der Auseinandersetzungen um die Kunst der Avantgarde 1945 – 1960*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main et al., 1994, p. 96.

41 Ibid., p. 102f.

42 See Walter Grasskamp, "documenta. Kunst des XX. Jahrhunderts," p. 124.

43 See Kimpel, *Documenta. Die Überschau*, pp. 21f.

44 See Klonk, "Die phantasmagorische Welt der ersten documenta und ihr Erbe," pp. 142ff.

45 "[...] bloß zwei harmlose Porträts" (translation by the author). Martin Schieder, "Die documenta I (1955)" in Étienne François, Hagen Schulze, eds., *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte*, Verlag C.H. Beck, Munich, 2001, vol. II, pp. 637–651, p. 648.

46 "pro-europäische" wie eine "anti-kommunistische Stoßrichtung" (translation by the author). Schieder, "Die documenta I (1955)," p. 638.

47 See Irene Heinze-Schmidt, Allgemeine Deutsche Kunstausstellung, *Sächsische Tageblatt*, 27.08.1946, p. 2; Irene Heinze-Schmidt, Allgemeine Deutsche Kunstausstellung, *Der Morgen*, 27.08.1946, p. 2; N.N., Allgemeine Deutsche Kunstausstellung, *Das Kunstwerk*, 3.1946, p. 43.

48 See Franziska Völz, "Biennale Venedig und documenta–versteckte Beziehungen? Zu Konzept, Künstler und Organisation," in Gerhard Panzer,Franziska Völz, and Karl-Siegbert Rehberg, eds., *Beziehungsanalyse. Bildende Künste in Westdeutschland nach 1945. Akteure, Institutionen und Konzepte*, Springer, Wiesbaden 2015, pp. 229–256, p. 247ff.

49 See Carl Linfert, "Erinnerung an die Dresdner Ausstellung," *bildende kunst*, No. 1, 1947, pp. 12–14;

Wolfgang Balzer, "Die Allgemeine Deutsche Kunstausstellung in Dresden 1946," *Zeitschrift für Kunst*, No. 1, 1947, 1, pp. 56–66.

50 "[...] besonders der expressionistischen und abstrakten Kunst" (translation by the author). See Carl-Ernst Matthias, "Künstlerkongress in Dresden," *bildende kunst*, No. 1, 1947, pp. 2–11, p. 5.

51 Carl-Ernst Matthias, "Künstlerkongress in Dresden," p. 5.

52 "Wenn man dem deutschen Volke diese Art von Bildern 12 Jahre lang vorenthielt, so kann man nur behaupten, wir haben nichts verpasst" (translation by the author). Carl Linfert, "Erinnerung an die Dresdner Ausstellung," p.13.

53 See Wollenhaupt-Schmidt, *documenta 1955*, pp. 104–111.

54 See Halbrehder, *Die Malerei der Allgemeinen Deutschen Kunstausstellung*, p. 27.

55 See Halbrehder, *Die Malerei der Allgemeinen Deutschen Kunstausstellung*, pp. 46–57; Fritz Löffler, "Die 2. Deutsche Kunstausstellung in Dresden und die westdeutsche Malerei," *Zeitschrift für Kunst*, No. 3, 1949, 4, pp. 277–288; Fritz Löffler, "Die zweite Deutsche Kunstausstellung in Dresden," *Die Kunst und das schöne Heim*, No. 48, 1949/50, pp. 126–133.

56 See note 21. _

57 See Gisela Schirmer, *DDR und documenta. Kunst im deutsch-deutschen Widerspruch*, Reimer, Munich, 2005.

58 "Wir waren immer an der documenta interessiert gewesen, sie hatte uns von Anfang an tangiert, später allerdings weniger, denn sie glitt ja immer mehr ins Abstruse ab" (translation by the author). Quoted from Schirmer, *DDR und documenta*, p. 96.

Captions:

1 *Allgemeine Deutsche Kunstausstellung* (*General German Art Exhibition)*, Dresden, 1946: Exhibition poster, Photograph © Michael Bollé, Helen Adkins ed., *Berlinische Galerie: Stationen der Moderne – Die bedeutenden Kunstausstellungen des 20. Jahrhunderts in Deutschland,* Berlinische Galerie, Nicolai, Berlin, 1988, p. 352.

2–4 *Allgemeine Deutsche Kunstausstellung* (*General German Art Exhibition)*, Dresden, 1946: Exhibition view, Photograph © Museen der Stadt Dresden, Stadtmuseum Dresden

Susanne König is Professor of Art History at the Fachhochschule Potsdam. Her current research focuses on the circulation of knowledge between art and design. She also worked on the Staatsministerium für Wissenschaft und Kunst (SMWK) research project *West-Art/East-Art. The System of Art and Official Arts in Separated and Unified Germany from 1945 to 2000* at the Department of Art History at University of Leipzig, which was realized in cooperation with TU Dresden. Before that, she was a member of the academic staff at University of Paderborn and at University of Siegen. She studied art history and philosophy at the University of Stuttgart as well as arts and media management at the Hanns Eisler School of Music in Berlin. She is the author of *Marcel Broodthaers: The Musée d'Art Moderne, Département des Aigles,* Reimer Verlag, Berlin, 2012.

The Shock of the Contemporary: documenta II and the Louisiana Museum

by Kristian Handberg

Knud W. Jensen (1916-2000), founder and director of Denmark's Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, often referred to his visit to *documenta II* in 1959 as his "documenta-Shock."[1] The impact of this encounter with the 1,000 works of art in the 100-day museum of contemporary art led to a fifteen-page illustrated essay in the yearbook *Louisiana Årbog 1959.* Moreover, it inspired him to organize the exhibition of *Works from documenta* at Louisiana just a few weeks after the end of the show in Kassel. After the remarkable initiative of opening a privately funded museum around his collection of early Danish modernist art in a distinctively modern work of architecture in 1958, a year later *documenta II* gave Jensen a "new view on how the collection should and ought to have been – and–which art the museum should present in the future."[2] I will use Jensen's inspiration by *documenta II*, which he declared to be "the biggest art shock of his life,"[3] as a point of departure to look at exhibition-making in the late 1950s and 1960s in the years formative for the notions of modern and contemporary art. In the Afterall Exhibition series "Documents for Contemporary Art" (2014), Lucy Steeds has argued that exhibitions of contemporary art can "act as a forum for the experience and critical articulation of cultural contemporaneity."[4] This accentuation of the contemporary was already present at the core of *documenta II* and thereby foreshadowed tendencies of the 1960s, when curated, thematic, and temporary exhibitions became more common in the new museums of modern art, like Louisiana, for instance. In the article, I will discuss the impact of *documenta II*, focusing on three aspects: its curatorial agenda of instituting the contemporary as a world view, its combination of showing contemporary art and setting up a recent art historical horizon for the present, and, finally, its impact on the development of museums of modern art as visitor attractions and popular events that present art in spectacular surroundings.

Any study of past exhibitions deals with complex and ambiguous matters: how can we comprehend a long-gone exhibition like *documenta II*, even with the help of meticulous documentation like *documenta II 1959. Eine fotografische Rekonstruktion* available?[5] My aim here is not to provide a reconstructive exhibition history or to concentrate on an excavation of *documenta II* as such. Instead, the idea of this article is to point towards a relational exhibition history stressing the entanglements of documenta with other exhibitions and institutions and their shared agendas to showcase contemporaneity. While the attention on documenta history has been considerable, both in the archival documenting sense and in the collective art historical memory, the second edition has hardly been submitted to the canon of "most important exhibitions," unlike, for instance, Szeemann's *documenta V* in 1972, or the contemporaneous exhibitions of Willem Sandberg and Pontus Hultén.[6] Instead, studies have tended to see *documenta II* with critical distance and as symptomatic of general tendencies, for instance, in the discourse on the era's Americanization and Cold War policies[7] or in Walter Grasskamp's strikingly titled essay "For Example, documenta, or, How is Art History Produced?"[8]. As Grasskamp has stated, "In its historiography *documenta* is seldom seen in the larger context of its time but is regarded as a unique event, a stroke of genius of Arnold Bode, which in many ways is without antecedents. To reconstruct documenta's prehistory in the context of the postwar German and European art scene is work still to be done and might lead to levelling its singularity perhaps a bit."[9] Hopefully this article can contribute to this expanded understanding by pointing to the overlooked aspects of the event and its important interplay with other venues of modern and contemporary art.

From a "Peaceful Province" to a "Hectic Metropolis"

Jensen's decision to go to Kassel seems to have been encouraged by the French gallerist Denise René, who

1

had close contacts to Denmark and provided works for *documenta II*. In advance of his visit, Jensen wrote to documenta founder and primus motor Arnold Bode (1900-1977) asking for a meeting with him and expressing the wish to receive materials about the exhibition for a planned essay in the Louisiana yearbook.[10] Jensen and Bode found interest in each other's projects and also developed a personal friendship with mutual visits. This paved the way for Louisiana as the only museum showing works from *documenta*. As a last tribute, Jensen would also later contribute the text "documenta-Shock" to the 1986 anthology *Arnold Bode*. Jensen reveals his experience of *documenta II* in the essay "Indtryk fra Documenta" ("Impressions from Documenta"), which appeared in the yearbook *Louisiana 1959*. The length of fifteen richly illustrated pages bears witness to the importance Jensen attributed to the event, which was impressive, but also provocative for the relatively inexperienced museum founder. Jensen presents the exhibition as an attempt by Bode to offer postwar Germany a necessary "updating on world-art"[11]–an updating he indeed also deemed urgent himself. While he starts his essay providing a characterization of Kassel as a provincial "bombed-out" city halfway between Hamburg and Frankfurt, far from art's traditional centers, he concludes by claiming in contrast that, "The visit was for a Northerner like arriving in a hectic, fascinating, almost frightening metropole."[12] The updating, according to Jensen, was a goodbye to previous distinctions, "isms," and genres, as "a zone of freedom had been cleared for art", so that "[a]rt today seems to unfold itself in a hitherto unknown freedom" and "a restless searching, experimenting, and researching" by "artists in all [free] countries."[13] The so-called free art was predominantly non-figurative, he observes, "Of 700 paintings, 685 were non-figurative,"[14] and Jensen notes that "the victory of the non-representational art was so absolute that it was now just about using freedom, the disappearance of norms, and the unlimited possibilities of expression."[15] Indeed, the victory of abstraction as a "world language" was an ideological resonance with the free West, even though Jensen (in accordance with the universalist world images of the time) claims that the chosen works represented the whole world.[16]

Besides this celebratory rhetoric of being shocked by the new and hitherto unknown freedom, Jensen also accentuates the way *documenta* is staged as a reaction to the darker origins of its contemporaneity. "The bombed-out baroque palaces with their empty window recesses and blackened walls were an effective frame, in its way a symbol for the world in which modern art is created. [...] the society of wars, nuclear build-up, mass production, and human standardization,"[17] where (with reference to the sculptures of Germaine Richier) "[o]ne is forced to think about Hiroshima."[18] This reveals two central areas of ambivalence: first, the experience of a new freedom (perceived by the West and projected onto the world) and the presence of similarly world-spanning threats of the Cold War era. And second, on the one hand, the idea of autonomy of (abstract) art and the "absolute" freedom for artists to dedicate themselves to experiment with inner worlds, and simultaneously art as a reaction to the outer world and its perceived social, political, cultural, and philosophical modernity. Jensen was a good observer, so much so that his account reads like a catalogue of typologies of the postwar era, its anxieties and utopias. He was impressed by "the massive call-up of convincingly topical, high-quality art"[19] as well as by the ways in which it was presented in equally inspiring frameworks, where "the overall impression, strangely enough, despite the background of ruins, is festive, light, and uplifting,"[20] inducing an awakened energy in the visitor. The *documenta shock* was not just a confrontation with the gravity of contemporary art, but just as much with the new potentialities of remaking the art institution. A new museum, for Jensen, had to be based on three principles: representing the contemporary, showing its foundations in modernist art history and creating a total experience for the viewers.

The Musealization of Modernism

Despite the central importance of Bode, the influence of Werner Haftmann–curatorial advisor of *documenta I-III*–also needs to be taken into account for understanding the interplay of *documenta* and the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art. Even though a bit forgotten

today, the German art historian Werner Haftmann (1912-1999) was a key figure in the world of European art in the postwar era–and in the creation of *documenta*. Through his dedicated promotion of abstraction, which he boldly claimed to be a "world language," one could call him the "European Greenberg" as a founding figure for the paradigm of postwar modernism and its institutions. Where references to the American art historian Greenberg appear as being quite scarce in the following European 1960s debates, Haftmann had a profound influence through his writings, promotion of artists, and curatorial work reaching from *documenta* over important exhibitions like *Zeugnisse der Angst in Moderne Kunst* (Darmstadt 1963) and membership of the jury of the Venice Biennale in 1960 and 1962, to being the founding director of the Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin, which opened in 1968.

2

His *Malerei im 20. Jahrhundert* (1954) (English edition*: Painting in the Twentieth Century* (1965)) became a standard work in the era, with an ambitious reading of "the profoundly revolutionary developments in painting"[21] illustrating the situation of modern European mankind, from the "turning point" of Cezanne up to the "tangled, chaotic growth, which we call 'the present.'"[22] Going through the foundations of modern painting in France, Germany, and Italy in the late 19th and early 20th century and sketching out the internationalizing contemporary art scene from 1945 on, Haftmann promotes the qualities of abstraction in exactly the combination of modernist autonomy and definitive response to the situation by (white Euro-American) man in his time that Jensen would later read out of his *documenta* experience. Haftmann notes about Wols (1913-1951), for instance: "What gives the life and work of Wols their value as contemporary documents is Wols' exemplary acceptance of the destiny which man meted out to man in the chaotic years before and after the war: persecution, poverty, homelessness, and perpetual flight. Gently submissive to his fate, he recorded what befell him: not the facts, but the images provoked by the wounds that inflicted his psyche."[23] In a central passage, the art historian describes the fulfilled postwar abstraction as an expanded, new realism: "[...] abstract painting is also concerned with the creation of realities: harmonic realities existing in their own right, and expressed by structures of form and colour; psychic realities expressive of man's inner world; and realities relating to the outside world, reflecting modern scientific insights."[24] Haftmann's view on art and the modern world is further exemplified in the essay "Utopie und Angst" for the exhibition *Zeugnisse der Angst in der Modernen Kunst*: a large-scale exhibition of modern art that complemented the intellectual meeting of the Darmstädter Gespräche 1963 with the theme *Angst und Hoffnung in dieser Zeit* ("Fear and Hope in These Times"). Here, Haftmann observes the art of his time (especially Asger Jorn is mentioned) through the complementary forces of utopias and fears: an existential approach where inner and outer worlds are mixed for the "Aufbau einer neuen Welt" (building of a new world) of the postwar era, where the "utopian future projection" is tied to "contemporary fear."[25] Once again, a world picture very similar to Jensen's reading of *documenta II*.

Compared to Greenberg's contemporary formalism and promotion of American painting as heirs of the European modernist tradition, Haftmann was more aware of the positions of European postwar art, such as concrete art or spontaneous abstraction, even if he also left out significant fields not fitting into his art view, i.e. non-abstract art. His thinking was concerned with embedding abstract art in modern and contemporary experience, albeit by its expanded speculative realism, rather than the pure formalist self-critique of Greenberg. From the Western German perspective, in the middle of the "chaotic panorama" of postwar Europe,[26] "free" abstract art appeared as a sign of cultural identity of the rebuilt Western Europe: "The faith in artistic freedom united the creative energies of Europe despite all physical and moral barriers. It alone accounts for the scarcely believable fact that after the end of hostilities, when it became possible once more to take stock of the artistic situation in European countries, a single common pattern stood out clearly. Far more strikingly than before the war, indeed more than ever before, the work done in different European countries seemed to form a European whole."[27]

International, clearly with universalist aspirations, this points to the ideal of abstraction as a world language ("Abstraktion als Weltsprache"),[28] which became the dictum of the first three *documenta*s, where Haftmann was involved in a sense that today we would definitely call co-curator, or, in the words of Grasskamp, "chief ideologist,"[29] also contributing with his academic reputation as an established German art historian. In a speech for *documenta III* in 1964, Haftmann credits documenta as being the personal initiative of Arnold Bode, but that it was also formed through their common discussions while visiting some scenes of international art life, such as Venice or Paris.[30] This pointed beyond the German situation, which is sometimes evoked in the documenta myth of the "Ausstellungswunder" rising from the ruined city, and revealed a more comprehensive image of modern art. The first *documenta* exhibition in 1955 did not start from a *Stunde Null* with contemporary works, but followed the 20th century through a selection of modernist works that drew largely on Haftmann's expertise and even his *Malerei im 20. Jahrhundert*, where, as Grasskamp reveals, the plates from the picture section in Haftmann's book even overlap with the *documenta* catalogue, as he actually brought some of the color printing blocks with him.[31] The first *documenta* was intended as a corrective to the infamous 1937 Nazi exhibition *Entartete Kunst* ("degenerate art") in order to construct a rehabilitating narrative of modernism for the German people. While the first *Allgemeine Deutsche Kunstausstellung* in Dresden in 1946 had already been dedicated to this cause much earlier, the task of atoning for that exhibition was also manifestly taken up elsewhere in the 1960s, like at the Haus der Kunst in Munich, the city where the most famous of the Nazi's exhibitions on "degenerate art" had originally been shown, with the exhibition *Entartete Kunst. Bildersturm vor 25 Jahre* ("Degenerate Art: The Iconoclasm 25 Years Ago") in 1962.[32] The success of *documenta*, and the establishment of its recurring form with *documenta II*, was thus not just connected to the exhibition of new works, but also to a curated selective presentation of the past for the present. It established a resonance for contemporary art in the modern tradition, which was not yet musealized at that time. The 100-day museum, as Bode would call documenta in the catalogue of *documenta III* (in 1964),[33] did not have a collection, but was able to show a specific vision of the past.

This was also the case in *documenta II* (1959), where Haftmann continued his art historical curatorship. At first, the goal was to present "Art since 1945," a horizon already stretching beyond the year of the previous exhibition in 1955. However, Haftmann's catalogue essay draws a horizon for the contemporary in the previous art of the 20th century, like psychological representations made possible by fauvism and expressionism or the harmony of concrete forms established by suprematism, de Stijl, and the Bauhaus, set up as foundational "arguments" for contemporary art.[34] These central arguments about the foundation of modern art were also carried out in the beginning of the actual exhibition, through rooms with a prominent selected presentation of prewar forerunners in the sections "Die Argumente der Kunst des XX. Jahrhunderts" ("Arguments of 20th-century Art"), "Die Lehrmeister der Malerei des XX. Jahrhunderts" ("The Masters of 20th-century Painting") and "Wegbereiter der Skulptur des XX. Jahrhunderts" ("The Trailblazers of 20th-century Sculpture") featuring the likes of Brancusi, Picasso, Klee, and Mondrian.[35] This "monumental historical introduction"[36] was what first met the visitors before they reached the "Art since 1945" section that was dedicated to contemporary practices. And, of course, it corresponds with Haftmann's art historical narrative, promoting a canon of masters from a Western universalist perspective. The exhibition also featured testimonial displays of artists who had passed away since 1955: Willi Baumeister, Jackson Pollock, Nicolas de Stäel, and Wols.[37]

3

documenta II's focus on the art of its present was premised on a profound staging of a selected past,

creating a kind of double vision of modernist masters and contemporaries. This strategy of providing a modernist premise of the present production was also the basis of the new museums of modern art, like *Moderna Museet* in Stockholm and *Museum des 20. Jahrhunderts* in Vienna, which like the Louisiana Museum, showed the founding arguments of modern art together with its contemporary manifestations. This corresponds with Jensen's vision for Louisiana, as it became known. Initially, Louisiana was dedicated to early Danish modernism, but the focus changed remarkably after Jensen's *documenta* visit.[38] The "documenta shock" was not a break with the art of the past, but a new orientation of that past in a sharpened direction, as the museum would present selected examples of international modernism, for instance, in exhibitions of Kasimir Malevich (1960), Max Ernst (1963), and Jackson Pollock (1963) in the years following *documenta II*.

In the Labyrinth of Contemporary Art

Even though the later reception has sometimes perceived *documenta II* as one-sided in its emphasis on non-figurative art produced as the result of a specific linear art history, a recurring characteristic around the experience of the *documenta II* was the metaphor of the labyrinth. The room structure of halls and corridors, stairs and bridges in and out of the ruins of palaces and new buildings and the vast array of works gave rise to the notion of the labyrinth to describe the complex intertwining of architecture and art.[39] The term was seemingly introduced by the organizers themselves, taken up by critics and proceeded into popular circulation. Even a contemporary newsreel introduces the exhibition as a "Labyrinth der modernen Kunst" (labyrinth of modern art) (UFA Wochenshau, July 1959)[40] when showing a summer-clad audience wandering around and wondering about the forms of modern art. As Harald Kimpel and Karin Stengel note in their essay on the exhibition, the labyrinth image contained an ambiguity: "While the exhibition presented itself as a directory through the labyrinth of contemporary art, it appeared as a labyrinth in itself, where a minotaur waited around every corner,"[41] as an illustration of the "very comprehensive adventure happening in between the positive and negative poles of freedom"[42] that Haftmann had formulated as constitutive for modern art. If abstraction was taken as a lingua franca of the contemporary world, this world was not yet perceived as clearly defined and easily accessible, but as a complex labyrinth.

Interestingly, the notion of the labyrinth was also a recurring motif in important exhibitions that would follow *documenta II* in the 1960s. Groundbreaking large-scale exhibitions like *Dylaby* ("Dynamical Labyrinth"), curated by Willem Sandberg together with the artists Jean Tinguely, Daniel Spoerri, Niki de Saint Phalle, Robert Rauschenberg, Martial Raysse, and Per Olof Ultvedt at Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam in 1962 and *HON–en katedral*, curated by Pontus Hultén and de Saint Phalle, Tinguely, and Ultvedt at Moderna Museet in Stockholm in 1966, have been perceived through the image of the labyrinth, forming almost a curatorial model of the "labyrinthine" exhibition.[43] Even though these exhibitions appear more carnivalesque, offering spectacular experiences–such as walking in through the vagina of a giant body or watching paintings walking on the ceiling–and also presenting art in a neo-dada vein, some kind of genealogy can be observed in the trope of the labyrinth for vanguard exhibitions that were pioneering in the "historicization" of contemporary art.

New curatorial models were necessary for a new age, characterized by an "almost violent dynamism,"[44] in the words of the important exhibition-maker Pontus Hultén. The complex, ambiguous image of the postwar world is very present in Haftmann's account in *Painting in the Twentieth Century.* As mentioned above, it is presented as a guide into the "tangled, chaotic growth, which we call 'the present'"[45] and the European postwar situation as "a chaotic panorama." The era offered both new freedom, especially compared to the Nazi past, and new kinds of societal and cultural threats in a consumer society caught in a Cold War–the negative and positive poles of freedom, as Haftmann described in the *documenta II* catalogue. Haftmann definitely saw modern art as being in tune with the new scientific horizons of the era: "The new scientific view of the world, in which substance is identified with energy, space with time, and finitude with infinity has profoundly influenced the modern artist."[46] A new universal orientation–with abstract art as its "world language"–is also characteristic of the postwar world, where the traditional European cultures of art (notably, France, Italy, and Germany) have been replaced by an internationalization forming a "European whole" more than ever before, and modern art even extending throughout the whole globe as a "model example of a world culture," as Haftmann put it in his speech at the opening of the *documenta II*,[47] so that–according to him–the Japanese Sugai, the Chilean Matta, the Cuban Lam, and the American Pollock felt at home (exhibiting in Kassel). However, this global ambition of modernist world

culture was of course restricted to the "free," Western-oriented world, and the art forms of the other side the Iron Curtain a few miles from Kassel were excluded.[48] "Where lack of freedom reigns, under totalitarianism in all its forms, modern art is always persecuted,"[49] Haftmann said in the opening speech, clearly directed towards the Nazism of the past as well as the Communist regimes of the present. From analyses of art in the Cold War era, the political charging of free-form abstraction is well known. As Sabine Autsch states in her article on abstraction and Americanization at *documenta II*, the concept of "artistic freedom" was politicized so that "Abstraction and Americanism" were promoted as synonyms for liberalization, independence, and subjectivism.[50] This is, of course, also a central aspect of the supposedly global scope of contemporaneity that *documenta II* addresses.

documenta as a Popular Attraction

Besides its art historical statement and proclaimed world-spanning interpretation of the present, *documenta II* was also shockingly new in a more immediate sense: as a popular experience, where modern art could be enjoyed in a spectacular setting accompanied by contemporary design interiors, cafés and bars, and other facilities, turning the exhibition into a total package of "aura and event," in the words of Autsch. *documenta II* was a new type of institution: being art exhibition, cultural festival, and media event at once,[51] and presenting contemporary art as a popular attraction. Here, it is not the art works that are in focus, but the sociality around them, as illustrated by the newsreel's images of a youthful audience hanging out by Picasso's fountain sculpture, "Les Baigneurs."

4

This image is an icon of *documenta II* as an event for youth, far away from the conventional museum. According to Bode, the exhibition was aimed at youth "across all national borders with clarification for the contemporary and hope for the future."[52] With 134,000 visitors, the exhibition was indeed a mass cultural event. These visitors were met by a recognizable lower-case 'd' logo on posters, and waving flags outside the Friedericianum reminded a contemporary reviewer of "screaming banners outside a clearance sale in a department store."[53] After the modernist historical lesson in the "Argumente der Kunst des XX. Jahrhunderts," "Lehrmeisters," and "Wegbereiters" rooms opening the exhibition in the Friedericianum, the audience would reach a café, styled with textile works of Richard Mortensen and Henri-Georges Adam. Cafés in exhibitions were not common at the time (one of the first was the "refreshment room" at the Stedelijk Museum with murals by Karel Appel created in 1951) and caused critics to comment on the "strange mixture" of coffee drinkers with fashionable lipstick colors and the colors of the artworks in the "Labyrinth of the Modern."[54] Indeed, as Autch observes, the whole event bore a resemblance to modern life's popular features like cocktail parties, barbeques, and swimming pools.[55]

5

The integration of artworks, exhibition design, and popular event have been central to *documenta II*'s concept and initial success. A similarly revolutionary rethinking of showing art took place at the new museums of modern art of the postwar era. At Louisiana, for instance, the art exhibitions were supplemented with jazz concerts, Fluxus happenings, debates, and a café with a sea view. It is likely that Jensen's enthusi-

asm was not only caused by the works of art on display at *documenta II*, but also by the ways in which they were presented, including the supplementary designed lounges and cafés. His new museum in Denmark was *new* in the sense that it displayed art in an informal and modern setting, integrated the experience of art, architecture, and landscape–and featured a café. A poster from the inaugural year of 1958 presents Louisiana as "Collection of Contemporary Art and Crafts" with a "Cafeteria and Park."

6

At first sight, the Louisiana Museum with its Scandinavian modern architecture in a scenic park at a Nordic seaside location is quite different from the dramatic frames of *documenta* set by the "bombed-out baroque palaces" and the labyrinthine exhibition design. However, they share a common vision of exhibition architecture: a striking similarity may be observed between the white walls framing the sculptures at the Orangerie outdoor exhibition at *documenta II*, forming "open-air white cubes" as Grasskamp put it,[56] and the way in which sculptures were placed among the white walls of Louisiana at the time. The two exhibition architectures were developed independently of each other, but with a related vision of the staging of contemporary art on a new foundation. While the museum's architecture was already there before Jensen went to Kassel, Jensen saw that he had to change the emphasis of the contents from a permanent collection to changing exhibitions. And the first exhibition took documenta to Louisiana.


7


8

In the beginning of October, shortly before the exhibition closed in Kassel on October 11, Louisiana could announce a show of selected works from "the most talked-about and interesting exhibition in Europe," as the press enthusiastically passed on.[57] "We hope to be able to open in October,"[58] Jensen said, adding that the opening hours would be expanded during the show, which reveals the improvised spontaneity of the arrangement and the flexibility of the new museum. When *Værker fra documenta* opened on October 20, it showed forty-one works by fourteen artists. The selection was ostensibly made by Jensen together with Bode and

avoided artists previously shown in Denmark, especially French artists.[59] This was noted in the press reception, which applauded this unusual input "with just one Frenchman," pointing to the dominating French inspiration in Danish modern art. The critiques were positive, welcoming a "fascinating survey of postwar art" as a "breeze from the outside," a selection of the "most modern." One review, for instance, expressed surprise to see works made as late as the previous year. Thus, radical newness and aggressive contemporaneity impressed the Danish reception; reviewers were awed by the presence of the big event in the local context. However, the show was also controversially discussed, as Jensen recalls in his autobiography. Polemics in the press and passionate discussions in the museum sections of Danish art society were complemented by the discontent of Danish avant-garde artists like Ejler Bille and Erik Thommesen, who attacked the works of Pollock, Tàpies, Dubuffet, Wols, and others as being a "whim of fashion, hat trimmings and empty decoration"[60] with an underlying weariness of giving the new museum away from Danish artists to foreign competition.

The exhibition became a touchstone in the curatorial efforts of Louisiana. Some works were bought from the show, including Victor Vasarely's *Zilah* (1957), while other artists, such as Ernst, Pollock, and Dubuffet garnered attention and were consequently exhibited further in the museum. The most important influence of *documenta II* on Louisiana was, however, the dedication to current contemporary and international art together with their foundation in modernist art history and as a total experience. Louisiana showed a survey of works from *documenta IV* again in 1968; the same year Haftmann's Neue Nationalgalerie opened as a "Weltgalerie der Moderne," built by Mies van der Rohe and arguably the last great modernist museum confidently staging modernist art in modernist architecture in the Kulturforum: the new West Berlin equivalent to Museum Island located in the Eastern part of the city, by then capital of the GDR. The following year, in 1969, Haftmann would spark a debate with his speech on the contemporary museum at the 100-year symposium for Hamburger Kunsthalle, known as his "Hamburg speech," where he denounced the traditional museum as well as the "irresponsible" anti-museum art of the young 1968 generation.[61] New fault lines had occurred, and abstraction was no longer generally considered a world language, neither at *documenta*, where Haftmann was no longer involved and Bode's influence increasingly subdued, nor in other parts of the world.

Conclusion

Even if long past today, *documenta II* of 1959 left a decisive mark on exhibition history. The way it inspired Jensen's reconfiguration of Louisiana as a modern museum dedicated to the experience of the present is a case in point. Moreover, it turned documenta into a recurring event that matched the format of the perennial exhibition (which had been established by the Venice Biennale, the Great Exhibitions, and the Paris Salons, for instance) with an international scope and a focus on contemporaneity. Thus, the aim and self-understanding of documenta as a stage of current tendencies, aesthetic discourses, and new definitions of international art were constituted here, to be continued and benchmarked in the following documenta editions. Accordingly, as Kimpel and Stengel state, "Since 1959 every documenta functioned from the beginning as an occasion for public reflection of the state of contemporary culture and its social condition; commenting on the exhibition tied the critique of the event with a general diagnosis of the era,"[62] giving the event the core designation as *Gegenwartsbewältigung*–coming to terms with the present. This included a presence of the recent past and considerable engagement in the popular experience-making of the day. Louisiana, as one of the leading new defining museums of the era, followed a similar agenda: "Even though the emphasis is still on experiencing pictorial art, our duty is also to channel some part of contemporary cultural life into our museums,"[63] Knud W. Jensen would later say about the aim of the museum. Hence, I would argue that *documenta II* worked as a catalyst for Louisiana and other European museums of modern art, while the museums were in turn important for *documenta* and sources of knowledge on modern art, as well as allies in the forming of a new way of presenting art. However, the role of presenting the art history of modernism, which was still so present in the first three documenta editions, was consequently outsourced to the museums of modern art. Louisiana, but also Haftmann's decision to leave documenta to become the director of the newly founded Neue Nationalgalerie, are cases in point. I would like to conclude by stressing that institutions like documenta and Louisiana, with their focus on the history of the present, help us understand the formation of the notion of contemporary art as well as its relation to modernity. Their expansive notion of the present with its utopian idea of abstraction as a world language marked an important point in exhibition history, before the notion of the contemporary started to emancipate itself from the historical category of modern art.

Notes

1 This title forms a chapter in his autobiography *Mit Louisiana-liv*, Gyldendal, Copenhagen, 1986, as well as a contribution to the tribute anthology *Arnold Bode. Documenta. Kassel*, Stadtsparkasse, Kassel, 1986.

2 Knud W. Jensen, *Mit Louisiana-liv*, p. 50. "Allerede året efter åbningen af Louisiana fik jeg pludselig et nyt syn på, hvorledes samlingen kunne og burde have været – og hvilken kunst museet i fremtiden skulle vise på sine udstillinger" (all translations by the author).

3 Ibid.

4 Lucy Steeds, Introduction to *Exhibition* (Documents for Contemporary Art), Whitechapel/MIT Press, London, 2014, p. 19.

5 Schriftenreihe des documenta-archivs, 2000.

6 See, for instance, *The Formative Years: Pontus Hultén and Moderna Museet* Anna Tellgren, ed., Koenig Books, London, 2017, Andreas Gedin, *Pontus Hultén, Hon & Moderna*, Bokförlaget Langenskiöld, Stockholm, 2016, Stedelijk Studies, and the interviews in *Hans Ulrich Obrist: A Brief History of Curating* (2008).

7 Sabiene Autsch, "Die Welt schmeisst mit Farben – Abstraktion und Amerikanisierung auf der documenta 2 (1959)," in Lars Koch, Petra Tallafuss, eds., *Modernisierung als Amerikanisierung? Entwicklungslinien der westdeutschen Kultur 1945-1960*, transcript, Bielefeld, 2007.

8 Walter Grasskamp, "For Example, documenta, or, How is Art History Produced?," in *Thinking About Exhibitions*, Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, and Sandy Nairn, eds., Routledge, London, 1996, pp. 48-56.

9 Walter Grasskamp, *To be continued: Periodic Exhibitions (documenta, For Example),* Tate Papers 2009, p. 5.

10 Letter from Knud W. Jensen to Arnold Bode, August 21, 1959, Mappe 1, archives of Louisiana Museum of Modern Art.

11 Knud W. Jensen,, "Indtryk fra Documenta II" in *Louisiana 1959*, Knud W. Jensen, ed., Louisiana/Gyldendal, Copenhagen, 1959, pp. 61-75, 61.

12 "Besøget på Documenta var for en nordbo som at komme fra en fredelig provins til en hektisk, betagende, næsten skræmmende metropol." Ibid., p. 74.

13 Ibid., p. 61.

14 Ibid.

15 "den genstandsløse kunsts sejr er så absolut, at det nu kun drejer sig om at udnytte friheden, normernes bortfald, de ubegrænsede udtryksmuligheder", Ibid. p. 64.

16 Ibid., p. 61.

17 "Kassels udbombede barokpalæer med de tomme vinduesnicher og sværtede mure var en virkningsfuld ramme, på en vis symbolsk for den verden den moderne kunst er skabt i. Megen kunst betegner et oprør, en protest imod det samfund, vi lever i, krigenes, atomoprustningens, masseproduktionens og den menneskelige ensretnings samfund," Ibid.

18 Ibid., p. 74.

19 Jensen, *Mit Louisiana-liv* , p. 53.

20 Jensen, "Indtryk fra Documenta II,"p. 67.

21 Werner Haftmann, *Painting in the Twentieth Century*, Lund Humphries, London, 1965, Vol. 1, p. 10.

22 Ibid., p. 11.

23 Ibid., p. 345.

24 Ibid., p. 315.

25 Werner Haftmann, "Utopie und Angst" pp. 77-97 in *Zeugnisse der Angst in der Modernen Kunst*, Mathildenhöhe, Darmstadt, 1963, p. 80. Exhibition catalogue.

26 Ibid., p. 311.

27 Ibid., p. 313.

28 The formulation was introduced in Werner Haftmann, *Malerei der 20. Jahrhundert*, Prestel-Verlag, Munich, 1954.

29 Walter Grasskamp, "For example, documenta, or, how is art history produced?," in *Thinking About Exhibitions*, Greenberg, Ferguson and Nairn, eds., Routledge, London, 1996, pp. 48-56.

30 Quoted in the presentation by Evelyn Haftmann on http://werner-haftmann.de/documenta/. Accessed 04.18.2017.

31 Grasskamp, "For example, documenta, or, how is art history produced?," p. 54.

32 Okwui Enwezor,"The Judgement of Art: Postwar and Artistic Worldliness" in *Postwar: Art Between the Atlantic and the Pacific 1945-1965*, Haus der Kunst, Munich, 2016, pp. 23-24. Exhibition catalogue.

33 First mentioned for *documenta III* in 1964.

34 Werner Haftmann, "Malerei nach 1945," in *documenta II*, M. DuMont Schauberg, Kassel, 1959, p. 17. Exhibition catalogue.

35 Harald Kimpel, Kirstein Stengel, *documenta II 1959. Eine fotografische Rekonstruktion*, Schriftreie des documenta-archiv, Kassel, 2000. p. 8.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid., p. 9.

38 Pontus Hultén's Moderna Museet and Willem Sandberg's Stedelijk, with their exhibitions of the historical avant-gardes, were other declared inspirations in the early 1960s, seemingly taken up after visiting documenta.

39 Ibid., p. 8.

40 UFA Wochenshcau 155/1959, 14.7. 1959, Bundesarchiv, Filmothek. Accessed 04.18.2017. https://www.filmothek.bundesarchiv.de/video/584345.

41 "Während sich also die Ausstellung als Wegweiser durch das Labyrinth der Gegenwartskunst ausgibt, wird sie selbst zum Irrgarten, in welchem hinter jeder Ecke ein Minotauros zu gewärtigen ist", Kimpel and Stengel, *documenta II 1959. Eine fotografische Rekonstruktion*, p. 8.

42 "Die moderne Kultur ist ein sehr umfassendes Abenteuer, das zwischen den negativen und positiven Polen der Freiheit sich ereignet," Haftmann 1959, p. 14.

43 This was the thesis behind the symposium Lose Yourself. The Labyrinthine Exhibition as Curatorial Model at Stedelijk Museum, February 2017. Accessed 04.18.2017. http://www.stedelijk.nl/en/calendar/theory/lose-yourself.

44 In a letter to Billy Klüver. Quoted in Hiroko Ikegami: *The Great Migrator. Robert Rauschenberg and the global rise of American Art*, MIT Press, 2010, p. 107.

45. Werner Haftmann, *Painting in the Twentieth Century*, Lund Humphries, London, 1965, Vol. 1, p. 11.

46 Ibid., p. 316.

47 Werner Haftmann, "Vortrag anlässlich der Eröffnung der 2. documenta am 11. Juli 1959," printed in Mannfred Schneckenburger, *Documenta. Idee und Institution, Tendenzen, Konzepte, Materialen*, Bruckmann, Munich, 1983, p. 55.

48 It should be acknowledged that the representation of art from outside the West was indeed sparse and only included artists like Lam and Matta integrated into Western scenes and styles.

49 "Wo Unfreiheit herrscht, Totalitarismus in allen seinen Spielarten, da steht auch die modernen Kunst immer weiter unter Verfolgung", Ibid., p.54.

50 Sabiene Autsch, "Die Welt schmeisst mit Farben – Abstraktion und Amerikanisierung auf der documenta 2 (1959)," in Lars Koch and Petra Tallafuss, *Modernisierung als Amerikanisierung? Entwicklungslinien der westdeutschen Kultur* 1945-1960, transcript, Bielefeld, 2007, p. 234.**D**

51 Ibid., p. 246.

52 Introduction to *documenta II*, p. 11: "über alle nationalen Grenzen hinaus Klärung für die Gegenwart und Hoffnung für die Zukunft geben wird."

53 Rainer Zimmermann, "Die zweite documenta in Kassel," *Kulturarbeit* 10, 1959, quoted in Kimpel and Stengel, *documenta II 1959. Eine fotografische Rekonstruktion*, p. 30. ("Grelle Fahnen wie aus dem Sclussverkaufsarsenal eines Warenhaus").

54 Ibid.

55 Autsch, "Die Welt schmeisst mit Farben – Abstraktion und Amerikanisierung auf der documenta 2 (1959)," p. 250.

56 Walter Grasskamp, "The White Wall: On the Prehistory of the White Cube," in *OnCurating*, No. 9/11: Curating Critique, 2011, p. 88.

57 "'Dokumenta' til Louisiana," *Information*, October 9, 1959. [misspelling in original]

58 "Europakunst til Danmark," *B.T.*, October 7, 1959.

59 Ibid.

60 Jensen, *Mit Louisiana-liv*, p. 53.

61 Werner Haftmann, "Das Museum der Gegenwart," in *Das Museum der Zukunft*, Gerhard Bott, ed., M. DuMont Schauberg, Kassel, 1971.

62 Kimpel and Stengel, *documenta II 1959. Eine fotografische Rekonstruktion*, p. 7. ("Seit 1959 fungierte jede documenta auch als Anlass zur öffentlichen Reflexion über den Zustand der zeitgenössischen Kultur und deren soziale Bedingungen; im Ausstellungskommentar verbindet sich Veranstaltungskritik mit allgemeiner Zeitdiagnose").

63 Knud W.Jensen, "The Ideal Museum Wanted: Qualified Utopias," paper at CIMAM Conference, 1979. Archive of the Papers of Knud W. Jensen, Louisiana.

Captions

1 Pageview from "Indtryk fra Documenta", Louisiana 1959. Photo: Kristian Handberg.

2 Werner Haftmann in front of Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin. 1968. Photo: Reinhard Friedrich, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.

3 View from "Die Argumente der Kunst des XX. Jahrhunderts", Museum Friedericianum. Photo: Günther Becker, © documenta Archiv.

4 View with Pablo Picasso: Les Baigneurs, Photo: Günther Becker, © documenta Archiv.

5 Café with Richard Mortensen: "Fresque d'Aubusson", 1956, and Henri Georges Adam: "Penmarch", 1958. © documenta Archiv.

6 Poster, Louisiana 1958. Photo: Louisiana Museum of Modern Art. © documenta Archiv.

7 View of the "Open-air white cubes" at the sculpture exhibition at the Orangerie. Photo: Günther Becker, © documenta Archiv.

8 View of Louisiana with sculptures of Robert Jacobsen at the time of Værker fra documenta, 1959. Photo: Louisiana Museum of Modern Art.

Kristian Handberg studied art history, aesthetics, and culture at Aarhus University with a focus on postwar art history and theory, writing his master's thesis on superrealism and art historiography. He completed his PhD project at the University of Copenhagen on retro as cultural memory through site-specific case studies in Montreal and Berlin, including research as a visiting schtolar at McGill University, Montreal. Since 2015, he has been a postdoctoral researcher with the project *Multiple Modernities: World Images and Dreamworlds in Arts and Culture, 1946-1972* at Louisiana Museum of Modern Art and the University of Copenhagen, Denmark, a collaborative research project on the radically new horizons of the postwar era and its current reassessment in academic and curatorial practices. He is also a coordinator of the research group *Modernisms* at the Department of Arts and Cultural Studies, University of Copenhagen and works as an art critic, editor, and curator. His publications include *There's no time like the past: Retro between Memory and Materiality* (2014), "No time like the past?: On the new role of vintage and retro in the magazines Scandinavian Retro and Retro Gamer," *Necsus European Journal of Media Studies*, December 2015, and "The World Goes Modern: New globalized framings of the postwar era in the contemporary exhibitions *After Year Zero* and *The World Goes Pop*", *Journal of Aesthetics and Culture*, 2016.

Ghostly Women, Faithful Sons
by Vesna Madžoski

Memory and Spectacle

One of the biggest and most important exhibitions of the past several decades, *documenta* in Kassel, Germany, was initiated in 1955 by Professor Arnold Bode with a two-fold function: partly as a "regeneration initiative for a small town that had suffered extensive damage during World War II and partly as an attempt to counter the attack on modern art by the Nazis."[1] Its conceptual origins are to be found in the "hope of human renewal, of a revolutionary, or evolutionary, transformation of mankind to a better life–in this case the conversion of the German population, led astray by National Socialism, to modernist art, seen as an international phenomenon, and to freedom."[2] This way, the envisioned function of *documenta* was to become a guide to the people and lead them back to the path they had lost, or, in other words, to curate their minds by exposing them to a new sensory discipline. Germany in the 1950s introduced the rules for polite behavior:

> By means of which a nation that had turned barbaric in the crimes of the war and the Holocaust was again to find a way back to civilization. By being nice and being polite, it was possible to make the economic miracle all the better, whereas the "things we don't understand" are simply "Picasso."[3]

Formulated best in a rather problematic statement by Roger M. Buergel, the curator of its twelfth edition in 2007, the hidden function of *documenta* was to serve as an instrument of rebuilding the community of a fragmented post-war society:

> Not only does the "damaged or endangered community" make a recovery through the task; it is through the exhibition medium that this community actually learns to see, understand, and develop itself as a community. In spite of its exclusions, *documenta* was (and is) a laboratory–an ontological laboratory in which to create, display, and emphasize an ethics of coexistence.[4]

On the level of aesthetics, Walter Grasskamp underlines the fact that the first editions of *documenta* should be "understood as an answer to the trauma that resulted from that original antimodernist smear campaign" of National Socialism.[5] Further on, this will allow us to interpret this "One Hundred Day museum" as an event created on a particularly traumatic spot of recent German history, or as a part of post-war cultural memorization. Nevertheless, the official narrative of *documenta* becomes destabilized if we read its repetitive form as a continuous restaging of the traumatic past in a particular form: in the form of spectacle. According to Guy Debord, the function of spectacle is "to use culture to bury all historical memory."[6] On the other hand, spectacle complicates one of the main functions of this exhibition, since its dream of collectivity will never be reached:

> The spectacle was born from the world's loss of unity, and the immense expansion of the modern spectacle reveals the enormity of this loss. [...] Spectators are linked solely by their one-way relationship to the very center that keeps them isolated from each other. The spectacle thus reunites the separated, but it reunites them only *in their separateness.*[7]

Taking a step further, this makes curators, the main agents of *documenta*, the ones who function not only as the "masters" of the spectacle, but also as the "masters" of the traumatic past; their duty is to construct a synthetic narrative in the form of an exhibition, to shape this "not-yet" man, and to make sure he rejoins the collective of other civilized men.

Accidental Images

During the course of my research into the history of *documenta*, two particular photographs caught my attention in the book dedicated to work and life of its founder, Professor Arnold Bode, in the chapter featuring the interview with his widow, Mrs. Bode.[8] On the right-hand side of page 24 and parallel to the interview, two black-and-white photographs have been placed, one below the other. The caption under the first reads "Protest action during the press conference at documenta 4, 1968,"[9] and shows a large crowd of young people standing around the table with, presumably, journalists, and holding up a large

hand-written poster with the message "Prof. Bode! We, the blind, thank you for this beautiful exhibition."[10] The second photograph shows five men in suits in their mid-thirties surrounding an older man who is giving or taking a book from one of them; the caption reads "documenta 5, 1972. From the left: Peter Iden, Prof. Arnold Bode, Harald Szeemann, Prof. Bazon Brock, Dr. Jean Christophe Armmann, Dr. Ingolf Bauer."

Protestaktion anläßlich der Pressekonferenz zur documenta 4, 1968

documenta 5, 1972. Von links: Peter Iden, Prof. Arnold Bode, Harald Szeemann, Prof. Bazon Brock, Dr. Jean Christophe Armmann, Dr. Ingolf Bauer

1

What initially caught my attention were not the particular elements of those photographs separately; the "disturbance" stemmed from their juxtaposition. What triggered my attention was the construction of the shift that was achieved by editing in the framework of the book, the construction of the change that apparently happened between those two (cinematic) moments in history. I became interested in the space in-between, in the particular cut that shows things shifting from a highly dramatic, "explosive" and "noisy" image of an undifferentiated group of men and women in the first photograph to a calm, "monumentalized" group of five men in the second. Selected from a vast body of archival photographs as most representative of the "historical reality," they are here exhibited as "natural" sequences of events following each other with no apparent contradiction or clash.

At first glance, the first photograph seems to show a crowded press conference where the group of people present is expressing their gratitude to Professor Bode. Nevertheless, the caption informs us that what we are seeing is the "protest action," which further complicates the story and opens up the space to doubt the truthfulness of the written statement, turning the message into a possibly ironic one. If there was some disturbance in the photograph of 1968, in the one from 1972 everything seems to have been resolved. There are no students, there seems to be no protest, and there are no ironic messages. What remains unanswered is the key to how to read the message in the first photo, as well as what happened in between. At this point, I became interested in what in Barthesian terms could be called the subversion of these photographs, or the possibility of releasing the "pressure of the unspeakable which wants to be spoken."[11]

Since the text of the interview that frames the photographs did not give me any further keys to my initial questions, the next place to look for clues was in the official visual and textual material left behind by those two exhibitions in the art library–the examination of their catalogues. The analysis of the catalogues becomes even more intriguing since, as already noted, "The book metaphor runs like a thread through *documenta*'s history," where "the catalogue becomes a kind of lasting monument to the exhibition and one of its most important authentic traces."[12]

I immediately became aware of the difference between the two catalogues that showcased a radical shift that happened in the period between 1968 and 1972. The catalogue from the 1968 was something that we could characterize today as "old-fashioned"–it had the same format as the catalogues of two previous editions of *documenta*, in hard cover, divided into two books, with introductory texts by the mayor of Kassel, Professor Arnold Bode, and several other art history experts. The texts were followed by a large section of black-and-white images of artworks and the artists, all precisely divided into segments based on the medium in which the works were made. Nevertheless, the catalogue from 1972 looks like something of which, at least conceptually, any exhibition-maker of today could be proud: its loose

black-and-white pages in A4 format were compiled into a big orange plastic office folder, the artworks were presented in more than twenty categories and sub-categories with images, accompanying texts, and, in the case of some conceptual works, the artworks themselves were included in the catalogue. What was also a novelty was the appearance of advertisements placed by commercial art galleries and art magazines in the last part of the catalogue. Going through those catalogues, I was vaguely introduced to the group of men from the second picture and concluded that they were in one way or another related to *documenta 5*, mostly being responsible for the execution of its particular segments. Nevertheless, the first catalogue did not reveal anything that could help me understand the first photo. What was even more striking was the contradiction between the images and catalogues from particular times: the vibrant and messy image from 1968 in comparison to the rigid and disciplined catalogue from the same year, and the stiffness of the men in the second picture juxtaposed with the "alive" and loose catalogue from 1972.

Not able to find any satisfying answers to my initial questions about the changes between these two moments, nor about the identity of the people from the first picture or the meaning of their message written to Professor Bode, I decided to continue my search in other available archives. Among the rare visual documents of exhibitions from the past, the works that truly stand out are the documentaries made by the Belgium filmmaker, Jef Cornelis. At this point, we will take a closer look into the ideas and questions posed by his movies about *documenta 4* (1968) and *documenta 5* (1972).

Filming the Shift: Jef Cornelis' Documentaries

The rich and impressive body of work of Jef Cornelis has yet to be evaluated and analyzed. In the period between 1963 and 1998, he was primarily active as a director and scriptwriter for the Flemish Broadcasting Company (VRT) in Belgium. Besides providing valuable content on various subjects and people, his work is indispensable in the discussion on the medium of TV and documentary-making. One of the most important aspects of Cornelis' work is that he did not hide himself behind the camera, or present his films as objective and essentially "true" to reality. Instead, inspired by certain developments in filmmaking in the 1960s, he treated the camera as his pen, or *camera stylo*, as a way to express his opinions on the events that he filmed.[13] Apart from being a television maker, he was also involved in various art initiatives, and was an active participant in the international art scene, which gave him a unique access to this field. He has left behind several documentaries in which the art world is constructed and presented in a particular way, reflecting his deep dissatisfaction with certain manifestations of power.[14] Nevertheless, after filming *documenta 5*, Cornelis decided to stop filming the "art world."[15]

documenta 4

For the second broadcast of both documentaries in the 1990s, Jef Cornelis added short introductory notes that open the films. These further reveal his position on the filmed material, and offer a framework in which to watch and interpret it. The opening line for *documenta 4* introduces us to the clashes and problems that were occurring in the international art scene at that moment:

> When Prof. A. Bode initiated "Documenta 1" in 1955 in Kassel, his first task was to bring West Germany back to the international scene. When "Documenta 4" took place in 1968, the international art world was in the crisis of authorities. Kassel of that time did not understand this.

Being aware of his position as a filmmaker who not only represents events but also gives a voice to conflicting positions, Cornelis opens the film with a scene in which the French artists express their protest against the exhibition-makers, and explain the withdrawal of their works from the show as a political act. This black-and-white, fifty-minute film is fast and dynamic, and we see and hear a multitude of voices: those of the artists, the organizers, the critics, the dealers and gallerists, and the interviewer. We also see the artworks, the public, and the camera(man). Very soon, we become aware of at least four levels on which conflicts and tensions are taking place, and the film leaves us with open questions rather than clearly formulated answers.

On the first level, the conflict was between the rebellious artists and the organizers, usually seen as the part of the 1960s student protests and demands for institutional change. In this particular case, the *primus inter pares* of the organizers, the Dutch Jean Leering, reduces the political dimension of this protest to a mere technical problem. We hear him explaining that the artists were not satisfied with the room in which they were supposed to exhibit their works. Having two exhibition spaces at their disposal, of which one was extremely big and the other quite small, the organizers had decided to distribute the artworks according to their size. Nevertheless, the

rebellious artists explained their withdrawal as a way of openly disagreeing with the selection process of the exhibition that, according to them, did not represent a true and objective overview of the art scene of that moment. Being the first edition of *documenta* to be focused on contemporary art production, this fact has a specific significance.[16]

Although being dissatisfied with the organization and the overloaded nature of the spaces, the American artists decided to participate, and to avoid the politicization of the act of withdrawal. This point introduces us to a new level of the conflict: US artists versus European artists. The decision to exhibit, for the first time in Europe, the new developments in American art (minimalism, conceptualism, pop art) turned this edition of *documenta* into a historical moment in which the repositioning of the center of artistic production officially shifted to the other side of the Atlantic. According to the voices of the critics heard in the film, the exhibition shows the strength of the young American scene and the "sicknesses" of the old European one. Nevertheless, for their part, the rebellious French artists express their opinion about the disproportions in the exhibition, which offered an overview of mostly American art.

As a consequence, the appearance of the new forms of art initiated several shifts on the third level on which this confrontation took place–between the new art production and the rigid museum structures. Art dealers inform us about the necessary shifts that would have to happen in the galleries, and the need for collectors to change their attitude towards what is considered art. We hear that New York-based Pace Gallery had sold several works by Old Masters in order to finance the new artistic production and the ambitious works exhibited in Kassel. At this edition of *documenta*, the debate was still ongoing about what was to be considered art, and what the criteria should be by which this was to be judged. Since the main title of the show was "Art is what artists make," this was the criteria followed in the selection process.

The last level of confrontation seems to have been taking place between the potential of art as a tool of political change and the threat of its commodification. At that point in history, new genres of American art were considered to be critical of the market system and, in the case of minimalism, as a way of escaping its grasp. Nevertheless, several decades later it became clear that this was not the case, and Cornelis gives us his lucid insights via the soundtrack, following particular artworks: twice we see Robert Indiana's artwork, during the first few minutes of the film and again at the end. The image is followed by a particular noise: initially it is a sound similar to a typewriter, and at the end it becomes clear that what we are hearing is a cash register. The final sequence of the film provides us with Cornelis' ironic conclusion, through Louis Armstrong's version of "What a Wonderful World": a song made as an antidote to the more and more racially and politically charged climate in the US, which the American art completely fails to portray.

documenta 5

Four years later, Jef Cornelis filmed the next edition of *documenta*, which now opens with the following introductory text:

> ..."Documenta 5" in 1972 is known in history as a first example of an exhibition as a spectacle. Under the leadership of a Swiss Harald Szeemann, the art is brought back to the museum. The main point of this event in Kassel became the economical, political and media importance. The avant-garde was definitely buried. The new hero is the exhibition maker Szeemann...

The first impression of this fifty-five-minute, mainly black-and-white film is one of order and the immaculate organization of the exhibition. Artworks are organized under bigger themes and categories, there is no sign of chaos, and everything seems under control.[17] Following the didactic character of the exhibition, the film imitates this and presents itself as an educational piece with voiceover narration. In comparison to the previous film, with its multiple actors and voices, in the film about *documenta 5* we are left with only three of them: we see and hear the artists, curators, and gallerists.

The main organizer of *documenta 5*, the Secretary General Harald Szeemann, talks about the importance of audience attendance, his acceptance of power and responsibility, and his view that subversive artists can only work in the context of a museum.[18] Daniel Buren, one of the participating artists, openly reflects on the new position of Szeemann and calls it "the exhibition of the exhibition," or the construction of the show as a curator's artwork. Alongside the works usually considered to be art, Szeemann had included numerous objects of mass culture usually referred to as "kitsch." There is also no longer any doubt about what should be considered art: from this moment, art is not what artists make, but rather what the curator defines as art. There are no contradictory

voices from the artists who had previously opposed the "invasion" of American art, which was fully institutionalized within the contemporary art system during this short four-year span.

When it comes to questions about the commercialization of art, the artist Lawrence Weiner still believes in the possibility of conceptual art to escape the market. Nevertheless, Cornelis allows us to hear the position of one of the art dealers, Leo Castelli, who erases all possible illusions and says that even the conceptualists have to live from something. According to Cornelis himself, this edition of *documenta* was an important historical moment, after which the things developed in a particular direction: "For me, the fifth *documenta* was the decisive moment. The marketing and the spectacle of art hit its first peak there."[19] One of the main contributions of *documenta 5* in developments within the international art system is usually ascribed to the institutionalization of one person responsible for the conceptual and organizational aspects of an exhibition. Harald Szeemann introduced the new type of curatorship: *documenta 5* marked his institutionalization as an exhibition-maker. Before this event, "the exhibitions were simply 'hung' or 'mounted.' Much was spontaneous or born of necessity."[20] This would not be the case anymore. The centralization of power was presented as a progressive development in the situation following incidents at *documenta 4*, where the show was endangered by major conflicts in the discussion of what was to be regarded as (modern) art, and was officially run by 23 members of a "comprehensive council."[21]

Following this, the spectacle of the exhibition as (re)invented by Szeemann as his medium can be read as his solitary narrativization of modern art, which seems to echo another moment of German history when the avant-garde was buried for the first time: the traumatic moment of "degenerate art" when the exhibition was used as a spectacular medium by the "artists" of the Nazi party. As noted by Gerd Gemunden, embracing Westernization in the 1960s, and specifically US popular culture, was offered as an alternative to the Nazi past, or as a way of erasing one's own past through this "remembering" of other people's memories.[22] This is precisely what appears to have happened between those two editions of *documenta*: all contradictions were resolved and pacified through the construction of one master narrative that embraced the spectacularization of art as a way of avoiding confrontation with one's own fractured identity. Nevertheless, the exhibition as a spectacle seems to have been there from the first edition of *documenta;* hence the remaining question will be for us to try to define what the real novelty was at *documenta 5*.

Back to the Photographs: Where is the punctum?
After this endeavor of researching the official and alternative visual material on *documenta 4* and *5*, I return to the photographs in order to summarize the conclusions that I have reached in the meantime. Indeed, I developed a further understanding of the shift that happened between those two editions, and definitively confirmed that the message addressed to Professor Bode was an ironic one. Nevertheless, following Roland Barthes' advice on how to gain access to pictures, we should look for the counter-narrative, defined by Rosalind Krauss as "a seemingly aimless set of details that throws the forward drive of diegesis into reverse."[23] Looking back at the photographs, I asked myself if there was something that still escaped the narrativization, something that still struck me, or in Barthesian terms, what was the *punctum* that "rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow" and "breaks my *studium*"?[24]

In the first photograph, amidst the noisy scene and the students, I spotted one detail on the table, an object without an owner, without a *master,* and seemingly out of context: a female purse. In the second photo, my attention was caught by an object of exchange, of communication, that seemingly initiated the movement between the two men in the picture: a book for which we cannot define who the sender is and who the receiver is.

What both of those details, or *punctums*, open up are two different cracks, two different "black holes" in the history of *documenta*. The female purse undoubtedly brings us to someone who is missing, who is absent from this perfect picture–a woman. It opens up questions of the total absence or invisibility of women from the narrative of *documenta*. From the other side, the book opens up questions about tradition and continuity, or the means by which the same things are transferred from one generation to the next, while presented as novel. The answers or further complications of those questions, I propose, might be better formulated if we posed them in the framework of one of the recent editions of this manifestation, *documenta 12*, which took place in 2007. As the discussion has already brought us to the question of what the real changes were at *documenta 5,* I suggest here that we take a look at the *punctum* in the second photograph.

Generation Change at *documenta 5*

The discussion about *documenta 5* seems to encapsulate the conclusion that Hans Belting offered regarding the history of art and modernism, underlining two major events we should bear in mind when examining modernism in the present:

> Two events, however, separate early modernism from the present, and they permanently affected both the fate of art and the image of written art history. [...] The cultural policies of National Socialism represented the first event, and the new cultural hegemony of the United States in or over Europe was the second event to be discussed in any retrospective on twentieth-century art. [...] The debate that raged about "degenerate art" was only the high point of an already long-simmering controversy on modern art. [...] Modern art, in Germany the victim of politics, became the hero of international culture. [...] Modern art occupied a sacred space in which only veneration was possible and where critical analysis was out of place.[25]

In that sense, the first edition of *documenta* was created as a "retrospective of modern art as it had survived the period of persecution and destruction and that was now celebrated as a new classicism."[26] Nevertheless, the main problem with this representation of modernism was its selective nature and interpretation that was made "safe" for the German audience, in whose eyes this type of art had been demonized just a few years earlier: "Technical media (photography) and *dada*, with their social satire, remained largely in the background,"[27] and there were neither German-Jewish artists nor politically engaged art from the Weimar Republic.[28]

After twelve years and three editions of *documenta*, whose task was the revival of modernist art and a remodeling of German citizens, a moment came when the old paradigms were to be questioned. The time had come to take this manifestation into a new era. Hence, we should not be surprised by the "chaos" displayed at *documenta 4*, when the politics of exhibiting shifted from an overview of the old to showing the new, or the most recent art production, as it opened amid the student revolts and political turmoil of the Cold War:

> Visitors on the opening day had to brave chanting demonstrators and a red flag, or they got embroiled in discussions on the portico steps. [...] And yet Arnold Bode as director of the show seemed a bit lost amid all the color and diversity. [...] Art was no longer at home in his rooms, but was straining to break out of the museum into social space, to where Fluxus, happening and actionism were already forming up–young, rebellious art whose proponents once again were waiting outside the doors.[29]

At that time, the generational change was also manifested in the resignation of Werner Haftmann, the spiritual father of *documenta*, as well as of two important council members, Fritz Winter and Werner Schmalenbach, who believed *documenta* would "degenerate into a trendy show of novelties."[30] In the organizational structure, this was reflected in the replacement of Arnold Bode's "circle of friends [...] by a council of twenty-six with democratic powers to decide who to admit to the illustrious ranks of *documenta* exhibitors."[31]

As we have seen, the process of democratization was not perceived as the right model to make an exhibition, which is why four years later, in 1972, everything was very different: "Swiss exhibition maker Harald Szeemann led the corporate venture out of the chaos of its pseudo-democratized selection procedure to a curatorial model."[32] What is even more striking, if we place this event in a historical context, is the fact that those were the days of the Baader-Meinhof-Gruppe, Vietnam, napalm bombs, and the attack at the Olympic village in Munich; the world was on fire, but this was nowhere to be seen in Szeemann's calm and reflective new child:

> In the context of the social transformations after 1968, the institution of the exhibition was also called into question. In the late 1960s, art institutions were being occupied everywhere. Alternatives to the art market were created, and collective campaigns were undertaken. Not only society was to be conceived anew–art too once again turned to utopias.[33]

In his letter sent to Szeemann, Robert Morris withdrew all his works, and forbid any to be shown, as he was not interested in illustrating "misguided sociological principles or outmoded art historical categories." He also refused to participate in an exhibition that did not consult with him about what work to show, "but instead dictate to me what will be shown."[34] On May 12, 1972, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* published a letter signed by Carl Andre, Hans Haacke, Donald Judd, Barry Le Va, Sol Le Witt, Robert Morris, Dorothea Rockburne, Fred Sandback,

Richard Serra, and Robert Smithson. In this letter, they requested that the artist should be the one with the right to choose the way his/her work is exhibited in a space, the right to agree on or to reject the proposed thematic classification, and the right to decide what will be written in the catalogue, while the transportation costs should be paid by the inviting institution.[35]

Harald Szeemann's beginnings were in the theater, hence we should not be surprised to notice that his curatorial practice reflects the method of stressing the theatricality of exhibitions. Nevertheless, it is important to notice that this approach was already anticipated and integrated in previous *documenta* editions. The decision to have the first edition held in the bombed-out museum created a particular kind of a stage for the art to be exhibited, bringing in a particular atmosphere as well. On this particular stage, Arnold Bode "deployed compelling spatial situations to elicit an emotional response from the audience–a method popularly applied in Baroque theater."[36] Therefore, we can even conclude that the novelty of *documenta* as a spectacle was not instituted by Szeemann. Nevertheless, the shift did happen on another level: from 1972 onwards, the spectacle of modernism was replaced by the spectacle of (liberal) capitalism.

At the time, this shift was perceived as the "Americanization" of arts and culture in Europe. In today's globally "Americanized" world, it becomes almost impossible to imagine a different kind of a society. Nevertheless, the late 1960s and early 1970s mark a period in which resistance was felt not only in the socialist countries. The struggle for the public domain in West Germany becomes even more significant when one bears in mind the opposition to its Eastern, communist section. In the context of *documenta*, 1977 was the "first and only occasion that East Germany was represented."[37] Harald Szeemann did invite artists from the East to participate, but this was rejected due to his approach of exhibiting "social realism as part of a cabinet of curiosities."[38] Additionally, the two countries "not only assigned conflicting functions to art–in the West the expression of freedom, in the East social responsibility–but also developed different habits of seeing it."[39] The selectors of *documenta* did not consider that the official painting from the East had any artistic quality whatsoever, while "in the West, individualism was celebrated; in the East, it was condemned as "bourgeois and decadent"": "If, in the East, art was required to legitimate itself by its social mission, in the West the development of modern art was seen to reside precisely in liberation from missions of any kind."[40] In the meantime, the "liberal" in liberal arts began to mean the liberal market, and it was precisely this shift that was staged at *documenta 5*. Having no problem with the corporate influence and funding, Harald Szeemann simply applied the same logic to all future exhibitions he produced. If the *documenta* of 1968 "highlighted New York as the new art metropolis,"[41] its next edition confirmed a new canon, "indisputably a canon oriented toward America, one fixated on the media and compatible with discourses."[42] As it seems, the faithful sons had learned their lesson.

The Woman Without a Shadow

The question of the obscured history of women in *documenta*'s past is one that demands its own space for analysis, and at this point I would like to focus only on the editions that are significant for this discussion–*documenta 4*, *5*, and *12*.[43] In Jef Cornelis' documentaries, there is only one short moment when we encounter a female face, that of the art dealer Denise René in *documenta 4*. The absence of women in the documentaries can be seen as a consequence of their absence from the exhibitions, their organization, and from the public discussion on art. This becomes even more tragic seen in the perspective of the surrounding rise of feminism in the 1960s and 1970s, which had yet not been allowed to penetrate *documenta*'s rigid system of male dominance.

Nevertheless, in the recent documentary made by the TV station ARTE about *documenta 12*, we are confronted with an abundance of female characters. Most of the artists whom the director Julia Benkert focuses on are women.[44] We are informed that, contrary to all public announcements, this particular edition of *documenta* was the "child" of a curatorial couple–Roger M. Buergel and his wife, Ruth Noack. In the period preceding the exhibition, it was publicly stated that the exhibition would take place under the artistic leadership of Mr. Buergel alone, and this documentary explains that the statute of *documenta* "technically" does not allow the appointment of two persons as its leaders. Therefore, Mrs. Noack had to be presented in the position of a curator.[45]

One of the first differences one can notice when comparing this documentary to the ones made by Jef Cornelis is the incredible focus on curators. Nevertheless, we are not presented with their conceptual framework or aesthetic or political questions; rather, the camera has a sensationalistic approach, and is used as a way to intrude into their private lives

"behind the scenes." We hear that Mrs. Noack does not particularly like to spend time with her two little children, and sees them as a burden on her busy schedule. She discusses their decision to wear red clothes at the opening as a way to "rebel" against the dominance of black at the usual art gatherings. They show us small wooden models of exhibition spaces, around which they spend most of their time arranging artworks, resembling children playing with a doll-house. We see Mr. Buergel driving a luxurious cabriolet through the city, in a hurry to meet possible sponsors, etc.

One of the most striking facts is that Mrs. Noack declares herself a feminist, but her decision to comply with the ruling statute that renounces her official power brings up questions about the current state of the post-feminist struggle. This generation seems to be satisfied with whatever they are given, and nobody questions the fact of lesser value and hence less pay given to female workers as compared to their male colleagues. Nevertheless, a look at the list of people employed in various positions in the *documenta 12* machinery (listed in the colophon) reveals that it was mostly run on the power of women. At this point, I became interested in the possibility of "locating" those numerous women in the official material created by the authors of the exhibition.

In addition to the catalogue of artworks and the separate reader of theoretical texts, the curators decided to offer us another source through which to "remember" this show–a luxurious photo book, *Bilderbuch*. Although the show itself was for the most part overcrowded with thousands of visitors every day, this photo book shows untitled images of exhibition spaces populated mainly by the works of art. In several of them that include people, we see mostly women: they pose in front of the artworks with solemn expressions on their faces, and their attached identification badges allow for the conclusion that they must have been part of the "army" of teenagers employed by Mr. Buergel as exhibition guides. On page 201, we even see two cleaning ladies vacuuming and washing the gigantic floor of *documenta*'s new "crystal" building.

Nevertheless, what caught my attention was the very last photograph. After the whole series of very professional and high-quality photographs, this last one is blurred, possibly taken secretly, and we see an elegantly dressed elderly woman strolling among the artworks. Not being a technically perfect photograph, it made me wonder why it was included in the collection. The only answer I could come up with was that it must have been based on the identity of the person "caught" in the picture.

2

In one of the documents publicly available on the official *documenta 12* website, I discovered an interview with a woman who physically seemed almost identical to the woman in the blurry photograph that triggered my attention: a 77-year-old inhabitant of Kassel, Mrs. Gerda Lippitz. This rather long and elaborate interview presents her as an art enthusiast and a genuine *documenta* expert, who has followed every edition since 1968. According to her, she has never "experienced such a relaxing exhibition as *documenta 12*."[46] What became interesting here were the particular positions and behavior promoted by *documenta* officials through the publicity of this interview.

We read about the enjoyment Mrs. Lippitz has every five years when *documenta* comes to her town, and she obtains a pass in order to be able to go there every day and fully enjoy the artworks. For her, this "is not an exhibition but an encounter with the world!" What stands out is the conclusion that the subject's position promoted here is one of reverse cultural tourism–instead of traveling far to get experiences of other places, Mrs. Lippitz is offered a substitute in the exhibition where she can enjoy the rest of the world gathered under one roof. Or, as Donald Preziosi put it in his analysis of the construction of (national) subjects, starting with the Great Exhibition of 1851, we encounter here "imaginary geography of all peoples and products with the modern citizen-consumer, the 'orthopsychic subject' at and as its (imaginary) center."[47] The only demand on the consumer constructed through *documenta* is one of

the extensive leisure time necessary to fully grasp the numerous artworks.

Being able to visit the exhibition every day, Mrs. Lippitz also controls the other visitors and reacts whenever some of them express doubts about whether an object in the exhibition is really a work of art: "Then I reply: 'Well just come with me and I'll show you the five things I've understood and enjoyed.'" This policing of possible contradictory voices seems to completely shut out any possibility of discussion on the status of art today. Rather, this solitary experience is presented as the only valid perspective through which other subjects are supposed to see the exhibited objects. In a way, this recalls the description of the gaze of Queen Victoria, who visited the Great Exhibition every second day: "In seeing Victoria seeing, a whole world learned what and how to see. Victoria, in short, ostensified the spectator as consumer."[48] Instead of a gaze of the Queen, we are introduced here with its seemingly "democratic" transformation, the gaze of a satisfied (female) consumer. What did not change is this belief that the whole world is present under one roof, "the ideal horizon and the blueprint of patriarchal colonialism; the epistemological technology of Orientalism as such. It was the laboratory table on which all things and peoples could be objectively and poignantly compared and contrasted in a uniform and perfect light, and phylogenetically and ontogenetically ranked."[49] In this imaginary world where all the differences were rendered and domesticated, every citizen believed to be its master.

If we recall the discussion from the documentaries analyzed when the status and function of art was still debatable, Mrs. Lippitz informs us that the art of today is that which makes one feel comfortable. She believes that 1,001 antique chairs imported from China as part of an artist's concept is not an extravagance of luxury, but rather a beautiful concept that allows one to fully appreciate art. For the artists in the 1960s, art was significant for not being susceptible to instrumentalization and commodification, as other objects were. As it seems, this position has completely evaporated in the course of history. Ironically, the imported chairs fit in perfectly with Buergel's idea, inspired by "palm groves" in India: as places where people can sit and reflect on art. It is worth pointing out that this was not interpreted as a form of exoticism, but rather as a valid curatorial concept.[50] The strategy Mrs. Lippitz used in order to fully understand Mr. Buergel's view on art was to read all of the articles and to listen numerous times to his recorded radio interviews. Drawn from this, the satisfied subject seems to be the one who listens to the voice of the curator and repeats it until his positions become internalized, until they become hers. The perfect consumerist subject is presented here as a (feminine) one who asks no questions, causes no friction, and shows no doubt about the picture of the world presented. Going back to the photograph from 1968, it seems possible that the female purse on the table might have its master after all–it might have been Mrs. Lippitz's, who has formed her worldviews through *documenta* exhibitions ever since.

* In a slightly modified form, this analysis was originally published as a chapter entitled: "Curating *documenta:* The Spectacle of Capitalism" in Vesna Madžoski, *DE CVRATORIBVS. The Dialectics of Care and Confinement*, Atropos Press, New York, Dresden, 2013.

Notes

1 Angela Dimitrakaki, "Art and Politics Continued: Avant-garde, Resistance and the Multitude in Documenta 11," *Historical Materialism* 11.3, 2003, pp. 153.

2 Christoph Lange, "The Spirit of Documenta. Art-Philosophical Reflections," in *50 Jahre / Years Documenta, 1955-2005, vol. 2: Archive in Motion, documenta manual*, Steidl Verlag, Göttingen, 2005, pp. 14-15.

3 Michael Glasmeier, "Paths to Discretion," in *50 Jahre / Years Documenta, 1955-2005*, *vol. 1: Discrete Energies*, Steidl Verlag, Göttingen, 2005, p. 193.

4 Roger M. Buergel, "The Origins," in *50 Jahre / Years Documenta*, *1955-2005, vol.2: Archive in Motion, documenta Manual*, Steidl Verlag, Göttingen, 2005, p. 176. The quote within the quote is by Federal President Theodor Heuss here.

5 Walter Grasskamp, "Degenerate Art and Documenta I: Modernism Ostracized and Disarmed," in *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles*, Routledge, London, 1994, pp. 165.

6 Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, Hobgoblin Press, Canberra, 2002, p. 192.

7 Emphasis in the original, *Ibid.*, p. 29.

8 Lothar Orzechowski, *Arnold Bode: Documenta Kassel: Essays*, Stadtsparkasse, Kassel, 1986.

9 "Protestaktion anläßlich der Presskonferenz zur documenta 4, 1968" in *Ibid*, p. 24.

10 "PROF. BODE! WIR BLINDEN DANKEN IHNEN FÜR DIESE SCHÖNE AUSSTELLUNG" in *Ibid*, p. 24.

11 Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, Vintage Classics, London, 2000, p. 19.

12 Lutz Jahre, "Curators and Catalogues in the *Documenta* Reading Room," in *50 Jahre / Years Documenta, 1955-2005, vol.2: Archive in Motion, documenta Manual*, pp. 46-47.

13 Koen Brams and Dirk Pültau. 2003. "Television makes things disappear. They slip from memory. Interview with Jef Cornelis about his early films for television." Jan van Eyck Academy Website. Accessed 17.11.2007. http://www.janvaneyck.nl/0_3_3_research_info/cornelis_interview1.html

14 About his first encounter with the Venice Biennale in 1966, he said: "I thought I had landed in parish hall. I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw the Cardinal of Venice handing out the awards. [...] I think my vision of the art world was already clearly expressed in that film. It is obvious how I feel about the art world–remote, critical, ambiguous–to put it mildly." In Koen Brams and Dirk Pültau. 2003. "Le spectacle, mon dieu. Interview with Jef Cornelis on his return to the visual arts and *Little Sparta, et in arcadia ego.*" Jan van Eyck Academy Website. Accessed 17.11.2007. http://www.janvaneyck.nl/0_3_3_research_info/cornelis_interview2.html

15 "I dropped out in 1972. That was pretty radical. I still went to exhibitions and stayed in touch with a number of people, but I wasn't involved anymore. Documenta 5–1972–was in my opinion the beginning of the

commercialization and the breakthrough of the mentality of 'every man for himself'." Nevertheless, his attempt at a "comeback" was reflected a decade later in the documentary on the Paris Biennial in 1985 (*Het gerucht: Biennale van Parijs*) but after this, he made no more record of the exhibitions or exhibition-making. *Ibid.*

16 As a consequence of this "modernization," the numeration of *documenta* was changed from the Roman numbers to Arabic ones.

17 Szeemann entitled his *documenta 5* "Questioning Reality–Pictorial Worlds Today," further divided into several smaller sections of which "Individual Mythologies" was the most important one.

18 We also hear Szeemann justifying his decision to divide the show into thematic parts based on the need to make artworks more interesting to the public. For more on this "discovery" of the audience and the shift of the visitor from the periphery to the center of museal practice in the post-industrial leisure society, see: Karsten Schubert, *The Curators Egg: The Evolution of the Museum Concept from the French Revolution to the Present Day*, One-Off Press, London, 2000.

19 Koen Brams and Dirk Pültau. 2003. "Le spectacle, mon dieu. Interview with Jef Cornelis on his return to the visual arts and *Little Sparta, et in arcadia ego.*"

20 Ronald Nachtigäller, "Performing the Zeitgeist. A Roundup of Fifty Years of Staged Art," in *50 Jahre / Years Documenta, 1955-2005, vol.2: Archive in Motion, documenta manual*, p. 26.

21 Szeemann was appointed "Secretary General" (a reference to the political role of the UN Sec. Gen.). Szeemann didn't aim to "democratize" the making of the *documenta*, however; he made this clear when describing himself as "a Secretary General with the widest range of authority and a team of 5-7 executors in a *documenta 5* working group" in Federica Martini and Vittoria Martini, "Questions of Authorship in Biennial Curating," Marieke van Hal, Solveig Ovstebo, Elena Filipovic eds., *The Biennial Reader*, Hatje Cantz Verlag, Berlin, 2010, p. 265.

22 Gerd Gemunden, "Nostalgia for the Nation: Intellectuals and National Identity in Unified Germany," *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present*, Dartmouth College, Hanover and London, 1999, pp. 120-133.

23 Rosalind Krauss, "Reinventing the Medium," *Critical Inquiry* 25.2, 1990, p. 298.

24 Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, p.26.

25 Hans Belting, *Art History after Modernism*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2003, p. 37.

26 *Ibid.*

27 *Ibid.* p. 39.

28 For more on this, see: Philipp Gutbrod, "Werner Haftmann's Introduction to the D2 Catalogue," in *50 Jahre / Years Documenta, 1955-2005, vol. 2: Archive in Motion, documenta manual*, p. 193.

29 Ronald Nachtigäller, "Performing the Zeitgeist. A Roundup of Fifty Years of Staged Art," in *50 Jahre / Years Documenta, 1955-2005, vol. 2: Archive in Motion, documenta manual*, p. 29-30.

30 Friedhelm Scharf and Gisela Schirmer, "Off the Wall: Artists' Refusal and Rejections: A History of Conflict," *50 Jahre / Years Documenta, 1955-2005, vol.2: Archive in Motion, documenta manual*, p. 104.

31 Martin Engler, "Twilight of the Gods: Documenta in Times of Change," in *50 Jahre / Years Documenta, 1955-2005, vol .2: Archive in Motion, documenta manual*, p. 234.

32 Ronald Nachtigäller, "Performing the Zeitgeist. A Roundup of Fifty Years of Staged Art," p. 30.

33 Gabriele Mackert, "At Home in Contradictions: Harald Szeemann's Documenta," in *50 Jahre / Years Documenta, 1955-2005, vol. 2: Archive in Motion, documenta manual*, p. 254.

34 Friedhelm Scharf and Gisela Schirmer, "Off the Wall: Artists' Refusal and Rejections: A History of Conflict," p. 99.

35 *Ibid.*

36 Agnes Prus, "Theater and the Documenta," in *50 Jahre / Years Documenta, 1955-2005, vol. 2: Archive in Motion, documenta manual*, p. 78.

37 *Ibid,* p. 119.

38 *Ibid,* p. 123.

39 *Ibid.*

40 Philipp Gutbrod, "Werner Haftmann's Introduction to the D2 Catalogue," p. 196.

41 Martin Engler, "Twilight of the Gods: Documenta in Times of Change," in *50 Jahre / Years Documenta, 1955-2005, vol. 2: Archive in Motion, documenta Manual*, p. 235.

42 Michael Glasmeier "Paths to Discretion," p. 181.

43 Only twice has a woman been appointed as the main curator–Catherine David for *documenta X* in 1997, and Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev for *dOCUMENTA(13)* in 2012. As a process of possible inclusion of female artists in Szeemann's shows, I encountered only one mention of an 'incident' when he received a public letter from Lucy Lippard entitled "Who the hell are you calling a whore?"

44 Julia Benkert, *Das Wunder von Kassel*, 2007.

45 This "technical" problem seems to be one that did not exist in 1968, when it was possible to have 23 (or 26, according to some sources) members on the comprehensive council as its leadership.

46 *documenta 12 Official Website*, http://www.documenta12.de, for the original German version of the interview see: http://www.documenta12.de/index.php?id=1214.

47 Donald Preziosi, *The Brain of the Earth's Body: Art, Museums, and the Phantasms of Modernity*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2003, p. 111.

48 *Ibid.*, p. 98.

49 *Ibid.*

50 The elitist concept hit its peak with the introduction of the chef Ferran Adrià into the framework of the exhibition: "The star chef will participate from afar, by keeping a table for two open to the exhibition visitors at his restaurant El Bulli on the Costa Brava, outside Barcelona, every night of the show. The lucky two will be chosen randomly by Buergel in Kassel and offered airfare, along with a meal at El Bulli." "Critics Weigh In on Documenta 12 and Art Basel; Ferran Adrià's Role in Documenta 12." *Artforum* Official Website. June 18, 2007. International News Digest. Accessed 23.10.2007. http://artforum.com/news/id=15482

Captions

1 Scan of page 24 from Lothar Orzechowski, Arnold Bode: *Documenta Kassel: Essays,* 1986, *documenta 4*, 1968, Photograph by Heinz Pauly © documenta Archiv, *documenta 5*, 1972, Bode Nachlaß © documenta Archiv

2 Scan of page 221 from *d12 Bilderbuch,* Kassel 2007**,** Photograph by Geneviève Frisson, © Geneviève Frisson

Vesna Madžoski is a professor of critical theory at the Master Artistic Research program of the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague, The Netherlands. Based in Amsterdam since 2003, she has initiated and organized various contemporary art events. Since 2006, she has been a member of the Amsterdam-based artists' initiative Public Space With A Roof, with which she has produced numerous exhibitions and projects in Amsterdam and internationally. As a lecturer, she has given talks on various topics related to contemporary art in different venues and occasions and has published numerous texts and essays in various international publications. She was one of the editors of the Belgrade magazine *Prelom – Journal for Images and Politics*. In the last ten years, her research has focused on the analysis of the global art system, while her PhD dissertation *DE CVRATORIBVS. The Dialectics of Care and Confinement* (2013, Atropos Press) traced the changes in the practice of curatorship in post-war Europe and the consequences this had on both an aesthetic and political level.

"The Master of the Works": Daniel Buren's Contribution to documenta *5* in Kassel, 1972[1]

by Beatrice von Bismarck

The Power of the Institution

At *documenta 5*, which ran from 30 June to 8 October 1972 in Kassel, Daniel Buren was represented by a multipart work. Under the title "Exposition d'une exposition, une pièce en 7 tableaux" (Exhibiting an Exhibition: A Work in 7 Pieces) he staged an installation based on the alternating white and coloured stripes, always 8.7-cm wide, which he had been using since 1965. To seven walls in six of this *documenta's* sections, he stuck white paper printed with vertical white stripes. One was at Museum Fridericianum in the "Idea and Idea/Light" section organized by Konrad Fischer und Klaus Honnef. Framed by doors to the left and right, to the side of which hung pictures by Brice Marden, the wall was also surrounded in the space by works by Sol LeWitt, Hanne Darboven, Robert Ryman and Richard Long. The other locations were all at the Neue Galerie, where works by other artists were hung on the striped surfaces: anti-communist posters in the "Political Propaganda" section, for example, or Jasper Johns' *Flag* (1958) and Robert Bechtle's *'61 Pontiac* (1968-1969) in the two rooms of the "Realism" section put together by Jean-Christophe Ammann.[2] (fig. 1) Together with two photographs of the 1970 spring festival in Kyoto, Buren also published an essay in the ring-bound *documenta 5* catalogue. Its title, "Exposition d'une exposition",[3] linked it to the installation in the museum spaces. The catalogue also contained a list compiled by the artist detailing all of his solo and group shows, texts written and interviews given. This biblio-biography, the final part of his contribution, was given its own title, "Exposition – Position – Proposition (a)", marking it out as a further text-based work by Buren.[4]

With this contribution, Buren pursued the critical engagement with art institutions that had characterized his practice since 1967, an approach focussing on the functions performed by studio, gallery and museum in the production, presentation and distribution of art. He spoke out vehemently against the notion of the autonomous work of art and the associated assumption of a neutral setting: be it the stretcher, the venue, or the social context– the frame in which an artwork is presented is always involved in the production of meaning and itself undergoes changes in function depending on the definition of art brought to bear in any given case.[5]

1

One important quality of the art institution addressed by Buren with his applications of striped material is its consecrating function. Every form of art, he stresses in his texts, only becomes manifest via the museum. Everything, even if it possesses no aesthetic value in its own right, can be declared as art by the museum, thus also lending it an economic value.[6] In Kassel, in the staged surroundings of the tonally subdued and gesturally reduced works of Darboven, LeWitt, Marden and Ryman, he performed this power of the institution insofar as the white-on-white printed stripes here took on the status of a painterly position. The coordinated aesthetic ensemble anointed the serially produced sheets of paper as art, at the same time as focussing attention in a more fundamental sense on the requirements for something to be categorized as "painting".[7] In the other

sections, however, the striped panels assumed functions of the wall. As a background for the works hung on them, they drew attention to the modes of presentation of art, labelling the hanging surface not as neutral but as always already designed. Taken together, these two different ways of applying the stripes raised questions about their role as picture support, wall decoration, or poster.[8]

Whereas in previous works, Buren had opened the exhibition space up to the street and created connections between situations inside and outside, in Kassel he decided from the outset against an intervention in the city. Looking back, he explained this decision by saying that the whole of Kassel becomes an exhibition for the duration of documenta.[9] He disputed the urban space's potential to liberate art from conditions prevailing in the museum. Even the positions of Conceptual and Land Art, he argued, ultimately remained tied to the museum as "the common revelator for all forms of art".[10] In Kassel, as in a series of subsequent works made in the first half of the 1970s, Buren concentrated on conditions within institutions and the links established between artworks and their location. By marking parts of the architecture or space behind and around the artworks on display, he rendered various museum practices visible: the fixing of exhibition duration, serialization and rhythmization, historical and semantic references, and the use of existing architectural features.[11] He was interested, as he said himself, not in abolishing art institutions but primarily in altering specific codes in the field of art.[12]

The Curator Becomes an Artist

As Buren's contribution to *documenta 5* makes abundantly clear, this interest in change was not supposed to exhaust itself in a gesture of surrender to the valorising power of the museum.[13] Concentrating on one specific aspect of institutional conditions–the exhibition–he was above all positioning himself as an artist in a way that is relevant not only to understanding his practice as a whole, but also to the changes within the field of art around 1970 and to the social and political significance of *documenta*.

"More and more," Buren remarked in the *d5* catalogue, "exhibitions tend no longer to be exhibitions of works of art, but rather to exhibit the exhibition as a work of art".[14] This referred to a new phenomenon in the art world of the late 1960s and early 1970s–that of the thematic exhibition. Harald Szeemann, director of *documenta 5*, owed his reputation largely to such thematically framed shows, most importantly *When Attitudes become Form* in 1969, when he was still director of the Kunsthalle in Bern, and *Happening/Fluxus* a year later at Kölnischer Kunstverein. Both events fitted him for his appointment as director of *d5*.[15] It hardly comes as a surprise, then, that this *documenta* was the first to be given a theme: "Questioning Reality–Pictorial Worlds Today".

Buren, too, had already shown his work in group shows like *Information* at New York's Museum of Modern Art in 1970 and *Konzept-Kunst* at Basel's Kunstmuseum in 1972. Characteristic of Szeemann's exhibitions, however, was the way their concept predefined a hypothesis. In 1971, in the initial exposé for *documenta 5* co-written with Jean-Christophe Ammann and Bazon Brock, Szeemann explicitly distanced it from other exhibition types (solo shows, group shows, retrospectives, collection shows, etc.), stating that principles of form would be replaced by principles of content. "The entirety of the exhibition material", they wrote, "will be determined by a thematic context, which is either a) derived from existing artistic productions or b) formulated independently of the pre-existing material."[16] Instead of adopting a reactive position that sought to follow contemporary artistic production, the organizers based their approach on the assumption that they would be involved in the production of meaning.

In Szeemann's previous shows, this approach did not represent an obstacle to the participating artists. On the contrary, Szeemann's approach to *When Attitudes Become Form* was characterized by refraining from categorizing, arranging or clarifying. Without curatorial interventions, the artistic actions were meant to enter into a relationship with each other, with the location and with the audience. The resulting event character of the show was further heightened in *Happening/Fluxus*.[17] For both exhibitions, the emphasis was on the social dimension of art, an approach that also shaped the initial concept for *documenta 5*: "d5 will have to shed light on the role of art in the problem-solving endeavours of society."[18]

The *d5* programme as it was finally realized, however, confronted the artists with a different situation. Although *documenta* had increasingly taken on the symbolic function of a guarantor of freedom, and not just artistic freedom, the 1972 exhibition saw a twofold dissolution of this guiding principle committed to democracy. Firstly, in the eighteen months following publication of the original concept, which stressed the participation of art in social change, the organizers had made significant altera-

tions. Criticism both from galleries (who saw their opportunity for additional sales on the back of *documenta 5* dwindling) and from artists (who saw the predefined concept as a curtailment of their freedom), resulted in a de-politicization of the original ambitions. As confirmed by Szeemann's foreword to the catalogue, the autonomy of the artwork returned to a more central position.[19] And secondly, Szeemann was increasingly becoming a "first among equals". The non-intervening curator of the *Attitudes* show had turned into the sole director of a large-scale exhibition who gathered staff around him in hierarchic circles. The committee initially consisting of as many as people, which until *documenta 4* had selected artists via a protracted democratic process, was now replaced by a single, sometimes autocratic-seeming individual whose subjective conviction was the key shaping influence on the vision of contemporary art advocated in the exhibition.[20]

Both of these changes in the run-up to *documenta 5* focussed attention on the emergence of a new profession in the field of art – the exhibition maker. In connection with sharp increases in arts funding since the 1960s, the field of art also saw an increased professionalization and a clearer differentiation of tasks. More academics than ever before were employed by museums; reform initiatives brought new jobs in art education to orient activities more strongly towards the audience; exhibition budgets were raised as a means of securing greater public interest in art institutions.[21] Szeemann's career documents this development in exemplary form: in 1969, after eight years as director of Kunsthalle Bern, he set up his "Agency for Intellectual Guest Labour" and from then on worked as a freelance curator.

This development created a new position of authority comparable to that occupied by artists, as demonstrated not least by Szeemann's own self-staging in his 1981 book *Museum of Obsessions.* It opens with a series of photographs showing Szeemann, naked from the waist up, in Mephistophelian poses. In the middle of the book, this is followed by a sequence of photographs from his life. For the period covering *documenta 5*, they show not individual artworks but only him–setting up the exhibition, with his partner Ingeborg Lüscher, talking to colleagues and artists, and finally, on the last day of the show, enthroned and relaxed amid a crowd of people. (fig. 2) The extensive descriptions of his own working processes–travel, meetings, trains of thought–additionally lent his exhibitions an artwork-like status.[22] As if to underline this view, one of his articles stated: "From the organizer's point of view, *documenta 5* was a step towards self-fulfilment via the medium of the exhibition."[23] The artist stars, who were celebrated at the first *documenta* and *documenta II* in series of photographs, found themselves replaced by the "curator heroes".[24]

The manifesto signed by ten American artists that appeared in *Artforum* at the time, commenting on recent exhibition practice and specifically that of *documenta 5*, reacted against this shift in roles. The artists claimed their right to decide for themselves whether, what and where they would exhibit, how their work would be classified, and how their pages in the catalogue would look.[25] What they were fighting over was the power to define the public appearance of art. While five of the signatories (Hans Haacke, Sol LeWitt, Barry Le Va, Dorothea Rockburne and Richard Serra) did show work at *documenta 5* in spite of their protest, the others (Carl Andre, Donald Judd, Robert Morris, Fred Sandback and Robert Smithson) withdrew their participation. Two of them found other ways of remaining associated with the context of *documenta 5* while retaining control of their public profile. In the issue of *Flash Art* published to coincide with the event, Morris published an open letter explaining his withdrawal. He had not been prepared, he wrote, to make his work available for the illustration of sociological principles or outdated art-historical categories, especially having not been consulted on the selection of his own works.[26] And Smithson had a text published in the exhibition catalogue that he used to attack the function of the museum and the art-confining power of museum directors.[27]

The Artist Becomes Curator

The means deployed by Buren in his contribution "Exposition d'une exposition, une pièce en 7 tableaux" resemble such strategies. He, too, not only placed his text within the more specific discursive field of *documenta 5*, but, like Smithson, used the organizer's invitation for an attack on him. It was his – Szeemann's – role that his criticism focussed on above all. The works selected for *d5*, he argued, performed the function of strokes of colour in a carefully composed ensemble which, as a section of the exhibition, followed a specific ordering principle or concept defined by the organizer. In his view, the organizer alone both took responsibility for and covered over all contradictions.[28] If the exhibition in general was becoming an artwork, then in the case of *d5* it was a team led by Harald Szeemann "that exhibits (the works) and exhibits itself (to the critics)."[29]

2

Buren went further than Morris and Smithson, however, insofar as he did not merely remark on shortcomings but actually entered into open rivalry with the curator, putting himself on the same level in several ways: like Szeemann, he elevated himself above the artists on show alongside him at *documenta 5*. In the catalogue he generalized, stating that today's artists are "rendered impotent by artistic routine" and "have no choice but to let someone else, the organizer, do the exhibiting".[30] Szeemann assumed a similar impotence when, during the preparatory phase of *documenta 5*, he considered artists and audience as not yet capable of participatory action, thus justifying his role as mediator. This role, he claimed, consisted in making it easier for artists to express themselves.[31]

For *documenta 5*, Szeemann assured Buren of his support in realizing the installation at Neue Galerie should this be necessary, thus siding with Buren against fellow artists with whom he could, at least potentially, be in conflict.[32] With his contribution, Buren himself wanted to enter into dialogue both with the works on display and the event's organizer. Because the pictures that were hung on his striped walls were not works made specifically for *d5*, the desired dialogue with them necessarily remained one-sided. Ultimately, the offer of a dialogue was extended only to the curator, whose manipulative treatment of the exhibits Buren imitated. Like the organizer, he made his mark not on individual canvases but on the exhibition itself.[33] He was prepared to accept the fact that he was doing violence to work by other artists, justifying this behaviour with his claim that he was merely mimicking the similarly violent interventions of the supposedly "neutral" white walls.[34]

As well as positioning himself with regard to his fellow artists, Buren's contribution also challenged the curator concerning all of the roles and powers denounced in his catalogue text: by showing work in several sections at the same time, he rejected the ordering principle to which art at *documenta 5* was subjected; by listing his exhibitions, writings and interviews, he performed an organizational task usually reserved for the curator; and by strictly limiting the bibliography to texts he himself had written or co-written, he emphatically ruled out any

external comment or judgement.[35] In different ways, all three strategies sought to deprive the mediator Szeemann of any way to participate in the production of meaning by Buren's work. Like the artists' museums created at around the same time, Buren reserved the right (via the interplay of the parts of his contribution, and by taking over the administrative, organizational and representational tasks usually assigned to the curator) to retain the defining power over his own work after it had been produced.[36]

Buren shifted the focus of his critical approach from the institutions to those operating within them, and his approach led to the demonstration of an artistic self-image that could afford to forego any signature, usually the key pointer to the identity of an author and the condition for his/her authority. The anonymity of his stripes was meant to point out that the artist was no longer the owner of his/her own product, meaning the end of the cult of personality surrounding the artist.[37] But the strategies he used, with which he secured his own participation in the exploitation and interpretation of his work, pushed him back into the spotlight as an author, now equipped with expanded scope for action and an elevated position in comparison with the other actors in the field of art. The interplay of his individual works for *d5* epitomizes this practice.

At the same time, Buren's contribution succeeded in expanding the functional definition of exhibitions, thus adding a new perspective to documenta's socio-political significance. From the outset, the documenta events were harnessed as part of the conflict between the two halves of the divided Germany. The juxtaposition of Socialist Realism on the one hand and a pluralistic vision of art on the other was extended to the forms of society on either side of the border. In connection with the event's location near the border with East Germany, a lasting linking of the terms "Kassel", "art" and "freedom" established itself. The precondition for the equation of "freedom" with art was art's autonomy.[38]

With the changes to its concept, originally geared towards the social relevance of art, the fifth *documenta* reconnected with this tradition of political functionalization. At the same time, however, its newly autocratic organizational structure moved away from notions of political democracy. Buren's contribution not only exposed these structural changes, but also turned the exhibition into a space of contestation. At around the same time, a heated debate about updating the museum's function focussed on breaking down the clear assignment of the tasks of producing, mediating and perceiving art to artists, curators and audience respectively, and on making work processes happen within the art institutions.[39] In Buren's case, it was not the public that was involved in such processes of exchange with the curator. Instead, he staged a direct contest between curator and artist over the power to define what art is, representing this dispute in the various parts of his contribution, in each arguing from a different angle. In this way, the fight over hierarchic positions that enable those occupying them to uphold or replace certain rules and codes was revealed and documented–but it was also perpetuated. Buren showed the conflictual character that, according to Bourdieu, is an integral part of social life, regardless of whether it is taking place in the field of culture or that of the social classes.[40] The highlighting of such structures could have led to a political reading of the exhibition very different to that established in the tradition of documenta reception–a reading that would have identified anti-democratic developments not only in East Germany but also in West Germany and that would have understood the exhibition as a contrasting instrument of protest.

In the summer of 1971, in response to the first published concept for *documenta 5,* Georg Jappe asked whether the artists, who were pushing for equality with experts and the public and calling for the abolition of pedestals, would themselves be prepared, in the interest of the social effectiveness of art, to step down from their pedestals.[41] Buren's answer to this question–while maintaining the socio-political orientation of his practice–was to keep only the pedestals for himself and for the curator.

This text was originally published in German as: "Der Meister der Werke. Daniel Burens Beitrag zur documenta 5 in Kassel 1972," in Uwe Fleckner, Martin Schieder, Michael Zimmermann, eds., *Jenseits der Grenzen. Französische und deutsche Kunst vom Ancien Régime bis zur Gegenwart. Thomas W. Gaehtgens zum 60. Geburtstag*, Dumont, Cologne 2000, pp. 215-229.

* Translation from German: Nicholas Grindell

Notes

1 "The Master of the Works" ("Der Meister der Werke") was a subheading used by Buren in his essay *Nachspiele* (orig. *Rebondissements,* Daled & Gevaert, Brussels, 1977) in which he looked back at his contribution to *documenta 5*. See Gerti Fietzek, Gudrun Inboden, eds., *Achtung! Texte 1967-1991*, Verlag der Kunst, Dresden/ Basel, 1995, p. 274.

2 The locations of Buren's interventions are not recorded in the documenta catalogue. The artist only listed them himself in 1977 in *Nachspiele*, pp. 256-259.

3 Daniel Buren, "Exposition d'une exposition/Ausstellung einer

Ausstellung", in *d5* exhibition catalogue, documenta GmbH / C. Bertelsmann Verlag, Kassel, 1972, p. 17.29.

4 Accordingly in later lists of Buren's writings, the biblio-biography is classified as a text piece, see for example *Achtung! Texte 1967-1991,* p. 439.

5 See Daniel Buren: "Critical Limits" (1970) in *5 Texts*, Academic Press, London/New York, 1973, pp. 43-57. Buren also dealt with various art world institutions in separate texts: *Is Teaching Art Necessary?* (1968, in Lucy R. Lippard, *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1973, p. 51-53), "Function of the Museum" (1970/1973, in *Five Texts*, pp. 58-62), *Function of the Studio* (1971/1979, in *October* No. 10,1979, pp. 51-58).

6 See "Critical Limits," p. 47 and *Standpoints* (1971) in *Five Texts*, pp. 38-39.

7 For Douglas Crimp, the strength of Buren's work lies in its inquiry into the conditions that make painting appear as painting, thus anticipating an end of the painterly code. See Douglas Crimp: "The End of Painting," in *On the Museum's Ruins*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA/London, 1993, pp. 84-107, especially pp. 87-88, 103-105. For a written interpretation of his work in this sense, see also Buren, *Nachspiele*, p. 259.

8 See Ibid., p. 288-297.

9 See Ibid., p. 272.

10See Buren, "Critical Limits," p. 47.

11 Works by Buren that refer to and develop aspects of his approach in Kassel include installations for exhibitions at Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, Joseph-Haubich-Kunsthalle, Cologne (both 1974), Städtisches Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach (1975) and Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (1976).

12 See Buren, *Nachspiele*, p. 312.

13 Frazer Ward understands Buren's work as an ongoing gesture of surrender in this sense. See "The Haunted Museum: Institutional Critique and Publicity," in *October* No. 73, Summer 1995, pp. 81-82.

14 Buren, "Exposition d'une exposition". In French: "De plus en plus le sujet d'une exposition tend à ne plus être l'exposition d'œuvres d'art, mais l'exposition de l'exposition comme œuvre d'art."

15 On Harald Szeemann's nomination by documenta founding father Arnold Bode, see Harald Kimpel, *documenta. Mythos und Wirklichkeit*, DuMont, Cologne, 1997, p. 202.

16 Jean-Christophe Ammann, Bazon Brock, Harald Szeemann, "Erläuterungen zum Ausstellungsmodell documenta 5," in *Informationen*, March 1971, p. 2.

17 On Szeemann's organizational style for the exhibitions in Bern and Cologne, see Jean-Marc Poinsot, *Large Exhibitions: A Sketch of a Typology*, in Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, Sandy Nairne, eds.: *Thinking About Exhibitions*, Routledge, London/New York 1996, pp. 48-50.

18Ammann, Brock, Szeemann, "Erläuterungen zum Ausstellungsmodell documenta 5," p. 3.

19See Harald Szeemann: (-), in d5 exhibition catalogue, pp. 10-11. On contemporary responses to changes to the original concept, see Bruce Kurtz, "Documenta 5: A Critical Preview," in *Arts Magazine* No. 46, Summer 1972, pp. 31-33; Peter Sager, "Zur documenta 5," in *Das Kunstwerk* No. 25, July 1972, p. 4.

20On the organizational structure of the previous documenta exhibitions, presenting the democratic procedure itself as a subject of the exhibition, see Kimpel, *documenta. Mythos und Wirklichkeit*, pp. 191-194. See also Ibid., pp 203- 206, on the "reautocraticization" of the organizational structure and the subjectivization of decision-making processes for *d5*.

21On the changes within the art field from the 1950s to the 1970s in different geographical contexts, see, for example, Jürgen Weber, *Entmündigung der Künstler. Geschichte und Funktionsweise der bürgerlichen Kunsteinrichtungen*, Damnitz, Munich, 1979, pp. 101-115; Diana Crane, *The Transformation of the Avant-Garde. The New York Art World, 1940-1985*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago/London, 1987, pp. 2-11, 119-130; Raymonde Moulin, *L'Artiste, l'*

22See Harald Szeemann, *Museum der Obsessionen*, Merve Verlag, Berlin, 1981, in particular the illustrations on pp. 10-19, 171-174, and the articles "Wenn Attitüden Form warden" (1969) and "Die Agentur für geistige Gastarbeit im Dienste der Vision eines Museums der Obsessionen" (1979), pp. 48-72 and pp. 107-124.

23 Szeemann, "Die Agentur für geistige Gastarbeit," p. 111.

24 On the curator as "hero", see Walter Grasskamp, "Modell documenta oder wie wird Kunstgeschichte gemacht?," in *Kunstforum international* No. 49, April/ May 1982, pp. 21-22. On this shift in self-image, see also Oskar Bätschmann, *Ausstellungskünstler. Kult und Karriere im modernen Kunstsystem*, DuMont, Cologne 1997, pp. 222-223.

25 This declaration added to and refined some of the points of the "Artists Reserved Rights Transfer and Sale Agreement" drawn up by the lawyer Bob Projansky for the New York gallerist Seth Siegelaub in March 1971 that was included in the *d5* catalogue in German, English and French. See *d5* catalogue, Section 18.

26 An excerpt from the open letter is reprinted in Lawrence Alloway, "'Reality': Ideology at the D5," in *Artforum* No. 11, October 1972, p. 31.

27 See Robert Smithson, in *d5* catalogue, p. 17.74.

28 See Buren, "Exposition d'une exposition". In French: "Les contradictions, c'est l'organisateur qui les assume, c'est lui qui les couvre."

29 Ibid.: "qui expose (les oeuvres) et s'expose (aux critiques)".

30 Ibid.: "l'artiste et son œuvre, impuissants à force d'habitude de l'art, ne peuvent plus que laisser exposer un autre : l'organisateur."

31 See Harald Szeemann, "Blick zurück fast ohne Zorn. Interview mit Petra Kipphof" (1972), in *Museum der Obsessionen,* p. 82.

32 See letter from Harald Szeemann to Daniel Buren of 31 January 1972, documenta archive, Kassel.

33 He wanted to question both the structures of the exhibitions and the works on show, including his own. See *Nachspiele*, p. 299.

34 See Ibid., p. 282. By elevating himself above the other artists in the show, Buren referred back to the claim he formulated with his work for the "VI Guggenheim International" show in 1971 at New York's Guggenheim Museum, a length of striped material 20 metres long and 10 metres wide hung in the museum's open central space, thus declaring himself the actual centre of the exhibition. In this way, his aim of redefining the function of the architecture with its given sightlines was prioritized over the partial loss of visibility suffered by all the other works. Anyone resisting this was accused of siding with the power of the institution. For Buren's own description of the work, see "Round and About a Detour," in *Studio International*, No. 181: 934, June 1971, pp. 246-247. The museum had Buren's work removed before the show opened. For a description of these events, see various accounts in "The Guggenheim Affair," in *Studio International* No. 182, July/August 1971, pp. 5-6 and Thomas M. Messer, "'Which is in fact what happened'. Thomas M. Messer in an interview with Barbara Reise, 25 April, 1971," in *Studio International* No. 182, July/August 1971, pp. 34-37.

35 Buren pursued this strategy. The bibliography originally produced for the d5 catalogue has become the basis for all bibliographies appearing in publications about Buren, still appearing with no mention of texts by critics or art historians. In 1974, he stated that his own writings served to protect him from being misinterpreted by critics. See Daniel Buren: "Why write texts, or the place from where I act", *in Five Texts,* pp. 6-8.

36 In Buren's view, the "artist's museums" section created by Szeemann at *documenta 5* was a form of narcissism on the part of the curator, multiplying his activity. See *Nachspiele,* p. 303-304.

37 See Buren, "Beware" (1970) in *Five Texts,* pp. 10-23, and "It rains, it snows, it paints" (1969), Ibid., pp. 24-27.

38 For more detail on the use of the term "freedom" in connection with documenta events, see Kimpel, *documenta. Mythos und Wirklichkeit*, pp. 133-139.

39 On the museum debate around 1970, see the essays in Gerhard Bott, ed., *Das Museum der Zukunft. 43 Beiträge zur Diskussion über die Zukunft des Museums*, DuMont, Cologne 1970. For a definition of the museum as a site of engagement, see above all Bazon Brock, "Das Museums als Arbeitsplatz," pp. 26-34, and Kurt Hackenberg, "Verdachtsmomente für das Museum der Zukunft," pp. 100-106.

40 On Bourdieu's concept of the "field", see Pierre Bourdieu, Loïc J. D. Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Anthropology*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1992, pp. 94-114; David Swartz, *Culture & Power: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1997, pp. 117-136.

41 See Georg Jappe, "What is Reality? The Theme of Documenta 5," in *Studio International* No. 182, July/Aug. 1971, p. 3.

Captions:

1 Daniel Buren: Photo-souvenir: „Exposition d'une exposition, une pièce en 7 tableaux", travail in situ auf der documenta 5, Kassel, 1972. Detail. Photograph by: Brigitte Hellgoth, © documenta Archiv, Daniel Buren, Robert Bechtle

2 Scan from Harald Szeemann: *Museum der Obsessionen* (1981), p. 74: Photograph showing Harald Szeemann surrounded by artists on the last day of *d5,* Oct. 8, 1972, Photograph by: Balthasar Burkhard.

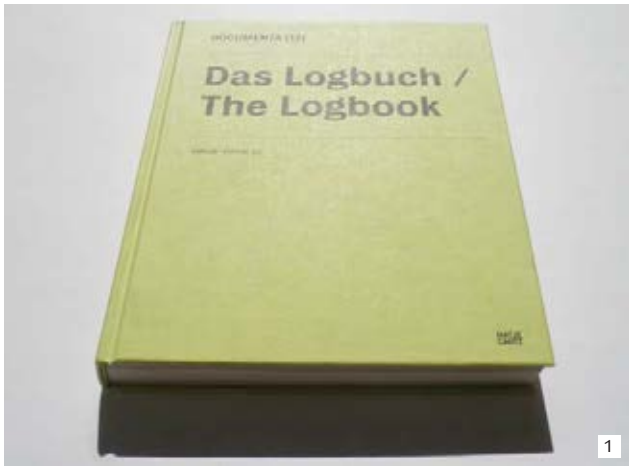
institution et le mar

Beatrice von Bismarck (Leipzig, Berlin) is a professor at the Academy of Arts Leipzig, teaching art history, visual culture and cultures of the curatorial. She worked as a curator of the department of 20th-century art at Städel Museum, Frankfurt, taught at the Leuphana University in Lüneburg, and was co-founder and co-director of the "Kunstraum der Universität Lüneburg". In Leipzig, she was co-founder of the project-space "/D/O/C/K" and initiator of the M.A. Program "Cultures of the Curatorial" which started in autumn 2009. She has been responsible for numerous conferences, most recently together with Rike Frank for *Of(f) Our Times–The Aftermath of the Ephemeral and Other Curatorial Anachronics* in Oslo 2016-2017. For the next two years, she will co-direct the TRANScuratorial Academy, which she co-conceived, starting in Berlin then touring to Mumbai and Phnom Penh (2017-2018). She co-edited the special issue of *Texte zur Kunst* on the topic of curators (June 2012, 22/86), to which she contributed the essay "Curating Curators". Recent publications in which she has been involved as co-editor include *Cultures of the Curatorial* (with Jörn Schafaff and Thomas Weski), 2012; *Timing - On the Temporal Dimension of Exhibiting* (with Rike Frank, Benjamin Meyer-Krahmer, Jörn Schafaff, and Thomas Weski), 2014; *Hospitality - Hosting Relations in Exhibitions*, (ed. with Benjamin Meyer-Krahmer), 2016 (all Sternberg Press, Berlin), and *Now–Tomorrow–Flux: An Anthology on the Museum of Contemporary Art* (with Heike Munder and Peter J. Schneemann), JRP|Ringier, Zurich, 2017. Her essays have been published in numerous catalogues and critical readers. For her research project on the "Curatorial", she was awarded the "Opus Magnum" fellowship of the VolkswagenStiftung, Hannover (2015-2017).

CCB with ... Displaying Curatorial Relationality in dOCUMENTA (13)'s The Logbook

by Nanne Buurman

This essay addresses the display of relationality as a significant part of curatorial self-staging in contemporary network cultures, focusing on an example from the most recent history of documenta: *dOCUMENTA (13)'s The Logbook.* Together with *The Book of Books* and *The Guidebook*, *The Logbook* is part of the three-volume catalogue that was produced on the occasion of the thirteenth edition of documenta in 2012. Besides providing installation shots and information on events beyond the show's main venues in Kassel, according to artistic director Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev (CCB) *The Logbook* was intended to give "an inner perspective on the making of dOCUMENTA (13)" (11).[1] The publication not only includes numerous e-mails that the curator exchanged with those involved in the show's production but also many smartphone pictures, a large number of them showing her together with her "elective affinities"–be they artists, colleagues, or members of family. Taking into account the historically shifting political implications of publishing intimacies, I will explore how *The Logbook* turns into a quasi-autobiography that exhibits the curator's authority by exposing her familiarity and friendship with important others. The essay follows several propositions simultaneously: first, I suggest that as a display of professional and private relationships, this part of the *dOCUMENTA (13)* catalogue is exemplary for how immaterial and affective labors such as networking, travelling, and meeting people have moved to the core of contemporary curatorial practice in neoliberal post-Fordism. Second, I will discuss how, as an autobiographical exhibition of Christov-Bakargiev's central position in the art world, the catalogue contrasts with the modesty of modernist display rhetorics that was used in the exhibition itself. Third, I will think about how the book reflects on the translation of objects into image-data and their (re-)materialization into a tangible book object, thereby providing meta-medial problematizations of the tensions between materiality and immaterialization in an increasingly digitalized age. To analyze the ways in which *The Logbook* with its exposure of processes of social and technical re/production reflects reconfigurations of curatorial authorship under *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, I finally compare it to the similarly (auto)biographic 1981 monograph *Museum der Obsessionen: von/über/zu/mit Harald Szeemann* ("Museum of Obsessions: by/about/on/with Harald Szeemann").[2]



1

Thus, I argue that the catalogue's display of social processes of communication and conviviality on top of more or less conventionally documenting the objects on display relates to a radically altered socioeconomic frame of reference, in which (formerly feminized) immaterial and affective labors are no longer considered marginal or countercultural but have become paradigmatic. In their study, *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, sociologists Luc Boltanski and Ève Chiapello, for instance, discuss how libertarian values, models of living, and modes of working that had been

central in artistic and social critiques of capitalism and hierarchical (patriarchal) power structures up to the 1970s have meanwhile been co-opted by neoliberalism.[3] Against the backdrop such an ambivalent entanglement of libertarian self-realization and neoliberal exploitation of subjectivity, this essay seeks to analyze the ways in which *The Logbook*'s autobiographical exposure of the curator's relationality, may be read as symptomatic of a biopoliticization of curating, that is: a shift of attention from the exhibition as an end-product of curating to the persona of the curator and her life. Thus, my aim is to call attention not only to the historically shifting political implications of the publishing of intimacies but also to the role of gendered economies in performing curatorial authorship. Before problematizing how the capitalization of subjectivity, affectivity, and relationality in neoliberal network economies affects specific contemporary curatorial practices, I will first take a closer look at the ways in which gender intersects with socioeconomic transformations from industrial to post-industrial societies and the increasing significance of the curatorial in the art field.

Curating as a Labor of Love

Since the 1970s, countries of the global North have undergone a transformation from Fordist to post-Fordist economies, with the rise of service sectors, informatization of production, and an increasing relevance of symbolic as well as affective dimensions in the production of surplus value. According to political theorists Michael Hardt and Antonio Negi, productivity today takes the form of "cooperative interactivity through linguistic, communicational and affective networks." [4] The proliferation of "immaterial and affective labors," which was pushed further by the spread of digital technology, economic financialization, and an acceleration of globalization since the 1990s, was sometimes conceptualized as a "homework economy" or a "feminization of labor."[5] The term feminization of labor not only refers to the quantitative rise of women in the wage labor market but also to an expanding precarization and flexibilization of work and its growing qualitative likeness with what was traditionally considered women's reproductive responsibilities (i.e., management of relationships, blurring of life and labor, voluntarism, care). As Hardt and Negri note, the expanding feminization of labor, which they also refer to as biopoliticization of production, poses "significant challenges to traditional concepts and methods of political economy in large part because biopolitical production shifts the economic center of gravity from the production of material commodities to that of social relations, confusing [...] the division between production and reproduction."[6] Moreover, they call attention to the fact that what is considered feminization of labor also goes hand in hand with a biopoliticization of authority in neoliberal Deleuzian "societies of control."[7] This means that power is implemented no longer merely through hard disciplinary measures of force but also by dispersed effects of governmental soft power through which subjectivities are programmed to become self-responsible Foucauldian "entrepreneurs of the self."[8]

Remarkably, the feminization of labor and the proliferation of biopower also coincided with the appearance of the figure of the curator beginning in the 1970s and an increasing relevance of the curatorial in the artistic field since the 1990s. Beyond the shared etymology of care work and curating in the Latin *curare* ("care"), this parallel development of the "curatorialization" of the arts and the "feminization" of labor is no accident. Both, curators and women, have in common a tradition of working as invisible hands whose shadow labors as housekeepers and support structures behind the scenes of commodity production were (and often still are) neglected in order for art work and wage labor to appear as sole and autonomous sources of value. Throughout the twentieth century, feminists have challenged this gendered division of labor, which confined women to the so-called private realm. While many fought for better access to public employment, in the late 1960s a group of Marxist feminists provocatively demanded "wages for housework" to criticize the naturalization of housework as a "labor of love."[9] By requesting remuneration for what was hitherto considered to be personal, they called attention to the fact that domestic, reproductive, and affective labors are always already part of the general economy and should be recognized as such. Whereas critics cautioned that such an approach risked contributing to the commodification of social relations and the capitalization of the private realm, others argued that instead of merely asking for better representation in the workforce, it was indeed necessary to problematize the underlying binary ideology of productive work on the one hand and supposedly non-productive labor on the other.[10]

The conflicts exposed by these controversies are still "highly relevant to our time," as formerly marginalized activities, soft skills, and affective labors have moved to the fore of economic wealth creation,[11] which is also exemplified by the rise of the curator.[12] Apart from giving heightened publicity to formerly

invisible actors, the increasing significance of biopolitical production in post-Fordist capitalism implies a more explicit capitalization of immaterial and affective practices that had not been recognized or considered part of wealth creation in industrial Fordism with its focus on wage-based factory work. Some scholars have therefore even gone so far as to describe feminism as "capitalism's handmaiden," acknowledging the inadvertent complicity of liberation movements with neoliberalism,[13] insofar as practices that challenged rigid norms of living and working paved the way for the flexibilized economy and were recuperated as productive forces in what has been termed "the new spirit of capitalism."[14] The new modes of immaterial production entail an increasing mobilization of subjectivity, affects, and relationships at the core of North-Western post-industrial service and information economies, while manufacturing goods–despite their ongoing significance–plays an ever decreasing role in the generation of surplus value. As a consequence of this transformation, manual labors (including paid and unpaid domestic chores) lose their status and are frequently sourced out–for instance, to immigrant workers or the labor force in the global South.[15]

Whereas women and artists–in accord with the significance of passion and personal commitment in the roles they are traditionally expected to perform–have for some time been cited as role models of the post-Fordist entrepreneur,[16] under the conditions of global connectivity "house work and art work"[17] are complemented by yet another labor of love, that of "net-*working*."[18] Feminist science and technology scholar Donna Haraway has linked networking to the blurring of the boundaries between public and private, when home and market become increasingly entangled in the social factory.[19] She underlines the ambivalence of networking by defining it as "both a feminist practice and a multinational corporate strategy."[20] Unsurprisingly, contemporary curators have been identified as masters of networking who epitomize post-Fordist subjectivity.[21] No longer primarily associated with the craft of making exhibitions and installing artworks, but increasingly concerned with communication, collaboration, the circulation of ideas and the generating of encounters, curating has become a paradigmatic immaterial practice of biopolitical production. As a consequence of their tasks of managing subjectivities and social processes, curators are frequently forced to capitalize on their own emotive resources, personal ties, and relationships. Hence, the neoliberal friendship economies with their blurring of the boundaries between leisure and work as well as between friends and colleagues have provoked considerable criticism in the field.[22] Against the backdrop of an increasingly explicit biopolitical colonization of what used to be considered private, the politics of the personal have thus become an urgent issue once again.[23]

The slogan "the personal is political" was coined in 1969 by feminist activist Carol Hanisch in a text that defends feminist consciousness-raising groups against the accusation of being merely apolitical.[24] It has played an important role in feminist politics ever since, often by publicly addressing issues that had previously been banned from visibility. Yet, due to norms of transparency and (self-)surveillance in post-industrial screen societies, the political strategy of increasing one's visibility has become more ambivalent. The emancipatory promises of participation and agency that are conventionally associated with public self-assertion turn out to be compromised as they risk being recuperated by neoliberal capitalism with its imperatives to constantly exhibit, broadcast, and brand oneself. Such reification of one's self may also be associated with the celebrification of culture, which has been theorized by art theorist and critic, Isabelle Graw with regard to the objectification of artists in their self-stagings. Graw discusses how the replacement of the star by the celebrity exemplifies the biopolitical turn from an economic valorization of labor to that of life itself.[25] The democratization of the celebrity logic and its expansion to other fields also corresponds with the increasing amount of time spent online, a consequent "dematerialization of the real"[26] and the necessity to devise digital alter egos in order to be able to participate in the immaterial networked "second life." Taking this as a point of departure, I consider how the affective labor of building, managing, and maintaining relationships in curating is showcased in *dOCUMENTA (13)*'s *The Logbook* and complemented by a second-order affective labor of incorporating the resulting networks into the curator's public image.

Analyzing Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev's embracing of extreme visibility in the first section of *The Logbook*, I ask: What are the (bio)political implications of CCB's presentation of herself as a dialogic, caring, enthusiastically committed, round-the-clock networker in a context where flexible project-based labor systems, teamworking, multitasking, flat management, and full personal identification with one's work have become hegemonic ideals? In the following, I will argue that while the display of Christov-Bakargiev's multiple relationships fosters her image as a generous,

conversational collaborator, whose authorship is based on dialogue, flat hierarchies and affective bonds, *The Logbook* also demonstrates the ambivalence of networking as a feminist and a corporate practice by exposing how an altruistic crediting of others may at once serve to accumulate what sociologist Pierre Bourdieu calls "social capital."[27] Focusing on the public persona of CCB, the essay, significantly, does not attempt to reconstruct the curator's intentions nor to make a statement about Christov-Bakargiev as a person. It rather engages with the book as a virtual space of affective labors, or as an "exhibition without walls" that provokes reflections on the tensions between the personal and the political, publicity and relationality, as well as processes of materialization and immaterialization in contemporary network cultures.

The Catalogue as a Curatorial Autobiography

At first glance, *The Logbook* looks like an institutionally authored catalogue for *dOCUMENTA (13)* because there is no individual name on the cover. [fig. 1] According to the imprint page (319)–which lists Christov-Bakargiev as the "artistic director" first, followed by Bettina Funcke "Head of Publications," "Co-editor" Nicola Setari, as well as a number of assistants, translators, copyeditors, proofreaders, picture editors, researchers, interns, and designers, before crediting Leftloft for the graphic design–it may in fact be said to be authored collaboratively. The extensive list of *d (13)* participants on the back of the book as well as interviews with collaborators in its final section could also be taken as arguments for applying a model of plural authorship. Nevertheless, there are good reasons to attribute authorship primarily to CCB: due to her meta-responsibility as the artistic director, she is not only obviously responsible for the publication's overall design, but more significant for my argument here is the fact that the first section of *The Logbook* is largely centered on her person, thus turning the exhibition catalogue into a quasi-autobiographical self-mediatization.

Already the structure of *The Logbook* foregrounds the importance of the curator's immaterial and affective labors. The "making of" appears in the beginning of the book before the documentation of the installed show and is complemented by an extensive final section of "conversations" at the end of the book, thus documenting relational practices behind the scenes of the staged exhibition. As indicated on the contents page, *The Logbook* is organized chronologically from shortly after Christov-Bakargiev was appointed artistic director of *dOCUMENTA (13)* in December 2008 until the exhibition closed in Kassel in September 2012. [fig. 2] It is divided into three general sections. The first spans roughly three years of planning, preparation, and production before the show's opening (January 1, 2009 – June 6, 2012). The middle section covers the opening period (June 6 – 16, 2012) with its ceremonies, performances and documentation of the artworks' installation *in situ,* ordered by venues. It also briefly documents the opening events and the exhibition in Kabul (17 – 20 June 2012). The final section consists of information on seminars, conferences and lectures that were scheduled to take place during the exhibition's duration (June 22 – September 16, 2012), additionally presenting interviews with CCB and her so-called "agents" (i.e. her co-curators and advisors), reprinted from other sources. Taken together, the first and the last section make up about half of the publication, presenting black-and-white photos and text on green pages, while the middle section, which documents the opening events and the show's installation, is printed in color on white pages.

2

Deferring the presentation of the installed artworks to the second section, Christov-Bakargiev breaks with (feminized) scripts of curatorial modesty. Rather than putting the artworks first, *The Logbook* opens by prominently displaying the life, work and relationships of the curator, to the extent that she becomes the catalogue's prime exhibit, a sort of personification of *dOCUMENTA (13).* Furthermore, as typical for autobiographical formats, she is the subject *and* the object of speech acts and photographic acts alike. Most of the pictures that appear in the first section of the book, for instance, are either shot by CCB or show her together with artists, friends, family members and other collaborators. Since the image credits (315) for the first section (8–111) are dominated by the phrase "Photos: CCB," *The Logbook* may

3

also be seen as an expression of celebrity selfie culture, because it draws upon popular conventions of self-chronicling to expose the curator's life and work.[28]

The Logbook as a Family Album

Due to the kinds of pictures included in the first section of *The Logbook,* it resembles a family album in many ways. [figs. 3 and 4] Apart from a striking number of snapshots that show the curator's dog Darsi (21, 39, 79, 91, 94, 100), several images depict Christov-Bakargiev with her then husband Cesare Pietroiusti (39) and their daughters Lucia and Rosa (37). Even the whole family is captured posing in front of a memorial in Ho Chi Minh City (58), as well as in front of an airplane in Warburton (33). What must have been research trips in preparation for *dOCUMENTA (13)* bear semblance to family vacations. [fig. 4] This inclusion of images that look like private holiday pictures is quite an unusual but important choice for the catalogue, for it demonstrates the inseparability of the curator's private and professional lives. These pictures make visible the necessity of balancing personal ties with job demands, a double bind which has long been censored by masculinist norms of autonomous professionalism while becoming much more acceptable in neoliberal times, where formally feminized relational aspects are increasingly valued in many jobs as soft skills and signs of social responsibility. As a consequence, the heteronormative mother-father-children family model has assumed new significance in societies of biopolitical governance, where "motherliness" has become an important model for leadership roles, regardless of their bearer's gender. Moreover, including family pictures may help to convey the image of the curator as a warm, caring person, an effect that is frequently used to enhance the likability of politicians and other public figures.

Publishing these personal images in an exhibition catalogue–rather than keeping them out of the public eye–is therefore not only a strong statement on the difficulty of drawing a clear line between personal and professional issues but also calls attention to the comparability of the emotional and affective investments into family life and the passions that go into curating as a labor of love. The blurring of boundaries between the curator's labor and her leisure also becomes obvious in the notable fact that CCB's husband was invited to participate in *dOCUMENTA*

(13) as an artist by Chus Martínez, co-curator of this documenta edition. However, as can be observed in an e-mail-exchange presented in the book, Pietroiusti turned down the invitation on the ground that he did not want to endanger the relationships with his artist friends in Italy. As he explains, "With difficulty I would have to continue working with them without an awkward sense of difference and privilege that comes from being the husband of the artistic director of such an important cultural event." (46) Publishing this humble denial to take advantage of his privileged relationship with the curator not only seems to be good PR, but moreover also highlights the increasing importance of networking and negotiating affective ties in a "project-based polis,"[29] where it is necessary to remain on good terms with everybody because one might want to collaborate with someone again at a later point.


4

The Logbook as a Facebook

Adopting numerous features of the family album–transforming it from a collection of personal souvenirs for retrospective private use into a more public platform of instant postings–Facebook is probably the most pivotal manifestation of today's neoliberal friendship economy. In many ways, *The Logbook* therefore also adheres to the Facebook rationale, where a voluntary exposure of formerly personal aspects of life has become as essential as displaying one's well-connectedness. In terms of layout, for instance, *The Logbook* seems to borrow Facebook's logic of the timeline by presenting text and images in columns according to chronological order, which is not a typical choice for exhibition catalogues. Also graphically inspired by real logbooks, dates and places visited by Christov-Bakargiev are successively entered into a grid of two columns, complemented with pictures taken on these days and/or e-mails of the respective dates. This geo-temporal information also portrays CCB as a "nomadic curator,"[30] a typical member of the global art jet set. It reveals how–at least in preparation for *dOCUMENTA (13)*–she was constantly on the move, travelling all around the word at dizzying speed. Many entries read like the following lists: Sharjah-Doha-Dubai-Dublin-Turin-New York (15), or Rome-Paris-New-York-Rome-London-Kassel (27). Moreover, a great number of the pictures included in *The Logbook* resemble typical Facebook images. [figs. 3 and 4, 5 and 6]

They show CCB posing with artists, curators, intellectuals, and other practitioners, emphasizing her closeness with these often very important people.[31] When pictured with one or two other persons, Christov-Bakargiev's name is omitted from captions that adhere to the pattern "With [+person's name]," thereby implicitly presuming that she does not have to be identified. Following the tradition of photo albums, this choice of caption suggests that the book is conceived from her personal perspective. Hence, the more famous of her peers are simply identified by their proper name, while for less-known individuals–such as "Francesco Cavalli and Francesca Bozzia of Leftloft, the design company, and Bettina Funcke, Head of Publications" (77)–their function or role is frequently added. This establishes a hierarchy of naming in which some do not need to be identified, while others require introduction or even remain anonymous collectives, like members of the construction crew (97) and education programme (110).


5

The choice of published e-mails follows the same logic as the image selection: even though innumerable e-mails must have been written amongst the people who helped produce the show–primarily a selection of those that were sent by CCB or to CCB were eventually published, among them exchanges with Cesare Pietroiusti, written in Italian (25, 26, 29). This

selective duplication of her in-and-out-box supports the impression that *The Logbook* was designed to represent the curator's point of view. Moreover, the display of e-mail exchanges with art world VIPs underlines CCB's importance. Among her correspondents, there are theorists such as Giorgio Agamben (14), Michael Taussig (23, 30), Franco "Bifo" Berardi (37, 41, 44, 56), Judith Butler (53), Donna Haraway (74), and Karen Barad (89), the curators Hans Ulrich Obrist (25) and Okwui Enwezor (16), as well as artists such as Thomas Bayrle (45), Wael Shawky (51), Lawrence Weiner (53), Jérôme Bell (36, 62, 92–94) and Sanja Iveković (79), to name but a few.


6

She often addresses them by first or even nickname, thus signaling intimacy. Taussig, for instance, is greeted as "Dear Mick" (23), Bell closes his e-mails with "Love" (36) or "baci" (92), and Weiner ends his with "AS ALWAYS LOVE AND KISSES" (54). By thus publicly stressing the curator's familiarity with famous individuals, CCB is displayed as the nodal point of an international network of cultural producers. Showcasing her intimacy with art world VIPs reinforces the curator's importance, while on the other hand also ennobling the emerging practitioners and less famous others who are depicted alongside her. A literal Facebook, the first section of *The Logbook* thus may be seen as a portrait gallery of Christov-Bakargiev's collaborators that characterizes *dOCUMENTA (13)* as a collective endeavor, while at the same time serving as a self-promotional medium that allows readers and viewers to intimately witness CCB's life and labour as a celebrity curator.

The Catalogue as an Exhibition Without Walls

Paradoxically, this egocentric approach in the *Logbook* that stages the curator as the center of everything counteracts the more modest display rhetorics in the exhibition itself as well as verbal disclaimers in press interviews by way of which Christov-Bakargiev diminished her authorial powers for the sake of declared curatorial neutrality, an ethics of care, and artistic autonomy that I have analysed elsewhere.[32] [figs. 7 and 12] The ghostly effects of invisible curatorial hands producing meanings and affecting the viewers' perception through assembling, juxtaposing, framing, and lighting objects were indeed more apparent in *The Logbook* than in *d (13)'s* whitewashed display.


7

Many of the snapshots that CCB took during extensive travels in preparation for *dOCUMENTA (13)* are represented in *The Logbook* as a materialization of the virtual archive of digital pictures from her smartphone. It appears as an idiosyncratic imaginary museum, where objects of different categories have been equalized by being scaled down, digitized, and flattened to the format of digital data displayed on a touch screen. In his book project *Le Musée imaginaire* (orig. 1947/1952), known in English as the *Museum without Walls*,[33] André Malraux reflected on two "waves of decontextualizing of artworks" by "transplantation" to the museum and other "sites of reproduction," while experimenting with the "equalizing" and "democraticizing effects of camera and press."[34] Playing with *cadrage*, lighting, gray scales, perspective, and the size of the photographs he included, Malraux aimed to emancipate objects from their original context in order to create a narrative of transcultural kinship and anachronistic likeness between a diversity of things from different geographical and historical backgrounds.[35]

Apart from the obvious autobiographical quality of the images in *The Logbook* that give insights into Christov-Bakargiev's associative mode of working, they also address the shifts of significance implied in curatorial and editorial reshuffling. In fact, a picture

that represents *d (13)*'s head of publications, Bettina Funcke (79), editing the catalogue seems to be a reference to the famous pictures that show Malraux editing his *Musée imaginaire* with the images spread on the floor. [fig. 8]


8

The contemporary restaging of the iconic image in *The Logbook* hints at the medial transformations of the digital age, where the photographical no longer serves as the meta-medium, but instead, the digital has become paradigmatic for every form of cultural production.[36] This does not necessarily result in code-based, screen-based, or other net-based practices but rather calls attention to the ways in which digital media also inform contemporary interactions with materiality. In *The Logbook,* the process of digitalization and informatization of tangible objects through smart-phone photography is being reversed by re-materializing the immaterial digital avatars of things into a haptic book-object, whose materiality is emphasized by the fake linen hardcover as well as by the thick matte paper. [fig. 2] Furthermore, the nostalgic appeal of black-and-white prints that evoke times when photographs still existed as material entities rather than as digital data, as well as the fact that the images are often presented as overlapping in the layout of the first section of the book, add to stress the physical substance of these pictures as hyper-real simulacra.[37]

The almost fetishistic emphasis on the book as a material thing follows an "Aesthetics of Bookishness," which has been defined by Jessica Pressmann as "a serious reflection on the book, [...] through experimentation with the media-specific properties of print illuminated by the light of the digital."[38] As one can gather from the selection of the reproduced images in *The Logbook*, Christov-Bakargiev's habit of using smart phone shots as photographic note taking is mirrored in her obvious interest in books and notebooks as well as museums and archives (27, 28, 39, 49) as material storages of knowledge. *The Logbook* features several pictures of the curator's own notebooks (18, 55, 57, 64, 69) in addition to photos of György Lukács' diary (23), Lee Miller's notepad (39), and William Kentridge's notebook (69). [fig. 9]


9

Furthermore, the memory stick of Christov-Bakargiev's phone and her handwritten notes may be said to have functioned as extensions of the curator's brain, where *d (13)* as an imaginary exhibition was slowly taking shape. In fact, many of the objects that CCB photographed during her travels literally turned up in the show, particularly in the space called *The Brain* that was situated at the heart of documenta's traditional main venue, the Rotunda of the Museum Fridericianum. [fig. 10]


10

Separated from the rest of the exhibition by a transparent glass wall, it contained a multiplicity of heterogeneous objects. *The Logbook*–in line with the other *d (13)* publications–provides a special focus on *The Brain.* Besides photographically indexing Christov-

Bakargiev's first encounters with some of the objects in their contexts of origin in the first section, it also dedicates ten pages of its second section to the installation and presentation of exhibits in the Rotunda (138-147). Like in the *Guidebook* (24-33), the documentation of *The Brain* precedes the presentation of artists and venues, setting it apart as the curator's personal vision.

The Logbook as a White Cube

The remaining hundred-plus pages of the book's second section (137–244) are dedicated to the documentation of the exhibition, providing installation shots (entire rooms), constellation shots (constellations of exhibits), and photos of single artworks. This part is ordered by venues, starting with *The Brain* as a point of departure (138-147), preceded by color pictures of the preview days and opening ceremonies (114-136), which capture the many events and activities that took place during the first days of *d (13)*. In contrast to these pages that document the socializing of VIPs mostly, in the documentation that follows there are only few shots of the people that populate the show, pictures are no longer laid out as if they were overlapping, and most importantly, the green pages have been replaced by white ones. The convention of having installation shots devoid of visitors as well as the norm of giving each image its own autonomous space on white ground are typically associated with the tradition of the white cube, which has been famously criticized by Brian O'Doherty for creating an illusion of objectivity and neutrality. With regard to the second section of *The Logbook,* O'Doherty's observation of modernist exhibition pictures seems to remain valid: "The Eye is the only inhabitant of the sanitized installation shot. The spectator is not present."[39] The middle section of *The Logbook* cites this convention not only with regard to the content of the pictures but also on the level of its own white cube-like page design, replacing the collage layout of the book's first section. In many instances, images of white cube spaces are printed on white pages (e.g. 169, 170/171, 180), and this superimposition of white cube and white page calls to mind their analogous function as ideological machines suggesting objectivity and neutrality. [fig. 11] Besides dematerializing reality by translating space into image, projecting 3D-materiality onto less material flat surfaces, this layering of white cube and white page also relates to the leveling and self-negating camouflage of display to which I referred earlier as being characteristic of many parts of *d (13)*.

11

The history of documenta provides an interesting early example of this relationship between exhibition and catalogue. Whereas Malraux had robbed the museum of its walls, compressing its reality into the virtual space of the book dominated by flat pages, the first *documenta* of 1955 (curated by Arnold Bode), took the opposite direction, while adhering to a similarly universalist art history. Bode not only used reproductions of images from the *Musée imaginaire* in the art-historical "preface" of the first *documenta,*[40] what is more, the publication *Painting in the Twentieth Century* (1954), published by co-curator and art historian Werner Haftmann a year earlier, provided the script for the show. The exhibition was a material assemblage of the artworks that the book had only talked about. As Lutz Jahre remarks about the catalogue of the first *documenta*, "The expensive catalogue reproductions also found dual uses. In 1954, Haftmann was already preparing a volume of plates to supplement and illustrate his monograph. Its first (illustrated) edition appeared in 1955, after the first *documenta.*"[41] But Haftmann not only recycled the documenta reproductions for the new edition of his book, what is more, "[...] both were published by Prestel-Verlag, ten colored and forty black/white reproductions were identical, and the layout and sequence of illustrations were very similar."[42] Therefore, Eduard Trier, who curated the sculpture section of the second *documenta*, referred to Haftmann's illustrated edition of *Painting in the Twentieth Century* as an "imaginary documenta,"[43] while Tietenberg in turn observes with regard to the first *documenta*: "To a certain degree, the layout of the exhibition was also oriented on the layout of the book's pages. In particular, presentation of paintings evoked a mode of reception comparable to 'browsing' through the pages of a book."[44] Furthermore, she describes the sculpture section of *documenta II*, curated by Trier, as "a book made architecture"[45] because, "With the

white walls suggesting neutrality and each sculpture sitting in its own niche, the exhibition visitors were liable to view the sculptures from the front."[46]

Against this historical backdrop, it is interesting to note that whilst it adheres to the white cube principle of isolating images and presenting them on white ground, *The Logbook*'s second section breaks with the corresponding convention to present perfect scans/facsimiles of paintings/photos, film stills, professional, flawless pictures of three-dimensional work, and installation shots on shiny glossy paper. Instead, it is printed on matte paper with open pores in a natural white, not a bleached one. Moreover, many of the images in this book have an amateurish DIY touch. They were obviously taken in the exhibition (not in photo studios). As a consequence of not isolating the objects from the exhibition for documentation, a number of the photos feature tokens of context. In many cases, for instance, the lightning is not ideal, so traces of the flash or other reflexions may be discerned. Furthermore, picture frames appear in the images. Sometimes other display features intervene into the representation as well. These somewhat improvised aesthetics of the images resembles the personal souvenir photographs of an ordinary visitor documenting his or her visit to the exhibition, or perhaps even the image stream of a blogger. As a consequence of such a break with conventions of "neutral" decontextualizing photography, on the level of the aesthetics of the selected images *The Logbook's* catalogue section, despite the white-cubesque layout, in a way still resembles a private vision of the show rather than a professional perspective.[47] The subjective point of view–which also captures the spatial dimension of the objects' positioning in the space instead of smoothly isolating them from their contexts of display–necessarily implies a body moving through the exhibition holding a camera.

The Logbook as a Museum of Obsessions

In its subjective and exhibitionary character, *The Logbook* may be seen as an actualization of Christov-Bakargiev's imagined documenta, mediated by the logic of social media. By de- and re-materializing exhibited objects as well as ephemeral affectivities and data-based communication through printing, *The Logbook* not only memorializes the temporary local event *dOCUMENTA (13)* in the more durable form of a book object, but it also musealizes the immaterial and affective labors behind the scenes of the show. In an interview with art critic Kia Vahland, the curator explains, "documenta is a membrane between the audience and the world behind the exhibition: artists, intellectuals, technicians. I tend to concern myself more with the world behind the exhibition than with the audience."[48] Correspondingly, she states in another interview that she pursued a career in art instead of following in the footsteps of her mother, an archaeologist, because it seemed to be "more attractive" to her, to be in "exchange with the makers, that is, people who are still alive."[49] It is hence no surprise that *d (13)* was marked by an unusually high percentage of commissioned works, as compared–for instance–to *documenta 12* (2007). CCB herself repeatedly stressed that she commissioned more than a hundred new works for the show. So, to come back to my argument from the beginning, the practice of commissioning artists rather than merely exhibiting pre-existing artworks may be read as a strategy of reciprocal authorization that prioritizes communicative interaction over ready-made exhibits, affective ties over material end products.


12

In accordance with her interest in extended notions of love, intellectual exchange, and social bonding, *The Logbook*'s first section highlights Christov-Bakargiev's contribution to some of the projects designed specifically for this show, thus representing her as their co-author. After artist Mario García Torres wrote her in an e-mail how much he had enjoyed their meeting the night before (20), CCB, for instance, responds: "How about doing a work at hotel one in Kabul as a documenta project? Like a homage to Boetti sort of..." (21). Unsurprisingly, this suggestion was carried out collaboratively. The artist and the curator travelled to Kabul together, where García Torres not only re-cultivated the One Hotel, founded by *Arte Povera* artist Alighiero Boetti as a space of conviviality in the 1970s, but also documented his research and engagement with the hotel in an audiovisual essay that was shown in Kassel.

Significantly, Boetti's textile work *Mappa* (1971) was exhibited nearby, together with correspondence between Boetti and Harald Szeemann, whose plan to exhibit the tapestry in *documenta 5* (1972) had eventually failed [fig. 12].

Christov-Bakargiev's collaborative artist-oriented approach also clearly echoes Harald Szeemann's explicit interest in artistic attitudes, which–according to curator Søren Grammel–helped the curator to acquire meta-artistic authorial status by modeling his own subjectivity on that of the artists.[50] Szeemann's *Live in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Forms* (1969) has been canonized as one of the first shows of contemporary art that was based on commissions, inviting artists to work *in situ* rather than selecting art objects for display. The catalogue for this famous show is a two-hole-punched binder with the exhibition title printed in Szeemann's handwriting on its paper cover, thereby giving it a DIY touch that functions like a signature. Apart from its self-made office aesthetic, the personal appeal of the catalogue is underlined by including a double page with facsimiles showing the front and back of the worn, handwritten paper phone list in which Szeemann compiled the contacts of artists and other people he met in preparation for the exhibition. The display of e-mail contacts in *The Logbook* similarly depicts Christov-Bakargiev's collaborative method, showing her networking and communicating with interesting and important people around the globe. Yet, while Szeemann's catalogue with its handmade look reflects the "aesthetics of administration"[51] of conceptual artistic practices, which at the time were involved in a "dematerialization of art,"[52] the design of *The Logbook* seems to be more in tune with the new materialisms and postinternet aesthetics in contemporary art, characterized by a new emphasis of materiality mediated by processes of digitization.

Christov-Bakargiev has not only repeatedly expressed her gratitude for having been supported by Szeemann when she was younger,[53] but she also pays tribute to him in *The Logbook* by including photos of her own 1999 *Arte Povera* publication on the shelves of his archive (still located in Switzerland at the time), as well as a photo of herself together with his widow, artist Ingeborg Lüscher (38). [fig. 3] Because there were numerous other references to Szeemann's practice in *dOCUMENTA (13)*, it is likely that the catalogue for *When Attitudes Become Form*, with its publication of personal notes and facsimiles of letters by artists, also served as an inspiration for *The Logbook*. I would even suggest that *The Logbook* provides an upgraded version of Szeemann's *Museum der Obsessionen* (1981), one of the first monographs to center on individual curatorial practices (auto) biographically.[54] Even while the *Museum der Obsessionen* publication was not conceived as an exhibition catalogue but rather as a retrospective compilation of a variety of different types of texts and images, it shares many characteristics with *The Logbook*. Like *The Logbook*, the *Museum der Obsessionen* includes black-and-white pictures, showing Szeemann "with" his significant others and elective affinities. [fig. 14] It features numerous references to his partner Ingeborg Lüscher and deliberately blurs the lines between private life and work, blending both into a *Gesamtkunstwerk* held together by its protagonist's passions. A hybrid of museum and memoir, the book canonized Szeemann as a model of subjective curation, and its focus on his eccentric personality contributed to consolidate the idea of the curator as author.[55]


13

Moreover, *Museum der Obsessionen* includes a text called "How an Exhibition Comes into Being," subtitled "Diary and Travel Account on the Preparations for and Consequences of [...] the exhibition *When Attitudes Become Form* (Works, Concepts, Processes, Situations, Information)."[56] The text, reprinted from the catalogue for the exhibition *Op Losse Schroeven* (literally "On Loose Screws") (1969), consists of chronological entries documenting Szeemann's curatorial practice. Starting with how Szeemann was commissioned by Phillip Morris, Inc. to produce the show, it gives insights into how he developed the concept, researched suitable artists, travelled to the United States and other places for studio and gallery visits and, finally, how he and the artists installed and opened the controversial exhibition. It ends with an extensive list of headlines and newspaper reviews that appeared as reactions to the exhibition and is complemented by a black-and-

white facsimile of the very phone list that had been included in the show's catalogue. [fig. 13] In the daily entries, Szeemann reports on his nightly meals, talks, and drinks with artists, gallery owners, and museum directors, displaying his intimacy with many important art world figures, prefiguring Christov-Bakargiev's conversational self-staging. The diaristic disclosure of Szeemann's networking and the blurring of his private and professional lives in this text in particular may well have served as a role model for the "making of" section in *The Logbook*.


14

Conclusion

Despite these similarities, it should be kept in mind that in contemporary neoliberal times of intensified biopolitical capitalizations of life, the autobiographical mode has different implications than it had in a pre-1990s cultural context still largely defined by the "old" spirit of capitalism. Christov-Bakargiev's choice to expand the catalogue's scope from merely documenting the objects on display to also highlighting the social processes of communication behind the scenes of the shows production relates to a radically altered socioeconomic frame of reference. Szeemann's insistence on exhibition-making as unconstrained self-realization and his 1969 resignation from the Kunsthalle Bern to found the *Agentur für Geistige Gastarbeit* ("Agency for Spiritual Guest Work", my translation), for instance, have been considered as acts of liberation from a limiting institutional framework and professional norms in tune with the countercultural spirit of the time. Even though they eventually turned him into the prototype of the freelance curator who played the role of a creative, autonomous meta-artist, it should be noted that the founding moment of independent curating was not as voluntary as its subsequent mythologizing by Szeemann himself or the mainstream reception would have it, but rather an instance of forced emancipation: after having been urged to resign as the director of the Kunsthalle Bern in 1969, Szeemann did not cease searching for a new institutional position until he was hired by the Kunsthaus Zürich in 1981,[57] the imaginary *Museum of Obsessions* perhaps functioning as a substitute home institution.

Retrospectively, Szeemann may nevertheless be seen as the ideal "entrepreneur of the self" for making the best out of his precarious situation. His definition of the "Agency for Spiritual Guest Work" not only perfectly matches Foucault's original definition of the entrepreneur of the self, but also Hardt and Negri's notion of the biopoliticization of production. Underscoring his believe that curating is a mode of "self-realization," in 1969 Szeemann wrote, "You need love in order to fill out a given framework [...] today a new generation of exhibition makers try to be private publicly."[58] Szeemann's own self-publishing played a significant role in the authorial ennoblement of formerly less glamorous curatorial care work. In fact, he used a politics of the personal to make visible formerly invisible curatorial labors at about the same time Hanisch declared the personal to be political (1969) and the International Wages for Housework Campaign (1972) called attention to the economic significance of housekeeping and care labor. Yet Szeemann's empowerment of curating was achieved by a heroizing singularization or even masculinization of his role as a sovereign maverick. This is exemplified by a photograph from *Museum der Obsessionen* that depicts him on the last day of *documenta 5* (1972) surrounded by participating artists. [fig. 15] Analyzing this iconic photograph, Dorothee Richter points out how he adopts gendered historical patterns of depicting men as *primus inter pares* ("first among equals") in order to demonstrate power and creativity. As she observes, "Szeemann's pose is a distinctive positioning, based on historical schemata, especially of the curator as a god/king/man among artists."[59]


15

In the meantime, independent curators are not only generally recognized as central authorities in the art field but have also come to be widely associated with precarious working conditions and new dependencies on the markets, putting an end to the glamorizing of independent curation. Recognizing the necessary heteronomy of curating, since the 1990s curatorial discourse has explicitly revaluated institutions under the heading of New Institutionalism.[60] In the late 1960s and early 1970s, up until the 1980s, the autonomist exodus from repressive factories and institutions as well as the insistence on a creative blurring of life, labor, and love could still be seen as feasible alternatives to the alienation of disciplined, standardized wage labor and hierarchically organized institutions. But in globalized post-Fordist neoliberalism, where artists and curators serve as role models for a generalization of the labor of love, and where self-marketing and the passions to perform have become economic imperatives, idiosyncratic self-assertions and the blurring of life and labor are very much in line with the demands of the new spirit of capitalism.

Against this backdrop, Christov-Bakargiev's hyperbolic exhibitionism, in which she turns herself into the prime object of display and multiplies her countenance into an army of cloned avatars tagged all over the pages of *The Logbook's* first section, may not only be read as a feminist re-appropriation of Szeemann's politics of the personal but also as a self-branding strategy in accordance with commodification of subjectivity in neoliberal biopolitics. By abstracting her personality into an image, reiterating stereotypical poses with significant others, "CCB" also turns herself into a marketable brand that circulates globally. The relationality on display in *The Logbook* therefore oscillates between identity politics, practices of solidarity, and reciprocal support on the one hand, and corporate marketing strategies on the other. It thus complicates feminist politics of the personal in the age of the feminization of labor, female shift, and Facebook's "lean in" feminism, in which privileged (white) women–often corporate executives–encourage peers to network and capitalize on their femininity in order to gain access to leadership positions, thus naturalizing both femininity and capitalism.[61] Besides its particularities, Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev's display of relationality in *The Logbook* thus reflects larger socioeconomic trends towards the intensified deployment of affect in biopolitical regimes of immaterial labor. The biopolitical turn has given rise to an increasing significance of the curator's persona in order to mark projects as parts of a recognizable brand while at the same time calling for a more relational model of authorship in tune with neoliberal networked relations of production. CCB's autobiographic self-presentation, her references to Harald Szeemann's practice, and her potentially burlesque play with and combination of contemporary and historical models of authorship thus demonstrates how performances of curatorial authorship intersect with shifting gendered labor regimes. Moreover, *The Logbook's* reflections on the new medial conditions of exhibition-making invite further elaboration of the relationship between social and technological reproduction as central sources of value in contemporary network economies.

*This text first appeared in the *Journal of Curatorial Studies,* 5:1, 2016, Special Issue "Affect and Relationality," ed. by Jennifer Fisher and Helena Reckitt, pp. 76-99, and has been revised for republication.

Notes

1 Page numbers in the body of the text refer to *Das Logbuch/ The Logbook*, part 2/3 of *dOCUMENTA (13)'s* catalogue, Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern, 2012.

2 *Museum der Obsessionen: von/ über/ zu/ mit Harald Szeemann,* Peter Gente and Heidi Paris, eds., Merve, Berlin, 1981.

3 Luc Boltanski and Ève Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, Verso, London, 2007.

4 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri*, Empire*, Harvard UP, Cambridge, MA, 2000, p. 294.

5 See Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature,* Routledge, New York, 1991; Cristina Morini, "The Feminization of Labour in Cognitive Capitalism," *Feminist Review*, 87: 1, 2007, pp. 40–59; Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth,* Harvard UP, Cambridge MA, 2009, pp. 131–49. For feminist problematizations of Hardt and Negri's approach, see Silvia Federici, "Über Affektive Arbeit," in Felicita Reuschling, ed., *Beyond Re/ production. Mothering,* Revolver, Berlin, 2011, pp. 30-38, p. 35ff.; Leopoldina Fortunati,, "Immaterial Labor and Its Machinization," *ephemera,* 7: 1, 2007, pp. 139–57, p. 146f; Kathi Weeks,"Life Within and Against Work: Affective Labor, Feminist Critique and Post-Fordist Politics," *Ephemera,* 7: 1, 2007, pp. 233–49; Angela Mitropoulos, *Contact and Contagion: From Biopolitics to Okikonomia*, Autonomedia, New York, 2012, pp. 174f.

6 Hardt/Negri, *Commonwealth*, p. 134.

7 Ibid. p. 144, and Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control," *October*, 59, 1992, pp. 3-7. See also Nanne Buurrnan, "Vom Gefängniswärter zur Heilerin. Kuratorische Autorschaften im Kontext vergeschlechtlichter Ökonomien," *Kritische Berichte,* 4, December 2016, in which she discusses the shift from disciplinary societies to societies of control corresponds with conceptualizations of the curator as a prison warden (Smithon's critique of cultural confinement at *documenta* 5) to conceptualizations of the curator as a healer (as Christov-Bakargiev was dubbed during *dOCUMENTA (13).*

8 Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the College de France,* 1978-1979, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2008, p. 226; see also Hardt/Negri, *Commonwealth*.

9 See Mariarosa Dalla Costa and Selma James, *The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community,* Falling Wall Press, Bristol, 1972; Silvia Federici, *Wages Against Housework,*Falling Walls Press, Bristol, 1975, esp. p. 2; and Fortunati, "Immaterial Labor and Its Machinization".

10 For analyses of the controversy, see Christian Marazzi, *Capital and Affects: The Politics of the Language Economy,* Semiotexte and MIT Press, Cambridge, MA and London, 2011, pp. 74f; Kathi Weeks, "Life Within and Against Work".

11 Marazzi, *Capital and Affects*, pp. 74–75.

12 See Beatrice von Bismarck, "Kuratorisches Handeln: Immaterielle Arbeit zwischen Kunst und Managementmodellen," in idem. and Alexander

Koch, ed,, *Beyond Education: Kunst, Ausbildung, Arbeit und Ökonomie,* Revolver, Frankfurt am Main, 2005.

13 See, for instance, Nancy Fraser, "Feminism, Capitalism and the Cunning of History," *New Left Review*, 56, March/April, 2009, pp. 97–117;

Nina Power, *One-Dimensional Woman*, Zero Books, Winchester and Washington, 2009.

14 Boltanski and Chiapello, *The New Sprit of Capitalism*. See also Andreas Reckwitz, *Das Hybride Subjekt: Eine Theorie der Subjektkulturen von der bürgerlichen Moderne zur Postmoderne*, Velbrück Wissenschaft, Weilerswist, 2006.

15 Marazzi, *Capital and Affects*, pp. 94, 83; Fortunati, "Immaterial Labor and Its Machinization," pp. 154; See also Encarnacion Gutierrez Rodriquez, "Affective Value: On Coloniality, Feminization and Migration," eipcp.net/transversal/0112/gutierrez-rodriguez/en. Accessed 03.03.2014.

16 See Reckwitz, *Das Hybride Subjekt*.

17 See Helen Molesworth, "House Work and Art Work", *October,* 92, 2000, pp. 71–97; and Morini, "The Feminization of Labour in Cognitive Capitalism."

18 Mitropoulos, *Contact and Contagion,* p. 172.

19 Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women*, p. 166.

20 Ibid., p. 170.

21 See, for example, Oliver Marchart, "The Curatorial Subject: The Figure of the Curator Between Individuality and Collectivity," *Texte zur Kunst,* 86, June 2012, pp. 28–40.

22 See, for example, Jan Verwoert, "The Friendship Dimension: Against the Commodification of Social Relationships", *Springerin* 4, 2011, pp. 18–21; Beti Žerovc, "Networking Competence: On the Role of Curators and Schools of Curating in the 'Left-wing Politicization of

Contemporary Art'', *Springerin* 3, 2007, n.p..

23 See, for instance, Franco "Bifo" Berardi, *The Soul at Work: From Alienation to Autonomy,* Semiotexte and MIT Press, Los Angeles, Cambridge, MA and London, 2009. The private has not always been considered extra-economic. The ancient private *oikos* ("household") was in fact the economic complement to the non-economic political public sphere. See Nanne Buurman, "Ausstellen einstellen. Kuratieren als Sorgen für Unsichtbarkeit," in Sophia Kunze und Marietta Kesting, eds., *Dark Rooms. Räume der Unsichtbarkeit*, Neofelis, Berlin, 2016.

24 Carol Hanisch, "The Personal is Political", 2006. http://www.carolhanisch.org/CHwritings/PIP.html. Accessed 01.15.2014.

25 Isabelle Graw, *Der große Preis: Kunst zwischen Mark und Celebrity Kultur,* Dumont, Cologne, 2008, pp. 165–71, 220.

26 Fortunati, "Immaterial Labor and Its Machinization," esp. p. 15.

27 Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," in John G. Richardson, ed., *Handbook for Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, Greenwood, New York, 1986, pp. 241–58, esp. p. 249.

28 See, for instance, Kim Kardashian, *Selfish,* Universe, New York, 2015.

29 Boltanski and Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism*.

30 Paul O'Neill, *The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Cultures,* MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 2012, p. 73.

31 See, for example, pages 19, 29, 30, 31, 34, 35, 59, 69, 72, 96, 104 and 111.

32 See Nanne Buurman, "Angels in the White Cube? Rhetorics of Curatorial Innocence at *dOCUMENTA (13)*," *OnCurating,* 29, May 2016.

33 Andrée Malraux, *The Voices of Silence, Vol. 1: The Museum without Walls*: Princeton UP, Princeton, NJ, 1978.

34 Rosalind Krauss, "Postmodernism's Museum without Walls," in Reesa Greenberg, Bruce Ferguson, Sandy Nairne, eds., *Thinking about Exhibitions,* Routledge, London/New York, 1996, pp. 341-348, p. 344.

35 For a historicization of Malraux's universalist approach to constructing a world art history as a "family album of art" by tracing formal resemblances across space and time, see Walter Grasskamp's chapter "The Layout of World Art" in his book *André Malraux und das imaginäre Museum. Die Weltkunst im Salon*, C.H. Beck, Munich, 2014, pp. 98-130. He also addresses the time-specific colonialist and imperialist underpinnings of such a decontextualizing approach. It recently appeared in English as *The Book on the Floor: André Malraux and the Imaginary Museum,* Getty, Los Angeles, 2016.

36 Kerstin Stakemeier, "Prosthetic Productions. The Art of Digital Bodies. On 'Speculations on Anonymous Materials' at Fridericianum, Kassel," *Texte zur Kunst,* 24/93, 2014, pp. 166-180, p. 176.

37 These processes of translation between different im/material "states of aggregation" could also be read in relation to CCB's expressedly critical stance towards processes of digitalization that she reflects in her essaysCarolyn Christov-Bakargiev, "Letter to a Friend/Brief an einen Freund," *dOCUMENTA (13)- 100 Notes/ 100 Thoughts Series,* No. 003, Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern, 2011, p.14; Idem., "The Dance Was Very Frenetic, Lively, Rattling, Clanging, Rolling, Contorted, and Lasted for a Long Time," in *The Book of Books, dOCUMENTA (13)* catalogue 1/3, Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern, 2012, pp. 30-45.

38 Jessica Pressmann, "The Aesthetics of Bookishness in Twenty-First-Century Literature," *Michigan Quarterly Review,* 48: 4, 2009, pp. 465-482, p. 466.

39 Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space,* Lapis Press, Santa Monica, CA, 1986, p. 42.

40 See Annette Tietenberg, "An Imaginary Documenta, or, the Art Historian Werner Haftmanna as an Image Producer," in Michael Glasmeier and Karin Stengel, eds., *archive in motion. 50 Jahre documenta.1955-2005,* Steidel, Göttingen, 2005, p. 39.

41 Lutz Jahre, "Curators and Catalogues. In the *Documenta* Reading Room," in Glasmeier, Stengel, eds., *archive in motion 50 Jahre documenta*, pp. 46-61, p. 50.

42 See Tietenberg, "An Imaginary Documenta," p. 40.

43 Ibid., p. 41.

44 Ibid., p. 42.

45 Ibid., p. 43.

46 Ibid.

47 Even though the imprint identifies Anders Sune Berg, Nils Klinger, Roman März, Rosa Maria Rühlig, Henrik Stömberg, and Krzysztof Zielinski as the "Installation View Photographers" (319), one may ask if in continuation of the book's first section, Christov-Bakargiev's point of view is evoked again.

48 Kia Vahland. 2012. "Über die Politische Intention der Erbeere. Gespräch mit Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev." *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. May 31 (translation by the author).

49 Heinz-Norbert Jocks, "Das Erzählen als Wille zur Wahrheit," conversation with Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, *Kunstforum International* 216, 2012, pp. 364–76, esp. p. 369 (translation by the author).

50 Søren Grammel, *Ausstellungsautorschaft: Die Konstruktion der auktorialen Position des Kurators bei Harald Szeemann: Eine Mikroanalyse, Frankfurt* am Main, Revolver, 2005.

51 Benjamin Buchloh, "Conceptual Art 1962–1969: From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions," *October,* vol. 55, Winter, 1990, pp. 105–143.

52 Lucy Lippard and John Chandler, "The Dematerialization of Art", *Art International,* February, 1968.

53 See Ralf Schlüter, "Madame Maybe," *Art: Das Kunstmagazin*, June, 2012, pp. 21–24, esp. pp.22-23; and Idem., "Das Herz der documenta schlägt in Kabul," conversation with Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, *Art Spezial: Documenta 13,* July 2012, pp. 96–98, esp. p. 96.

54 For Szeemann, the notion of the "Museum der Obsessionen" was more than a book, it was a "life-long speculative project" that never materialized as an institution or an exhibition. See *Museum der Obsessionen* p. 125 (translation by the author).

55 See Beatrice von Bismarck, "Der Meister der Werke. Daniel Burens Beitrag zur documenta 5 in Kassel 1972," in Uwe Fleckner, Martin Schieder, Michael Zimmermann, eds., *Jenseits der Grenzen. Französische und deutsche Kunst vom Ancien Régime bis zur Gegenwart. Thomas W. Gaehtgens zum 60. Geburtstag,* Dumont, Cologne, 2000. pp. 215-229.

56 See *Museum der Obsessionen*, pp. 48–73 (translation by the author).

57 I thank Maria Bremer for sharing her insights on this matter. After having directed *documenta 5* (1972), he also unsuccessfully applied for the following editions, a fact that is also rarely taken into account.

58 See *Museum der Obsessionen*, p. 112.

59 Dorothee Richter, "Artists and Curators as Authors: Competitors, Collaborators or Teamworkers?," in Beatrice von Bismarck, Jörn Schafaff, and Thomas Weski, eds., *Cultures of the Curatorial,* Sternberg, Berlin, 2012, pp. 229–48, p. 232. See also von Bismarck, "Der Meister der Werke."

60 See, for instance, Simon Sheikh, *In Place of the Public Sphere?,* b-books, Berlin, 2006.

61 Sheryl Sandberg, *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead,* Knopf, New York, 2013. For a critique of such a brand of feminism, see Susan Faludi, "Facebook Feminism: Like It or Not", *The Baffler,* 23, May 2013.

Captions

1 *dOCUMENTA (13), The Logbook* (2012).

2 *dOCUMENTA (13), The Logbook* (2012), p. 7: Contents.

3 *dOCUMENTA (13), The Logbook* (2012), p. 38: CCB with Ingeborg Lüscher, Harald Szeemann's archive with CCB's publication *Arte Povera*, CCB with

Lea Porsager on Monte Verità in Switzerland and p. 39: CCB with her husband Cesare Pietroiusti, Hitler's thermometer, Eva Braun's powder compact, and Lee Miller's notepad in the Lee Miller Archive, CCB's dog Darsi on the Laptop.

4 *dOCUMENTA (13), The Logbook* (2012), p. 58: CCB with Sopheap Pich and Vann Nath, CCB visiting Vu Giang Huong, CCB with her husband and daughters in Ho Chi Minh City and p. 59: CCB with Jimmie Durham.

5 *dOCUMENTA (13), The Logbook* (2012), p. 34: CCB with Joseph Backstein, CCB with Mario García Torres and p. 35: CCB with Guillermo Faivovich, Nicolás Goldberg, CCB with Dixie Evans.

6 *dOCUMENTA (13), The Logbook* (2012), p. 68: Hans Ulrich Obrist and CCB visit Füsun Onur and p. 69: CCB in William Kentridge's studio, CCB at a bus stop with Sanja Iveković.

7 *dOCUMENTA (13),* display (for the work by Kristina Buch) in the documenta Halle.

8 *dOCUMENTA (13), The Logbook* (2012), p. 79: Lawrence Weiner in his studio, Bettina Funcke and Darsi working on the *dOCUMENTA (13)* catalogue.

9 *dOCUMENTA (13), The Logbook* (2012), p. 18: CCB's notebook and p. 19: CCB with Catherine David, with Michelangelo Pistoletto, with Nedko Solakov, with Walter Grasskamp, group picture of CCB with former documenta directors and curators.

10 *dOCUMENTA (13), The Logbook* (2012), pp.138-139, Installation views of *The Brain*.

11 *dOCUMENTA (13), The Logbook* (2012), pp. 170-171, Installation Views, left: Susan Hiller, Khadim Ali, right: Aníbal López.

12 *dOCUMENTA (13),* Display (for correspondence between Harald Szeemann and Alighiero Boetti) in the Museum Fridericianum.

13 *Museum der Obsessionen: von/über/zu/mit Harald Szeemann* (1981), p. 72: last page of text on the making of *When Attitudes Become Form* (1969) and p. 73: Facsimile of Harald Szeemann's phone list that had also been included in the WABF exhibition catalogue.

14 *Museum der Obsessionen: von/über/zu/mit Harald Seemann* (1981), p. 172: Kassel June 1972, Johannes Cladders, H.S., Jacques Raumnot, Marcel Broodthaers, photograph by: Maria Gilissen, Brüssel and p. 173: documenta 5, Kassel, June 1972, with Ingeborg Lüscher, Photograph by Balthasar Burkhard.)

15 *Museum der Obsessionen: von/über/zu/mit Harald Szeemann* (1981), p. 174: last day of *documenta 5*, 1972, photographed by Balthasar Burkhard and p. 175: with Guy Harloff, Loreo, Easter 1973.

1–12 All photographs by: Nanne Buurman, courtesy of documenta und Museum Fridericianum Veranstaltungs GmbH, Hatje Cantz Publishers.

13–15 Photographs by: Nanne Buurman, courtesy of Merve Publishing.

Nanne Buurman is an art educator, curator, and scholar based in Leipzig currently working on her PhD in art history at the Freie Universität Berlin, where she was a DFG (German Research Foundation) funded member of the International Research Training Group *InterArt Studies* from 2012-2015. Her main research areas are curatorial and exhibition studies with a focus on documenta, authorship and gender, socioeconomic contextualization, and globalization. In 2015, she co-organized the international conference *Situating Global Art* at the Freie Universität Berlin for which she is currently co-editing the publication. Besides her academic commitments, Buurman has worked for a number of art institutions, including *Documenta11* and *documenta 12* in Kassel. She has also been involved with numerous collaborative formats of cultural production, among them the art mediation project *Arbeitslose als Avantgarde* (*The Unemployed as an Avant-garde*), which she initiated in the framework of the *documenta 12* art education program (2007), as well as a number of exhibitions and book projects. Publications include "Angels in the White Cube? Rhetoriken kuratorischer Unschuld bei der *dOCUMENTA (13)," FKW/Zeitschrift für Geschlechterforschung und visuelle Kultur,* 58, April 2015 (English translation in *OnCurating,* 29, May 2016); "Exhibiting Exhibiting. *documenta 12* as a Meta-Exhibition," *Kunsttexte,* Nr. 3, October 2016; "Hosting Significant Others: Autobiographies as Exhibitions of Co-Authority," in Beatrice von Bismarck and Benjamin Meyer Krahmer (eds.), *Hospitality: Hosting Relations in Exhibitions*, Sternberg, Berlin, 2016; "Vom Gefängniswärter zur Heilerin. Kuratorische Autorschaften im Kontext vergeschlechtlichter Ökonomien," *Kritische Berichte,* 4, December 2016; and "Home Economics: Curating as a Labour of Love," *Esse Arts + Opinions,* 90, Spring 2017.

Being Singular/Plural in the Exhibition Context: Curatorial Subjects at documenta 5, dX, D12, d(13)

by Dorothee Richter

In my view, each documenta proposes a number of specific paradigmatic models of the subject and of power constellations, which in each case function as an appeal to the visitors. These paradigmatic models of the subject operate in the political sphere: they give us a sense of how we should function as male or female citizens, they propose modes of order, they subtly convey constellations of power–in short, they communicate conceptions of race, class, and gender. In this way, they produce, as it were, a network of relationships in the sphere of culture and politics. In saying this, I am building on discussions of this subject by Walter Grasskamp, Oliver Marchart, and Nanne Buurman. In the following, I will be analysing the effects and contradictions of these paradigmatic models of the subject as "consensus machines", or as counter-hegemonic, which will involve discussion of the subtle interconnection between affirmation and criticism. The interpretation and dissemination of these models of the subject take place in catalogues and through gestures of self-positioning, but these latter are also discussed in the arts pages, which position and re-interpret them in turn.

Oliver Marchart has, for instance, discussed *documentas X*, *11* and *12* from the points of view of politicization/depoliticization, the decentring and recentring of the West, the interface between art and theory, and the strategies of mediation.[1] So my approach will be more from the angle of the apparatus of an exhibition, and I fully expect to find contradictory appeals within one and the same documenta. I have to confine myself to very few aspects, namely the verbal and iconographic statements of the visible protagonists, in this case the curators. I will start by very briefly summing up my previously published discussion of *documenta 5*, and then take a critical look at the constructions of the subject in *dX* (Catherine David), *d12* (Roger Buergel and Ruth Noack), and *dOCUMENTA (13)* (Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev).

1

2

documenta 5: Harald Szeemann and Politics of Sites

In 2012, I have put forward a detailed argument to the effect that the image of the profession of curator has been based in part on Harald Szeemann's self-staging.[2] To summarize briefly: the composition

of this photograph, which was widely circulated as a significant snapshot, makes allusion to a large number of pictorial constructions that are already charged with meaning in the Western canon. It stages a hierarchical relationship between artists and curator, with the curator positioned as a god, a man, and a genius: these images seem, as it were, to unite in the establishment of the curator's new-found authority.


3

In the essay I argued that the Bohemian group surrounding Szeemann can in fact be traced back to an earlier revolt by artists who–as part, or even as precursors, of the student revolt of 1968–mapped out new forms of community, production, and distribution. Happenings, actions, Fluxus, and the Situationists became movements that turned against the art establishment. The established institutions were bypassed; the public was to be involved. Political messages and ideas were presented, even though there was no clearly defined common political stance (not even within a given group). Gender roles and social institutions like marriage were reinterpreted: for example, through the so called FluxDivorce. Editions, newspapers, mail art, and print productions were intended to make art affordable and, through large print runs, accessible to greater numbers of people. Through the provision of "scores" of instructions for use, almost anything could become art: seen in this way, everyday actions and high art merged. That Fluxus performances were invited to Germany (to Wiesbaden) at all was due in part to a desire for the re-education of Germans; anything "American" was seen as something to be encouraged–which is quite amusing, given that the chairman of Fluxus was a young Lithuanian who lived in Germany for a number of years before emigrating with his parents to the United States.

But to return to the special grouping of figures in the photograph of Szeemann and his entourage, which was first noted by Beatrice von Bismarck.[3] This paradigmatic photograph shows clearly that having a curator with sole responsibility created a new position of power; the originally chaotic and revolutionary activity in the art of the 1960s was once again part of a power-based relationship. In my article, I cited the well-known examples of Daniel Buren and Robert Smithson, but there were numerous other clashes between Szeemann and artists, for instance Klaus Staeck and Gerhard Steidl's fight for a "political information stand" containing documentation relating to Kassel, including the city's cultural politics and aiming to show the effects of the documenta on Kassel, the art market and artists, and to reveal openly the organization and structure of documenta.[4] After some initial skirmishing, Harald Szeemann gave his response: "Dear Klaus Staeck, many thanks for your letter [of 22 February 1972]. I confirm what was said in our telephone conversation, which concluded with a 'No' to your stand. Sincerely yours, Harald Szeemann."[5] Staeck fought back, publishing the exchange of letters and other material to coincide with *documenta 5*, under the title *Befragung der documenta, oder Die Kunst soll schön bleiben* (Questioning documenta, or art is supposed to remain beautiful).[6]

4

documenta X: Catherine David, or the Blind Spot in the Eyes of Critics

As has often been noted, *documenta X*, curated by Catherine David, represented, on many levels, a break with the past, which I would like to characterize briefly. The changed interpretation of what is to be understood by contemporary art was noticeable at the very entrance to the documenta-Halle. Peter Friedl set his stamp on this *documenta X*, declaring the hall, in neon letters, to be a KINO (CINEMA). This in

itself indicates that the status of the "exhibition" had become uncertain, as had the status of the visitors as subjects. On the level of the display, the emphasis was no longer entirely on individual pictorial works: instead, the visitor was enveloped in whole "environments". So, the status of the work was no longer that of a classic, autonomous work of art: it might, for example, be a landscape created out of photo wallpaper, with the appearance of having been digitally produced, by Peter Kogler (see fig. 5). This, too, situates the visitors: it appeals to them as subjects operating in the digital age, not as subjects of the overview, the central perspective, but as subjects being enclosed in a relatively undefined overall structure. In the central area of the documenta-Halle, the curator dispensed with works of art altogether and set up a bookshop designed by Vito Acconci and a discussion area designed by Franz West. By doing this, she positioned art as part of a social and political discourse that included cultural and art studies. Overall, this pointedly demonstrated the nature of contemporary art as a complex discourse made up of a variety of subject matters, concepts, commentaries, and political contexts.

I would quickly like to add, more or less in passing, that Catherine David appointed Simon Lamunière as curator of the website and facilitated the creation of a Hybrid WorkSpace. For the first time, she acknowledged the digital space as decidedly part of the world, part of culture. The Hybrid WorkSpace was above all a largely uncontrolled space, which is hard to imagine when you think of previous and subsequent battles over access to the documenta exhibition space.[7] The Hybrid WorkSpace was organized by an entire group of individuals: Eike Becker, Geert Lovink/Pit Schultz, Micz Flor, Thorsten Schilling, Heike Foell, Thomax Kaulmann, and Moniteurs, and was initiated by Catherine David (*documenta X*), Klaus Biesenbach, Hans Ulrich Obrist, Nancy Spector (Berlin Biennial); the Hybrid WorkSpace group was given the use of a five-room apartment where they could invite guests, make radio broadcasts, communicate with the outside world, and establish contacts with web initiatives and make them accessible.

With regard to content, Catherine David showed–again in complete contrast to the emphasis placed on painting in the preceding documentas–many works from the 1960s that had either fallen into oblivion or not yet attracted attention in the "Western" context. The main themes ranged, as the documenta Archive puts it, "from the debate on post-colonialism (as in Lothar Baumgarten's *Vakuum* series, 1978–80, or the *documenta documents*), various models of urbanism (Aldo van Eyck, Archigram, Archizoom Associati, Rem Koolhaas), and the meaning of the visual image in the media society (exemplified by Marcel Broodthaers's *Section Publicité du Musée d'Art Moderne, Département des Aigles*, 1968), to contemporary web art".[8] I am only briefly mentioning all this to make it clear that, in both form and content, the *documenta X* broke with many previously accepted paradigms of contemporary art.


5


6


7

8

What was therefore more than surprising was that there was relatively little debate about the director's approach in terms of structure and content, while the press focussed its discussion instead on Catherine David as a person. The *documenta X* website still refers to this: "Instead of genuinely engaging with the questions raised or with David's achievement as a curator, the general tendency among art critics was to make continual reference to the exhibition's 'over-emphasis on theory' or 'intellectualism' and its alleged 'lack of sensuousness'."[9] Dirk Schwarze discusses the language of the documenta criticism in an article published online:

> The fact that for the first time a woman was the artistic director [...] tempted commentators into using formulations that were sometimes distasteful:
>
> 'Catherine David has a very narrow head. But there's an awful lot in it. Catherine David looks as fragile as a fairy. But she has all the charm of a deep-frozen crowbar. Catherine David has an attractive mouth, usually painted with dark red lipstick, but she is never seen to smile. Whether she is really like that, or is artfully staging herself as an arrogant, unapproachable intellectual diva, is hard to tell, given how self-marketing ploys are proliferating at the higher levels of the art world.' (Martin Jasper, *Braunschweiger Zeitung*)
>
> [...] 'There has been much puzzling over the eyes, the physiognomical trademark of the current director, who has sole charge of the documenta. David is said to be unpredictable and snappish, to be a Parisian sphinx; the word 'merde' easily crosses the lips of that Snow White face.' (Roland Gross, *Darmstädter Echo*) [...] 'She looks like Snow White – twenty years after the episode with the seven dwarfs. Yesterday the beautiful documenta boss was an object of desire for photographers. [...]' (Birgit Kölgen, *Westfälische Rundschau*).[10]

And Schwarze's survey also includes the following, from Dorothee Müller of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*:

> 'Sometimes, with Catherine David, you have [...] the feeling that a nun has turned up in a brothel. A nun who, with missionary zeal, wants to convert the scene of vice into one of virtue. The brothel is the art world and an event like the documenta is a part of that world. [...] Large parts of the documenta [...] are totally lacking in sensuousness, and its creator is not so much a high priestess raising art onto an altar as a stern disciplinarian demanding that we perform rigorous religious exercises.'"[11]


9

Well, the way she stages herself in photographs, does not support any of those comments. If we try to interpret them as stagings, what we see is the restrained black-and-white uniform of a female curator or professor who, in line with common practice, takes her cue from the classic black-and-white image of a man in a suit, albeit in a slightly freer version. The only claim to status that the photos make is that of an autonomous subject. So what prompted this extreme malice, which strikes us today as so inappropriate? Seen from a feminist point of view, this kind of "criticism" caters to the typical denigration of women. There is no discussion of content: instead the woman is reduced to externals and thereby to her gender role (imposed by a patriarchal society). Viewed in this way, the director of *documenta X* is primarily a woman who has had the gall to take up such a high-profile public position and additionally refuses to smile.

I suspect that other subtle, unspoken ascriptions also play a part. Walter Grasskamp has pointed out what an important ideological role art exhibitions played after the Second World War: However, with

documenta X, the controls were in the hands not only of a woman, but also–the elephant in the room, in my view–of a *Jewish* woman. Some of the commentaries betray the subtly racist character of their ascriptions when, for instance, they speak of a "high priestess", or of "Snow White": they specifically target Catherine David's dark hair and pale complexion. Vague religious connotations waft through the texts, as we have seen: high priestess, religious exercises, nun. At the same time, implicit reference is made to the myth of the beautiful Jewess–a myth about which Elvira Grözinger has written and which paints Jewish women as seductresses and destroyers, with Snow White a frequent metaphor.[12]


10


11

One can therefore draw the conclusion that the refusal to engage with the themes and formats of *documenta X* is based on a refusal to acknowledge the leadership role of a woman, and more specifically a Jewish woman. Retrospectively, as it were, the critics deny her the position of a producer of meaning beyond the physical, gender, or "racial" characteristics to which she is implicitly reduced. Thus, the autonomous subject status accorded to Catherine David–caught as she is between her own self-staging and ascriptions from the outside–can be seen to be extremely precarious and fundamentally contested: she is represented as someone who is permitted only with reservations to create meaning at a (Federal) German exhibition venue, even if especially this *documenta* did make the greatest possible impact on the arts and is in retrospect widely acknowledged as one of the most important ones.[13] Okwui Enwezor as a director of non-Western origin and Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev as the second female director of a documenta each developed, in the run-up to the event, strategies for avoiding this kind of radical verbal rejection and negation; it would be worth analysing those strategies in detail.

documenta 12: Roger M. Buergel and Ruth Noack, or Scenes from a Marriage

What is striking in both official and less official photographs of the curators–or rather of the director and the curator, Roger Buergel and Ruth Noack–who were partners in private life–is that iconographically they staged themselves very much as a couple (see fig. 10, 11, 13). Here are several pictures in which their respective clothing is carefully coordinated in both style and colour. They also often relate to each other through the direction of their gazes. Thus, they are clearly presenting themselves as a couple, and not merely reflecting their essentially hierarchical professional relationship. As the man, Buergel, often assumes the more dominant position; he appears larger and looks straight out of the picture, while Noack's gaze is often turned towards him. For comparison, the curators of the fifth Berlin Biennale, Adam Szymczyk and Elena Filipovic: their clothes show no such striking correlations in style and colour, nor do their postures suggest a hierarchical private relationship (see fig. 12).


12

Oliver Marchart comments critically on the conscious displaying of the couple relationship between Buergel and Noack:

> D12 [...] is in fact the first major international exhibition to be curated neither by a single individual, nor by two individuals together[...], nor by a team (as with D11), but by a bourgeois nuclear family. In the preface to the catalogue, the only subjects, apart from the authors Buergel und Noack themselves, are their children, Charlotte and Kasimir. A truly innovative form of collective practice in the field of art", Marchart continues with some sarcasm, "which not only, unfortunately, betokens a new bourgeois respectability–despite the assertion of feminism that distinguished the d12–but also has more far-reaching implications.[14]

The reaction of Christian Kravagna to this shift was similarly critical:

> Enwezor was a curator who unquestionably had more international experience prior to taking on the documenta, yet despite this, or precisely because of it, he chose to operate with a team of six co-curators who brought with them a wide range of knowledge drawn from a variety of artistic and living environments. Buergel and Noack, by contrast, act as a family, which brought about a shift of emphasis from the political to the personal that manifested itself in, among other things, a delight in the discovery of beautiful and interesting objects that one could come across in foreign lands and then present as individual lucky *trouvailles*.[15]

This self-staging of *documenta 12* director Buergel and *d12* curator Noack not merely as a couple but as a family is reinforced by the added touch that the Roman numeral twelve in the documenta logo is said to have been designed by one of the couple's children. Even to me, as someone who has repeatedly collaborated with both Roger Buergel and Ruth Noack, this narrative of a traditional nuclear family came as a surprise. After all, when I had invited Ruth Noack to take part in a symposium on feminist strategies in contemporary art, she had offered to turn over her place as a speaker to the group "Frauensolidarität/ Frauenbeziehungen" (Solidarity between women/ relationships between women), as they would present a radical discussion of the connection between form and content. Noack felt a close connection with this Austrian group. At that time (in 1999), Noack, although in a relationship with Buergel, identified herself as a lesbian. In her contribution to the publication resulting from the symposium, she wrote: "As Roland Barthes pointed out, identity that is created by narrative follows an Oedipal structure: 'If there is no longer a father, why tell stories at all?'"[16]

It is not part of my argument to discuss the sexual orientation preferred by Noack or Buergel nor anybody else's: for one thing, that is their business, and for another I consider the requirement of a clear-cut sexuality and gender attribution on binary lines to be a patriarchal imposition, as has been discussed by Jacqueline Rose in particular in relation to the visual field.[17] But I would like to raise as an issue the fact that both Noack and Buergel, when they assumed the direction of the *documenta 12*, gave their own public image a new interpretation as a conventional narrative. It would have been possible to show a different kind of partnership, one not intrinsically defined as a hierarchy, in which gender roles might be more fluid and both partners could stage themselves as professionals of equal status. Instead, Buergel and Noack conducted their public appearances in an unusual way: while Roger Buergel introduced the programme or particular concepts, Ruth Noack, from among the audience, critiqued or questioned his statements. Perhaps the intention of this publicly performed dissent was to offer an insight into the discourse between the two, but as a spectator one was uncomfortably reminded of scenes from a marriage.


13

It would be well worth investigating what effects the return to a more conservative approach, which Oliver Marchart identifies at many levels in the *documenta 12* directorship, had on the production of the exhibition and the meaning it created. I suspect that there were many contradictions, with messages that were in the end very mixed, some conservative, others extremely progressive. For instance, *documenta 12* did feature a higher percentage of female artists

than any previous or later one, and altogether gave ample exposure to feminist works. It is possible that Buergel and Noack were attempting a strategic move that misfired, using conservative elements like the staging of a nuclear family and Buergel's frequently mentioned return to the Romantic and the beautiful in order to smuggle in critical messages.

I am suggesting this apparently far-fetched idea because of the fact that the last exhibition Roger Buergel created before being appointed documenta director was *Das Privatleben der Werder Bremen Spieler* (The Private Lives of the Werder Bremen Soccer Players) at the Künstlerhaus Bremen, to which, in my role as artistic director of the Künstlerhaus, I had invited him. The title was intended, like an optical illusion, to raise false expectations: the exhibition presented no images of anyone's private life nor of any soccer player but instead a subtle narrative made up of textual fragments and photographs, some by Buergel himself, some by artists. This was intended to show how he conceives exhibitions through associations as well as through inspiration from theoretical ideas. Perhaps it was this media-reflexive game with unfulfilled expectations and surprisingly critical content that originally suggested the idea of staging a perfect, conservative relationship between a couple. In the execution, the use of this framework may have proved less manageable than expected.

dOCUMENTA (13): Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev as an "Angel in the White Cube"?[18]

This is the photograph with which, on 18 September 2009, Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev ushered in *dOCUMENTA (13)* (see fig. 14). For this, her first appearance, she framed herself with previous documenta directors. From the outset, she staged her authority iconographically; she was letting it be known that, with this conference, the *dOCUMENTA (13)* had already begun. In this way, she was providing herself with support–from documenta authority figures in general, not merely from individual past directors to whom specifically she, in her position, might be able to look for assistance or inspiration. As we have seen from the example of *documenta X*, it might be also especially important for a female curator/director of documenta to represent herself in this way. But I would argue that Christov-Bakargiev initiated a conservative change on at last three different levels: On the first level, she interpreted the role of a female curator alongside traditional female role models, on the second level, she obscured all hierarchies inside the documenta organisation, and on the third level, she obscured and confused critique of National Socialism in a politically problematic way.


14

The following reading of the first two points of *d(13)* is heavily indebted to Nanne Buurman's work on this issue of documenta:

> Whereas the preceding *documenta 12* (2007)–with its ostentatious mise-en-scène–had shifted the attention away from artist-subjects and contexts of production towards the context of reception, the effects of display on the perception of objects, and the experiences of visitors, *d(13)*'s display, in contrast, was curbed in favour of centring the attention on the artists as its primary authors. Thus, *d(13)* countered the reflection of exhibitionary mediality and authority, epitomized in *d12* by the mirrored entrance hall, by once again re/turning to the model of the white cube.[19]

As Buurman observes in her text "Angels in the White Cube. Rhetorics of Curatorial Innocence at *dOCUMENTA (13)",* CCB often staged herself as a warm-hearted, welcoming hostess, and explicitly opposed the theoreticization of art and of display.[20] Here is Buurman quoting CCB: "'Art seems to be in danger of being talked to death.' [CCB] criticized an 'excess of art criticism and theory', because [as CCB claims] 'often these texts are not discussing the artworks themselves but curatorial positions in contemporary art, thereby becoming a meta-artistic discourse' (2012b: 692)."[21] Buurman examines "how the power inherent in the dispositives of showing (once again) became (or was rendered) invisible by verbal and visual rhetorics of innocence" and specifies "the ways in which the political dimension of exhibiting – i.e. 'the power of display' and the hierarchization of visitors and exhibits implied in their constellation

– was deproblematized."[22] Therefore, she links the ways in which CCB presents herself as the model of the self-effacing hostess who always gives precedence to her guests, in this case, the artists.

In fact, as Buurman observes not only in "Angels" but also in her 2016 text "CCB With...Displaying Curatorial Relationality in *dOCUMENTA (13)'s The Logbook*", talk of hospitality and care was omnipresent at *d(13):* much space is given to networks and friendships, especially in *The Logbook*.[23] The topic of curating as care has been taken up by different authors, for example, Elke Krasny in her not yet published PhD on Susan Lacy's project of networked international dinner parties, "The International Dinner Party. A Curatorial Model, Re-Mapping Affinities, Transnational and Feminist Practices". Curating as care in this context is an outspoken feminist concept of networking women in the arts.[24] It is Buurman's merit to draw attention to the fact that the notion of "curating as care" and "curating as networking" sometimes also problematically colludes with the neoliberal deployment of traditional concepts of femininity in post-Fordist societies and their regimes of immaterial and affective labour.[25]

As Olga Fernandez and I have argued on more than one occasion, precisely this promise of a kind of authorship that is networked, mobile and international–secondly–turns the position of the curator into a paradigmatic performance of the new post-Fordist model of work.[26] And I agree with Buurman's analysis that this is affirmed as a performative cultural uttering to position immaterial and affective labour as naturalised. Biopolitical means that, in Foucault's usage, this technique of power does not deal with single subjects in the way that Althusser's concept of interpellation was formulated, but that this cultural utterance would instead influence major parts of societies. Immaterial and affective labour are no longer marginal, but can be seen as installed firmly, not only in creative industries but all over in the worldwide financial business and on all levels of management tasks in companies, as Maurizio Lazzarato, Antonio Negri, and Michael Hardt, as well as Eve Chiapello and Luc Boltanski have pointed out in their discussions on immaterial labour. The different theoretical approaches have in common that they want to explore how power is reorganised in a global capitalism, in which the state apparatuses have lost their central role. On the other hand, one might argue the ideological state apparatuses have gained immense terrain in influencing people with post-factual imaginary scenarios, such as those one sees in the shocking rise of the right all over the Western world.

Under the cloak of a curatorial non-concept of *d(13)* that would give priority to the artistic personality,[27] a kind of Facebook persona of the female curator as a networker is celebrated even in the *dOCUMENTA (13)* catalogue (*The Logbook*), as Buurman has shown in her detailed analysis "CCB With....".[28] Buurman speaks of a "bio-politicization" of curatorial performance: "What are the (bio)political implications of Christov-Bakargiev's presentation of herself as a dialogic, caring, enthusiastically committed round-the-clock networker in a context where flexible project-based labour systems, team-working, multi-tasking, flat management and full personal identification with one's work have become hegemonic ideals?"[29] She argues that the comprehensive displaying of the processes of social communication, which were shown in *The Logbook* in great detail, particularly in the first section of the book, along with the relatively conventional presentation of art in the second section is an affirmative reference to or expression of neoliberal friendship economies.

To expand on Buurman's observations, I would add that the discourse Christov-Bakargiev conducted is reminiscent less of a position informed by theory than of a drawing-room chat, which implies, as I try to show, a historically and politically confused conception of contemporary problems.

> **Christov-Bakargiev:** [...] The philosopher Martin Heidegger said that we know we have to die, but the other animals do not know it. But how does he know that? The twenty-first century is the century of great discoveries–for example, we are only just discovering the language of crows. It is mad to persist in thinking about the other animals in the way you do. Birds form flocks in the sky and fly thousands of miles and communicate with each other. So there are forms of telepathy and a language of animals.
>
> **Süddeutsche Zeitung (Kia Vahland):** And you claim to understand animals and plants?
>
> **Christov-Bakargiev:** In a true democracy, in my view, everyone is allowed a voice. The question is not whether we give dogs or strawberries the right to vote, but how a strawberry can assert its political intention. My aim is not to protect animals and plants but to emancipate them. At one time, it used to be said that we had universal

> suffrage, and yet women did not have the vote. Why did no one see the contradiction there? If the citizen-subject was construed as being only male, then certainly there was universal suffrage.
>
> **SZ:** Why should dogs be able to vote, like women?
>
> **Christov-Bakargiev:** Why not? Does the world belong less to dogs than to women?
>
> **SZ:** Do you see no fundamental difference between a woman and a dog?
>
> **Christov-Bakargiev:** Absolutely not! There is no basic difference between women and dogs or between men and dogs. Or between dogs and the atoms that make up my bracelet. I think everything has its own culture. The cultural product of the tomato plant is the tomato.[30]

The interviewer herself, faced with this random mixture of wild speculations about emancipation, women, animals, agency, and voting rights, seems to be somewhat at a loss for words. These statements could not be further removed from Catherine David's call for a critical engagement with the political, social, economic, and cultural questions of the globalized present-day world, for a "manifestation culturelle" that would, "in various different ways, facilitate access to an understanding of the state of the world"–explicitly refusing to pander to a "society of spectacle".[31] Yet, in the contemporary debate there are many lines of enquiry that explore such questions on a firmer theoretical basis, such as, for example, projects by Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, the Anthropocene Issue[32] and Animism,[33] which consequently were explored in a variety of formats. It would be interesting to compare a work shown at *dX*, *Ein Haus für Schweine und Menschen* (A House for Pigs and People), a collaboration between Carsten Höller and Rosemarie Trockel, with works from *dOCUMENTA (13)* by Pierre Huyghe, *Untilled, 2011–12, Alive entities and inanimate things, made and not made. Dimensions and duration variable* and *Dog Run*, to investigate the notions of humans/animals that are put forward.[34]

Another problem in the positioning of subjectivity through *dOCUMENTA (13)* is the continuing blurring of authorship. Not only does CCB present herself as a co-author of artistic work, as noted by Buurman,[35] through the obviously participatory nature of the interventions and in how the artwork should be perceived, but CCB also confuses any hierarchies in the organisation of documenta. A good example is that Chus Martínez repeatedly appeared as some sort of co-curator, yet did not explicitly hold that position. On the *d(13)* website, numerous individuals were listed, including Chus Martínez as a department head, agent, and member of the core group; eight other people were described as agents of the core group, ten more were only agents, there were three personal assistants to CCB, eleven advisors, Dr Christine Litz as project manager, a large number of curatorial assistants, a fairly large group of people responsible for dealing with the press, and then again a head of "Vielleicht Vermittlung und Andere Programme" (Maybe Education and Public Programs)–Julia Moritz.[36] Julia Moritz answered about this rather confusing structure in an email dated 3 October 2016:

> dear dorothee, yes that's how it was–surreal administration and deliberate confusion as a concept :) chus was co-director alongside ccb, of everything, and called this "head of department" despite it embracing different areas/departments, deliberately absurd–then there were, as always, the four departments: communication, publication, education and exhibition, and I headed the education department, with the flowery title of director of Vielleicht Vermittlung und Andere Programme (Maybe Education and Public Programs), though we "real" heads of departments were happy to forgo that bureaucratic addition [...] best, Julia.[37]

The fact that the hierarchy is obscured does not cause it to disappear, but makes everything all the more impenetrable and nebulous. As Buurman points out, in *The Logbook* CCB staged her relationship with Szeemann and his partner as an act of consecration, as indirectly conferring authority on her.[38] CCB positioned herself in relation to an absent, great Other, one might say.[39] Despite all the parading of a variety of personal relationships and a rather naively presented account of complex issues, she was clearly engaging in power strategy when she announced to Rein Wolfs–as he himself told me–that she would under no circumstances show any artist whose work he had previously exhibited under his directorship in the Fridericianum. The single exception to this was then Matias Faldbakken, whose work was shown off-site at the library.[40]

As Buurman has noted, CCB's idea of her documenta non-concept was presented in condensed form in the so-called *Brain*,[41] which would imply this

small room as a brain and the rest of the exhibition as a body, again an obvious hierarchical positioning. In *Die Zeit* Hanno Rauterberg described it as follows:

> There are the pastose pictures of vases by the painter Giorgio Morandi, in gold frames. There are stone figures, the Bactrian Princesses, 4,000 years old, from what is now northern Afghanistan. There is also a postcard-sized metal panel with knobs, a switch devised by the computer pioneer Konrad Zuse. And so it goes merrily on, a whole collection of fragile, damaged old things, and as if that were not enough–and lest we should get bored with this exercise in disconnected thinking–*he* is there, too: Adolf Hitler, both as a photograph and in the form of a fluffy bath towel with the embroidered initials A.H. Right next to it is a perfume bottle that once belonged to Eva Braun. You would only have to open the glass case to be able to smell what Hitler smelled.


15

Someone who did precisely this was the photographer Lee Miller, who came to Germany in the 1940s as a war reporter: she did not do it by opening a glass case, she penetrated the Führer's Munich apartment, had a good look round and finally had a bath; it was the night before Hitler killed himself. Miller photographed herself like that, sitting in the bathtub. That is how we see her now, in the *Brain*."[42]

I cannot enter into all the interrelationships or narratives suggested by the objects that were put on show in the "Brain". But Miller's photographs, occupying this position–the central position in the exhibition's central building–are fraught with meaning. Miller's photographs demystify, they show a very commonplace bathroom, and clearly a bathroom that it was easy to commandeer; it is bourgeois and very ordinary. Hitler's portrait, in a small format, stands on the rim of the bath, propped against the wall, and a typical, neoclassical small sculpture stands on a table on the right. Miller's appropriation of the bathroom has something anarchical about it, her boots and clothes have been carelessly thrown onto the floor, and the floor in front of the bathtub is dirty. The manner of the appropriation is undramatic. But the photographs are shown together with the towel with the initials A.H. and the perfume bottle, and the demystification is in danger of being turned into its opposite. Is this supposed to show me banality, the banality of evil?[43] But what does this signify in the context of the placing of pictures, old statues, stones, and digital replicas of them, all on the same level?


16

In CCB's text, "On the Destruction of Art–Conflict and Art, or Trauma and the Art of Healing", even the title is a jumble of disparate things. She did give a brief analysis of the photograph of Miller, but did not explain the precise curatorial idea–i.e., what exactly the combination of different objects and images and the arrangement of them in the room was supposed to suggest in terms of a narrative or idea[44] The question she posed in relation to the objects is in fact what I quote here from an interview:

> These objects [Eva Braun's perfume bottle and other things] stolen for so many years, are there now. I am always playing games on different levels. And one level is: would the German government ask for restitution? Because as you know, questions of restitution [...] pop up all the time nowadays.[45]

Once again, everything is thrown into the great levelling machine and falls at our feet like vomit: the restitution of artworks and objects that are the property of Jews and are to be returned is equated with Hitler's bath towel or thermometer. Personal belongings of Jews murdered in the Shoah, which can be seen in Jewish museums or at Yad Vashem, are equated with bath towels or perfume bottles belonging to some Nazis–whom I have no wish to remember as people.

The critical reassessment of National Socialism has involved, and still involves, understanding it structurally, as a social and political system; remembering millions of people who were murdered involves preserving mementos of them, remembering each one individually as a person and telling their personal story. Professional scenographers, such as, for example, Holzer Kobler and their staff, who installed an exhibition at the former concentration camp Buchenwald, have to consider precisely how to present objects owned by the jail guards or by their victims.[46] Thus, the objects owned by guards are deliberately put on a lower level, and they are not presented prominently in any way. Very consciously, meaning is produced through the way things are presented. On the contrary, in the "Brain", the postmodern gesture to equalize everything is dominant, which concludes in levelling structures, differences, causes, and outcomes, historical situations, economic bases, and superstructures. Here, I agree with Hanno Rauterberg, who aptly comments:

> Less weight is given to logical thinking, thinking in terms of cause and effect. Two paintings by Dalí are forced into juxtaposition with an experimental apparatus for DNA research, for all the world as though the brave new world of breeding humans were just an innocent matter of aesthetics. One might end up thinking that violence, war or the Holocaust are also somehow simply natural events occurring without a cause. If there are no longer any clearly defined subjects, then there is no one who bears responsibility. Animism is very good at letting everyone off the hook.[47]

I must reiterate that this subject construction ends up in staging the role of a female curator as compatible with conservative connotations, welcoming, naïve, uninformed, not too sharp, taking up power in a hidden way. The discussed gestures position her as a meta-artist, a staging in which the celebrity status as such is one of the most important messages. One could argue that at least partly critical artworks were pacified in their (in some cases) much more radical commentary on contemporary societies.

17

* Translation: Judith Rosenthal

Notes

1 Oliver Marchart, *Hegemonie im Kunstfeld, Die documenta Ausstellungen, d10, D12, d11 und die Politik der Bienalisierung*, Marius Babias, ed., Walther König, Köln, 2008.

2 Dorothee Richter, "Artists and Curators as Authors – Competitors, Collaborators, or Teamworkers?", Beatrice von Bismarck et al., ed., *Cultures of the Curatorial*, Sternberg Press, Leipzig and Berlin, 2012, pp. 229–250; also published elsewhere.

3 See Beatrice von Bismarck, "Der Meister der Werke. Daniel Burens Beitrag zur >documenta 5< in Kassel 1972", Uwe Fleckner, Martin Schieder, Michael F. Zimmermann, eds., *Jenseits der Grenzen/ Dialog der Avantgarden*, DuMont Literatur und Kunst Verlag, Köln, 2000, pp. 215-229.

4 Klaus Staeck, *Befragung der documenta, oder Die Kunst soll schön bleiben*, Steidl, Göttingen, 1972, p. E 10.

5 Ibid., p. E 14.

6 Ibid., pp. E 10 – E 16.

7 See *documenta X* website, Archiv.documenta, http://www.documenta12.de/archiv/dx/deutsch/frm_info.htm. Accessed 20.03.2017.

8 Ibid.

9 Retrospective of documenta: https://www.documenta.de/en/retrospective/documenta#. Accessed 14.12.2016.

10 See Dirk Schwarze, "Zur Sprache der documenta-Kritik". http://dirkschwarze.net/category/documenta/page/169/.26 April 2010.) Accessed 26.10.2010.

11 Schwarze 2010 (see note 10). Accessed 19.09.2016.

12 Elvira Grözinger, *Die schöne Jüdin. Klischees, Mythen und Vorurteile über Juden in der Literatur,* Philo, Berlin and Vienna, 2003.

13 For a detailed analysis, see the shortened English version of the publication from footnote 1, see Oliver Marchart, "Curating Theory (Away), The Case of The Last Three Documenta Shows," in *Institution as Medium, Curating as Institional Critique?* Dorothee Richter, Rein Wolfs, eds., *OnCurating* No. 8, 2011, pp. 4-8.

14 Oliver Marchart, *Hegemonie im Kunstfeld, Die documenta-Ausstellungen dX, D11, d12 und die Politik der Biennalisierung*, pp. 63–64.

15 Christian Kravagna, *Texte zur Kunst*, No. 67, September 2007, p. 205, quoted here in Marchart, Ibid., p. 64.

16 Ruth Noack, "Wer ist man, wo endet man, und wo beginnt die oder der andere? Zur Videotrilogie 'Me/We; Okay; Gray' von Eija-Liisa Ahtila", Dorothee Richter, ed., *Dialoge und Debatten, ein internationales Symposium zu feministischen Positionen in der zeitgenössischen Kunst*, Verlag für moderne Kunst, Nuremberg, 1999, p. 97.

17 Jacqueline Rose, *Sexuality in the Field of Vision*, Verso, London and New York, 2010.

18 I borrow this title from Nanne Buurman, "Angels in the White Cube?

Rhetoriken kuratorischer Unschuld bei der dOCUMENTA (13)", *FKW // Zeitschrift für Geschlechterforschung und visuelle Kultur*, No. 58, April 2015, pp. 63–74. In the following, I cite from the slightly expanded translation "Angels in the White Cube? Rhetorics of Curatorial Innocence at *dOCUMENTA (13)*", *OnCurating*, No. 29, Mai 2016, pp. 146-160.

19 Ibid., p. 149.

20 Ibid., pp. 146, 149, 155-156. See also Nanne Buurman: "CCB With... Displaying Curatorial Relationality in dOCUMENTA (13)'s *The Logbook*," *Journal of Curatorial Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 1, June 2016, pp. 76-99, here: pp. 79 ff, 87, 90/91ff.

21 Buurman, "Angels in the White Cube," p. 149.

22 Ibid., p. 148.

23 Ibid., pp. 146, 149, 155-156, and Buurman, "CCB With...", pp. 79 ff, 87, 90ff.

24 Elke Krasny, *The International Dinner Party. A Curatorial Model, Re-Mapping Affinities, Transnational and Feminist Practices*, unpublished PhD, University of Reading, 2014.

25 Buurman, "Angels in the White Cube" and "CCB With....". See also Buurman "Vom Gefängniswärter zur Heilerin. Kuratorische Autorschaften in vergeschlechtlichten Ökonomien," *Kritische Berichte,* No. 4, December 2016, pp. 109-116.

26 Olga Fernandez, "What is it That Makes ‚Curating' so Different, so Appealing?", *Institution as Medium, Curating as Institutional Critique?* Part 1, Dorothee Richter, Rein Wolfs, eds. *OnCurating* No. 8, 2011, p. 40-42. http://www.on-curating.org/issue-8.html#.WHFDNz8VgXk. See also my talk at Kiasma, Helsinki, "Development of curating and mediating contemporary art," 2011, (not published) and Dorothee Richter, "In conversation with False Hearted Fanny, Feminist Demands on Curating," in Elke Krasny, ed., *Women's: Museum. Curatorial Politics in Feminism, Education, History, and Art | Frauen: Museum. Politiken des Kuratorischen in Feminismus, Bildung, Geschichte und Kunst*, Löcker, Vienna, 2013, p. 75-83; additionally, the concept of the Postgraduate Programme in Curating at Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK) is based on this notion from a critical perspective.

27 See Buurman, "Angels in the White Cube," pp. 149-152.

28 For a detailed discussion, also see Buurman, "CCB with...: Displaying Curatorial Relationality in dOCUMENTA (13)'s *The Logbook*," pp. 76–99, pp. 86-89.

29 Ibid., p. 79.

30 2012. Kia Vahland. "Documenta-Leiterin Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev: Über die politische Intention der Erdbeere." Interview, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. 8 June, Accessed 14.12.2016. http://www.sueddeutsche.de/kultur/documenta-leiterin-carolyn-christov-bakargiev-ueber-die-politische-intention-der-erdbeere-1.1370514.

31 *documenta X* website. Accessed 14.12.2016. http://www.documenta.de/de/retrospective/documenta_x#.

32 Campus 2014: The Anthropocene Issue, Anthropocene Curriculum, 14–22 November 2014: "The Anthropocene is based on a changing earth system as a complex system. We can also regard the Campus as a complex system. I think we should allow the participants enough freedom to self-organize, because that's what a complex system does". Workshops, publications, video recordings, etc., Katrin Klingan, Ashkan Sepahvand, Christoph Rosol, Bernd M. Scherer, eds., *Textures of the Anthropocene: Grain Vapor Ray* (from 2013).

33 Anselm Franke (curator), *Animismus* (Animism), Haus der Kulturen der Welt: "How do we distinguish things from beings? The exhibition *Animismus* examines the way we draw the boundaries between life and non-life on the basis of aesthetic symptoms. The scientific positivism of the modern era was based on a categorical division between nature and culture, between a subjective and an objective world. Animism has become the alternative to that view of ourselves. That is the starting point for this exhibition. With works by around thirty international artists, curator Anselm Franke transforms the Haus der Kulturen der Welt into a self-reflexive anthropological museum of the modern age. Friday, 16 March–Sunday, 6 May 2012."

34 See the article by Dorothea von Hantelmann in this issue of *OnCurating*.

35 See Buurman, "CCB With...," esp. pp. 90-94.

36 For a discussion of the similar crediting of the crew in *The Logbook*, see also Buurman, "CCB With...," p. 85.

37 Julia Moritz in an e-mail to Dorothee Richter of 3 Oct. 2016.

38 See Buurman "CCB With...," pp. 91-93.

39 Ibid., pp. 77, 93, 95. See also Buurman, "Hosting Significant Others. Autobiographies as Exhibitions of Co-Authority," in *Hospitality. Hosting Relations in Exhibitions*, Beatrice von Bismarck and Benjamin Meyer-Krahmer, eds., Sternberg Press, New York and Berlin, 2016, pp. 123-148.

40 Conversation with Rein Wolfs on 7 Oct. 2016, Zurich.

41 See Buurman "Angels in the White Cube," pp. 154-155.

42 Hanno Rauterberg, "Lost in Kassel," *DIE ZEIT*, No. 24/2012, 6 June 2012. Accessed 30.09.2016. http://www.zeit.de/2012/24/Kunst-documenta/seite-2.

43 See Hannah Arendt's famous and controversial discussion of obedience as a banal way to produce destruction. Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem, A Report on the Banality of Evil*, Viking Press, New York, 1963.

44 Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, "On the Destruction of Art – or Conflict and Art, or Trauma and the Art of Healing," in *100 Notes–100 Thoughts,* No. 40, Hatje Kantz, Ostfildern, 2012, pp. 282–92, here p. 286.

45 Tobias Haberl, "In Conversation with Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev," in *Das Logbuch, The Logbook,* Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, ed., Hatje Kantz, Ostfildern, 2012, p. 288.

46 I am grateful for this explanation by Diana Bico, being part of the scenographic team at Holzer/Kobler.

47 Rauterberg, "Lost in Kassel."

Captions

1 Harald Szeemann

2 Spanic antepedum, altar sub construction, christ and the twelve apostle, ca. 1120 , Barcelona

3 Jean-Auguste Dominique Ingres, The Apotheosis of Homer, 1827

4 *KINO*, 2012. © documenta Archive

5 *Documenta hall* by Peter Kogler. © documenta Archive

6 Bookshop designed by Vito Acconci. © documenta Archive

7 Space for discussions. © documenta Archive

8 *Hybrid Work Space.* © documenta Archive

9 Catherine David

10 Ruth Noak, Roger M. Buergel

11 Ruth Noak, Roger M. Buergel

12 Adam Szymczyk and Elena Filipovic at the fifth Berlin Biennale

13 Ruth Noak, Roger M. Buergel

14 Jean-Christophe Ammann (for Harald Szeemann), Manfred Schneckenburger, Rudi Fuchs, Catherine David, Jan Hoet, Okwui Enwezor, Roger M. Buergel

15 View into the "Brain", *documenta (13)*

16 Self-portrait of Lee Miller in the bathroom of Adolf Hitler, *documenta (13)*

17 CCB with Brad Pitt

Dorothee Richter is Professor in Contemporary Curating at the University of Reading, UK, and head of the Postgraduate Programme in Curating, CAS/ MAS Curating at the Zurich University of the Arts, Switzerland; She is co-director with Susanne Clausen of the PhD in Practice in Curating Programme, a cooperation of the Zurich University of the Arts and the University of Reading, as well as the publisher of the web journal OnCurating.org; Richter has worked extensively as a curator: she was initiator of Curating Degree Zero Archive, which travelled to 18 venues in Europe; Curator of Kuenstlerhaus Bremen, at which she curated different symposia on feminist issues in contemporary arts and an archive on feminist practices, *Materialien/Materials;* recently she directed, together with Ronald Kolb, a film on Fluxus: F*lux Us Now, Fluxus Explored with a Camera* (Staatsgalerie Stuttgart 2013, Akademie der Bildenden Künste in Wien, 2014, Kunsthochschule Hamburg 2014, Gesellschaft für Aktuelle Kunst, Bremen, 2014, Kunstverein Wiesbaden 2014, University of Reading 2013, Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zürich, 2013; Kunsthalle Sao Paolo, 2014; Ostwall Museum Dortmund, 2015, Kibbutz College Tel Aviv, 2015; Universität Lüneburg; 2015; Museum Tinguely in Basel, 2015, Lentos Museum in Linz, 2016), and she is working at the moment on a video archive on curatorial practices together with Ronald Kolb, with 100 interviews of contemporary curators and curatorial groups.

Thinking the Arrival: Pierre Huyghe's *Untilled* and the Ontology of the Exhibition

by Dorothea von Hantelmann

Pierre Huyghe's contribution to *dOCUMENTA (13)* required some effort in order to be discovered at all. It was not just that Huyghe had chosen a decidedly decentered exhibition site: a composting facility located in the Aue-Park. Even after one had located the site, it was anything but obvious that it was art. Visitors found themselves in a kind of overgrown vacant lot: a pile of compost, sprouting growth, through which a walkway led, at times really just a beaten path, with algae-covered puddles. The hills were overgrown with plants and weeds. Off to one side, paving slabs were stacked; nearby, a mound of black chippings. An ant colony had formed at the foot of an oak. Even on closer inspection, it was unclear what had been altered artistically and what hadn't, where the composting facility ended and the work of art began.

There was something like a center of the work: a reclining concrete figure placed in an open space in the middle of the lot–a replica of a work by the sculptor Max Weber from the 1930s, which on its shoulders had, in lieu of a head, a beehive populated by a trembling, buzzing swarm of bees. And there was the elegant white female greyhound, *Human*, which, with its pink leg, became a trademark of this *documenta*. Other elements of the work became apparent over time: the compost hills were planted with psychotropic, medical, and aphrodisiacal plants such as deadly nightshade and angel's trumpets. Cannabis was also there, as well as rye, which is itself a completely harmless grain but is particularly likely to harbor ergot, a fungus that can be used to synthesize LSD. At some point, visitors began to sense that the stacked sidewalk slabs were arranged in a particular way, as was the surrounding basin, in which tadpoles splashed. Huyghe had collected several artifacts–he calls them "markers"–from various times and contexts. The stacked sidewalk slabs, for example, recalled the form and materials of Minimal Art, while a felled tree alluded to Robert Smithson's *Dead Tree* of 1969. A bench, tipped over and resting between the stone slabs, was part of Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster's installation at *Documenta11* and a small, desiccated oak lying around was part of Joseph Beuys *7000 Eichen* (7,000 Oaks), his contribution to *documenta 7* (1982). Some of these markers were more obvious; others were, if it all, recognizable as such only with the help of a drawing by the artist published in the short guide. The latter included various physical adaptations of functional elements from literary texts. Supposedly, there was a turtle walking around the composting facility that was borrowed from Joris-Karl Huysmans's novel À *rebours* (*Against the Grain*). And the young man who was nearly always present, in order to take care of the dog and the plants, personified with his constantly repeated, always identical actions a reference to the living dead in the garden of Raymond Roussel's fantastic novel *Locus Solus*.

There were, however, also aspects of the work that remained and still remain open. Even today, I do not know whether Huyghe was the one who formed the hills or whether they were already there, which of the plants were already growing at the site and which he planted. The bees and the ants were just as arranged as the pool of water and the piles of stones. But what about the ecosystems located at the edge of visibility (the tadpoles, for example)? Were they part of the work? An interplay of design and the undesigned characterized this place, making it seem strangely charged–as a place where the artistic work invested in its composition became palpable, even if this composed quality was never entirely revealed.

Huyghe often speaks of "scenarios" in reference to his works, by which he means a set, a structure of rules and possibilities that the artist initiates but that then produce something of their own independently of the artist. A scenario without a script, in a sense. Many of his works are based on real situations,

fig. 1–5

unscripted events and encounters. Contingency, chance, and inherent rules are thus always part of his works. What distinguishes *Untilled*, however, is the fact that we are dealing with a concrete physical place here whose own materials and processes are constitutive components of the work. The work is not *based* on a scenario, it *is* a scenario; a scenario that to a large extent remains contingent and must remain so, because it depends on factors over which the artist has no influence, such as the weather, the time of day or of the year, the biorhythms of a dog. The realization of this work was based on processes and events initiated by the artist that then organized themselves independently and without regard to the initial form. Part of the arrangement is that both bees and ants spread plant seeds. How that happened was, of course, beyond the scope of his plan. Visitors found themselves the middle of a process that generated itself in its contingency. The bees not only disseminated the seeds; they also reproduced, so that the head of the sculpture was constantly growing and after several months was monstrously swollen. Huyghe had created a place that had neither a beginning nor an endpoint; it remained indeterminate in its topographical form–a work that was literally rooted in its environment and continued to grow roots at every moment of its existence.

Untilled was not only based on a real situation, it kept existing as a real situation. Still plant waste continued to be transformed into fertile humus, while Huyghe simultaneously transformed the place into a site that was at once physically concrete and fictional, artistically designed and an actually preexisting milieu. Zachary Cahill has brought the metaphor of the "bleeding image" into play to describe this reshaping of a context by means of fiction.[1] An imaginary, mental image obtains a material support and, in a sense, steps into the world. The dog is, if you will, this kind of "bleeding": a living image, a kind of real fiction. The oak is from Beuys's *7000 Eichen*, but it remains, precisely because it has neither a label nor a context, above all an oak. Because Huyghe had quite literally integrated into the creation of his work intelligent plant and animal forms that are not controlled by him, the work is subject to constant changes that occur independently of both the artist and the viewers. In the process, organic, biological, and artistic processes of creation form mesh. The site of the work is a site of becoming.

It is this ontology, which includes unstable, artistic and non-artistic, biological, and organic processes, that marks the point of departure for my reflection on this work. The fact that *Untilled* is more a network than a work has led me to connect it with the figure of association–a concept that has become increasingly important in the context of more recent approaches based on a critique of anthropocentrism, for instance by philosophy of science. The relationship between the figure of association and the idea of art as such or the format of the exhibition and its governmentality will be treated in the following.

The Work as Network: An Allegorical Reading of "Untilled"

The key issue of any philosophy is whether it places object-object relationships on the same ground as human-object relationships; if it does not, it is merely the old anthropocentric theory in another guise. This is an approximate summary of the point of departure for a contemporary mode of thinking that centers on the attempt to overcome anthropocentrism in a rigorous way.[2] In this context, Donna Haraway speaks of the ethical and practical task of "reworlding" landscapes, technologies, and species without adopting the consoling premise of "human exceptionalism."[3] The approaches of both Haraway and Bruno Latour refer back to Alfred North Whitehead, who developed most explicitly an ontology that is not based on the perceiving subject.[4] Whitehead was influenced not only by Einstein's theory of relativity but also, and above all, by the evolutionary biology of Charles Darwin and his theories about the significance of chance and the interlinking of living creatures and ways of living. Whitehead's project was to develop a metaphysics that could stand up to the theories of Einstein and Darwin. Thereby, life processes or procession in general and the overcoming of anthropocentricity moved to the center of attention. Whitehead countered modern bifurcation into nature and culture with gradual distinctions that were no longer categorical. For example, he no longer distinguished categorically between the modalities of a stone, an animal, and a human being but instead placed them on different points of a scale.[5]

From the moment at which one begins to question the opposition of subjects and things, a whole series of traditional binary pairs break down. For if one no longer takes for granted the modern subject that conceives of the world as primarily a stock of resources and that – in contrast to the inorganic materials that surround it – is in exclusive possession of the freedom and agency to transform its natural environment, distinctions between organic/inorganic, human/animal, free will/determination no longer make sense. Categorical distinctions

are replaced by associations that Latour in particular makes the focus of his thinking when he conceives of reality as associations of units that are composed of both human and nonhuman elements and that are inherently processual. Latour's terminology for this is "variable ontology."[6]

Untilled could be seen as an association in Latour's sense: a linking of different forms of life, modes, and materials. The organic, the biological, and the mineralogical form part of this association just as much as the human and industrial products (such as sidewalk slabs). There are individual and collective organisms (like human beings, a bee swarm, and an ant colony), each with its own divisions of labour, forms of social organizing, and intelligence. All these elements are linked with one another via biological or social processes; all are integrated into different procedures with regard to reproduction, dissemination, and decay (composting). Art is also part of this association. It manifests itself in the female figure lying at the center, a sculpture typical for a park, with its motif of fertility, transformed into a kind of surreal image that sets in motion very real processes of pollination. Art is also present, in the form of references to *documenta* (*7000 Eichen*) and to various artists with whose work Huyghe is engaged in an intense dialogue (Robert Smithson) or even friendship (Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster). Yet what is decisive is that none of these "markers" are "exhibited" or appropriated in the sense of postmodern citation. They are simply there (present in low or weak intensity): the bench as a bench, the oak as an oak–components of an association and literally interwoven with the biological processes of this site. As an association, *Untilled* includes human (art, industry) and nonhuman forms of production and products, arranged on a plane nonhierarchically in a way that artistic and organic/biological processes dovetail in the creation of forms.

If one reads this work allegorically, it stands for an understanding of the world and of reality that, in Latour's sense, "wants to bring things and animals back in."[7] It embodies a model of reality (and of art) composed of different, human and animal, plant and material actors. In accordance with such a view of reality as a network, *Untilled*, as an artwork, is itself realized as a network: as a work without stable form, permeated by contingency into its innermost structure. A work that literally and constantly changes and transforms itself.

The Question of Critique

In his "Steps Toward the Writing of a Compositionist Manifesto," Bruno Latour introduces the word "composition," to which he attributes an almost paradigmatic significance:

> Even if the word [...] is a bit too long and windy, what is nice is that it underlines that things have to be put together (Latin *componere)* while retaining their heterogeneity. Also, it is connected with composure; it has clear roots in art, painting, music, theater, dance and thus is associated with choreography and scenography; it is not too far from 'compromise' and 'compromising,' retaining a certain diplomatic and prudential flavor. Speaking of flavor, it carries with it the pungent but ecologically correct smell of 'compost,' itself due to the active 'de-composition' of many invisible agents [...]. Above all, a composition can *fail* and thus retains what is most important in the notion of constructivism [...]. It thus draws attention away from the irrelevant difference between what is constructed and what is not constructed, toward the crucial difference between what is *well* or *badly* constructed, *well* or *badly* composed.[8]

Composition is clearly a constructivist term for Latour. It refers to the nature of the construction, to the modality and functioning of a thing. Moreover, for Latour the term functions as an alternative term to "critique." Whereas he understands "critique" to be the driving force of modernism, the "steam engine"[9] that tries to break open rigid ties and structures and call them into question, composition follows a contrary impulse. It aims to find paths in order to deliberately reconnect the links broken by critique: to develop a system of rules that functions well, to develop an association that can address issues of climate on a global level–to give one example cited by Latour.

The perspective that Latour proposes here is also productive for *Untilled*, because the theme of this work–a nonanthropocentric view of reality–is indeed played out on the ontological level of the work of art. Its orientation and its critical content are revealed in its specific, that is, network-like, processual ontology, which, as described above, implies an understanding of the world and reality that is equally network-like. What this means precisely becomes evident in a somehow illegitimate comparison of *Untilled* to an artwork like Walter De Maria's installation *13, 14, 15 Meter Rows* from 1985. De Maria's work consists of

forty-two highly polished stainless-steel rods. To viewers who see this work not only in terms of form and aesthetics but also in relation to social and economic contexts, what does it stand for? It demonstrates the technical perfection of highly refined industrial production: alchemical methods that are able to produce the impression of material homogeneity, forms of mass production, and a material polish that suggests the form of a product–all aspects of the industrial or mechanical age (I'm not saying that this was De Marias intention, but his intention is not my focus here). Huyghe's work, in comparison, has a much larger range of component parts and materials, and their heterogeneity remains visible, not having been reshaped by industrial, mechanical processes. The places where the works are presented or realized are just as antithetical as their composition: the white cube is an almost Cartesian space, cleared and freed of all penetrations of reality. It is a space separated from natural processes, in which all natural processes and variations–temperature, light, acoustics–are regulated. By contrast, Huyghe's garden exists in an overgrown, inscrutable, complex space without categorical separations of nature and culture, of animate and inanimate material. Huyghe himself even speaks of the creation of a biological form: "I don't think about the exhibition anymore but rather about a biological form of creation."[10]

It is possible to say that, as a composition in the Latourian sense, De Maria's installation remains linked to a "utopia of economy," which is at the same time the utopia of the industrial age, whereas Huyghe's work moves into the direction of a "utopia of ecology," in which nature is no longer merely a resource but is itself perceived as an effective apparatus in terms of its complexity and refinement. As a composition, it is rooted more in the circular mode of ecology than in the demiurgic model of the economy. The artwork as an end product (which is presented as separate from the processes that led to it) is replaced by the processual continuity, an interplay between the composition and its decomposition aided by microbes, bacteria, and other invisible agents.

Not least thanks to the network-like ontology that distinguishes *Untilled*, Huyghe sketches an idea of art and the experience of art that is fundamentally distinct from the usual mode of a group exhibition–to which his work ultimately belongs. To put it differently, his work suggests a worldview that is entirely antithetical to the worldview staged by the cultural format of the exhibition (and, as demonstrated, the white cube as its paradigmatic place), of which *Untilled* nevertheless remains part. How does Huyghe's work position itself within this area of tension?

fig. 6

fig. 7

The Exhibition

"Correlationism is the paradigm of contemporary art," Suhail Malik claims in an issue of *Spike Magazine* from 2013.[11] In the context of non-anthropocentric thinking, the neologism correlationism functions as a generic term for all the ways of thinking that ultimately belong to a Kantian tradition with its focus on the perceiving subject. Thinking is always related to the world, just as the world always appears to a thinking subject. Malik is interested in an alternative to this tradition, a mode of thinking that attempts to speculate about something beyond this relationality. He considers contemporary art to be correlationist insofar as, since the proclamation of the "death of the author," it has been oriented ever more toward the subject of aesthetic experience. "Contemporary art assumes a beholding subject who makes semantic sense of the work, who's the true recipient, who finds their own meanings, adds interpretive richness."[12] For him, the focal point of today's art system is the viewer or, as he puts it, "interpreting subjects," who debate

the meaning of art in "this nice soft democracy of plural disagreements."[13]

I do not wish to go into greater detail here about whether art since the 1960s has actually become more correlationist or, rather, whether in turning to the aesthetics of experience there are not other approaches of an alternative orientation. For even if I do not necessarily share Malik's explanatory framework, his core insight that visual art constitutes a decidedly correlationist discourse is hard to deny. Moreover, art is not only based on a subject-centered way of thinking, rather–I would add–the ritual of the exhibition has historically helped to establish this style of thinking and continues to rehearse and reinforce it.[14] It is no coincidence that the format of the exhibition emerged historically around the same time as Kant's philosophy. Exhibitions are cultural formats, apparatuses based on the juxtaposition of a thinking, perceiving subject and an object that is experienced and perceived by the former. The exhibition's paradigm is that of autonomy, not that of the association. The exposed object is ex-posed, in the sense of an object removed from its original contexts (or networks). It is approached by a singularized, isolated viewer, who, released from her physical intertwining with the world, is usually reduced to the sense of sight and hence to the sense that is primarily associated with a cognitive and rational perception of the world.

This juxtaposition of subject and object, which is fundamental for the apparatus of the exhibition, is deeply correlationist in its constitution. But–and herein lies the governmental effectiveness of this apparatus–it also implies essential socioeconomic premises of modern social orders. Thus, the aesthetically experiencing, critically judging viewer corresponds to the figure of the modern individual; it is one of *the* cultural achievements of the exhibition format that it receives a large number of people, who are nevertheless addressed as individuals, not as a crowd or a group. These are individuals, admittedly, who perceive and distinguish themselves in their relationship to material objects. It is no coincidence that a society whose esteem of itself relies to a large extent on what it produces should come up with a ritual that centers on the value of material artifacts, a material artifact that is structurally organized in the form of a product and whose insertion into open systems of order corresponds in turn to the constitution of a pluralistic, market-based social order. The value of the plurality (to which Malik refers in the quotation above) is not a postmodern phenomenon of contemporary art. It is constitutive of the format of the exhibition, just as it is also a constitutive component of a modern system of values. Not only are exhibitions essentially organized along axes of sight that always show the individual work in relation to others, but the idea of the collection as an assembly of different (artists') subjectivities also already takes into account the central value of plurality and diversity that characterizes modern societies. Exhibitions perform a ritual that has individualized and liberal features, and hence it has become a central ritual of modern, equally individualized and liberal societies.[15] Both the style of thinking and the socioeconomic premises of these societies–the individual, the object, the market, progress, pluralism–are rehearsed, cultivated, and reflected upon through this ritual.

Because through the format of the exhibition, art is linked with the subject-oriented, anthropocentric, correlationist style of thought all the way down to its DNA, it is not possible to step out of this regime merely on the level of pure form or content. Daniel Buren, to give an example, is one of the few artists who have recognized this. Based on this insight, he has worked for decades on a changed ontology of the work of art, which he tied to a reconfiguration of the ritual of the exhibition.[16] In Buren's in situ works, there is a place, a context, but no longer a vis-à-vis in the sense of a discrete object to be viewed as separate from the architecture. The thing-like object becomes a "visual tool" (which has connections to the concept of decor), whereas the exhibition turns into a situational intervention. The commonly ex-posed work of art, taken out of its context, is in his work a site-specific one, created in and for a specific context. In a further elaboration of Buren's in-situ concept, one could speak of *Untilled* as a *situated work of art*: a work that is literally interwoven with its context, that establishes roots, that inserts itself into an existing association and re-composes it.

So how does *Untilled* relate to the format of the exhibition and its governmental agenda?[17] What other forms of practices does it propose? First, Huyghe steps out of the plural game that, as we have seen, is fundamentally inscribed in the exhibition format. There are no longer any other works in view when standing in the composting facility. There is no axis of sight any longer and hence no constant reminder of an imperative to move forward. Instead, Huyghe brings a certain calm–a thinking of arrival, in a sense–into the progressive apparatus of the exhibition. One has more the feeling of arriving in a

place than the need of assessing an exhibit. *Untilled* is a place whose structure and character are not revealed exclusively visually; that one has to explore and walk through, much like an exhibition, in order to grasp its individual elements, but that in essence formulates an alternative ontology of the formation of the exhibition: a composting facility is a place for worthless things, which are thrown away and left to themselves, so that they can establish connections to other things and in this way transform into something else, something fertile. "The compost is the place where you throw things that you don't need that are dead," says Huyghe. "You don't display things. You don't make a mise-en-scène, you don't design things, you just drop them. And when someone enters that site, things are in themselves, they don't have a dependence on the person. They are indifferent to the public. You are in a place of indifference. Each thing, a bee, an ant, a plant, a rock, keeps growing or changing."[18]

Like the exhibition, *Untilled* is composed of various different components, but unlike the things in an exhibition, they change, form connections, and run through processes that are conceived neither by the artist nor by the viewer and that cannot be thought of in terms of experience. Because they remain undirected, they can neither be steered nor controlled. Huyghe transforms the exhibition into a growing medium, where intensities vary and things leak into each other; they become porous, contingent, chaotic. He is speculating on the idea of art that barely needs an artist or a public and that is almost self-generating. This is where he cuts the correlation that forms the basis of modern thinking.

One aspect that particularly interested me about this work was its strange dual structure: on the one hand, situated and site-specific but, on the other hand, also a work in the sense of the modern autonomous, that is, a flexible and mobile concept of the work. In that respect, it is perhaps comparable to the pavilions of Dan Graham, which also take in an external context, connect with it, and in that sense have a situational component, even though they are still mobile and the context can vary. For it is also part of the concept for *Untilled* that the work is situated–but not necessarily just in this place alone. On the one hand, it is literally rooted in its surroundings, continuously spreading roots at every moment of its existence, whereas on the other hand, it remains a structural entity that could potentially also take place elsewhere. In contrast to the fundamentally site-specific and hence unrepeatable works of Buren, Huyghe's work is both situated and mobile. In this combination of the situated and the work, in this idea of a work based on a "variable ontology" in Latour's sense, Huyghe indeed seems to realize an original setting.

I write "seems" because Huyghe produced a film in *Untilled* that is now circulating–in lieu of the project in Kassel itself–in exhibitions and collections. And the very existence of this film alters the status of the original work. The latter is now, once again, an in-situ work, a particular place, like De Maria's *Lightning Field* for example: a legendary performance that lasted a hundred days, the relics of which can still be visited today. What remains, however–the work of art proper–is the film and hence a self-contained, ex-posable entity–not an algorithm that is performed anew again and again, not a living, constantly developing association.

*This is a slightly abridged English version of "Denken der Ankunft. Pierre Huyghes *Untilled,*" in *Kunst und Wirklichkeit heute. Affirmation - Kritik - Transformation,* Lotte Everts, Johannes Lang, Michael Lüthy, Bernhard Schieder, eds., Transcript, Bielefeld, 2015, pp. 223-239.

Notes

1 Zachary Cahill, "The Image is Bleeding. Pierre Huyghe as Landscape Artist," *Mousse* No. 11, 2012, pp. 140-141 (p.140).

2 See Graham Harman, *Guerrilla Metaphysics. Phenomenology and the Carpentry of Things*, Open Court, Peru/IL, 2005.

3 See Donna Haraway, *When Species Meet*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2008; Nicholas Gane, "When We Have Never Been Human, What Is To Be Done?," Interview with Donna Haraway, *Theory, Culture & Society* No. 23, 2006, pp. 138-158.

4 See Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality. An Essay in Cosmology* [1929], David Ray Griffin and Donald W. Sherburne, eds., Free Press, New York, 1978; Alfred North Whitehead, *The Concept of Nature* [1920], Cambridge/MA, 2004.

5 Whitehead, ibid. , p. 166.

6 Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern,* Harvard University Press, Cambridge/MA, 1993, p. 85.

7 Andreas Ziemann, "Latours Neubegründung des Sozialen?" in *Die Wiederkehr der Dinge,* Friedrich Balke, Maria Muhle, Antonia von Schöning, eds., Kulturverlag Kadmos, Berlin, 2011, pp. 103-114 (p. 104).

8 Bruno Latour, "Steps toward the Writing of a Compositionist Manifesto," *New Literary History* No. 41, 2010, pp. 473-474.

9 Bruno Latour, *Das Elend der Kritik*, Diaphanes, Berlin/Zurich, 2007.

10 "Je ne pense plus l'exposition mais une forme biologique de la création." Pierre Huyghe quoted in Stéphanie Moisdon, "3 Questions à Pierre Huyghe," *Beaux Arts* No. 7, 2012, p. 79, translated by DvH.

11Suhail Malik, "Beyond the Contemporary/Jenseits des Zeitgenössischen," roundtable about speculative thinking and its meaning for contemporary art, moderated by Armen Avanessian, *Spike Magazine* No. 36, 2013, pp. 90–104 (p. 100).

12 Malik ibid.

13 Malik ibid.

14 See Dorothea von Hantelmann, "On the Socio-Economic Role of the Art Exhibition," in *Cornerstones*, Juan A. Gaitán, Nicolaus Schafhausen, Monika Szewczyk, eds., Sternberg Press, Rotterdam/New York, 2011, pp. 266-277.

15 von Hantelmann, ibid.

16 Dorothea von Hantelmann, "Reconfigurer le rituel," in *Le Musée qui n'existait pas. Daniel Buren*, Centre Pompidou, Paris, 2010, pp. 285-309. Exhibition catalogue.

17 Traditionally, documenta is opened by the president of the German Federal Republic.

18 Quoted from "Christopher Mooney on Pierre Huyghe," *Art Review* No. 10, 2013, pp. 92-99 (p. 97).

Captions

1–6 Pierre Huyghe, *Untilled*, 2011–12, Alive entities and inanimate things, made and not made. Courtesy the artist; Marian Goodman Gallery, New York, Paris; Esther Schipper, Berlin.

7 Walter de Maria, *13, 14, 15 Meter Rows*, 1985.

Dorothea von Hantelmann is Professor of Art and Society at Bard College Berlin. She previously was documenta Guest Professor at the University of Kassel where she lectured on the history and meaning of documenta. Her main fields of research are contemporary art and theory (she has written on artists like Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Pierre Huyghe, Philippe Parreno, but also on Jeff Koons, Daniel Buren and James Coleman) as well as the history and theory of exhibitions. She is currently working on a book that explores art exhibitions as ritual spaces in which fundamental values and categories of modern, liberal and market based societies historically have been, and continue to be practised and reflected. She is author of *How to Do Things with Art* (2010), a book on performativity within contemporary art and co-editor of *Die Ausstellung. Politik eines Rituals* (2010).

Becoming Global: From Eurocentrism to North Atlantic Feedback–documenta as an "International Exhibition" (1955–1972)

by Walter Grasskamp

Even though it is today regarded as the major periodical art exhibition of international, if not global, relevance, documenta in its beginnings was not really an international show. It was not even a proper European one, but in fact a very German event, indeed (fig. 1). Though labelled as an "international exhibition" from the start, the claim was questionable for various reasons. In the following I will try to explain why, and the question of internationality will remain the main focus of my paper.[1] More than I will be able to point out in detail, I will refer to a standard work on documenta's history, Harald Kimpel's *documenta. Mythos und Wirklichkeit* ("documenta: Myth and Reality"), which unfortunately has not yet been translated into English.[2]

1

The First *documenta* (1955)

Let me start with some statistics: in 1955, *documenta's* official list of 148 artists was dominated by fifty-eight German participants, adding up to far more than one third of the whole selection. France followed with forty-two artists (about a quarter), Italy with twenty-eight, Britain with just eight, Switzerland in contrast with six, and Holland with but two. That made up a rather surrealistic world map of "twentieth century art" ("kunst des XX. jahrhunderts"), which was what the first *documenta* claimed to cover; as surrealistic a map as the national pavilions in the Venice *Giardini* in winter. The official list of participants was displayed prominently in the catalogue on the first double page after the introduction, and it specified six nations, to which all the European artists were allocated, and only one more, the USA, with only three entries (fig.2). Unofficially, though, nearly every Western European and Central European country was present.

That was possible because many artists who lived in Paris at the time were registered as French–no matter if they were born in Barcelona, Budapest, Copenhagen, Lisbon, Malaga, Moscow, or elsewhere. Hence, artists from Belgium (Gustave Singier), Bohemia (František Kupka), Denmark (Richard Mortensen), Hungary (Viktor Vasarely), Portugal (Marie-Hélène Viera da Silva), Russia (Marc Chagall, Antoine Pevsner), and Spain (Juan Gris, Joan Mirò, Pablo Picasso) were all registered as French. If you include these somewhat "Frenchised" artists, this *documenta* included at least seven European nations besides the officially listed seven, which makes fourteen altogether.

There were inaccuracies, too. Austria, for example, was not even mentioned, though

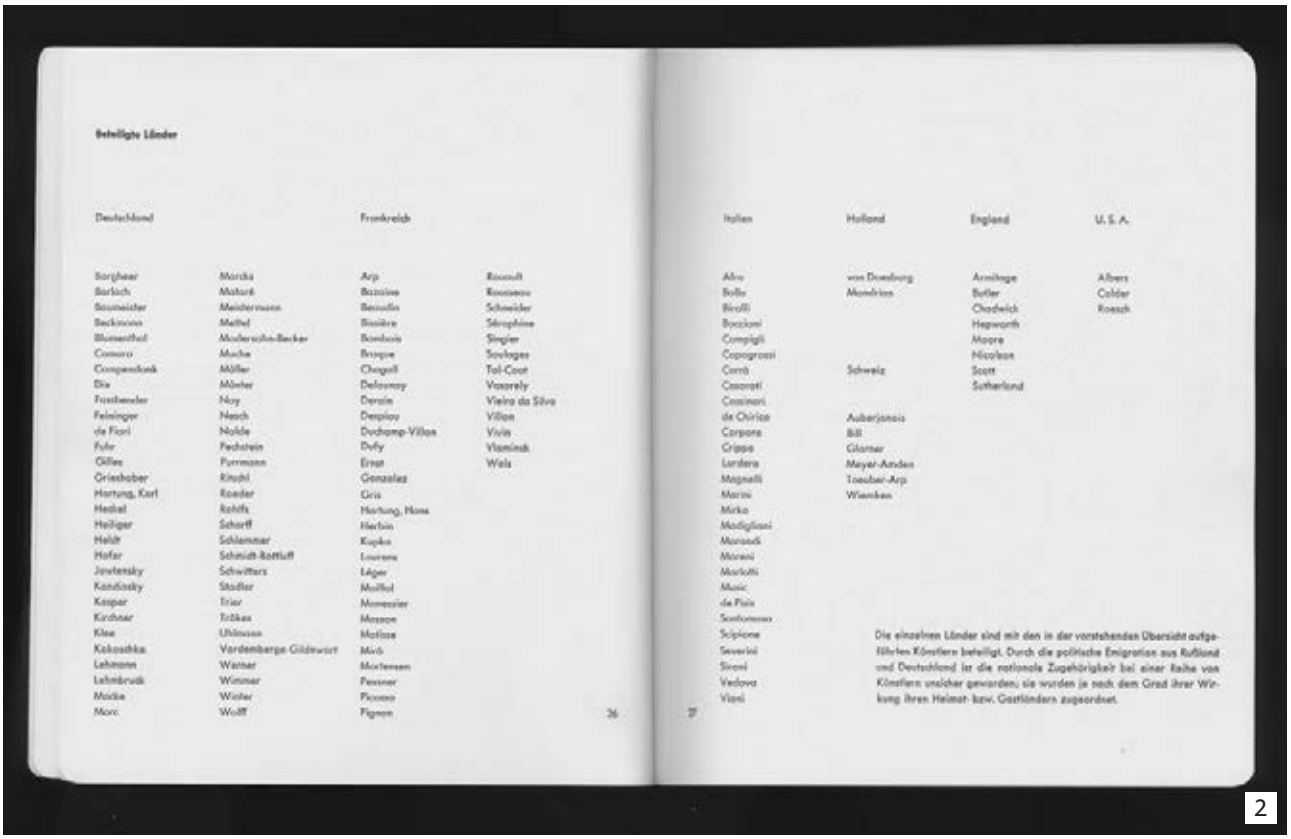
represented by Ludwig Kasper and Oskar Kokoschka, the latter in fact living in Salzburg at the time; both were listed as German. Jawlensky and Kandinsky were listed as German, too, the latter with seventeen paintings, half of which he had made during his time of emigration in Paris. France in return was generously attributed with the German emigrants Max Ernst, Hans Hartung, and Wols. The Gorizia-born Zoran Mušič was listed as Italian as was the Athens-born Giorgio de Chirico, both rather difficult cases of national affiliation.

Official and unofficial origins summed up, artists from around eighteen European nations were present. In fact, each European country west of the 16th line of longitude (touching Stockholm, Vienna, and Messina) was represented–with only one exception, Sweden. But if we look east of the 16th line, nearly every artist of importance was missing: only Russia and Hungary were considered, with five artists altogether (Chagall, Jawlensky, Kandinsky, Pevsner, and Vasarely), all of them migrants and three of them actually living in France at the time. Thus Central Eastern Europe was underrepresented, not to speak of Eastern and Southeastern Europe, of Latvia or Lithuania, Romania or Bulgaria: the horizon of the first *documenta* was limited to France, Italy, and Germany, with only a few extensions. Thus, it was European only in a questionable way–with prominent omissions, grotesque imbalances, and blurred classifications.

National Affiliations

The omissions were, of course, partly due to the Iron Curtain and the Cold War, and furthermore to a post-war lack of information and to still restricted possibilities of travelling for West Germans, too. So it may appear pedantic to report on the history of documenta with percentages and proportions, as I do and will continue to do, because I am interested in what internationalism meant on the walls and the floors of documenta and in its catalogues–and not what it meant in opening speeches, press releases, and other cultural software of good will and ideology: as sometimes you have to read between the lines, in exhibitions you sometimes have to read between the pictures. Obviously, there was a difference between claim and reality, between official ideology and actual selection, between international validity and national orientation. But in this dilemma the first *documenta* only was characteristic for a post-war Europe still busy reorganizing its historical features while coming to terms with the Iron Curtain.

With regard to the national identities of the artists, the organizers of course knew that the 20th



2

century had been one of voluntary migration and involuntary emigration. So at the foot of their list, they admitted how difficult it was to denominate the national identities.[3] In fact, how could they decide then (and how would we decide now)–according to places of birth, academies visited, sites of greatest impact, current residence, or the valid passport? To give an example: Zoran Mušič was born in July 1909 in Gorizia when the city still belonged to the Austro-Hungarian dual monarchy, before it became part of the Serbian dominated kingdom (in 1919) and then was finally divided into half Italian and half Yugoslavian (after 1945). Mušič, who grew up with three languages–Slovenian, Italian, and German–went to school in Klagenfurt (Austria) but in the early thirties studied art in Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, which then tried in vain to become independent from Serbia. He travelled extensively to Madrid, Paris, and Zurich, and went back to Dalmatia, before he moved to Venice, where, as member of the *Resistenza,* he was arrested in 1943 and deported to a German concentration camp, Dachau, from where he returned two years later to live in Paris as well as in Venice. The *documenta* catalogue notably listed him as Italian and in its short biography did not mention his time in Dachau.

It was then–and still is–difficult to characterise art along national lines, but this problem has different historical implications. It seemed easier in the 19th century, when European art was explicitly meant and officially supported to profile and celebrate national cultures.[4] It started to become difficult and outdated when radical modernism arose from many widespread national centres and mingled in international metropoles like Berlin, Paris, or New York or in provincial art schools like the Bauhaus in Weimar. So the most amazing fact about the first *documenta*'s official list of artists and nations seems therefore that such a list was still regarded as possible, necessary, and helpful.

It is noteworthy in this context that (with six exceptions: Feininger, de Fiori, Jawlensky, Kandinsky, Kasper, Kokoschka) all the artists presented as German had also been born in Germany, thus being national in terms of origin. This was true for most, if not all the Italian artists, too. Germany and Italy thus presented national art in the traditional context of birth and origin while the genuine French artists were represented together with a mixture of migrants which Paris had attracted and therefore stood for the modernist concept of internationalism. National affiliation played a role in the display, too: two major halls were exclusively reserved for Germany and Italy each! Germany and Italy had not only the privilege of high numbers of genuine representatives, but also of particular halls dedicated to their younger generation.

Selective Eurocentrism

The predominance of artists of Italian and German origin in contrast to the mixed selection from Paris gives a provincial note to the first *documenta* rather than a nationalistic one: with 42 artists, France was clearly second to the German and Italian presence that added up to two thirds of all participants. In any case, it was a very unbalanced relation to the rest of Europe that could be regarded as a kind of *selective Eurocentrism*. With hindsight, the German-Italian predominance could even appear embarrassing, as both countries had been allies of fascism and brothers-in-arms during most of World War II that had ended only ten years before.

But this erstwhile political partnership did *not* shape this artistic predominance, on the contrary: among the German artists there were five who had spent most or all of the National Socialist years in Italy to avoid persecution at home (Bargheer, Blumenthal, Gilles, Purrmann, Roeder).[5] Especially Hans Purrmann, defamed as degenerate like the others, played an important role directing the *Villa Romana* in Florence as a kind of safehouse. In a counter-trend to the official fascist axis, Italy had been a half-exile for German artists who at home were–or risked to be–defamed as degenerate. Before the war, modernist German artists had the chance to survive in Italy in an ambiguous state of an *inner emigration abroad* that Rudolf Levy even made use of *during* the war before the German occupation of Italy put an end to his life in 1944.[6]

This Italian connection especially applied to Werner Haftmann, one of the two founding curators of documenta. He had also preferred to spend the years between 1936 and 1940 in Florence, after the modern art he favoured, expressionism, had officially been banned in the "Third Reich". Thus Haftmann had excellent pre-war contacts with the neoclassical and futurist artists in Italy, some of whom embedded with fascism (but he had obviously no inclinations toward dadaistic and surrealistic Paris, which explains why Marcel Duchamp or René Magritte were missing at the first *documenta*). In any case, the German-Italian relations had the character of a genuine cultural exchange on different cultural and political levels before and after 1945.


3

Although that gave the Italian-German relationship a good post-war start, enforced by two German academies in Florence (Villa Romana) and Rome (Villa Massimo), an intense and enduring transalpine dialogue was not established for the generations of artists to come. If a cultural exchange between Italy and Germany was maintained after World War II, it was rather in the design of art exhibitions than in fine art itself: the importance of Italian *allestimenti* for German post-war curators is a rather unknown field of cultural exchange between Italy and Germany, not only with regard to the first *documenta*: after the war there were two main European sources for the refurbishing of exhibition design, as far as I can see, one being the *Stedelijk Museum* in Amsterdam, the other the *Triennale di Milano*. Doing extensive interviews with a couple of senior curators of post-war West Germany, I was surprised to learn that in the decade after the war, the *Triennale* in Milano was much more interesting and important for them than the Venice Biennale, especially in terms of display.[7]

Besides there also was a short-lived *triangle* of post-war cultural exchange between Venice, Amsterdam, and Recklinghausen, a small German city in the industrial Ruhr area, where important and innovative art exhibitions had already been made years before the first *documenta* opened. The key figure in this triangle of cultural exchange was Willem Sandberg– the outstanding and probably most important curator of post-war Europe. Exhibitions his friend Paolo Mariotti had created for the Palazzo Grassi in Venice went to Sandberg's *Stedelijk* in Amsterdam and then to the *Ruhr Festival* in Recklinghausen.[8]

In 2008, Stefano Collicelli Cagol published a book on Marinotti's exhibitions at the Palazzo Grassi in the fifties and sixties, so I do not need to dwell further on this subject.[9] He also introduced me to Anna Chiara Cimoli's *Musei effimeri. Allestimenti di mostre in Italia 1949 – 1963* (*Ephemeral Museums: Design of Exhibitions in Italy from 1949 to 1963*, Milan, 2007), a beautiful book that fans out a surprising background of inspiration for the exhibition design of Arnold Bode for the first *documenta*.[10] So I do think that Italian exhibition and fair design from the thirties to the fifties was a special source for German exhibition design and had more influence on post-war Europe than is documented.[11]

"Occidental Art of the XX. Century"

Back to Kassel: most impressive in the first *documenta* was, of course, the sheer number of German artists. It must have been a relief for most of them, who had been previously defamed as degenerate, to return triumphantly to the international art scene in an exhibition that, in the hall of painting, ennobled them in the neighbourhoods of Picasso or Matisse, and, in the hall of sculpture, of Henry Moore (fig.3). Of course, only the Western part of the tripartite former German Empire was included, not the communist GDR ("German Democratic Republic") nor the Eastern part, which became part of Poland as of 1945. Paradoxically, the first *documenta* was of international significance just because of this exclusion of artists not living in the Western part called FRD ("Federal Republic of Germany"). Thus, it fit into the new "global" landscape of the Cold War–and had the windfall profit to show for it: until 1977, Kassel would be the capital of *Cold War Modern*, as an exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum London would label the period in 2008.

This leads to a surprising paradox: while the Western landscape of the Cold War was clearly dominated by the United States, the first *documenta* included only three American artists, two of them first-generation German émigrés, Josef Albers and Kurt Roesch, Alexander Calder being the only participant who in fact was of long-term American origin.[12] Of any detail, this one is apt to point out that the first *documenta* was European mainly because there were no artists born on a different continent– Calder being the only exception, accepted primarily, it seems, because he had lived in France for a couple of years. This attributed another provincial note to the first *documenta*, as modernism in between had become a North Atlantic phenomenon.

For neglecting American art in the first *documenta*, Bode and Haftmann were excused later on with the argument that modern American art was little known at the time and hard to obtain, but this was not true: Kassel was situated in the US occupa-

tion zone, and for the post-war generation the libraries of the so-called *Amerika-Häuser* were popular and rich sources of information, the most famous situated in Hessian Frankfurt, some 120 miles south of Kassel. Moreover, already in 1948 Peggy Guggenheim had presented her collection in Venice, and in 1950 Willem Sandberg had organized an exhibition of American paintings in Amsterdam, among other events. So American art was neither beyond knowledge nor beyond reach.

Yet no excuse was necessary, because it was the deliberate *decision* of the curators to concentrate merely on European art as we now can read in Bode's *Collected Writings* posthumously published in 2007.[13] Whenever Bode specified any American contribution for the first *documenta* by name, these were the names of German émigrés (including George Grosz, by the way, who in the end did not make it to documenta fame in 1955). Finally, it is telling that the registered society for the founding of documenta originally had been baptized "Gesellschaft Abendländischer Kunst des XX. Jahrhunderts" ("Society for Occidental Art of the 20th Century")–even then an outdated, if diffuse, synonym for the selective Eurocentrism of the first *documenta*.

Eurocentrism, of course, did not yet have a negative reputation at all, not even its label: Europe had no doubts about its priority in the world and still felt like the homeland of civilisation, culture, and (modern) art.[14] After two World Wars that had started out as national conflicts, the notion of Europe was summoned as a utopia through which to unite and pacify the troubled continent–a utopia for which Werner Haftmann, in his foreword to the catalogue, took modern art as an anticipation. As a concept of the future, the idea of Europe substituted the historical reference to the Occident, the latter notion never to play a role again in the public relations of the first *documenta* after the opening.

Resuming these short considerations on the first *documenta*, it could be said that the themes of origin and affiliation, nationality and internationalism, nation and migration, overt and inner emigration, Eurocentrism and transatlantic relations were undercurrent motifs of the exhibition, background music to the artworks. While those themes were not officially dealt with in the catalogue, they rather delivered a distinguished subtext–implications that did not have to be explained then, but would have to be nowadays: as is often the case, yesterday's answers are still today's open questions.

Omissions

If the absence of American artists at the first *documenta* was already somewhat surprising, this is nothing compared to the omission of Jewish artists of classic modernity who had been forced to emigrate after 1933 and then were murdered in concentration camps after their countries of exile had been occupied by Germany: the first *documenta* did not show a single one of them, not even Otto Freundlich, whose sculpture *Der Neue Mensch* (*The New Man)* had been depicted on the cover of the guidebook to the *Degenerate Art Exhibition* of 1937.

After the European-wide genocide orchestrated by Germany, it may well have been difficult to find works by Jewish artists, whose families, gallerists, collectors, and heirs had likewise been forced into exile or killed. In any case, none of the artists Jankel Adler, Rudolf Levy, Hermann Lismann, Maria Luiko, Arthur Segal, or Gert Wollheim were rehabilitated in Kassel in 1955; nor was Felix Nußbaum's now famous *Selbstportrait mit Judenpass* (*Self Portrait with Jewish Identity Card*, 1943) to be seen. Ludwig Meidner, who had survived in his exile in Britain, had returned to West Germany already in 1953 to the city of Wiesbaden, some 120 miles from Kassel, but obviously not to the knowledge of the makers of the first *documenta*.

Important representatives of *political* emigration were likewise left out, such as Josef Scharl, John Heartfield, or George Grosz. Karl Schwesig, who in 1933 had been severely tortured by the SA for three days in their notorious "Schlegelkeller" headquarters in Düsseldorf, was caught again by the German invaders after his escape to Belgium and brought to concentration camps in Southern France, where he may well have met the equally detained Felix Nußbaum. Schwesig survived and returned to Düsseldorf in 1945 and died just a month before the first *documenta* opened, where his very impressive series of "Schlegelkeller" drawings would have told a story not welcome to a post-war West German art audience.[15] It had its reasons that the first *documenta* clearly put emphasis on modernism only in the *form* of the artwork, not in *content*! Omissions like these let the panorama of modernity staged in Kassel in 1955 appear in retrospect like a post-war idyll of political oblivion, however meritorious its contributions to rehabilitate the formerly "Degenerate Art" were.

Universalism

As if to compensate for a lack of true internationality, the first *documenta* offered the notion of art's universality: the entrance hall was decorated with

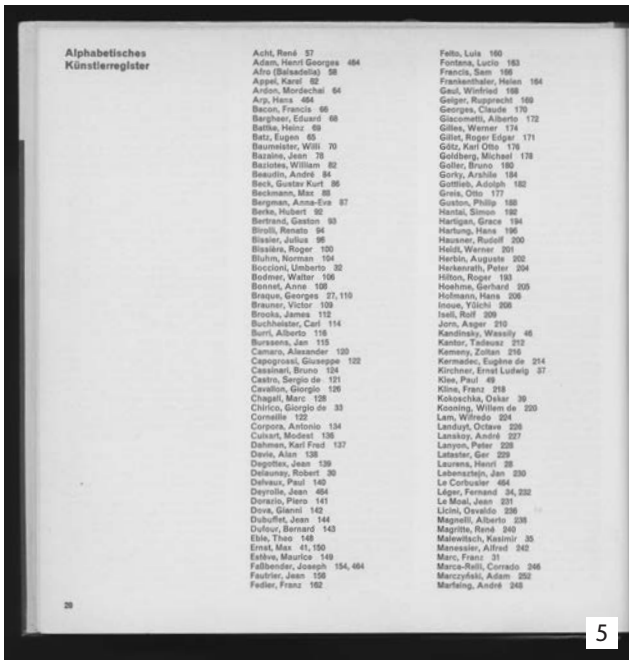
photographs of African tribal masks, archaic Greek portraits, Pre-Columbian sculptures or Mesopotamian castings that offered a suggestive *visual essay*, preparing the visitors for the modern artworks to come (fig.4). The notion of art's universality has its own history that I can only touch on here, its plausibility being an issue of its own. I have analysed and discussed this problem extensively elsewhere with regard to André Malraux and his *musée imaginaire*.[16] Not very convincing nowadays, such analogies between modern and ancient or non-European practices were thought to authorize modern art with the amplification of anthropology. Being universal situated art in history and anthropology rather than in actual political geography, and hence infused it with an internationalist humanism (be it one of primitivism–a notion, by the way, Bode and Haftmann would not use for tribal artefacts, but for naïve painting, nowadays labelled *outsider art*).


4

Modern art did not only have to be legitimated in anthropological relations, but in academic terms as well, a role that was undertaken for the first three *documentas* by Bode's co-curator Werner Haftmann, whose widely read history of *Painting in the Twentieth Century* was published a year before the first *documenta*, in 1954. Today, it may be hard to understand why modern art demanded such an amount of scholarly legitimation, but such public treatment endowed it with a degree of seriousness that today can make a writer nostalgic. The impulse of legitimation was eventually replaced by the growing market value of modern art that we worship today in pilgrimage sites such as Art Basel Miami Beach. (Little is it known, by the way, that the first *documenta* also served as a marketplace: many artworks were on offer, the most expensive, as reported by the German tabloid *BILD-Zeitung*, for 10,000 Deutsche Marks–a great deal of money at the time.)

***documenta II* (1959)**

The following three documentas can be regarded as variations and alterations on the themes the first one had established. The most important fact is that the second *documenta* in 1959 managed a crucial and paradoxical change of focus, which would remain typical for the ones to come: it reduced its focus in time but expanded it in space–something that became documenta's law of motion. If the first one claimed to represent "twentieth-century art", the second restricted itself to "art after 1945" *("*Kunst nach 1945*")*, but included many more states than before–and now even the United ones! In the second *documenta*, France produced more than one quarter of the artists invited and thus was by far the dominant nation, while Germany's contribution was corrected to one fifth only. Of the 339 participants, seventeen were women, which is exactly 5%. (Among the guards, by the way, was a young student of the Kassel art academy, Hans Haacke, who made beautiful photographs of other employees as well as visitors in the white cubes of the exhibition, since published in a small book.[17])


Alphabetisches Künstlerregister

Acht, René 57
Adam, Henri Georges 464
Afro (Basaldella) 58
Appel, Karel 62
Ardon, Mordechai 64
Arp, Hans 464
Bacon, Francis 66
Berghaer, Eduard 68
Bettke, Heinz 69
Betz, Eugen 65
Baumeister, Willi 70
Bazaine, Jean 78
Baziotes, William 82
Beaudin, André 84
Beck, Gustav Kurt 86
Beckmann, Max 88
Bergman, Anna-Eva 87
Berke, Hubert 92
Bertrand, Gaston 93
Birolli, Renato 94
Bissier, Julius 96
Bissière, Roger 100
Bluhm, Norman 104
Boccioni, Umberto 32
Bodmer, Walter 106
Bonnet, Anne 108
Braque, Georges 27, 110
Brauner, Victor 109
Brooks, James 112
Buchheister, Carl 114
Burri, Alberto 116
Bursens, Jan 115
Camaro, Alexander 120
Capogrossi, Giuseppe 122
Cassinari, Bruno 124
Castro, Sergio de 121
Cavallon, Giorgio 126
Chagall, Marc 128
Chirico, Giorgio de 33
Corneille 122
Corpora, Antonio 134
Cuixart, Modest 136
Dahmen, Karl Fred 137
Davie, Alan 138
Degottex, Jean 139
Delaunay, Robert 30
Delvaux, Paul 140
Deyrolle, Jean 464
Dorazio, Piero 141
Dova, Gianni 142
Dubuffet, Jean 144
Dufour, Bernard 143
Ebie, Theo 148
Ernst, Max 41, 150
Estève, Maurice 149
Faßbender, Joseph 154, 464
Faubrier, Jean 156
Fedler, Franz 162
Felto, Luis 160
Fontana, Lucio 163
Francis, Sam 166
Frankenthaler, Helen 164
Gaul, Winfried 168
Geiger, Rupprecht 169
Georges, Claude 170
Giacometti, Alberto 172
Gilles, Werner 174
Gillet, Roger Edgar 171
Götz, Karl Otto 176
Goldberg, Michael 178
Golter, Bruno 180
Gorky, Arshile 184
Gottlieb, Adolph 182
Greis, Otto 177
Guston, Philip 188
Hantaï, Simon 192
Hartigan, Grace 194
Hartung, Hans 196
Hausner, Rudolf 200
Heldt, Werner 201
Herbin, Auguste 202
Herkenrath, Peter 204
Hilton, Roger 193
Hoehme, Gerhard 205
Hofmann, Hans 206
Inoue, Yūichi 208
Iseli, Rolf 209
Jorn, Asger 210
Kandinsky, Wassily 46
Kantor, Tadeusz 212
Kemeny, Zoltan 216
Kermadec, Eugène de 214
Kirchner, Ernst Ludwig 37
Klee, Paul 49
Kline, Franz 218
Kokoschka, Oskar 39
Kooning, Willem de 220
Lam, Wifredo 224
Landuyt, Octave 226
Lanskoy, André 227
Lanyon, Peter 228
Latester, Ger 229
Laurens, Henri 28
Lebenshein, Jan 230
Le Corbusier 464
Léger, Fernand 34, 232
Le Moal, Jean 231
Licini, Osvaldo 236
Magnelli, Alberto 238
Magritte, René 240
Malewitsch, Kasimir 35
Manessier, Alfred 242
Marc, Franz 31
Marca-Relli, Conrado 246
Marczyński, Adam 252
Marfaing, André 248

5

Above all, those in charge of the second *documenta* decided to no longer display art in schemes of political geography. The topic of nationality obviously had been discussed among the organizers, who decided on a change of focus. They now stressed the international character of modernism on display, too, by arranging the artworks in combinations that obeyed aesthetic guidelines instead of national representation. The list of artists in the catalogue was

now neutral and alphabetical (fig.5). Yet there was one prominent exception from the brand new rule: artists from the USA.

6

Their selection had not been carried out in Kassel, but instead Porter McCray from the MoMA had been asked to select and ship an American contribution independently, which he did. Reportedly, the pieces arrived rather late and surprised the organizers by their sheer number and size, demanding much more space than had been reserved. With around forty artists, this was to become a prominent entry in the second *documenta* indeed. As a result, the floor plans had to be changed hectically: two halls were completely vacated for the large US formats, and thus the US contribution was the only one to be presented according to a national logic–a rather ironic twist to the story. The American paintings surprised the organizers in terms of their subject matter as well. Two combine paintings by Robert Rauschenberg found their way into the exhibition's parcours, but the third one, the unmade "Bed", was thought of as being too provocative and was discreetly banned to the secretary's office.

Rauschenberg was not yet the star of this second *documenta* anyway, but the late Jackson Pollock was, who had died three years earlier: his all-over paintings clearly dominated one of the halls. However troubled they might have been by this invited invasion, the curators could have regarded it as a kind of re-import: not only because some of the artists from the USA had been taught at their US art schools by European emigrants like Josef Albers, George Grosz, or Hans Hofmann, and others had adopted dadaist and surrealist inspirations brought to New York by European emigrants, but also because, as *Abstract Expressionists*, the American artists combined the names of two European innovations from the beginning of the century–abstraction and expressionism–thus their return could be regarded as a kind of amplified feedback. Involuntarily, Adolf Hitler had been successful in internationalizing modern art by forcing its representatives into exile as far as the USA and thus had changed the map of modernism irreversibly; finally, documenta took notice of that.

With the American extension, the second *documenta* followed the partnership also prevalent in politics, the economy, and consumer culture; it gave up its *Eurocentric* image of the world in favour of *Northern Atlantic* one. This was inevitable, as a solo exhibition of Jackson Pollock and group exhibitions of artists from the USA had already travelled through Europe after the first *documenta* and had made a great impression on the public, especially on some of the younger West German artists.[18]

The second *documenta* thus did not only expand in scope with regard to the number of countries from which artists were invited, but above all in ideology: if the first one had propagated the idea of art's universality, the second one propagated *abstraction as world language*–without a doubt one of the catchiest and most debatable slogans of twentieth century art. This notion has its own history, too, which I can only touch upon.[19] It is difficult today to appreciate the unreflecting enthusiasm in this pretension of abstraction as a world language. It seems full of traditional Eurocentrism and the politics of colonial monopoly. With this claim, however, the second *documenta* extended its geographical frame of reference to a supposedly global reach in exactly the same way that the artist Victor Vasarely, one of its *stars*, had already spoken of abstraction as "planetary folklore".[20]

But anyone who may have expected that, following this slogan, more non-European artists would have been invited to Kassel was bound to be disappointed: the slogan was not intended to end the predominance of European art nor to upvalue art made outside Europe. It rather offered up the latest European aesthetic recipe to the rest of the world–not in a franchise way but to be used unlicensed; *global freeware*, so to speak. If this sounds generous, note that there was no guarantee of re-import–and only very few of them in fact occurred. Europe may have exported the art museum as a cultural model throughout the world, but it was still reluctant to accept in its own museums contemporary art produced in non-European countries.

That was the stance of documenta for a long time, changing noticeably only in 1992 with *documenta*

IX. Artists who originated from Africa, Asia, Australia, and South America remained excluded with few exceptions and were clearly underrepresented for over thirty years in an exhibition that proudly adopted the label *world exhibition of art*. Starting out as an action of self-help in a war-destroyed land, the first documentas preferred art from already aesthetically established neighbours and allies that enhanced the value and legitimacy of the once defamed German artists. But after two world wars, a *world language* was a more than welcome utopia and could therefore be regarded as an idyllic, if naïve, notion.

7

This idyllic impression was reinforced with the ruin of the Orangerie transformed into an attractive outdoor area, turning parts of the second *documenta* into a summer festival. Numbers of solid sculptures were displayed in the ruins and between whitewashed provisional walls in front of the Orangerie (fig.7). Though this outdoor sculpture section conservatively confined many of its modern exhibits to an open-air white-cube, facing a huge park, it had a revolutionary Italian offspring in Spoleto*:* during the *Festival dei Due Mondi*, Giovanni Carandente, who had visited the second *documenta*, arranged an exhibition of modern sculpture in 1962 that was groundbreaking because the artworks were spread throughout the city and not restricted to the classical playgrounds like public parks or the gardens around art museums. Thus, Spoleto became an influential model for urban outdoor exhibitions of sculpture. documenta, in contrast, hesitated to invade its city until 1987, when Manfred Schneckenburger curated *documenta 8* and eventually conquered the public sphere of Kassel, probably through the influence of another internationally renowned German exhibition, *Skulptur-Projekte Münster,* founded in 1977 and explicitly dedicated to outdoor sculpture.[21]

documenta III (1964)

With the third *documenta* in 1964, nothing much changed; it rather seemed to suffer from a certain perplexity of its own success. It still claimed to present international art, but no longer specified which period. While the first had explicitly covered the twentieth century and the second art since 1945, the third *documenta* likewise only claimed to be an "International Exhibition" but had in fact significant blind spots. Like the second *documenta*, the third had special spaces for masterpieces reaching back beyond the second *documenta's* limit of 1945. These special areas could have allowed some retrospective additions of artists overlooked by the first *documenta*, but only Otto Freundlich and George Grosz were now included. Planned or not, with this politics of oblivion documenta not only launched post-war careers, but helped to forget pre-war ones. It took another two years for the returnee Ludwig Meidner, a crucial figure of German expressionism admired by the *Brücke* artists, to be given his first post-exile show in 1966–in Recklinghausen. Again, an appropriate formula was launched when the third *documenta* adopted the slogan "Museum of 100 Days", and that in fact best summed up its mixture of 20th-century modern classics and post-war contemporaries.

The emphasis was still on Europe: Germany and France delivered about one third of the 361 artists respectively, the remaining third were mainly shared among the USA, Italy, and Britain, with roughly thirty participants each, and overall only ten of them women, leading to a decrease to less than 3% of the total.[22] Yet statistics, I finally have to admit, never tell the whole story–talking about exhibitions, one of course has to look at the *staging* as well. This can be pointed out by the British contribution throughout the first three *documentas*. Already in the first *documenta* it was small by numbers but impressive in appearance: it dominated the main hall of sculpture, where Henry Moore's *King and Queen* were enthroned (fig. 3). When the second *documenta* was augmented with outdoor sculpture, it was Moore, again, who was at the centre of it, in this case the Orangerie's ruins, flanked again by Kenneth Armitage, Reg Butler, Lynn Chadwick, and Barbara Hepworth, and, as a new participant, Eduardo Paolozzi (fig.7). When the outdoor sculpture section was repeated in 1964, the third *documen*ta again set Moore at its the centre. This illustrates that not only do the numbers count in an international exhibition, but so do the positions in the exhibition space.

After Bode's legendary gift of staging had reached its peak with the controversial ceiling installation of Ernst Wilhelm Nay's paintings during *documenta III* (fig. 8), he was busy and successful, as before, in convincing politicians and donors of the necessity of a follow-up, which took place in 1968 as *documenta 4*. This success turned out to be a defeat, however, because during the fourth *documenta* Bode lost his influence, and the exhibition was completed by a group of younger curators headed by Jean Leering.

8

documenta 4 (1968)
The fourth *documenta* (which by the way, only featured five women, which once again makes 3%) was the first to raise the claim that would become typical for the ones to follow, namely to inform about and present only art of the preceding couple of years, stressing the contemporary aspect and neglecting, with few prominent exceptions, any retrospective task. This, of course, meant more or less adopting the formula of the Venice Biennale, which was some seventy years older and now had to face a younger competitor that had abandoned national representation as a structuring principle.

documenta's switch of concept was only possible because all the other representatives of the former three *documentas* had either left the board or been disempowered already before Bode: all of the veterans had wanted to stick to the combination of older art with contemporary work and would not agree to only show present-day artists. The fourth *documenta's* turn toward the contemporary was the result of a decisive battle behind the scenes that also changed the logo from Roman to Arabic numbers to mark the transition. The curators of a younger generation probably thought that modern art no longer needed any support of historical legitimation, after the majority of the German population seemed, if not to like, then at least to tolerate modern art, like the European public in general did. It was likely more important that one year earlier, in 1967, the first international fair dedicated exclusively to contemporary art had been founded in Cologne–by a former member of the documenta committee, the gallerist Hein Stünke, together with Rudolf Zwirner, who had been general secretary for the second *documenta* and then became a gallerist as well. As a model for all the influential and popular art fairs to come–in Basel, Chicago, London, Hong Kong, Madrid, Miami Beach, or elsewhere–the Cologne fair changed the perception of contemporary art in the long run probably more than any documenta still had a chance to do. In any case, contemporary art has since then developed enough legitimacy in itself, be it one of market value, social prestige, or media coverage.

Most conspicuous in the tour of the fourth *documenta* was the presence of North American artists, who represented colour-field painting, hard-edge painting, and–most striking–pop art and minimal art (fig. 9). Making up one third of all the artists invited, the American contribution earned the fourth *documenta* the nickname *documenta americana*. And that was only half the story: it also meant that American collectors could stay at home, which they did. In an interview with the late Johannes Cladders, he told me a very illustrative anecdote: when he ran around Paris in the autumn of 1962–like everybody had to, because the galleries opened for the new season and Paris was still the place to go–he met the very influential Iris Clert standing in front of her gallery somewhat perplexed. Without greeting him–a regular and important visitor she knew well–she said *Pas d'américains à Paris*! And for a while she said nothing more.[23]

No Americans in Paris of course referred to the collectors who had previously been regular custom-

ers. This marked a decisive moment in European art history, just as important as the first European travelling exhibition of Pollock a decade earlier: from that moment on, the North American collectors preferred to shop at home and no longer estimated their home-grown collectibles inferior to European art. They rather exported them, and that was manifest in an exhibition that took place in 1969, just one year after the fourth *documenta*: *When Attitudes Become Form*. Sponsored by a US tobacco corporation, this exhibition, curated by the great Harald Szeemann, presented a lot of North American artists that the average visitor of the fourth *documenta* a year earlier not even had heard of: in the mid-size towns of Bern and Krefeld, Szeemann managed to outplay documenta in its own newly chosen game, that is, presenting the latest and most advanced contemporary art! Like in 1956, when the exhibition *This Is Tomorrow* at London's ICA must have made the first *documenta* (of the preceding year) look old-fashioned, *When Attitudes Become Form* did this very trick one year after the fourth, but with much greater consequences.

9

***documenta 5* (1972)**

One of them, of course, was that Szeemann became the next artistic director in Kassel. *documenta 5* changed the face of the place probably more than any other except for the first one. What Szeemann did *not* change was the importing of North American art. On the contrary, "his" *documenta* was the one that should have been labelled *americana*: with nearly 90 participants, for the first time more than one third of the (generally reduced number of) artists came from the USA. And theirs was a generation that no longer relied on European models or traditions, but instead surprised the visitors with genuine innovations like Conceptual Art, Happenings, Installations, Land Art, Performance Art, and Photorealism, not to mention photography itself, or film, which up to then had never been regarded as art in Kassel! (Out of the 234 participants, 11% were women, thus their number quadrupled.)

But a decisive change also affected the role of the curator. As already noted in 1982 in a text for the special issue "Mythos documenta" that I edited for the German magazine *Kunstforum International* (fig.10),[24] originally *documenta* was eager to promote the modern artist as hero. This was all the more necessary as modern artists had been among the victims of National Socialist discrimination. But *documenta 5* (1972) changed the game: instead of venerating the producers, behind whom the *documenta* organizers of the first and second editions had retreated, the triumph of the new heroes, the mediators, was heralded. Szeemann was prepared for it, as his first feat, the exhibition *When Attitudes Become Form*, had already proved that not only artists but also art mediators could become stars of the art world if they presented the right artists at the right time in the right context.[25] His contradictory notion of *Individuelle Mythologien* (Individual Mythologies), the slogan of *documenta 5*, is possibly the best password ever invented to lead into modern art's field of force. It gave *documenta 5* the intellectual and artistic features necessary to secure its enduring fame as the most important d*ocumenta* apart from the first.

10

Incidentally, this notion changed Haftmann's strategy of legitimation, because it did not historicize the artistic material but characterized it by labelling it: Haftmann's strategy had come to an end because the fast market changes in new tendencies made it obsolete. By calling the central section of the fifth *documenta* "Individual Mythologies", Szeemann had appropriated a different way of producing art history without historical concepts, or national ones, for that matter. Although Szeemann was not thanked for his achievements during and after the closing of his

documenta 5, but instead sued for having overdrawn the budget, his example influenced and changed the world of art mediating in many ways and foreshadowed today's importance of the *curator*.

Coda

But now I have come to the end of my statistics and proportions. I hope they have given you some impression of what we talk about when we talk about internationality in art, not to speak of globalisation. And I am sorry if it sometimes sounded like the *European Song Contest*. When we look back on the formative years of documenta, the then-famous issues–the *universality of art* or *abstraction as world language*–today they rather make us smile than convince us or inspire awe. Coming generations in return might find amusing what we today take for granted, the *global art world* for instance, or *post-structuralism; museum size* in contemporary painting or *curatorial studies;* the *iconic turn* or the notion of *copyright*–who knows? They may even look back with contempt on the idea of the *contemporary* and find it too commercial, and may favour *slow art* instead. An ironic photograph circulating on the internet shows a group of demonstrators holding a transparent that says "NO TO CONTEMPORARY ART. TOGETHER WE CAN STOP IT." These could be themes for discussion in half a century, just before *documenta 23* in 2062. I definitely will not be there, but some of you youngsters among us may–so take care.

Notes

1 This is a revised version of the paper I contributed to "Conference on the Way to dOCUMENTA (13)" to which Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev had invited former curators of *documentas 5* to *12* to the Castello di Rivoli in Turin in September 2009. I was invited to speak as a historian on the first four editions.

2 Harald Kimpel *documenta. Mythos und Wirklichkeit*, Diss. Univ. Kassel 1996, DuMont, Cologne, 1997 (with comprehensive bibliography). Also see Walter Grasskamp, "'Degenerate Art' and documenta I - Modernism Ostracized and Disarmed," in Daniel J. Sherman and Irit Rogoff, eds., *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1994, pp. 163–194; Walter Grasskamp, *Documenta art du XX^e siècle. Exposition internationale au Musée Fridericianum de Kassel du 15 juillet au 18 septembre 1955*, in Bernd Klüser and Katharina Hegewisch, eds., *L'Art de l'exposition. Une documentation sur trente expositions exemplaires du XX^e siècle*, Editions du Regard, Paris, 1998, pp. 211- 226; Michael Glasmeier and Karin Stengel, eds., *50 Years documenta 1955-2005*, 2 vol., Steidl, Göttingen, 2005; Walter Grasskamp, *To Be Continued: Periodical Exhibitions. Documenta for Example*, Tate Papers, No 12, *Landmark Exhibitions Issue,* 2009; Hans Eichel, ed., *60 Jahre documenta. Die lokale Geschichte einer Globalisierung*, Siebenhaar, Kassel, 2015. A special treat are the four volumes dedicated to each of the first four documentas displaying most of the artworks and installations with superb contemporary photographs. Edited by Harald Kimpel and Karin Stengel for the documenta archive Kassel, they were published in chronological order by Edition Temmen (Bremen) in 1995, 2000, 2005, and 2007.

3 "Die einzelnen Länder sind mit den in der vorstehenden Übersicht aufgeführten Künstlern beteiligt. Durch die politische Emigration aus Rußland und Deutschland ist die nationale Zugehörigkeit bei einer Reihe von Künstlern unsicher geworden; sie wurden je nach dem Grad ihrer Wirkung ihren Heimat- bzw. Gastländern zugeordnet." *documenta. Kunst des XX. Jahrhunderts*, Munich, 1955, reprinted 1995, p. 27. Exhibition catalogue.

4 Walter Grasskamp, D*as Europa der Kunst. Zwei Jahrzehnte der Akademie der Bildenden Künste München*, oder: Vier Jubiläen und eine Utopie, in zeitblicke 5, (2006), No. 2.

5 There were other German artists not present at the first *documenta* who had spent most or all of the Nazi years in Italy, like Max Peiffer-Watenphul. For Purrmann, see my essay "Hans Purrmann als Europäer betrachtet. Über Kunst und Migration," in Felix Billeter and Christoph Wagner, eds., *Neue Wege zu Hans Purrmann*, Gebr. Mann, Berlin, 2017, pp. 352–365.

6 That could include war service, as in the case of Eduard Bargheer, who was drafted and worked as an interpreter from 1942 to 1944 and was then included in the "Kunstschutz" (art conservation) program in Florence until 1945. This could also include exhibitions in more liberal art institutions, such as, in this case, the Kunstverein (art union) Hamburg, where Bargheer was included in the 1936 exhibition *Kunst im Olympiajahr* (art in the year of the Olympic Games), which is reported to have been closed down by the political authorities a couple of days after the opening.

7 *Thomas Grochowiak Interviewed by Walter Grasskamp*, Walther König, Cologne, 2009; *Johannes Cladders Interviewed by Walter Grasskamp*, DuMont, Cologne, 2004.

8 The city of Recklinghausen had been the home of the *Ruhrfestspiele* beginning in 1947, the early years being devoted to theatre only. Nearly from the start, the annual Recklinghausen shows were early examples of themed art exhibitions, a category later made famous by Harald Szeemann. In addition, they also advanced exhibition design. As Grochowiak (who had been responsible for the annual exhibition as of 1950) told me (page 60 of the book mentioned in the footnote above), Arnold Bode was a regular visitor of the annual exhibition in Recklinghausen, like almost everyone interested in modern art in post-war Germany, before he invented *documenta.* Bode must have been the first to recognize the importance of the *Ruhrfestspiele's* experiment in exhibition design and concepts. He is even said to have asked if he could be the guest curator of one of them before he started his own enterprise in Kassel.

9 Stefano Collicelli Cagol, *Venezia e la vitalità del contemporaneo. Paolo Marinotti a Palazzo Grassi (1959 – 1967)*, Il Poligrafo, Padua, 2008.

10 See issue on *allestimenti*, *Rassegna* No. 10, 1982.

11 Cagol and I share the supposition that these innovations would have reached London as well and may have inspired the groundbreaking exhibition *Parallel of Life and Art* that was staged at the ICA in 1952, and furthermore the innovative exhibition designer Richard Hamilton. Anyway, the *Independent Group* could have known about the Milano *Triennale* via the magazine *Domus* or other sources of migrating images.

12 Lyonel Feininger, in contrast, a second-generation émigré, was identified in the catalogue as representing Germany.

13 Heiner Georgsdorf, ed., *Arnold Bode: Schriften und Gespräche*, B & S Siebenhaar, Berlin, 2007.

14 Not only of art, by the way, but of architecture as well, where what would become crucial to art only few decades later had already happened: the European origin was generalized and distributed worldwide as *international style*, an expression already coined in 1932 for the eponymous MoMA exhibition. Exponents of the international style in architecture were included in the small selection of photographs Bode exhibited on the margins of the first *documenta*.

15 Karl Schwesig, *Schlegelkeller. Mit einem Vorwort von Heinrich Mann*, Frölich und Kaufmann, Berlin, 1986.

16 In Germany, it became topical at the beginning of the twentieth century when the recently discovered cave paintings of Stone Age were used to justify modern art's expressionist and abstracting features. It became international through the emigration of one of its major protagonists, the Austrian Ludwig Goldscheider. Goldscheider was the founder of the Phaidon Verlag in Vienna, where in 1934 his book *Zeitlose Kunst* (*Timeless Art*) appeared, delivering the first analogies of modern and traditional art. When Goldscheider had to emigrate to London in 1938, he founded the still famous *Phaidon Press* and published a more radical English version of *Zeitlose Kunst* that sharpened the argument already in its title: *5,000 Years of Modern Art or: The Picture Book of King Solomon*, London, 1952. Already in 1948, the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) in London had staged the exhibition *40,000 Years of Modern Art: A Comparison of Primitive and Modern*. It was a very modernist way of defending modern art with ancient (and exotic) examples, because it used the strategies of the museum and photography, both of them foundations and outstanding features of modernity, also to be used by André Malraux in his

musée imaginaire. See my recent book, *The Book on the Floor: André Malraux and the Imaginary Museum.* Getty, Los Angeles, 2016; German version, *André Malraux und das imaginäre Museum. Die Weltkunst im Salon.* C.H. Beck, Munich, 2014.

17 Walter Grasskamp/Hans Haacke: *Photographic Notes documenta 2 1959*, Deutscher Kunstverlag, Berlin/Munich, 2012.

18 Sigrid Ruby, *Have We An American Art? Präsentation und Rezeption amerikanischer Malerei im Westdeutschland und Westeuropa der Nachkriegszeit*, Diss. Univ. Bonn 1998; Verlag und Datenbank für Geisteswissenschaften, Weimar, 1999.

19 Obviously, it was not invented by Werner Haftmann, the ideological mastermind of early documentas, but promoted by a richly orchestrated book published by Georg Poensgen and Leopold Zahn in 1958, one year before the second *documenta*, called precisely (in translation) *Abstract Art - A World Language*. Yet, it already contained an anthology of appropriate quotations edited by Haftmann, whose aesthetic convictions it matched, while it of course also flattered the artists included.

20 I owe this reference to Vasarely to Wolfgang Ullrich, whose book *Bilder auf Weltreise. Eine Globalisierungskritik* (*Pictures Travelling around the World. A Critique of Globalisation*) was published in 2006 by Wagenbach in Berlin. There is anecdotal proof, by the way, that nationality in art was still a European topic of relevance in 1959: visiting the second *documenta* convinced the Danish collector Knut Jensen, who only had bought Danish art up to then, to change his guidelines and open his collection to international art. He even managed to get a small selection of the second *documenta* to travel to his beautiful *Museum Louisiana* near Copenhagen after the gates had been closed in Kassel.

21 Walter Grasskamp, "Art in the City: an Italian-German Tale," in Florian Matzner, ed., *Public Art*, Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern-Ruit, German/English edition, 2001, separate English edition, 2003.

22 There was another addition to the concept that was not successful and remained an exception: a separate exhibition in the Kassel art school (*Werkakademie*) presented applied art, contemporary design of products, and posters, including the just retired director of the Amsterdam Stedelijk Museum, Willem Sandberg, with his typographical work. Different from Recklinghausen, the first *documenta* had not combined applied art and fine art, much to Bode's concern, I guess; nor did the second. His indispensable companion Werner Haftmann, the chief ideologist of the first three *documentas*, appears to have insisted successfully on his rather traditional academic notion of art, restricting it to painting, graphic works, and sculpture. Thus, documenta was innovative in its contemporary choices, but very conservative in its restriction of media, rejecting photography as an artistic media up until 1977 and, above all, ignoring design and architecture with few exceptions. dedicated to contemporary art, it stuck to the academic media. Being familiar with the Bauhaus concept, Bode, Grochowiak, and Sandberg were inclined to combine applied and fine art, but Haftmann obviously was not.

23 *Johannes Cladders interviewed by Walter Grasskamp*, p. 50.

24 Walter Grasskamp, "Modell documenta oder wie wird Kunstgeschichte gemacht?," *Kunstforum International, Vol.* 49, 3/1982, April/May, pp. 15-22. A revised English translation was published as "For example, Documenta or How is Art History Produced?," in Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, and Sandy Nairne, eds., *Thinking About Exhibitions*, Routledge, London, 1996, 2.Ed. 1999, pp. 67–78.

25 Walter Grasskamp, "Der Kurator als Held. Harald Szeemann," in Wolfgang Ullrich, ed., *Ein Urlaubstag im Kunstbetrieb. Bilder und Nachbilder*, Philo Fine Arts, Hamburg, 2010, pp. 71–100.

Captions

1 Museum Fridericianum with German cars and national flags during the first *documenta*. Photograph by: Carl Eberth. © documenta Archiv.

2 Pages from the *documenta* catalogue (1955, Prestel Verlag, Munich, reprint 1995) with list of artists.

3 *documenta*'s Hall of Sculpture with Henry Moore's King and Queen. Photograph by: Hilmar Deist. © documenta Archiv.

4 Installation View of Ground Floor during the first *documenta*. Photograph by: Günther Becker. © documenta Archiv.

5 Pages with artists list from the *documenta II* Catalogue (1959, DuMont Schauberg, Colone)

6 Installation View of Museum Fridericianum during *documenta II* with paintings by Jackson Pollock. Photograph by: Günther Becker. © documenta Archiv, Jackson Pollock

7 Installation View of the Orangerie during *documenta II* with Sculpture by Henry Moore. Photograph by: Hilmar Deist. © documenta Archiv.

8 Installation View with Painting by Ernst Wilhelm Nay installed on the Ceiling at *documenta III*. Photograph by: Günther Becker. © documenta Archiv.

9 Installation View with Group of Visitors during *documenta 4*. Photograph by: Heinz Pauly. © documenta archiv.

10 Pages from "Mythos documenta" with Walter Grasskamp's essay "Modell documenta". Courtesy of *Kunstforum International*.

Walter Grasskamp, born in 1950, held the chair in art history at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich from 1995 to 2016, where he was vice-rector from 1999 until 2003. Co-ordinating editor of *German Art in the 20th Century: Painting and Sculpture 1905 – 1985* (Royal Academy London, 1985) and author of numerous essays and books dedicated to modern and contemporary art (with a focus on post-war West Germany); to the history of art museums and art unions, exhibitions and curating (with a focus on documenta); to art in the public sphere (with a focus on *Sculpture. Projects in Münster*), as well as to pop culture and consumerism. Latest publications: *The Book on the Floor. André Malraux and the Imaginary Museum* (Getty, Los Angeles, 2016); *Das Kunstmuseum – eine erfolgreiche Fehlkonstruktion* (C.H. Beck, Munich, 2016).

Post-North? Documenta11 and the Challenges of the "Global Exhibition"

by Anthony Gardner & Charles Green

Introduction

Documenta11 (2002) is widely considered one of the most important exhibitions in recent decades, recognized for its postcolonial, geographic dispersion of art. Two key factors underpin this recognition, for not only did its artistic director Okwui Enwezor assert that the idea of an avant-garde had never belonged to the North Atlantic alone, but his curatorial enterprise also hinged on a radical (though not entirely unprecedented) curatorial method: that of diffused curatorship in which the exhibition's director worked closely with a team of collaborators. Our essay will concentrate equally on both of these impulses behind Enwezor's challenge to "global" exhibition-making at the turn of the millennium. It will also point to the significant tension that then emerged between the self-conscious destabilization of centralized intellectual and artistic authority across what Enwezor famously described as postcolonial "constellations of discursive domains, circuits of artistic and knowledge production, and research modules," on the one hand, and his adroitly managerial solution of delegated duties on the other.[1]

Enwezor was consciously seeking a fundamental and ambitious redefinition of the structure and meaning of art institutions according to a globalized and, potentially, decolonized model of art. Rather than simply presenting a group show in documenta's usual, comfortable Kassel home, he staged his exhibition–though this was far more than an exhibition in the conventional understanding of the term–across five connected forums, or "Platforms" as he called them, in different locations worldwide. He shared curatorial responsibility for *Documenta11* between himself and his close-knit group of six co-curators: Carlos Basualdo, Ute Meta Bauer, Susanne Ghez, Sarat Maharaj, Mark Nash, and Octavio Zaya. He had worked with each previously and, moreover, had done so over a long period (Zaya, for instance, co-curated the 2nd Johannesburg Biennale with Enwezor in 1997).

Despite its setting in the small German town, but given its huge reputation and resources, documenta offered perhaps the only opportunity for such a group of leading curators to actively alter the art world with one exhibition. At the very least, it provided this curatorial team with the ambition to emphasize certain aspects of the all-powerful wave of globalization then sweeping the contemporary art world in order to advance a narrative of decolonization over other narratives about the global, and *Documenta11* did so thoroughly enough to have a genuinely historic impact on both artistic and curatorial practice. In that light, it is perhaps surprising that though there have been many references to *Documenta11* in the literature on biennials, and an extensive array of reviews and feature articles that appeared in the period after 2002, there has been relatively little by way of extended writing on the exhibition. Our book *Biennials, Triennials, and documenta: The Exhibitions That Created Contemporary Art* (2016) offers one such expansive analysis, returning to earlier editions of documenta, particularly Harald Szeemann's impactful exhibition of 1972, and to the great, post-World War II emergence of biennials across the global South.[2] As Okwui Enwezor well knew, this second wave of biennials was an important prefiguration of his epochal *Documenta11*.

1

The Five-Year Plan

The 1998 appointment of Enwezor as curator of *Documenta11* was in itself a radical departure from documenta's exclusively West European list of previous directors (a list that as well had only consisted of men until 1997, when French curator Catherine David directed *documenta X*). *documenta X* had focused on curating art that was adamant in its links with politics, and *Documenta11* maintained that emphasis. However, *Documenta11*'s particular historical moment–five years later and following the 9/11 attack–was now marked by the different issues that the Platforms were to spell out: a more intense focus on globalization; a heightened sense that racism, along with a hysteria about refugees and Islam, had returned to Europe; and, overshadowing all this, the new awareness of an impending environmental catastrophe. Catherine David's own obdurately and politically engaged artist selections, along with her revival of a daily public program of famous speakers that stretched the whole hundred-day duration of *documenta X*, were clear influences on Enwezor's approach. Looking back in 2013, shortly after he was appointed director of the 2015 Venice Biennale, Enwezor remembered that he was very conscious of this:

> Exactly 15 years ago, I got handed the reins of organizing documenta. I was 35 at the time, I had [a] limited track record, no major institution, patron, mentor, behind me, yet somehow that amazing jury that selected me saw beyond those deficits and focused, I hope, on the force of my ideas, and perhaps even a little wager on the symbolism of my being the first non-European, etc. My sense of it was that the jury wanted a choice that could be disruptive of the old paradigm but still not abandon the almost mythic ideal of this Mount Olympus of exhibitions. I came to documenta as I said with little track record, but with an abundance of confidence.[3]

Enwezor was quite accurately playing down his exhibition experience: he had curated nothing remotely on the scale of documenta, with the possible, though fraught and perhaps telling exception, of *Trade Routes: History and Geography: 2nd Johannesburg Biennale* (1997). But he was perfectly positioned to take on the discursive role of the reforming, surprise outsider, and his methods were already presaged in Johannesburg. There, he had presented multiple exhibitions arranged by a group of curators, a film program, and a symposium as an "open network of exchange," capable of productively exploring the sociopolitical processes of globalization.[4] This was an immense claim for an exhibition and had rested on the curator expropriating conceptual territory far beyond the aesthetic–an expropriation that had always proved immensely controversial, as shown by the heated and negative artist and critic responses to Harald Szeemann's 1972 landmark *documenta 5: Befragung der Realität, Bildwelten heute* (Questioning Reality–Pictorial Worlds Today), and to Elisabeth Sussman's 1993 Whitney Biennial. Enwezor had emphasized the importance of openness in a world characterized by migration and displacement. Despite the economic focus of its title, *Trade Routes: History and Geography* presented geographical mobility and displacement as the overarching unifying core of globalization, more than what he described as "economic consolidation and efficient distribution of labour and capital."[5] The main thrust of Enwezor's argument at Johannesburg was already that contemporary globalization politically and conceptually relates to historical colonialism, and that an examination of the enduring cultural mélange formed by colonialism "breathes new life" into thinking about globalization.[6] While he emphasized the colonial origin of current developments in global history, Enwezor also claimed that contemporary globalization is an unprecedented phenomenon, a period "like no other in human history."[7]

Enwezor was born in 1963 in Nigeria, but had been based in New York from late 1982 on. We use "based" fairly loosely though, for at that turn-of-the-century moment in the biennial boom, in 2002, no member of the emerging, highly peripatetic curator cadre was domiciled anywhere except airport lounges. By 2017, however, most are now safely ensconced in senior art museum jobs: Hans Ulrich Obrist at the Serpentine Gallery in London, Okwui Enwezor at the Haus der Kunst in Munich, Massimiliano Gioni at the New Museum in New York, Jessica Morgan at the Dia Art Foundation in New York, and so on. With an undergraduate degree in political science but no academic training in art history or background in museum work, Enwezor paid insistent attention to contemporary art outside the predictable North Atlantic art circuit, knowing that his life experiences precisely embodied the peripheralism he promoted. However, his close-knit *Documenta11* curatorium, four of whom were also academics as well as curators, had strong links to London (the exception, Chicago-based curator Susanne Ghez, was the long-standing director and chief curator of the University of Chicago's respected art museum, the Renaissance Society). More particularly still, the cabal was linked to a small

institution that embodied the growing intersection of academia and curatorship, the Institute of International Visual Arts (Iniva), located in Shoreditch in London's East End. Its founding director, Gilane Tawadros, was to be one of the co-curators of the 2003 Venice Biennale. This small research institute had a considerable reputation as a powerhouse for exhibitions and writing over successive phases of multicultural and postcolonial thinking; its scholars were connected with the influential, London-based journal, *Third Text*, which had been founded back in 1987 by veteran artist-theorist Rasheed Araeen. They all owed a considerable intellectual debt to pioneering Birmingham School cultural theorist and sociologist, Stuart Hall.

A link between curator and scholar was itself slightly unusual, for curators' writings on contemporary art and their methodologies for researching biennials had long since diverged from the work of art historians. The differences included the semi-ritual iteration of open rhetorical tropes, rather than the specificities and conclusive arguments usually associated with academic scholarship, and many curators' predilection to advocacy as opposed to art historians' preference for critique. The mutual incomprehension between curators and art historians was by now long-standing, dating back at least to *documenta 5* in 1972 and the rise of the charismatic auteur curator.[8] The early twenty-first-century chasm between the two otherwise closely aligned professional groups, has been quite thoroughly discussed by many writers but was, as we shall see, not necessarily as inevitable as it mistakenly seems. It was certainly not as definitive as the almost complete exclusion of art critics from the key forums of contemporary art. The curators of *Documenta11* were exceptional in that they crossed these borders. Certain of them, such as art historian Sarat Maharaj, then based at Goldsmiths College in London, already had very substantial reputations as scholars (in Maharaj's case, as an expert on Marcel Duchamp and Richard Hamilton). And it was in mid-1990s New York that Enwezor co-founded *Nka: Journal of Contemporary African Art* with Chika Okeke-Agulu and Salah Hassan, and co-presented his first exhibition that would attract wide notice, *In/sight: African Photographers, 1940 to the Present*, at the Guggenheim Museum (1996). In retrospect, *In/sight* already announced Enwezor's methodologies for *Documenta11*. First, *In/sight* argued that powerful parallel modernities, in this case those of African art, needed to be taken into account in any postwar art history. Second, Enwezor was already choosing to work in collaboration, in this exhibition with co-curators Clare Bell (assistant curator at the Guggenheim Museum), Danielle Tilkin (project director for *Africa Hoy/Africa Now*), and Octavio Zaya (who had been a co-curator of the first Johannesburg Biennial in 1995 and was to be a co-curator with Enwezor of the imminent second Johannesburg Biennial (1997) and then of *Documenta11*).

Documenta11 incorporated a double perspective that we might summarize in two words: postcolonialism and globalization. As the twin organizing criteria for the exhibition, these were not by any means completely novel. A number of landmark biennials and museum exhibitions had previously foregrounded not simply identity politics, but also artists who dissected the workings of cultural hegemony. *Magiciens de la terre* (1989) and *documenta X* (1997) were *Documenta11*'s chief North Atlantic precursors, though Enwezor would have insisted instead on a genealogy of exhibitions that included several biennials of the South, including his own Johannesburg Biennial of 1997.[9] Nevertheless, just as Arnold Bode and his friends had developed the first *documenta* to connect postwar West Germany with the rest of Cold War Europe via an exhibition of the newest developments in the late-modernist, international art of the time, so Enwezor was connecting the North Atlantic to the global South, like it or not, at the most important and influential recurring exhibition of all, with a notable focus on artists from Africa. This was an intensely geopolitical view of exhibition curating and one immediately recognized by visitors, even if they themselves were somewhat blind to their own metropolitan provincialism. As critic Kim Levin wrote,

> Updating the founder's original intent, which was to bring to post-war Germany the latest developments in modern art from the rest of Europe, Documenta 11 (which continues through September 15) brings to Europe the latest developments from the rest of the struggling, globalizing, postcolonial world. Jan Hoet's Documenta IX missed its historic chance to bring new art from the former Soviet empire into the fold in 1992. Catherine David's Documenta X in 1997 talked the talk about inclusion, but flubbed it with exclusionist hauteur. Enwezor, with a team of six co-curators, delivers on his promise.[10]

The exhibition did more than this; it relentlessly challenged North Atlantic hegemony over the definition of contemporary art. As Enwezor wrote in his introductory essay to the *Documenta11* catalogue:

> Today's avant-garde is so thoroughly disciplined and domesticated within the scheme of Empire that a whole different set of regulatory and resistance models has to be found to counterbalance Empire's attempts at totalization. Hardt and Negri call this resistance force, opposed to the power of Empire, "the multitude."[11]

By Empire, he was alluding to the then-recently published and, at the time, much-quoted activist tract by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (2000).[12] Hardt and Negri's *Empire* had immediately become a bleak primer for the new millennium, and it was much quoted in art-critical and curatorial essays. Geography, culture, injustice, and globalization–accompanied, in the wake of September 11, 2001, by a large section of the broad European and American public's reversion to social intolerance and rollback of popular left-liberal causes–had instantly periodized both postmodernity and its identity-driven early 1990s successor as privileged subcultures. The explanation, according to Hardt and Negri in *Empire*, was an Empire that internalized and entangled Others rather than simply exploit them: they explained that Empire was an open system of ever-enlarging networks without a center. Hardt and Negri did not simply identify Empire with the United States. Instead, they pointed out the equivalence of globalized corporations and postmodern factories with neomedievalist, fundamentalist Others, and in all this they imagined only a weak, quasi-messianic positive agency (a "multitude" of indefinable yet potentially collective desires and drives). At the center of Empire, they placed communications industries and, at the very margins of this world, a space left for art.

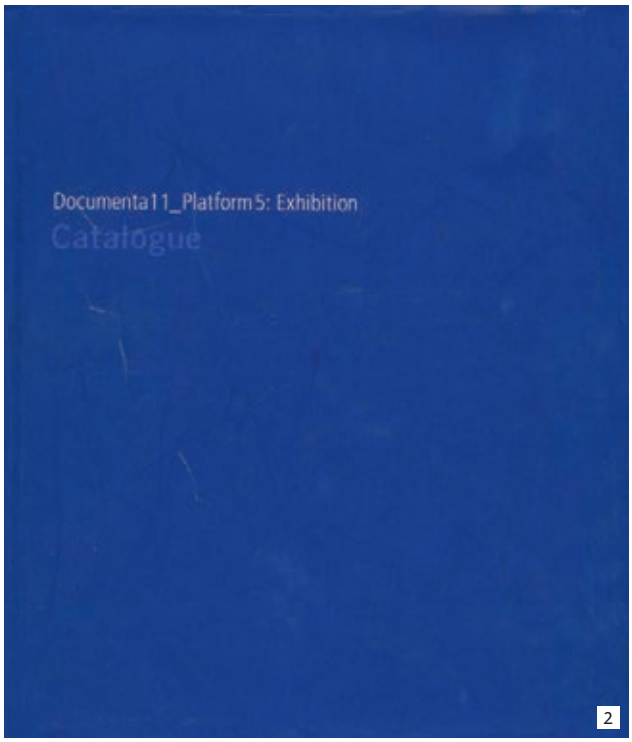
Curators such as Enwezor grasped the stakes in adapting to this transformation, explaining that marginal artistic players who had been there and were ignored all along could repopulate familiar, foundational artistic narratives. Entanglement, not difference, ruled Enwezor's *documenta* and his reconstituted global canon of art (although the dual reference to the destroyed airplanes of 9/11 and the venue for moving image projection in the title of his catalogue essay, "The Black Box," made that entanglement significantly strained). He explained the hegemony exercised through art history's putatively disinterested judgments and the commerce of art with consummate, diplomatic plausibility: doyenne artist Louise Bourgeois, for instance, was both self-declared outsider and, by already universal consensus, a senior, key figure in late twentieth-century North Atlantic art; in Kassel the room for her works was next to a suite of rooms devoted to West Coast conceptualist photographer Allan Sekula's monumental archive documenting the decline of global shipping, *Fish Story* (1987–1995), pointedly opposite a group of rooms that quite precisely mirrored this juxtaposition of hot emotional rhetoric and cool documentary. But this group of rooms consisted of works by artists of color, including Lorna Simpson, Steve McQueen, and Destiny Deacon.

Next, Enwezor was not simply altering the form of biennial directing by just delegating his curatorial role. He was, as well, expanding quite dramatically the form that a biennial would take (and, as we argue in our book, we are using the word to signify biennials, triennials, and all other recurrent exhibitions that survey contemporary art). Building on the "100 days–100 guests" program of speakers that Catherine David had made such a prominent part of *documenta X*, Enwezor saw that a biennial could encompass the participation and the intellectual work of invitees who were not artists at all, but economists, lawyers, poets, political theorists, and other experts. Further, he would disperse *Documenta11* beyond Kassel itself, across the five "Platforms" spread across the globe, each located in a different nation.

The *Documenta11* office explained this complex process thus:

> Platform1, Democracy Unrealized, took place in Vienna, Austria, from March 15 to April 20, 2001 in Vienna. It continued from October 9 to October 30, 2001, in Berlin, Germany [following the terrorist attacks of 9/11].
>
> Platform2, Experiments with Truth: Transitional Justice and the Processes of Truth and Reconciliation, took place in New Delhi, India, from May 7 to May 21, 2001, and consisted of five days of public panel discussions, lectures, and debates and a video program that included over 30 documentaries and fiction films.
>
> Platform3, Créolité and Creolization, was held on the West Indian island of St. Lucia in the Caribbean between January 12 and January 16, 2002.
>
> Platform4, Under Siege: Four African Cities, Freetown, Johannesburg, Kinshasa, Lagos, was held in Lagos from March 15 to March 21, 2002, and engaged the current state of affairs of fast-growing African urban centers in a public symposium, along with a workshop, "Urban

> Processes in Africa," organized in collaboration with CODESRIA. Over the course of one year, more than 80 international participants across many disciplines – philosophers, writers, artists, architects, political activists, lawyers, scholars, and other cultural practitioners – contributed to the evolving, dynamic public sphere that spelled out Documenta11's attempt to formulate a critical model that joins heterogeneous cultural and artistic circuits of present global context. Platform5, the final platform, is the exhibition Documenta11 in Kassel, from June 8–September 15, 2002.[13]



2

The first four Platforms consisted of lectures, debates, and panel discussions; the fifth included these as well, during the event's one-hundred days of public events much as at *documenta X*, but it also included the expected mega-exhibition spread across the Museum Fridericianum (the stately art museum on Kassel's town square that had been the principal venue since the first *documenta* in 1955) and the close-by documenta-Halle, the Orangerie, the Binding Brauerei (a derelict brewery used for this documenta only), the Kulturbahnhof (Kassel's former central railway station, which had long been replaced by the newer Wilhelmshöhe Station, a few kilometers west of the city center, leaving the older central station to local trains and its surprisingly capacious building to galleries for documenta), and a few other, smaller, temporary venues, including Swiss artist Thomas Hirschhorn's elaborate, jerry-built sculpture-cum-community-center, the famous *Bataille Monument* (2002), which was located further out of town in a poorer workers' suburb. In 2002, *Documenta11* did not use the Neue Galerie, which had long been a key documenta venue.

In his Introduction to *Documenta11*'s exhibition catalogue, Enwezor declared:

> As an exhibition project, *Documenta11* begins from the sheer side of extraterritoriality: firstly, by displacing its historical context in Kassel; secondly, by moving outside the domain of the gallery space to that of the discursive; and thirdly, by expanding the locus of the disciplinary models that constitute and define the project's intellectual and cultural interest.[14]

The triple significance of the word "platform" helps explain why the previous symposia were so important to Enwezor and his group, even though each was attended either by audiences of insignificant size or by invitees only. First, a platform is a manifesto, a rhetorical gesture and an outline of a plan for the future. The first four Platforms were all of these. Enwezor had explicitly asserted that all the Platforms, together, were "a constellation of disciplinary models that seek to explain and interrogate ongoing historical processes and radical change, spatial and temporal dynamics, as well as fields of actions and ideas, and systems of interpretation and production."[15] The thoroughness of the enterprise, mapping a succession of global challenges that seemed particularly pressing at that early twenty-first-century moment–democracy (which is overshadowed by history), reconciliation (which is tested by the search for justice), cultural hybridity (exemplified by creolization), and urbanization (the millennial stresses that might undo or reshape civic culture)–went far beyond the normal, boilerplate curatorial rhetoric.

Second, a platform is a vantage point. Enwezor's Platforms, culminating at Kassel, were looking into the distance, both forwards and backwards. The view was prospective in that the participants described future reconciliation in the political, cultural, and social spheres–sometimes in their papers or later, in Kassel, in their works of art–in utopian or sometimes dystopian visions. Their views were, equally, retrospective in that the Platform speakers and, just as obviously, Kassel's artists were documenting and mapping the global present. They were recording contemporaneity's present shape, whether in the

speakers' essays or in artists like Sekula's patient assemblage of documentary color photographs, which described the transcontinental operation and slow collapse of ocean-based industries such as shipping and fishing in a long succession across rooms of modestly scaled prints. (Sekula avoided the gargantuan scale of glossy C-type images that had become a common artistic trope in photography selections for biennials.) This double vision was definitely comprehensible to *Documenta11*'s knowledgeable European audience. But even then, the Kassel exhibition, as Enwezor well knew, appeared within the horizon of a powerful but apparently natural and, in fact, recalcitrant North Atlantic provincialism.

As if to prove him right, at the time, other curators were mapping an idea of international art that far more exclusively identified with the idea of a globalized world, using a global topography redeemed by the now-apparently free flow of data, information, and commodities. The director of the 2003 Venice Biennale and co-curator of Ljubljana's *Manifesta 3*, Francesco Bonami, was one of those figures. Propelled by his rosy view of the curatorial collaborations in Ljubljana, Bonami would imagine in Venice a cultural camaraderie produced by art that depended on its viewers to complete the work. This was "Dreams and Conflicts: The Dictatorship of the Viewer," the title of his 2003 Venice Biennale. Bonami, like many curators of the period, was identifying open-endedness with the third and then-familiar usage of the word "platform," which denoted a matrix-like assemblage of software that is so open and permeable that it permits interoperability and easy plug-ins, and in turn linking this to the highly informal, relational art of the late 1990s. But this "Dictatorship" was to quickly become dated, as Claire Bishop observed in the aftermath of *Documenta11* and a few months after Bonami's Biennale closed, when she wrote that, "It can be argued that the works of Hirschhorn and Sierra, as I have presented them, are no longer tied to the direct activation of the viewer, or to their literal participation in the work."[16] Not only did her words point to the limits of art's relational aesthetics, but equally to the passive politics at the core of certain curatorial thinking.

Enwezor, on the other hand, was not at all as invested in those two particular, quickly aging signifiers of artistic contemporaneity, both of which had first appeared the previous decade in *Traffic* (curated by Nicolas Bourriaud at the CAPC, Bordeaux, in 1996). By 2002, curators had already been valorizing the terms associated with conviviality and sociability for about ten years, and so the degree to which Enwezor avoided such art and rhetoric in his *documenta*, as opposed to Bonami's reliance on that in his Venice Biennale a mere year later, reflects real difference in artistic priorities despite the common network within which both curators moved. As veteran *New Yorker* art critic Peter Schjeldahl reluctantly admitted, Okwui Enwezor "is onto something: a drastically expanded field of players and points of view in which the global spread of multiculturalism is taken for granted."[17] *Documenta11* painted a picture of contemporary art as a network in which New York, Lagos, London, Cape Town, and Basel were more or less equally important to a contemporary canon and similarly crucial in understanding contemporaneity, as opposed to some centers being exotic margins and others more genuinely cosmopolitan and contemporary.

Black Box, White Cube, Outside the Frame

The North Atlantic was marginal in Enwezor's first four Platforms but not at the fifth, the Kassel exhibition. We know that Enwezor placed his *documenta* against North Atlantic hegemony, and yet a very substantial number of the artists he selected were from Europe and the United States, so many that we must focus on this apparently contradictory aspect of his selections in order to understand what he was doing at this fifth Platform.[18] We will do this by focusing on one of his selections in particular, Thomas Hirschhorn's *Bataille Monument* (2002), which embodied the different, ambitious notions of a platform, but which was also self-consciously a work of art. We will come back to the significance of this apparently unremarkable observation shortly, for it is central to understanding both the significance of Hirschhorn in general, as Anthony Gardner has elsewhere explored in detail, but also of Enwezor's placement of Hirschhorn's work at the heart–while at the same time at a highly visible periphery–of *Documenta11* as well.[19] Hirschhorn's work figured immediately and prominently in exhibition reviews. His *Monument* was located at the Friedrich-Wöhler housing estate, in an outer suburb of Kassel called Nordstadt, a racially divided and socioeconomically disadvantaged district far away from documenta's main exhibition venues such as the Museum Fridericianum, the Brewery, and the Hauptbahnhof, which were all concentrated near the city center. As we noted, *Documenta11* did not use the Neue Galerie in 2002, and so the Neue Galerie's great collection of works by Joseph Beuys–including his arrangement of sleds, *The Pack* (1969), as well as the famous banner-

size photograph and a self-portrait of Beuys, *La rivoluzione siamo Noi* (The Revolution Is Us) (1972), which had been part of the artist's *Büro der Organisation für direkte Demokratie durch Volksabstimmung* (Bureau of the Organization for Direct Democracy by Referendum) at *documenta 5*–was able to be seen that year during documenta. This is worth remembering, given Hirschhorn's extensive allusions to Beuys and the *Monument*'s debt to Beuys's *Büro* and to *documenta 5* (which we will discuss in more detail presently). The *Bataille Monument* was really only accessible to documenta visitors if they waited at the main venues for garishly badged old taxis that were themselves part of the artwork. These shuttled at intervals to and from the Nordstadt. The *Monument* itself was constituted by a series of "departments." These included large, *Merzbau*-like installations made of recycled materials, silver foil, cardboard, and plastic sheeting held together with duct tape and covered with messages and aphorisms, a plastic tree-like sculpture that doubled as a meeting-place, and a free library filled with books on Bataille's key obsessions, including sections on "words," "sex," and "sport." There was an *Imbiss*, a snack bar run by a local Turkish family, and a website and television studio at which locals could create programs on any subject they wished. These would later be transmitted on Kassel's public access television service. There were workshops about art and philosophy at which Hirschhorn and experts on the French surrealist theorist would appear and speak. Over the course of five months, Hirschhorn and his team, which included more than twenty assistants drawn from housing estate residents and young volunteers, constructed, maintained, and eventually removed these various departments.

It is important to emphasize that Hirschhorn undertook the creation, maintenance, and monitoring of the *Bataille Monument* together with the residents of the Nordstadt. However, at the same time, the *Bataille Monument* was definitely "not a question of representation, of a social project, of democratic representation," in Hirschhorn's words, "but of an artistic project."[20] His distinction between art and activism is important, for although art-critical writing and exhibition-making connected with racial and cultural identity had marked the 1990s and its biennials, such as the 1993 Whitney Biennial, there was a great distinction between consciousness-raising, the celebration of difference, and what Hirschhorn (and by extension Enwezor) was now proposing. Central to this distinction was Beuys's *Büro* at *documenta 5* as the direct precursor of Hirschhorn's *Bataille Monument*. The photographs and slogans that Beuys and his assistants had pinned on the *Büro's* walls or scrawled on its blackboards reappeared now in the pages and banners that Hirschhorn taped to the walls of his sculptures. Hirschhorn had decided that he would be present at the *Bataille Monument* in the Nordstadt to field questions about his politics, the work, and its placement.[21] His attendance and the constant routine of activities mirrored Beuys's constant presence at *documenta 5*. But Beuys's *Büro* was supposed to lead to direct political engagement, whereas Hirschhorn took similar social processes to different ends in a very twenty-first-century demarcation of the audience's experience with his art from democracy as an end in itself. If Hirschhorn was attracted to Beuys's utopian social politics, he also understood that such utopian ideals risked being subsumed and dissolved within the social status quo they seemed to protest. Art needed to fight for its own interests and ambitions, according to Hirschhorn, rather than become a politicized tool used for the advantage of others (including that of the *Gastarbeiter* residents of Kassel's outer suburbs). Or to put it another way, art had to relate to, but be distinguished from, the other worlds (political, social, and so on) around it. We shall now think this through by looking at the institutionalization, or even the recuperation,


3


4

of ostensibly radical artistic practices that Enwezor risked in *Documenta11.*

The Platforms that preceded Kassel, and the conference books that began to be published during the year after the exhibition, signaled that the supposed gap between politics and art was the product of a particular geographical perspective on culture, just as Hirschhorn's *Monument* signaled that the bridge between the two was neither one of instrumental service nor allegorical lesson. So, if we remember Hirschhorn's own emphatic resistance to seeing the *Bataille Monument* as an example of activist democracy–a resistance that seems surprising, at first sight, given the works' obvious investment in its location, in a racially divided and socioeconomically disadvantaged housing estate–then similarly we must pay careful attention to Enwezor's claims about both the Platforms and the exhibition at Kassel. Hirschhorn dismissed descriptions of the *Bataille Monument* that saw it as social work because he did not perceive it as fulfilling the social needs of the Nordstadt's residents.[22] Similarly, Enwezor resisted constraining his exhibition's politics according to a supposed social need or identity-based militancy, or to claims for artistic autonomy. Rather, he evaluated (as did Hirschhorn) the imbrication of artistic projects with contemporary worlds around them. This was especially evident in Enwezor's film, video, and speaking program that thoroughly examined the concept of the documentary form that was so instantly identified with *Documenta11's* fifth Platform. Thus, he wrote, "Linked together the exhibition counterpoises the supposed purity and autonomy of the art object against a rethinking of modernity based on ideas of transculturality and extraterritoriality."[23] Where Szeemann was pilloried for non-artist selections, Enwezor's *Documenta11* avoided opprobrium. By comparison, the previous *documenta X* had been a lightning rod for criticism centered on the austerity of neoconceptual political art. Without a doubt, Enwezor and *documenta X*'s director, Catherine David, had approached their respective editions of documenta through similar perspectives. She also saw the curator's role as ethical, welcoming the controversies and the apparent overstepping that this produced. She wrote,

> It may seem paradoxical or deliberately outrageous to envision a critical confrontation with the present in the framework of an institution [documenta] that over the past twenty years has become a Mecca for tourism and cultural consumption. Yet the pressing issues of today make it equally presumptuous to abandon all ethical and political demands.[24]

Nonetheless, David avoided framing all this within the parameters of identity politics, words that she had scrupulously avoided in her introductory essay to that 1997 exhibition, instead defining "the great ethical and aesthetic questions of the century's close," both negative and positive, including the upsurge of nationalism, racism, and identity fixations, and new forms of citizenship.[25] And now it seemed that *Documenta11*, like the *Bataille Monument*, managed to embody the space of contested meaning that David had written about. The reason was that *Documenta11*'s Platforms had deterritorialized contemporary art, by which we mean for a start that Enwezor and his associates did not allow political art to be misconstrued as an identity art, and neither had Hirschhorn or other artists. Enwezor remembered,

> The one virtue of documenta is the time allowed to organize it, which made possible the platforms. But you must remember that the platform idea, which was fundamentally about the deterritorialization of documenta, was not initially endorsed by certain landlocked critics, but once it took off its implications about going beyond business as usual became abundantly clear.[26]

There are two ways we can understand this idea of deterritorialization. Just as the deterritorialization of documenta most obviously implies to a general audience the movement of documenta activities off-site from Kassel and Germany, so both contemporary art and the exhibition itself were deterritorialized by being embedded in discourses far larger and more imminent than art pure and simple. This then meant that the adjudicating competencies of art critics were removed in the face of interdisciplinarity (an emerging lack of competence reinforced by the many long moving image works that dotted *Documenta11*, whose collective duration, variously estimated at more than 600 hours long, would run for longer than the exhibition was open; a full viewing of all the art works was thus impossible, rendering critics doubly bereft of any omniscient authority).[27] This second meaning of deterritorialization as interdisciplinarity was familiar to an art world that had internalized (and often misunderstood) the term from French philosopher Gilles Deleuze's deeply influential writings over the previous two decades. It was just as important as the first, since it made the reasons for expanding the venue quite comprehensible. This was not the same

thing as pluralism; if that had been the case, Enwezor would only have wanted to disperse documenta's geography. Nor, it should be clear by now, was this the same as framing contemporary art within the terms of identity and its associated politics. Under these conditions, a consensus for change emerged, starting with the documenta board and proceeding to the international art world. This in turn fed a fairly substantial shift in the artistic canon made possible by a rare coincidence of events, which involved more than just shuffling minor figures on- and offstage behind the main–American, British, Italian, German, and almost always male and white–actors.[28]

There remained skepticism about the capacity of a biennial or any other perennial exhibition to honestly manage a serious shift, even simply the revaluation of art from the periphery to the center, without subsuming, misrepresenting, and excluding artists in vast new spectacles, and now *Documenta11* risked the charge of festivalism. Peter Schjeldahl reproached the exhibition for this, writing:

> Documenta11 brings to robust maturity a style of exhibition–I call it festivalism–that has long been developing on the planetary circuit of more than fifty biennials and triennials, including the recent Whitney Biennial. Mixing entertainment and soft-core politics, festivalism makes an aesthetic of crowd control.[29]

This "festivalism," he wrote, comprised assemblages of unsaleable installation art that exalted curators. Schjeldahl was making a point more serious than it sounds and perhaps more than he intended about the devolution of experimental art under the sign of the biennial into quasi-intimate experimental play in public situations. This trend was then quickening in pace, linked to the relative withering of an art of institutional critique. Five years before, such critique had underpinned *documenta X* (and made it a target for bored reviewers). In that documenta, Swedish/Belgian artist Carsten Höller and German artist Rosemarie Trockel had presented *Haus für Schweine und Menschen* (1997), a pigsty for pedigree, oversexed swine that was a literally living metaphor for biennial socialization. Yet, in a very short period of time, Höller had moved away from this work, dubious in its humorous relation to dour institutional critique, to his later works, *The Double Club* (2008) and the Tate-sponsored slide, *Test Site* (2006)–a shift towards mass play and social intimacy.

This shift from critique to play was the basis of the substantive criticisms of *Documenta11*, which generally emerged from a Left steeped in postcolonial theory. Festivalism, according to writers like Schjeldahl, indicated a transformation in the nature of the biennial spectacle within which different exhibitions might locate themselves in different niches and at the same time attract really substantial audiences without dumbing down the art, or at least any more than contemporary artists wished (for the cultivation of the joke-as-art was a basic trope with biennial curators' favorite artists, such as Höller or Italian artist Maurizio Cattelan). Schjeldahl's distinction between the institutional and the commercial contemporary art worlds was already, in the light of the vast spectacles that large commercial galleries such as Gagosian Gallery would unleash in the second decade of the new century, out of date. The inclusion of (apparently) so many non-European and non-North American artists could reveal, critic Kim Levin quoted Enwezor as saying, "not an elsewhere, but a deep entanglement."[30] But it might also manage to convert that same art into an Orientalist spectacle. In a fiercely adversarial, highly critical assessment made three years after *Documenta11* closed, Sylvester Ogbechie argued in 2005 that such projects are inherently and inevitably flawed and that, in the process, *Documenta11* "may be constructing the conditions for a new appropriation of the 'other' by the West."[31] Much as Kendell Geers had before him, on the eve of the 2nd Johannesburg Biennale, Ogbechie was cautioning that Enwezor's exhibition would, in fact, marginalize already marginalized communities and carelessly replicate "modernism's appropriation of African and other 'non-Western' arts at the beginning of the twentieth century."[32] For, at the least, the European and North American art worlds and museums had not really broken from their heritage of exoticism in the display of anyone different, and behind this lay either crude or subtle nationalisms. Likewise, in his 2004 essay for *Documents* magazine, *October* editor George Baker was to argue against Enwezor thus, on the basis that the latter identified biennials with a model of resistance against global capitalism:

> For the fragmentation of the institutions of art and culture enacted by biennials today is, as I have implied, another mode of these institutions' consolidation; the perceptual sublime of the mega-exhibition seems dedicated to a fragmentation that blinds, rather than empowers, its spectators. I don't think we can just wish away the spectacularization inherent in this mode of

fusing institutions and media that all mega-exhibitions entail.[33]

To the degree that Enwezor's revision of contemporary art's rapidly solidifying canon was successful in the face of Baker's criticism, then that reassessment would substantially be projected through a North Atlantic platform and inflected by the legitimate expectation that all large exhibitions in search of large publics are spectacles and include spectacular works of art.[34] The local, at *Documenta11*, was clearly altered by the global, pointing beyond the now-dated horizons of postmodernism and, further, towards the limits of representing identity. For unlike the curators of *Magiciens de la terre*, Enwezor had hardly selected any indigenous artists living in traditional communities for *Documenta11* apart from Inuit collective Igloolik Isuma Productions, though he had included a multitude of artists whose work could be considered transnational, concerned with human rights or justice, and who were members of various diaspora. We can locate this emphasis in the broader context of a hotly contested theory of cosmopolitanism emerging around then, in the writing of Kwame Anthony Appiah and Indian economist Amartya Sen, in which the latter had been describing the limit of the argument that one's identity is a matter of "discovery," not choice.[35] In this sense, Enwezor's group of curators was not, so to speak, calling individual artists or writers to account as ambassadors and ciphers of race or ethnicity even as it seemed to many that the inherently spectacular nature of a biennial always did and always would.

Conclusion

Why did the organizers of a powerful art institution in the heart of Europe such as documenta want to effect such changes? Was this at last an instance of the center with a conscience and the remedy for provincialism that art historian Terry Smith had prescribed in the pages of *Artforum* back in 1974, in his essay "The Provincialism Problem"?[36] Smith had defined provincialism as "an attitude of subservience to an externally imposed hierarchy of cultural values."[37] We can recognize this as a description of hegemony in action. He had used this definition to set up a model that saw the New York art world as the metropolitan center with all other art communities, including large, often culturally semi-autonomous, rich, confident North American cities such as Chicago and Los Angeles, as provincial. This "almost universally shared" construction of reality became a "problematic relevant to all of us."[38] The solution? An artist-led activism might bring about change, he felt then, and most biennial curators (and artists) feel similarly optimistic now that curator-led (and artist-led) exhibitions might have the same effect on powerful art institutions. The remedy's plausibility seemed dubious at that point, for it was never clear in 1974 why the perpetrators of this system might wish to consider its victims and make reparations, but it is far more evident today, both in the provinces and at the center. Even if, as theorist Stewart Martin noted, "There is a persistent sense in which *Documenta11* proposes a radical transformation of avant-garde art, while remaining deeply entwined within its traditional problems," then this qualification (that *Documenta11* was "deeply entwined within its traditional problems") was inevitable for any biennial.[39] None would be able to escape. The suggestions implicit in the subaltern criticisms of *Documenta11* were either a separatist trajectory (documenta would then be shifted off-shore altogether and would only include non-Western artists) or even more decentralized and dispersed models of exhibition-making. Neither would have been possible. Neither trusty, austere German auditors nor the trusting German public would have ever permitted such a use of public funds (even if we can see tentative steps in this direction with 2017's *documenta 14* presented jointly in Athens and Kassel). But geographic dispersion was to be explored further in the next iterations of Manifesta, and curatorial devolution was to preoccupy curators for the rest of the decade.

For critics such as Ogbechie and others, although *Documenta11* might have convincingly spelt out the passing of an avant-garde idea of art, the exhibition's exploration of globalization's dystopic reality was at the same time in itself a profoundly avant-garde hangover.[40] In fairness, that was to miss the point and to unjustly refuse to take Enwezor at his word. First, Enwezor was showing that the idea of an avant-garde was never simply something of the center. Second, if critics believed that documenta needed to completely reevaluate its methods and operations in order to transform itself, then this is exactly what *documenta X* and *Documenta11*'s directors, David and Enwezor, thought they were doing. Third, globalization had prompted an unparalleled specialization in which internationally oriented curators such as Enwezor (or Hou Hanru, or Hans Ulrich Obrist, or Charles Esche, or Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev) now exercised an unmatched authority over contemporary art's discourse.

Other exhibitions were to take up these challenges in *Documenta11*'s wake. But many biennials–

such as Dak'Art (previously the 1992 Biennale de l'art africain contemporain) in Dakar, Senegal, which had exhibited artists from across the globe, but from 1996 onwards focused on African artists, or the Bamako Biennial in Mali (the Rencontres de Bamako, originally named the Biennale africaine de la photographie), active from 1994 onwards and dedicated to African photography–had been established long before *Documenta11*. Even then, there is no doubt that *Documenta11* focused North Atlantic attention more closely upon such biennials; reviews of these African biennials and other events, scattered far across the globe and which had been embedded, often for a generation or more, within local art eco-systems independently of external validation, now began to appear, for example, in the pages of *Artforum* or *Art in America*. Moreover, at about this time, contemporary art media that worked through aggregation–by which we mean internet bulletins such as *e-flux*–began to proliferate, habituating the art world to a dispersed model of art production in tune with the flexibility and frequency of air travel rather than distilling events down to a digest, which had been the model of prestigious art journals such as *Artforum*. That august journal itself began to reformat itself, becoming more and more a global guide, adding a free internet edition, *artforum.com*, and a Chinese edition, *artforum.com.cn*, both of which have increasingly diverged from the print version.

Documenta11 was absolutely part of that broader transformation of contemporary art and audiences' access to it (or at least to its mediatization). *Documenta11* was thus always either going to be a spectacle, or else it would have been (as *documenta X* was accused) boring and austere. Or it might have skated over the reality of such issues. These seemed to be the options that awaited biennial curators in reimagining the dominant North Atlantic version of art, but both the tenth and eleventh editions of documenta had eschewed the model of a simple survey in favor of attempting to redefine the existing canon of contemporary art, ranging backwards and forwards rather than across the terrain of the present and, at least as important, redefining their audiences' engagement with art itself as something entangled with politics and geography. The paradox was that, as *Documenta11* began to exert its massive influence on subsequent biennials, Enwezor's success quickly cemented the very curatorial authority he was seeking to destabilize.

Notes

1 Okwui Enwezor, "The Black Box," in Okwui Enwezor et al., eds., *Documenta11_Platform 5*, Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern-Ruit, 2002), pp. 42–55, esp. p. 42. Exhibition catalogue; see also Tim Griffin and Okwui Enwezor, "Documenta's New Dimension," *Art Press*, No. 280, June 2002, pp. 24–32. *Documenta11* continued documenta's tradition of individual typographic identities for the name of each edition of the exhibition, despite capitalizing the generic title documenta, hitherto spelt with a lower-case "d"; thus the lack of a space between the word Documenta and the number 11.

2 See Anthony Gardner and Charles Green, *Biennials, Triennials and documenta: The Exhibitions That Created Contemporary Art*, Wiley-Blackwell, Boston, 2016, which includes an earlier version of this essay.

3 Okwui Enwezor, in Chika Okeke-Agulu and Okwui Enwezor, "Interview with Okwui Enwezor, Director of the 56th Venice Biennale." *Huffington Post*. December 7, 2013. Accessed 12.07.2013. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/chika-okekeagulu/interview-with-okwui-enwe_b_4380378.html?utm_hp_ref=fb&src=sp&comm_ref=false.

4 Okwui Enwezor, "Introduction: Travel Notes: Living, Working, and Travelling in a Restless World," in Okwui Enwezor, ed., *Trade Routes: History and Geography: 2nd Johannesburg Biennale 1997*, Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council and Thorold's Africana Books, Johannesburg 1997, pp. 7–12, esp. 7.

5 Enwezor, "Introduction: Travel Notes," p. 12.

6 Ibid., p. 9.

7 Ibid., p. 12.

8 See Terry Smith, *Thinking Contemporary Curating,* 2nd edn., Independent Curators International, New York, 2012, and Julian Stallabrass's review of *Thinking Contemporary Curating* in Julian Stallabrass, "Rhetoric of the Image," *Artforum*, Vol. 51, No. 7, March 2013, pp. 71–72; here, Stallabrass criticizes the unique but repetitive lingo of contemporary art curatorship. In 2011, art historian Claire Bishop and curator Kate Fowle (of Independent Curators International) organized a symposium on the topic at CUNY, New York ("The Now Museum: Contemporary Art, Curating Histories, Alternative Models," March 10–13, 2011, conference by CUNY Graduate Center, Independent Curators International, and the New Museum, New York) which, from several accounts, demonstrated this cross-disciplinary hostility and mutual incomprehension. On the other hand, art history itself now witnesses a boom in the writing of exhibition histories of contemporary art.

9 See Reesa Greenberg, "Identity Exhibitions: From Magiciens de la terre to Documenta 11," *Art Journal*, Vol. 64, No. 1, Spring 2005, pp. 90–94. Three years after *documenta 11*, Greenberg here examined three landmark exhibitions–*Magiciens de la terre*, the *1993 Whitney Biennial*, and *Documenta11*–each of which proposed an alternative to the standard North Atlantic canon by prompting audiences to look beyond Western Europe and East Coast American art centers, and pay attention to artists who continued to be marginalized on account of class and ethnicity. On account of these differences, such artists are persistently seen as derivative, primitive, or exotic. She correctly located Enwezor's dramatic reorganization of *Documenta11*, with its Platforms and its expanded scale, both inside the new accounts of globalization that were emerging at the time and also within many curators' reconsiderations of the ideal exhibition space, which was no longer to be a White Cube (though Enwezor's display consciously took advantage of the disconnect between the serene architectural order of his installation and chaotic video images).

10 2002. Kim Levin. "The CNN Documenta: Art in an International State of Emergency." *Village Voice*. July 2. Accessed 09.14.2015. http://www.villagevoice.com/2002-07-02/art/the-cnn-documenta/full/.

11 Enwezor, "The Black Box," p. 45.

12 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 2000.

13 "Platform5_documenta11." Accessed 10.10.2015. http://www.documenta11.de/data/english/index.html.

14 Enwezor, "The Black Box," p. 42.

15 Ibid., p. 49.

16 Claire Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics," *October,* No. 110, Fall 2004, pp. 51–79, esp. p. 78.

17 Peter Schjeldahl, "The Global Salon," *New Yorker*, Vol. 78, No. 17, July 1, 2002. Accessed 09.15.2015. http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2002/07/01/020701craw_artworld.

18 Wu Chin-tao also recognized the exhibition's bias towards artists based around the North Atlantic. Important though her argument certainly is, we want to push beyond the limitations of its critique by considering why Enwezor selected the artists he did given the four other platforms and his general critique of North Atlantic hegemony. See Wu Chin-tao, "Biennials without Borders?," *New Left Review*, No. 57, May–June 2009, pp. 107–115.

19 Anthony Gardner, *Politically Unbecoming: Postsocialist Art Against Democracy*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA 2015, pp. 182–186.

20 Thomas Hirschhorn, in Thomas Wülffen et al., "Beyond Mission Impossible," *Janus*, No. 14, Summer 2003, p. 31; Thomas Hirschhorn, "*Bataille Monument*," in Claire Doherty, ed., *Contemporary Art: From Studio to Situation*, Black Dog, London 2004, p. 137.

21 Thomas Hirschhorn, conversation with Anthony Gardner, London, January 2012. Author's notes.

22 Hirschhorn, "*Bataille Monument*," in Doherty, *Contemporary Art*, p. 137.

23 Enwezor, "The Black Box," p. 55.

24 Catherine David, "Introduction," in *documenta X: Short Guide*, Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern-Ruit, 1997, pp. 6–13, esp. p. 7.

25 See David, "Introduction," and in particular note her two opening pages, esp. p. 12.

26 Chika Okeke-Agulu and Okwui Enwezor, "Interview with Okwui Enwezor, Director of the 56th Venice Biennale."

27 For complaints about the impossible durations of the exhibition's video exhibits, see for instance Eleanor Heartney, "A 600-Hour Documenta," *Art in America*, Vol. 90, No. 9, September 2002, pp. 86–95.

28 Oliver Marchart, "Hegemonic Shifts and the Politics of Biennialization: The Case of Documenta" (2008), reprinted in Elena Filipovic, Marieke van Hal, and Solveig Øvstebø, eds., *The Biennial Reader*, Hatje Cantz and Bergen Kunsthalle, Bergen and Ostfildern, 2010, pp. 466–490. Oliver Marchart's essay looked at biennials from the perspective of political science, arguing that "biennialization contributes in no small measure to the construction of local, national and continental identity," emerging from a heritage of exoticism and nationalism (p. 467). He wondered (as had Reesa Greenberg a couple of years before) if biennials could ever escape being embedded solidly within the dominant, hegemonic culture.

29 Schjeldahl, "The Global Salon" (2002); also see 2002. Michael Kimmelman, "Global Art Show with an Agenda: The Biggest Documenta Ever." *New York Times*. June 18. pp. E1–E2; Eleanor Heartney, "A 600-Hour Documenta," pp. 86–95; Kim Levin, "The CNN Documenta: Art in an International State of Emergency," p. 57.

30 Okwui Enwezor quoted in Levin, "The CNN Documenta," p. 57.

31 Sylvester Ogbechie, "Ordering the Universe: *Documenta11* and the Apotheosis of the Occidental Gaze," *Art Journal*, Vol. 64, No. 1, Spring 2005, pp. 80–89, esp. p. 89; for similar criticisms, see Anthony Downey, "The Spectacular Difference of Documenta X1," *Third Text*, Vol. 17, No. 1, 2003, pp. 85–92. Downey's essay acknowledged the institutional constraints and conventions that both support and prescribe the form that documenta can take but then criticized the spectacle of an exhibition that imagines, he asserted, that it can proceed from a position independent of established authority. For the more directly personal and sustained attack on Enwezor on Sylvester Ogbechie's own blog, see Sylvester Ogbechie, "The Curator as Culture Broker: A Critique of the Curatorial Regime of Okwui Enwezor in the Discourse of Contemporary African Art," June 17, 2010. Accessed 09.15.2015. http://aachronym.blogspot.com.au/2010/06/curator-as-culture-broker-critique-of.html.

32 Ogbechie, "Ordering the Universe," p. 89.

33 George Baker, "The Globalization of the False: A Response to Okwui Enwezor," *Documents*, No. 23, Summer 2004, pp. 20–25, esp. p. 25.

34 See Kobena Mercer, "*Documenta11*," *Frieze*, No. 69, September 2002. Accessed 09.15.2015. https://www.frieze.com/issue/article/documenta_113/. Mercer correctly noticed that Enwezor's exhibition was not simply a postcolonial documenta but was, he wrote, an ideas- and discourse-driven event, and one that sought to "redress the past exclusions carried out by 'Westernism.'" That last point indicated the exhibition's historiographic ambition, while the former indicated its sympathy with Catherine David's *documenta X* (an exhibition, however, that was far less spectacular than Enwezor's). Mercer noted the epochal significance of staging a "critical 'project' in a public arena," especially one of such vast size. But in fact, the list of artists showed that *Documenta11* was far more reliant than we retrospectively think on a familiar list of already-celebrated artist names to uphold what Mercer described as "a fairly conventional conception of global mélange." This showed, he acutely noticed, the lack of a satisfactory curatorial vocabulary for "dealing with 'difference' in contemporary culture." We might agree with him to the extent that biennials continued to present combinations of artists so that "difference" that might be relational and contingent in a different context still appeared spectacularly "other." Of course, this was because the art was still embedded in a still-dominating Western framework for imagining postcoloniality.

35 See Amartya Sen, "East and West: The Reach of Reason," *New York Review of Books*, Vol. XLVII, No. 12, July 20, 2000, pp. 33–38, esp. p, 37; Sen cited Michael Sandel, who presents this conception of community (one of several alternative conceptions he outlines): "Community describes not just what they *have* as fellow citizens but also what they *are*, not a relationship they choose (as in a voluntary association) but an attachment they discover, not merely an attribute but a constituent of their identity." Michael Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*, 2nd edn., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998, p. 150; cited in Sen, "East and West," p. 37; see, just as pertinently, Kwame Anthony Appiah's introduction and his Chapter 4, "Moral Disagreement," in *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*, W.W. Norton & Co., New York, 2006, pp. xi–xxi, and pp. 45–67.

36 See Terry Smith, "The Provincialism Problem," *Artforum*, Vol. 13, No. 1, September 1974, pp. 54–59; and Terry Smith, "The Provincialism Problem: Then and Now", *ARTMargins*, Vol. 6, No. 1, February 2017, pp. 6–32. For a different re-examination of this essay, see Charles Green and Heather Barker, "The Provincialism Problem: Terry Smith and Centre–Periphery Art History," *Journal of Art Historiography*, No. 3, December 2010. Accessed 09.15.2015. http://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2011/02/media_183176_en.pdf.

37 Smith, "The Provincialism Problem," p. 54.

38 Ibid., p. 55.

39 Stewart Martin, "A New World Art? Documenting *Documenta11*," *Radical Philosophy*, No. 122, November–December 2003, pp. 7–19, esp. p. 10.

40 Ogbechie, "Ordering the Universe," p. 84.

Captions

1 Okwui Enwezor in front of the Museum Fridericianum during *Documenta11,* 2002. Photo: Ryzard Kasiewic. Courtesy documenta Archive

2 Cover of *Documenta11_Platform 5*, exhibition catalogue, curators Okwui Enwezor et al (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2002). Courtesy documenta and Museum Fridericianum GmbH and Hatje Cantz.

3 Thomas Hirschhorn, « Bataille Monument », 2002 (Taxi-Shuttle Service) *Documenta 11*, Kassel, 2002. Photo: Werner Maschmann, courtesy the artist

4 Thomas Hirschhorn, « Bataille Monument », 2002 (Bar) *Documenta 11*, Kassel, 2002. Photo: Werner Maschmann, courtesy the artist

Anthony Gardner is Associate Professor in Contemporary Art History and Theory at the University of Oxford. He writes extensively on postcolonialism, postsocialism, and exhibition and curatorial histories, and he is one of the editors of the MIT Press journal *ARTMargins*. Among his books are *Mapping South: Journeys in South-South Cultural Relations* (Melbourne, 2013), *Politically Unbecoming: Postsocialist Art Against Democracy* (MIT Press, 2015), *NSK From Kapital to Capital: Neue Slowenische Kunst – An Event of the Final Decade of Yugoslavia* (with Eda Čufer and Zdenka Badovinac, MIT Press, 2015) and (with Charles Green) *Biennials, Triennials, and documenta* (Boston, Wiley-Blackwell, 2016).

Charles Green is Professor of Contemporary Art at the University of Melbourne. He has written *Peripheral Vision: Contemporary Australian Art 1970–94* (Craftsman House, Sydney, 1995), *The Third Hand: Artist Collaborations from Conceptualism to Postmodernism* (University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2001), and (with Anthony Gardner) *Biennials, Triennials, and documenta* (Boston, Wiley-Blackwell, 2016). He was Australian correspondent for *Artforum* for many years. As Adjunct Senior Curator in Contemporary Art at the National Gallery of Victoria, he worked as a curator on *Fieldwork: Australian Art 1968-2002* (2002), *world rush_4 artists* (2003), *2004: Australian Visual Culture Now* (ACMI/NGVA, 2004), and *2006 Contemporary Commonwealth* (ACMI/NGVA, 2006). He is also an artist who has worked collaboratively with Lyndell Brown since 1989; they were Australia's Official War Artists in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Plunging into the World: On the Potential of Periodic Exhibitions to Reconfigure the Contemporary Moment

by Nina Möntmann

Contemporaneity has become a key concept in the cultural field.[1] Already since the early 1990s, museums of present-day art are no longer called museums of modern art, but museums of contemporary art. The concept of the "modern" seems no longer to hit the mark when reference is to be made to the present, to what is current. Modernity is now understood as a designation for an historical era, an era that is over and that stands for a break with the past, for a movement of progress, for renewal and liberation from history, for avant-garde and abstraction. The notion of the "contemporary," by contrast, is undefined and open; there is no master narrative on which everyone could agree. Hal Foster observed in 2009 that "in its very heterogeneity, much present practice seems to float free of historical determination, conceptual definition, and critical judgment."[2] But neither does it follow the logic of postmodern plurality of anything goes, which, for its part, defined itself via hefty conflicts with history by seeking to leave the teleological narrative of modernity behind in favor of a complementary collection of various approaches and interests. In fact, "contemporary art" comprises all media and orientations. There are no longer any definite artistic styles or successive movements, such as abstract expressionism, minimal art, conceptual art, etc. Rather, the boundaries are blurred, which also corresponds in a way to the current academic topos of transdisciplinarity. This relation to history and temporality allows for a polychronic perspective on the current moment. In the following, therefore, I side with those who distinguish the concept of "contemporaneity" from art that is called "contemporary" simply because it is made at the present moment. According to Peter Osborne, for example, the notion of contemporaneity follows a new logic, that of a globalized world-system with networked coordinates and a relationship to the past that is no longer characterized by attempts to overcome history, but by a self-conscious resumption of it.[3]

This raises many questions: How do we periodize the present? Can the distinction between modernity and the present be maintained at all in a global context? For instance, the Western concept of modernity is closely tied to abstraction, ruptures, avant-gardes, progress, and innovation, whereas in other countries, such as India for instance, processes of modernization followed in a much less disruptive manner, never breaking away from the sequence of narrative and figurative modes in favor of abstraction. With a view to exhibition practice, one may therefore ask: How is a changed relationship to history and an awareness of new geographies in art and curatorial practice implemented? And how can this lead to an idea of futurity? These questions also shed new light on how art is presented, contextualized, and mediated, and thereby on the crucial role and responsibility of exhibitions in negotiating the current moment. In particular for the regularly recurring large-scale exhibitions, such as documenta, their societal role is a matter of how contemporaneity is conceived. Since documenta exhibitions, as large-scale and important as they are, do not stand alone, completely detached from the realities of the world, in the following, I will take up the broader historical context of exhibitions, addressing the geopolitical order and postcolonial constellations that were also so relevant to *documenta X* and *Documenta11*.

The Founding Narrative of Periodic Exhibitions

For the profile of every recurring large-scale exhibition, the so-called founding narrative is decisive, i.e., the guiding idea with which the first edition is initiated and which is ideally updated with each new

edition, from which a perspectival interpretation or definition of the contemporary moment can be derived.[4] This profile is not always cultivated, and some editions of biennials do not always fulfill the expectations placed upon them. Nevertheless, these guiding ideas of the founding that are nourished, on the one hand, by local conditions and, on the other, by an intentional positing of its founders, leave their mark on the subsequent history of each exhibition. For instance, the *Berlin Biennale* was initiated only in 1998 as the "young," urban biennial of a quickly changing metropolis. It stands for an unconventional thematic orientation and experimental formats, even in the city's own marketing campaigns, and in this context is supposed to enable new ideas to be hazarded. Hence, a certain hipness factor cannot always be avoided by the curators, or may even be intended by those responsible for its branding. *Manifesta*, in contrast, has been taking place as a mobile European biennial already since 1996 at different, but strategically important cities to embody European values after the collapse of the Iron Curtain. Its agenda is characterized by various approaches, such as challenging the specific post-Communist constellation, or dealing with stereotypes of the East and the West. Very far removed from this more recent biennial profile, the *Venice Biennale*, founded in the 19th century with its country pavilions, stands for the model of national presentation, underscored by each represented country's national economic interests, budgets, and organizational structures. The pavilions are supplemented by a large curated international exhibition at the Arsenale and the central Italian pavilion.

The first *documenta* was given decidedly 20th-century political responsibility by its founder, Arnold Bode, in 1955 for connecting the situation of Germany to an extended context that was initially Western European. A "return of German art into the continuity of European modernity," as Manfred Schneckenburger put it, a continuity that was allegedly disrupted by the Third Reich through its denigration of modern art as "degenerate." In later documenta exhibitions, the urgency of the reconstruction and integration of Germany into the West diminished, and the context was slowly expanded to eventually encompass art from around the globe, particularly since the end of the Cold War. Today, documenta assumes a hegemonic role as the world's most important exhibition of contemporary art. The expectations of the art field towards each documenta are aimed accordingly not only at a "seismographic" registration of current trends–a formulation that was often used in the 1980s and 1990s–but at decisively activating a global art field as the spearhead of a discourse oriented toward the future. In so doing, guiding themes of all documenta editions since the fall of the Iron Curtain have included interrogating social formations within society, the inequality of global relations under globalized capitalism, and the search for new forms of collective identities viewed from various angles. The significance of periodic exhibition formats in general has risen rapidly since the early 1990s. It is hence no coincidence that Charles Green and Anthony Gardner subtitled their 2016 publication *Biennials, Triennials and documenta* with the phrase, "The exhibitions that created contemporary art." They claim that "since the early 1990s [periodic exhibitions] define contemporary art."[5]

In 1989, (the year of the "victory" of global capitalism) two large-scale exhibitions were early examples to tackle, with quite different trajectories, the dimensions of a new globalized world order. *Magiciens de la terre,* curated by Jean-Hubert Martin at the Centre Pompidou and in two further locations in Paris, was an early attempt to show contemporary artistic positions from Western art centers together with those from the global South, still regarded at the time as peripheral. However, the show was harshly criticized for its selection and presentation: artworks were largely arranged according to the formalist criteria of Western art history. One example is the immediate vicinity of a wall painting by Richard Long with a traditional painting of the Yuendumu, an Australian aboriginal community (Grande Halle, Parc de la Villette, Paris 1989). In this way, religious or ceremonial artifacts were subsumed under "Western" aesthetic standards. There were many similar examples, which have been read as an unintended reproduction of colonial power relations by the curatorial team.[6] The *Third Havana Biennale*, curated by Gerardo Mosquera and his team, was conceived around very different trajectories related to an idea of globalism. It showed works by 300 artists from 41 countries, many of which were in Africa and Asia. Its achievement was, above all, that it became a social hub for non-Western artists and thus an early example for forging southern global networks independently of Western art centers, even before the collapse of the Iron Curtain and perceivable progress in globalization.[7] It is precisely the underlying question that is now relevant here: how can art and how can exhibitions, which account for the field of art as a globalized one, position themselves critically? What relationship to their own temporality is

necessary, and how can this flow into a creative artistic or curatorial process?

The Plunge into the World

Thus, the success of recurring large-scale exhibitions in the "Former West" is also located within the context of larger political changes in the early 1990s–the noticeable and rapidly expanding process of globalization after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In many exhibitions, the social function of artistic practice was increasingly thematized: the 1993 *Whitney Biennale*, for instance, was dubbed the "PC Biennale" because it no longer gathered together market trends, but assumed a radical political position in the context of liberation movements related to identity. Further projects dedicated to social change include the 1993 *Project unité*, curated by Yves Aupetitallot in Le Corbusier's residential block *Unité d'habitation* in Firminy, where so-called "context art" was shown by artists such as Renée Green, Fareed Armaly, Liam Gillick, Tom Burr, and many others. Moreover, it should be mentioned that the AIDS crisis precipitated a multitude of exhibitions in institutions and in the public sphere. These exhibitions no longer merely showed various objects, but they also contextualized a social field in which, and from which, the objects and their meanings are produced. In the words of the artist Yvonne Rainer, an "art exhibition does not have to separate, or isolate, its objects from the conditions in and under which those objects have been produced."[8]

The format of the exhibition accordingly went through a "re-evaluation and reconception [...] in the artistic field"[9] in the late 1980s and 1990s. According to the editors of *Thinking About Exhibitions,* it was turned into the "primary site for exchange in the political economy of art, where signification is constructed, maintained and occasionally deconstructed."[10] This intrinsic critique of the exhibition and its capacity to produce meaning and value could be seen as the fundamental condition for opening up the format to create new platforms for negotiation. It paved the way for a new sensitivity to the process of curating, which reflected the potential societal involvement of the exhibition. On this basis of raising awareness for the exhibition's political intertwining with the art industry as well as with more broadly conceived social interconnections, art's worldliness came into focus, defining art production at that time. It was perceived as enabling active participation in defining a contemporary moment. In this sense, Pamela M. Lee speaks of a "geopolitical immanence," which occurred when, during the most recent wave of capitalist globalization, art lost its (critical) distance from the world. She argues that art's professional sphere, that is, the methods of production and distribution, have become one with the global economy.[11] The artwork itself is thus simultaneously an object and agent of globalization, but can no longer be assumed as an autonomous, independent entity withdrawn from the world.

As a conclusion to this situation, Lee proposes *Forgetting the Art World*, which is also the title of her book. This can be understood as proposing that we can achieve a nuanced understanding of the present only if we recognize that the present situation relates asynchronously to the historical worldview of the 20th century, whose canonical paradigms were developed from a critical distance. For the present, however, we must recognize that the situation has shifted completely, and a self-contained art world has given way to a fast-moving, transitory, global paradigm with no easy distinction between artistic and non-artistic modes of production. However, it is all the more important not to lose sight of the problematic implications of a (reciprocal) crossover between globalization and contemporary art as such, which we are experiencing today. This blurring of boundaries lies in the economization of all areas of the art field as an industry, with all the dependencies that thereby arise, particularly the danger of reproducing or maintaining colonial power structures in global relations. It is precisely this awareness and the thematization of the critical, problematic implications of globalized art industries that enable a new perspective on or relation to the world, even from an immanent position. It makes it possible, I would argue, to move on and develop ideas for an alternative "world-system." In contrast to earlier sociological theories that have investigated social change on the level of individual societies, the theory of world-systems analyzes the relations among societies with a view to the mechanisms and effects of globalization. World-system theory can be fundamental for understanding how interconnections in our present-day world work systematically–also that we currently find ourselves in a crisis-ridden transitional phase from a capitalist system to a new world-system.[12]

World Systems at *documenta X* and *Documenta11*

Two previously mentioned exhibitions were among the first curatorial endeavors that registered the "plunge into the world," thematizing and taking advantage of their own participation in how the world-system functions: *Magiciens de la terre* brought non-Western positions together with Western ones,

while the *Third Havana Biennale*, with its focus on the global South, imagined an independence from the West, which also paved the way for social networks of the South by enabling artists to meet and connect. The history of documenta, not without ruptures and leaps, may also be read as exemplary of the movement from the model of worldviews developed from a distanced position–among which Harald Szeemann's *Individual Mythologies* at *documenta 5* (1972) can also be counted–to a geopolitical immanence. But this "plunge into the world" is not an illustration of what is happening in the world, but an alternative imaginary produced from an intrinsic position with the means of the arts, of curating, and of theory, which can act as a corrective to the factual world-system. *Documenta11* (2002), curated by Okwui Enwezor and his team,[13] is a good example of an exhibition that pursued this discourse in the cultural field and that effected a radical shifting of the canon, as Green/Gardner (2016) note, prepared by Catherine David's *documenta X* (1997), with David opening documenta to global and postcolonial positions and theorizing. Already the catalogues of both exhibitions reveal these tendencies. The "plunge into the world," as I call it, or geopolitical immanence, was enacted already on the first pages of the catalogues of both the tenth and the eleventh editions of documenta, but each time with different premises, which can be read as a development in the direction of a transcultural approach.

The catalogue of *documenta X* opens with photos of Kassel destroyed by war, images of concentration camps, poems by Paul Celan, an essay by Bertolt Brecht, a political map of the Cold War, an image of the fall of the Berlin Wall, and finally a diagram showing the hierarchy of centers and peripheries in the world that–superimposed over a photo of the Petronas Tower in Malaysia's capital, Kuala Lumpur–refers to global shifts and the rapid development of parts of Asia into economic powerhouses. Corresponding with this series of photos, theoretical links to the Frankfurt School, French-influenced poststructuralism, and finally postcolonial theories may be observed in the catalogue's essays. Right at the beginning of the *Documenta11* catalogue, we also find a series of press photos of global political events and conflicts spreading over thirty pages without comment. They include images showing the ruins of the Twin Towers after 9/11 and hopelessly overloaded refugee boats, the still of a video message from Osama Bin Laden, an image of the violent clash between Israelis and Palestinians in front of a mosque in Jerusalem, and one of Milosevic before the United Nations' war tribunal at The Hague, the largest war-crimes trial since the Second World War. The essays that follow, written mainly by members of the transcultural curatorial team, are on bio-politics, film, globalized urban economies, and documenta as a zone of action. Thus, whereas at *documenta X* there was still a Euro-centric gaze, widening successively from the site of Kassel, via Germany to the global situation, *Documenta11* presumes and takes for granted a global perspective from the outset. This was also apparent, of course, in the respective


1


1

exhibitions' overall layout and in many individual artworks.

2

2

As an example, I would like to discuss a key work from *Documenta11,* which opens up the past's potential to reshape the present. More precisely, I would like to consider how Steve McQueen's bipartite video installation, *Western Deep / Caribs' Leap*, commissioned for the show, offers possibilities for reconfiguring the globalized present from a colonial past. *Western Deep* shows workers in a South African gold mine. McQueen concentrates the film on the visual elements of the movement of sweating, hard-working bodies, which is occasionally accompanied by the threatening metallic rattle of the elevator and machines: in the depths of the mine a speechlessness seems to prevail. At *Documenta11*, the film was presented in one of its infamous black boxes in the Binding Brewery, which blacks out perception of the immediate surroundings, enabling the viewers' excursion into the far-off underworld of the mine. The unbearably long journey down into the apparently unending, narrow, dark, and hot shaft becomes a trip to hell. The TauTona Mine, known under the Apartheid regime as "Western Deep," is four kilometers deep, the deepest mine in the world. Nobody has ever been closer to the earth's core; temperatures rise as high as 55 degrees Celsius. The trip down takes three hours; elevators have to be changed several times because with a single shaft into such a depth, the ground would collapse. Therefore, the shafts also lie far apart. It becomes obvious that the workers risk their health and lives, while multinational companies make the profit. The film conveys that there is a lack of legal liability in accordance with OECD guidelines, which include respect for human rights, along with a prohibition of discrimination according to race, skin

3

3

color, or gender. Almost all the workers in the gold mine are black and male.

4

4

McQueen displays *Western Deep* in an installation, juxtaposing it with the piece *Caribs' Leap*, which consists of two video works. One, projected on a big screen, shows hypnotic shots of a slowly falling, dark figure before a densely cloudy sky mirrored in the sea. The artist shot the film on the Caribbean island of Grenada, where his parents were from. He evokes an historic event from 1651–more than 150 years after Christopher Columbus reached the island–when the French colonialists eventually defeated the Caribbean population. Up until then, the Caribbean people had successfully resisted European colonization. The last inhabitants on the island apparently chose a quick death rather than dying the slow death of colonization. They jumped off a high cliff that is today called *Caribs' Leap*. McQueen shot his film precisely at this site of sacrifice, recounting the story of the political act of the collective final refusal of being colonized. On a small monitor in the same space, the second part of *Caribs' Leap* documents leisure scenes on the beach of the island, children playing, while fishermen are pulling their boats onshore–before the camera eventually pans over open coffins in a morgue. In the correspondence between the pieces, *Western Deep* and *Caribs' Leap*, the Caribbean rebels, who would rather jump to their deaths than live under colonial power, appear like "angelic messengers" to the capitulating mine workers, who put their lives into the hands of their exploiters.[14] The lift's racing descent into the mine's hellish shaft thus appears more cruel in contrast to the lightness of a free fall into the beyond. Moreover, their "plunge into the world" is updated in that of the mine workers: the work depicts a story of colonization that has not ceased to the present day. In the process of globalization, exploitation has assumed other forms that now pay out in the currency of neoliberalism, while the power relations have remained the same. The juxtaposition of the historic event with the situation of the exploited mine workers today also opens up the potential for giving this story another outcome: to imagine an empowerment of the mine workers gained through collective resistance, not only on a local basis but on a planetary scale, to the apparent mechanisms of globalized neoliberal as well as neo-colonial capitalism.

Caribs' Leap / Western Deep was not only one of the most impressive works I have seen, at one of the most pioneering exhibitions, but it can also be regarded as paradigmatic for the world-system devised at *Documenta11*. The curator Owkui Enwezor and his team had initiated five platforms that took place in different cities around the world.[15] At the one that took place in Saint Lucia, one of the nodes of the world-system was documented with the concepts of "Créolité" and "Créolisation." The Caribbean is regarded as the model for "Créolité." It is exemplary of a region in which the historically specific experience of colonization has led to an interdependent cultural identity and language. At the same time, the Caribbean is marked by a diversity of West African and European influences, so that the language is a mixture of African syntax, Caribbean vocabulary, and French dialects. "Créolisation" is understood in this context as a social process of reciprocal cultural interpenetration that is not tied exclusively to the Caribbean, but stretches over the entire world. The writer and philosopher Édouard Glissant was one of the first to describe the process of cultural globalization, discerning a relational "poetics of diversity" as its potential.[16] The temporal relation of the colonial past and neocolonial present in McQueen's work can be described with what T.J. Demos calls the "specters of colonialism in contemporary art." Artworks which "acknowledge the ghosts, [...] open up the repressed

histories, [...] admit the colonial present, and [...] commence this politics of memory in partnership with the dead in struggle," are suggesting "what is to be done otherwise."[17] This approach of acknowledging the specters of the past in the present moment and instigating alternative outcomes pluralizes the temporality of the contemporary moment and endows it with the potential to think alternative presents.

Whereas the relation of McQueen's work to the concept of *Documenta11*, for which it was made, is thus closely related to the programmatic direction of the exhibition, I would like to conclude by discussing a work by Dora García, who realized a piece that updated a historical moment of a brutally crushed uprising within the rather open curatorial conception of the 11th *Gwangju Biennale* (2016), fourteen years after *d11*.

The Contemporary and its Polychronic Narratives

Maria Lind's concept for the Biennale did not follow a specific thesis, but asked the question, "What does art DO?"–in the sense of, "What can art achieve? What can art move? How does art position itself in society?"[18] García related her ideas very directly to the specific history of the Biennale's founding by drawing on the connection to the May uprising in Gwangju and bringing it into the contemporary moment. The *Nokdu Bookshop for the Living and the Dead* is a reconstruction of the legendary Nokdu Community Bookshop in Gwangju in South Korea, which was a meeting place for rebels during the Gwangju Uprising against the military dictatorship and martial law decreed on 18 May, 1980. In the original bookshop, a multiplicity of activities took place: the Paris Commune was discussed as a model, women organized to parry gender-specific violence, news was exchanged, corpses from the bloodily suppressed revolt laid out and mourned, and finally, of course, books were sold, discussed, and read. For the 11th Gwangju Biennale, García conceived her work not as a monument to this bookshop, but as a similarly living place of *contemporary* exchange. The activities taking place at the reconstructed bookshop–readings, discussions, book presentations, workshops, etc.–were designed by García herself in cooperation with the Book Society in Seoul, the local McGuffin bookshop, and the original owners of the Nokdu bookshop. These jointly organized activities were related to the history of the uprising and its survivors, but also to the current political situation, feminisms in Korea, independent publishing in the country and so on: all things one can imagine taking place in a "real" independent and active bookstore. García writes that there are places, such as the shop for instance, which function as nodes where an infinite number of events, historical processes, narrative strands, life stories, ideas, needs, worries, positions, memories, and desires collide. They all crystallize in relatively small, unimportant places–what Jorge Luis Borges called "The Aleph."[19] García's bookshop, reconstructed as a simple wooden structure, was managed during the Biennale by book dealers from the local McGuffin bookstore. Together with the Book Society in Seoul, they were responsible for the new selection of books on sale in the store. Older books, documents, and posters that were not for sale had been donated and loaned by contemporaries of the 1980 revolt. Many of these items had been bought at the time in the original Nokdu Bookshop. The supplementary objects in Dora García's 2016 reconstruction were replicas of the rebels' everyday objects from the 1980s. Other objects, the coffins, flags, fruits, and shrouds were designed or arranged by García to emphasize the connection of the original bookshop with death, where the killed rebels were washed, laid out, and thus presented to their families.

The *Nokdu Bookshop for the Living and the Dead* thus relates directly to the history of how the Gwangju Biennale was founded. This Biennale is the oldest biennial for contemporary art in Asia. It was founded in 1995 in the city of Gwangju to remember the violently suppressed rebellion of the civil democracy movement in 1980. The programmatic agenda behind the appointment of each curatorial team and the expectation placed on the art is tied to critical social and political positions, which has been fulfilled over time to a greater or a lesser extent. Dora García's reactivation, updating, and reactualization of the Nokdu Bookshop in the exhibition context is implied already in the work's title: *Nokdu Bookshop for the Living and the Dead*. The process of updating (*Aktualisierung*) in contemporary art, I would like to argue, is not only performing an alleged breakdown of linear time, as was achieved in art practices of the 1960s,[20] but it sets out to evoke situations in which unused potentials are revived and prohibited liberations are given new prospects.[21] In that sense, the bookshop is untied from canonical historiography as a fragment of the history (the lost revolution of *the dead*), a time capsule, which is set free in order to conceptualize alternative histories and, ultimately, alternative versions of the present and the future (the potential for collective action as a liberation of *the living*). Therefore, the present is not presented as post-revolutionary but as still pursuing the same objective,

which has not yet been achieved, but is now equipped with new findings, strategies, and energy.[22] These trajectories were created and opened up in García's bookshop, they were explored by the visitors and participants, and they were shared in the workshops, lectures, reading groups and discussions from where they were potentially diffusing into wider societal spheres.

5


5


5

Remarkably, artworks that engage with updated historical fragments are today frequently key works in the exhibition in which they are shown, backing my thesis that the principle of updating has assumed a particular relevance in defining the contemporary moment. Quite often, these works combine documentary elements with fictional and poetic ones, a matter-of-fact register with a suggestive one, and information with personal narrative. In this combination, they embody the potential to clear the path for abandoned views toward the future or alternative outcomes of the past. They call attention to what could have happened and in fact still might happen. Rather than accepting the lost battles of the past as failures, they create an opening to look upon these struggles as unfinished business to be revived. This specific mode of dealing with history, which marks a rupture with the concept of chronology and genealogy in favor of an updating of historical fragments is, in my view, specific for the current critical understanding of contemporaneity and the actualization of its potentials in the age of globalization. Geoff Cox and Jacob Lund speak of an "expanded present, [...] in which several temporalities and times take part in what is perceived as present and as presence."[23] Contrary to a simplified dictum of "learning from history," this plunging out of chronology into a multiplicity of temporalities enables us to reread history not as given sequence of completed entities, but as a complex net of open-ended threads and polychronic narratives, which can still be diverted in different directions.

Conclusion

The chronological openness in dealing with history in contemporary art as well as in developing curatorial conceptions enables fragments to be taken out of the hegemonic historiography for a moment in order to open up other histories and alternative presents. In this sense, as Pamela M. Lee summarizes, "Art actualizes, iterates or enables processes of globalization."[24] By doing so, it breaks with the previous principle of art history, which is genealogical, as well as with an expectation towards the contemporary needing to be innovative. A polychronic understanding of contemporaneity refutes the idea of an end of (art) history, as stated by Francis Fukuyama, Arthur Danto, or Hans Belting, and instead opens up future perspectives based on revived and as yet unfulfilled narratives from the past.[25] On the basis of these insights, the potential for periodic exhibitions, such as documenta, to define the contemporary moment in the cultural field lies in developing alternative versions of world-systems nourished by as yet unrealized

struggles for liberation and social and economic justice, with a future perspective of a planetary society as a civilizational project of collective desire.

* Translated from German by Michael Eldred, with independent extensions by the author.

Notes

1 See, for example, as an early, initiatory contribution to the discourse on contemporaneity: Arthur Danto, *After The End of Art*, Princeton/NJ (Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1997; Terry Smith, *What is Contemporary Art? Contemporary Art, Contemporaneity and Art to Come*, Artspace Critical Issues Series, Sydney, 2001; or, more recent publications: Peter Osborne. *Anywhere or Not at All: Philosophy of Contemporary Art.* Verso, London and New York, 2013; Geoff Cox and Jacob Lund, eds., *The Contemporary Condition*, a publication series by Sternberg Press initiated in 2016, with individual books by Cox and Lund, Terry Smith, Jussi Parikka, et al.

2 Hal Foster, "Questionnaire on 'The Contemporary'," in *October* No. 130, Fall 2009, pp. 3–124, cit. p. 3.

3 Osborne labels contemporary art in this sense as "post-conceptual," drawing on the legacy of conceptual art practice of the 1960s: "Contemporary art, in the critical sense in which the concept has been constructed in this book, is a geo-politically reflexive art of the historical present of a postconceptual kind." Osborne, *Anywhere or Not at All*, p. 176.

4 During their presentation at the Bergen Biennial Conference in 2009, Gunnar Eeg-Tverbakk and Jonas Ekeberg pointed out the relevance of the founding narrative of biennials and also the responsibility that goes along with this in terms of maintaining the trajectories attached to this narrative. Therefore, for newly founded biennials and triennials it was, according to them, crucial to carefully and responsibly drafting the outline of the first edition. See Monika Szewczyk's review of a part of the conference "How to Run a Biennial? (with an Eye to Critical Regionalism)," in Elena Filipovic, Marieke van Hal, Solveig Øvstebø, eds., *The Biennial Reader. The Bergen Biennial Conference*, Bergen Kunsthall, Hatje Cantz, Bergen/Ostfildern, 2010, pp. 27-32, cit. p. 30.

5 Anthony Gardner and Charles Green, *Biennials, Triennials, and Documenta: The Exhibitions that Created Contemporary Art*, Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford, 2016, p. 3.

6 For an in-depth discussion of the concept, reception, and impact of *Magiciens de la terre*, see Annie Cohen-Sola, "Revisiting Magiciens de la Terre," in *Stedelijk Studies Journal*, No. 1, Fall 2014, http://www.stedelijkstudies.com/journal/revisiting-magiciens-de-la-terre/#_edn13; and Lucy Steeds, ed., *Making Art Global (Part 2): 'Magiciens de la Terre' 1989*, Exhibition Series No. 4 (Exhibition Histories), Afterall Books, Koenig Books, Cologne, 2013.

7 The main theme of the third Havana Biennale was "*Tradition and Contemporaneity*" and included the international conference *Tradition and Contemporaneity in the Arts of the Third World.*

8 Yvonne Rainer, preface to "The Work of Art in the (Imagined) Age of Unalienated Exhibition," in Brian Wallis, ed., *If You Lived Here, The City in Art, Theory, and Social Activism, A Project by Martha Rosler*, New Press, Seattle, 1991, p. 13.

9 Matthias Michalka, "to expose, to show, to demonstrate, to inform, to offer. Artistic Practices around 1990," in Matthias Michalka, ed., *to expose, to show, to demonstrate, to inform, to offer. Artistic Practices around 1990*, Walther König,Vienna/Cologne, 2015, p. 12. Exhibition catalogue.

10 In: Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, Sandy Nairne (eds.), Thinking about Exhibitions, London/New York 1996, Introduction p. 2.

11 See Pamela M. Lee, Forgetting the Art World (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012), p. 5

12 Immanuel Wallerstein envisages a new world system will be established around 2050. A point of reference for the analysis is world-system theory as developed by Immanuel Wallerstein, Samir Amin, or Beverly Silver, each with their own specific focus, such as the relationship between the centers and the peripheries (Wallerstein), the economy (Amin), or work and labor struggles (Silver).

13 Carlos Basualdo, *Ute Meta Bauer,* Susanne Ghez, Sarat Maharaj, *Mark Nash,* and Octavio Zaya.

14 Rachel Taylor in her description of the piece in a leaflet of Tate collection, 2012.

15 *Democracy as an Unfinished Process* took place in a Western metropolis, in Vienna; *Experiments with the Truth: Legal Systems in a State of Transformation and Processes of Finding Truth and Reconciliation* in Delhi; *Créolité and Créolisation* on Saint Lucia; *Under Siege: Four African Cities, Freetown, Johannesburg, Kinshasa, Lagos* in Lagos. The fifth platform was the exhibition staged in Kassel.

16 See Édouard Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse,* University of Virginia Press, Charlottesville, VA, 1989.

17 T.J. Demos, *Return to the Postcolony - Specters of Colonialism in Contemporary Art*, Sternberg Press, Berlin, 2013, cit. p. 18.

18 Maria Lind in the press release for the 11th Gwangju Biennale.

19 Dora García in an email to the author from October 13, 2016.

20 See Pamela M. Lee, *Chronophobia: On Time in the Art of the 1960s*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 2004.

21 Nina Köller and Kerstin Stakemeier explored the hindered liberations of historical fragments to be "rescued" as a concept for a series of exhibitions at their project room "Space for Actualisation" in Hamburg in 2007.

22 For the counter-hegemonic potentials of small-scale local projects in taking up old and as yet unfinished struggles as opposed to the large-scale "global exhibitions" discussed here, see Mark Fisher and Nina Möntmann: "Peripheral Proposals," in Binna Choi, Maria Lind, Emily Pethik, Nataša Petrešin-Bachelez, eds., *Cluster Dialectionary,* Sternberg Press, Berlin, 2014, pp. 171-182.

23 Geoff Cox and Jacob Lund, *The Contemporary Condition: Introductory Thoughts on Contemporaneity & Contemporary Art*, Sternberg Press, Berlin, 2016, p.16.

24 Pamela M. Lee, *Forgetting the Art World*, cover text.

25 Danto, *After The End of Art*; Francis Fukuyama, *"The End of History?," in The National Interest No. 16, 1989, pp. 3–18; Hans Belting, Das Ende der Kunstgeschichte?*, Deutscher Kunstverlag, Munich, 1983.

Captions

1 *documenta X*, catalogue image, Hatje Cantz and the documenta GmbH, 1997

2 *Documenta11,* catalogue image, Hatje Cantz and the documenta GmbH, 2002

3 Steve McQueen, *Western Deep*, 2002, (video still) © Steve McQueen

4 Steve McQueen, *Caribs' Leap*, 2002 (video still) © Steve McQueen

5 Dora García, *Nokdu Bookshop for the Living and the Dead,* 2016 (Installation view Gwangju Biennial), photograph by Dora García

Nina Möntmann is a curator, writer and Professor of Art Theory and the History of Ideas at the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm. Curated projects include *Fluidity*, Kunstverein in Hamburg 2016 (together with Bettina Steinbrügge and Vanessa Joan Müller); Harun Farocki *A New Product* (Deichtorhallen Hamburg, 2012); *If We Can't Get It Together. Artists Rethinking the (Mal)functions of Community* (The Power Plant, Toronto, 2008); *The Jerusalem Show: Jerusalem Syndrome* (together with Jack Persekian), 2009, *Parallel Economies in India*, (Frankfurter Kunstverein, 2006) and the Armenian Pavillion for the 52nd Venice Biennale. She participated in the long-term Israeli/Palestinian art and research project *Liminal Spaces*, and in 2010 was a research fellow at the Museo de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid. She organized a number of symposia, such as *Scandalous. A Symposium on Art & Ethics*, 2010, and *New Communities*, 2008 (both at Moderna Museet in Stockholm), *We, Ourselves, and Us* at the Power Plant in Toronto, 2009, and *ReForming India – Artistic Collectives Bend International Art Practices* at the Vera List Center for Art and Politics at the New School in New York, 2007. Recent publications include the edited volumes *Brave New Work. A Reader on Harun Farocki's Film 'A New Product*,' English/German, Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, Cologne, 2014; *Scandalous. A Reader on Art & Ethics*, Sternberg Press, Berlin, 2013; *New Communities*, Public Books/The Power Plant, Toronto, 2009; and *Art and Its Institutions*, Black Dog Publishing, London, 2006 and the monography *Kunst als sozialer Raum,* Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, Cologne, 2002/2017. Her essays have been published in numerous critical readers and catalogues.

Learning from documenta: A Research Project Between Art and Anthropology

by Elpida Rikou & Eleana Yalouri

documenta 14 (2017) is a remarkable moment in the history of one of the art world's leading exhibitions because of the decision to partly relocate it to Athens, alongside its customary home in Kassel, Germany. Past documenta exhibitions have also been closely connected to other parts of the world. *documenta 11* (2002), for instance, was based on five transdisciplinary discursive platforms presented on four continents (Kassel, Vienna and Berlin; New Delhi; St Lucia; Lagos) and *dOCUMENTA (13)* (2012) involved venues in Cairo and Alexandria, Egypt, Banff, Canada, as well as in Kabul and Bamiyan, Afghanistan. *documenta 14,* however, seems to be taking it a step further: the entire exhibition is focussed on the Greek capital city. *Learning from documenta* is a two-year independent research project that critically engages with the presence, impact and aftermath of *documenta 14* in Athens, with reference to other artistic, economic and sociopolitical developments in Greece and internationally. This research project was initiated in October 2015 by Athens-based anthropologists and artists and is an occasion for methodological and theoretical innovation: anthropological ways of working are combined with artistic interventions and inform the activities of the Athens Arts Observatory, a platform for public debate on current issues of art, culture and politics.[1]

1

ATHENS ARTS OBSERVATORY
LEARNING FROM DOCUMENTA

In the last few decades, big international (blockbuster) exhibitions have reminded us that the art world and the forces it entails transcend the limits of local or national traditions of art production and consumption and involve a circulation that cannot be described merely in terms of centre-periphery, producer-consumer or push-and-pull models. These exhibitions have become important sources of direct and indirect revenue, visibility and prestige for artists, museums and galleries worldwide. They are themselves a product of asymmetries of power in the post-colonial contemporary art market and function both as a meeting point and a melting pot of different cultural traditions in art production. At the same time, they become a context defining art discourses and practices, suggesting directions of development in art and measuring sticks for evaluating artworks and their producers. Their role in shaping contemporary art, culture and even international politics is considerable and has been discussed by art historians and theorists.[2] It is time for a systematic study of this phenomenon from an anthropological viewpoint as well.[3]

documenta 14 is a major cultural event with significant political and economic implications for Greece at this particularly sensitive conjuncture in the proverbial "Greek crisis", which is conventionally located around the time of the sovereign debt crisis of 2010, and even more in "the European crisis"–a phenomenon which, in turn, is embedded in worldwide upheaval and rapid global change. Remarkably, since the economic repercussions of the Eurozone crisis began to be felt in Greece, the Greek contemporary arts scene has thrived. Numerous projects have sprung up, some of which are linked to community-based initiatives, exploring a broader connection between the arts and social reality. Moreover, the *Athens Biennale,* a local private art initiative operating within an international network of similar large-scale, periodic, contemporary art events, has showcased grassroots projects in the arts and in politics during its exhibition entitled *Agora* (AB4, 2013). Artists from outside Greece are demonstrating prolific activity in Athens, where "crisis" has rendered anything "made in Greece" more attractive to an international audience and where collaborative initiatives still flourish and the cost of living is low.[4] For this and other reasons, the Athenian art scene has come under the spotlight

of the curators of *documenta 14*. With *documenta* taking place partly in Athens, the hitherto "peripheral" Greek contemporary arts scene seems to be moving centre stage in the arts worldwide. Against this backdrop, *The Learning from documenta* project seeks to scrutinize how the arrival of such an international institution of contemporary art will influence the local art world and art production in a country where cultural policies have predominantly focussed on the country's ancient Greek heritage and have neglected contemporary art, which has depended mostly on private institutions and individual entrepreneurs.[5]

2

With its chosen title *Learning from Athens (working title), documenta 14* is putting processes of knowledge and power at the heart of artistic production. Art as a process of knowledge has also been introduced into previous documenta exhibitions (*documenta 11*, for instance). However, *documenta 14's* focus on Athens urges us to reflect on the following questions: What are the parameters and processes involved in the decision to place a city at the centre of an international exhibition's interest and wish "to learn"? And what are the means employed to "learn from Athens"? What reactions and refusals have been provoked in response to a contemporary art institution's desire to "learn from" a city "in crisis"? How is the significance of what is happening "in situ" to be evaluated? Through what processes and strategies of learning is or should art be related to "the public" and to "the social" and how is it creating its publics? What can an interaction between anthropological fieldwork and contemporary art offer to a methodological and theoretical approach to these questions? And finally, what are the ethics and politics of learning *from*, *with*, or even *against*, the other? In the following, we seek to demonstrate various aspects of our "learning from documenta" process by reflecting on the socio-economic, cultural, political and historical backgrounds of staging *documenta 14* in Athens and the theoretical and methodological foundations of our anthropological research, considering the implications of the nexus of knowledge and power in *documenta 14's Learning from Athens* and our *Learning from documenta*.

Cultural, Socio-Political, Economic, and Historical Backgrounds

It is a well-rehearsed topos that the history of documenta is also connected with the post-war reconstruction and re-education of Germany as well as the post-war order in Europe and worldwide. As *documenta 14's* curator Adam Szymczyk has noted, the first *documenta* was staged among the ruins of Kassel, including the ruins of its main museum the Fridericianum; and it was through those ruins of the past that documenta was able to explore its possible futures. If we are to adopt such a historical perspective, we cannot avoid comparing current claims to "Learn from Athens" with earlier ones made in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries invoking (ancient) Athens and Greece as the cradle of European civilization and involving ancient Greek heritage as a cultural resource and aesthetic ideal for Greece, Germany, and the Western world. Since Romanticism, the aesthetics of ruins have enchanted Western European travellers. But if eighteenth- and nineteenth-century artists and intellectuals who visited Greece and the wider Mediterranean in the context of the Grand Tour wished to come closer to an idealised Greek past through the ruins of classical antiquity, recent developments have led a new wave of visitors to orientate themselves towards the future.[6] The urban ruins of the Greek economic crisis today invite artists, students, activists, and academics to move to Athens in order "to learn" from a city that in recent years has often been treated as an experimental workshop, incubating political aspirations of resistance to dominant powers and/or neoliberalism.

The presence of *documenta 14* in Athens also seems to have triggered certain allusions to the history of the relationship between Greece and Germany with its older and more recent economic, social, and cultural parameters, conjuring up a specific association with the political powers dividing Europe between South and North, also mirrored in Europe's earlier division between East and West. Several publications have raised the issue of "(crypto) colonialism" to describe the asymmetries of power that have shaped the relationship between Greece and Western Europe and that have often led to massive economic and other kinds of dependency.[7] "The South", which is also the title of *documenta 14's*

journal, is now becoming the place where *documenta 14* seeks (and finds?) the "cultural urgency" (a term by documenta founder Arnold Bode) that gave birth to the exhibition as an institution in post-war Germany and which according to Szymczyk needs to be rediscovered. But could this emphasis on "urgency" possibly lead to perceiving "the South", and Athens in particular, as outside the canonicity and "normality" of Europe?[8] The wish to solve or manage the European crisis usually results in identifying Greece with "the problem" without acknowledging the broader systemic roots of the crisis in the global political and economic order. The concept of "the Greek debt" becomes relevant in this context and acquires different meanings in Greece, where–in turn–the indebtedness of the Western world to the ancient Greek "world heritage" is invoked with additional reference to the WWII reparations Germany allegedly owes the country.[9] These two aspects of "the debt" make its symbolic meaning expand beyond the current financial situation and into a more general negotiation of who owes what to whom historically. Such a negotiation does not only involve the present and the past, but also the future, with the next generation of Greeks being born into financial debt.

In contemporary negotiations of power related to the Greek "crisis", such discourses are reignited at the multiple levels of academic analysis and everyday conversations, political statements and media commentaries.[10] When embarking on research on *documenta 14*, we need to take into account such international and historical parameters, which have been involved in the politics of soft diplomacy and in negotiations of power.[11] It is not a coincidence, for example, that during his 2016 visit to Greece, the German Minister of Foreign Affairs Frank-Walter Steinmeier referred to *documenta 14* as a potential "artistic bridge between Greece and Germany", which could also form the basis for a political entente between the two countries.[12] The mobilization of art by politics, as if the former were a field that could be conceived of as separate from the latter, and the focus on Greco-German relationships, as if documenta involved only those two countries, constitute interesting topics of discussion. Yet it should always be borne in mind that *documenta 14* is not just about Greece and Germany, but involves a number of relationships well beyond those two countries.

Informed by the latest trends in social theory and intellectual debates including postcolonial studies, *documenta 14* chose to identify with "the anti-colonial, anti-capitalist front of a 'trans south'", in order to give But documenta remains a big and powerful institution and the paradox of an "alternative" discourse becoming emblematic in the discourse and practices of a powerful institution that represents and produces cutting-edge contemporary art has aroused scepticism. During our preliminary fieldwork in Athens, we often heard people accusing *documenta 14* of "colonizing", "orientalising", or "exoticising" Athens, an accusation that was often also levelled against the wider phenomenon of "crisis tourism" that has recently hit the Greek capital.[14] For example, in an interview he gave to Berlin-based artist Len Kahane, former finance minister Yanis Varoufakis made this connection while he noted that "doing documenta in Athens is like rich Americans taking a tour in a poor African country".[15] A stencil on a city wall near the offices of *documenta 14* in Athens, which later also appeared elsewhere in the city reads: "Dear documenta: I refuse to exoticize myself to increase your cultural capital. Sincerely, *oi ithageneis* [the natives]". Likewise, a small number of art projects, which develop locally and manifest themselves mainly through the social media, take a critical or rather cryptic, ironic and/or humorous stance towards *documenta*, often along similar lines.[16] Rather than pre-emptively adopting these systematic references to the "colonialization" or "exoticization" of Greece, we put them to the test and seek more pertinent concepts that may better serve as analytical tools in the specific historical and socio-political setting.

Methodological Reflections on Art and Anthropology

The development of anthropology as a discipline implicated in the historical, colonial, and imperial programmes that shaped the relationship between "The West and the Rest" has been haunted by this type of question regarding power/knowledge relations and the construction of "otherness". As a matter of fact, under the influence of cultural critique, art was seen as a possible way out of the multiple epistemological, methodological, and political dilemmas faced by anthropologists in the post-colonial era.[17] Anthropology therefore has a lot to offer in helping us comprehend the cultural politics and the economic parameters governing recent developments, as well as the role art and anthropology can and do play in these developments and in the production of knowledge: the emphasis *documenta 14* puts on knowledge and grassroots projects connecting arts and society certainly points in that direction. It also shows that the circumstances call for more systematic research into methodological and epistemological questions regarding the ways one can do anthropology (and art) today, and into how research

questions can be opened up to public debate. On the other hand, the emphasis artists tend to put on politics nowadays along with the educational turn and other contemporary artistic trends[18] also offer food for thought, while artistic and research practices inspired by these trends serve to develop new perspectives in the relations between art and anthropology. In other words, contemporary art also has a lot to offer, not simply as an object of anthropological study, but also as an interlocutor and collaborator, suggesting new ways and means of doing/approaching anthropological research.[19]

Recent theoretical and methodological developments in anthropology have also pointed to the need for finding new ways of doing anthropology in the contemporary world, which can no longer be understood in terms of a mosaic of cultures, but should rather be seen in terms of flows of people, capital, ideas, and information.[20] Anthropologist George Marcus, for example, has suggested a specific methodological model, which shifts from a single-sited to a multi-sited ethnography as a more appropriate way to respond to the circumstances of a globalized world.[21] Marcus and Fred Myers[22] have specifically noted that art and cultural production in general cannot be studied exclusively at a local level, and they have argued for a critical cultural perspective in the anthropology of art as well as in anthropology through art. Marcus has also commented on the ways artists engage in institutional criticism[23] and has promoted non-conventional ways of doing ethnography, collaboratively and potentially through art.[24] *Learning from documenta* is a project that discusses and experiments with the close relationship between "theory" (stereotypically linked to the social sciences) and "practice" (stereotypically associated with the arts). However, it cannot and will not reproduce such binary oppositions at a time when the discursive turn in art and the engagement with the arts in anthropology are allowing us to explore the ways the one feeds into the other. Anthropological ways of working, combined with artistic interventions and use of the media, open up a dialogue with the wider public to suggest new ways of learning.

The Present Stage of the Research

At the present stage of the research, the interest of the research group *Learning from documenta* focusses on the anthropological method of participant observation, which allows us to record responses to *documenta*'s presence at several levels from the more official to the more personal. The members of the group attend *documenta 14*'s events systematically, discuss with members of the art world inside and outside Greece, inside and outside *documenta 14*; they discuss with "the public" of *documenta*, as well as with those who are indifferent to or react in various ways to the presence of this major institution in Athens; they are gradually building an archive of relevant publications and other information about the history and the socio-political activities of the institution; they collect audiovisual material on which several individual art and research projects already in the making will draw. A fanzine is being published, and a number of roundtable discussions organized as part of the Athens Arts Observatory forum for public debate. These discussions also provide research material, as they allow different opinions to be voiced and to take shape in public, sometimes revealing latent controversies or unexpected alliances between various social actors.

3

4

At the time of writing *documenta*'s official opening has not yet taken place. But Adam Szymczyk and many members of *d14*'s organizing team have already been in Athens for over two years now, in contact with representatives of different public institutions and the local art scene. The exhibition's opening has been preceded by a series of activities: semi-public events that took place at the Athens

School of Fine Arts (ASFA), the publication of a number of issues of *South* magazine, *documenta*'s collaboration with the National Radio and Television (ERT), the launching of the educational programme, and the recent announcement of *documenta*'s collaboration with the National Museum of Contemporary Art (EMST), which has been unable to function properly until now due to local conflicts in the cultural domain. Most importantly, the Public Programs of *documenta 14*, curated by Paul B. Preciado, has been housed in a building that served as the headquarters of the military police during the years of the junta and has triggered heated discussions regarding "the proper" readings of history, the employment of such "a difficult heritage", and the ability of "newcomers" to manage the *gravitas* of this historically loaded place. Such developments encourage us to address critically the way local memories and histories are translated by international artists and institutions and, by contrast, to question ethnocentric assumptions that promote locals as the only legitimate and insightful interpreters of local affairs. At the same time, they raise the question of whether something can be gained from "the loss in translation" that occurs in conversations between newcomers and old-established Athenians.[25]

Because documenta is an important art institution with an aura of its own, the project *Learning from documenta* cannot but conceive of *documenta*'s presence in Athens as a valuable opportunity to bring to the fore the many intellectually, politically, and even emotionally significant debates that are already in full swing about this exhibition. *documenta*'s presence in Athens has provoked the occasional media frenzy, usually in response to press releases by the organizers. More specifically, it has been received with enthusiasm and expectation, scepticism, or fierce criticism based on ethical, ideological, political, or personal grounds, involving feelings of inclusion or exclusion from *documenta*, as well as aspirations of gaining prestige, experience, and symbolic and economic capital. Purportedly "Agora", the last Athens Biennale, provided the inspiration for Adam Szymczyk's "Learning from Athens" project.[26] But while *documenta 14* is certainly occupying centre stage of the Athenian arts scene right now, the Athens Biennale is currently unfolding in the background, allegedly drained of its human and economic resources by the presence of *documenta* and the discontinuance of the collaboration that was initially planned between these two institutions. As this report is being compiled, the Athens Biennale announced its new programme with the title *Waiting for the Barbarians*, which follows a self-ironic twist on possible "self-orientalizing". And while some are alluding to the way *Manifesta 1* destroyed the local arts scene in Ljubljana,[27] multiple initiatives and connections between newcomers and artists who have been living in Athens for years are being forged, and a part of the city's arts scene is burgeoning. At the same time, local public institutions and employees acknowledge the financial support and work experience offered to them by *documenta*.

Despite the importance of this event, however, and the organizers' desire to reach out and address socioeconomic inequalities, the wider public and most Athenians are still unaware of the whole business of organizing the events that are approaching.[28] It is, in fact, worth noting the relative indifference with which *documenta 14* has been greeted until now. Emerging critiques by local and international voices attribute this to the Greek public's parochialism and its inability to "grasp" recent developments in art.[29] Unlike these critics, perhaps we should look at this indifference (or "refusal?") as a strategic response by underrepresented local groups to the efforts of contemporary artists to create ad hoc political situations that serve their artistic aims. These reactions have been couched in the language of debt and colonial domination since the coming of *documenta 14* to Athens was first announced and are heavily influenced by the experience of anti-austerity struggles in all its political forms in Greece. Strategies of refusal could thus be a notable reaction to *documenta*'s stated aim of gaining knowledge from a country in crisis and from marginalized groups in Greece and elsewhere.[30]

The central position of "learning from" in *documenta 14's* title triggered reactions regarding the crossing gazes and asymmetries between observers and the observed. It still remains to be seen what translations and appropriations, what convergences and frictions, and, in the end, what learning and unlearning will take place along the way of these paths. The *Learning from documenta* team is investing time, thought, and energy in the research process. It converses with the international literature and with current art practices and aims at an in-depth critical understanding of *documenta 14*. It wants to keep its distance from the stereotypes and prejudices, which are collectively and pre-emptively positioning themselves for or against *documenta*. Its aim is to understand in a comparative fashion how art institutions work at an international level, and what issues arise as a result of moving an important contemporary art

institution to a city outside the Western European "centres" of contemporary art. It is also analyzing the narratives and the critical idioms developing in response to this specific event. At the same time, it hopes to contribute to the shaping of the post-*documenta* cultural scene in Athens: its proposed programme is expected to serve both as a historical record, as well as a space for interaction and the cultivation of new ideas and practices.

* Acknowledgements
We are grateful to Apostolos Lampropoulos and Aris Anagnostopoulos for their comments on an earlier version of this paper.

Notes

1 The project is academically supported by the Department of Anthropology, Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences and the Athens School of Fine Arts. It is a TWIXTlab initiative https://twixtlab.wordpress.com/. See www.learningfromdocumenta.org for more information on the members and the activities of this research project.

2 See, for instance, Bruce Altshuler, *Biennials and Beyond. Exhibitions that Made Art History 1962-2002. (Salon to Biennials, vol. 2)*, Phaidon Press, London, 2013.

3 See, for example, Thomas Fillitz, "Worldmaking – The Cosmopolitanization of Dak'Art, the Art Biennale of Dakar" in Hans Belting et al., eds., *Global Studies. Mapping Contemporary Art and Culture*, Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern, 2011, pp. 382-401; Thomas Fillitz, "Anthropology and Discourses on Global Art," *Social Anthropology/ Anthropologie Sociale* No. 23(3), 2015 , pp. 299-313.

4 Elpida Rikou and Io Chaviara, "Crisis as Art: Young Artits Envisage Mutating Greece," *Visual Anthropology Review* No. 32 (1), May 2016, pp. 46-59.

5 Myrsini Zorba, Πολιτική του Πολιτισμού. Ευρώπη και Ελλάδα στο Δεύτερο Μισό του 20ου αιώνα [Politcs of Culture: Europe and Greece in the Second Half of the 20th century], Patakis, Athens, 2014; Nikos Souliotis, "Cultural Economy, Sovereign Debt Crisis and the Importance of Local Contexts: The Case of Athens," *Cities* Vol. 33, August 2013, pp. 61–68.

6 Eleana Yalouri "Afterword. Hellenomanias Past, Present, and Future" in Nicoletta Momigliano and Katherine Harloe, eds., *Hellenomania.* Routledge and BSA, London, (under publication).

7 Michael Herzfeld, "The Absent Presence: Discourses of Crypto-colonialism," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* No 101 (4) , Spring 2002, pp. 899–926; Dimitris Tziovas, "Η Δυτική Φαντασίωση του Ελληνισμού και η Αναζήτηση για το Υπερ-εθνικό" [The Western Fantasy of Hellenism and the Quest for the Hyper-national]. In Έθνος, Κράτος, Εθνικισμός [*Nation, State, Nationalism*], Etaireia Spoudon Neoellinikou Politismou kai Genikis Paideias, Athens, 1995, pp. 339–361; Eleana Yalouri, "The Metaphysics of the Greek Crisis," *Visual Anthropology Review*, Vol. 32 (1), May 2016, pp. 38-46; Nicolas Argenti and Daniel Knight, "Sun, Wind, and the Rebirth of Extractive Economies: Renewable Energy Investment and Metanarratives of Crisis in Greece," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute (N.S.),* October 2015, pp. 1-22; Nicolas Argenti and Daniel Knight, "Sun, Wind, and the Rebirth of Extractive Economies: Renewable Energy Investment and Metanarratives of Crisis in Greece," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute (N.S.),* October 2015, pp. 1-22; Kostis Kalantzis, "'Fak Germani': Materialities of Nationhood and Transgression in the Greek Crisis," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* Vol. 57(4), October 2015, pp. 1037-1069.

8 cf. Theodoros Rakopoulos, "The Crisis Seen from Below, Within, and Against: From Solidarity Economy to Food Distribution Cooperatives in Greece," *Dialectical Anthropology* Vol 38 (2), 2014, p. 193.

9 This has been widely discussed in the Greek press.

10 Kostis Kalantzis, "'Fak Germani': Materialities of Nationhood and Transgression in the Greek Crisis."

11 Joseph Nye, *Soft Power. The Means to Success in World Politics,* Public Affairs, New York, 2004.

12 See http://m.griechenland.diplo.de/Vertretung/griechenland/el/03/documenta__14.html

13 Despina Zefkili. 2017. "'Exercises of Freedom': Documenta 14." *Third Text. Critical Perspectives on Contemporary Art and Culture.* Accessed: 20.03.2017. http://thirdtext.org/exercises-freedom-documenta14.

14 On crisis tourism, see, for example, http://www.atathens.org/tours_socialmovements1-en.html or

https://insp.ngo/athens-homeless-city-tour-shedia/.

15 http://www.spikeartmagazine.com/en/articles/doing-documenta-athens-rich-americans-taking-tour-poor-african-country.

16 See, for example, http://documena.weebly.com/ or https://idammathens.wordpress.com/.

17 James Clifford and George Marcus, *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography,* University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1986.

18 Paul O'Neill and Mick Wilson eds., *Curating and Educational Turn,* Open Editions/de Appel, Amsterdam, 2010; Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, Verso, New York, 2012; Dieter Roelstraete, *The Way of the Shovel,* The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2013.

19 See, for example, Arnd Schneider and Christopher Wright, eds., *Contemporary Art and Anthropology*, Berg, Oxford and New York, 2006; Arnd Schneider and Christopher Wright, eds., *Between Art and Anthropology. Contemporary Ethnographic Practice,* Berg, Oxford and New York, 2010; Arnd Schneider and Christopher Wright, eds., *Anthropology and Art Practice,* Bloomsbury, London, New York, 2013; Tim Ingold, *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture,* Routledge, New York, 2013.

20 Arjun Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy," *Public Culture* Vol. 2, 1990, pp. 1-24.

21 George E. Marcus, "Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography," *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 24, 1995, pp. 95-117.

22 George E. Marcus and Fred Myers, eds., *The Traffic in Culture,* University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1995.

23 George E. Marcus, "The Power of the Contemporary Work in an American Art Tradition to Illuminate Its Own Power Relations," in George E. Marcus and Fred Myers, eds., *The Traffic in Culture,* University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1995, pp. 201-223.

24 George E. Marcus, "The Uses of Complicity in the Changing Mise-en-Scene of Anthropological Fieldwork," *Representations* No 59, Summer 1997, pp. 85-108; George E. Marcus, "Affinities. Fieldwork in Anthropology Today and the Ethnographic in Artwork." In Arnd Schneider and Christopher Wright eds., *Between Art and Anthropology. Contemporary Ethnographic Practice,* Berg, Oxford, New York, 2010, pp. 83-94.

25 Apostolos Lampropoulos, personal communication.

26 Cathryn Drake. 2017. "On the Ground: Athens." *Artforum*. Accessed 20.03.2017 https://www.artforum.com/slant/id=66502.

27 Ref. in Despina Zefkili. 2017. "'Exercises of Freedom': Documenta 14." *Third Text. Critical Perspectives on Contemporary Art and Culture.* Accessed: 20.03.2017. http://thirdtext.org/exercises-freedom-documenta14.

28 Andrea Kasiske. 2017. "Will Documenta Have an Impact on Athens' Art Scene?" *Deutsche Welle.* Accessed 18.03. 2017. http://dw.com/p/2ZCRY.

29 Ibid.

30 Aris Anagnostopoulos, personal communication. See also, Eva Tuck and Wayne K. Yang, "Unbecoming Claims: Pedagogies of Refusal in Qualitative Research," *Qualitative Inquiry* Vol. 20(6), July 2014, pp. 811–818.

Captions

1 *Learning from documenta* Logo, 2017. Design by Io Chaviara

2 *Learning from documenta*, March 9th 2017: Roundtable on the "Politics of Art Making" at the Athens School of Fine Arts. Participants (from left to right): N.Pappa, P.Charalambous, N.G.Khan-Dossos, A.Lampropoulos and E. Rikou (coordinators), R. Lowe, A. Omrani, T.Tramboulis. Photograph by George Sakkas.

3 *Learning from documenta,* September 2016: Workshop "Art and Anthropology Research Kit". Several members of the *Learning from documenta* team during a discussion at TWIXTlab. Photograph by George Sakkas.

4 *Learning from documenta,* March 2017: Members of the team selling the fanzine after a roundtable meeting. Photograph by George Sakkas.

Elpida Rikou has studied sociology (Panteion University, Athens), social psychology (D.E.A., Université Paris V-Sorbonne), and anthropology (D.E.A., Université Paris V-Sorbonne), social psychology (D.E.A. and Ph.D, Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris). She has taught at different universities (Universities of Crete, Thessaly, Athens and Panteion University) since 1998. She has been teaching Anthropology of Art in the Department of Theory and History of Art of the Athens School of Fine Arts since 2007. She is the editor of *Anthropology and Contemporary Art* (a collection of texts of British and American anthropologists and art theorists published in Greek by Alexandria in 2013) for which she has written the introduction and of Marc Augé's book "Pour une anthropologie des mondes contemporains" (published in Greek by Alexandria in 1999), for which she has also written the introduction.) and the co-editor of *Fonés* (a collection of works on the human voice, Athens: Nissos, 2016). She has published articles in journals, edited volumes, art catalogues, and newspapers and has coordinated several arts projects with an interdisciplinary character (i.e. Voices/Fones, *Value*/4th Athens Biennial, *Learning from documenta*, etc.) in which she has participated as both an anthropologist and a visual artist. Since 2015, she has been co-coordinating the international research project *Learning from documenta* with Eleana Yalouri. She is a founding member of TWIXTLab, a long term project situated "betwixt" contemporary art, anthropology and social reality . (http://twixtlab.wordpress.com/)

Eleana Yalouri (https://independent.academia.edu/EleanaYalouri) is assistant professor and head of the Laboratory of Anthropological Research of the Department of Social Anthropology at Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences in Athens. She has a BA in Archaeology (University of Crete, Greece), an MPhil in Museum Studies (University of Cambridge), a PhD in Social Anthropology (University College London), and has conducted postdoctoral research at the University of Princeton, USA. She has been a visiting lecturer at the University of Westminster, London, and a lecturer in the Dept. of Anthropology of University College London. Her research interests include theories of Material Culture, cultural heritage and the politics of remembering and forgetting, theories of space and the social construction of landscape, and anthropology and contemporary art, anthropology, and archaeology. Her book *The Acropolis. Global Fame, Local Claim* (Berg 2001) discusses the modern life of the Athenian Acropolis, and the ways in which modern Greeks deal with the national and international features of their ancient classical heritage. Her edited volume Υλικός Πολιτισμός. Η Ανθρωπολογία στη Χώρα των Πραγμάτων [*Material Culture. Anthropology in Thingland*] (Alexandria 2012) offers a systematic review of theories and ethnographies on key fields of Material Culture. Her current research projects involve collaborations with visual artists and art historians exploring the borders between contemporary art and fields of inquiry dealing with the Material Culture of the past or present, such as archaeology and anthropology.

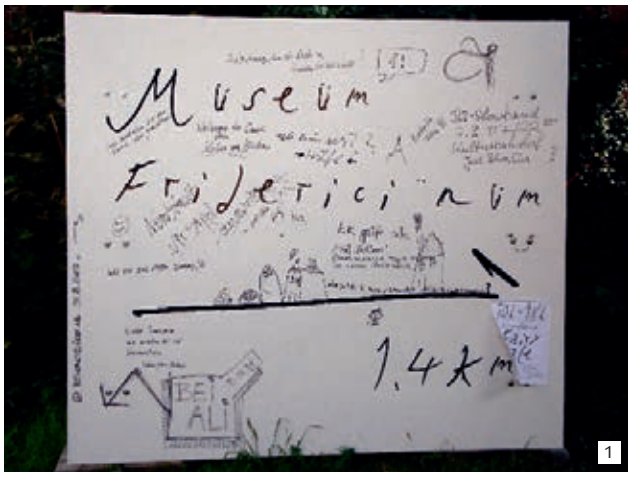
Learning from Kassel
by Ayşe Güleç

In recent years, art institutions have set out to reach an audience that until now had not counted among its usual visitors. The focus of these efforts is usually children, young people and immigrant communities, who are often classified as having little education or knowledge about art. To engage them, art institutions develop their own, special in-house programmes. Meanwhile, ministries, sponsors and large and small foundations support various cultural education projects designed to acquaint groups of people regarded as uncultured and non-art-savvy (in other words, the uneducated) with the museum. Adding to these is a plethora of projects and co-operations between, for example, educational institutions such as schools, day-care centres and museums. One seldom asks why migrant communities (or any group less likely to frequent the museum) should actually go there. Few art institutions have ventured beyond their own walls to connect art and audiences in other places. Still more rare is the question of what and how museums would have to change structurally and institutionally, if they want and have to accommodate heterogeneous groups in a migrant society. The change does not mean that these institutions become "migrant museums" but museums in a migrant society.

Regardless of the institutions' motives and desire to reach out to new groups, one should ask what venturing out could mean, and what art institutions can and should learn (preferably about themselves) by doing this. Experiences within the context of *documenta 12* can serve as an example, as here we find one of the most influential contemporary art exhibitions in its first structural attempts to move out, find, address and cooperate with various segments of the population. Taking as an example the 12th edition of documenta, an institution that understands itself as an international exhibition,[1] it is possible to examine how the institution connected to the local context (Kassel, Germany) and which participatory–cooperative work modes were established there. These experiences are then compared with the approaches taken by *dOCUMENTA (13)* to uncover differences, continuities and discontinuities in their structural connection with local population groups–though the successor, in my view, did not take up, develop or sharpen the basic approaches used in *documenta 12*.

Learning from Kassel

Anyone wanting to assume German citizenship, first has to pass the naturalisation test for his or her respective state. Besides general questions about the colours in the German national flag, principles of the welfare state and cornerstone freedoms of the press and right to demonstrate, the test in Hessen includes more specialised questions about science and culture. Future Germans must know, for example, the name of Casper David Friedrich's most famous painting. This is followed by question 85, which asks test-takers to name one of the most important modern and contemporary art exhibitions, held every five years in Kassel. documenta is so important, in fact, that knowledge of it is required in a test that determines national boundaries of belonging and defines a cultural hegemony. To the same extent that taking note of documenta appears significant for future citizens, one could also ask how knowledgeable documenta should be about the citizens for which the exhibition is held, among them many residents of Kassel.



1

The relationship between Kassel and documenta can generally be described as follows: the institution of documenta as a large-scale recurring exhibition is important to the city and its inhabitants. But this relationship is also marked by a sceptical distance. Much of this is owed, perhaps, to the view that

documenta lands in Kassel every five years like a UFO and takes offagain after 100 days. All the same, Kassel residents follow every step of the preparations, and every exhibition is very much appreciated, even though certainly not by everyone, of course. It is appreciated because every documenta attracts international guests over the course of the exhibition, awakening Kassel from its usual slumber and generating economic advantages. Other cited reasons for the exhibition's importance to the city include the emergence and expansion of cafés and restaurants around the exhibition venues, and the vitalising of the city's culture with international flair.

Local Partnerships

At the start of preparations for *documenta 12*, artistic director Roger M. Buergel and exhibition curator Ruth Noack contacted three socio-cultural centres in Kassel. At a joint meeting in the fall of 2005, they explained their desire to collaborate with local institutions to build a stronger connection between the exhibition and the city. In doing so, they said, they wanted to support existing initiatives and draw energies from the exhibition into the city. The confrontation with art in other places could reassert art's potential, as it makes the perception of art more concrete. Two representatives from the Kulturzentrum Schachthof–Christine Knüppel and myself–expressed interest. We were prepared to share our knowledge of the local realities and open our contacts to the various population centres and interest groups.

In late December 2005, Kulturzentrum Schlachthof–in coordination with its new cooperation partners–organised a meeting of some forty Kassel residents, all of whom were active in a diverse range of areas including school, extra-curricular and higher education, child and youth education, socio-cultural work, architecture and urban planning, the trade union and women's initiatives. From this group the "*documenta 12* Advisory Board" emerged: a discussion and action group that discussed the three guiding questions for *documenta 12* in monthly meetings and linked these back to the situation in Kassel.[2] The members formed working groups and developed their own actions and events responding to various socio-political topics. These monthly advisory board meetings saw the various actors come together in a trusting, open work atmosphere: artists, Kassel residents and the curator/directors. Each brought his or her own, specialised knowledge and experience to the discussions.

Learning from the "Other"

The development phase for the *documenta 12* advisory board included regular attempts to contact various population groups. Wanda Wieczorek, the assistant to the artistic director and I spoke to initiatives, networks and migrant communities and visited these people at their respective organisations and districts in the city. This form of contact was important for inviting other population groups (many of whom we had never met) to the advisory board, and learning from these experts.[3] The discussions were especially interesting for us because we were able to derive new insights from our discussion partners' points of view about the art institution. From these perspectives, we could generate knowledge: for changes to our own institutional–structural barriers and for the value of cooperation with a win–win situation for all parties involved.

Scene 1

Profound changes in industrial production and the world of work in recent decades have led to high unemployment and poverty, which has left its visible mark on the city of Kassel. The crisis of working society and its effects was also a frequent topic at advisory board meetings, prompting us to make contact with an unemployment initiative. One afternoon, we met with a group of five people who were active in the initiative's office. After a short round of introductions, they asked if we had come on behalf of documenta, and if our intention was to offer them one-euro-jobs for building and installing the exhibition.[4] It was only after allaying these fears that we were able to have a relaxed, exciting conversation about the situation of the unemployed and the initiative's activities.

Translation of the Situation

Is documenta an exploitative employer? An institution that demands maximum attention and resources from everyone, giving little or nothing in return?

Scene 2

At the oldest mosque in Kassel, we were greeted by the Imam and five people from the first, founding generation of the local mosque association. We contacted them in an effort to get to know the congregation and invite those interested in the advisory board to join. After hearing our reason for coming–that documenta wanted to introduce itself and get to know them–they were astonished. It was their first experience with those responsible for documenta. At the end of an intensive conversation, the association's representatives assured us "We'll

give you everything you want. But if you want money [...] we don't have any either."

Translation of the Situation
Do many people not know about documenta, making it difficult for them to understand its intentions? Do some people suspect documenta of only making contact when it wants something (money)?

Scene 3
At a visit to a senior centre, we were received in a large room with a table of Christmas biscuits and coffee for around thirty people. Five people came and listened politely before disappearing without further questions.

Translation of the Situation
Does documenta have to be interesting to everyone?

In many of the conversations, we encountered people who had heard of documenta, but had never been to one of the exhibitions. Many were very surprised that the documenta exhibition has ties to subject matter to which they could personally relate. We invited some of these people to the *documenta 12* advisory board several times, because we thought their voices and points of view were important. They refused, citing an insufficient knowledge of the German language. Like many committees, the advisory board's organisational form was such that many less assertive, language-oriented participants were excluded. These notes on *documenta 12* exemplify some of the opportunities and stumbling blocks that art institutions have to deal with when making contact and building cooperative partnerships with hitherto unaddressed segments of the population.

Structural Consequences
Every documenta has a clearly defined timetable. Its five-year rhythm begins with the naming of the artistic director and ends after 100 exhibition days. The exhibition comes down. The team disperses. Only a small, organisational core of people stays on site. The network of the *documenta 12* advisory board ended with the exhibition in September 2007. What remains are many experiences and personal contacts, but no binding commitment or concerted form of continuing the work together.

The director of *dOCUMENTA (13)* was Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev. Nineteen agents (curators, writers, artists, scientists and philosophers) from around the globe participated in the development of *dOCUMENTA (13)*.[5] Like all the documenta exhibitions before it, the thirteenth edition organised its contacts differently during preparations for the exhibition, and thereby largely ignored the work of the *documenta 12* advisory board and *documenta 12* art mediation.[6] Knowledge from individuals who had experience in the context of art mediation, specifically at the previous documenta, was only built on in part. The Maybe Education Department emerged after a three-day workshop titled "No Education". Members included staff, agents and various individuals from Kassel, who gave feedback on the programmes relevant to the audience. There were no longer any significant connections to local bodies or participatory forms of cooperation. At *dOCUMENTA (13)*, the art mediation and advisory board–building blocks relevant to the *documenta 12* context–came together in the form of the so-called "Worldly Companions".

Those responsible for the outreach, education, and public programme sought people who lived in or had a connection to Kassel to do the art mediation. An advert in the local newspaper drew 700 applicants. One-hundred-and-seventy people from this group were selected and became Worldly Companions. The majority of the Worldly Companions were native to Kassel and practised various professions (i.e. gardening/agriculture, medicine/therapy, pedagogy), or studied at the art academy in Kassel. Chosen individuals were schooled in dialogue-based art companionship from January 2012 until the exhibition opened. The "School for Worldly Companions", as it was called, consisted of monthly meetings during which theory texts were read and discussed, along with talks by artists, philosophers and scientists.


2

Changing Institutional Frameworks
Contact and invitations extended to groups that have not previously been addressed can and should lead to a challenge of one's own institutional framework. In

societies influenced by migration and heterogeneity, art institutions are called upon to challenge, to examine and change their own structures, in order to make them accessible to the widest variety of population centres and interest groups. To do this, art institutions need long-term, process-oriented collaborations with individuals who can contribute different points of view. The most important factor is transmission, or a desire to learn from one another.

At the meetings of the *documenta 12* advisory board, the working atmosphere between artists, Kassel locals and the curators/directors was one of confidence and trust. The importance of the advisory board was stressed on a symbolic level and emphasised in the media, but the exchange was rather one-sided and unsystematic. At *documenta 12*, makers were given local knowledge and could productively use it for the exhibition by, for example, including people from Kassel or finding certain sites, spaces or situations in the city without having to do much research on their own. The advisory board members, on the other hand, had less to gain from *documenta*. Their activities took the *leitmotif* of the exhibition as a point of departure, but they could not use the artworks for their advisory activities. The transfer of theoretical information relating to art was lacking as well. At *dOCUMENTA (13)*, strikingly, the Worldly Companions were not even acknowledged in any of the official catalogues or publications. They were never listed by name. The justification was that they did not need documenta's symbolic capital. At one public session of the Maybe Education group, the artistic director mentioned that she never wanted the Worldly Companions in the first place, because her exhibition and the artworks in it could also have done without mediation.

Conditions for successful cooperation with communities and other interest groups at documenta are generally complicated by the temporary dimension of documenta as a fleeting event. Adding to this was the fact that what was introduced and achieved in terms of local collaboration during *documenta 12* was regrettably not taken up by the new makers of *dOCUMENTA (13),* and therefore could not be developed any further. Other, more stable art institutions are at a clear advantage here. They can allow, or better yet, create room for contacting various population groups, enter into long-term partnership and use an open, democratic and truly participatory practice to redirect their relevance as institutions in migrant society. There is tremendous potential to be found in collaborations between art institutions and local or non-art savvy communities. *documenta 14* currently makes an effort to realize these potentials–this time not only by learning from Kassel but by *Learning from Athens* as well.

*This text originally appeared in Ruth Noack, ed., *Agency, Ambivalence, Analysis. Approaching the Museum with Migration in Mind,* Mela Books, Shivpuri Patna Bihar, 2013. It has been edited only very slightly for reprint.

Notes

1 Company self-description, documenta GmbH.

2 The three guiding questions, or *leitmotifs,* formed the basis for research, concept and the development of the exhibition. The questions were: Is modernity our antiquity? (modernity as historical form), What is bare life? (vulnerability of human existence), What is to be done? (the question of education). See the three *documenta 12* Magazines, titled *Modernity?, Life!,* and *Education:,* ed. by Georg Schöllhammer and documenta und Museum Fridericianum GmbH, Taschen, Cologne, 2007.

3 See Carmen Mörsch: "Special Invitation. Art Education at *documenta 12* as Critical Practice", in: *documenta 12* Magazine, *Education:,* ed. Georg Schöllhammer/documenta und Museum Fridericianum GmbH, Taschen, Cologne, 2007, pp. 223-225. See also Ayşe Güleç /Wanda Wieczorek on the Advisory Board, ibid., p. 221.

4 Unemployed individuals receiving unemployment benefits from respective "job centres" may be obliged to perform duties for which they receive €1 an hour. There was also an art mediation project titeld, *Arbeitslose als Avantgarde* (the unemployed as an avant-garde), see *Kunstvermittlung 1. Arbeit mit dem Publikum, Öffnung der Institution*, ed. by Wanda Wieczorek, Claudia Hummmel, Ulrich Schötker, Ayşe Güleç and Sonja Parzefall, diaphanes, Zurich, 2009, p. 112.

5 *dOCUMENTA (13)* also took a regional institution as a thematic reference and anchor point: the Breitenau Memorial in Guxhagen. It was a forced labour camp until the end of the Second World War and later a home for wayward girls. The facility served as a metaphor for the exhibition theme "Collapse and Recovery".

6 Documented in *Kunstvermittlung I* (see note 4) and *Kunstvermittlung II. Zwischen kritischer Praxis und Dienstleistung auf der documenta 12*. Ergebnisse eines Forschungsprojekts, ed. by Carmen Mörsch and the d12 art mediation research team, diaphanes, Zurich, 2009.

Captions

1 "Müseüm Fridericianüm", official *documenta 12* signage embellished by graffities. Photograph by and © Nanne Buurman

2 "d'occupy (occupy documenta)", Friedrichsplatz after occupation during *dOCUMENTA (13).* Photograph by and © Nanne Buurman

Ayşe Güleç studied social education/social work at the University of Kassel and has been working at the *Kulturzentrum Schlachthof e.V.* cultural centre since 1998. The focus of her work is migrants and (inter-) cultural communication. She is involved in the development of self-organised initiatives in the areas of gender, migration and anti-racism. Güleç developed the *documenta 12* advisory board and consequently became its spokeswoman. She became a member of the Maybe Education Group at *dOCUMENTA (13)*. She is currently responsible for community liaison in the office of the artistic director of *documenta 14* in Kassel. Publications include: "Fordern, überfordern, verweigern. Bild- und Raumpolitik(en) in der Migrationsgesellschaft," in Zülfukar Çetin, Savaş Taş, *ed.: Gespräche über Rassismus. Perspektiven & Widerstände,* March 2015, pp. 189–216; *Kunstvermittlung – Arbeit mit dem Publikum, Öffnung der Institutionen. Formate und Methoden der Kunstvermittlung auf der documenta 12,* diaphanes, Berlin, 2009.

Installations Everywhere: Disorientation and Displacement in Jan Hoet's documenta IX

by Angela M. Bartholomew

Reviews called it "pandemonium,"[1] "the most curious and perhaps the most difficult of Kassel's postwar spectaculars,"[2] and the "biggest, costliest version yet of the behemoth of contemporary art exhibitions."[3] With 195 artists and more than 1,000 works, *documenta IX* was gargantuan in scale. Taking place in the post-Berlin Wall reality of 1992, Jan Hoet, the show's artistic director, described having the sense that "almost everything is available."[4] This access to "almost everything" Hoet saw as a consequence of the development of information technology and the effects of globalization, which extended his purview to production beyond the Euro-American-centric axes of the art world, and facilitated the exposure of diverse forms of artistic practice. But *documenta IX's* "almost everything" also included generous funding; at the time, it was the most expensive documenta to ever have been realized in Kassel.[5] With so much at hand, the show was expansive, heavy on spectacle, and proved alluring enough to inspire vast crowds. Visitor numbers far exceeded expectations. For the first time since documenta's inception in 1955, more than half a million people–615,640 to be precise–visited the exhibition.[6]

Most conspicuously, the show revealed a predilection for site-specific installations, and the use of industrial materials, avowing Hoet's belief in art as an "instrument that can make us conscious of our individuality–of our identity in a technological era in which people are of little importance."[7] These works exemplified what Hoet calls 'manoeuvre': the capacity to navigate around problems, "in order to go further [...] to break loose."[8] Rather than articulate a clear concept or methodology for *documenta IX*, Hoet wrote:

> My exhibition is an offer and a challenge; it is an invitation and an argument that can be experienced through the individual encounter with art. [...] The ninth documenta is a documenta of places; its topography is the framework that supports it all. But it is also a documenta of artists; for they alone create the spaces within the framework.[9]

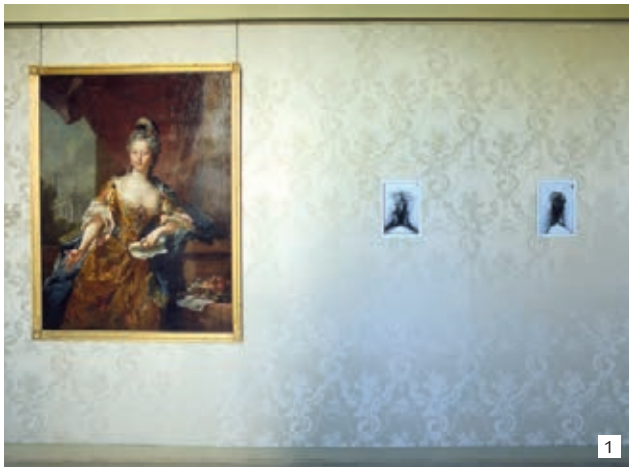
For this "documenta of places," Hoet succeeded in adding a large number of exhibition spaces that had not previously been occupied by documenta, extending the exhibition into seven buildings and many locations throughout the city. The Fridericianum, the main site of documenta from the beginning, was filled from floor to ceiling, as was the Orangerie. A considerable new site, documenta Halle, which has since become the show's main annex, was constructed expressly for *documenta IX*. But this was still not sufficient. Beyond the exhibition grounds, venues stretched throughout the city: into the Kulturfabrik Salzmann; the Kulturhaus Dock 4; the Neue Galerie; up the staircase of the AOK health insurance company; through the Ottoneum (and its natural history collection); behind commercial shop windows; and into parking lots above and below ground. Still, there was enough overflow to justify the construction of five temporary structures designed by the Belgian architects Paul Robbrecht and Hilde Daem in the outer reaches of Karlsaue Park.[10]

In the tower of the Fridericianum was a small manifesto-cum-exhibition also curated by Hoet. Entitled *Collective Memory*, it included Jacques-Louis David's 1793 masterpiece, *The Death of Marat*, lent by the Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts in Brussels, along with one work each from James Ensor, René Daniëls, Paul Gauguin, Alberto Giacometti, Joseph Beuys, Barnett Newman, and James Lee Byars. These canonical works are another example that shows how "almost everything" was available for Hoet, including the auratic remnants of key artists from documentas past. In *documenta IX*, an an exhibition based on pluralism, critic Christopher Knight called it the "Tower of Babel."[11]

A public program enacted over the course of a hundred days–which included jazz, boxing, and baseball, an open-air video festival, and even techno raves–accompanied this accumulation of art.[12] It was an extension to fuse art and life (or perhaps to 'artify' almost everything), and an effective promotional strategy. With its many locations and accessible program, *documenta* moved the city of Kassel into the event, bringing art *to* the people, or immersing the people *into* the exhibition. T-shirts, baseball caps, watches, earrings, umbrellas–almost everything was sold with a documenta logo. Even cigarette boxes read, "Art has no ready answers, only questions" leading critic Kim Levin to argue that "instead of Beuys's 7000 trees, Hoet's documenta has a 'limited edition' of 900,000 packs of cigarettes–which, in keeping with the rest of the manic hyperbole, may just be the biggest, most cancer-causing multiple in history."[13] Smokers, too, were made aware of Hoet's thoughts on art engagement: art will not provide answers for passive absorption; one must be open to the encounter.

It would have been nearly impossible to see everything that comprised *documenta IX*. In attempting, the visitor would certainly be lost, physically or in the act of trying. Amid the pageantry around the exhibition, and its occupation of massive swaths of the city, the exhibition became a 'must-see' event. But were the many artworks included subservient to the spectacle of *documenta IX*? Or were these artworks able to find a way out of the labyrinth of the mega-exhibition? To posit a response to this question, a description of a few of the works included will be described in the following, with particular attention to how they would have been encountered while winding through the show.

For Hoet, making the visitor aware of his or her subjectivity is fundamental to prompting what he described as "displacement": "Shifting things out of their accustomed contexts [...] the destabilization of one's own standpoint."[14] Under this logic, objects were showcased in alien and unsettling contexts in order to create disruption. The visitor would thus be prompted to think not only about the objects, but to think *through* them, about the surrounding conditions, and the act of encounter. Given its timing in 1992, the character of the art displayed in these locations was attuned to the aesthetic, historical, or contextual specificities of the sites. The works in the Neue Galerie, for example, were installed in relation to, or as a commentary on, the existing collection. One would find Zoe Leonard's work installed there amid the collection: a series of black-and-white photographs of female genitals alongside moralistic 18th-century German paintings. Through this juxtaposition Leonard addresses the familiar critique of painting in terms of the 'male gaze,' inserting sex, and the reproductive power of women, into a traditional, restrained, bourgeois narrative.[15]

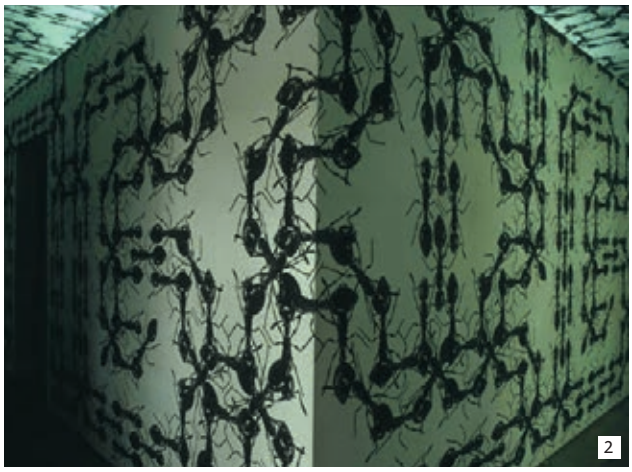


1

Meanwhile Cady Noland, in the darkness of an underground parking lot, made an exhibition of her own. Nolan interspersed framed selections of an essay she had written on "the tactics of psychopathic manipulators" on the walls with photos of lethal accidents; in the center of the room were two smashed American vehicles found by the artist in a German junkyard.[16] Beyond her installation she presented works by fellow artists who were not invited to *documenta*: among them Joan Wallace, Peter Nagy, Steven Parrino, and Jessica Diamond, whose works also dealt with damage and destruction. Noland's effort to invite fellow artists, and to arrange an exhibition underground, in the subterranean bowels of *documenta*, shows an urgency to exert control over the conditions of display.

Works like these, which could be framed under the umbrella term 'installation art,' are precisely the form that most exemplifies the "almost everything" approach of *documenta IX* as noted by the art critic David Batchelor.[17] Installation art encompasses the visitor in a context shaped by the artist, in recognition of the effect "of the container on the contained."[18] It is only logical that artists would seek to exert control over the container in this case, particularly when that container was one of the most promoted exhibition events of the decade. Installation art is particularly apt in this context. It serves to wall off, or occupy a space against the totalizing nature of the mega-show, to build a clearing in the forest, an opening in the

labyrinth. In his "Politics of Installation," Boris Groys argues that this conflict lies at the heart of installation art: the installation is a battleground over sovereignty.[19] It envelops the visitor, directs behavior–just as a labyrinth would. Yet in the context of *documenta IX*, even installations risk the potential of becoming yet another attraction, another ride in the theme park.


2

This was particularly a threat for works in the Fridericianum. It was full, floor to ceiling, with installations. Suddenly in the center one encountered a bar, with tables and chairs, an artificial palm tree, and soft piano music. A respite where you could sit down, read, and watch. But this was, of course, another installation, and the room included five screens that played footage of people telling stories about the past while also sitting in a bar. Old coats hung in a cloakroom with dusty suitcases that could be glimpsed through a hole in a retainer wall. *Transit Bar*, by Vera Frenkel, it would become apparent, was about people who had to leave their countries of origin never to return. Into another spaces, one would meet Peter Kogler's computer-generated *Ants* (1992) running over the walls of a constructed gallery, a manic wallpaper. Inside, Bruce Nauman's *Anthro/Socio* (1991), on several monitors featured the spinning head of a bald man, upside down, shouting "Help Me! Eat Me!" Perhaps the call is a plea: to rescue the work from its entrapment in the crowded labyrinth, or to put it out of its misery and simply feed it to the Minotaur. Amid the installation art, there were also paintings and sculptures in the Fridericianum, arranged in such a way as to serve not as attractions, but as periodic stops amid the installations.

Hoet proclaimed that his curatorial vision for *documenta IX* was determined solely by "art, artists and their works."[20] He asserted that no concept was used to "fram[e] the point of departure and set the course of further reflection."[21] The justification for this 'formlessness' was that it would be impossible to wrap a theme around such an increasingly disparate field of artistic production, and that any limitation in focus, or drawing of boundaries, would misrepresent the state of art in 1992. Yet this 'no concept' concept was a concrete force behind many decisions. Not everything can fit into one exhibition, not even "almost everything," no matter how massive or meandering. Selection is required. The contradiction, then, is that the haphazard arrangement of the exhibition, and the disorientation that would be felt by the visitor, was largely an effect of *purposeful* curatorial choices. The winding, ceaseless cacophony of works, crawling up the walls and to the ceiling, covering the floor, down the hallway, around the garden, behind the windows; to get truly lost in the labyrinth of *documenta IX* was a factor of the massive number of works included, as much as what Batchelor identified as "deliberately contrived conjunctions of disparate works."[22]

That is not, however, to assert that artists did not capture visitors in their own particular spaces of exhibition, despite their position in a mega-event. For


3

the installation *Die Toilette* (1992), Ilya Kabakov constructed an exact replica of provincial Soviet outhouse–as might be found in bus and train stations, connected to a two-room apartment. The installation was in the courtyard behind the Fridericianum where the live-in toilet invited visitors into a reality completely distinct from the structure in whose shadow it stood. Installation, in this case, is a political form, bent on shaping the conditions of the visitor's experience, of shifting the rhythm of daily life, to create a space for slippage to occur that might incite new perspectives. Encased, not by a self-erected structure but by the documenta Halle, Cildo Meireles' work had similarly political lines. Like the 'supra-sensorial' installations of fellow Brazilian artist, Helio Oiticica, Meireles' installations in Brazil in the 1960s and 1970s encouraged tactile experiences that might rouse the visitor from the repressive conditioning of the country's fascist dictatorship. While not created until 1992, Meireles' work for *documenta IX*, *Fontes*, works in the same tradition, immersing the visitor in accumulated measurements of time, all in vivid orange. He underlines the relation of space and time, the subjective experience of it, and its futile nature–insights all the more pertinent in a labyrinth. Some artists ventured further to find a quiet space at the edge of the labyrinth. Franz West's installation of seventy-two kilim-upholstered divans, called *Auditorium*, created a respite in a parking lot above ground, which completely contrasted with its its utilitarian setting. Tadashi Kawamata sought a calmer site to build a labyrinth of his own: a shantytown along the waterside beyond the temporary structures in the Karlsaue Park called *People's Garden* (1992).

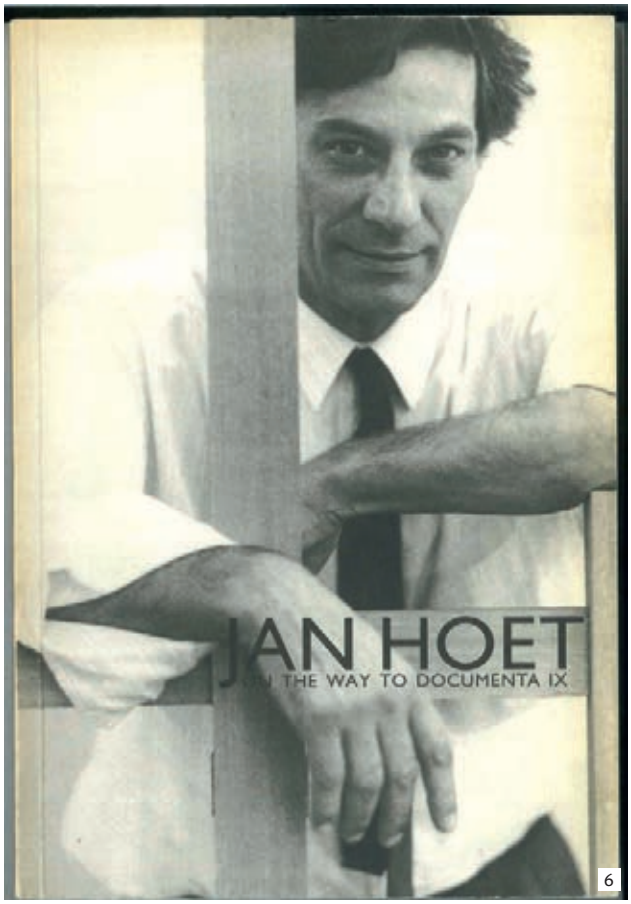

4

These works suggest that a labyrinth need not only be a trap; to lose oneself can also be a liberating act. The intentions behind the creation of a labyrinth as an exhibition is to activate the visitor, to put her in a position to participate in the production of meaning, to break free through an experience of subjectivity. This desire to activate the visitor is particularly in line with the ambitions of installation artists in the 1990s, in opposition "to the passivity of mass-media consumption–and to induce a critical vigilance towards the environments in which we find ourselves."[23] But the installations in *documenta IX* also engulf or shield visitors from the larger labyrinth of the mega-exhibition that surrounds them. Unlike an exhibition in which the artists work together to create a dynamic whole, overarching labyrinth–as was the case with *Dylaby (Dynamisch Labyrint)* (Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 1962) or *Hon – en katedral* (Moderna Museet, Stockholm, 1966)–wandering through the installations of *documenta IX* would be like jumping from one planet to another.


5

As such, *documenta IX* shows deference to "the romantic spirit of the individual producer," a holdover from the 1980s, acutely visible in Rudi Fuchs' documenta a decade prior.[24] Hoet's curatorial persona, as a flamboyant, would-be boxer in the service of art, evokes a romantic image of an impassioned servant who cannot quell his calling to serve as art's warden. His overwhelming presence as the face of *documenta IX* is undeniable, despite his fully qualified curatorial team that included the Italian art critic Pier Luigi Tazzi (b. Florence, 1941), the art critic, theorist, and renowned polyglot Denys Zacharopoulos (b. Athens, 1952), and Hoet's colleague from the Museum of Fine Arts in Ghent, art historian Bart de Baere (b. Ghent, 1960). One need only glance at the cover of the book, *On the Way to Documenta IX*–a promotional account of Hoet's vision for the exhibition, and of the path that paved the way–to get a sense of the iconic status of the curator.[25] Spanning the full cover is a black-and-white photograph of Hoet in a button-up shirt, leaning forward nonchalantly over two wooden

planks. Whether the planks are material support, or a work itself is unclear. Inside are copious photographs–several of them by prominent art world photographer Benjamin Katz–of documenta's soon-to-be director: leading museum tours, chatting with Joseph Beuys, sorting slides, putting out a cigarette.



6

It goes without saying that there are power plays at work in the realization of exhibitions. In an exhibition with such a high-profile persona, the subject of the work of several artists was Hoet himself. Amid the paintings of the Neue Galerie, a towering structure displayed Jan Hoet's personal collection of knick-knacks, brought over from Ghent, and arranged by Haim Steinbach. Two painted portraits of the curator by Marlene Dumas were included. Most notably, in considering the labyrinthine quality of *documenta IX*, was Guillaume Bijl's wax museum of documenta history, which featured a wax figure of Hoet (for which the curator posed personally) alongside figures of Arnold Bode and his wife, and Joseph Beuys: exceptional figures in the canonical past of documenta. Looking inward, to consider the elevated significance of the present documenta, and its curator, counterintuitively acknowledges the world outside the labyrinth, asserting that the exhibition


7

and its promotion are self-inflated, and self-affirming.

In this line of argumentation, critic Peter Schjeldahl's warning against the blaring effects of tourist economics on such an exhibition is on point.[26] The most expensive documenta yet, the spectacular nature of the event was the main attraction. But was it the case, as Schjeldahl argues, that Jonathan Borofksy's work *Man Walking to the Sky* (1991-1992), which proposes "transcendence" through the exhibition "experience," was a false promise? Can the visitor, activated through encounters, escape the labyrinth for the vast open space of skyward transcendence? If the transcendence is symbolic of escape from the labyrinth, then the audience of documenta is the Minotaur, trapped in a labyrinth for its own acculturation, awaiting refinement to be awakened. Getting lost in the labyrinth is therefore a contradiction–entrapment to enable escape.

Borofsky has provided insight across multiple editions of documenta. His work chosen for inclusion in the aforementioned 1982 documenta was *Hammering Man*. Several faceless silhouettes, generic workers, hammered away in a gallery of neo-expressionist paintings, alluding to the work required to protect what Rudi Fuchs extolled as the fragile spirit of art. Fuchs' vision, which favors the *beaux arts* of painting and sculpture, concerns itself with the lyrical quality of art and purports that art should be safeguarded in its museum temple, shielded from the effects of the media and politics, to be contemplated through its materiality.[27] But Hoet's documenta is different, and so is the Borofsky chosen to represent it. It features an emblem for potential transcendence through the art encounter outside the confines of the museum: an individual man, with his own unique features, heads unimpeded for the sky.


8

9

For Hoet, the encounter with the greatest potential is one that elicits displacement, to be removed from a worldly rhythm. This is not, however, to be done strictly within the confines of the museum temple; art should be encountered everywhere, spread outward, over almost everything. The experience sought is disorientation: getting lost, creating slippage, to allow one to see the whole world anew. If it is true, however, that "the best installation art is marked by a sense of antagonism towards its environment, a friction with its context that resists organizational pressure and instead exerts its own terms of engagement," as Claire Bishop writes, then one installation among a documenta of installations loses much of its power.[28] While it may be possible to temporarily contain the visitor in an installation, subsumption by installation is not a fail-safe strategy to insulate the visitor, or the work, from the mega-exhibition. Therefore, it may be concluded that while both the artworks and the visitors may have gotten lost in the labyrinth of *documenta IX*, transcendence was unlikely.

Notes

1 Michael Corris, "The Pandemonium of the Showroom," *Artforum* Vol. 30 No. 1 (September 1992), pp. 90-91.

2 David Galloway. 1992. "'Documenta': Missing Edge." *International Herald Tribune*, June 27-28, p. 6.

3 Michael Kimmelman. 1992. "At Documenta, It's Survival of the Loudest." *The New York Times*, July 5.

4 Jan Hoet, "An Introduction," *Documenta IX*," vol. 1, Edition Cantz, Stuttgart, 1992, p. 18. Exhibition catalogue.

5 The budget of the exhibition is quoted as approximately US$11 million, or 16 million Deutschmarks. See: Peter Schjeldahl, "The Documenta of the Dog," *Art in America* 80, No. 9, September 1992, p. 90; Nande Janssen, "Ohne Titel Een onderzoek naar de visie en receptie van documenta 7, 8 en IX," Doctoral Thesis, Universiteit Utrecht, August 2000.

6 According to the documenta Foundation and the Museum Fridericianum GmbH. See: "documenta IX: 13 June - 20 September 1992." Accessed 27.01.2017. http://documenta.de/en/retrospective/documenta_ix#.

7 Martijn van Nieuwenhuyzen, "Jan Hoet. The Belgium museum director explains why his Documenta will 'unfold itself like a dream,'" *Flash Art News* (insert in *Flash Art International Edition*) 145, March/April 1989, p. 3.

8 Stuart Morgan, "Documenta IX: Body Language," *Frieze* 6, Sept-Oct 1992, p. 29.

9 Hoet, "An Introduction," *Documenta IX*," p. 17.

10 These structures later were moved to the Netherlands to house the Museum De Paviljoens in Almere, until it closed its doors in 2013 as a result of budget cuts. See: Roberta Smith. 1992. "A Small Show Within an Enormous One." *The New York Times*, June 22.

11 Christopher Knight. 1992. "Look for the American Label: Global pluralism may be the theme of Documenta 9, the latest extravaganza at Kassel, but the show gets its bite from American artists." *Los Angeles Times*, July 12.

12 Janssen, "Ohne Titel Een onderzoek naar de visie en receptie van documenta 7, 8 en IX," p. 69.

13 Kim Levin. 1992. "Jan Who? Docu What?" *Village Voice* 37, 28, pp. 95-96, as quoted in Janssen, "Ohne Titel Een onderzoek naar de visie en receptie van documenta 7, 8 en IX," p. 89. This common credo of Hoet was written on the boxes in German: *Kunst bietet keine klaren Antworten. Nur Fragen*.

14 Hoet, "An Introduction," *Documenta IX*," p. 20.

15 Morgan, "Documenta IX: Body Language", p. 29.

16 Schjeldahl, "The Documenta of the Dog," p. 96.

17 David Batchelor, "Almost everything is available," *Frieze* 6, 1992, pp. 35-38.

18 Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, The Lapis Press, San Francisco, 1986, p. 69.

19 Boris Groys, "Politics of Installation," *E-flux*, January 2009. Accessed 24.02.2017. http://e-flux.com/journal/politics-of-installation.

20 Hoet, "An Introduction," *Documenta IX*," p. 19.

21 Ibid.

22 Batchelor, "Almost everything is available," p. 36.

23 Claire Bishop, "But is it installation art?", *Tate Etc.*, Issue 3, Spring 2005. Accessed 01.02.2017. http://tate.org.uk/context-comment/articles/it-installation-art. Exemplifying this aim in terms of mass media consumption is Dara Birnbaum's installation of micro-sized monitors entitled *Transmission Tower: Sentinel* (1992). The viewer of *documenta IX* was invited to piece together the events of the student protest of Tiananmen Square through scenes of news broadcasts. Birnbaum writes of the work: "Within this installation, the distribution of these images on micro-sized monitors prevents an immediate, singular reading of the events in Tiananmen Square. Rather than positioning the viewer as another point of reception, she or he is encouraged to become an active participant in the reconstruction of meaning by choosing a plan of interaction with the images on each monitor." *Documenta IX*, vol. 2, Edition Cantz, Stuttgart, 1992, p. 52. Exhibition catalogue.

24 Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, Verso, London and New York, p. 194.

25 Alexander Farenholtz and Markus Hartmann, eds., *Jan Hoet: On the Way to Documenta IX*, Edition Cantz, Stuttgart, Time International, 1991.

26 Schjeldahl, "The Documenta of the Dog," p. 96.

27 Rudi Fuchs, "Introduction", *Documenta 7*, vol. 1, D + V Paul Dierichs GmbH & Co., Kassel, 1982, p. XV. Exhibition catalogue. Titled simply, *A Story*, Rudi Fuchs' stated aim as artistic director of *documenta 7* was to "reaffirm the autonomy of art against the incursion of the world around art," which he described in his letter to the participating artists of documenta as "the customs and architecture, politics and cooking," which are "hard and brutal."

28 Bishop, "But is it installation art?".

Captions

1 Zoe Leonard, *Untitled* (Prints from *documenta IX* installation), 1992. Collection Flemish Community. Installation in the Neue Galerie, *documenta IX*, Kassel, consisting of 19 black and white photographs affixed to gallery walls. Photograph by: Dirk Pauwels. Courtesy of S.M.A.K., Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, Gent.

2 Peter Kogler, *Ants*, 1992. Installation, Museum Fridericianum, *documenta IX*, Kassel. Photograph by: Dirk Bleicker. Courtesy of documenta Archiv.

3 Ilya Kabakov, *Die Toilette*, 1992. Installation, Museum Fridericianum, Kassel. Exterior and interior of installation. *Documenta IX*, vol. 2, Edition Cantz, Stuttgart, 1992, pp. 248-249. Exhibition catalogue. Photographs by: Dirk Bleicker.

4 Cildo Meireles, *Fontes*, 1992. Installation in the documenta Halle. *Documenta IX*, vol. 2, Edition Cantz, Stuttgart, 1992, pp. 360-661. Exhibition catalogue. Photo by: Dirk Pauwels.

5 Franz West, *Auditorium*, 1992. Installation at *documenta IX*, Kassel, consisting of 72 divans, 90 x 110 x 220 cm each. Courtesy of Franz West Privatstiftung, (c) Archiv Franz West.

6 Cover of *Jan Hoet On the Way to Documenta IX*. Alexander Farenholtz and Markus Hartmann, eds, Edition Cantz, Stuttgart, Time International, 1991.

7 Guillaume Bijl, *History of Documenta, Wax Museum*, 1992. Installation at *documenta IX*, Kassel 1992. Courtesy of the artist.

8 Installation of the Fridericianum with five of Jonathan Borofsky's sculptures, *Hammering Man* (1982) and paintings by Martin Disler, *documenta VII*, Kassel, 1982. Photo by: Dirk Bleicker. Courtesy of documenta Archiv.

9 Installation in front of the Fridericianum including Jonathan Borofsky's *Man Walking to the Sky*, 1991–1992. Photo by: Dirk Bleicker. Courtesy of documenta Archiv.

Angela M. Bartholomew is a researcher, writer, and lecturer. She is a doctoral candidate in art history at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, where she teaches courses on the forces that shape art's presentation and on the strategies artists employ to subvert systems of control. Her dissertation research, *The Mediation of Critique: Strategies of Subversion in the Exhibition of Contemporary Art in the Low Countries, 1982–1997,* is supported in full by an esteemed award from the Dutch Organization for Scientific Research (NWO). She has also held research positions both at the University of Amsterdam and at the Stedelijk Museum. Before moving to the Netherlands, she studied and worked in San Diego, California, including for several years at the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego. She is co-editor of an upcoming volume on *Sculpture Communism,* a body of work by the Belgian artist Jan De Cock, has published in journals such as *Stedelijk Studies and Metropolis M,* and is an editor and frequent contributor to *Kunstlicht*. In her capacity as a performance artist, she also occasionally gives lecture performances that parody the instrumentalization of art by corporate and political interests.

Books at documenta: Medium, Art Object, Cultural Symbol

by Anna Sigrídur Arnar

This year, *documenta 14* features a massive sculptural bookwork by Marta Minujín titled *The Parthenon of Banned Books* (*El Partenón de libros prohibitos*) (fig. 1). The Argentinian artist's replica of the famous Greek monument was originally erected in 1983 in Buenos Aires after the collapse of Argentina's brutal military dictatorship. Composed of 25,000 books bearing titles censored by the junta, Minujín's book monument represented a powerful rebuke of this regime's practice of violent repression and censorship by placing these banned books back into public view and circulation (five days after the monument opened, the books became available to individuals and public institutions). In an interview, Minujín describes the work as a "mass participation artwork" with local libraries and cultural institutions donating books for the enterprise.[1] For the reconstruction of this work in Kassel, the artist launched a call to the public to donate 100,000 formerly or currently banned books[2] and, like the earlier iteration of this work in Buenos Aires, the donated books collected for the monument will subsequently be redistributed into the public realm when its display on the Friedrichsplatz draws to a close. The Friedrichsplatz was deliberately chosen as the site for Minujín's sculpture because of its highly charged history, including events associated with books. In 1933, for instance, this same public square was the site of a book burning orchestrated by the Nazis as a part of their effort to eradicate books deemed to be "against the German spirit" (fig. 2). Moreover, this site happens to be located in front of the city's Landesbibliothek, once housed in the Fridericianum Museum, a structure that was decimated during World War II from Allied bombing raids in 1941, resulting in the loss of over 350,000 books. The Landesbibliothek was also at one time overseen by the brothers Grimm, scholars and librarians central to Kassel's cultural identity and prestige.

1

2

The present essay examines how books–as art objects, as powerful cultural symbols, and as curatorial tools–have been showcased in previous documenta exhibitions and what they can tell us about the expanded social fabric of book culture as well as exhibition practices and strategies of display. From large sculptural bookworks such as Minujín's, to modest scale artists' books, as well as consciously designed catalogues, or found, altered, and destroyed books, to books that have been translated into stone, photography, tree bark, and digital media, the book has emerged in diverse forms during critical moments in documenta's history. The aim here is not to provide a comprehensive history of "documenta and the

book," but rather to highlight a few critical moments to ask how they reveal significant shifts in curatorial practice and exhibition strategies within documenta's own history.

Rehabilitating the Narrative of Modern Art

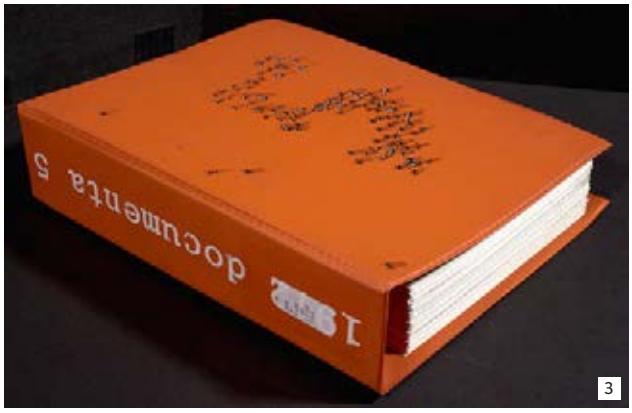
Much like Minujín's *Parthenon of Banned Books* was a response to censorship and violent loss, the first *documenta* staged in 1955 was conceived by its founder, Arnold Bode, as a means to recover a cultural legacy that had been brutally purged or censored by the Third Reich as well as literally decimated by Allied bombing. It was not just the Fridericianum Museum that had been damaged by the end of the Second World War; the city of Kassel itself was 85% destroyed and was still in a state of semi-ruin as Bode began to lay the groundwork for the first *documenta* exhibition.

As has been established in the extensive literature on the history of documenta, Bode's curatorial and design choices were shaped by modernist principles that privileged abstraction as well as notions of universality and cultural health.[3] For this task, Bode partnered with art historian Werner Haftmann, who had just published his influential book *Painting in the Twentieth Century*, which also served as a blueprint for the exhibition's catalogue. Together they engineered the first three documenta exhibitions, with Bode as chief designer and organizer and Haftmann as "chief ideologist."[4] Like the narrative thread in Haftmann's book, the first *documenta*, as Ian Wallace demonstrates, represented a conscious effort to "rehabilitate" modernist art, particularly abstract art and the Expressionist tradition from "the slur of 'degeneracy' conferred by the Nazis."[5]

Although subsequent documenta exhibitions headed by Bode-Haftmann sought to expand the narrative of modernist abstraction to include more recent developments, cracks began to appear in their organizational scheme. Unable or unwilling to accommodate movements or individuals that defied their narrative, documenta proved to many observers to be out of step with the contemporary art world.[6] In particular, many artists and critics openly criticized documenta's narrow embrace of media–painting, sculpture, and the graphic arts–at the expense of experimental and mixed media works that included ephemera, environmental works, video, film, happenings, or performance.

The Artist's Book, the Catalogue, and the "Dirty" Book

Curated by Harald Szeemann, *documenta 5* (1972) has been extensively analyzed and is widely considered to be among the most influential, albeit controversial, exhibitions of the post-war era.[7] What has not been discussed, however, is that this was the first documenta exhibition to feature artists' books in a meaningful way. Although scholars and critics have typically identified *documenta 6* as a foundational moment in documenta's engagement with artists' books,[8] it is actually *documenta 5* where we first see a surprising number of artists producing and implementing books as a part of their practice. Hubertus Gojowczyk, a former pupil of Dieter Roth (himself a prolific maker of artists' books), for example, displayed twenty-three books at *documenta 5,* cementing his reputation as a sculptor of compelling biblio-objects, and it marked his first showing at documenta. In addition, some of the leading figures in experimental artists' books in the conceptualist vein, including Hanne Darboven, Stanley Brouwn, Michael Harvey, John Baldessari, Lawrence Weiner, among others, were featured in *documenta 5* for the first time.[9] Christian Boltanski also had his first documenta showing that year, with his *Album de Photos de la Famille D.* placed within a discursive setting of objects and documents. And Fluxus artist Ben Vautier's first time exhibiting at documenta included his intermedial "Écritures" as a part of his performance-residency for *documenta 5*. Moreover, Edward Ruscha, now widely recognized as a pioneer in the history of artists' books, was represented with fourteen books at *documenta 5*, and Szeemann tapped the artist to design the exhibition poster and catalogue cover (fig. 3), which became in many ways an artist's book in itself. In form, materials, and motif, this catalogue signaled to audiences that *documenta 5*, or "*d5*" as it became known, would represent a radical departure from the first four documenta exhibitions.



3

When Szeemann was tapped to become the director of *documenta 5*, he had already established his reputation as a curator who upended conventional curatorial frameworks with such notable exhibitions such as *Happening and Fluxus* (1970) and especially *Live in Your Head. When Attitudes Become Form* (1969). Like these earlier exhibitions, *documenta 5* featured objects, environments, and "actions" that did not fit traditional genre or media categories such as performance, film, video, installation, as well as multiples, including artists' books. Moreover, as Lucia Pesapane explains, Szeemann chose to exhibit "objects that did not belong to the realm of art, creating a mixture of ordinary objects and fetish items that belonged to popular, political, or kitsch culture, as well as to religious and outsider art."[10] Visitors to *d5* were therefore presented with quotidian items such as postage stamps, Swiss currency notes, comic books, advertisements, popular magazine covers, playing cards, posters, and works of science fiction. Such a broad embrace of non-elitist imagery and non-precious materials provided not only a more inclusive context for artists' books, but it also made possible an expanded view of artists' books that would include books conceived as inexpensive multiples, produced with accessible materials and technologies. As such, the notion of the rarified signed and limited edition of the *livre d'artiste* from the pre-war era, produced by artists such as Bonnard, Matisse, or Picasso gave way to more conceptually based artists' books that explored the experience of reading or the nature of language, narrative, or time. Moreover, in many cases, the use of ordinary materials allowed visitors to handle the books and control the viewing-reading experience.

In keeping with his expanded view of what kinds of works would be included in *d5*, Szeemann was equally concerned with how to organize artworks in the exhibition spaces. In particular, he was determined to move away from the practice of displaying static objects organized around the concept of national schools, as was customary for the Venice Biennale, or of what he called the "reign of styles"[11] that he believed characterized earlier incarnations of documenta. More broadly, however, he wanted to replace what he perceived to be a "scheme of master-pupil relationships" with a "horizontal field of associations, influences, affinities, speculations."[12] *d5* would therefore attempt to bypass conventional art historical labels or styles with a more fluid model of broad thematic categories.[13]

Significantly, Szeemann channeled many of these curatorial concepts for the *d5* exhibition into the design of the catalogue itself. As a doctoral student in art history conducting research on the origins of the modern illustrated book, Szeemann had gained valuable insight into the early avant-garde's use of books and print media to advance social and aesthetic agendas.[14] Moreover, when he later assumed positions as museum director and curator, he was known to take a hands-on role in the design of catalogues and related promotional materials for exhibitions such as *When Attitudes Become Form*. As in the catalogue for this earlier exhibition, the *d5* catalogue is not a bound codex with a fixed structure, but rather a notebook filled with pages with two-hole punches that fit into metal rings (fig. 4). Such a structure implied that the catalogue, and perhaps the curatorial enterprise itself, was a work in progress and seemed to correspond, at least in part, to many of the exhibition spaces of *d5*, which some observers at the time described as "raw" and "unpolished."[15] More importantly, however, the loose-leaf arrangement of the *d5* catalogue allowed the user-reader of this catalogue, in principle anyhow, to rearrange the contents or to add new material. The artist Claes Oldenburg, for example, describes how he issued a small catalogue corresponding to his *Maus Museum* on display at *d5* that was intended to be incorporated into the larger exhibition catalogue: "As you can see it has wire rings so that it can be inserted but it was printed too late to be included."[16]


4

Oldenburg's comments highlight one of the many challenges that compromised *d5*'s principle of the customizable catalogue, because in the end it simply contained too much material. It was divided into twenty-five sections that corresponded to different thematic sections of the exhibition as well as supplementary information on *d5* events and a bibliography. However, in consulting multiple copies of this catalogue, the last six sections are empty including the sections labeled "nachher," (afterward) where owners could ostensibly add their own materials such as press clippings, images, and notes.[17]

Many reviewers of the exhibition mentioned the catalogue's imposing size as well as its conspicuous design, some noting that it constituted a statement or work of art in its own right.[18] In this sense, the *d5* catalogue was perhaps more successful as an expressive vehicle for Szeemann than as a practical tool for visitors of the exhibition.

5

5

5

From a graphic design standpoint, the *d5* catalogue reflected a conscientious break from the design of the earlier documenta catalogues, which all bore the stamp of Bauhaus modernist design with its emphasis on grid-like order and a universalist typeface (fig. 5). Although Kassel-based graphic designer, Professor Karl-Oskar Blase, himself a product of modernist training, is listed in the catalogue credits as the *d5* designer, Szeemann is listed in the catalogue credits as overseeing the catalogue's "Gestaltung" (a broad term that can encompass everything from general presentation to design).[19] Indeed, as mentioned earlier, it was Szeemann who reached out to Ruscha to contribute an image for the catalogue's cover. The artist had already been exploring insect motifs at the time, and he rendered them in a hyper-illusionistic manner with sharp shadows, enhancing their sense of movement.[20] As organic matter in motion, the ants on the *d5* cover (which disperse onto the backside as well) fundamentally destabilize the solidity of the pure letter and number forms of the Bauhaus-inspired logos from earlier documenta catalogues. Moreover, the bright red-orange color used for the *d5* cover provided yet another point of contrast, as it openly departs from the modernist color repertoire of primary colors and black and white.

Based on correspondence between Szeemann and Ruscha, we learn that it was the artist who suggested the use of a "very shiny" or "plastic" material for the catalogue cover.[21] The decision to embrace the brightly colored plastic is certainly in keeping with the exhibition's embrace of the pop art aesthetic, as well as post-minimalism's explorations into industrial materials including plastic. More importantly, however, the strategic design choices of the *d5* catalogue suggest that Szeemann was aware of how an ordinary object such as a book could be used as an experimental tool to upend conventional functions and forms of the codex, not to mention an exhibition catalogue.

Ruscha, whose own books were prominently featured in *d5*, certainly understood his books as serving this kind of critical function. "I liked the idea that my books would disorient," he writes, "and it seemed to happen that people would look at them, and the books would look very familiar, yet they were like a wolf in sheep's clothing. I felt that they were very powerful statements, maybe the most powerful things I've done."[22] Ruscha conveyed such "powerful statements" and "disorienting" effects in his books through the use of low-key materials and minimalist means. In keeping with *d5's* embrace of popular and commercial art forms, his books eschewed what Ruscha described as "the nuances of the hand-made and crafted limited edition book."[23] His book *Every Building on the Sunset Strip* (1966), for instance, was issued in 1,000 copies (and 5,000 in a second printing in 1971), and it featured two continuous strips of deadpan photographs of commercial storefronts along the well-known street in Hollywood. Glamour, or any hint of narrative or "mood," as Ruscha

described it, was drained out.[24] In its utter ordinariness, the book becomes a radical statement.

By 1972, Ruscha had produced fourteen books, all of which were on view at *d5*. Significantly, evidence suggests that at least some were displayed in such a way that viewers could handle them (fig. 6). Thus, despite the low-key content of his books, the artist placed value in the experiential dimension that could be afforded by his books. Interviews with the artist reveal that he was often particular about the way his books were exhibited because he understood how display could enhance or detract from the viewer-reader's experience.[25] Moreover, he described his books as "bits of sculpture," [26] suggesting a physical presence that could be viewed from more than one side and ideally, exhibited free from the wall so they could be held.

IDEE Ed Ruscha PHOTO BY ERHARD WEHRMANN 6

Ruscha's books were displayed in a section of *d5* labeled "Idee" (Idea) on the second floor of the Fridericianum Museum. It is here, in the building that formerly housed Kassel's Landesbibliothek, where most of the artists' books were exhibited. Co-curated by Klaus Honnef and the noted gallerist of conceptual art, Konrad Fischer, the gallery space featured books by Lawrence Weiner, John Baldessari, and Michael Harvey, as well as a host of other projects or portfolios with text and image by artists such as Stanley Brouwn, Victor Burgin, Douglas Huebler, Allen Ruppersberg, and others. In a nearby room, Hanne Darboven's 1972 eighty-six page *1. Buch/ 42. Buch* methodically marked the passage of time with the succession of each page framed in neat rows on the wall.

7

8

The group Art & Language occupied a separate room on this floor, where the members set up a "Reading Room" with metal cabinets whose contents could be accessed by visitors of the exhibition (fig. 7). Although not a book properly speaking, this piece prioritized participatory reading and open access, as visitors could open and close drawers to peruse their contents to generate meaning.[27] Similarly, photographs from other areas of the "Idee" section show *d5* visitors handling books displayed on tables (fig. 8), implying that books are not rarefied objects, but rather a medium that is accessible and free to be handled. For Lawrence Weiner, the value of "universal availability," as he termed it, was critical to the display of his book.[28] Moreover, such availability could be achieved with modest means. For the occasion of *d5*, he published *Ein Elementarbuch* (*A Primer*), a soft-cover eighty-four page book, measuring 14.6 x 10.5 cm and displayed in the "Idee" section.[29] When asked during an interview if he was satisfied with "his situation" at *d5*, he replied in the affirmative, adding, "I made a book. The book is there so that people can see it. They can pick it up and take it out. [...] And people, especially working class people, can come in and look

at it. They really can see what's relevant to them or not."[30]

Although several of the books at *d5*, such as Darboven's and Baldessari's were displayed in vitrines or framed on a wall,[31] the increased presence of books at the exhibition aligned with the curatorial ambitions to transform the museum from a static entity that enshrines singular auratic objects to a site where visitors were in part responsible for creating their own experience. In addition to the artists' books and Art & Language's participatory "Reading Room" in the "Idee" section of the exhibition, visitors entering the Fridericianum Museum encountered Hans Haacke's *documenta-Besucherprofil* that gathered sociological "profiles" from the visitors directly, thereby producing, in Haacke's words, "a collective self-portrait in a participatory and self-reflective process."[32] Moreover, the publisher and bookseller Walther König installed books in a library format in alignment with the "concept of *d5*" in the "Information" section of the exhibition, encouraging visitors to roam through his fully functioning bookshop and peruse the books at will.[33] Located just in front of Joseph Beuys' *Büro des Organisation für direckte Demokratie* with the artist on-site engaging with *d5* participants, the bookshop-library received a steady stream of visitors. Beuys himself frequently visited the shop and discouraged the bookseller from replacing the smudged display copies of books, stating "the dirtier the better."[34] As such, these "dirty" books served as testaments preserving the traces of user participation and engagement.

Szeemann once referred to *documenta 5* as not simply a "producer" of an exhibition, but also as a "publisher and librarian."[35] Such roles were, of course, partly realized with the bookstore (which became an increasing presence with every *documenta* exhibition after *d5*[36]) as well as with the accessible display of books and texts in the exhibition spaces. Certainly, however, the self-conscious design of the exhibition catalogue represented an extension of this ideal. Although it failed in terms of making it a user-friendly document, the *d5* catalogue definitively altered the course of *documenta* history in terms of curatorial branding. It goes without saying that each subsequent *documenta* catalogue has had a unique design that in some way marks the curatorial themes or conceits of the director. Moreover, publishing has become a major *documenta* enterprise in and of itself and has expanded to include multi-volume readers, magazines, notebooks, and most recently, with *dOCUMENTA (13)*, a massive three-volume catalogue, one of which is titled *The Book of Books* and comprises nearly 1,000 pages.

The "Metamorphosis" of Books

True to form, the catalogue for the *documenta 6* exhibition (1977) had a distinctive character of its own. Rather than attempting to encompass the entirety of the curatorial enterprise into a single volume, the organizers, under the directorship of Manfred Schneckenburger, decided to divide the catalogue into three separate volumes, which could be housed in a slipcase when not in use. The elegant black and white tomes of the catalogue, with its stylized typography, sets itself apart from the *d5* catalogue not only in design but its content, as explained by Schneckenburger:

> This time, in contrast to the last catalogue, we are not trying to offer monuments to the artists, with its long list of exhibits and biographical references in two columns, but, where necessary, to analyze every work [...] In other words, we are actually trying to see the catalogue as an instrument for mediating between the work and the audience.[37]

Such mediation had pragmatic applications as well, since the audience could carry selective portions of the catalogue while examining the different exhibition spaces of *documenta 6*.

Above all, however, the exhibition spaces and the catalogue of *documenta 6* were rigorously structured around the concept of "media." Looking back at his curatorial framework for *documenta 6*, Schneckenburger explained:

> Unlike in the past, we thought in terms of media, not in terms of genres. Whereas talk of genre always also involved paragons and rivalry between the arts, and thus distinctions in terms of content, media were defined simply in terms of their specific modus operandi. [...] Visitors to documenta 6 could view these media in all their artistic potential, emancipated and on an equal footing. We even examined books as a medium.[38]

As such, the exhibition embraced a broad spectrum of art ranging from painting, sculpture, photography, film, video, and performance as well as artists' books, drawings, and "utopian design." More importantly, however, the aim of this separate but equal arrangement of medium was to provide analysis of each medium "in order to recognize," as he and

Lothar Romain articulated in a joint statement, "the character of each form of presentation and communication."[39] Moreover, such an endeavor would be carried out critically rather than descriptively because of their acute awareness of the "sudden shift" from media "fascination" (that characterized the 1960s) to media "uneasiness."[40]

It is within this context that *documenta 6* devoted an entire section of the exhibition to books as well as an essay examining the book as a medium by Rolf Dittmar (whose formidable artists' book collection is now housed in the Staatliche Museen in Berlin). Herein lies one of the biggest distinctions between books at *documenta 5* and *documenta 6*. Whereas *d5* was perhaps the first documenta to include artists' books in an innovative manner and to transform the catalogue itself into an artwork, Szeemann and the co-curators of the "Idee" section seemed to consider artists' books as a natural extension of artists' varied output that included mixed media and inexpensive editioned multiples as well as explorations into language. Books also fit into the *d5*'s overall embrace of the democratic potentials of art and of the idea, if only partially realized, of engaged spectatorship. Yet, there was no specific discussion devoted to artists' books by Szeemann or the curators of the "Idee" section where most of the books appeared.[41]

Such an oversight is perhaps not surprising since in 1972, critical assessment of artists' books had not yet fully taken root. Although many of the artists who exhibited at *d5*, including Ruscha, Weiner, Darboven, and Brouwn, had been engaged with making books for several years and were featured in exhibitions organized by curators and artists associated with *d5* such as Konrad Fischer (for his gallery in Düsseldorf), Johannes Cladders (for the Mönchengladbach Museum), Seth Siegelaub (for his publishing projects/exhibitions in New York), or Joseph Kosuth (for the Lannis Gallery, and later Lannis Museum in New York), basic critical terms and concepts to distinguish experimental "artists' books" from the deluxe tradition of the *livre d'artiste,* or the broader concept of "multiple" had not been fully developed. In other words, despite long-ranging experimental engagement with books (that reaches even further back to Futurist, Surrealist, and the Fluxus movements), the critical literature on the subject simply lagged behind.[42] Significantly, however, the interval between 1972 and 1977 proved to be a remarkably prolific time period for the artist's book. Acknowledging this development, Dittmar built on this momentum for *documenta 6*, and included well over 200 books by dozens of different artists and installed them in exhibition spaces in the Neue Galerie.

In the accompanying essay that appeared in the third volume of the catalogue, Dittmar begins by taking stock of the prolific rise of artists' books in the previous few years, and cites influential exhibitions in Milan, London, Philadelphia, and Washington D.C. as evidence that the "Book as Art Work" had become an independent category unto itself.[43] As such, he characterized *documenta 6* as an "attempt" to document this phenomenon. Significantly, Dittmar decided to divide this part of the exhibition into two categories, labeled "Metamorphosen des Buches" and "Konzept-Bücher" (The Metamorphosis of Books and Concept or Conceptual Books). In the "Concept" section were books by familiar names that had been included in the "Idee" section of *d5*: Stanley Brouwn, Daniel Buren, Hanne Darboven, and Lawrence Weiner. In the much larger "Metamorphosis of Books" section, the curators presented such established book artists such as Dieter Roth (fourteen books) or poet-artist-critic Marcel Broodthaers (six books) along with artists such as Anselm Kiefer and John Latham, who received their first showing at *documenta 6* in the section dedicated to the display of books. The sisters Barbara and Gabriele Schmidt-Heins, who had just shown work in the exhibition *Buchwerke* (Bookworks) in Bremerhaven the previous year, installed a remarkably prescient library containing dozens of their minimalist tomes. Moreover, Dittmar devised a sub-section titled "Objektkataloge" (Object Catalogues) that featured the *Kassettenkataloge* (catalogues in a box) issued by the Mönchengladbach museum in the late 1960s and early 1970s for artists like Marcel Broodthaers, Carl André, and Joseph Beuys, along with earlier examples of the "book in a box" principle by Marcel Duchamp and others. Dittmar also acknowledges publishing projects involving multiple artists such as *Fluxus 1*, 1964 (George Maciunas and associates), *Décollage 5* (1966), and *de-collage* (1969) (Wolf Vostell and others).

Noting the incredible variety of books being produced by artists, Dittmar concludes that the "only common denominator seems to be, that the artist questions the book as a medium that disseminates information."[44] The books on view, then, were devoted to exploring and subverting conventional norms of the book. While both the "concept" and the "metamorphosed" book carry out such explorations, it is the latter category that received far more attention at *documenta 6*–the catalogue lists four

times as many "metamorphosed" books on display than "concept" books. And despite Dittmar's celebration of reading as a "personal action" that shapes meaning through the decisions of individual readers, the majority of the books on view at *documenta 6* constituted what Garrett Stewart has described as "prevented reading on display."[45] From cut, torn, or carved books (Michael Badura, Steven Cortright, Helfried Hagenberg, Jürgen Brodwolf), burned books (Bernard Aubertin, Hubertus Gojowczyk), books chained or bound shut (László Lakner, Konrad Balder Schaüfflen) to those that were covered in rubber, plastic, plaster, concrete, or mud (Alice Kochs, Milan Knizak, Dieter Krieg, John Latham, Dieter Roth, Timm Ulrichs, Wolf Vostell, Erwin Wortelkamp) or books that contained blocked or obscured text (Marcel Broodthaers, Gerhard Rühm, Martin Schwarz), a conventional reading was negated. While one could argue that materiality and spatiality among other haptic factors can contribute to "reading" a book, Dittmar points to additional challenges that interfere. Crucially, the challenge centers on the issue of display. "[D]irect access to the visitor of the exhibition," he notes, "is prevented by the glass of the vitrine."[46] In fact, most of the books for *documenta 6* were placed behind glass. As numerous photographs from the exhibition attest, visitors of *documenta 6* were obliged either to hover above display cases or look through double-sided vitrines onto the book objects (figs. 9 and 10). There were of course exceptions, such as Franz Erhard Walther's *Stoffbuch 2* (Material Book 2), a massive quilt-like book displayed on the museum floor that allowed spectators to manipulate the twenty-nine blank cloth pages, or literally wrap their recumbent bodies in these pages, as if in bed (fig. 11).[47]

In his essay, Dittmar raises an additional factor that fundamentally undermines viewers' access to the books on display. The majority of the books featured at *documenta 6*, he notes, were produced as unique objects rather than multiples.[48] Several of these works, such as Jiří Kolář's *Wunschbuch* (Wish Book) were posed on pedestals like static sculptural objects to be looked at but not touched. Like Kolář's work, many of the unique books were in fact *livres détournés*, books that deviate from their original function or form in order to interrogate the limits of the book. Dittmar refers to such books as "experiments" and states that the objective of *documenta 6* is not to "provide answers, rather it documents questions. Questions, which the artist has asked of the book medium, and questions, which the book as medium asks us."[49]


9


10

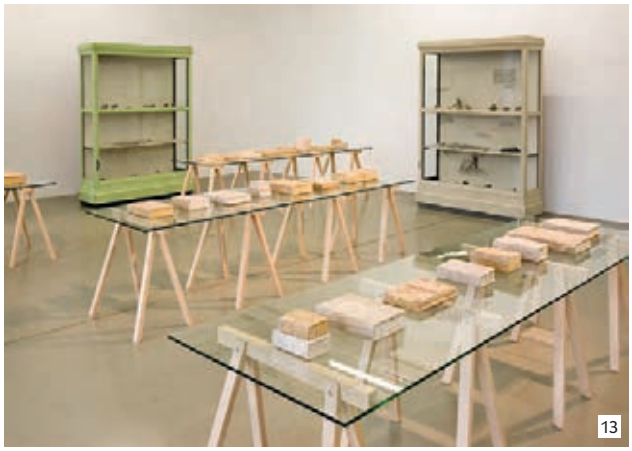
Thus, despite the incredible number and variety of books on display at *documenta 6*, the crucial task of "media reflection" bypassed analysis regarding "emerging trends" of the book sector.[50] Given the media "uneasiness" signaled by Schneckenburger and Romain in their statements about *documenta 6*,[51] Dittmar's essay suggests the artistic explorations into the medium of the book reached an end point. These books are treated like ossified artifacts, and viewers are simply witnesses to their self-reflexive or negated status. Nevertheless, by dedicating an entire section to books, what *documenta 6* did achieve was to document the consolidation of the book as a medium in art. Moreover, by designating two distinct categories of books as art–the "concept book" and the "the

metamorphosis of the book"–Dittmar acknowledged the book not only as a multiple, but also, in the hands of some artists, as a singular object. It is this latter category, as one reviewer stated, where *documenta 6* "was an unwitting success."[52]


11


12

Perhaps the most lasting contribution of the book section in *documenta 6* is to be found in the sculptural bookwork by Hubertus Gojowczyk called *Door to the Library* (*Tür zu Bibliothek*) (fig. 12). Composed of books and mortar, this work was installed in the stairwell of the Neue Galerie for *documenta 6*, as if integrated into the architectural structure of the museum. Significantly, the Neue Galerie, like the Fridericianum Museum, had sustained major damage during the war, and had only been rehabilitated in 1976, a year before the opening of *documenta 6*. Moreover, while the great majority of books at *documenta 6* were displayed in the newly renovated Neue Galerie, Gojowczyk's book sculpture enjoyed the distinction of becoming the very first acquisition by the Neue Galerie of a work made in connection with a documenta exhibition. After additional renovations to the Neue Galerie in 2011, the work has been relocated, but it remains on permanent display, serving as reminder of the extensive representation of books at *documenta 6*.


13

Trauma, Cultural Memory, and the Book

Thirty-five years after the accession of the Gojowczyk piece, the Neue Galerie purchased another sculptural bookwork for their permanent collection. Titled *What Dust Will Rise* (fig. 13), it was produced by Michael Rakowitz on commission for *dOCUMENTA (13)* in 2012.[53] For this work, the artist collaborated with Afghani and Italian stone carvers to fashion stunning travertine replicas of select books that once belonged to the firebombed Landesbibliothek of Kassel, whose charred remains were also on view in Rakowitz's installation in surrounding vitrines. Such remains included the so-called *halskrause* (neck ruffle), a 17th-century prayer book whose pages curled from the excessive heat from the 1941 bombing (fig. 14). Displayed in the Fridericianum Museum, *What Dust Will Rise* openly recognized the exhibition site as a place of trauma, and his book-themed installation bore witness to this trauma as well as the widespread instances of cultural destruction across the globe. The glass cases and table surfaces in the display served as translucent pages in a multi-layered illustrated text wherein the artist's drawings and notes recounted some of these events, including the Allied bombing of 1941 that devastated the library of the Fridericianum, the Nazi looting of libraries throughout Europe, the Taliban's 2001 destruction of the monumental Buddhas in Bamiyan, Afghanistan, the destruction of the World Trade Towers in the same year, as well as a

host of similar atrocities committed across time and national boundaries.

14

Like a palimpsest, Rakowitz's display of books at *dOCUMENTA (13)* reveals that beneath each cycle of dissolution and restoration lie the traces of earlier transgressions and reparations. For example, juxtaposed with the carved replica of the aforementioned *halskrause*, Rakowitz includes a passage from the *Frankfurter Zeitung* from the same year that the Landesbibliothek was destroyed, reporting that Nazi troops burned a Talmudic library in Poland. Like Minujín's *Parthenon of Forbidden Books* displayed at this year's *documenta 14*, *What Dust Will Rise* reminds viewers that the Fridericianum and the adjacent Friedrichsplatz were sites that simultaneously endured and initiated acts of biblioclasm.

Another telling narrative cycle woven through Rakowitz's bookwork pertains to the history of documenta itself and the curatorial frameworks that have defined each exhibition since its inception. The chief curator of *dOCUMENTA (13),* Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, took Bode's identification of documenta as a restorative gesture for post-war society even further by organizing a series of documenta events in Afghanistan, a nation still in the midst of war. Rakowitz was one of several artists invited by Christov-Bakargiev to come to Afghanistan, and he carried out part of his project using local travertine quarries in Bamiyan. Knowing that he could never re-carve these monumental Buddhas or recover the damaged books from the Fridericianum's Landesbibliotek or the thousands of books and artifacts lost, stolen, damaged, or destroyed in conflict, he realized that he *could* reintroduce the skills of stone carving to the region (which had dwindled due to the extreme iconoclasm of the Taliban). Rakowitz therefore conducted a stone carving workshop with local participants in a monastery cave close to the niche where one of the Buddhas once stood. [54] The results of this workshop, along with one of Rakowitz's carved books, were displayed in Kabul for the *dOCUMENTA (13)* exhibition held in the summer of 2012.[55] Meanwhile, the remaining books were displayed back in Kassel within the larger discursive framework and objects described above.

Significantly, Rakowitz's book-themed work was far from an isolated example at *dOCUMENTA (13).* Throughout the exhibition, books in varied form and materials were on full display, and these books consistently served to invoke themes of memory and trauma, as well as the tensions regarding the powers that regulate classification and custodianship of cultural heritage, themes central to Christov-Bakargiev's curatorial agenda.[56] Amar Kanwar's installation *The Sovereign Forest*, for example, highlighted the often deadly struggle to preserve the resource-rich lands in East India. Produced with handmade pages of native banana fiber and silkscreened text, these books served as surfaces upon which the artist projected digital images. Paul Chan's work *inncompleteset*, installed in an off-site location, featured the torn off covers of 600 eclectic books, many of them art history textbooks or monographs on famous artists such as Cézanne or Van Gogh, as well as popular trade and reference books, which he used as "canvases" for paintings. Running parallel with his activities as an e-book publisher, Chan investigates books as a shared cultural space and questions their relationship to our bodies. "When books are burned," he asks, "why is it natural to assume that people are next?"[57] Matias Faldbakken produced two installations with books at *dOCUMENTA (13),* one in the City Hall library, and the other in Kassel's Youth Library. Here, Faldbakken disrupted the taxonomic order of the library by spilling the books onto the floor, creating a chaotic scene (fig. 15). Mark Dion's work at *dOCUMENTA (13)* was also staged within a library, in this case the Schildbach Xylotheque, or wood library, located in the Ottoneum, Kassel's natural history museum. Founded in the 18th century by Kassel-based naturalist Carl Schildbach, this library consists of wooden book-boxes made with the bark and flora of diverse tree specimens from the region. Not only did Dion redesign the display of these books, placing them in a beautifully crafted hexagon-shaped shelved room, he also produced six new book-boxes to extend the global range of the library by including specimens from the five continents omitted in Schildbach's original collection (fig. 16). The sixth book was devoted to the native German oak, a symbolic nod to Joseph Beuys's *7000 Oaks* (*7000 Eichen*) produced for *documenta 7* in 1982.


15


16

Although not all the book-themed projects were commissioned specifically for *dOCUMENTA (13)*, we learn that all of the artist-participants visited Kassel and nearby Breitenau (a Benedictine Monastery that once served as a labor camp) prior to the exhibition and that Christov-Bakargiev encouraged the artists to engage with the city's history, cultural spaces, and institutions.[58] Moreover, the curator commissioned an ambitious range of books in order to initiate discussions on subjects that aligned with the framework of *dOCUMENTA (13)*. Called *100 Notes-100 Thoughts*, these booklets included a wide range of authors with texts by György Lukács on the sociology of art, Melanie Klein on identification, Christov-Bakargiev's "thoughts" on trauma and healing, as well as books commissioned from artists such as Etel Adnan, Ida Applebroog, Dinh Q. Lê, Lawrence Weiner, and Mathias Falbakken, among others. In sum, the collection sought to establish a network of ideas, a mobile library where, as Christov-Bakargiev notes, "the archive and the artist book [sic], collapse and recovery all come together here."[59]

Christov-Bakargiev was largely responsible for selecting the authors for the *100 Notes-100 Thoughts* series and, in some instances, she paired individuals to work together–as was the case for the fourth book in the series by artist Emily Jacir and political philosopher Susan Buck-Morss. I wish to conclude my analysis by examining this booklet, along with Jacir's work *Ex Libris* exhibited at *dOCUMENTA (13)*, because they not only expand upon the theme of books and trauma, but they also reflect the artist's research process in preparation for *dOCUMENTA (13)*.

Like the other artist participants invited by Christov-Bakargiev to *dOCUMENTA (13)*, Jacir visited Breitenau as well as other sites in Kassel including the Murhard Library, where she learned about the severely damaged books once housed in the Fridericianum. In the notebook, she includes photographs from the various sites she visited along with hand scrawled notes, including:

- in 1939 when war was declared, they put 22 manuscripts into bank safes for safekeeping
- after the bombing in 41 they hid books in stables and castles
- books are not Flammable–it's the wooden shelves

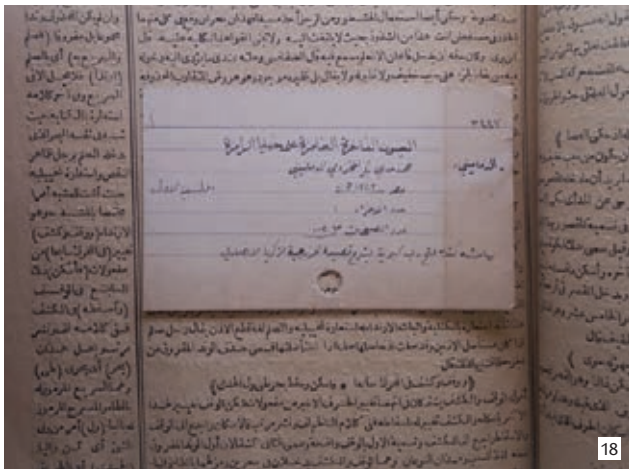
And beneath a photograph of the *halskrause*, the same damaged prayer book that also figured in Rakowitz's work, she writes:

- 80% of the books were destroyed
- 60-80 bombs hit the main building

Not one bomb hit the tower.[60]

Ex Libris was in fact installed in that tower, known locally as the "Zwehrenturm." It is the one area of the Fridericianum that, as Jacir notes, miraculously survived the Allied bombing raid of Kassel. Acknowledging the charged history of biblioclasm, the artist filled the exhibition space with photographs to commemorate 30,000 books looted from Palestinian homes and institutions in 1948, many of which are currently housed in the Jewish National Library in West Jerusalem where she photographed them.[61] Taken with an ordinary mobile phone camera, these photographs were enlarged and mounted on thin panels that lined the museum walls in neat rows as if on bookshelves (fig. 17). Significantly, Jacir simultaneously issued a book bearing the same title, so that the photographs would continue to circulate beyond the dates of the exhibition. Moreover, in this same book, she incorporated her research on Kassel and the region as charged sites through which books have circulated or were met with tragic fates.[62]

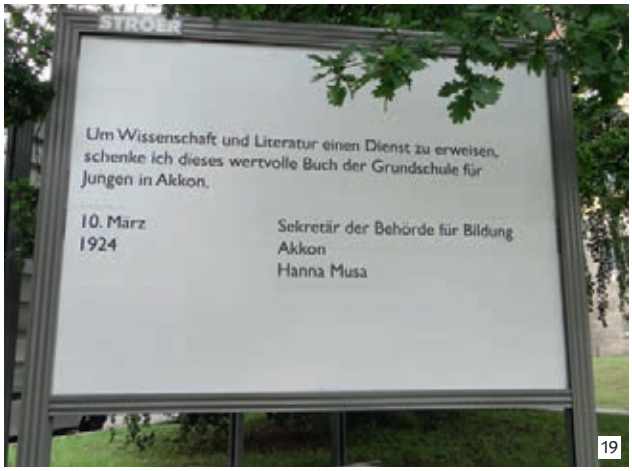
17



18

Jacir's photographs present spectators with close-up views of such details as bookplates, personalized dedications, library stamps, as well as marginal doodles, tears, stains, puckered labels, or scraps of paper left behind in the folds (fig. 18). By focusing on the personal histories and idiosyncratic markings of these looted books, Jacir stakes a claim for the original owners, hence the title. Crucially, this claim was extended to the public terrain outside the museum walls through the use of commercial billboards. In strategic locations throughout Kassel, she translated handwritten dedications found inside the looted Palestinian books and broadcast them in German, English, and Arabic. These once personal missives now called out to anybody on the busy public sites in Kassel, including the city train station, the Zwehrenturm itself (located beside a major roadway), and the Murhard Library (fig. 19). With the dispersion of *Ex Libris* across multiple sites and media (that extend to her two ancillary publications linked to the project), the spectator engages with the work in multiple contexts.

Jacir and her co-author Buck-Morss remind us that books are by nature migratory objects that often



19

flow between different owners and institutions, willingly or by force: "Books move and thrive in diaspora, scholarship flourishes through cosmopolitan exchange. Texts and artifacts follow the lines of pilgrimages, troops and trade."[63] Indeed, through Jacir's research in preparation for *dOCUMENTA (13),* she discovered that the most extensive book restitution project took place near Kassel at the Offenbach Archival Depot. Established shortly after the war, thousands of books looted by the Nazis were processed at this site with the aim of restoring them to their original owners.[64] Jacir therefore addresses not only the looting of Palestinian books but, like Rakowitz, she also invokes complex multi-layered narratives about theft, destruction, and control of cultural property across time and geographic regions, including Kassel. As such, we come to understand books not only through their textual content, but also through their accumulated histories (and tragedies) embedded in their materials, the marks of their owners, and the spaces in which they are exhibited.

Adam Szymczyk and his curatorial team for *documenta 14* seem to embrace the potency of such associations with the placement of Minujín's biblio-sculpture in the Friedrichsplatz.[65] The classical edifice of *The Parthenon of Banned Books* not only engages with the neoclassical structure of the Fridericianum and its fraught history of biblioclasm, it clearly references the city of Athens, the home of the original Parthenon and the host of *documenta 14* events and artworks, not to mention a palimpsestic site with its own layered history of trauma and loss. For this reason, it is significant that Minujín's work served as an early public announcement to bolster interest and public participation in *documenta 14*. What remains to be seen, as I write this essay prior to the opening of the exhibition, is what kind of role books will play in shaping visitors' experience or reflecting curatorial themes.

Notes

1 Marta Minujín, *El Partenón de libros*, fourteen-minute documentary, 1983. Tate Modern, London, T14343.

2 The occasion of the Frankfurter Buchmesse, held in October of 2016, was used to solicit donations for the work. http://documenta14.de/the_parthenon_of_books/donate/en. Accessed 12.01.2017.

3 Ian Wallace, *The First documenta, 1955. 100 Notes–100 Thoughts*, n. 002. dOCUMENTA 13, Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern, 2011.

4 The expression is Walter Grasskamp's, "For Example, Documenta, Or, How is Art History Produced?" in Reesa Greenberg et al., eds., *Thinking about Exhibitions*, Routledge, New York, 1996, p. 74.

5 Wallace, *The First documenta,* p. 5.

6 For *documenta* history, see Dieter Westecker, et al., *documenta –Documente, 1955-1968,* Georg Wenderoth Verlag, Kassel, 1972; and Glasmeier and Stengel, eds., *50 Jahre/ Years documenta, 1955-2005*, 2 vols.

7 Bruce Altschuler, for example, has included it in his survey of influential exhibitions in *Biennials and Beyond–Exhibitions that Made Art History 1962-2002*, Phaidon, 2014, London, pp. 157-74. An extensive bibliography of the critical reception of the exhibition is included in Roland Nachtigäller et al, *Wiedervorlage d5: Eine Befragung des Archivs zur Documenta 1972*, Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern-Ruit, 2001. Exhibition catalogue.

8 See, for example, Steven Klima's characterization of *documenta 6* as "notorious" and that it was the first documenta to include artists' books, *Artists' Books: A Critical Survey of the Literature*, Granary Books, New York, 1998, pp. 8 and 45. See also Thomas Vogler, "When a Book is not a Book," *Books as Objects*, Comus Gallery, Portland, OR., 1993. Exhibition catalogue. Annelie Lütgens writes that "credit must go to *documenta 6* for establishing a section that featured artists' books," in "A Re-Presentation of *documenta 6*," in Michael Glasmeier and Karen Stengel, eds., *Archive in Motion*, p. 278.

9 For the complete list of works shown at *d5* see Nachtigäller, pp. 218-35.

10 Lucia Pesapane, Introduction to "documenta 5: Questioning Reality–Image Worlds Today, 1972," in *Harald Szeemann. Individual Methodology,* Florence Derieux, ed., JRP Ringier, Zürich, 2007, p. 91.

11 Notes from the Harald Szeemann Archive, 2011.M30, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

12 Ibid.

13 These themes included "Individual Mythologies," "Artists' Museums," "Information," "Film," "Political Propaganda," "Science Fiction," "Images by the Mentally Ill," among others.

14 As a student in art history in Paris, Szeemann conducted research on Alfred Jarry and the illustrated books of the Nabis, focusing on the socio-cultural context including experimental theatre and publishing. Szeemann never completed the thesis, but a draft of it is preserved in his archive at the Getty Research Institute.

15 For the "rawness" of the exhibition spaces, see *Harald Szeemann. Individual Mythology*, p.147.

16 Angela Westwater Reaves, "Claes Oldenburg, An Interview," *Artforum*, October 1972, p. 37.

17 The list of exhibited works was originally omitted from the catalogue. Szeemann issued the list of works after the exhibition closed.

18 Barbara Rose quips that the "Monstrous super-document" represented the "only great work of art in the show," "Document of an Age," *New York Magazine*, August 14, 1972. The documenta Archiv possesses a hilarious flyer mocking the increased heft of each documenta catalogue, the *d5* supposedly weighing in at six kilos compared to trim 450 grams of the first catalogue. dA-AA-Mp. 38. Critic Nigel Gosling complains that the *d5* catalogue was as big as "two London telephone directories," Nigel Gosling, 1972. "Crystal balls in Kassel." *The Observer*, July 2.

19 I thank graphic designer João Doria for this observation, http://blogs.walkerart.org/design/2012/12/03/catalog-and-archive-two-szeemann-designs. Accessed 01.29.2017.

20 Siri Engberg, "Out of Print: The Editions of Edward Ruscha," in *Edward Ruscha. Editions 1962-1999, Catalogue Raisonné*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, 1999. Exhibition catalogue, p. 32.

21 In a letter dated April 29, 1972 Ruscha wrote to Szeemann stating "The catalog cover with my design would look extremely well if it were either very shiny or plastic coated." The letter is reproduced in Tobia Bezzola and Roman Kurzmeyer, eds., *Harald Szeemann. with by through because towards despite. Catalogue of All Exhibitions, 1957-2005,* Edition Voldemeer, Zürich, 2007, p. 317.

22 As cited by Clive Phillpot, "Sixteen Books and then Some," in *Edward Ruscha. Editions 1959-1999,* p. 77.

23 Interview with John Coplans "Concerning *Various Small Fires:* Edward Ruscha Discusses His Perplexing Publications," *Artforum* 3, No. 5, February 1965, p. 25.

24 Ibid.

25 "The Book is the important thing, the handling of the book." As cited in Glasmeier, and Stengel, eds., *50 Jahre/ Years. Documenta 1955-2005*, vol. 1, *Discreet Energies*, p. 125.

26 Phillpot, "Sixteen Books and then Some," p. 67.

27 In a documentary film about *d5*, Joseph Kosuth, who exhibited with Art + Language, discusses how the group's reading room allowed several viewers to read simultaneously whereas a conventional codex could only be read by one person at a time. *documenta 5: A film by Jef Cornelis*, Argos/ JRP Ringier/Le Magasin, Brussels/Zürich/Grenoble, 2012.

28 Lawrence Weiner, "Statement of Intent," in *Live in your Head. When Attitudes Become Form*, Kunsthalle Bern, 1969, n.p. Exhibition catalogue.

29 The cover of this book shared the same red-orange hue as the *d5* catalogue.

30 *documenta 5: A film by Jef Cornelis.*

31 Klaus Honnef explained that some of the books at *d5* belonged to Konrad Fisher's private collection and was therefore displayed in vitrines. Honnef, personal email correspondence with the author, February 13, 2017. Artist Michael Harvey explains, "If I remember correctly, I had two books in Documenta 5. One–white papers– 1968-71, 71 loose pages in a box, was displayed on a table with other books. The second, DETECTIVE, not yet in book form, was displayed on the wall like drawings." Email exchange with author, March 22, 2017.

32 Hans Haacke, "Lessons Learned," *Tate Papers*, no. 12, Landmark Exhibitions issue, Autumn, 2009, http://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/12/lessons-learned. Accessed 03.21.2017.

33 The bookseller's contribution-installation to *d5* is listed as "Buchhandlung Walther König, Bucherangebot in Form einer Bibliothek zum Konzept *d5*," Nachtigäller et al., *Wiederforlage d5*, p. 234. Some participants, including Claes Oldenburg, considered the bookstore as an integral to *d5*; see Reaves, "Claes Oldenburg, An Interview," p. 39.

34 Nicole Büsing and Heiko Klass, "Interview with Walther and Franz König," April 18, 2012, http://www.hatjecantz.de/walther-and-franz-koenig-5164-1.html. Accessed 03.21.2017.

35 *Harald Szeemann. Individual Mythology*, p. 94.

36 Büsing and Klass, "Interview with Walther and Franz König."

37 Cited and translated by Lutze Jahre, "Curators and Catalogues in the Documenta Reading Room," in *Archive in Motion*, p. 56.

38 See Schneckenburger's retrospective assessment of *documenta 6* and *8* in Jennifer Allen, "documenta–Looking Back and Ahead," *Frieze*, May 21, 2012. https://frieze.com/article/documenta-%E2%80%93%C2%A0looking-back-and-ahead. Accessed 02.12.2017.

39 Lothar Romain and Manfred Schneckenburger, "Fundamentals of *documenta 6*," in *Archive in Motion*, p. 273.

40 Ibid.

41 Significantly, the subject of books at *d5* comes up in Jef Cornelis's documentary in his interviews with Joseph Kosuth and Lawrence Weiner.

42 For a concise discussion of the critical language with respect to artists' books, see Johanna Drucker, "The Artist's Book as Idea and Form," in *The Century of Artists' Books*, Granary Books, New York, 1995, pp. 1-20. Writing on books since 1972, Clive Phillpot's critical writings have been assembled in *Booktrek. Selected Essays on Artists' Books since 1972*, Distributed Art Publisher, New York, 2014. For a more European focus, see Deborah Wye, *Eye on Europe: Prints, Books & Multiples, 1960 to Now*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2006. Exhibition Catalogue; and Sigrid Schade and Anne Thurmann-Jajes, *Artist's Publications. Ein Genre und seine Erschlieszung*, Salon Verlag, Cologne, 2009.

43 Rolf Dittmar, "Metamorphosen des Buches," in *documenta 6*, vol. 3, Kassel, Paul Dierichs, 1977, pp. 296-99. The influential exhibitions cited by Dittmar include those curated by Daniela Palazzoli at L'Uomo e l'Arte in Milan (1972), Germano Celant at the Nigel Greenwood Gallery in London (1972), Diane P. Vanderlip at Moore College in Philadelphia (1973), Martin Atwood at the Arts Council of Great Britain (1976), and the Fredrick Gallery in Washington D.C. in 1976.

44 "Der einzige gemeinsame Nenner scheint zu sein, dass der Künstler das Buch als Medium der Fremdinformationsvermittlung in Frage stellt," Dittmar, p. 297. All translations by the author.

45 Garrett Stewart, *Bookwork: Medium to Object to Concept to Art*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2011, p. 55.

46 "...ist der Austellungsbesucher durch das Glas der Vitrinen an dem zur Informationsaufnahme erforderlichen unmittelbaren Kontact gehindert." Dittmar, p. 298.

47 Another exception is Dieter Krieg's *Gummibuch 1* and *2* (Rubber Book 1 and 2) displayed on a table without glass.

48 Dittmar, p. 298.

49 "Es ist nicht Sinn dieser Ausstellung, Lösungen anzubieten, sondern Fragen zu dokumentieren. Fragen, die der Künstler dem Medium Buch gestellt hat, und Fragen, die das Buch als Medium uns stellt. In diesem Sinne sind die gezeigten Exponate als Experimente zu verstehen." Ibid, p. 299.

50 "Der 'documenta 6' geht es vornehmlich um eine Dokumentation der grundlegenden Fragestellungen. Sie muss schon aus räumlichen Gründen darauf verzichten, die sich abzeichnenden Auswirkungen des Medienreflexion auf dem Buchsektor darzustellen." Ibid.

51 "Fundamentals of *documenta 6*," in *Archive in Motion*, p. 273.

52 D.E. Steward, "Fridericiana," *Chicago Review*, Vol. 31, No. 1, Summer, 1979, p 61. Critic David Shapiro concurs, noting that *documenta 6*'s selection of books were "rigorous" and "beautifully proposed and executed," and adds that "With the book-as-sculpture Documenta has a certain success," "A View of Kassel," *Artforum,* September 1977, p. 62.

53 The commission was also partly funded by the Dena Foundation for Contemporary Art and the Lombard Fried Gallery.

54 German restoration expert Bert Praxenthaler and Afghani stone carver Abbas Allah Dad assisted Rakowitz in this endeavor.

55 One of Rakowitz's books was displayed in the Queen's Palace in Kabul. For pictures of his work as well as those by participants in his stone carving workshop, see "An Exhibition Opens in Kabul," in *The Logbook. dOCUMENTA (13) catalogue 2/3*, Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern, 2012, pp. 250 and 253.

56 See especially Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, *On the Destruction of Art – Or Art and Conflict, or the Art of Healing. 100 Notes–100 Thoughts*, n. 040. *dOCUMENTA (13)*, Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern, 2011.

57 Paul Chan, *Wht is a Book*, Badlands Unlimited, New York, 2011. [misspelling in original]

58 For a synopsis of the funding for *dOCUMENTA (13)*, see www.documenta.de/en/retrospective/documenta_13. Accessed 03.21.2017.

59 "Interview with Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev," *Hatje Cantz Magazine*, June 5, 2012. www.hatjecantz.de/carolyn-christov-bakargiev-5197-1.html. Accessed 03.28.2017.

60 Emily Jacir and Susan Buck-Morss, *100 Notes–100 Thoughts| No. 004. dOCUMENTA (13)*, Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern, 2011.

61 Jacir's work was initially inspired by scholar Gish Amit's research; see "Ownerless Objects. The Story of the Books Palestinans Left Behind in 1948," *Jerusalem Quarterly. Institute of Jerusalem Studies* 33, Winter 2008, pp. 7-20.

62 Emily Jacir, *Ex Libris*, Walther König, Cologne, 2012.

63 Jacir and Buck-Morss, *100 Notes–100 Thoughts*, p. 40.

64 The state of Hesse, to which Kassel belongs, was part of the American Zone of Occupation, and the Depot was run by the Officers from the Monuments, Fine Art and Archives. Emily Jacir, *Ex Libris*, p. 9.

65 See the essay about Minujín's work by the curatorial team, "What Foundations Have Been Laid for Them: the Building and Burning of Knowledge," *South as a State of Mind* 6, Fall/Winter 2015.

Captions

1 Marta Minujín *El Partenón de libros*, 1983. Photograph Marta Minujín Archive.

2 Book burning on the Friedrichsplatz, Kassel, 1933. Photograph by: Carl Eberth. Courtesy Stadtarchiv Kassel.

3 Edward Ruscha, design for the *documenta 5* catalogue, Kassel, Bertelsmann, 1972. Photograph courtesy John M Flaxman Library Special Collections, The School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

4 *documenta 5* catalogue, interior view. Photograph courtesy John M Flaxman Library Special Collections, The School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

5 documenta catalogue covers. Photograph courtesy John M Flaxman Library Special Collections, The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. 6 Edward Ruscha's works at documenta 5. Photograph by: Erhard Wehrmann, Courtesy Kunststiftung Poll, Berlin.

7 Visitors in the Reading Room with a Survey by the Art + Language Institute at d5. Photograph by Paolo Mussat Sartor, Courtesy documenta Archiv Stadt Kassel.

8 Visitors viewing books in the "Idee" section of d5. Photograph by: Erhard Wehrmann, Courtesy Kunststiftung Poll, Berlin.

9 Books in vitrine at documenta 6. Photograph by: Werner Lengemann. Courtesy documenta Archiv Stadt Kassel.

10 Books in vitrine at documenta 6. Photograph by: Werner Lengemann. Courtesy documenta Archiv Stadt Kassel.

11 Franz Erhard Walther, *Stoffbuch 2*, *Grosses Stoffbuch,* 1968-69. Photograph by: Pit Brocksom. Courtesy documenta Archiv Stadt Kassel.

12 Hubertus Gojowczyk, *Tür zu Bibliothek*, 1977. Photograph by: Werner Lengemann. Courtesy documenta Archiv Stadt Kassel.

13 Michael Rakowitz, *What Dust Will Rise*, 2012.

14 *Halskrause*, detail from Michael Rakowitz's *What Dust Will Rise*, 2012.

15 Matias Faldbakken, *Untitled (Book Sculpture),* 2012. Photograph by Anna S. Arnar.

16 Mark Dion, Xylotheque, 2011-12. Photograph by Anders. Sune Berg. Courtesy the artist and Museumslandschaft Hessen Kassel.

17 Emily Jacir, *Ex Libris*, 2010-12. Photograph by: Haupt+Binder.

18 Emily Jacir, *Ex Libris*, 2010-12, detail. Photograph by: Jörg Lohse.

19 Emily Jacir, *Ex Libris*, 2010-12. Photograph by: Anna S. Arnar.

Anna Sigrídur Arnar is Professor of Art History in the School of Art, Minnesota State University Moorhead (USA). Her publications include *The Book as Instrument: Stéphane Mallarmé, The Artist's Book, and the Transformation of Print Culture,* University of Chicago Press, 2011, which won the Robert Motherwell Book Award in 2012 from the Dedalus Foundation. More recently, she has published an essay in Sabine Folie's catalogue *+Que 20 Ans Après* for the Generali Foundation, Vienna (Sternberg, 2015), and an article in *esse. Arts + Opinions* (Montréal) for a special issue on the "library/bibliothèque" (January 2017). Her current project is titled "'Reading' Books at Perennial Exhibitions of Global Contemporary Art."

Para-Museum of 100 Days: documenta between Event and Institution

by Nora Sternfeld

Every five years, documenta emerges as a grand spectacle that sets Kassel as well as the art world in motion. This staging is as important for the institution behind documenta as it is for the curators and journalists, all of whom are keen on another media event. Just as regularly, feature articles in the arts sections, especially in German newspapers, express their disappointment with documenta's troubled relationship between being a large-scale event and a critical voice within the art world. Reflecting on this in 2005, Sarat Maharaj, co-curator of *documenta 11* (2002), proposed escaping this back-and-forth between "critique and spectacle" by placing the focus on other demands or claims of documenta. Drawing on the history and the original idea behind documenta, Maharaj suggested placing the emphasis on finding ways to "'re-connect' with 'lost, terminated, interrupted, exiled, diasporized' terrains of idea and art practice."[1] For this to happen,[2] he argues, we must enter into the thick of the conditions, utilizing anything and everything that enables action to be taken within the (post-)colonial relations rather than from an external position. With reference to Dada and Kurt Schwitters' *Fall in den Zufall (Fall into Chance)*, Maharaj calls working in the thick of it "Merz-thinking." He further explains: The "'stick on' way of working without knowing beforehand how the pieces will configure suggests an add on ad infinitum model of thinking-creating. I call this an agglutinative mode–an unfinishing process of becoming, billowing out, nosing-forward."[3]

In the following I would like to pursue this idea and draw on examples from the history of documenta in order to develop a perspective that enables looking into social relations from within them. Since documenta is certainly a spectacle, since it does certainly act within a neoliberal art market, and definitely has deep historical roots in the Cold War era, it is a place of concentrated energy that indicates and sets trends in the field of art. These, however, are not its only traits. Much more can still be learned by working with the history and the archive of a recurring large-scale exhibition like documenta. For this reason, I propose learning from within the thick of the material–not only in order to learn more about the large-scale exhibition and hegemonies within the art field, but also to understand social relations through documents, strategies, practices, and events of past documentas, and to take cues from the historical material to explore what all this means for the present. But how can the archive be activated and made available to the public? Moreover, where are approaches such as these positioned in relation to spectacle and representation, to historicization and agency?

In the Middle: The In-Between Space Within Representation

Let us begin addressing the problem of overcoming representation by looking at an example taken from the history of art education at documenta.

1

As artists and art educators at *documenta 12* (2007), Annette Krauss and Claudia Hummel invite the visitors to place their own bodies in relation to a historical artwork, tracing its entire journey from the gallery back into the main exhibition. On October 7, 1968, artist-activist Graciela Carnevale locked the audience of her opening inside an empty storefront gallery and left. As a member of the Grupo de Arte de Vanguardia de Rosario, Carnevale, along with many other political artists of the time, was interested in forcing the spectators to act. After about an hour of growing tension, the trapped audience members managed to make contact with a passer-by, who threw a cobblestone through the window and freed the people inside. In the now iconic photograph of this event displayed at *documenta 12*, we see a spectator take her first step from the gallery onto the street. The original action and the documentary photograph bear witness to an artistic praxis that that strives toward an act of leaving the gallery. In this respect, showing this particular piece at *documenta 12* in 2007 almost seems ironic, as it can still be read as a sign that activist art–even when it actively seeks to resist being incorporated into the canon and institutions–ends up right back inside the canon and the institution. This leaves artists, curators, and art educators who still refuse to relinquish their claims to critique with the problem that there might not be such a thing as an outside. If by 2007 the belief had been dispelled that one could escape representation or the institution by taking political action, as was still the case in Graciela Carnevales's *Confinement* in 1968, the question that arises is where critical art education–as well as critical research and education as research–can locate and, in Donna Haraway's sense, "situate" itself. According to Donna Haraway, situated knowledge is never neutral.[4] It is always already a position in many different senses: it speaks from a specific body, from a specific social situation within power relations, and it takes a position when it speaks. It is in the middle–in-between spaces that emerge between art and reality, representation and presence, theory and practice, and above all between the current state of affairs and the possibility of changing it. Claudia Hummel enters this in-between space with Annette Krauss. As an art educator, she does not give an overview of documenta, but instead becomes involved in it with her body.

If we can no longer presume that researchers can assume an external position from which to voice critique or undertake action, then strategies learned from artistic, art education, and curatorial practices become all the more relevant for research. These strategies perform their actions in the middle: in the middle of conditions, of materials–and in documenta's case–in the middle of Kassel, and in the middle of the world. If getting an overview of the subject matter is no longer the main concern of research, it might be an option to become intimate with it. In recent years, "middling" has become a relevant method for praxis-based research. In many seminars and lectures over the past two years, for instance, theorist Irit Rogoff has explored the question of the "how" of doing research. In a seminar entitled "The Way We Work Now," she stresses that it is important for her to "start in the middle."[5] Researcher Katve-Kaisa Kontturi likewise speaks of "middling" and "following" as methods of research.[6] From the vantage point of transgressing disciplinary boundaries or from the idea of undisciplined knowledge production, research is seen as a relation within relations, concerned with pursuing questions rather than answering them, and with learning in the middle rather than establishing an imaginary overview. Curator and performance theorist Bettina Knaup describes this process as becoming "intimate" with her subject. All of these approaches put the researcher in a position where she can change and thus learn something that had previously been unknowable.

What Does Post-Representational Mean Here?

And what remains after the event? The documenta archive collects materials: traces and remainders of each documenta. Asking questions about the history from within the midst of these materials enables an engagement with what went on in the past and what it means for the present. Thus–between (temporal) event and (durable) institution–a post-representational in-between space can emerge, pointing beyond representation. What does post-representational mean? Both in terms of *Darstellung* (representation as depiction) and *Stellvertretung* (as standing in for), representation has been subjected to substantial critique within the art field (for instance, by the manifold waves of institutional critique) and within theory (for instance, in the context of new museology or feminist, postcolonial, and poststructural political theory). These critiques have engendered countless action-based and de-material strategies within artistic and curatorial practices, at the latest since the 1960s–including Graciela Carnevales's action.

Experiments that transgress representation have long since come into the institution. Today, they are even a driving force behind how contemporary institutions define themselves. In this sense, nowadays

institutions see themselves as event spaces. In the midst of a dynamic of dematerialization, they cater to the demands of the "flow" of neoliberal infrastructures. Against this backdrop, it seems necessary to reposition the post-representational: but instead of leaving behind the struggles around representation, the work needs to be done in the spaces that can be carved out between representation and presence. Archives and exhibitions can be such in-between spaces, as they are sites located between what they refer to and what might happen inside and with them.

The post-representational therefore seems to need something additional to remain a critical practice; besides engaging with exhibitions as contact zones and spaces of assembly, or–more precisely–as sites that hold the potential for something to happen, other aspects have to be addressed as well: the focus on action and what is happening in exhibitions gives rise to questions concerning continuities, memories, and what remains when everything is constantly in flux. And the attention to the social space that emerges between us provokes questions concerning material and structural conditions. In this sense, the post-representational does not simply leave representation behind, it engages with questions of presence and absence, with the space that emerges between us, and the things that are not in our power that turn the space between us into a public space in the first place. Besides merely focusing on the temporary character of the exhibition, it thus becomes increasingly more interesting to consider the permanent character of the institution, or even the durability of the museum. Based on this, can documenta as an event, therefore, be considered as both ephemeral and permanent at the same time? What would this mean for debates on the large-scale exhibition? documenta is undoubtedly an institution. But would it also be possible to consider it as a para-museum?

The Para-Museum

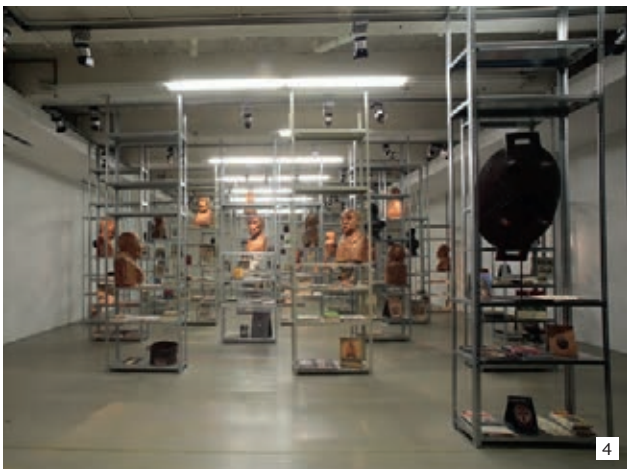
Ever since Harald Szeemann tried to redefine Bode's "one-hundred day museum" by calling it a "one-hundred day event" in the run-up to *documenta 5* in 1972–only to find himself back inside the exhibition space–the history of documenta has been narrated as a tale of two poles: of institutionalization and event, of aesthetic autonomy and social responsibility, of museum and public space. From my newly acquired post-representational perspective, this no longer seems to be the main discrepancy. Given the neoliberal transformation processes, it appears problematic to resolve the controversy by arguing in favor of one side: of the museum *or* the event, of representation *or* presence. Rather than believing in something outside of representation and the institution, following a critical engagement with the neoliberal imperative of presence, the conundrum arises of insisting upon the institution, but without being governed by it quite as much.

2

To better understand this conundrum, I suggest looking at the ways in which artists use the museum as a medium. I would like to call this strategy the para-museum. The para-museum was prefigured most notably by the artists' museums of the 1970s, to which an entire room was dedicated at *documenta 5*.

3

The room comprised Claes Oldenburg's *Maus Museum* (1972), Marcel Broodthaers' *Musée d'Art Moderne, Département des Aigles, Section Publicité* (1972), among other examples. Forty years later, Kader Attia's installation at *dOCUMENTA (13)* in 2012, titled *The Repair,* consisted of repaired faces and objects that had been destroyed by war.[7]


4


5


6

His material markedly disrupts the familiar ethnographic ways in which objects such as these are presented by complicating binary colonial modes of representation. At *documenta 11* (2002), Meshac Gaba exhibited the library from his project *Museum of Contemporary African Art*.

7

What makes the museum, both as a subject and medium, so attractive for contemporary artists? Perhaps they are drawn to the canon now that it is almost impossible to establish meaning, because everything is constantly in flux. The museum becomes relevant as a space where it is still possible to negotiate meaning and stand up against the apparatus of value-encoding. Artistic museum projects insist on idiosyncrasy, autonomy, criticality, as well as on the museum's heteronomous potential: the possibility of intervening in the space where the power of definition resides.

Imagining the para-museum simultaneously as an inside and an outside, with a parasitic relation to the museum, we might conceive of it as a subversive gesture that steals (the power of definition and the infrastructure) from the museum. In speaking about his *Musée d'Art Moderne Département des Aigles* at *documenta 5*, Marcel Broodthaers says, "The fictitious museum tries to steal from the official, the real museum, in order to lend its lie more power and credibility."[8] In fact, countless subversive forms of thievery have been known to take place in art museums as well as in art education–the mediating belly of the para-museum–in the twilight and in the

shadows of attention, where art educators spend hours upon hours with visitors, custodians, and doorpersons, especially on the weekends when the journalists, curators, and directors are out. In such situations and in-between spaces, surely much is risked, said, taken, and used differently than specified by the institutions. In *The Undercommons,*[9] Stefano Harney and Fred Moten describe this subversive relationship to the institution as the resistance of "the undercommons," who find a place inside the institution and lay claim to its future by simply inhabiting it in uninvited and uncalled-for ways. Harney and Moten call this acting against the grain of institutional norms and logics of exploitation "fugitive practices." Because critique is inextricably entwined with neoliberal and (neo)colonial conditions, they find themselves undermining and moving beyond it.

What is given up in such a form of ongoing movement is any possibility of permanence. For this reason, I propose a para-institutional praxis that desires more than occupying a subversive position, because it does not shy away from the radical democratic demand to engage in the struggle for hegemony. From the position of the undercommons, what would it mean if we were to take the institution at its word? This complicated relation of neither being against nor fully governed by the museum can be described using the prefix *para.* The Greek word παρά can be translated in many respects, for instance, locally as from...to, nearby, next...to; temporally as during, along; and figuratively as in comparison, in contrast, contra-, and against. Although *para* refers to deviation rather than opposition in Greek, in Latin it becomes *contra*.

With this in mind, a possible perspective for researching documenta could be to look at how, from the very start, the artists, curators, and educators involved with documenta have established a "museum of the future" as a para-institutional position. The question that certainly arises here is which future is imagined in the present of each documenta and what this means with regard to the respective power relations. Furthermore, the materials and the history of documenta may also give rise to other, alternative histories and interventions. I therefore propose reading documenta as a practice situated within the respective conventions of contemporary exhibition-making while simultaneously exceeding these given norms and ascriptions anew with each edition. Although originally conceived as a temporary intervention, meanwhile documenta has aquired a continuity spanning over sixty years by now. And finally, the Fridericianum as the main site of documenta also points to both, a temporary as well as an ongoing engagement with the museum. Like the artists' para-museums, documenta is and is not a museum. It expands the boundaries of what can be said, shown, and seen. It can be approached as an intervention, as a positioning, as an assembly, as a discourse, and as research. The documenta archive invites explorations without a preconceived idea of the outcome–and to a certain extent it invites us to be on intimate terms with the traditions, historical documents, materials, stories, and memories of the exhibitions. But then another iteration of documenta takes place, reinventing documenta, and shedding a completely new light on its history and its future.

The primary goal of my proposal of looking at the space between the institution and the event is not to gain a better understanding of documenta. Instead, in this post-representational in-between space, I am suggesting thinking with documenta and critically assessing its decisions with regard to the state of the world in which we live. This could be about using the history of documenta to devise questions regarding the present. This can be done by looking at the artworks and interventions of each documenta, at the interventions staged by it, those with which documenta declared solidarity, and those it saw itself challenged by. Critical research that situates documenta in between the institution and the event understands its position as being in the midst of social conditions and working with the history of documenta, to enable–as Catherine David, artistic director of *documenta X* (1997) put it–people to "gain access to an understanding of the state of the world we live in" in a variety of different ways.[10]

* Translated from the German by Erika Doucette

Notes

1 Sarat Maharaj, "Merz-Thinking: Sounding the Documenta Process between Critique and Spectacle," in Minna Henriksson, Sezgin Boynik, eds., *Contemporary Art and Nationalism. Critical Reader*, Pristina Institute for Contemporary Art "Exit" and MM-Publications – Center for Humanistic Studies "Gani Bobi," Pristina, 2007.

2 It is important that I begin with this demand, as cutting through this practice of repeatedly enacting the same debate is not an end in itself.

3 Sarat Maharaj, "Merz-Thinking: Sounding the Documenta Process between Critique and Spectacle."

4 Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspectives," *Feminist Studies* No. 14/3, 1988, pp. 575–599.

5 Irit Rogoff, "Starting in the Middle. NGOs and Emergent Forms for Cultural Institutions," in Johanna Burton, Shannon Jackson, and Dominic Willsdon, eds., *Public Servants: Art and the Crisis of the Common Good*, New Museum and MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 2016, discussed at Freethought City Seminar, Bergen Assembly, September 2015, http://bergenassembly.no/event/seminar-4-stefano-harney-and-irit-rogoff/

6 Milla Tiainen, Katve-Kaisa Kontturi, Ilona Hongisto, "Framing, Following, Middling: Towards Methodologies of Relational Materialities," *Cultural Studies Review* No. 21, September 2015, pp. 14–46.

7 http://universes-in-universe.org/eng/bien/documenta/2012/photo_tour/fridericianum/22_kader_attia

8 Marcel Broodthaers interviewed by Johannes Cladders "Musée d'Art Moderne Département des Aigles," in Christian Kravagna, ed., *The Museum as Arena: Artists on Institutional Critique,* Verlag der Buchhanndlung Walther König, Cologne, 2001.

9 Stefano Harney, Fred Moten, *The Undercommons*, Minor Compositions, Wivenhoe, 2013.

10 https://www.documenta.de/de/retrospective/documenta_x#

Captions

1 Claudia Hummel, Annette Krauss, Testing Carnevale, documentation of an educational action at *documenta 12* in the framework of the project "Sehen am Rande des Zufalls" (Seeing on the Brink of Chance), Kassel, 2007, Photo: © Sehen am Rande des Zufalls.

2 Documenta V 100 day event, in *Informationen*, 1. Mai 1970 © documenta Archiv

3 Detail from Marcel Broodthaers, *Musée d'Art Moderne, Département des Aigles, Section d'Art Moderne*, Kassel *documenta 5,* 1972 © documenta Archiv / Photographer unknown

4–6 Kader Attia, *The Repair from Occident to Extra-Occidental Cultures*, Installation, Kassel *dOCUMENTA (13),* 2012. © documenta archiv / Photograph by: Ryszard Kasiewicz

7 Meshac Gaba, *Museum of Contemporary African Art: The Museum Shop*, diverse Materials – Installation, Kassel *documenta 11,* 2001. © documenta Archiv / Photograph by: Ryszard Kasiewicz

Nora Sternfeld is an educator and curator. Sternfeld is currently professor for curating and mediating art at the Aalto University in Helsinki and co-director of /ecm – Master's Program in Exhibition Theory and Practice at the University of Applied Arts Vienna. She is part of *trafo. K*, office for art, education and critical knowledge production based in Vienna (w/Ines Garnitschnig, Renate Höllwart, and Elke Smodics), of the Viennese network *schnittpunkt*. exhibition theory & practice, and of *freethought*, a platform for research, education, and production based in London (w/Irit Rogoff, Stefano Harney, Adrian Heathfield, Mao Mollona, and Louis Moreno). In this context, Sternfeld was one of the artistic directors of the Bergen Assembly 2016. She has recently been appointed as the new documenta Professor at the Kassel School of Art and Design.

Imprint
Issue 33

Publisher
Dorothee Richter

Co-***Publisher***
Ronald Kolb

Editor
Nanne Buurman, Dorothee Richter

Contributions
Anna Sigrídur Arnar, Angela M. Bartholomew, Beatrice von Bismarck, Nanne Buurman, Anthony Gardner & Charles Green, Ayşe Güleç, Kathryn M. Floyd, Walter Grasskamp, Kristian Handberg, Dorothea von Hantelmann, Susanne König, Vesna Madžoski, Nina Möntmann, Philipp Oswalt, Dorothee Richter, Elpida Rikou & Eleana Yalouri, Nora Sternfeld

Proofreading
Stephanie Carwin

Web Design and Graphic Design Concept
Ronald Kolb, Biotop 3000

Graphic Design Issue 33
Ronald Kolb, Biotop 3000

Supported by
Postgraduate Programme in Curating, ZHdK
(www.curating.org)

PhD in Practice in Curating
Practice-Based Doctoral Programme
Department of Art , University of Reading

Institute for Cultural Studies in the Arts (ICS),
Department of Cultural Analysis,
Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK)

ONCURATING.org is an independent international journal (both web and print) focusing on questions around curatorial practise and theory.

ONCURATING.org
Toni-Areal,
Pfingstweidstrasse 96,
8005 Zürich
info@oncurating.org
www.on-curating.org

For advertising options please visit
our website and get in touch!

Supported by
Postgraduate Programme in Curating, ZHdK
(www.curating.org)

PhD in Practice in Curating
Practice-Based Doctoral Programme
Department of Art, University of Reading

Institute for Cultural Studies in the Arts (ICS),
Department of Cultural Analysis,
Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK)