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PORTUGUESA

THE EXHIBITION AS KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

Dissertation presented to the Universidade Católica Portuguesa to obtain the
Master's degree in Culture Studies, specialisation in Management of the Arts
and Cultures

By
Teresa Sousa Veloso da Costa Pinheiro

Universidade Católica Portuguesa – Faculdade de Ciências Humanas
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Resumo

A exposição de arte contemporânea, desde o seu aparecimento no contexto museológico e curatorial, tem sofrido diversas alterações de carácter social, político e económico, influenciadas pelo período histórico e artístico onde se inserem. A figura do curador, igualmente em constante transformação, tem vindo a assumir um papel de mediador que estabelece e fortalece as relações entre os artistas, o público, os profissionais dos museus e outras instituições culturais. Recentemente, este conjunto de mudanças contribuiu para um diluir de fronteiras institucionais entre profissões, departamentos e disciplinas, que resultou na elaboração de projectos curatoriais baseados no trabalho colaborativo e em rede. É enquanto efeito destas inovações que a presente dissertação pretende estudar a exposição como produção de conhecimento. A análise dos projectos *Academy* (2004-2006), *The New Model: An Inquiry* (2011-2015) e *Under the Clouds: From Paranoia to the Digital Sublime* (2015), que tiveram lugar no contexto europeu dos últimos quinze anos, é o ponto de partida para uma reflexão sobre a exposição e a dimensão curatorial enquanto instrumentos de comunicação, colaboração e mediação.

Palavras-chave: exposição, curador, arte contemporânea, mediação

Abstract

The exhibition of contemporary art, since its emergence within the museological and curatorial context, has experienced social, political and economic changes influenced by the historical and artistic in which they are inserted. The figure of the curator, equally in constant transformation, has come to play a mediating role that establishes and reinforces the relationships between artists, audience, museum professionals and other cultural institutions. Recently, this set of changes contributed to the dilution of institutional boundaries between professions, departments and subjects, which resulted in the elaboration of curatorial projects based on collaboration and networking. It is as an effect of these innovations that the present dissertation intends to study the exhibition as knowledge production. The analysis of the curatorial projects *Academy* (2004-2006), *The New Model: An Inquiry* (2011-2015) and *Under the Clouds: From Paranoia to the Digital Sublime* (2015), which took place in the European context of the last fifteen years, is the starting point for the study of the exhibition and the curatorial as instruments of communication, collaboration and mediation.

Keywords: exhibition, curator, contemporary art, mediation

Dedication

To Graça Veloso (1942-2007).

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1. Introduction

"When I have seen an exhibition that leaves me asking myself a series of questions I've not asked myself before, I feel like I've received a gift." (Butt, 2014: 50)

The dynamic field of cultural studies has plenty of interesting questions that could be raised in the research context of this dissertation. To define cultural studies is not easy¹, as it is an "interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and sometimes counter-disciplinary field that operates in the tension between its tendencies to embrace both a broad, anthropological and a more narrowly humanistic conception of culture." (Nelson, Treichler and Grossberg, 1992: 4) It claims that cultural production, in all its forms, is happening in alternative cultural systems outside the restrictive environment of the academy and high culture; and it is necessary to engage in the study of these new structures as well as of "the entire range of society's arts, beliefs, institutions and communicative practices." (Nelson, Treichler and Grossberg, 1992: 4) As a matter of fact, when Richard Hoggart first applied the expression for the establishment of the Centre for the Contemporary Cultural Studies in 1964, at the Birmingham School, he believed "that culture (primarily literature and art but also expressive culture more broadly understood) made available, to those trained to find it, a distinctive kind of social knowledge that is unavailable through any other means." (Grossberg, 2010: 11) The structure of cultural studies is installed in a middle ground, "operating in the between, to open up possibilities, to see multiplicities instead of simple difference" (Grossberg, 2010:16). It works between disciplines and in the borderline between theory and practice; and because it deals with such a diversity of subjects, it does not adopt a unique methodology: "Cultural studies draws from whatever fields are necessary to produce the knowledge required for a particular project." (Nelson, Treichler and Grossberg, 1992: 2)

The dissertation focuses on the development of the display systems of contemporary art and on the way exhibitions evolved into curatorial projects that can produce knowledge. The evolution of exhibitions accompanied the history of museums (Ferguson, 1994); and in fact, the period, in the 18th century, marked by an openness of

¹ The dissertation incorporates the field of cultural studies, although it is not its main focus. The study and development of cultural studies as an academic field can be explored through the work of the following authors: Richard Hoggart, Stuart Hall, Raymond Williams, Chris Barker, Lawrence Grossberg, Tony

museums to the public with the aim of educating the lower classes, overlapped with the progressive need of artists to show publicly their work (Pereira, 2013). However, it was later in the 20th century that the museum transformed into a space of experiencing and learning, introducing a renewed figure in the field of contemporary art: the curator (George, 2015). Previously responsible for taking care of private collections, the curator developed into an autonomous decision-maker and exhibition-organiser, collaborating and mediating the relationship between artists, institutions and audience (George, 2015).

The 20th century brought several moments that destabilised the order of museums and, consequently, the conceptualisation of exhibitions (Schubert, 2009). To begin with, exhibitions expanded into ahistorical structures around a curatorial concept (Meijers, 1992) and later, with the emergence of new artistic movements, the exhibitions had to adapt the display models into the experimental, conceptual and immaterial artistic production of the time (Calderoni, 2011). "The exhibition as a critical form" (Voorhies, 2017) became more and more a space for discussion, reflection and construction of new ideas. The New Institutionalism emerged in the decade of 1990 as a curatorial movement that aimed to reorganise the cultural institutions from within and defined by "open-endedness and dialogue, and leading to events-based work" (Tallant, 2009: 1). In a period in which the independence and isolation of the curator culminated in the figure of the "star-curator" (Balzer, 2014), the intention of New Institutionalism was to end up with the strict borders between departments/professions and to implement participation, collaboration, dialogue and share of ideas as the main guidelines, rejecting any hierarchical structures (Farqharson, 2006). These movements influenced the educational turn that is occurring in curatorial practices since the beginning of the 21st century, which does not mean "that curatorial projects have increasingly adopted education as a theme; it is, rather, to assert that curating increasingly operates as an expanded educational praxis." (O'Neill and Wilson, 2010: 12) The innumerable projects emergent from the joined efforts between curators, educators, museum staff, students and visitors, established the curatorial within a collaborative practice of mediation.

The dilute of borders – between curating, education and mediation – resulted in a curatorial practice within an expanded field that left behind the "star-curator" behaviour and engaged with collaborative and in network projects. This recent topic – already mentioned in works such as *Curating and the Educational Turn* (Paul O'Neill and Mick

Wilson, 2010), *It's All Mediating: Outlining and Incorporating the Roles of Curating and Education in the Exhibition Context* (Kaija Kaitavuori, Laura Kokkonen and Nora Sternfeld, 2013), *Contemporary Curating and Museum Education* (Carmen Mörsch, Angeli Sachs and Thomas Sieber, 2017) and *Beyond Objecthood: The Exhibition as a Critical Form Since 1968* (James Voorhies, 2017) – is still under development in the academic and cultural community. With this in mind, the dissertation contributes with the study of three curatorial projects: *Academy* (2004-2006) curated by Bart De Baere and Dieter Roelstraete, Charles Esche, Kerstin Niemann, Irit Rogoff and Angelika Nollert; *The New Model* (2011-2015) curated by Maria Lind and Lars Bang Larsen; and *Under the Clouds: From Paranoia to the Digital Sublime* (2015) curated by João Ribas. The dissertation does not intent to establish itself as an exhaustive description of the three case studies, but as a reflection about the characteristics that distinguish them from other projects and the potential of each case, within its particularities, to produce knowledge.

The second chapter, under the title "Theoretical Framework", covers the evolution and description of theoretical concepts that contributed to the elaboration of the dissertation. The first sub-chapter, "The curator and mediation", studies the origin of both terms, not in isolated approaches, but through the several connections that constitute them. Acknowledging the concepts of curator and mediation as two dynamic realities, this sub-chapter identifies the fundamental moments in the history of museums and exhibitions that influenced the construction of a relationship between curating and mediating. If curating is understood as the making of exhibitions, the second sub-chapter, "Exhibition-making and the curatorial as tools for knowledge production", demonstrates the existence of the curatorial dimension that provides the necessary tools for knowledge production. It outlines the exhibition historical evolution, emphasising specific moments, curators and exhibitions that contributed to the study of this distinct reality named curatorial. The history of exhibitions accompanied the history of art, confirming the idea that research projects, such as exhibitions, can depart from artistic production and, in this sense, the notion of arts-based research concludes this chapter.

The third chapter corresponds to a practical concretisation of the approaches to the exhibition, a methodology that consists in the analysis of three case studies. These case studies were chosen from a specific context: recent European curatorial projects organised by curators who successfully performed the role of mediators, according to the definitions

reached in the theoretical chapter. The research accomplished in the theoretical part of the dissertation intersected with the extensive analysis of each case enabled to determine the following sub-titles: "The museum as a space for knowledge production", for the study of the pioneering *Academy* (2004-2006), a three-exhibition project that aimed to question the role of the museum as a space for learning, establishing a powerful relationship between the academy and the museum; "The conversational mode and the art of the encounter in exhibitions", for the analysis of *The New Model* (2011-2015), a long-term project that gathered exhibitions and lectures to understand the impact of *The Model: A Model for a Qualitative Society* (Palle Nielsen, 1968) in the sociocultural context of the time; and "Arts-based research VS curatorial research", for the understanding of *Under the Clouds: From Paranoia to the Digital Sublime* (2015), an exhibition as part of a research project, questioning the possibility of curatorial as research material. The titles functioned both as starting points and as lens of analysis for each case.

The dissertation "Exhibitions as knowledge production" intends to be a research project that, between theory and practice, potentiates a new critical perception over the exhibition as the curatorial and as knowledge production.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. The curator and mediation

2.1.1. Development of the figure *curator*

Over the last few decades, the curator has been recognised as an increasingly influential figure in the cultural and artistic field, as David Balzer argues, "The curator is a condition of the contemporary." (Balzer, 2014: 47) The origin of the word "curator" goes back to the Roman Empire: "The root of the word is the Latin *cura*, meaning care; *curatore* means, essentially, caretaker." (Balzer, 2014: 24). In the 14th century, the curator was responsible for taking care of precious and fragile objects (George, 2015). In the 17th century, richer families had specific rooms called "Cabinets of Curiosities", designated exclusively to store their collections of valuable objects. The term originally came from the German expressions *Kunstkammer* (art room) and *Wunderkammer* (wonder room) (George, 2015: 2).

"The Cabinet of Curiosities might look like an early period of freedom for the curator, although there was a marked subservience to objects and the person who owned them, reflected in the exclusive nature of the cabinets, which were not commonly open to the public. Nevertheless, the curator was positioned importantly within the cabinet" (Balzer, 2014: 29)

The number of private collections increased in the 18th century, and some were even donated to the state, which contributed to the development of the museum that was already increasing in this period (George, 2015). The private collectors gained responsibilities such as displaying their collections to the public. The role of the curator developed from merely preserving and organising the collection to more meaningful tasks such as its study and careful public presentation, to "educate the wider public in some form" (Hoffmann, 2014: 10). With the intent of fulfilling the museum's growing responsibility of educating society, the curator, museum director, collection keeper and educator were, usually, the same person in this period (George, 2015). The curator, in this period, was not recognised as the central author of exhibitions, as artists mainly organised them:

"After the Salon des Refusés, artist-initiated exhibitions began to proliferate. There is no nominal curator here – artists themselves curate, a brave move for the time, complementing a newly personal, direct, collaborative and sometimes raw approach to making work, and in opposition to the academy-, studio- and patron-bound practices that had become standard." (Balzer, 2014: 32)

It was in the 20th century that more profound changes occurred in the museum. Instead of merely storing collections, the museum became a place to experience and learn, and "where artists and curators could work together to experiment with new means of expression and presentation" (George, 2015: 4). The curatorial concept shaped the exhibition, from which the artworks were selected, to generate unexpected and new relationships between them (George, 2015). This responsibility established the curator as an autonomous figure in the cultural framework, a decision-maker who deepened the expertise on diverse subjects, providing the adequate context for the decisions made (Hoffmann, 2014): "(...) the curator as we know her emerges with a twist of autonomy, through the vital concept of connoisseurship: a display of taste or expertise that lends stylized independence to the act of caring for and assembling." (Balzer, 2014: 27) Although independent, the work of the curator required extensive collaboration, negotiation and discussion – not only with the artists but also with the various departments that participated in the production of an exhibition (George, 2015).

Alfred Barr (USA, 1902-1981), the founding director of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, played a major role in the development of the phenomenon of the curator, as it is known today. In the decade of 1930, the museum did not have a particularly good relationship with the artists (who were mostly organising independent exhibitions), Barr managed to bring back the institution as a modern space for the display of art (Balzer, 2014). Not only did he explore innovative exhibition designs, such as the white cube², but he also he followed the work of both American and international artists, and collaborated with them (Balzer, 2014). Barr's work recognised the contemporary curator as the independent *connoisseur*, who is extremely well informed about the art field. He remained institutional curator-director of the Museum of Modern Art until the 1960s (Balzer, 2014). The period between the 1960s and the 1970s was one of a proliferation of the artistic

² The white cube emerged from the need of creating exhibition spaces that would not intervene with the artwork environment. In this sense, Brian O'Doherty's defines the white cube as "Unshadowed, white, clean, artificial – the space is devoted to the technology of esthetics. Works of art are mounted, hung, scattered for study. Their ungrubby surfaces are untouched by time and its vicissitudes. Art exists in a kind of eternity of display, and though there is lots of "period" (late modern), there is no time." (O'Doherty, 1999: 15)

avant-garde, with the emergence of "post-painterly abstraction, colour field painting, op art, pop art, action art, performance art, earth art, video art (...)" (Balzer, 2014: 38):

"The modernist avant-garde ended, unexpectedly to many, in the heightened institutionalization and commodification of the artwork. But the avant-garde continued to search for new ideas and superficially, radical ones. It follows that the next, novel project of avant-garde art would be, after the object itself was exhausted, this dematerialization: taking away the object's objecthood to get at the edgy essence of creativity and ideas, and to prevent art from being consumed and packaged by the bourgeoisie." (Balzer, 2014: 39)

The contemporary curator was no longer the caretaker, but instead, curatorship became a new full-time job with responsibilities such as mediation, translation and negotiation (Balzer, 2014). This transformation had a clear contribution from Harald Szeemann (Switzerland, 1933-2005). Perhaps the most remarkable and controversial curator of the 20th century (Balzer, 2014), Szeemann curated what was considered the turning point in the art of display and a significant influence in curatorial practices: the exhibition *Live in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form* (1969) at Kunsthalle Bern and the Documenta 5 (1972) in Kassel, Germany. Szeemann was partly responsible for the romantic vision of the contemporary independent curator as an author. Artists start "to put their trust in curators as managers" in this period, as "the curator must understand the avant-garde aesthetically and commercially, combining the two to turn something that is new and thus vulnerable into something that is nothing short of invincible. The curator ushers forth the avant-garde, not making, but shaping, it new." (Balzer, 2014: 45)

The decade of 1980 was marked by an increase in the number of artists as well as exhibitions and, as a consequence, the dealer and the art critic were the dominant figures in the art market rather than the curator: "in that decade, a work of art's value could be easily quantified by the market and the press." (Balzer, 2014: 51) This market structure culminated in the decade of 1990, resulting in the emergence of blockbuster exhibitions, museum marketing strategies, exhibition merchandise and gift shops. Exhibitions and the museum's world were influenced by trends, all dominated by the multifaceted "star-curator" (Balzer, 2014). It was the recognition of the curator as "a seminal figure in contemporary art" (Ekeberg, 2013: 20):

"When the contemporary curator's job altered from advocating for new objects (the modernist era) to advocating for new ideas (the conceptualist era), to advocating for herself as the newest institutional entity, she changed the avant-garde forever. The star curator has created an incestuous cycle that signals the end of the avant-garde. Instead of finding and advocating for the new, she immediately orders and manicures it, negating the very possibility of newness." (Balzer, 2014: 55)

The standard background for curatorial work was history of art or museology studies; however, this period also introduced curatorial academic programmes. Today, it is possible to pursue a degree in curating and, because it is a relatively new field of study, the subjects usually consist of history of art and culture studies (Hoffmann, 2015). The curator still resides between theory and practice: on the one hand, there is a consistent theoretical background and an on-going relationship with the academy; on the other hand, there is a work experience in the cultural fieldwork.

The contemporary curator is responsible for the production of exhibitions, which includes functions such as the contact with artists, preparation of essays for the catalogue, of texts for the display labels and the exhibition parallel activities: "the role now incorporates those of producer, commissioner, exhibition planner, educator, manager and organizer" (George, 2015: 2). The curator's responsibilities differ depending on the institution; in the museum, the curator manages the possibilities of a collection and has an important role in the process of acquiring new works for the institution (Alloway, 1975). In small institutions, the curator has a wider approach to the exhibition making, as these structures usually are more open to new alternative methodologies concerning exhibition formats (Ferguson, 1994). Regardless of the working structure, the contemporary curator "engages with the cultural meaning and production of art, often from a position of development shared with the artist." (O'Brian, 2005: 1) According to Jens Hoffmann, the curator's work aims to understand the human mind and to create environments in which it is possible to question and reflect on our role in society:

"Curators – alongside philosophers, anthropologists, archaeologists, ethnographers, and so on – are involved in the study of how humans have constructed realities, asked questions, and created culture and civilization. The ultimate goal of all this is to understand ourselves more thoroughly and apply our findings and our creations. We must not forget that we are makers as well researchers – helping to improve humanity." (Hoffmann, 2015: 84)

Here, Hoffmann positioned the curator as "maker". In the essay "A Certain Tendency on Curating" (2011), Hoffmann considered the curator not only an organiser of exhibitions but also an author. This idea was based on François Truffaut's text "Une Certaine Tendence du Cinéma Français" (1954), in which he recognised the filmmaker as an *auteur* and whose authorship was apparent in all of his works. Mentioning other theories about authorship, such as Michel Foucault's "What is an Author" (1969) and Roland Barthes' "The Death of the Author" (1967), Hoffmann argued that, while assembling artists and works, the curator was creating a new object and, in that sense, producing knowledge as an author: "which is ultimately how we would describe what a curator is, someone who limits, excludes, creates meaning with existing signs, codes and materials." (Hoffmann, 2011: 139)

2.1.2. New Institutionalism and The Curatorial

New Institutionalism was a turn in curatorial practice, between the 1990s and the 2000s, which focused on the reorganisation of institutions from within. To understand this movement is necessary to present a brief introduction of the structure of cultural institutions. The organisation of cultural/artistic spaces differs from institution to institution because it depends on the dimension and type of structure (Office of Policy and Analysis, 2002). Indeed it is hard to compare small/independent galleries to national museums, for instance, not only because they differ in size but also because they have different goals. Museums and galleries are usually organised in departments, and each has its team with specific responsibilities (Tallant, 2009). Over the last years, the consequences of this separation have been discussed, especially concerning the hierarchical organisation of functions in the museum. The jobs related to Education or Visitor Programmes, for instance, tend to be seen as secondary compared to Curating or Designing Exhibitions, which positions the educative responsibility of the museum after the display and conservation (Charman, 2005).

The beginning of the 20th century brought a boost to the specialisation of professions in the museum, which enlarged the detachment of areas of labour (Charman, 2005). The professionalism of functions in the museum and other cultural institutions was concerned with the recognition of such jobs, but also with the necessity of specific training

and qualifications for the work. In order to improve the recognition of certified workers, it was essential to give them its earned importance, contributing to the continuous formation in this direction. After all, the *staff* is what mostly represented the museum and, if their jobs were not professionalised, would become demotivated and lose credibility. With this in mind, it was more efficient to instruct the *staff* with specific skills, destined to specific areas, which contributed more and more to the separation of departments (Ruge, 2008).

In spite of the differences between each institution and the different models of management of cultural organisations, a large part of the museums can be divided into the following broad departments (Office of Policy and Analysis, 2002): director, curatorship and exhibition making, education and visitor services, conservation and restoration, marketing and media, volunteers and museum staff. The *director* holds the responsibility of looking after the institution and is in charge of making the ultimate decisions concerning the museum's programming. The director's mission is to improve the image of the museum, to engage the actual audience and to search for new audiences, to develop strategies for the future of the museum through new activities and services (Ruge, 2008). In line with these goals, the *marketing department* develops strategies with three main concerns: "to increase the visibility of the museum, to augment and improve its audience and to find funds" (Ruge, 2008: 33). The conservator takes care of the study and maintenance of the museum collection (Ruge, 2008) and this applies not only in art museums but also in historical and scientific ones. These tasks usually are completed alongside the curators. Regardless of the structure, there are two major areas in art institutions: exhibition making (curating) and education. The curating department is mainly responsible for the conception and production of exhibitions (Office of Policy and Analysis, 2002). There are several designations for the different positions inside this department: curator, curator's assistants, exhibition and display curator, exhibition designer, among others. Overall, the curating department is expected to take care of the collection (its categorisation, storage and conservation processes), manage research projects about the collection, outline the exhibition programme for the institution, implement the exhibitions (elaboration of curatorial concepts and exhibition texts), contact artists or other museum collections and to handle consequent loan, insurance and travel conditions, work together with the education/visitors department to promote the connection with the public, and to design and set up the exhibition's structure and to follow the

contractors' work along the installation of the exhibitions (Ruge, 2008). In situations in which the department is larger, these tasks are shared with other people; otherwise, it is commonly the curator's responsibility. The education department draws the programme of activities in line with the collection and exhibitions, aimed to suit all types of audience (Ruge, 2008). It requires the collaboration with other departments, so that they can imbue their knowledge in different fields to the activities. The plan of activities can consist of guided tours, workshops, concerts, conversations, theatre plays, screenings, performances, and other numerous formats. The outcome of their responsibilities is to implement the activities among the audience and be able to interpret their feedback to improve their structure (Ruge, 2008). The education office, along with the curating one, aids in the install of exhibitions.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, a movement emerged which was named Institutional Critique, created by "artists who presented radical challenges to the museum and gallery system" (Raunig and Ray, 2009: 1) Art institutions were an inconsistent presence in society because on the one hand, they were programming according to political and corporate concerns and, on the other hand, they aimed to create cultural, pleasant and learning experiences (Bryan-Wilson, 2003). Through Institutional Critique, artists questioned and challenged the social, cultural and economic function of art institutions (museums and galleries, for instance) (Bryan-Wilson, 2003). There were two distinct waves of this movement. In the first one, from the 1960s and 1970s, artists such as Daniel Buren, Robert Smithson and Hans Haacke were against the art system and were interested in putting an end to its structures. In the 1980s and 1990s, Institutional Critique kept the same designation and included artists such as Fred Wilson, Andrea Fraser and Renee Green. Addressing the same political and institutional issues, this second wave was also concerned with the conceptual and subjective forms of production (Raunig and Ray, 2009). Institutional Critique was not an artistic movement, but indeed an "analytical tool, a method of spatial and political criticism" (Sheikh, 2009: 32) that developed mainly through artistic practices (Sheikh, 2009). It challenged institutions' structures and policies – not only artistic organisations but also all kinds of institutions and their capacity of "auto-criticism" (Buden, 2009: 33). The museum welcomed these critics, as it considered itself an open and active place (Bryan-Wilson, 2003). Indeed, Institutional Critique began to be adopted by directors, critics, curators and by the institutions themselves (Bryan-Wilson,

2003). This change may have led to the third wave of Institutional Critique, supported by curators and critics that were interested in using institutions as a solution and transforming them from within (Sheikh, 2009). According to Jonas Ekerberg,

"Even if the art institution has fostered alternative exhibitions since the Salon des Refusés, it was not until the sixties that the politics of exhibition making and the power of the institution were questioned and discussed on a more systematic and critical level. After the politicized seventies and the return to painting in the eighties, it was the nineties that saw the advent of the curator as a seminal figure in contemporary art." (Ekeberg, 2013: 20)

Some defended that this third generation of Institutional Critique corresponded to New Institutionalism, which is a term borrowed from social sciences (namely economics and sociology) that emerged in the period between the late 1990s and the early 2000s, representing a curatorial discourse with the aim of transforming institutions from within (Doherty, 2004). According to Claire Doherty, what distinguished New Institutionalism from Institutional Critique was "Firstly, relational and/or socially-engaged practice emerge as dominant strands of mainstream contemporary visual art through theoretical discourse and social networks" (Doherty, 2004: 3). Also, the cultural experience and interaction with contemporary art were acknowledged as "urban regeneration" (Doherty, 2004: 3) and the creation of alternative spaces for cultural production questioned the function of museums and galleries. Finally, "a generation of nomadic curators and artists emerged", with the desire to explore and share new and different methods in the field of art. In this period, curators and directors felt trapped in too many bureaucracies and decided to "de-institutionalize" (Farquharson, 2013: 55) and create their own structures, with the goal of deconstructing the idea of institution. However, simultaneously, the New Institutionalism was characterised for maintaining the conviction that museums and galleries were the fundamental spaces for art (Doherty, 2004). Mostly, and according to Alex Farquharson,

"(...) new institutionalism represents the absorption of institutional critique as theorized and practised by artists since the 1970s. Seen this way, it is institutional critique practised from the inside, exposing and opposing the ideological and disciplinary structures through which art in institutions comes to be mediated." (Farquharson, 2006: 3)

The emergent alternative organisations, established mostly by curators, were defined by "open-endedness and dialogue, and leading to events-based work" (Tallant, 2009: 1). The majority of the projects resulted in small self-organised structures that developed experimental approaches (Farquharson, 2013), offering integrated and interdisciplinary programming (Doherty, 2004), in which research projects, workshops, talks and performances were programmed side-by-side with exhibitions (Farquharson, 2013). They were interested in integrating communities through education and the collaboration with visitors and, in this sense, the new institutions were also considered "social projects" (Kolb and Flückiger, 2013: 6). The curators would look up for influences in institutions already existent in the community so that their projects would be "part community center, part laboratory, part school" (Esche, 2013: 27). This proximity to people required "shifts in visitor behavior back and forth between reception and participation" (Doherty, 2004: 2) and the visitor would end up interpreting multiple roles such as "participant, viewer, collaborator and client" (Doherty, 2006: 7). The collaboration was a key feature of the new institution that, inevitably, would take a political stand by rejecting hierarchical structures (Farquharson, 2006). The interdisciplinary and collective work was fundamental for the development of a complete and diversified programme through collaborative practices of sharing knowledge (Farquharson, 2006). Maria Lind used the expression "working curatorially" to describe the way they would cross and connect "works, places, people, questions, contexts etc." (Lind, 2013a: 31). The new institution, as a discourse space for debate and research, replaced the previous consumerist idea associated with the art institution (Kolb and Flückiger, 2013). Also, by bringing alternative methods to face the "institutional organization of the art field" (Kolb and Flückiger, 2013: 15), it created moments of discussion and reflection about the present and future role of institutions (Mader, 2013). Rather than giving up and destroying institutions, as Institutional Critique defended, the New Institutionalism was interested in its renovation, taking advantage of its available tools: "The institution is not only a problem, but also a solution!" (Sheikh, 2013: 29).

However, the designation "New Institutionalism" was not of general consent. For instance, Charles Esche preferred the expression "Institutional Experimentalism" because, as he explained, "We were learning by doing, it was really pragmatic in that sense. Let's find out how things work, but on our terms. I don't feel happy about the word 'new'

because it is such a neoliberal term" (Esche, 2013: 27). Jorge Ribalta, from MACBA, proposed "Relational Institutionalism" (Ekeberg, 2013), while Maria Lind defended that attributing "any label" seemed to mean that the process was over (Lind, 2013a: 29). New Institutionalism embodied concepts of contemporary art such as dialogue, participation, process-based and open-ended works, experiments and research (Doherty, 2004). As a result of influences such as Relational Aesthetics and Institutional Critique, the work developed by New Institutionalism renewed the socio-political role of art institutions (Farquharson, 2013).

Between 1999 and 2002, several curators moved from large institutions to take over projects in which critical thinking, research and dialogue were the priority: Maria Lind in the Kunstverein München (Munich), Charles Esche in the Rooseum (Malmö), Catherine David in the Witte de With (Rotterdam), Vasif Kortun founded the Platform Garanti Contemporary Art (Istanbul), and Maria Hlavajova in the BAK (Utrecht). The 1990s, as already mentioned, were the decade of the "independent curator". The independent curator would no longer be attached to an exclusive institution but would work in several different environments. This allowed curators to be involved in projects that were not directly related to the production of exhibitions: some wrote for art magazines or taught in academic programs, other curated exhibitions in different formats such as Biennials or Manifesta (Farquharson, 2006). These interdisciplinary experiences would go on to reflect in the programming of the emerging institutions. BAK, for instance, is described as "a site of *interlocution* between and among various publics, convening on the basis of shared concerns to negotiate the concept of a common future through artistic imagination, intellectual rigor, and civic engagement"³ and Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art defends that "reflection with, and input from, Witte de With's public is core to our programming through both educational projects and public events"⁴. Both are interested in the creation of meaning as a result of the encounter between the institution and the audience, including the exchange of knowledge, dialogue and collaboration. The idea of an expanded programme positioned the curator as co-producer because, concerning these new institutions, "(...) it is no longer the container that defines the contents as art, but the contents that determine the identity of the container" (Farquharson, 2006: 4).

³ BAK basis voor actuele kunst (website). Accessed August 23, 2017. <https://www.bak-utrecht.nl/en/About>.

⁴ Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art (website). Accessed August 23, 2017. http://www.wdw.nl/en/about_us/.

Also in the 1990s, the artistic/curatorial practice "Relational Aesthetics", defined by Nicolas Bourriaud (France, 1965), emerged. It was associated with the New Institutionalism, as both approaches recognised the exhibition as "a critical medium" (Voorhies, 2016: 2). The expression was first employed in the catalogue of Bourriaud's exhibition "Traffic" (Altshuler, 2008) and it referred to art based on inter-human relations (Bourriaud, 1998). *Traffic* was an exhibition curated by Nicolas Bourriaud that took place in CAPC – Musée d'Art Contemporain de Bordeaux, in 1996. It counted with the participation of 28 European artists (such as Liam Gillick, Philippe Parreno, Pierre Huyghe, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Douglas Gordon, Rirkrit Tiravanija and Jason Rhoades) who worked in different mediums and practices and did not share any style or subject. Instead, they had the common interest in the power of human relations. The group of artists were asked to work in Bordeaux for a period before the opening, and the time they spent together became part of the exhibition and its process. The opening lasted several days and was replete with events, debates, film screenings, and parties – all of which required the participation of the audience. Through their artistic practice, the artists worked methods to promote exchange, cooperation, interactivity, communication; in other words, the potentiality of relational dimensions. The exhibition was fundamental for these artists, whose works required the presence and interaction of people to succeed. *Traffic* functioned as the theoretical basis for the development and structure of Relational Aesthetics that Nicolas Bourriaud later described in his book *Esthétique Relationnelle* (1998). According to him, Relational Aesthetics "takes being-together as a central theme, the "encounter" between beholder and picture, and the collective elaboration of meaning." (Bourriaud, 1998: 5) The artistic object was not closed anymore or within the limits of an artistic period/style: it became something open that existed beyond its material form. The artistic form obtained its true existence through human interaction, which placed the artist in a constant dialogue. Contrary to Conceptual Art, in which the intellectual process was above the object, in Relational Aesthetics the object was a necessary vehicle to promote the encounter. The exhibition became an open space, where the possibility of forming communities emerged more naturally than in other places where it was imposed. It "brings together moments of subjectivity" (Bourriaud, 1998: 8): the immediate perception and interpretation enabled the discussion and debate, which placed the exhibition as a "promoter" of critical thinking. The exhibition was also perceived as "arena of exchange"

(Bourriaud, 1998: 7), in which each artwork suggested interactions with other artworks, as well as with people, in an infinite production of relationships. There was an evident desire to change the typical modern exhibition "into something more open, active and democratic" (Voorhies, 2016: 3), in opposition to the "white cube" and the superior power associated with it. The increasing discontent with the formal institutions (such as the museum) and the development of new perceptions of what an art institution should be led to the creation of new art spaces: Nicolas Bourriaud and Jérôme Sans, in 1999, were the founding directors of Palais de Tokyo, Paris, in which the programming followed the beliefs of both Relational Aesthetics and New Institutionalism. The role of the curator shifted from taking care of artworks and organising exhibitions to that of a "creative producer" (Voorhies, 2016: 2), with an important influence in what the artists created. Relational Art, in a way, transformed the roles in contemporary art:

"(...) the artist is conceived less as an individual producer of discrete objects than as a collaborator and producer of *situations*; the work of art as a finite, portable, commodifiable product is reconceived as an ongoing or long-term *project* with an unclear beginning and end; while the audience, previously conceived as a 'viewer' or 'beholder', is now repositioned as a co-producer or *participant*." (Bishop, 2012: 2)

Both New Institutionalism and Relational Art motivated an increased interest in collective and collaborative work, still present in contemporary art in recent years (Bishop, 2012). Most of the relational artworks required not only the presence of an audience but, more importantly, its participation. In the introduction of *Participation* (2006), a collection of essays edited by Claire Bishop, she highlighted that "(...) activation; authorship; community – are the most frequently cited motivations for almost all artistic attempts to encourage participation in art since the 1960s" (Bishop, 2006: 12). Firstly, participatory art aimed to generate dynamic topics that required the activation via human interaction, which established a relationship between experiencing artworks and collective engagement (Bishop, 2006). Secondly, it challenged the idea of authorship, which the artist(s) waived by creating open-ended objects. The idea of shared authorship was "(...) understood both to emerge from, and to produce, a more positive and non-hierarchical social model" (Bishop, 2006: 12). The social concern led to the aforementioned proposition, the sense of community and collaboration as a solution to the social crisis (Bishop, 2006).

Bishop pointed out that the continuous interest in participatory mechanisms had been recurring since the 1960s (Bishop, 2006). This meant that interactivity overlapped with the traditional contemplation of the work of art, which, at the time, was considered too uninvolved given that the contact with art was supposed to result in human relations (Bishop, 2004). Bishop addressed a few issues concerning the emergence of Relational Art and its contradictions. The author questioned how it could be possible to evaluate the quality or what type of relations could result from the interaction between an art object and the individual. How could it be controlled? Was there a common structure of relational works, which could be separated from the subject/concept to establish differences between them, or was it all mixed? Bishop argued that Bourriaud, when explaining Relational Art, did not seem concerned with the quality and difference between resulting relations because, for him, every relationship resulting from the interaction work-individual was more important than each individual and, therefore, every relationship was positive (Bishop, 2004). Also, by not evaluating the extension of participation in Relational Art, it allowed a certain hierarchy inside the gallery: in a democratic way, the aim of the artists may be to produce artworks with which every potential visitor can relate to, but it is known that only a certain indeed relate to them (Bishop, 2012).

The participatory and engaging art challenged the autonomy of the artwork, which was "open-ended, interactive, and resistant to closure, often appearing to be "work-in-progress" rather than a completed object." (Bishop, 2004: 52). Since it was "open-ended", it was harder to understand if there was a structure in the objects (Bishop, 2004). Here, it was not the meaning derived from the artwork that was open to interpretation; it was the artwork itself (Bishop, 2004). The audience was expected to participate not only in the interpretation of the artwork but also in the process of production (Bishop, 2012). This meant that the artwork was always dependent on something: the context, the visitor and the surroundings. It could not exist only by itself, as it would have no meaning. More than a relationship between object and individual, Relational Art expected to stimulate the interaction between individuals to "create a community, however temporary or utopian this may be" (Bishop, 2004: 54). The goal was to develop human relationships and, for that to happen, it was necessary that the work was inserted in an environment that received groups of people. The fact that the artwork relied on participation also questioned its authorship. Given that the object was never finished and each individual added meaning to it, who

was, in fact, the author? Because, in a way, the artist or collective of artists gave away the authorship of their own work by making it open (Bishop, 2012).

Although Relational Art was created as something democratic, it had to be acknowledged that although there was no defined structure for each artwork, there were pre-defined levels of participation (Bishop, 2004). Socially engaged art created tension between the political and aesthetic dimensions: given that the focus was on participation over aesthetic considerations (Bishop, 2012). This is not to say that the relational works do not follow ideal aesthetic models; this means that the visual presence of the work did not contribute to a better understanding of its meaning (Bishop, 2012). In this context, Bishop argued that it "is not possible to conceive of an aesthetic judgement that is not at the same time a political judgement" (Bishop, 2012: 27).

The constant relationship between art, reality and action apparently aimed to "repair the social bond" (Bishop, 2012: 11). In fact, Relational Art was noticeably tied-in to social inclusion, which placed a lot of pressure in the success of the art projects, that is to say, that they were expected to result in the positive engagement of people and solve social problems (Bishop, 2012). Dealing with social issues required bringing the notion of social responsibility into the conception of the artwork; however, it was important to "bring these projects back" to the art field and experience them like that, bearing in mind that it was in the artistic context that they were conceived (Bishop, 2012). Given that contemporary art spaces such as museums and galleries were often associated with high culture and frequented by the upper classes, Relational Art contributed to social inclusion by wishing to give everyone (including minorities) the possibility to participate in the process of production of the art objects (Bishop, 2012). This incorporated a growing tendency of artists who tackled social issues since the decade of 1960, a movement recognised as socially engaged art, but also known as the following expressions: "relational aesthetics," "social justice art," "social practice," and "community art," among others." (Pasternak, 2012: 8) It emerged based on precedents such as:

"(...) the Dada Cabaret Voltaire, Joseph Beuys' notion of Social Sculpture, Allan Kaprow's "happenings," Gordon Matta Clarke's interventions, radical community theater of the 1960s, Lygia Clark's Tropicália movement in Brazil, the community-based public art projects of groundbreaking artists such as Suzanne Lacy, Mierle Laderman Ukeles and Rick Lowe to social movements from the Civil Rights and Feminist Movements to the Green Party (...)" (Pasternak, 2012: 8)

Unlike these examples, socially engaged art did not constitute an art movement (Thompson, 2012). In *Living as Form: Socially Engaged Art From 1991-2011* (2012), Nato Thompson utilises expressions created by artists and curators working in the social context such as "Social Aesthetics" by Lars Bang Larsen, "New Genre Public Art" by Suzane Lacy, "Tactical Media" by Critical Art Ensemble, "Dialogic Art" by Grant Kester, and, the already mentioned, "Relational Aesthetics" by Nicholas Bourriaud (Thompson, 2012: 19). These resulted in action-based projects that progressed beyond the limits of contemporary art, aspiring inter-personal relationships: "For, as art enter life, the question that will motivate people far more than What is art? is the much more metaphysically relevant and pressing What is life?" (Thompson, 2012: 33) The main interest of the artists was the engagement with communities through participation, conversation and integration of new audiences. With this in mind, the artistic projects aimed to raise awareness on social and political issues (Thompson, 2012). In the context of socially engaged art, Doherty questioned if it was possible to organise a programme of "a diversity of events, exhibitions and projects, without privileging the social over the visual." (Doherty, 2004: 2).

In 2010, Markus Miessen published his third book as a critic on the phenomenon of participation, *The Nightmare of Participation*. While deconstructing the romantic idea of participation as a work process, Miessen questioned if it was possible to participate in a certain circumstance without losing the active role of not being interested in participating (Miessen, 2010). Participation usually involves too many "decision-makers", and it is precisely an idealistic view of participation to think that every participant wants to be part of the collective decision-making (Miessen, 2010). The author defended that trusting a democratic decision, voted by the majority of the participants, was obviously a risk (Miessen, 2010). "Any form of participation is already a form of conflict" (Miessen, 2010: 92), and the participation in a certain situation requires the understanding of the conflict dynamics of the situation. In this context, conflict did not stand for being radically against something. Instead, it meant conflict as a "micro-political practice" (Miessen, 2010: 93), whereby the participant maintained the necessary active role in the working space: "thus, participation becomes a form of critical engagement" (Miessen, 2010: 93). Miessen proposed rethinking relational and participatory practices "toward a direct and personal engagement and stimulation of specific future realities" (Miessen, 2010: 251). This

transformed the position of the participant into a co-author, given that participants were already exposed to a pre-defined structure (Miessen, 2010).

In the essay "Chat Rooms" (2004), Hal Foster questioned the need to emphasise participation and the socially engaged creation of knowledge, when it had been present in the art field for such a long time (Foster, 2004). Within the phenomenon of participation, the visitor was not only required to take on an active role in the artistic experience. Each individual was also expected to interact with other visitors by means of experiencing the community that was formed thereof. However, Foster agreed with Sartre, when he argued, "often in galleries and museums, hell is other people" (Foster, 2004: 194). The author defended that "discursivity and sociability" (Foster, 2004: 194) were already part of artistic production, therefore there was no need to impose participation and social interaction; and if these features were, in fact, necessary in art it was because perhaps the artistic production was lacking the utopic social dynamics of the community (Foster, 2004). By contextualising relational projects in the museum environment – both exhibitions and educational projects – Claire Doherty questioned:

"But what exactly does this mean for visitor experience? What is the future of exhibition-making in light of such assertions? Is there still a polarisation between relational projects promoted within exhibition programmes and socially-engaged practice largely supported through education programmes?" (Doherty, 2004: 5)

Taking the key moments described above into consideration (namely New Institutionalism and Relational Aesthetics), curatorial and artistic practices have been experiencing an "educational turn" since the beginning of this century (Poças, 2010). The academy has always had moments of crisis due to decisive factors such as the "privatization of knowledge", the failure of public institutions and the difficult access to education (Schneider, 2010: 1). In the decade of 1980, a large part of the young generation refused to enrol in the higher education system; so, instead of applying to universities and academies, they believed that knowledge could be acquired on the streets, in bars, in conversations about current subjects and social struggles (Schneider, 2010). Simultaneously, knowledge and learning practices would start "addressing everyday practices of resistance which, back then, were ignored by the traditional system and entered the academy only after a significant delay – like poststructuralist French theory, cultural studies, or postcolonial theory" (Schneider, 2010: 3). Another decisive factor that

contributed to the educational turn in curating was the establishment of the Bologna Process (Poças, 2010). In 1999, the Ministers of Education of 29 European countries signed the Bologna Declaration, which resulted in the European Higher Education⁵. This process had the aim to build a common structure for higher education in the group of 29 countries (bachelor, master and doctoral). It intended to improve the cooperation and exchange between institutions, to increase students and teachers' mobility and access to other universities and countries. It also established new common methodologies, standards and guidelines regarding the quality of institutions, such as the credit system (ECTS). In spite of positive intentions, the outcome was generally negative. The Bologna process required too many bureaucracies and procedures that lead to the homogenisation of institutions, neglecting their local characteristics and traditions (Rogoff, 2008). It also schematised academic knowledge production by following a market structure, in which quantitative principles were favoured over qualitative ones (Poças, 2010). This placed the student in the position of a client not only since it took payment in exchange for education, but also because the student was treated and expected to behave as a client (Rogoff, 2010a). *Curating and the Educational Turn* (2010), a book by Paul O'Neill and Mick Wilson, introduced these new movements that brought together the academy and curatorship, with the aim of achieving alternative models of education.

"Contemporary curating is marked by a turn to education. Educational formats, methods, programmes, models, terms, processes and procedures have become pervasive in the praxes of both curating and the production of contemporary art and in their attendant critical frameworks. This is not simply to propose that curatorial projects have increasingly adopted education as a theme; it is, rather, to assert that curating increasingly operates as an expanded educational praxis." (O'Neill and Wilson, 2010: 12)

These circumstances motivated the emergence of organisations outside institutions that advocated self-education (Schneider, 2010). Florian Schneider established a clear distinction between institution and the concept of "ekstitution" (Schneider, 2010: 4). The institution sets apart "those who know from those who do not know" (Schneider, 2010: 4) and, by limiting the exchange of knowledge, it maintains an unequal relationship between the different elements. The ekstitution, on the other hand, emerged as an alternative to the institution and strives for an immediate and collaborative access to knowledge, through

⁵ European Higher Education Area (website). Accessed August 23, 2017. <https://www.ehea.info/>.

notions such as "horizontalism, flat hierarchies, charity, and sharing" (Schneider, 2010: 4). These self-organised projects combined both practice-based research and alternative pedagogical methods, creating models such as "free schools, night schools, open academies, caucuses" (Phillips, 2010: 85):

"Pedagogical models are currently being explored, re-imagined, and deployed by artists and curators from around the world in diverse projects comprising laboratories, discursive platforms, temporary schools, participatory workshops, libraries, reading groups, lectures, talks, and symposia. They have appropriated into their practice educational formats, methods, programmes, models, terms, processes, and procedures. They are developing intensive investigations into education as a site of knowledge production, proposing unconventional and unofficial frameworks for education." (Poças, 2010: 21)

As explained above, curators, artists, scholars and students reacted to the controversial events by studying and developing new methods of knowledge production and reflection through self-organised structures (Poças, 2010). The resulting projects "challenge conventional perceptions and systems of knowledge" (Poças, 2010: 19) because they occur outside and beyond institutional spaces and because they replace "traditional art materials" with social engagement and discussion (Poças, 2010). Consequently, some argue that these pedagogical projects were not considered aesthetic or have visual value since they were closer to political and activist protests. Given the variety of methodologies and intentions of each project (and following different results and impacts), it does not seem correct to classify them through a standardised category. However, it is consensual that all of them are of the educational type (Poças, 2010). The Copenhagen Free University, for instance, functioned between 2001 and 2006 and claimed:

"The Copenhagen Free University was an attempt to reinvigorate the emancipatory aspect of research and learning, in the midst of an ongoing economization of all knowledge production in society. Seeing how education and research were being subsumed into an industry structured by a corporate way of thinking, we intended to bring the idea of the university back to life. By life, we mean the messy life people live within the contradictions of capitalism. We wanted to reconnect knowledge production, learning and skill sharing to the everyday within a self-organized institutional framework of a free university. Our intention was multi-layered and was of course partly utopian, but also practical and experimental. We turned our flat in Copenhagen into a university by the very simple act of declaring 'this is a university'."⁶

⁶ "Statement in relation to the outlawing of the Copenhagen Free University" by Copenhagen Free University (website). Accessed August 23, 2017. <http://www.copenhagenfreeuniversity.dk/future.html>.

Installed in the apartment of the artists Henriette Heise and Jakob Jakobsen, The Copenhagen Free University provided meetings, film screenings, a book and zine shop and an online library, rejecting the formats of traditional universities. The research projects (on subjects such as feminism, art, economy, activism, media and history) were built through gatherings and presentations of people reunited by open-calls, in which the process was more important than the final results. Also, it had an online platform through which a network of other free universities that followed this example as well as other online libraries and open sources of information were available.

In 2006, Anton Vidokle (Russia, 1965) organised the project *unitednationsplaza* – "the exhibition as school"⁷. The project was part of Manifesta 6, which was meant to happen that year but unfortunately got cancelled. Nonetheless, Vidokle and his collaborators Liam Gillick, Boris Groys, Natasha Sdrs Haghighian, Nikolaus Hirsch, Walid Raad, Martha Rosler, Jalal Toufic and Tirdad Zolghadr were still dedicated to making the project work. Installed in a building at Platz der Vereinten Nationen (United Nations Plaza) in Berlin, *unitednationsplaza* worked over the period of one year as an open and free temporary art school, providing lectures, seminars, performances and film screenings by a series of artists, curators and writers.

"Unitednationsplaza's alternative approach to the exhibition form is emblematic of a decisive turn in contemporary art toward reformulating a public sphere into the kind and quality associated with the high level of intellectual knowledge produced by the private realm of educational institutions." (Voorhies, 2017: 202)

Anton Vidokle was interested in the format of an art school, with a multidisciplinary dimension that combined between theory and practice. The meetings, collaborations and learning processes were priority – more so than the final products. The audience was also responsible for the project dynamics, as they were expected to participate as much as they felt comfortable with. This allowed, Vidokle described, a productive engagement that changed the traditional perception of the roles of the institution, curator, audience and artist (Vidokle, 2010). The participation of the audience equalised the position of the spectator in relation to the other elements of the artwork, establishing a sense of community:

⁷ *unitednationsplaza* archive (website). Accessed August 23, 2017. <http://www.unitednationsplaza.org/>.

"It did not make an explicit statement to the effect that a system of inclusion and exclusion pervades the contemporary exhibition-making industry, presenting art *to* the spectator. Instead, it enacted the critique by showing the spectator that the exhibition can be porous and produced in accordance with him or her." (Voorhies, 2017: 203)

The programme included the *Martha Rosler Library*, composed of 7700 loaned books from the artist's collection, with subjects "ranging from political theory, war, poetry, feminism, and science fiction to art history, mystery novels, children's books, colonialism, newspaper clippings, and maps." (Voorhies, 2017: 203). The visitors could read the books and even photocopy pages. The library's books were selected in a collaboration between the artist Martha Rosler and Anton Vidokle, whose aim was to create a representative and critical collection of the contemporary cultural and social context (that excluded cookbooks and gardening books, for instance). The library took a significantly critical outlook, as it was a collection of books which were carefully selected – each book with its distinct meaning (Voorhies, 2017).

These projects are only a few examples among several others that were initiated by curators and artists and embraced pedagogical/educative formats that are still impactful to this day (Tallant, 2009). As Peio Aguirre explains, "Art always involves a system of mediations – a series of distances and gaps open up in the representation and mediation of art, and the term 'project' is there to fill these gaps." (Aguirre, 2010: 178).

The dissatisfaction with innovations in the academy contributed to the collaboration between students, teachers and curators inside other educational institutions such as the museum. According to Lois H. Silverman, "museums have *always* been institutions of social service" (Silverman, 2010: 13). The history of social work in museums is still being written, but it can be said that it is present in museums all over the world, most likely since their emergence. The social role, however, works on several levels and can have varying results, depending on the museum and the context. Consciously and unconsciously, museums contribute to the transformation of individuals and their relations in (and with) the society. The education and learning processes in the museum strengthen the social responsibility and provide moments of reflection, which expand the set of references of each visitor (Silva, 2006). Irit Rogoff argues, "Education is by definition processual – involving a low-key transformative process, it embodies duration and the development of a contested common ground" (Rogoff, 2008: 6). Knowledge is the result of

transformative and active individual construction and, in this sense the museum behaves like a space for dialogue, relationships and negotiations for this creation of meaning (Silva, 2006). As a process, learning depends on the following circumstances: prior knowledge of the individual; willingness and expectations to learn; and the approaches used to learn (Silva, 2006). The complex process of interpretation(s), designated learning, is considered an experience: a group of interactions with objects, ideas, spaces, perspectives, and meanings through sensations and conversations (Silva, 2007). The individual experience, explains Falk, is influenced by three key contexts: the personal, the socio-cultural, and the physical; and together they define the "Contextual Model of Learning" (Falk, 2009: 159). The personal context is the previous knowledge and personal interests of the visitor; the socio-cultural refers to the visitor's group interactions both inside and outside the museum; and the physical context concerns the physical tools that the exhibition provides to the visitor (Falk, 2009). The absence of a rigorous teaching/learning and formal evaluation system contributes to the experience, potentiating alternative models of learning and several perspectives on the same issue, which in turn results in the consolidation of meaningful and lasting learning experiences (Silva, 2007). In the context of experiencing, that is not to say that "to do" is the same thing as "to learn" (Silva, 2007). Overall, education in the institutional sense intends to challenge the visitor to raise questions, create goals to potentiate different learning models and to promote collaboration, tolerance, inclusion and imagination (Silva, 2007). Irit Rogoff believes education is related to "the places to which we have access. (...) access as the ability to formulate one's own questions, as opposed to simply answering those that are posed to you in the name of an open and participatory democratic process." (Rogoff, 2008: 8). Education empowers experimental opportunities for the knowledge production, as it challenges stable and conventional ways of learning, which does not mean to ignore the latter but encourages the existence of alternatives (Rogoff, 2008).

The turn that intersected the curatorial and the educational, according to Nora Sternfeld, seemed to behave exclusively according to the curator's perspective (Sternfeld, 2010). The education field, "a discourse that has been marginalized for years is now associated with the themes of conferences and publications, with artistic, political, activist, and theoretical approaches, drawing international attention" (Sternfeld, 2010: 8). Sternfeld argued that the turn considered education as an ensemble of pedagogical tools and ignored

the internal struggles of the educational field (Sternfeld, 2010). Education works with the unexpected, developing projects that do not yield tangible results, but that still contribute to the development of interesting discussions (Sternfeld, 2010). When it comes to socially engaged projects, situations are particularly challenging to control, and there is an increased risk of failure. The unglamorous and tedious aspects of educational tasks are rarely mentioned in essays on the educational dimension of curating because there are moments when nothing interesting necessarily happens, not even knowledge production (Sternfeld, 2010).

When analysing this particular moment in curating practice, the educational turn, it is important to question why we use the term "turn" and what it represents. To "turn" is to change the direction; it requires a movement (Rogoff, 2008). In the context of art and exhibition history, this does not refer to a spatial displacement but rather, in a chronological structure of facts, a shift from the past (Khan, 2010). But, as Irit Rogoff explains:

"Are we talking about reading one system – a pedagogical one – across another system – one of display, exhibition, and manifestation – so that they nudge one another in ways that might open them up to other ways of being? Or, are we talking instead about an active movement – a generative moment in which a new horizon emerges in the process – leaving behind the practice that was its originating point?" (Rogoff, 2008: 1)

In spite of being apparently different fields, the collision of the "notions of learning spaces and exhibiting spaces" (Rogoff, 2006: 13) ends up integrating this large project that is the academy. Education and, therefore, the academy have the political potential to access and debate contemporary and social issues "larger than its own internal questions" (Rogoff, 2006: 14). The curatorial contributes to this opening of possibilities and mediations concerning the presentation and discussion of subjects that, previously, had not been considered valuable for investigation (Rogoff, 2010b). The academy, as part of social reality, can provide the necessary critical tools for people to take an active role in social struggles (Rogoff, 2006). The knowledge production does not happen in isolation through framed and separated subjects, but instead through the contact and interaction between individuals (Rogoff, 2006):

"This shift from organizing exhibitions at the level of visible staging to the production of knowledge connects two areas that have traditionally been closely related in the history of the museum, but are nevertheless rather far apart in terms of their symbolic capital and attention to discourse: the curatorial and the educational." (Sternfeld, 2010: 7)

The educational turn emerged within the notion of "expanded academia" (Poças, 2010: 26), which manifested not only through self-organised projects outside institutions but also through independent movements in specific departments of some institutions. The goal was to create and incorporate as many of alternative art institutions as possible to put an end to the art academy's monopoly of the art education field (Poças, 2010). Irit Rogoff argues, "we work in an expanding field" (Rogoff, 2013: 41): an expression also used by Alex Farquharson as the "expanded field" (Farquharson, 2006: 1), by Jens Hoffmann as "expanding programming" (Hoffmann, 2015: 21) and by Claire Bishop:

"This expanded field of post-studio practices currently goes under a variety of names: socially engaged art, community-based art, experimental communities, dialogic art, littoral art, interventionist art, participatory art, collaborative art, contextual art and (most recently) social practice." (Bishop, 2012: 1)

The independence of the curator led to a "multitasking" profession, which allowed the exploration of other art-related fields, such as opening their own institutions, creating educational projects, writing critical articles or returning to the academy as professors: "besides guest curating, these individuals had developed singular voices as critics and public speakers, especially with regard to articulating curating's expanded field" (Farquharson, 2006: 1). With the dissolution of institutional boundaries, brought by shifts such as New Institutionalism, the position of the "star-curator" transformed into a collaborative practice: "As the art museum today is a hybrid creature, able to be many different things to many different people, so too its professionals need to embrace this multiplicity within their working lives." (Charman, 2005: 8).

In addition, the verb "curating", and related terms, has gained other meaning that had not been associated with the expected exhibition's vocabulary and meanings up to that point. Very often it is used in the music field: music festivals and clubs/bars have their nights "curated" by someone. The opinions differ: some consider that the expression is being misused; others think of it as a positive evolution of the terms. Regardless, it is still up for discussion. Under these circumstances, David Balzer created the concept

"curationism" to describe the repetitive use of curating in so many aspects of our lives, and thus creating a "dominant way of thinking and being". (Balzer, 2014: 10)

The transdisciplinary shifts in curatorial practices displaced the exhibition as the primary curatorial practice, setting it at the same level as education and events such as artistic residencies, workshops, lectures, film screenings, conferences, or performances. Different departments work collaboratively towards an "integrated approach to programming" (Tallant, 2009: 2), in which all programmes have the same emphasis. "The exhibition – in this expanded, extended sense – works, above all, to shape its spectator's experience (...)" (Smith, 2012: 35). With such shifts, the intentions of the exhibition expanded from contemplation to experimentation, interaction and knowledge production, as described in the following chapters.

2.1.3. Curating as a collaborative practice

The concept of collaboration describes projects, actions or events that are produced by more than one person. Eszter Lázár describes collaboration as a "generic name for artworks, exhibitions, or projects, in which, instead of one person (artist, curator), a group of people work and develop a concept together." (Lázár, 2012: 1). Collaboration is an expression usually compared (or even mistaken) with "cooperation". If, on the one hand, collaboration requires the participation of every member in the conceptualisation and execution of the project, on the other hand, cooperation consists in simply sharing of information or help among participants. Cooperation, typically, means that participants are following a structure that has already been planned by the artist, for instance. Collaboration, an "open-ended concept" (Lind, 2007: 17), is not new in the cultural and artistic world, as several artists would work together either in organised partnerships or within the same space. For instance, the Fluxus group on one side and Andy Warhol and his Factory in the other (Lind, 2007). The meaning of working together would contribute mostly to the processual work, through exchanging ideas and methodologies, more so than to the final results.

In her essay "The Collaborative Turn" (2007), Maria Lind explains how collaborative work has several methodologies and agents, making it difficult to study it as a single practice. Collaboration is present in a lot of aspects of our lives. For instance, and

especially nowadays, professional structures are not particularly interested in the production of physical results. Due to the development of the Internet and technologies, employees' competencies should converge to the production of services such as "communication, social relations and cooperation" (Lind, 2007: 20). People are expected to develop skills in personal relationships in order to improve teamwork and collaboration between workers, with the goal of developing networks. In the pursuit of collaboration as the infrastructure of their work, a lot of artists, curators, or activists created self-organised groups under this vision: "It could be said that the sticky wicket they pad around is 'the social' or 'sociality', although they use very different methods to reach their public" (Lind, 2007: 25). The collective work enables them to bring together different fields to work on the same idea and, most of the times, they intend precisely to fight against or for the same particular cause (Lind, 2007). Lind argues that systems of 'working together' have always existed and that they still occur, but now in new and refined ways (Lind, 2007). Collaboration prevails as a critique to individualism, stimulating constructive features such as sympathy, social awareness, sense of community, capability to listen and help the others (Lind, 2007).

In the 1990s, the definition of curator was far from that of someone who took care of rare objects. This period set the "phenomenon of the curator-as-editor as well as the curator-as-star" (Green and Gardner, 2016: 24): exhibitions were already recognised as a medium, and the curator occupied the position of an author, placing the artist in a secondary seat (Green and Gardner, 2016). The independent curator, a term already existent in the 1980s, was internationally recognised as a profession and earned a new popular status in the 1990s. The exhibition seemed to work as a label or an artistic product that reflected the individuality and authorship of the curator: "independent curators began to partake in symposia, publications, and public forums, situating their own practice as the subject of critical discourse." (Abrams, 2013: 1).

Contrary to the star-curator of the 1990s, curators started to work more collaboratively at the beginning of the 21st century. In her text, Maria Lind mentioned the curatorial collective *What, How & for Whom* and their motivation for using the method of collaborative work: "It has to result in something that would otherwise not take place; it simply has to make possible that which is otherwise impossible." (Lind, 2007: 29). Created in 1999 and based in Zagreb (Croatia), the collective reunites four curators (Ivet Curlin,

Ana Dević, Nataša Ilić and Sabina Sabolović) and the designer and publicist Dejan Kršić⁸. As a self-organised collective, they produce exhibiting and publishing projects and manage the Gallery Nova, in Zagreb. The name is based on the three key questions made to starting-projects, namely exhibitions: "What? How? For whom?". Addressing contemporary social and political issues, the WHW collective is interested in using the exhibition as an instrument of reflection and knowledge (Dizon, 2010). The group does not work according to hierarchical structures or established roles/functions (WHW, 2014). All members contribute in the same way to the conceptual process in the creation of projects. When it comes to the practical side of the projects, they distribute tasks (for pragmatic reasons), but final decisions are made together. This group dynamic requires a continuous exercise of dialogue, "tolerance, understanding, and commitment with and to one another" (WHW, 2014: 246). In this way, the collective does not have a fixed work routine, but instead it changes every day and develops through collective experiences and the constant exchange of ideas, perspectives and opinions. In their own words:

"What remains constant from our perspective is the desire to rethink the exhibition as an open and collective recourse equally capable of intervening in existing social surroundings as it is in creating new ones. Exhibitions are a form of communication that is in a constant rehearsal." (WHW, 2014: 247)

Interdisciplinarity can also be recognised as an alternative approach to collaboration, with the recent interest in bringing together different disciplines (Lind, 2007). The former strict boundaries are now transformed into blurred lines that keep the different subjects in contact, contributing and influencing each other. The main critique to this is, while professionalisation and separation of subjects focused on having deep knowledge of each issue, the practice of interdisciplinarity makes it difficult for people to have a similar amount of knowledge in several disciplines. This results in several individuals knowing small amounts of each subject (Lind, 2007). In 2002, Maria Lind became director of the Kunstverein München and initiated the *Sputnik* project, gathering curators, artists and writers in a collaborative structure "intended to shape the institutional functions of the museum." (Voorhies, 2017: 128) The project, which lasted three years, focused on the analysis of the museum's infrastructures and internal organisation. Inspired

⁸ What, How & for Whom/WHW biography and information is available at BAK basis voor actuele kunst website. Accessed August 23, 2017. <https://bakonline.org/en/Contributors/What-How-For-Whom-WHW>.

by the Russian "sputnik" concept, which means "travelling companion" and "partner", the project included participants from different age groups and backgrounds such as Carey Young, Deimantas Narkevičius, Lynne Cooke, Matts Leiderstam, Bik Van der Pol, Jan Verwoert, Apolonija Šušteršič, and Liam Gillick. Following the lines of New Institutionalism, the group had access to the museum's behind the scenes in order to "recommend interventions-as-artwork in response to how the institution functioned" (Voorhies, 2017: 128), in areas such as design, architecture and communication. *Sputnik* resulted in, for instance, the redesign of the Kunstverein's hallway:

"Originating with the intention to activate the museum's entrance by encouraging more sustained social possibilities for an underused space, [Apolonija] Šušteršič's *Eintritt* (*Entrance*) (2002-ongoing) consisted of an arrangement of comfortable chairs and tables for visitors to relax on. She inserted a coffee bar at which people could meet, and a workstation the museum's curatorial staff took turns manning, performing their administrative functions in the public realm while acting as a kind of welcome center-cum-lounge for museum visitors." (Voorhies, 2017: 130)

When approached to integrate the *Sputnik* project, the artists and curators were not immediately informed about what they were going to do. The decision process, in collaboration with the institution and the other participants, was already part of the project (Voorhies, 2017). Often, the relationship between the artist and the curator is one of collaboration, a dynamic which is palpable in *Sputnik* (Lázár, 2012). Commissioned work is the result of dialogue, a collaboration whereby they reach a unanimous possibility of an answer by working together. It is an exercise of idea sharing and discussion, in which the disagreements also contribute to the formation of a new object (Lázár, 2012). Ultimately, and using the curator-artist relationship as an example, collaboration generates collective thinking and questioning when it comes to authorship (Lind, 2007).

2.1.4. Mediation: a relationship between curator and educator

The term mediation refers to the transmission of a message from one part to another (Lind, 2013b). The origin of the word, "*Vermittlung*" in German, means conflict management mainly concerning military and political confrontations (Andreasen and Larsen, 2011). It implies a conflict; from which mediation emerges, through negotiation and reconciliation (Lind, 2013b). Mediation is formulated through two concepts, "passage"

and "social link" – that also belong, as metaphors, to the cultural and artistic field (Dufrêne and Gelereau, 2004). Cultural mediation can be perceived from two perspectives: on the one hand, the mediation itself (exhibitions, written documents and dynamics that work according to the audience's participation) and, on the other hand, the mediation between the different mediative systems (i.e. the articulation and communication between them) (Dufrêne and Gelereau, 2004). Mediation is a broad concept that includes actions such as solving conflicts, establishing relations, building bridges: it is a dynamic process of interaction (Kaitavuori, 2013). According to Maria Lind, "It is essentially about creating contact surfaces between works of art, curated projects, and people, about various forms and intensities of communicating about and around art." (Lind, 2013b: 89). Mediation concerns museum education and communication, through promoting dialogue, inclusion and reflection in a "productive strategy to shape these social spaces and practices" through "immaterial forms of collaboration" (Semedo, 2014: 172). It is "decisive and necessary" (Bernard, 2004: 165) in order to continually understand and evaluate our systems of knowledge production and our capacities of communication. Mediation lives in the in-between, acting and creating meaning in the borderlines (Semedo, 2014). However, it is not a passive in-betweenness; it has an active presence and contributes not only to conflict resolution but also in creating said conflicts. Aside from reaching an agreement, the goal of mediation is to stimulate the difference, to encourage the encounter of ideas and the potential of these collisions (Andreasen and Larsen, 2011). Mediation is not something stable, as it evolves according to the surrounding context (Dufrêne and Gelereau, 2004).

In the introduction of the book *It's All Mediating: Outlining and Incorporating the Roles of Curating and Education in the Exhibition Context* (2013), Kaija Kaitavuori explains how mediation emerges from the work of both educator and curator and, mainly, from the relationship between them: "These functions have been part of the core mission since the beginning of the public museum institution but have not always been separated into individual professions." (Kaitavuori, 2013: x). The roles of curator and educator are a result of a process of professionalisation in art institutions that disassociated fields and responsibilities. Consequently, the curator is expected to take care of artistic objects and to exhibit them, while the educator is expected to take care of people and to welcome them to the museum (Kaitavuori, 2013). This professionalisation resulted in an unbalanced and hierarchical separation (Kaitavuori, 2013); which, in the end, led to querying whether the

separation between professions was more of a restriction than an expansion of opportunities (Kaitavuori, 2013). Nora Sternfeld explains, "it is necessary to deconstruct the role of educators and curators as "mediators" between the object and the visitor and to try to unlearn many of the fundamental truths within the art and exhibition field" (Sternfeld, 2013: 3).

In the essay "Why Mediate Art?" (2013), Maria Lind identifies two main educational approaches in the art institution context and uses the Museum of Modern Art as an example of these methods. The educational approach does not simply consist of its activities: its content exists beyond practical applications such as guided tours or pedagogical activities (Kaitavuori, 2013). The first method relates to the work of Alfred Barr, the Museum of Modern Art's founding director. Barr did not add pedagogical activities at the end of the exhibition-making process, as the didactic dimension was already integrated into the exhibition itself. It was no secret that the displaying in art institutions, namely in the MoMA, was influenced by the market and business strategies and inspired in the layout of department stores. The relation to consumerism and the influence of *branding* in curatorial practices was clear, and indeed the visitor was considered an "educated consumer". In this sense, the educational approaches "tended to be more visual and spatial than discursive" (Lind, 2013b: 86) in this context. In 1937, the MoMA launched a separated educational department managed by Victor E. D'Amico, which leads us to the second method of the educational approach. The activities developed by the department stimulated the visitors' participation and drew upon their imagination. This approach was more concerned with the artistic capacities of the visitor than with the contemplation and interpretation of the art exhibited (Lind, 2013b). Both approaches, the educated consumer and the participant, encouraged the individuality of the visitor – contrary to the collectivist model of spectatorship influenced by Constructivism and featured, for instance, in Relational Aesthetics with artists such as Philippe Parreno and Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster (Lind, 2013b). Lind argues, "All of the above count as forms of mediation, employed more or less consciously: integrated didacticism, supplementary participatory education and pedagogy, and finally narrative information deployed both inside and outside the institution." (Lind, 2013b: 89).

According to Gilles Deleuze, "Mediators are fundamental. Creation is all about mediators. Without them, nothing happens." (Deleuze, 1992: 285) In this sense and

following Barr's model of exhibition's integrated didacticism, the curator assumes the role of the mediator, performing as "the instrument/channel through which the discourses on art would come to be generated, and the creator of a particular kind of site of production: that associated with the making of meaning and value in the context of an expanded field of cultural production." (Shah, 2017: 1) The curator becomes the central figure that connects agents, artworks and the audience through dialogue and knowledge production (Shah, 2017). The traditional curatorial practices – of selecting, installing, questioning, and contextualising – are already didactic mediation (Lind, 2013b). As Paul O'Neill argues, exhibitions "are the main means through which contemporary art is now mediated, experienced and historicized." (O'Neill, 2007: 15). The display and promote functions of curatorial practices end up integrated in the meaning of the artworks; and it is the curator's responsibility to contextualise and explain – or, in other words, to mediate – these meanings, through the development of adequate dialogues and the production of texts around artworks (Shah, 2017).

The educational and participatory activities that most art institutions create to complete exhibitions are, according to Lind, an "abundance of didacticism": easy to avoid if the visitor is not interested in participating (Lind, 2013b). On the contrary, the "semivisible practices" (Semedo, 2014: 173) of curatorial mediation are already integrated into the exhibition (Lind, 2013b). Mediation provides more space for active engagement with exhibitions and less to "compensatory" educational actions (Lind, 2013b: 89):

"Educational concerns are important, maybe even essential in democratic societies. But this attitude often clashes with high-modernist ideas about art not imposing itself on its viewers—that it is, or at least should be, strong enough to stand on its own feet and speak for itself, removed from “external” contexts. Which leads to decontextualized “What do you see and what do you feel” pedagogy." (Lind, 2013b: 88)

Mediation is inherent to institutions and was already present in their environments; however, it is essential to understand that there is not only *a mediation* but instead a large system of mediations continuously developing in art institutions (Lind, 2013b). In fact, contemporary art shifts such as the New Institutionalism diluted borders between fields, and now it is less important to define if a project "is the result of a curatorial, educational or artistic process." (Kaitavuori, 2013: xv) The mediator works in an in-betweenness, able

to gather information from a large number of subjects, taking over different spaces simultaneously (Shah, 2017) and occupying "the grey areas of mediation" (Andreasen and Larsen, 2011: 21).

2.2. Exhibition-making and the curatorial as tools for knowledge production

2.2.1. Exhibition-making

The exhibition, as studied in the sub-chapter "New Institutionalism and The Curatorial", was part of several curatorial and institutional movements that contributed to its expanded form. The innovative introduction of the project and event-based structures in which participation, collaboration, dialogical and experimental methods were essential features, contributed to the exhibition as a phenomenon that not only displayed knowledge but also produced knowledge. To better understand the changes that the exhibition experienced through time, this chapter analyses critical moments of the exhibition-making history that contributed to the exhibition as knowledge production. The exhibition is considered the "primary curatorial product" (Hoffmann, 2015: 11). It is the fundamental meeting point of all the agents in the artistic and cultural sphere, such as the artist, curator, critic and institution, and it engages them in an endless dialogue with the audience (Altshuler, 2008). It is true that the structure of art institutions is constantly changing; however, concerning the display of artworks, the exhibition can still be acknowledged as the preferred medium due to its infinite possibilities (Hoffmann, 2015). The history of exhibition-making coincides with the evolution of the museum, that up until the middle of the twentieth century could be described, according to Karsten Schubert, as a rather linear narrative: "Starting in Paris in the 1790s, the narrative shifted to London to the latter part of the nineteenth century, to Berlin at the beginning of the twentieth century, to America in 1929 with the founding of the Museum of Modern Art, and back to Paris again in the 1970s." (Schubert, 2009: 65)

The museum was first perceived as an imposing space, an elitist and private institution, only accessible to certain social classes (Bennett, 1996). In this context, the purpose of the exhibition was to show objects in private collections as well as historical documents that would help study and understand the history of humankind (Schubert, 2009). The artefacts, which belonged to diverse cultures and historical periods, were displayed according to traditional chronological structures, organised by dates and styles (Meijers, 1992). The "obsessive curatorial fixation on the chronology that overruled all other considerations" (Schubert, 2009: 25) fulfilled the exhibitions' goals of teaching the

general public at the same time it preserved historical documentation. The scholarly and educational potential of the collections was the fundamental concern of the museum, placing the visitor experience as a secondary interest – as it could be verified through the incomplete labels and weak texts in the exhibitions (Schubert, 2009).

The process of opening and expanding museums that took place between the 17th and 19th centuries occurred at the same time as the increased social and economic independence of artists and the development of the art market, which resulted in the production of several official and semi-official exhibitions (Pereira, 2013): "The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were also when our modern usage of the word "exhibition" developed. Though not exclusively used for art, it did refer generally to showing publicly." (Ward, 1996: 320). Institutions began to show interest in promoting living and contemporary artists. It culminated in the famous Paris Salons, organised by the Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture, initially in the Palais Royal and, later, in the Grande Galerie du Louvre, as well as exhibitions in London, prepared by the Royal Academy of Arts (Pereira, 2013). The walls of these spaces were filled with artworks from different artists and genres, in exhibitions that happened periodically. The exhibition of this time, in salons and international art fairs, was not concerned with the exhibitionary design or the curatorial conceptualisation, since the objective was to present the largest number of works. The exhibition, which had contemplative and commercial purposes, did not particularly aim to stimulate interpretative analysis; curatorial practices were still not recognised as a discipline:

"Despite the appearance during this period of the institutions that are now commonly taken to be synonymous with the creation of an autonomous space for art (museums, art societies, salons, galleries), it's nevertheless the case that art installation was not yet a subject for professional discussion, with a language of its own." (Ward, 1996: 319)

The official exhibitions, mostly managed by the state, had a jury that handled the admission of artists and, consequently, the most innovative and radical work would not be accepted. As such, artists would organise alternative and individual exhibitions as a demonstration of their dissatisfaction. Nevertheless, the concept of exhibition did not constitute a language yet; the curatorial discourse was not a subject worthy of discussion or study up until the twentieth century:

"A range of developments in the early twentieth century— the beginnings of historicized museum installations, distinguishing among epochs in terms of modes of visibility, for instance; and the new American science of advertising, with its psychologizing of design in terms of attraction and attention— such developments as these brought about a new self-consciousness of how the relationship of viewer and object could or should be mediated through presentation." (Ward, 1996: 319)

It was in the twentieth century that the museum experienced a radical turn. The exhibition transformed into an "aesthetic-education experience" (Schubert, 2009: 27), and the museum was more engaged with the visitor. The strict and historical exhibitions gave place to "ahistorical exhibitions" (Meijers, 1992: 10), which recognised the individuality of each artwork. The development of the exhibition in this century followed and adapted to the evolution of the artistic movements, and its experimental and conceptual formats:

"The history of art exhibitions of the 20th century is riddled with attempts to amend the relationship between the development of artistic tendencies and the experimentation of new display concepts. Avant-garde art exhibitions often tried to model themselves after the characteristics of the art they displayed for the public, thus manifesting themselves as works of the same genre they were showing." (Calderoni, 2011: 64)

The exhibitions began to reveal curatorial processes in the display of modern artists: the selection and contextualisation of artists were carefully planned according to its artistic content (rather than commercial values, as it was before). The third edition of *Salon d'Automne* (Paris), in 1905, was a good example of a turning point in the history of modern exhibitions, which gathered artists such as Renoir, Kandinsky and Cézanne in a show. Likewise, in 1913, New York welcomed the work of American and European artists in *The International Exhibition of Modern Art* (also known as the *Armory Show*), another influential event in the history of American exhibitions (Pereira, 2013).

The juxtaposition of works, according to thematic subjects, from different styles, media and periods, was "often used to make difficult subjects more accessible." (Newhouse, 2005: 258) Furthermore, the increasing international diffusion of art, along with the exchange of artists and artworks contributed to the spreading of the "large scale thematic exhibition" (Altshuler, 2008: 13). The thematic format was often used in both temporary and permanent exhibitions and followed a structure of storytelling that allowed a more profound understanding of each work by being presented them together

(Newhouse, 2005). Relying on a "curatorial concept", the curator selected and excluded artworks with the attempt of creating unexpected relationships between them. According to Nicholas Serota, "This principle of interpretation, of combining works for different artists to give selective readings, both of art and of the history of art, is also one of the fundamentals that has underwritten curatorial practice since the mid-nineteenth century." (Serota, 1996: 8). In his opinion, the curatorial process present in the display was in itself an interpretation of the artwork to the viewer, who was acknowledging discourses based on the subjective decisions of the curator (Hoffmann, 2015). Pierre Bourdieu describes this as "educational capital"⁹, referring to the power of institutions to control, through exhibitions, *what* information they provide and *how* they provide it to society in order to "educate" it.

It was in this century that the museum was more committed to the production, collection and exhibition of contemporary art: "once the museum emerged as the new place of worship, artists began to work specifically for the museum" (Groys, 2008: 44). Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain* (1917) – the transformation of a banal urinal into a modern sculpture – represented precisely this power of placement that the exhibition has:

"Placement has affected the perception of art, however, since the first cave paintings. Where an artwork is seen – be it in a cave, a church, a palace, a museum, a commercial gallery, an outdoor space, or a private home – and where it is placed within that chosen space can confer a meaning that is religious, political, decorative, entertaining, moralizing, or educational." (Newhouse, 2005: 8)

The power of display influenced the aesthetic and economic value of the artwork, as it was a deciding factor to its appreciation (Newhouse, 2005). According to Emma Barker, "the condition of being on display is fundamental to the construction of the category 'art' in the modern western world" (Barker, 1999: 13). The display in the gallery space conceded the objects the status of artwork, which they would lose outside of it: "It is a form of representation as well as a mode of presentation" (Barker, 1999: 13). To summarise, Nicholas Serota explains the three main events that influenced the development of modern art during the twentieth century:

"(...) firstly, a change in the relationship between the work of art and the space in which it is shown; secondly, the transfer by some artists of their place of work from the seclusion of the private studio to the public arena of the museum; and finally, an

⁹ Bourdieu cited by Richter, 2011: 51.

ever greater awareness by artists of the conventions of the museum itself. Each of these factors has contributed to a shift in the balance of the relationship between artist and curator." (Serota, 1996: 20)

The emergence of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, in 1929, was considered as one of the remarkable moments in museum and exhibition history (Schubert, 2009). Contrary to other American museums, influenced by the European museum scene, the MoMA was truly innovative since it exclusively collected and presented modern art (Schubert, 2009). It emerged from the collaboration between Lillie P. Bliss, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller and Mary Sullivan, who invited Alfred Barr to be the director of the museum (Schubert, 2009). Barr's vision on the power of exhibitions was innovative since he perceived the museum as "a laboratory; in its experiments, the public is invited to participate"¹⁰. The director was interested not only in the visitors' presence but also, and primarily, in their participation and integration in the museum's environment. The MoMA's collection included modern painting, sculpture, photography, architecture, design and film, "covering the entire spectrum of contemporary visual culture." (Schubert, 2009: 45) The goal of the MoMA's collection was to document and contribute to history and art history and especially to encourage social debates and critical opinions on contemporary issues through the subjects displayed. The exhibition and promotion of contemporary art were outlining a chronological order of history of the emergent artistic movements, with the aim of studying their contexts and the way they developed one after the other. By categorising and placing the movements within their respective historical periods, it led to an improvement of the research work on these artistic and museum practices (Schubert, 2009). Barr paid careful attention to the exhibition's details, especially in terms of audience experience and in 1937 he created an education department in the museum, managed by Victor d'Amico: "Education for Barr was not a side issue but central to the success of the whole venture, and with missionary zeal he devoted himself to developing new methods and approaches in this area." (Schubert, 2009: 45) In addition to exhibitions, the MoMA provided parallel educative activities, such as guided tours and the publication of catalogues. The catalogue – an assembly of written representations and reflections about the displayed objects – constituted the discursive dimension of the exhibition, recalling its narrative structure and meaningful textual component (O'Brian, 2005). These activities

¹⁰ Barr cited by Schuber, 2009: 45.

coincided with the will of the museum's director to involve the audience in the production of research contents and knowledge.

After the Second World War, in the 1960s, the history of exhibitions, according to Karsten Schubert, returned to Europe and was a period marked by radical transformations that rejected conservative ideas from institutions such as the museum (Schubert, 2009). This decade also witnessed the emergence of artistic movements such as post-minimal art, conceptual art and Arte Povera as well as new mediums such as video, performance, site-specific and happenings.

"(...) the 1960s – art's *material objectivity*, *medium specificity*, *visuality*, and *autonomy*. As a means of exploring these attributes, curators conjured new ways of making exhibitions that attempted to resolve how such conceptual and dematerialized practices could be presented, while providing a more visible curatorial structure within which the work of art could be best displayed. There were many exhibition moments in which the artwork (that which is made for presentation by an artist), the curatorial structure (the principal organizational framework for which this artwork is made), the techniques of mediation (the methods employed to communicate the work beyond the exhibition form), and the exhibition format (the type of presentation in which these relations are made manifest to a public) collapsed into one another." (O'Neill, 2012: 22)

The exhibition remained a fundamental dimension of artworks, and their existence somehow relied on its public presentation: "the spatial and temporal context of artistic production would coincide with the context of the exhibition" (Calderoni, 2011: 65). The *atelier* was no longer the conventional production space: the idea of the "modern artist" was renewed now that he created and presented his pieces in the exhibition framework (Calderoni, 2011). The space of the exhibition was intended to be as neutral as possible, which introduced the notion of "white cube". (O'Doherty, 1999) The gallery space – clean, white, synthetic, empty – transported the visitor to a different reality with no space-time relation and in which objects were staged similarly to theatrical performances (Hoffmann, 2015). Brian O'Doherty described it as a product of the purity of the church, the correctness of the courtroom and the mysteriousness of the experimental laboratory, combined with aesthetics and design (O'Doherty, 1999). The gallery had such a mystic environment that could make the visitor feel like an intruder (O'Doherty, 1999). Yet, this contradicted the purpose of the gallery exhibition, which was to be the object of visitor's gaze (Boris, 2009). The gallery was the meeting point of ideas and debates that were

inspired by the presence of artworks. Although designed to be invisible, it was hard to ignore the possibilities of the gallery space. The walls, for instance, were part of the exhibition's design and were the artwork's framework, ergo they inevitably produced meaning (O'Doherty, 1999).

The exhibition became more and more space for discussions about curatorial and artistic practices. The role of the curator, aside from mediating the artist-institution relationship and facilitating the artistic process, also began to incorporate the art critic role: "The exhibition turns into the vehicle through which critical thinking about art is developed." (Calderoni, 2011: 77). As a matter of fact, James Voorhies recently published *Beyond Objecthood: The Exhibition as a Critical Form Since 1968* (2017), which he described as the following:

"It is the first in-depth study to draw a corollary between late modernist artistic strategies engaged with the exhibition form and the subsequent unravelling and dispersal of those strategies into curatorial practices at major institutions and biennials in the Western world. It examines how the exhibition as a critical form originally took shape in the United States, only to be taken up with greater interest and concentration in Europe, most notably by curator Harald Szeemann in the early 1970s and, in the 1990s, by curators and artists (mostly European) operating under what is referred to as New Institutionalism." (Voorhies, 2017: 10)

"The exhibition as a critical form" owes a great deal to the respectable work of Harald Szeemann. As director of Kunsthalle Bern, the Swiss curator organised between 12 and 15 exhibitions every year, contributing to the encounter and presentation of artists from the European and American scene (Obrist, 2008). His most significant work, the exhibition *Live in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form (Works – Concepts – Processes – Situations – Information)*, assembled post-Minimalist and Conceptual artists and was held in 1969. The show was a breaking point in the history of exhibitions: it caused such controversy that it resulted in Szeemann's resignation as a director and led to his decision to work as an independent curator (Obrist, 2008). In a way, this exhibition symbolised the importance of the curator as an author and producer of knowledge, together with the artists. Szeemann invited artists from different backgrounds and artistic movements, from "the United States, Italy, Germany, France, England, Belgium and Switzerland to come together in Bern to turn the Kunsthalle into a workshop" (Voorhies, 2017: 75). The exhibition did not have a particular theme, and the works were not

categorised by medias or periods (Altshuler, 2008). As Szeemann argued in the exhibition's catalogue, in that period the artists were no longer dependent on the final result of their work, considering that what mattered was the actual presence of the artist as well as the presentation of the artistic process (Szeemann, 1969). The artists took over the inside and the outside of the museum, where the visitors could find:

"(...) Joseph Beuys rubbing fat into the crevice where the gallery wall meets the floor, in *Fettecke (Fat Corner)* (1969); Richard Serra splattering 460 pounds of hot lead into and along the space where the wall intersects the floor in an adjacent gallery and calling it *Splash Piece* (1968/1969); and a large demolition ball smashing to bits the side-walk in front of the Kunsthalle in Michael Heizer's *Bern Depression* (1969)." (Voorhies, 2017: 76)

The materiality of objects was not as important as the artist's actions. And that was precisely what the exhibition's title described: when the artist's attitudes become form. The exhibition demonstrated the infinite possibilities of curatorial processes and a new perspective of the curator, whose role evolved to that of creating exhibitions as new artistic objects (Hoffmann, 2015). Later in 1972, Harald Szeemann produced the Documenta 5 in Kassel. Documenta is a model that started in 1955 and is organised every five years (Voorhies, 2017). Created in the post-war context, the Documenta's goal was "the stimulation of local economy and the elevation of Germany's international prestige" (Voorhies, 2017: 75). Szeemann's proposal for the Documenta 5 was, following the dynamic and energetic structure of *When Attitudes Become Form*, to bring the exhibition out of the Fridericianum Museum and the Neue Galerie and transform the city of Kassel into an exhibition space (Voorhies, 2017). The curator replaced the Documenta's slogan "100-Day Museum" with "100-Day Event" because his interest was not to display artworks with the aim of the documenting art history but to organise a series of interactive events (Voorhies, 2017). These decisions were a critique of the institutional art systems that detained the power of authenticating art. Szeemann intended to evacuate the museum and make it look abandoned during the Documenta 5, while the events would take place in a large tent in Friedrichsplatz (Voorhies, 2017). Besides the tent, there would be *The Visitor's School*, a concept created by the artist and professor Bazon Brock, which would function as "learning site-as-exhibition" so that "the visiting public would become active agents in the exhibition" (Voorhies, 2017: 82). Due to budget cuts, the activities had to be

moved into the museum and in areas around or close to it, changing their context and therefore setting aside the initial critique of institutional spaces. Overall, Harald Szeemann's ambitious plan had to be scaled down. With the title *Questioning Reality – Image Worlds Today* it opened on June 30, 1972:

"It was a thematic exhibition that presented art as an array of social experiences and tableaux, inspiring questions concerning the disappearing boundaries between entertainment, design, architecture, theatre, and advertising, and the increasing challenge to distinguish between fine art and popular culture." (Voorhies, 2017: 85)

The curator included objects of everyday life from different media and contexts into the exhibition: "For Szeemann, within the exhibition's umbrella theme of questioning reality he looked toward everyday cultural production as the constitution of a reality understood and lived by modern society." (Voorhies, 2017: 85) Once more, his work elevated the curator's role to that of an author and invited the audience to question the relationship between art and reality. The artists, however, were not pleased with the excessive amount of power that the curator had over their work (Voorhies, 2017). They did not feel comfortable with how the curator limited the way in which they wanted to present their work, in the interest of constructing his own social critique. Several artists protested the lack of consultation and communication between the curator and the artists with regard to the conditions in which their artworks were to be displayed. Carl Andre, Hans Haacke, Donald Judd, Barry Le Va, Sol LeWitt, Robert Morris, Dorothea Rockburne, Fred Sandback and Richard Serra joined to express their disapproval about Documenta 5 in a document published in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (Voorhies, 2017). Robert Smithson wrote a letter refusing to participate in the exhibition, while Daniel Buren wrote an essay criticising the way exhibitions were increasingly acting as artistic objects: both documents were included in the exhibition's catalogue, contributing to the initial reflections and critiques raised by Harald Szeemann in the Documenta 5 (Voorhies, 2017). Conversely, some artists were receptive to Szeemann's thematic context and museum's critique. Joseph Beuys (Germany, 1921-1986) produced and performed *Bureau for Direct Democracy, through Referendum* (1972), which consisted of an office within the exhibition at the Museum Fridericianum. The artist was at the exhibition every day, welcoming the visitors and encouraging public debates about contemporary social and political subjects:

"Along the lines of Szeemann's vision, Beuys transformed the exhibition into a space for conversation about political and social change, including issues such as the right to free education, and discussions regarding the degree to which art maintains an autonomous position within the realm of social and economic influences." (Voorhies, 2017: 92)

Beuys considered the discussions that took place in this space as a medium of his work; in this sense, he associated the artistic production with the knowledge production, dialogue and individual expression of the visitors (Voorhies, 2017). The exhibition *When Attitudes Become Form* and Documenta 5 established Harald Szeemann as an innovative and remarkable curator, a significant influence on many of the following generations of curators (Voorhies, 2017). The close collaboration with artists, the interest in bringing common social and political subjects to the art institution to question the institution itself, the innovative models of mediation, and the relationship with the audience contributed to Szeemann's demonstration of how art and exhibitions can have an impact on people (Voorhies, 2017). The evolution of the role of the curator gave it a voice and influential presence within the art system, establishing the independence, freedom, and the role of producer of final objects that could be likened to artworks (Richter, 2010).

Different curatorial approaches displayed new artistic work throughout the century. Museums were now more interested in disclosing curatorial and artistic processes than the isolated final results. In this sense, curators, artists, and the audience were all involved from the beginning and virtually at the same hierarchical level when creating exhibitions: "As a result of this deconstruction the museum became truly self-conscious" (Schubert, 2009: 57). According to Karsten Schubert, the emergence of Centre Pompidou in Paris in 1977 provoked a change in the linear narrative of exhibitions' history, as previously mentioned. The innovative curatorial practices of its first director, Pontus Hultén (Sweden, 1924-2006), resulted in exhibitions such as:

"'Paris-New York' (1977), 'Paris-Berlin' (1978), 'Paris-Moscow' (1980), 'Paris-Paris' (1983), as well as 'Les Réalismes' (1980) and 'Vienne: Apocalypse Joyeuse 1880-1938' (1986)" [that] revealed the history of modernism as something much more complex, anarchic and volatile than so far conceded by a MoMA-inspired, apolitical aestheticism and its insistence on a strictly formal and autobiographical reading of art." (Schubert, 2009: 59)

The exhibition trilogy Paris-New York, Paris-Berlin and Paris-Moscow emerged from a desire to discuss the interrelations between the cultural capitals in the east-west axis (Hultén, 1997). Their approach to the analysis of the history of modernism was, through this multidisciplinary project, a reflection of the cultural, political and social diversity. Pontus Hultén believed that the primary responsibility of a museum was to develop an audience – while producing great exhibitions was secondary – in the sense that people most probably will visit the museum because they trust its programme (Hultén, 1997). The establishment of a positive relationship with the audience was possible through the welcoming environment of, what Hultén called, an "open-museum":

"Not an anti/museum but a place where there is a natural contact between artists and the public in developing the most contemporary elements of creativity. Such a museum is not simply a place to conserve works which have completely lost their individual, social, religious or public function but a place where artists meet their public and where the public themselves become creators."¹¹

The decade of 1980 was considered a period of the (re)discovery of the public, which turned into the "focal point" of the museum (Schubert, 2009: 70). From this period onwards, the increasing dependence on ticket sales (as a result of lack of institutional funding) equated the structure of the museum to the structure of corporate enterprises, holding marketing and fundraising functions: "How to increase attendance figures in order to justify public expenditure – and attract sponsorship – became the new focus of curatorial thinking." (Schubert, 2009: 70) This impacted the mission and management of museums and, consequently, the production of exhibitions – considering that when the "institution speaks, it speaks exhibitions" (Ferguson, 1994: 131). The institutions started dedicating more time to the temporary exhibitions, than to the display of their permanent collections. The possibilities of exhibition's themes and formats were infinite, and the emergence of a multiplicity of museums contributed to the diversity of institutions (Schubert, 2009). The exhibition intended to attract the highest number of people, which resulted in the continuous dynamic innovation of the museum to upgrade both the temporary and permanent exhibitions. The exhibition combined subjects from different fields, intersecting art with science, history or popular culture, and was held in unconventional spaces outside the museum. The exhibition *Laboratorium* took place in the Provinciaal Museum voor

¹¹ Hultén cited by Serota, 1996: 14.

Fotografie and several other public spaces of Antwerp, in 1999. The exhibition, organised by the curators Hans Ulrich Obrist (Switzerland, 1968) and Barbara Vanderlinden¹², was:

"an interdisciplinary project that involved collaborations between artists and scientists in Antwerp, Belgium, looking specifically at what unites them in terms of working processes – as the exhibition statement proposed, artists and scientists share a spirit of "imagination and experimentation" – and in terms of their respective sites of production, namely the studio and the laboratory." (Hoffmann, 2014: 82)

The exhibition included the work of artists such as Daniel Bruen, Harun Farocki, Kiam Gillick, Bruno Latour, Martha Rosler and Meg Stuart, among others. The exhibition was spread through Antwerp, a city that the curators decided to announce as a lab; and each workstation had a different theme, in which the visitors had the chance to produce their own experiments (Hoffmann, 2014). Obrist claimed that "there is often a lack of experimentation, that one is always too afraid to fail" (Obrist, 2011: 191), and an exhibition is an excellent tool to ask questions, make mistakes, and to trigger experimental and critical reactions. The curators set up their office as one of the exhibition's workstations, in somewhat of a "curatorial laboratory" (Hoffmann, 2014: 82). The exhibition emphasised the importance of an open process, constructed in the laboratory environment. It connected art and science, curatorship and experiments; and resulted in a collective and accessible knowledge production. For instance, *Laboratorium's* catalogue – Bruce Mau's piece *Book Machine* – was created alongside the exhibition: each day a new page was displayed so that the audience could follow the conceptualisation of the exhibition's final document.

The globalised world and changes in the private and public domains of society resulted in an enormous amount of interest and led to the creation of numerous cultural/artistic spaces, the so-called "creative industries" (Pereira, 2013).

"With the emergence of cultural and demographic changes towards post-modernity and the post-industrial leisure society, the public's perception of the museum shifted from educational to recreational, from research and display to a more audience-driven and service-oriented approach." (Schubert, 2009: 67)

¹² There is no information available on Barbara Vanderlinden's birthplace or year of birth.

The beginning of the new century, along with (and probably because of) New Institutionalism, brought educational approaches to the exhibition process: "In 2006, Manifesta 6 was intended to pose an alternative to the usual format of the biennial exhibition by applying such practices as knowledge production and the curatorialization of education." (Voorhies, 2017: 198) The idea of the exhibition as an educational tool was not new – the initial concept of exhibition already included the display of artworks from subjects such as cinema, performance, and literature as well as universal culture, history and everyday social issues, in order to educate society (Hoffmann, 2015). Organised by the curators Mai Abu ElDahab (Egypt)¹³, Florian Waldvogel (Germany, 1969), and the artist Anton Vidokle, Manifesta 6 end up not happening. The idea was to organise an art school, inspired by the Black Mountain College model: "a multifunctional site of discursive activity including criticism, research, experimentation, exhibitions, discussion, sharing, collaboration, and film screenings." (Voorhies, 2017: 198) The project was a critique of the biennial model, its repetitive and predictable selection of themes, artists and commercial interests. Through an alternative to the biennial's exhibition model, the curators aimed to "educate" new audiences. The plan was to set up the Manifesta 6 School in the city of Nicosia, in Cyprus – a country geographically and politically divided into two parts (the Greek part and the Turkish part). The International Foundation Manifesta (IFM), the organising agency of Manifesta, purposely chose Nicosia as this provided an opportunity to study and understand its conflicting environment as well as the relations between Europe, the Middle East and Northern Africa (Voorhies, 2017). The exhibition-as-school programme would be free and open to everyone, and was divided into two departments, individually managed by each curator: "One department would comprise an online educational initiative and another a nomadic school that would be run at different locations throughout Nicosia, such as theatres and bars." (Voorhies, 2017: 200) Vidokle's department consisted of a public education and residencies programme to be set in an old hotel in the Turkish Cypriot part of Nicosia, and it would be running through the three months of Manifesta. Although the curators' intention was to offer activities on both sides of Nicosia, Vidokle's project gave the impression that they had planned the exhibition programme only on the Turkish side (Voorhies, 2017), which led to the Manifesta's cancellation. Later, Anton Vidokle would use the ideas of the exhibition-as-school in the

¹³ There is no information available on Mai Abu ElDahab's year of birth.

form of *unitednationsplaza* (2006) and *Night School* (2008), as described in the first chapter.

"Museums increasingly began to view their permanent collections and temporary exhibitions as invitations to an open dialogue between curator and viewer. (...) Museums no longer hide the curatorial hand and present only the end product, but make visible the entire underlying decision-making process" (Schubert, 2009: 67)

The museum has been working towards a dynamic and open space, and the exhibitions reflect this mission. The exhibition is a "communicative space" (Richter, 2011: 48): a meeting point of people, art, institutions and political, cultural, social, economic systems. As a collective practice, it encourages the dialogue and communication between all of these participants, since it "allows for a sense of being alone together – to be part of a shared experience" (Hoffmann, 2015: 11). There is a positive outcome when, from this shared experience, both visitor and exhibition contribute to and influence each other. The exhibition's goal is to generate contemplation, observation, interpretation and change with the audience and/or society with the sole purpose of producing knowledge (Belcher, 1991).

2.2.2. The curatorial

Throughout exhibition-making history, there has been an increasing necessity to separate curating and the curatorial into two distinct concepts. Curating consists in producing exhibitions and all that that entails: the development of a concept/theory, selection of artworks, contact with artists for the commission of new work, fundraising, and management of complement activities (Hoffmann and Lind, 2011). It is everything that the profession requires in the practical sense, particularly the installation and display of art. Maria Lind describes curating "as a way of thinking in terms of interconnections: linking objects, images, processes, people, locations, histories, and discourses in physical space like an active catalyst, generating twists, turns, and tensions." (Lind, 2009: 63) The curatorial is immaterial and goes beyond curating. Lind describes it as something that can be performed or employed outside the limits of curating. Through methodologies that diverge from the artwork and its display, the curatorial presents the artworks in different contexts and dimensions in time/space, in order to challenge the status quo (Hoffmann and Lind, 2011). Introducing the PhD programme Curatorial/Knowledge at Goldsmiths

(London), Irit Rogoff and Jean Paul Martinon argued that the distinction between curating and curatorial is indispensable because, due to the quick and exponential evolution of curating, there was a lack of reflection, research and theorisation within the field¹⁴. They explained:

"While 'curating' as such deals with the mechanisms of staging exhibitions and their discursive sphere in or out of the remit established by the museum or exhibition space, 'the curatorial' explores all that takes place on the stage set up, both intentionally and un-intentionally by the curator. By this we mean the event of knowledge both scopical and non-scopical, the ideologies embedded in these performances, the interactive, relational and participatory nature of knowledge imparted, the edges of the knowable showing the limitations and or possibilities of knowledges imparted, and all the sources of knowledge; historiographic, curatographic, experiential, used in the production of the 'curatorial'."¹⁵

In *The Curatorial: A Philosophy of Curating* (2013), Martinon uses dramaturgical expressions to better explain the difference: curating is staging while curatorial is the performance (Martinon, 2013). The curatorial is knowledge and, simultaneously, a provocation to knowledge. It disturbs and stimulates different perceptions of reality, while it motivates changes in the exhibition context. It is disorder, but also discourse and narrative. The curatorial does not follow any rules, is not defined by any limits, and, above all, challenges the limits of the institution and curating (Martinon, 2013). It is ubiquitous and it encourages people to step out of their comfort zones. "The curatorial is really an unnecessary disruption of knowledge, that is, paradoxically, but necessarily, the birth of knowledge." (Martinon, 2013: 26) It challenges the way people think about the world, urging reflection and impelling changes. While it works within the limits, the middle, and in-between frameworks, the curatorial is not confined to them (Martinon, 2013). The curatorial follows the emergence of knowledges that are produced from curating practices.

"So perhaps the necessary links between collectivity, infrastructure and contemporaneity within our expanding field of art are not performances of resistant engagement, but the ability to locate alternate points of departure, alternate archives, alternate circulations and alternate imaginaries. And it is the curatorial that has the capacity to bring these together, working simultaneously in several modalities,

¹⁴ PhD programme Curatorial/Knowledge Introduction (website). Accessed August 23, 2017. http://ck.kein.org/full_introduction.

¹⁵ PhD programme Curatorial/Knowledge Introduction (website). Accessed August 23, 2017. http://ck.kein.org/full_introduction.

kidnapping knowledges and sensibilities and insights and melding them into an instantiation of our contemporary conditions." (Rogoff, 2013: 48)

2.2.3. Arts-based research

Arts-based research corresponds to research articulated with artistic practice in order to study and understand human life. (Savin-Baden and Wimpenny, 2014). It developed from the relationship between art practices and social sciences (Savin-Baden and Wimpenny, 2014). It is difficult to devise a distinctive definition of arts-based research due to the multiplicity of representation mediums in the art field – from visual arts, performance, and cinema, to dance, literature, and poetry – as well as decisive factors such as "location, diversity of participants, and the range of ways through which researchers, artists, and participants describe, interpret, and make meanings from experiences" (Finley, 2008: 79). Due to the diversity of arts-based research, some theorists refer to it as an "umbrella term" (Finley, 2008: 79), which comprises several methodologies.

It began with artists-researchers, who used their own artistic practice and creative processes as the starting point for research methodologies (Savin-Baden and Wimpenny, 2014). It then developed into the collaboration between social sciences researchers and artists; a collaboration that brought about "ideas about matters of meaning and communication, matters of technique, and matters pertaining to theoretical knowledge that can enrich the environment and yield truly remarkable products" (Eisner, 2008: 10). The cooperation works towards an equalisation of the roles of both artist (participant) and researcher, aiming inclusivity and the overlap of both artistic process and research (Savin-Baden and Wimpenny, 2014; Finley, 2008)). In a sense, arts-based research methodologies exist in in-between areas, within negotiations between theory and practice, public and private (Finley, 2008): dichotomies that, in the end, are not opposites but complementary realities that participate in each other developments (Macleod and Holdrige, 2005). Also, it lives in the tension between researcher and artist, whose criteria may not agree (Finley, 2008).

Susan Finley argues that arts-based research uses the emotional and affective experience as a method for the creation of meaning; and this meaning is represented by several mediums of the art field (i.e. books, films, and dance), occurring in the tension boundaries between fields (Finley, 2008). The research departs from the contact with

artworks (in its varied forms), to "promote a form of understanding that is derived or evoked through empathic experience." (Eisner, 2008: 6) The process of contemplation and observation of art is the starting point for research processes, "followed by a sense of needing to organize the materials and medium (...), followed by reflection on the process and perseverance with it" (Savin-Baden and Wimpenny, 2014: 4).

The purpose of arts-based research is to problematize traditional conclusions and reorder the apparently natural order of things (Finley, 2008; Eisner, 2008). Arts and the everlasting relationship with emotion and affection have the capacity of offering new perspectives to perceive the world: "Art helps us connect with personal, subjective emotions, and through such a process, it enables us to discover our own interior landscape." (Eisner, 2008: 11) By learning about our capacities of self-expression and self-awareness, art empowers human understanding (Eisner, 2008). The methodologies of arts-based research intend to "reject research practices that are implicated in paternalistic and colonizing traditions, or that treat production and acquisition of knowledge as a function of social privilege" (Finley, 2008: 75). It aims to introduce, in the social sciences researchers community, the tools of reflection and critical thinking against injustice, oppression and discrimination, providing "critical race, indigenous, queer, feminist, and border theories and research methodologies" (Finley, 2008: 71). It addresses to dialogic, open and participatory dynamics within research representations, promoting a transformation of the world through meaningful ethical, social and inclusive actions (Finley, 2008). For these purposes, it is necessary that the arts-based research reunite academic institutions and art museums to relate to common places, events and lives of real people (Finley, 2008). The integration within communities improves the equality between researchers and participant artists, with the aim of treating the participants, not as subjects, but to present them opportunities to research and reflect on their own work (Finley, 2008). Arts-based research simplifies the access to learning competencies and the development of these skills in the community (Finley 2008), considering that "knowledge creation is a social affair" (Eisner, 2008: 10). The central ambition of arts-based research is the knowledge production within the artistic field:

"The multifarious combinations of artists, teachers, students, critics, curators, editors, educators, funders, policymakers, technicians, historians, dealers, auctioneers, caterers, gallery assistants, and so on, embody specific skills and competences, highly

unique ways and styles of knowing and operating in the flexibilized, networked sphere of production and consumption." (Holert, 2009: 1)

It has a considerable impact in the conceptual context of art discourse and in the institutional and epistemological context of art education. Arts-based research is increasingly emerging in European art schools as departments and disciplines by the name of "artistic research", "practice-led research", "practice-based research" or "practice-as-research" (Holert, 2009). By thinking through art, it engages both the final objects and the artistic processes to understand their impact on people's lives (Savin-Baden and Wimpenny, 2014): "At the heart of arts-based inquiry is a radical, politically grounded statement about social justice and control over the production and dissemination of knowledge." (Finley, 2008: 72)

3. Methodology: case studies

The dissertation, as well as the cultural studies and the history of exhibitions fields, was formulated within the in-betweenness of theory and practice. On the one hand, the first part developed a literary analysis of the theoretical contributions about the topic, and on the other, the second part focused on the critical analysis of three case studies. Although separated, both parts are connected and strongly influenced each other strongly: "The ongoing historiography of curating demonstrates the significant role that display and site have played in producing the interpretative horizon for the practices historicized as contemporary art." (Ribas, 2013: 97)

The selection of the curatorial projects reflected the conditions of a particular temporal and geographical framework. The concepts studied in this dissertation, such as the New Institutionalism and the curatorial, emerged from the research work of curators, artists and institutions within the European context. Therefore the chosen projects took place in three contrasting and dispersed European countries, in different types of organisations within the recent period of the last fifteen years. The case studies represented the multiplicity of methodologies employed by curators that were able to determine the potential of curatorial projects as knowledge production.

The first sub-chapter, "The museum as a space for knowledge production", presents the *Academy*, a project developed in the period between 2004 and 2006. It resulted in exhibitions at the Kunstverein in Hamburg (2005), the Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst in Antwerp (2006) and the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven (2006) with the curators Bart De Baere, Dieter Roelstraete, Charles Esche, Kerstin Niemann, Irit Rogoff and Angelika Nollert. The *Academy*, greatly mentioned by authors such as Paul O'Neill (2010) or Lucie Kolb and Gabriel Flückiger (2013), remains a remarkable reference within the educational and curatorial context and inspired several other projects. The ambitious long-term format reproduced in three countries was an overcome challenge due to the collaborative work between curators and participants. Although each exhibition departed from a different research question, the central intention of *Academy* was to demonstrate, through exhibitions, the museum's capability to be a place to learn and to produce knowledge, in the same way the academy is.

"The conversational mode and the art of the encounter in exhibitions", the second sub-chapter, introduces the emergence of curatorial tools that transformed the exhibition into a space for the dialogue and an experience, shared with other people, that is able to produce meaning. Here, the dialogue is acknowledged in a wide-ranging sense: the case study itself is a dialogue between the exhibition *The Model: A Model for a Qualitative Society* (Palle Nielsen, 1968) and the social, cultural and economic context of the period between 2011 and 2015, which resulted in *The New Model*. The curatorial project, organised by Maria Lind and Lars Bang Larsen, occurred along four years at Tensta Konsthall, in Stockholm. It was an outstanding example to understand the meaning of "working curatorially" (Lind, 2013a: 31): the collaboration and dialogue between Lind and Larsen culminated in a long-term project that succeeded beyond the exhibition.

The third sub-chapter, "Arts-based research VS curatorial research" completes the second part of the dissertation with the study of the exhibition *Under the Clouds: From Paranoia to the Digital Sublime* (2015) at Fundação Serralves, in Porto, curated by João Ribas. The intention of including a Portuguese example in the dissertation was established from the beginning, as it was in the Portuguese cultural, social and academic context that the dissertation was developed. Likewise the previous two cases, *Under the Clouds* materialised as part of a curatorial research project that transgressed the limits of the exhibition. The project formulated and displayed questions through artistic production, establishing connections between the artworks, the curatorial and current real events. The elaboration of such relations set the curator as a mediator in the acknowledgement of contemporary social circumstances as a powerful impact in the artistic creation.

The methodology intended to address the case studies within a critical approach necessarily descriptive and, simultaneously, to introduce the theoretical concepts, the reflections and the questions raised in the second chapter. The opportunity of creating an encounter between academic research and curatorial practice enabled the confrontation between such contrasting projects. The countless interconnections that characterise the artistic sphere are represented in the selection of these three case studies: after all, besides the constructive differences, the projects share fundamental common points in their methodologies, intentions and results.

3.1. The museum as a space for knowledge production

3.1.1. Case Study 1: *Academy*

Academy was "an international series of exhibitions, projects and events"¹⁶ that occurred between 2004 and 2006, bringing together five different institutions from four European countries in a collective attempt to create answers to the conflicts in both academy and art organisations of that period:

"The Siemens Arts Program, the Kunstverein in Hamburg, the MuHKA, the Van Abbemuseum, and the Department of Visual Cultures at Goldsmiths College have made it their objective to grasp the "academy" as tool that allows these ideas to be unpacked over a longer period of time than usual." (De Baere, Dziewior, Esche, Niermann, Nollert, Roelstraete and Watson, 2006: 9)

The curators of this initiative were Bart De Baere and Dieter Roelstraete (MuHKA), Charles Esche and Kerstin Niemann (Van Abbemuseum), Irit Rogoff (Goldsmiths College), and Angelika Nollert (Siemens Arts Program). Bart De Baere (Belgium, 1960) is the General and Artistic Director of the MuHKA (Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp) since 2002. Since the merging of the MuHKA with the Centre for Visual Culture in 2003, the MuHKA focused not only on art but also on film and new media, exhibiting visual culture at large. De Baere worked as an advisor for cultural heritage and contemporary art to the Flemish Minister of Culture and was President of the Flemish Council for Museums. He was one of the curators of the Documenta IX in Kassel, among other exhibitions, and has written and published widely on art and institutional issues. Dieter Roelstraete (Belgium, 1972) is a member of the curatorial team of Documenta 14 in Athens and Kassel (2017). From 2012 until 2015, Roelstraete was the Manilow Senior Curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, curating exhibitions such as *Goshka Macuga: Exhibit, A* (2012) and *The Freedom Principle: Experiments in Art and Museum 1965 to Now* (2015). Between 2003 and 2011, Roelstraete was a curator at the MuHKA, organising exhibitions such as *The Order of Things* (2008) and *Chantal Akerman: Too Close, Too Far* (2012). He has written and published on

¹⁶ *Academy. Learning from the museum* (2006) at the Van Abbe Museum (website). Accessed August 23, 2017. <https://vanabbemuseum.nl/en/programme/programme/academy-1/>.

contemporary art and philosophy in catalogues and journals. Charles Esche (UK, 1963) is the director of the Van Abbemuseum since 2004 and, before that, he was the director of Rooseum Center for Contemporary Art in Malmo. Esche is the co-founder of the Afterall Journal and Afterall Books and an advisor at the Rijksacademie in Amsterdam. He curated several exhibitions, including the São Paulo Biennale in 2014. His work and publications explore the theory and practice within art museums, questioning the relations between art and social changes. In 2005 he published a selection of his texts with the title *Modest Proposals*. Kerstin Niemann (Germany, 1974) was a research curator at the Van Abbemuseum between 2006 and 2010. In 2010 she founded the Filter Detroit, a research residence for artists, musicians, architects and thinkers in and around Detroit. Since 2016, she has been working as a research assistant for the "Metropolis Cultural Program" in Hamburg, Germany, and is an associate professor of cultural theory and practice. Irit Rogoff¹⁷ is professor of Visual Culture at Goldsmiths, University of London, in the department of Visual Cultures, which she founded in 2002 and where she heads the PhD in Curatorial/Knowledge and the MA in Global Arts. Rogoff is a writer, curator and organiser, working at the crossroads between contemporary art, critical theory and new political manifestations. As part of the collective *freethought*, she was one of the artistic directors of the Bergen Assembly in 2016. Her publications include *Looking Away—Participating Singularities, Ontological Communities* (2013), *Visual Cultures as Seriousness* (2013), *Unbounded: Limits' Possibilities* (2012). Angelika Nollert (Germany, 1966) is the director of the Die Neue Sammlung – The International Design Museum Munich, Pinakothek der Modern, since 2014. Between 2002 and 2007 she was the project manager for visual arts at Siemens Arts Program in Munich, and between 2007 and 2014 she was the director of the New Museum in Nuremberg. For the Siemens Arts Program, she organised and co-curated several exhibitions, such as *Performative Installation*, a series of five shows held at the Galerie im Taxispalais in Innsbruck (2003), the Museum Ludwig in Cologne (2003/2004), the Museum of Contemporary Art Siegen (2003/2004), the Vienna Secession (2004) and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Leipzig (2004). Nollert has written several texts on contemporary art, published in exhibition catalogues and journals.

¹⁷ There is no information available on Irit Rogoff's birthplace or year of birth.

The *Academy* project resulted in three exhibitions, two symposia, numerous side projects and lectures, a book and, hopefully, an on-going debate about the questions introduced in the event. The Bologna Declaration, signed in 1999, caused a general dissatisfaction with art institutions and educational academies. The standardisation of educational institutions in Western Europe and the adjustment to safe and stable models of education rejected the speculative potential and imaginative thinking of the academy. Especially in "concepts such as "liberal" (as in liberal arts) or "free" (De Bare, Dziewior, Esche, Niermann, Nollert, Roelstraete and Watson, 2006: 7), usually used in the arts education, were considered unstable because of the new focus on the productive capacity of students. The university transformed into a place of mass production: not of objects, but of discourse and professional qualification. These inflexible rules affected mostly art academies, concerning that, before the Bologna Declaration, a large part of them avoided evaluation systems and allowed students to construct their space and time for the development of projects. These issues affected not only educational institutions but also art institutions such as museums and galleries. The rise of tourism and economic development created political expectations to the art institutions, which started to be managed as enterprises.

The changes in both institutions, however, stimulated the "*educational* possibility of the museum as a site for learning and experiencing things in a different manner." (De Bare, Dziewior, Esche, Niermann, Nollert, Roelstraete and Watson, 2006: 7). This placed in museums the responsibility of stimulating critical thinking not only about art but also about contemporary subjects, such as the context where we live and the relationships created with the society around. The academy had the potential of transforming institutionalised forms of learning into collaborative and transactional practices. As a frame of reference, the academy could help exhibitions and museums, if only with new ideas about the audience – that represented much more than the number of visits (De Bare, Dziewior, Esche, Niermann, Nollert, Roelstraete and Watson, 2006). The *Academy* was influenced by several projects such as *Lidl* actions (1960s) by Jörg Immendorff, the exhibition *Summer Academy* (1994) by Stephan Dillemath, the "Open Academy" (since 2000) by Charles Esche, the "University of Ideas (UNIDEE)" (1994) by Michelangelo Pistoletto, or the *Free International University* (1973) by Joseph Beuys. Beuys founded the

Free International University for Creativity and Interdisciplinary Research (F.I.U.)¹⁸, as a space for all the individuals to express their "creative potential" without restrictions or academic boundaries, believing in education as a universal human right,

Inspired by these models, the *Academy* aimed to reformulate them, as they should not be considered fixed representations but potentialities: "The specific projects here are a working-out-in-practice of the potential of learning and teaching to encourage new ways in which the experience of knowledge and enquiry can be defined." (De Bare, Dziewior, Esche, Niermann, Nollert, Roelstraete and Watson, 2006: 8). The relations between the academy, art and museum were not new, and they had always added value one to another. The combination of the museum and the academy was considered a solution for the expanding of learning, imagination, speculation and consequently, education in the museum. The *Academy* project believed that this partnership encouraged new ways of thinking and improved the intellectual and financial support for the audiences (De Bare, Dziewior, Esche, Niermann, Nollert, Roelstraete and Watson, 2006). The museum and the academy were spaces in which critical approaches to society and narratives were represented through the exchange of ideas. In opposition to the market obsessive-production perspective of public institutions, it was fundamental to formulate these critical spaces as "open fields of learning" (De Bare, Dziewior, Esche, Niermann, Nollert, Roelstraete and Watson, 2006: 9). It was through the encouragement of critical thinking and the stimulation of the individuals that was possible to develop public discourse.

The questions mentioned above were the groundwork for the creation of *Academy* in 2004: "*Academy* itself will not provide answers but experiences might arise." (De Bare, Dziewior, Esche, Niermann, Nollert, Roelstraete and Watson, 2006: 9) The *Academy* project intended to expand the educational and experimental dimension of art institutions and, "as such, it lays out a fundamental educational orientation for the museum or exhibiting space and a public role of the academy as a site of experimentation with the exemplary." (De Bare, Dziewior, Esche, Niermann, Nollert, Roelstraete and Watson, 2006: 9) The *Academy* project emerged as potential, a source for the critical reflection and space for the encounter and debate of challenging ideas.

¹⁸ Joseph Beuys was a professor at the Düsseldorf State Art Academy since 1961, and along the 1960s and 1970s he began to protest against its administration due to his discontent about the admissions' restrictions. In 1972, Beuys along with some of his supporters, created the Free School of Higher Education, which served as groundwork for the formulation of F.I.U. More information here: <http://pinakothek-beuys-multiples.de/en/glossary/free-international-university-f-i-u/>.

The *Academy* project resulted in three exhibitions:

- *Academy. Teaching and Learning Art* at the Kunstverein in Hamburg, from January 22 until April 3, 2005;
- *Academy. Learning from Art* at the Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst in Antwerp, from September 15 until November 26, 2006; and
- *Academy. Learning from the Museum* at the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, from September 16 until November 22, 2006.

The three exhibitions shared the goal of the initial *Academy* project, which was to explore the relationship between academy and museum, and also had in common to be established in different museums. This way, the museum was perceived as the appropriate space for the production, collaboration and exhibition of the results of this project.

3.1.2. The museum as a space for display and production

Academy emerged essentially from questioning what can the museum offer besides what it displays, regarding teaching and learning contents. It presented the museum as a space for reflection, speculation and experimentation – activities that at the time were missing in the academy. The project questioned the museum not only as a space for exhibition but also for production, placing it with the same functions as the university and art schools. The university, library and museum are institutions that, not only emerged relatively at the same time, but also that share the same feature: they all are spaces to access information, to acquire knowledge and that promote education (Ferguson, 1994). According to the ICOM (International Council of Museums) definition,

"A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment".¹⁹

The museum is a place of "collecting, conserving, researching, exhibiting, educating" (Ruge, 2008: 8) for the benefit of the audience. The modern form of the

¹⁹ ICOM Definition of a Museum, Article 3 – Definition of Terms (website). Accessed August 23, 2017. <http://archives.icom.museum/definition.html>.

museum, as it is now known, emerged in the late 18th and beginning of the 19th century. It appeared from a transformation process that merged the international exhibition and department stores formats, which were also changing during this period (Bennett, 1996). It was not until the late 19th century that the collaboration between cultural organisations and the government resulted in making high culture available in the shape of governmental institutions, with the purpose "of civilizing the population as a whole" (Bennett, 1996: 19). There was the idea that high culture could change the life and behaviour of mass society (Bennett, 1996). In this sense, the visitor was expected to adjust to the rules and the atmosphere of observation and contemplation of the museum (Bennett, 1996). In the 17th century, wealthier families would have a room in their houses, named "Cabinet of Curiosities", dedicated not only to the storage but also to the display of rare objects (George, 2015). Due to the rarity and exclusivity of the objects (Bennett, 1996), the access to the Cabinets was limited – the curiosity and desire of knowledge were only to be fulfilled by those with privileged access. On the contrary, the museum intended to be accessible to everyone, although some would have difficulties to "decode" the information displayed due to the lack of cultural background (Bennett, 1996). In any case, the museum was devoted to its pedagogical nature, by organising exhibitions that displayed collections arranged historically, by periods and cultures (Bennett, 1996). It distinguished the museum as a space of representation, where objects would express the identity and history of humankind (Bennett, 1996). Daniel Buren described the museum as a "privileged place with a triple role: aesthetic, economic and mystical" (Buren, 1970: 189). Indeed, the museum is one of the atmospheres in which the artwork reaches its contemplative and aesthetic dimension since it is one of the critical infrastructures for the exposure and display of artworks. Simultaneously, by improving the visibility and value of an artwork (and attributing a particular mystical status), the museum was stimulating its financial position and consequent "consumption". Also, according to Buren, another function of the museum was, along with preserve, to collect in order to eternalise (Buren, 1970).

In a way, the museum was always associated with the access to knowledge and to creation of meaning. It came from the emergence of other institutions connected to new subjects of knowledge and their discursive formations, such as relations of power, past and evolution (Ferguson, 1994). Similarly to the university and the library, the museum was a cultural institution created to discuss identity and history through objects and whose main

propose was to produce and disseminate knowledge (Ferguson, 1994). Likewise books or films, museum objects have layers of interpretation to understand what was beyond the display (Bennett, 1996). The museum works as the mediator between visitor and artwork, "as a means of seeing through those artefacts to see an invisible order of significance that they have been arranged to represent" (Bennett, 1996: 165). The museum is more and more the cultural institution of the 21st century, and it suffered great transformations until today (Cutler, 2010). It is still a place of contemplation and entertainment, but it has increased the concern of engaging with the audience to potentiate an educative experience to each visitor (Kaitavuori, 2013).

The *Academy* project emerged in the educational turn of curatorial practices, along with several other self-organised projects that in the beginning of the 21st century rose in opposition to the intensive institutionalisation of educational structures:

"As it seems increasingly difficult to produce meaningful content within the institutionalized structures of major universities and academies, an ethical and content-driven approach to producing new knowledge can only be achieved from the outside – through setting up small-scale frameworks that are nestled on the margins." (Miessen, 2010: 203)

The Bologna process resulted in the management of universities and academies through business models, converting teachers into fundraisers, students into clients and the academy into an isolated practice: "An institution always exists as a set of echoes, in conversation with other bodies of knowledge. If such echoes can no longer be heard or even produced, it is time to move on and produce alternative modes of formalized knowledge production." (Miessen, 2010: 209) *Curating and the educational turn*, as the title of the book by Paul O'Neill and Mick Wilson, dissolved the boundaries between curating and education, from which resulted in a process of "‘curatorialisation’ of education whereby the educative process often becomes the object of curatorial production." (O'Neill and Wilson, 2010: 13) This turn, in a way, transferred educational models from the university framework to the exhibiting space of the museum. While installing its projects in the museum, in a refusal and critique to school, *Academy* provoked questions such as "what does the gallery has to offer that the university does not?" (Phillips, 2010: 93)

Academy. Teaching and Learning Art (2005) at the Kunstverein in Hamburg was the first exhibition of the *Academy* project, and questioned the role of students and teachers at art schools: "What role do the two sides ascribe to one another? Can art even be taught, or learnt? What status do progressive thought and tradition, provincialism and internationalism have for the idea and essence of the academy?" (De Bare, Dziewior, Esche, Niermann, Nollert, Roelstraete and Watson, 2006: 10) The curators were Angelika Nollert (Siemens Arts Program) and Yilmaz Dziewior (Germany, 1964), at the time, curator and director of Kunstverein in Hamburg as well as professor of art theory at the Hamburg University of Fine Arts. After working at the Kunstverein, Dziewior was director of the Kunsthaus Bregenz (2009-2015) and, since 2015 he is the director of the Museum Ludwig in Cologne.

The exhibition consisted of a series of lectures and the display of partially processual artworks. It departed from the original concept of "academy" as collaboration, informal meetings and exchange of knowledge. The exhibition included an information centre that provided documents and reading materials about several international academies and art schools, and where seminars and talks took place. The lectures included "Academy as Potentiality" by Irit Rogoff (January 27, 2005), "Format Attempt – Publication as Seminar" by Heiko Karn, Katrin Mayer and Eran Schaerf (February 3, 2005), "The Academy and the Corporate Public" by Stephan Dilleuth (February 24, 2005), "Academy Isotrope, the Echo" by Abel Auer, André Butzer, Birgit Megerle and Roberto Ohrt (March 3, 2005), "Future Academy" by Clementine Deliss (March 10, 2005), "Ivory Towers / Lighthouses: On the social position of art conservatories" by Martin Köttering (March 17, 2005) and "The Protoacademy" by Charles Esche (March 31, 2005).

The invited artists worked, in different supports, subjects related to the academy and the institutionalisation of art education as well teaching and learning models and communication of knowledge. The works displayed at the exhibition included *ghostAkademie* (2005), an installation by Uli Aigner; *Untitled* (2004), 69 small ceramic sculptures, by Pawel Althamer, Artur Zmijewski & Nowolipie Group; the installation of books, clothes and wood designated *Thirst for Knowledge* (2003) by Mark Dion & Jackie McAllister; the video *iv* (2005) by Jeanne Faust; the 14 drawings *ABC Ecole de Paris* (1960/61) by Jef Geys; *Akademie für Adler* (1989) by Jörg Immendorff; the 30 banners *Lehrauftrah* (2000) and the videos *Seminar* (2002) and *Diplomarbeit* (1992/1998) by

Christian Jankowski; the installation *Basisarbeit* (1998) by Olaf Metzel; the video *The Girl Is Innocent* (1999) by Arturas Raila; and the *Workshop: Drawing Lessons*, which were life classes for students and all the visitors that were interested.

In fact, some of the artists were interested in collaborating with the students of the Academy of Fine Arts in Hamburg, which improved the relationship between the Kunstverein and the academy. The artist Eran Schaerf (Israel, 1952), based in Berlin, developed the *Modulator* together with the art students: an "imaginary software that moderates the seminar by means of editing and by added contributions and is characterized by the totality of these contributions."²⁰ The group project studied the structure of the academic seminars, as sender-receiver models, and transformed these traditional approaches into scholarly communication through the construction of fictitious software. The visitors were required to participate in this new non-hierarchical model of dialogue, in a spatial performance and experience in the installation.



Figure 1 *Modulator* (2005), Eran Schaerf at Kunstverein, Hamburg, 2005. Installation view. Photo: Katrin Mayer.

²⁰ More information about the *Modulator* is available at Katrin Mayer's portfolio (website). Accessed August 23, 2017. <http://www.katrinmayer.net/index.php/modulator--academy/>.

The artist Apolonija Šušteršič (Slovenia, 1965), based in Amsterdam, presented the work *Research Department. Meeting Room*.²¹ It was a space in the exhibition with a table, chairs, a blackboard, fresh coffee and tea, collection of books and magazines, designated for the discussion about the title of the exhibition, teaching and learning art. The *Research Department. Meeting Room* was a gathering place for everyone who was interested in debate issues related to education and knowledge production and the goal was to get together people from different backgrounds and professional practices. The first debate, during the first day of the exhibition, *Utopistic models of (art) education*, included the participants Jenny Berntsson, Yilmaz Dziewior, Måns Holst Ekström, Peter Hoppe, Robert Karlssen, Maria Lind, Katryn Mayer, Regina Möller, Maria Pijuan, Peter Steckroth, Jan Verwoert, Gitte Villesen and Carola Wagenplast. *Research Department. Meeting Room* was based on the concept of artistic research and enabled the production of new ideas through experimental methods and informal conversations.



Figure 2 *Research Department. Meeting Room* (2005) by Apolonija Šušteršič at Kunstverein, Hamburg, 2005. Installation view. Photo: Apolonija Šušteršič.

²¹ More information about the *Research Department. Meeting Room* is available at Apolonija Šušteršič's portfolio (website). Accessed August 23, 2017. <http://apolonijasustersic.com/portfolio/research-department-meeting-room/text/>.

Academy. Learning from Art (2006) at the Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst in Antwerp departed from questions such as "How can we learn from art?" and "How can we extend our concept of teaching and learning beyond the framework of formal training at academies?" (De Bare, Dziewior, Esche, Niermann, Nollert, Roelstraete and Watson, 2006: 10) The exhibition was organised by the MuHKA's curators Bart de Baere and Dieter Roelstraete and by Angelika Nollert (Siemens Arts Program). It focused on two main dimensions: the academy as a place for the theoretical and practical teaching/learning of art; and the art as an educational experience. The exhibition speculated how could art *itself* be an environment for discovering the world, through the presentation of artistic work that represented new forms of teaching/learning, including practices of exchange, reflection and experimentation. The artworks, as productive interactions to the exhibition format, functioned as communicative gestures to question the academy as a place for learning.

The exhibition included *Reflections* (2006), a project that consisted of the videos *Repérage* (2006) by Herman Asselberghs, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Worker (rms)* (2006) by Ina Wudtke, and the installation *Output* (2006) by Dieter Lesage; the animated painting *CRYPICCRYSTALCLOUD* (2006) by the duo DOCKX & MAST (Nico Dockx & Jan Mast); the work *Untitled (Letters)* (2006) by Jimmie Durham; *Brauner Garten* (2006) by the group Tobias Urban, Ali Janka, Florian Reither and Wolfgang Gantner; a series of works of tempera on canvas and wood by Johanna Kandl (from 1995 until 2005); the video *Ajnštajn, Novi Sad* (2005) by Helmut & Johanna Kandl; the installation *Circa 1968* (2004) by Mary Kelly; the video *Shiva dances with the Art Institute of Chicago* (2004) by Adrian Piper; *Uffizi Porte* (2003) by Michelangelo Pistoletto & Cittadellarte – Fondazione Pistoletto; the works *Sarai Readers* and *Lexwiki* (2006) by the Raqs Media Collective; *The Martha Rosler Library* (2005) by Martha Rosler, a project in which a major portion of the artist's private collection of books was made available for the public use.

Instant Academy (2006) was an artwork by Joëlle Tuerlinckx (Belgium, 1958) consisted of a geometrical composition in the wall made of "lines drawn with pens on adhesive tape" (Lorch, 2007: 1). The assemblages represented the fluid and ephemeral dimensions of the academy, which could be transformed "according to the demands of display and didactics." (Lorch, 2007: 1) Lia Perjovschi (Romania, 1961), based in Bucharest, presented four works: *Diagrammes* (1999-2005), *Exhibitions EU US* (1990-

2000), *Mind map ID* (2006) and *My Subjective Art History from Modernism – Today* (1990-2004), which consisted of a timeline of both images and handwritten texts, in a newspaper format, of the history of modern and contemporary art according to the logic of the artist. The exhibition included also works from the previous exhibition, in Hamburg, such as the installation *ghostAkademie* (2005) by Uli Aigner; a *Modulator Update* (2006) by the Modulator group; as well the *Research Department* (2006) by Apolonija Šušteršič, in which she gave the workshop *Learning from the Context*.

The exhibition, similarly to *Teaching Art, Learning Art* (2005), had a parallel programme of conferences. In the September 14, the exhibition held a Symposium with opening remarks by Francis van Loon, at the time the Rector of University of Antwerp, and the lectures "Academy as Potentiality" by Irit Rogoff and "Art and Research" by Jimmie Durham, Mary Kelly and Dieter Lesage. The series of talks named *Teaching, Learning, Research and Crossovers in Further Education* took place on November 16 and 21, at MuHKA between students, teachers, artists and it welcomed all the interested people.

The exhibition *Academy. Learning from the Museum* (2006) took place at the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, departing from the questions "What possibilities can a museum open up over and beyond its own perimeter?" and "How can the museum become a place of ongoing dialogue and exchanges of ideas, instead of being merely a vehicle for established values?" (De Bare, Dziewior, Esche, Niermann, Nollert, Roelstraete and Watson, 2006: 11) The exhibition, organised by Charles Esche and Kerstin (curators at Van Abbemuseum) and Irit Rogoff (Goldsmiths) focused in the institution – the Van Abbemuseum – as a tool for discussion:

"In asking what we can learn from the museum beyond what it sets out to teach us, we were not focused on the museum's expertise, what it owns and how it displays it, conserves it, historicizes it. Our interests were in the possibilities for the museum to open a place for people to engage ideas differently – ideas from outside its own walls. So the museum in our thinking was the site of possibility, the site of potentiality." (Rogoff, 2008: 4)

The curators invited "activists, theorists, artists, students, archivists, librarians and philosophers to contribute to unpacking the possibility of the academy-museum hybrid" (De Bare, Dziewior, Esche, Niermann, Nollert, Roelstraete and Watson, 2006: 10). A total

of twenty-two participants that, divided into groups, created projects based on their perspectives and had full access to the collection and museum staff to develop new ideas to be implemented inside and outside the museum. The goal was to explore the unseen possibilities of the museum, and not to reveal its flaws or to construct institutional critiques. The openness and deconstruction made available several rooms and infrastructures of the museum, which were disclosed to the audience.

The exhibition was less focused on the traditional final results of the artistic processes, but instead more involved with the presentation of on-going unfinished projects, which placed the exhibition in-between the concepts of "knowledge production," "research," "education," "open-ended production," and "self-organized pedagogies," (Rogoff, 2008: 1) What all the groups had in common was questioning what could we learn from the museum, which resulted in projects such as *The Ambulator; or: what happens when we take questions for a walk?* (2006). The project was organised by Susan Kelly²² (artist, writer, PhD candidate in Fine Art at Goldsmith College, based in London), Valeria Grazian²³ (curator, writer, cultural mediator and PhD candidate in Curatorial/Knowledge at the Goldsmiths College, based in London and Italy) and Janna Graham²⁴ (writer, curatorial and education projects, PhD candidate in Curatorial/Knowledge at Goldsmith College, based in London), and investigated:

"What are legitimate questions, and under what conditions are they produced? The seminar class, the think tank, the government department, the statistician's bureau are sites for the production of questions, but we were suggesting others born of fleeting, arbitrary conversations between strangers, of convivial loitering and of unexpected lines of flight in and out of the museum" (Rogoff, 2008: 4)

²² There is no information available on the birthplace or year of birth.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

The Ambulator was a space within and outside the museum that was activated by the visitor's capacity of producing questions. It had three steps: "1. Select a question and a destination 2. Answer it while taking a walk (with a friend or a stranger) 3. Leave a question behind." In collaboration with the students, the museum's staff and interested people in the city of Eindhoven, *The Ambulator* intended to collect and study the structures of generated questions. The project's resultant questions and answers contributed to the development of other activities such as radio plays, an Ambulator's tour to Bologna and a student publication.



Figure 3 *The Ambulator* (2006) by Susan Kelly, Valeria Graziano and Janna Graham at the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 2006. Installation view. Photo: [Curating & Educational Turn Seminar: Case Studies](#).

The artist and writer Liam Gillick (UK, 1964) and the artist, writer and curator Edgar Schmitz (Germany, 1968) created a project named *Inverted Research Tool* (2006). The artists installed a banner/screen in the library of the Van Abbemuseum, two banners outside of the museum, and displayed the same text in both interior and exterior screens. However, the text outside the museum was presented reverted and inverted, which obliged the visitor to enter the museum to be able to read it. The banner in the library also screened "a playlist of movies which may have to do with learning as encounters and forms of contact" (Andrews, Aigner and Nollert, 2006: 271), such as *Teorema* (1968) by Pier Paolo Pasolini, *My Hustler* (1965) by Andy Warhol, *Prénom Carmen* (1983) by Jean-Luc Godard, *Madame Wang's* (1981) by Paul Morrissey, and *Chinese Roulette* (1976) by Rainer Werner Fassbinder. The films played during the opening hours of the library (Süvecz, 2011).



Figure 4 *Inverted Research Tool* (2006) by Liam Gillick and Edgar Schmitz at the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 2006. Installation view. Photo: [Curating & Educational Turn Seminar: Case Studies](#).

Sounding Difference – The Gate Collection (2006) was a project by Irit Rogoff and the educator and artist Deepa Naik (UK, 1976) that used as starting point the collection of

the Gate Foundation, donated in that period to the Van Abbemuseum: "The Gate Collection has served as a state funded general library and video collection of works by artists who are of other, non-European, cultural heritages." (Andrews, Aigner and Nollert, 2006: 270) Its transference to the Van Abbemuseum raised questions regarding the museum as space of representation of 'the other' and the own conception of otherness. *Sounding Difference* was an installation produced from the works available in the collection, along with three video wall projections and a set of filmed interviews of the museum's staff "concerning their experience of inhabiting the museum in various states of difference." (Andrews, Aigner and Nollert, 2006: 270)



Figure 5 *Sounding Difference - The Gate Collection* (2006) by Irit Rogoff and Deepa Naik at the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 2006. Installation view. Photo: Curating & Educational Turn Seminar: Case Studies.

Yourspace (2006) was the project by Charles Esche and Kerstin Niemann. The title was an explicit reference to the online social network "myspace". It was a space within the museum created for the presentation of ideas and works by artists, cultural activists and other invited speakers from the Eindhoven region:

"These presentations, consisting in an informal exchange of knowledge and opinions, will be stimulated by the projects in the *Academy. Learning from the Museum* without being directly determined by these, rather creating a comfortable activation zone and space for discussion in the museum." (Andrews, Aigner and Nollert, 2006: 271)

Mårten Spångberg designed the space, and the informal gatherings happened every Thursday. Charles Esche, as the director of the Van Abbemuseum, decided to maintain *yourspace* as a permanent space in the museum after the exhibition *Academy. Learning from the Museum* finished. Jean-Paul Martinon (USA, 1963) and Rob Stone²⁵ (writer, publisher and Senior Research Fellow at Middlesex University) developed the project *I Like That* (2006). It consisted of a series of five exhibitions, each displayed for two weeks, which presented a small number of works from the museum's collection. The contextualisation usually provided by the museum was kept in storage during the project (such as titles, names, dates and explaining texts). Instead, the exhibitions had fragments of sounds such as music and conversations: "By this substitution, the shows very simply exploit the capacity of people to rethink works, invent stories and fabricate their own learning." (Andrews, Aigner and Nollert, 2006: 271)



Figure 6 *I Like That I* (2006) by Jean-Paul Martinon and Rob Stone at the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 2006. Photo: Curating & Educational Turn Seminar: Case Studies.

²⁵ There is no information available on the birthplace or year of birth.

If education represents "a site of knowledge production, alternative modes of questioning, new vocabularies, analyses of the conditions of contemporary education, and negotiations between institutional and self-organized cultures" (Rogoff, 2010a: 2); then the site of knowledge production can be the museum. Museums, as many have concluded, have the possibility and responsibility of "shaping knowledge" (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992): the (ongoing) history of exhibitions continues to prove the importance of these spaces as breeding grounds for knowledge production and their fundamental role in education in the last centuries (Ribas, 2013). The dilution of boundaries in cultural professions, especially those of educating and curating, was identified as the educational turn of curating; and "one factor that has contributed to this development is that museums are interrogating their role in knowledge society in diverse ways" as "they present themselves as sites of knowledge exchange, and as the stage of participation-based linking of history with the present." (Mörsch, Sachs and Sieber, 2017: 9).

There was a clear evolution in the *Academy* project throughout the two years process. It involved different countries, institutions and, most importantly, a large number of different people who worked together in critical processes of questioning different forms of knowledge. Irit Rogoff explained that *Academy* was "about the performance of our contemporaneity – in the world we currently inhabit it is possible for us to come together, to produce a network of those who previously had not come together or had not been able to talk to one another." (Rogoff, 2006: 20) The project established a long-term relationship between institutions and participants and, while in the first exhibition the lectures were a parallel program, in the last exhibition the exchange of ideas through informal conversations was inherent to the artworks within the museum space. With clear influences from the New Institutionalism, the *Academy* explored alternative curatorial approaches to knowledge through practices of participation, dialogue and encounter. The *Academy* placed the curator side by side with the artists, theorists, students and other participants, deconstructing the idea of authorship of the art projects. Bart De Baere, Dieter Roelstraete, Charles Esche, Kerstin Niemann, Irit Rogoff and Angelika Nollert, the curators of the *Academy* project, however, had a central role as mediators and producers of these multiple networks through, as Maria Lind designated, practices of "working curatorially". The *Academy* expanded in a way that, in the end, the projects developed were

open-ended, provocative and activated by the encounter; and the same happened to the museums that "no longer hide the curatorial hand and present only the end product, but make visible the entire underlying decision-making process" (Schubert, 2009: 67). *Academy* is, in a final analysis,

"partly university and partly museum, partly theoretical and partly practice-based, a space in which it is unclear whether the materials or the subjects are what make up its manifest, a mode of operating, is emerging which insists that we can learn not just from doing but also from being." (Rogoff, 2006: 20)

3.1.3. Social and educational responsibility of the museum

The art academy and the museum have been closely related for a long time: their systematic encounters and intersections are not new and improve their values: "the traditions of the academy are valuable to the museum because they privilege not only learning but speculation for its own sake." (De Bare, Dziewior, Esche, Niermann, Nollert, Roelstraete and Watson, 2006: 8) The academy and the museum have in common the access to knowledge and, more than access, they share the fundamental social responsibility of education. The *Academy* project departed exactly from the relationships between these two institutions and from the questioning of what the collaboration and exchange of methods between them could bring. The events produced by the *Academy* intended to explore the educational tools available in the museum, introducing the idea that the museum could also be a space to learn (De Bare, Dziewior, Esche, Niermann, Nollert, Roelstraete and Watson, 2006). If the academy is "a source that offers society the chance of critical reflection and the encounter with complex ideas" (De Bare, Dziewior, Esche, Niermann, Nollert, Roelstraete and Watson, 2006: 9), the same can be declared about the art museum: "Today, museums must become agents of change and development: they must mirror events in society and become instruments of progress by calling attention to actions and events that will encourage development in the society." (Arinze, 1999: 2).

As it was already mentioned, the social responsibility has always been present in the museum. Lois H. Silverman explains that there are diverse perspectives on museum's social impact: "1) interactive experience and social relationships; 2) communication as meaning-making; 3) the meaning of things; 4) human needs; 5) outcomes and changes; 6) relationship benefits and social capital; 7) social change; and 8) culture change"

(Silverman, 2010: 14). This social component is evident, in a first sense, in the human contact resulting from the museum experience, since it stimulates interactions among visitors, museum staff, strangers, or families. It also potentiates the relationship between visitors and the symbolic representations of humanity through historical objects and artworks (Silverman, 2010). The museum experience is an "interactive social experience of communication" (Silverman, 2010: 21) and it contributes to the transformation of this variety of relationships: between visitors and objects, visitors and other individuals, and between visitors and themselves. The museum promotes "social change through exhibits, educational programs, special events, and other efforts that raise public awareness of social issues and encourage effective action" (Silverman, 2010: 19). It is possible to exhibit almost everything, even the contemporary and social situation in which we are (Arinze, 1999). The museum introduces issues such as politics, economy, culture and history and it contributes to the engagement of the visitors. The social responsibility of the museum involves the visitors' education through the display, documentation and explanation of history for the future generations (Arinze, 1999). The museum holds the necessary resources to encourage change "in essential areas such as knowledge, skills, values, and behavior" (Silverman, 2010: 21). It stimulates de coexistence with the other, reducing prejudice and discrimination through learning processes. The museum's activities can promote discussions about social difficulties, "social justice and equality" (Silverman, 2010: 21).

"To fulfil their role in society, museums must accept that they are quintessentially educational and that they must actively promote that aim." (Talboys, 2005: 10) Through this essential recognition, museums keep working to improve the future of society. Contrary to the private and limited situation of their earlier dimension, museums are opening up every day aiming new forms of sociality (Bennett, 1996) In this process of becoming an accessible and social space, museums

"have opened up in all kinds of directions: towards new audience segments that until quite recently felt that the museum was not their place; towards art and artists that had not been represented or had been considered beyond the institutional scope; and towards new curatorial voices for which there had been no room in the single-strand master narrative of the past."(Schubert, 2009: 67)

Museums are spaces that encourage reflection and social awareness; and by welcoming and involving communities, they work towards the improvement of the lives of those around them (Talboys, 2005). Through the sharing of ideas, traditions and new subjects, museums contribute to the "ongoing process of transformation" (Butt, 2014: 53) of society.

The *Academy* project sought to emphasise the social and educational responsibility of the museum, through a process of rethinking the structural organisation of both the academy and the museum. The project challenged the Kunstverein (Hamburg), the Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst (Antwerp) and the Van Abbemuseum (Eindhoven) to function as spaces of knowledge production. The collaboration between academy and museum, in an interchange of methods and tools, lead to the raise of new questions, new forms of thinking as well to the construction of new perspectives and approaches to the world (De Bare, Dziewior, Esche, Niermann, Nollert, Roelstraete and Watson, 2006).

Academy resulted from a proactive reaction to the period of crisis and discontentment about the higher education institutions in Europe. The project gathered students, artists, curators and institutions from different nationalities that were concerned with these questions and were willing to think of new ideas collectively. It resulted in events that balanced the theoretical and practical side of education and artistic production and that were implemented within the museum. Also, the *Academy* contributed to these research topics with the organisation of lectures and the creation of a final catalogue. The type of knowledge produced within the *Academy* was linked to the possibility of learning about contemporary art, culture and history – subjects understood as "academic" – in the museum environment. The *Academy* stimulated the rethinking of the museum and the university's responsibilities that, conclusively, can be the same: to teach, learn, produce and display. The *Academy* introduced questions that transgressed the institutional boundaries, being suitable to be asked within the social context of reality: "As is the case for the museum and the very institution of art, it is ultimately *in* and *for* society that *Academy* must work." (De Bare, Dziewior, Esche, Niermann, Nollert, Roelstraete and Watson, 2006: 8)

3.2. The conversational mode and the art of the encounter in exhibitions

3.2.1. Case Study 2: *The New Model*

The New Model: An Inquiry was a research-based project initiated in 2011 by Maria Lind (Sweden, 1966) and Lars Bang Larsen (Denmark, 1972) at Tensta Konsthall. In four years, it studied the legacy of *The Model: A Model for a Qualitative Society* (Palle Nielsen, 1968).

Modellen. En modell för ett kvalitativt samhälle (The Model: A Model for a Qualitative Society) was an adventure playground for children, staged in Moderna Museet for three weeks in October 1968. The playground was a spatial structure constructed for children to play. It provided tools, materials, paint, costumes and masks, as well as LP's that the participants could play (Larsen, 2010). Palle Nielsen (Denmark, 1920-2000) graduated in painting at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts and began his research about children playgrounds in the late 1960s. Nielsen was committed to creating experimental space formations for children, as he considered that children needed to play more and there were no appropriate or accessible places for that purpose (Larsen, 2010). Nielsen's revolutionary actions were a critique of urban industrial structures, also associated with the social and cultural struggles that were taking place in the decade of 1960. Along with a group of activists, Nielsen constructed illegal playgrounds in several neighbourhoods of Denmark as an alternative protest and as "a constructive critique of city planning." (Larsen, 2010: 41) To increase the impact of the pedagogical and social analysis, Nielsen suggested the construction of a new playground should occupy an institutional space such as Moderna Museet, as its reputation in the media would draw more attention to their work. His colleagues disapproved the idea and claimed that it was an elitist context that would attribute the dimension of an "artwork" to the playground (Larsen, 2010). The collaboration between them and the cultural institution, Nielsen argued, would only bring advantages for all of them and his determination led to the approval of Carlo Derket and Pontus Hultén, curator and director of Moderna Museet (Larsen, 2010). The Moderna Museet was made available for Nielsen's project as long as he would handle the fundraising and the implementation of the playground.

Palle Nielsen received a doctoral grant from the Royal School of Architecture in Copenhagen, which turned *The Model* into a research project. With the support of the scholarship, the sponsorships (for instance, from the Ministry of Education), the help of journalists and volunteers, *The Model: A Model for a Qualitative Society* finally opened at Modern Museet in October 1968 (Larsen, 2010). Nielsen's playground, exhibited as a pedagogical model, "used the child's experience to humanise the art institution, and the photos he took to document the event radiate delight and exuberance." (Larsen, 2010: 30) *The Model* was an open artwork that required the audience participation, as the children's visit activated it. Nielsen was even able to adjust the museum's tickets policy turning *The Model* free for children up until eighteen years old, while the adults kept on paying the standard admissions price – although they were not allowed to get inside *The Model* (Larsen, 2010). The collective dimension of *The Model* rejected the idea of an individual authorship, which Nielsen acknowledged "as a radical critique of the way institutions and markets fetishize the artistic persona and signature" (Larsen, 2010: 34). Nielsen's intention was not to promote himself as an artist and so the project was signed by the collective pseudonym "Working Group", although the group did not exist. On the one hand, it coincided with the movements such as art activism and Institutional Critique, which were emerging in the 1970s; on the other hand, the shared signature was metaphorically on behalf of the children who, concerning their age, were not yet able to write (Larsen, 2010).

"Once inside the art institution, a playground is no longer just a playground" (Larsen, 2010: 35). Nielsen believed that the interior of the museum gave the freedom to children express themselves without the pressure of the urban environment: "the children's play in the art museum was the dream of a city space that had to be made susceptible to new social imaginaries and artistic critique." (Larsen, 2010: 36) *The Model* stimulated the children's physical and sensory necessities, through the diversity of objects available so that children could play freely and unpredictably in the exhibition space (Larsen, 2010). "Marimbas, metal tubes, gasoline cans, drums and old musical instruments" activated the "sound experience" (Larsen, 2010: 51) along with the background music playing through the gallery's sound system. In *The Model*, it was also possible to take slide photographs that were later projected on the gallery's walls (Larsen, 2010). *The Model* offered a set of possibilities precisely to understand the children's decisions, which reflected different

levels of interest and experience. In the essay that Nielsen wrote for the fundraising, he argued:

"Efficient education and large production cannot alone create the qualitative human being. Only the understanding that the human being as an individual needs a number of religious relations can do this; a need to realise oneself through one's own creation and through open communication with others."²⁶

The Model: A Model for a Qualitative Society had three main mindsets: it was "a pedagogical research project", "an activist critique of everyday life" and an "inclusive, process-oriented concept of art" (Larsen, 2010: 54). *The Model* promoted the discussion about the critical role of the artist and museum in society with the aim of bringing new audiences to art museums (Larsen, 2010). As an educational research project, it received MA students that analysed *The Model* and reached some conclusions: for instance, children seemed to prefer the practical activities (moving or bouncing) over the pedagogical ones and, although the playground encouraged collective exercises, children would play more frequently alone (Larsen, 2010).

The photographs and films made during the period of the exhibition provided the material to study the different stages of the playground. They resulted in the central documentation of *The Model*, which challenged the difference between the children "as a qualitative human being and an aesthetic subject, or even an art work." (Larsen, 2010: 66) The children's play was contemplated and examined, which placed them as "subjects who are unaware of they are being productive" (Larsen, 2010: 66) and established play as a productive action. It contradicted the hierarchical idea that the adults are the teachers (able to produce knowledge) and the children are the learners: "It is the children who will show us the qualitative society, because the children *are* this society." (Larsen, 2010: 69) In the catalogue of the exhibition, Nielsen declares: "The exhibition is the work of children. *There is no exhibition*. It is only an exhibition because the children are playing in an art museum."²⁷ Indeed the playground was not a source for introspective gaze, as more typical art exhibitions are, but *The Model* was considered an exhibition. Museums and exhibitions constitute essential tools for education and reflection, and the meaning produced by the children's play at *The Model* stimulated critical transformations in society (Larsen, 2010).

²⁶ Palle Nielsen cited by Larsen, 2010: 53.

²⁷ Palle Nielsen cited by Larsen, 2010: 70.



Figure 7 *The Model: A Model for a Qualitative Society* (1968) by Palle Nielsen at the Moderna Museet, Stockholm, 1968. Installation view. Photo: exhibition catalogue, pp. 2-3.

In 2011, Maria Lind and Lars Bang Larsen initiated the long-term research project *The New Model: An Inquiry* at Tensta Konsthall. Tensta Konsthall is an art centre devoted to contemporary art and located in Tensta, a suburb of Stockholm. It inaugurated in 1998, the year Stockholm was the European Cultural Capital. The founder was the artist Gregor Wroblewski, and since 2011, Maria Lind has been the director.

Especially since 2011, Tensta Konsthall has developed a multidisciplinary programme that works together with the international contemporary artists and the local community, following the New Institutionalism's organisational structure based on the dialogue, open-endedness projects, collaboration and event-based work. Some of the projects included the *Bidoun Library*, founded in 2009 by Bidoun Projects and implemented in Tensta in 2012. *The Bidoun Library* is a non-commercial project, a mobile library of books and magazines that also organises exhibitions, events and publications to

support the contemporary culture from the Middle East²⁸. Since 2016, Auel Coffee (a local, family-owned business) has been managing the café located in the hall of Tensta Konsthall. It serves organic food, East African traditional dishes, brunch and there are always vegan and vegetarian options. The Tensta Konsthall's café is a welcoming space, both as a workplace and as a meeting place.

The diverse programme of Tensta Konsthall included the *Art Camps* for children and teenagers during school breaks and the *English Language Café* every Wednesdays during the summer that reunites groups from every age to learn/teach English through informal conversations. It organised exhibitions such as *Abstract Possible: The Stockholm Synergies* (2012) with the work of artists such as Doug Ashford, Claire Barclay, José León Cerrillo or Yto Barrada, *Tensta Museum: Reports from New Sweden* (2013/2014) and, currently, *Discrepancies with G.G.* by Leonor Antunes (2017). The Tensta Konsthall released publications such as *Performing the Curatorial* (2012), *Art and the F Word: Reflections on the Browning of Europe* (2014) and *The Silent University* (2016); and coordinated the series of seminars *What Does an Art Institution Do?* (2012), *What Does an Exhibition Do?* (2015) and *What Does an Archive Do?* (2017). The Tensta Konsthall's programme also involves artist presentations, guided tours, film screenings, and symposiums.

As a new institution, Tensta Konsthall emerged as a space whose interdisciplinary programme broke the boundaries between departments, placing the contemporary art exhibition at the same level as the other activities. It intended to include the participation of the community in the Konsthall's actions and to stimulate an informal environment where everyone would feel welcomed and comfortable. Tensta Konsthall aimed to create moments of discussion through the sharing of knowledge not only about contemporary art but also about themselves, the community, their neighbours and the several cultures that lived in Stockholm. It established as a place for the encounter and the promotion of education. Ultimately, Tensta Konsthall settled down as an institution for the dialogue and the knowledge production, through the creation of research-based projects such as *The New Model: An Inquiry*. Based at Tensta Konsthall, *The New Model* reconsidered the

²⁸ *Bidoun Library* at Tensta Konsthall (website). Accessed August 23, 2017. <http://www.tenstakonsthall.se/site/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Tensta-Konsthall-Bidoun-Library-English-Guide.pdf>.

questions raised by *The Model: A Model for a Qualitative Society* to adapt them to the contemporary social and cultural context:

"Our lives in 2011 do not share much in common with the social and cultural upheavals of 1968. Today, not even play is an unspoiled, intact freedom; it is in part a function of the creative industries. How can we rearticulate and renew the questions Nielsen posed with his Model? How can we create a qualitative society out of a totally other reality?"²⁹

The structure of *The New Model* was noticeably influenced by the background of the curators who developed their careers between the theoretical and the practical perspectives of the curatorial practices. Maria Lind, co-organiser of *The New Model* and director of Tensta Konsthall, is a curator, writer and educator born and based in Stockholm. She is the artistic director of the 11th Gwangju Biennale *The Eighth Climate (What does art do)?* and professor of artistic research at the Art Academy in Oslo. She has taught since the early 1990s in institutions such as the Art Academy in Munich and the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm and was director of the graduate programme Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College (2008-2010). She was curator at Moderna Museet in Stockholm (1997-2001), co-curator of Manifesta 2 (1998) and director of Kunstverein München (2002-2004). In 2009, she won the Walter Hopps Award for Curatorial Achievement. Lind has contributed extensively to newspapers, magazines, catalogues and other publications. She edited *Abstraction* (2013) from the MIT's and Whitechapel Gallery's series *Documents on Contemporary Art*, and she is the co-editor of books such as *Curating with Light Luggage* (2005), *Taking the Matter into Common Hands: Collaborative Practices in Contemporary Art* (2007). Lind is also the co-editor of the Tensta Konsthall's publications. In 2010, *Selected Maria Lind Writing* was published by Sternberg Press. Lars Bang Larsen, co-organiser of *The New Model*, is an art historian, independent curator and writer born in Silkeborg, Denmark, and based in Barcelona and Copenhagen. He is the invited professor at the Haute École d'Art et de Design in Geneva and a post-doc fellow in the department of Arts and Cultural Studies at the University of Copenhagen, from where he holds a PhD on psychedelic concepts in neo-avant-garde art. He has co-curated group exhibitions such as *Populism* (2005) at Stedelijk Museum,

²⁹ *The Miracle in Tensta (Theoria)* (2014) by Magnus Bærtås, integrated in *The New Model* (2011-2015) at Tensta Konsthall (website). Accessed August 23, 2017. http://www.tensta.se/uploads/124-miracle_en.pdf.

Amsterdam and *A History of Irritated Material* (2010) at Raven Row, London. Larsen was the curator of the Danish participation in the 26th São Paulo Biennial (2004) and the co-curator of the 32nd São Paulo Biennial *Incerteza Viva* (2016). His publications include *Sture Johannesson* (2002), the monograph about Palle Nielsen's utopian adventure playgrounds, *The Model: A Model for a Qualitative Society, 1968* (2010) and *The Critical Mass of Mediation* (2014), co-edited with Søren Andreasen.

The New Model: An Inquiry was an arts-based research project inspired by the propositions studied in *The Model: A Model for a Qualitative Society*. From the beginning, *The New Model* pursued a structure based on the dialogue and the encounter. Firstly, the project was an outcome of the exchange of ideas between two curators, Maria Lind and Lars Bang Larsen. Secondly, *The New Model* included two seminars, occurred in 2011 and 2012, with the aim of gathering the participants and the community to discuss subjects associated with the two models. Thirdly, it developed through the collaboration between the curatorial team and the invited artists, resulting in the production and display of the artworks *The Miracle in Tensta* (2014) by Magnus Bærtås, *This Place is Every Place* (2014) by Ane Hjort Guttu, *Liquidity Inc.* (2014) by Hito Steyerl and *School Section* (2014) by Dave Hullfish Bailey. Finally, *The New Model* organised the exhibition *The Society Without Qualities* (2013) curated by Lars Bang Larsen. *The New Model: An Inquiry* promoted the importance of networking and of being together, as a way of exchanging ideas: a helpful model for the access to knowledge.

3.2.2. The potential dialogue(s) in knowledge production

*The New Model: An Inquiry*³⁰ introduced by the socially engaged *Model* and within the curatorial context of Tensta Konsthall, focused a large part of the research project in activities related to the dialogue.

As Irit Rogoff argues, when introducing the idea of dialogue in the curatorial practice, "it became clear that one of the most significant contributions that the art world had made to the culture at large has been the emergence of a conversational mode hosted by it." (Rogoff, 2008: 9) The conversational mode in art institutions and exhibitions

³⁰ *The New Model* (2011-2015) at Tensta Konsthall (website). Accessed August 23, 2107. <http://www.tenstakonsthall.se/?the-new-model-1>.

culminated in "new set of conversations between artists, scientists, philosophers, critics, economists, architects, planners, and so on." (Rogoff, 2008: 9) The discussion about different contemporary subjects transformed the art field into a "site of extensive talking – talking emerged as a practice, as a mode of gathering, as a way of getting access to some knowledge and to some questions, as networking and organizing and articulating some necessary questions." (Rogoff, 2008: 9)

A clear result of this "conversational mode" was the proliferating organisation of seminars, an activity that usually involves the presence and presentation of participants, who introduce topics to discuss with the audience. *The New Model* organised two leading seminars. The first one, in October 2011, took place at Tensta Konsthall with presentations by Lars Bang Larsen and the artists Magnus Bårtås, Dave Hullfish Bailey and Hito Steyerl. In 1968, Nielsen claimed that children were not given space or time to play. On the contrary, for the time being, playing was not only allowed but also intensely encouraged by creative industries and media. The primary target audience in the entertainment market were children. The inaugural seminar discussed the negative impact of acknowledging children's play as an efficient and profitable act of production (Lappalainen, 2011). In order to reinvent Nielsen's *Model for a Qualitative Society*, the seminar questioned if art could be an influential factor for the potential transformation of play – from the perception of playing as a flawless interaction into the play for the sake of experimentation and making mistakes. In an essay about the seminar, Lars-Erik Hjertström Lappalainen concludes:

"To think the future and the new, Nielsen seems to suggest, is to make new experiences 'in an experimental spirit.' It is not enough to depict people's experiences, or even to recreate them. The artist, says Nielsen, must instead make new experiences, 'live art,' in order to make a real contribution. (...) We can hope that experiences for the future come along with the new works, and that the seminar series prepares us for them: prepares us for that fact that an unsuccessful day can be the best." (Lappalainen, 2011: 4)

The second seminar, *The Model and the City: A Seminar on Palle Nielsen's project The Model (Moderna Museet 1968) and Tensta*, happened in March 2012 with the presence of Palle Nielsen, Gunilla Lundahl and Erik Stenberg. This seminar focused on the exhibition *The Model: A Model for A Qualitative Society* organised by Palle Nielsen at Moderna Museet in 1968. The duplicity of the exhibition, between activism and art, and

Nielsen's rejection of an artistic authorship, did not integrate the history of exhibitions immediately, even though this important event took place at one of the most famous museums in Sweden and Europe. The seminar explored the way *The Model* was received in the cultural context of 1968, and it included the participation of some of the key members of the projects *Action Talk* and *The Model*. In an analysis from the cultural and artistic point of view, the seminar focused on how the duality practice-theory contributed for the consolidation of relevant historical experiences that are still remembered today. Maurice Blanchot defines the act of conversation like the following:

"when two people speak together, they speak not together, but each in turn: one says something, then stops, the other something else (or the same thing), then stops. The coherent discourse they carry on is composed of sequences that are interrupted when the conversation moves from partner to partner, even if adjustments are made so that they correspond to one another." (Blanchot, 1993: 75)

The conversation is a form of mediation, as it is a tool for knowledge exchange and the creation of bridges of understanding (Szewczyk, 2009a). The educational turn of curating as a reaction to the Bologna Process broke boundaries between what was the "educational time" and the "free time", and learning practices culminated from informal conversations in the art institution (Szewczyk, 2009a). In "our hyper-communicative world" (Szewczyk, 2009b: 4), a period of constant share and access to information, the power of discourse has a great potential for social change; and, with this in mind, a large part of artistic and curatorial projects adopt it as a subject. Seminars, conferences, symposia, lectures, and informal talks: the main purpose of the conversation as mediation is the possibility of its continuity and efficacy after the period of the event (Szewczyk, 2009b).

Curating is also a dialogical practice, as it establishes a set of mediations between the triangle curator-audience-artists. Hans Ulrich Obrist³¹ explained the power of conversations within his curatorial practice:

³¹ In *Curationism: How Curating Took Over the Art World and Everything Else* (2015), David Balzer dedicated the first chapter to Hans Ulrich Obrist and portrayed him as the follow: "There is certainly no one quite like Hans Ulrich Obrist, who is affectionately known in the art by his monographic acronym, HUO. (...) Hans Ulrich Obrist was born in Zurich, Switzerland, in 1968 to non-art-world parents, yet his legend begins early. (...) Obrist, who has a celebrated memory, was struck by the vast Abby library of Saint Gall at the ripe age of three. He came across a Giacometti sculpture at Zurich's Kunsthau shortly thereafter, and vowed to 'go to museums every day.' By the early 1980s, the pioneering curator Harald Szeemann was at Kunsthau Zurich, and Obrist, now a teenager, soaked up his influential programming, visiting his Der Hang

"One could say that there are parallel realities: on the one hand, there is the curating of exhibitions – my main work is curating – but I've always had a sort of parallel activity, which is my research and knowledge production – and that's the interview project. The interview project actually predates anything else I'm doing, because everything started with conversations. Whenever I do exhibitions and books, they are the outcome of such conversations – conversations with artists, architects, scientists, all kinds of practitioners. So, one can basically say that the conversations are not conversations for conversations' sake, but are always working conversations. I'm always working with these artists, architects, or scientists, either on a show or on a conference or a book, and very often the conversation is not only parallel to working on a project, but new projects even grow out of the conversations. So, one can actually call them "production of reality conversations". (Obrist, 2011: 70)

If "art and conversation share this space of invention" (Szewczyk, 2009a: 2); this space can be the exhibition. The exhibition *The Society Without Qualities*, curated by Lars Bang Larsen, took place between February and May 2013 and displayed the work of artists such as Ane Hjort Guttu (Oslo), Archizoom Associati (Milan), Charlotte/Sture Johannesson (Malmö), Dave Bailey (London), Jakob Jakobsen/Anders Remmer (Copenhagen), Jaime Stapleton (London), Jakob Kolding (Berlin), Joanna Lombard (Stockholm), Learning Site (Copenhagen/Malmö), Palle Nielsen (Copenhagen), Samuel R. Delany (New York), Sharon Lockhart (Los Angeles), Søren Andreasen (Copenhagen), Thomas Bayrle (Frankfurt) and Xabier Salaberria (Donostia-San Sebastián)³². The exhibition "revisits key themes and central concerns of *The Model* such as artistic research, the right to the city, the child as an active historical subject, and the critical use of the art institution."³³ The exhibition's title had a double meaning. On the one hand, it referred to the failed systems of society that did not provide quality of life to its citizens. On the other hand, it dated back to the title of Robert Musil's novel *The Man Without Qualities* (1930-1942) that tells the story of a man that departed to the outside world in order to construct his character; "however in *The Society Without Qualities*, it is society rather than the human being that is deliberately left as a blank."³⁴ The exhibition questioned how artists,

zum Gesamtkunstwerk group show forty-one times. (...) Nineteen ninety-three was not only the year Obrist officially embrace *curator* but also when he officially began to record interviews, a medium in which he has become a sort of guru." (Balzer, 2015: 11-13)

³² *The New Model* (2011-2015) at Tensta Konsthall (website). Accessed August 23, 2107. <http://www.tenstakonsthall.se/?the-new-model-1>.

³³ *The Society Without Qualities* at e-flux Announcements (website). Accessed August 23, 2017. <http://www.e-flux.com/announcements/33105/the-society-without-qualities/>.

³⁴ *The Society Without Qualities* at e-flux Announcements (website). Accessed August 23, 2017. <http://www.e-flux.com/announcements/33105/the-society-without-qualities/>.

activists and architects could develop new systems of communication, according to utopian models, in an alternative to the transformations of society. It challenged art and architecture to address social and urban conflicts without following specific models or images representing the future of society: "The society without qualities can never become manifest, because it is a place in the future where something that is different survives." (Larsen, 2013: 3) This curatorial discourse was present in the exhibition, just as Paul O'Neill argued concerning the manifestation of discursive and conversational practices within the curatorial work:

"Today, exhibition making is no longer the only way that curating can manifest itself. You are right in pointing at a contemporary turn towards discursivity and discussion and the kind of spaces of display that involves talking heads rather than objects on the wall. Today we see the discourse as a spectacle phenomenon, where speaking or performing one's discourse has become a form of curatorial practice in itself." (O'Neill, 2009: 7)

The dialogue triggered the collaboration between artists and curators, which resulted in the commissioned work displayed along *The New Model: This Place is Every Place* (2014) by Ane Hjort Guttu, *School Section* (2014) by Dave Hullfish Bailey, *Liquidity Inc.* (2014) and *The Miracle in Tensta (Teoria)* (2014) by Magnus Bårtås. The dialogue not only functioned as a network within the project, but also it behaved as a central subject of *The New Model's* artistic production.

This Place is Every Place (2014)³⁵ is a film by Ane Hjort Guttu (Norway, 1971) that portrays a dialogue between two women in the suburb of Tensta in Stockholm: "*This Place is Every Place* is a seductive, beautifully shot study of the relationship between political and personal crises, pointing to a widespread loss of faith in alternative social organization."³⁶ The Arab spring is the film background, which establishes connections between the global protest movements and the riots in the Swedish suburbs. Born and raised in Tensta, the women are two sisters who speak about their sense of belonging to that place. Each one stands in an opposite position: the younger sister claims that everything should change, while the older appreciates the things as they are. *This Place is*

³⁵ *This Place is Every Place* (short preview) is available at Ane Hjort Guttu's portfolio (website). Accessed August 23, 2017. <http://anehjortguttu.net/filter/film/This-Place-is-Every-Place-2014>.

³⁶ *This Place is Every Place* (2014) by Ane Hjort Guttu, integrated in *The New Model* (2011-2015) at Tensta Konsthall (website). Accessed August 23, 2017. http://www.tenstakonsthall.se/uploads/136-THIS_PLACE_IS_EVERY_PLACE.pdf.

Every Place was Guttu's first fictional film, since her previous work adopted the documentary format. The artist meant to portrait a beautiful cinematic space and, in this sense, she did it fictionally as she did not felt it was possible to imagine a "qualitative society" in Tensta anymore. Ane Hjort Guttu is an artist and curator born and based in Oslo. Her work explores the representation strategies and power structures, especially within architecture and pedagogy, through analytical essays, image collections, video and photography. Her work was presented in exhibitions such as *Furniture isn't just furniture* (2017) at Fotogalleriet, *Time Passes* (2015) at South London Gallery, *Learning For Life* (2012) at Henie Onstad Kunstsenter and *Looking is Political* (2009) at Bergen Kunsthall. The film *This Place is Every Place* was also displayed for school classes at Tensta Gymnasium of the senior high school.

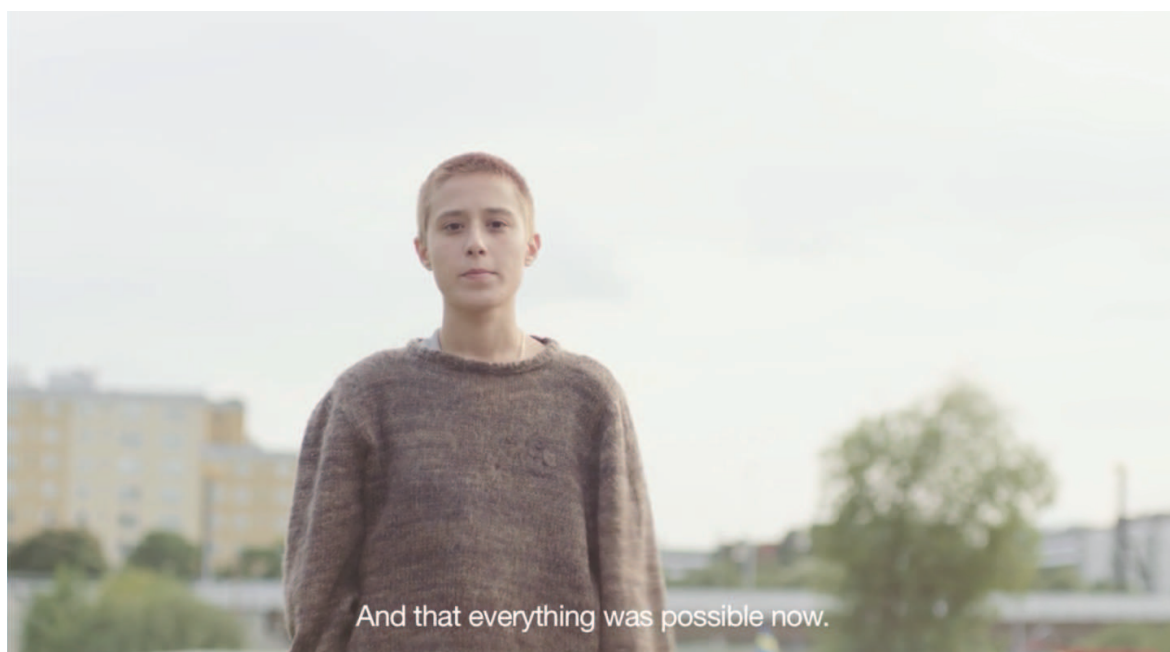


Figure 8 *This Place is Every Place* (2014) by Ane Hjort Guttu. Photo: snapshot from the film's short preview.

School Section (2014) by Dave Hullfish Bailey (USA, 1963) was also part of *The New Model*. As a large part of Bailey's work, *School Section* "is rooted in close observation, cross-disciplinary analysis and the experimental mapping of specific places, often sites where geographical edges coincide with cultural and economic margins."³⁷ The

³⁷ *School Section* (2014) by Dave Hullfish Bailey integrated *The New Model* (2011-2015) at Tensta Konsthall (website). Accessed August 23, 2017. <http://www.tenstakonsthall.se/?school-section-by-dave-hullfish-bailey>.

artist analysed the close geographic relationship between the late 1960s countercultural compound Drop City (Colorado, USA) and a decommissioned public school, studying the possible links between these two places constructed in two different times:

"Through research materials, prototypes for pedagogical objects and furniture, and proposals for field-based learning sites, his project asks questions about public education's trend toward standardized knowledge and enacts a highly contextual form of learning and intervening in place."³⁸

Following the steps of *The Model*, Bailey's research based project questioned the transformations of concepts such as society, childhood and the importance of contextual space in everyday life and it resulted in "sculptural processes and forms—including models, improvised devices, working prototypes, provisional architectures and sited interventions (...)"³⁹. Born in Denver and based in Los Angeles, Dave Hullfish Bailey is an artist whose sculptural work researches the "socio-political organisational structures, re-configuring their past facts, causalities and chronologies but retaining echoes of their social goals"⁴⁰. His recent exhibitions included *Broken Country* (2013) at Malmö Konsthall, Sweden, and the series *Sci-Fi + Fantasy; Mud, Salt Crystals, Rocks, Water; Wind; Rotation; Revolution* (2010) at KROME GALLERY, Berlin.

Liquidity Inc. (2014) was a video installation by Hito Steyerl (Germany, 1966) about "the formless, floating, violent, and simultaneously vital water"⁴¹ and that took as departing point the story of Jacob Wood, a former analyst who lost his job during the 2008 economic crisis and decided to turn his hobby in mixed martial arts into a career⁴². Wood's story was narrated through "footage from boxing matches and weather disasters, Hito Steyerl's own chat conversations, and images", establishing unexpected and weird connections that, somehow, resulted in a consistent dialogical narrative. Hito Steyerl is an artist from Munich who also works as a filmmaker, writer and teacher of New Media at University of Arts in Berlin. Her written and visual essays focus on the travelling images

³⁸ *School Section* (2014) by Dave Hullfish Bailey integrated *The New Model* (2011-2015) at Tensta Konsthall (website). Accessed August 23, 2017. <http://www.tenstakonsthall.se/?school-section-by-dave-hullfish-bailey>.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ David Hullfish Bailey is an artist represented by the KROME GALLERY, Berlin (website). Accessed September 12, 2017. <http://krome-gallery.com/artists/bailey/>.

⁴¹ *Liquidity Inc.* (2014) by Hito Steyerl integrated *The New Model* (2011-2015) at Tensta Konsthall (website). Accessed August 23, 2017. <http://www.tenstakonsthall.se/?liquidity-inc-by-hito-steyerl>.

⁴² *Hito Steyerl: Liquidity Inc.* will be displayed along with the exhibition *Art in the Age of the Internet, 1989 to Today* in February 2018. More information is available at The Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston (website). Accessed August 23, 2017. <https://www.icaboston.org/exhibitions/hito-steyerl-liquidity-inc>.

and their relationship to spectacle, history and violence. Her most recent group exhibitions include *Dreamlands: Immersive Cinema and Art, 1905-2016* (2016) at Whitney Museum of American Art, *MashUp: the Birth of Modern Culture* (2015) at Vancouver Art Gallery and her solo exhibitions include *Factory of the Sun* (2016) at Museum of Contemporary Art of Los Angeles and *Hito Steyerl* (2014) at Van Abbemuseum and Institute of Contemporary Arts.



Figure 9 *Liquidity Inc.* (2014) by Hito Steyerl at Tensta Konsthall, Stockholm, 2014. Installation view. Photo: Jean-Baptiste Béranger.

*The Miracle in Tensta (Teoria)*⁴³ (2014) is a film by Magnus Bårtås (Sweden, 1962) produced within the context of *The New Model*. Magnus Bårtås is an artist and writer from Jönköping, who lives and works in Stockholm. His work is mostly about constructed narratives associated with places and architecture, that is to say, that the essential tools for the development of his work are meetings, conversations and storytelling – the oral diffusion of knowledge. *You Told Me – work stories and video essays* (2010) is the title of Bårtås' research dissertation about the meaning of narratives in contemporary art and the

⁴³ *The Miracle in Tensta (Teoria)* (short preview) is available at *Rencontres Internationales Paris/Berlin* Vimeo Channel (website). Accessed September 20, 2017. <https://vimeo.com/111628568>.

production of video essays. Based on online testimonies, *The Miracle in Tensta (Teoria)* was a representation of an event that happened in August 2012: the appearance of the Virgin Mary in Tensta. The artist, with the support of Tensta citizens, gathered testimonies from the Internet and shot the witnesses in the same gallery room where the film was projected:

"Theoria is the Greek word for talking about something witnessed. If, during ancient times, someone experienced an extraordinary event, like the Olympics or a religious ritual, a theoria was performed when they returned home. Theoria consisted of a journey, a witnessing, and of the social situation when the person shared her experiences. In ancient times philosophers talked in terms of "ritualized visibility" that received a political significance where the person lived."⁴⁴

The artworks produced and displayed within the context of *The New Model* had in common the dialogue as a method to access knowledge. The dialogical dimension was inherent in the conversation between the two sisters (*This Place is Every Place*), in the spatial and temporal relationships mapped through sculptures (*School Section*), in the connections established through video montage in order to form a narrative (*Liquidity Inc.*) and in the word of mouth that constituted the witnesses' testimonies (*The Miracle in Tensta (Teoria)*). In a way or another, the artworks incorporated the discursive dimension of curatorial practices, contributing for the "exhibition-as-pedagogy" (Altshuler, 2008: 23). As Charles Esche argues, we should "understand education as knowledge exchange" (Esche, 2009: 304); and the discursive and dialogic mediations are within the frame of this "education, research, knowledge production and learning." (O'Neill and Wilson, 2010: 12)

3.2.3. Social Aesthetics

Along four years, *The New Model: An Inquiry* researched the possibilities of finding new models for a qualitative society through several projects such as seminars, workshops and exhibitions. While in 1968 *The Model* aspired to identify a model for a qualitative society, in the period between 2011 and 2015 *The New Model* questioned if it was conceivable to adapt the previous one to a new reality. More importantly, *The New Model* interrogated if it was possible to adjust society to qualitative models. Both *The*

⁴⁴ *The Miracle in Tensta (Teoria)* (2014) integrated *The New Model* (2011-2015) at Tensta Konsthall (website). Accessed September 12, 2017. <http://www.tenstakonsthall.se/?the-miracle-in-tensta-theoria>.

Model and *The New Model* established a relationship between the artistic and research practices through mediation and collaboration: in *The Model* between the activist group and the museum team, in *The New Model* between the artists, the curators and the community.

The Model: A Model for a Qualitative Society was many times included in movements associated with socially engaged art, namely the already mentioned "Social Aesthetics". Palle Nielsen, the creator of *The Model*, described Social Aesthetics as "a way of producing, interpreting or presenting art so connections arise between aesthetic knowledge and the surrounding society." (Nielsen, 2001: 78) The aesthetic, as in Nielsen's playground, emerged from the ordinary activities of the everyday life such as play. Social Aesthetics perceived the artwork in the way it communicated to the public, which assigned a more significant role to communication; "social aesthetics' concept of reality is based on dialogue, and its goal is to confirm and consolidate identity in a broad cultural perspective." (Nielsen, 2001: 78)

Contrary to *The Model*, *The New Model* did not have social or relational expectations, although it diverged from the classic static display model of exhibitions. In an interview that Maria Lind gave before the production of *The New Model*, she argued:

"I am not particularly interested in the notion of "relational aesthetics" as such. I am however, deeply engaged in the work of a number of the artists who have been associated with that notion. (...) What was interesting to me at the time, and this remains interesting to me, is how they often engage directly with their surrounding reality, whether it's a social or a even a political reality. The discursive aspect was highly relevant too. The way in which they brought up the function of decision making processes, the importance of biography and desire, as well as how collaboration and temporal aspects were foregrounded was very inspiring to me." (Lind, 2008: 1)

The exhibition *The Model: A Model for a Qualitative Society* might have been quite associated with movements such as Social Aesthetics and Relational Art due to the active interaction established between the audience and the model displayed. However, *The New Model: An Inquiry* was not recognised as such. Although not acknowledged as part of the socially engaged art, it is true that the curatorial process and the artistic production of *The New Model* gathered, conscious or unconsciously, elements from these movements. *The New Model* was not only contemplative but also participative since it pursued the inclusion and collaboration between several artistic agents and the audience. *The New Model: An*

Inquiry, as a process-based project, functioned both as "critical medium" and as "encounter" (Bourriaud, 1998). It resulted in several activities including exhibitions, screening of films, installations, seminars, aiming the involvement of visitors in a long-term process of critical thought: "These new considerations of the engagement of the spectator as a function of art revealed new ways of thinking about the exhibition as an arena of exchange through social relations." (Voorhies, 2017: 102)

The New Model's central elements – the encounter, the dialogue, the social relations and the discursive aspects – were the tools that enabled the access, share and knowledge production. *The New Model's* programme, between theory and practice, reflected these features. The two seminars researched, through the dialogue, to understand the impact of *The Model* and art in the contemporary society, while the exhibition and the commissioned artworks considered the critical role of artists in the community as facilitators to change. In the end, the communication was a fundamental characteristic of *The New Model* for the stimulation of critical discussions and exchange of ideas not only about *The Model: A Model for a Qualitative Society* but also about the surrounding realities:

"The art of curating resides in the capacity to grasp the potentials inherent in the magic of social encounters and the power to activate these potentials in the act of facilitating collective cultural manifestations. The medium of this art is communication. To curate means to talk things into being, not just exhibitions or events but the very social relations out of which such manifestations emerge, through the effort of creating and sustaining the channels of communication between the parties involved (the artists, the staff and board of the host institution, donors and sponsors, the press, members of the audience, etc.)" (Verwoert, 2010: 24)

Maria Lind and Lars Bang Larsen organised *The New Model* in a space that does not consider itself as a merely exhibit location, and that works towards the settle down in the community of Tensta as a space for the production of relationships and of meaning. It is through the elements that compose the Tensta Konsthall (the coffee area, the several events within the community) and through the relationships that they establish with people that projects such as *The New Model: An Inquiry* gathered the fair conditions to produce knowledge.

3.3. Arts-based research VS curatorial research

3.3.1. Case Study 3: *Under the Clouds: From Paranoia to the Digital Sublime*

The exhibition *Under the Clouds: From Paranoia to the Digital Sublime*, curated by João Ribas (Portugal, 1979), took place in the Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art. It displayed the encounter between the two representations of the cloud in contemporary society: "the mushroom cloud of the atomic bomb, and now the 'cloud' of information networks." (Ribas, 2015: 9) It suggested a critical reflection on the presence and impact of these representations in our everyday routines through the display of several visual works. Introducing the exhibition's catalogue, João Ribas argued,

"Since the second half of the twentieth century, we have lived under the shadow of two clouds: the mushroom cloud of the atomic bomb, and now the 'cloud' of information networks. How did the metaphor of post-war paranoia become the utopian metaphor for today's global, interconnected world?" (Ribas, 2015: 9)

If on the one hand, the mushroom cloud represented the potential extermination of humankind, on the other, the online cloud represented information and network. Although the clouds emerged for different reasons, they somehow influenced our ideas and the way we live. The infinite amount of information available transformed our needs and feelings, and it resulted in an independent "digital self": our presence on the Internet, which lives a life of their own. The online cloud symbolised something immaterial, invisible and omnipresent. Considering the abstract nature of both cloud representations, how was it possible to critically confront them?

The emergence of both clouds had historical relations: the technological revolution that influenced the origin of the digital cloud came from studies for the construction of nuclear weapons. The famous image of the mushroom cloud appeared in the documentation of the first detonation of an atomic bomb, designated "Trinity Test", on 16 July 1945 (Ribas, 2015). The explosion was captured from several viewpoints, on photos and videos, which resulted in a new image in popular culture: "The shape and perspective of the mushroom cloud, its expanding shape developing over several negatives, was both *inconceivable* – in the potential destruction it could cause – and *unrepresentable*, fixed only in the alluring, changing shape of a cloud." (Ribas, 2015: 11) The resulting images,

although they seemed innocent, represented the potential of an "apocalyptic end frozen in a fraction of second." (Ribas, 2015: 12), and this capacity of destruction was evident in the 1945 bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It showed how technological developments were capable of spreading everything by pressing one button, which, ironically, was also possible through the online cloud. "As a metaphor for digitalization and contemporary hypomnemata – the externalization of memory and knowledge – the cloud is our way of dealing with the vastness of it all." (Ribas, 2015: 17)

The mushroom cloud illustrated the post-war paranoia concerning the imminent threat of a nuclear war. The power of these types of weapon represented the massive annihilation of humankind. "The geopolitical response to this unprecedented sublime potential for destruction, and the ensuing proliferation of nuclear weapons, was the doctrine of 'mutual assured destruction (MAD)' a form of deterrence pursued through-out the Cold War." (Ribas, 2015: 13) The military strategies in the Cold War settle on the question of which side would have prepared a nuclear response to the first attack: "How might a 'command and control network' survive in order to assure the total annihilation of an attacking enemy?" (Ribas, 2015: 13) In 1962, a researcher at the RAND Corporation named Paul Baran, responded to the memo "On Distributed Communication Networks" working with "computing power, communication systems and information theory" (Ribas, 2015: 13). Taking into consideration that the use of centralised systems of information would be destroyed in case of a nuclear attack, Baran suggested that the information should be spread in different systems. The distributed network would make sure that the information could still function after a disturbance. This innovative way of thinking inspired the development of the Pentagon's Advanced Research Projects Agency Network (or Arpanet) and "on 29 October 1969, the first data travelled between two nodes of the four node network – eventually evolving to become the internet." (Ribas, 2015: 14) The emergence of the Internet revolutionised the communication and transformed the world in an endless network that "has come to define all forms of social relations, and enabled a global, interconnected marketplace on an unprecedented scale." (Ribas, 2015: 14)

The 'cloud' became the representation of this complex network and infinite flow of information, and it structured the way we exist, relate to society, and the way the global markets function: "we now think, see and feel through the cloud." (Ribas, 2015: 15) It is accessible everywhere and at all times, from any devices (smartphones, computers, and

tablets). Although its representation as a non-place⁴⁵ without physical dimensions, the cloud is a technological construction that requires several resources: "An apparently immaterial cloud is powered by thirty billions watts of electricity, equivalent to the output of thirty nuclear power plants." (Ribas, 2015: 17) As all the industrial material production, it provokes ecological damages. Due to the excessive consumption and accumulation of data, the increase of an exhaustive production of information, texts and images lead to an "archival anxiety"⁴⁶. The 'cloud' appeared as a storehouse for the production and organisation of knowledge, resulting in "new relations between information and knowledge; bits and atoms; screens, images and things; increasing 'datafication'; surveillance, and data mining" (Ribas, 2015: 20) and in new relations within visual culture. Currently, not only it is possible to perceive images but also to touch, drag and scroll them. The existence of these two clouds influenced each other, but mostly it transformed and, controlled the main conditions of how we live, work and entertain (Ribas, 2015).

Under the Clouds: From Paranoia to the Digital Sublime was displayed between 20 June and 20 September 2015 and included works by the following artists: Adel Abdessemed, Horst Ademeit, Cory Arcangel, Arte Nucleare, Darren Bader, Enrico Baj, Robert Barry, Eduardo Batarida, Thomas Bayrle, Neïl Beloufa, René Bertholo, Joseph Beuys, K.P. Brehmer, Bruce Conner, Kate Cooper, Gregory Corso, Guy Debord, Harun Farocki, Hans-Peter Feldmann, Carla Filipe, General Idea, Melanie Gilligan, Jean-Luc Godard & Anne-Marie Miéville, Peter Halley, Rachel Harrison, Mona Hatoum, Pedro Henriques, Thomas Hirschhorn, Yves Klein, Sean Landers, Elad Lassry, Mark Lombardi, Julie Mehretu, Katja Novitskova, Ken Okiishi, Trevor Paglen, Nam June Paik, Silvestre Pestana, Pratchaya Phinthong, Seth Price, Martha Rosler, Thomas Ruff, Jacolby Satterwhite, Ângelo de Sousa, Frances Stark, Haim Steinbach, Hito Steyerl, Jean Tinguely, Adelhyd van Bender, Stan VanDerBeek, Andy Warhol, Christopher Williams, Christopher Wool and Anicka Yi.

⁴⁵ Marc Augé described "non-places" as "spaces which are not themselves anthropological places and which, unlike Baudelairean modernity, do not integrate the earlier places: instead these are listed, classified, promoted to the status of 'places of memory', and assigned to a circumscribed and specific position." (Augé, 1995: 78) and as "spaces in which neither identity, nor relations, nor history really make any sense; spaces in which solitude is experienced as an overburdening or emptying of individuality, in which only the movement of the fleeting images enables the observer to hypothesize the existence of a past and glimpse the possibility of a future." (Augé, 1995: 87)

⁴⁶ Mark Fisher cited by Ribas, 2015: 20.

The exhibition's parallel activities included guided tours by the Serralves Museum Education Service and by the exhibition curator João Ribas as well as the screening of the films *A Movie* (1958) by Bruce Conner and *Six fois deux* (1976) by Jean-Luc Godard and Anne-Marie Miéville. The exhibition resulted in a publication containing texts by Enrico Baj & Sergio Dangelo, Thomas Hirschhorn, Sean Landers, Metahaven, Seth Price, João Ribas, Frances Stark, Hito Steyerl and Stan VanDerBeek.

João Ribas, curator of the exhibition *Under the Clouds: From Paranoia to the Digital Sublime* is the Deputy Director and Senior Curator of the Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art. From 2007 until 2009, he was curator at The Drawing Center, New York, and from 2009 until 2013, at the MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, where he curated the exhibition *In the Holocene* (2012) on art, science and speculation. Ribas was the winner of four consecutive AICA (The International Association of Art Critics) Exhibition Awards (2008-11) and an Emily Hall Tremain Exhibition Award (2010). He curated exhibitions of the work of Chris Marker, Amalia Pica, Joachim Koester, Akram Zaatari, The Otolith Group, Otto Piene, Frances Stark, Rirkrit Tiravanija, and Ree Morton, among others. His writing has appeared in numerous publications, including *Artforum*, *Mousse*, and *Art in America*, and has been a contributor to numerous catalogues and books, including *Contemporary Art: From 1989 to the Present* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2013) and *Realism Materialism Art* (Sternberg, 2015). He was a professor at Yale University, at the School of Visual Arts in New York and the Rhode Island School of Design.

Under the Clouds: From Paranoia to the Digital Sublime reunited 55 artists from different generations and methodologies to research the visual presence and the social impact of the cloud in contemporary life.

3.3.2. Artistic practice as groundwork for research

The exhibition *Under the Clouds: From Paranoia to the Digital Sublime* studied the impact of two representations of the cloud in contemporary society and their influence in the conception of the sublime since the second half of the twentieth century. The

classical notion of the sublime "represents the unrepresentable"⁴⁷. It recalled something so vast and endless that was impossible to hold or limit to comprehend it in its whole.

"The word 'sublime' may seem rather outmoded – etymologically it comes from the Latin *sublimis* (elevated; lofty; sublime) derived from the preposition *sub*, here meaning 'up to', and, some sources state, *limen*, the threshold, surround or lintel of a doorway, while others refer to *limes*, a boundary or limit." (Morley, 2010: 14)

In the 18th century, the concept of the sublime developed a relationship between the arts and the representations of "aspects of nature that instil awe and wonder" (Morley, 2010: 12). The examples of the sublime in this period were, between abstraction and material, perceived from a distance: the sea, infinity and clouds in the sky. Artists and writers from the Romantic Movement would also use the definition of the sublime in the way of employing modern vocabulary to describe human experiences (Morley, 2010). The philosophers Edmund Burke (Ireland, 1729-1797) and Immanuel Kant (Germany, 1724-1804), for instance, studied the concept of the sublime⁴⁸. On the one hand, Burke's definition represented the human's experience and what was beyond the self; on the other hand, Kant's idea of the sublime described "what happens at the borderline where reason finds its limits." (Morley, 2010: 16) Kant categorised the sublime as the *mathematical* and the *dynamical*, "the former in which we are overwhelmed by size, and the later, by force" (Ribas, 2015: 10) and described it as the "negative experience of *limits*" (Morley, 2010: 16). Similarly to the immensity of the sublime, the representation of the cloud was challenging due to its abstract and shifting form; and, in this sense, the traditional concept of the natural sublime was correlated to the painting of the 19th century.

⁴⁷ João Ribas's "The Future was a Cloud" talk at Global Art Forum 10: "The Future Was", March 2016. The lecture is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WGvDIN7rdFM> (accessed September 1, 2017). Each year, the Global Art Forum brings together a diverse line-up of artists, curators, musicians, writers and thought leaders. The Forum is recognised for its collaborative, innovative approach to the art world and draws on other disciplines and experiences to take a broad 'helicopter view'. It includes performance, music, commissioned research and projects alongside live talks. Over the years, the Forum has toured to Qatar, Kuwait, France and the UK, and grown to include publications, workshops and other educational initiatives. The tenth edition of the Global Art Forum, titled The Future Was, explored the ways in which artists, writers, technologists, historians, musicians and thinkers have imagined, and are shaping, the future. All programming was free and open to the public.

⁴⁸ For the catalogue of the exhibition *Under the Clouds: From Paranoia to the Digital Sublime*, João Ribas researched the origin of the concept of the sublime in "central texts of philosophical aesthetics: Edmund Burke's 1757 treatise, *A Philosophical Enquiry to the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* and Immanuel Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, from 1790." (Ribas, 2015: 9) Ribas also advises to see *On the Sublime*, available in <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/17957/17957-h/17957-h.htm> (accessed September 1, 2017).

"A contemporary sublime has come to replace the natural one through the clouds, the sublime of the 'third industrial revolution'. (...) What I want to do is attempt to describe the phantasmagoric character of our sublime, to limn out the shape of its expanding edges, the shadow it as come to cast over us. If beauty was the paradigmatic aesthetic category of modernity, it is the sublime that defines our contemporary condition." (Ribas, 2015: 9)

Although the contemporary definition of the sublime does not cover the idea of everlasting meanings, there is still the belief that abstract "forces beyond our control" (Morley, 2010: 17) have the power to manipulate our lives. The contemporary concept of the sublime, more than within its relationship to nature, was applied to the evolution of technology in the frame of the exhibition. The amazement sensation caused by sublimity was gradually replaced by the feeling of terror, precisely in this relationship between life and technology: "Despite the fact that we are increasingly caught within an electronically implemented global system of control and consumption, the concept of the sublime aspires to the possibility of some kind of authentic experience of self-transcendence." (Morley, 2010: 18)



Figure 10 *Liquidity Inc.* (2014) by Hito Steyerl at Serralves Museum, Porto, 2015. Installation view. Photo: Patrícia Assis.

Somehow, the relationship between the two clouds and consequent transformation of the sublime paradigm was as well related, represented and experienced in artistic production throughout the centuries. The exhibition *Under the Clouds: From Paranoia to the Digital Sublime*, as part of a research project, presented the work of artists that, in their various mediums, displayed the issues questioned by the curator João Ribas. *Silver Clouds*⁴⁹ (1966/2015) by Andy Warhol (USA, 1928-1987), was an adequate representation of the relationship between art and technology. Conceived from the collaboration between Warhol and the electrical engineer Billy Klüver (Monaco, 1927-2004), *Silver Clouds* resulted in several rectangular-shaped metallised polyester film filled with helium in a room. It was first displayed at Leo Castelli's Gallery, New York, in 1966, and later used in *Rainforest* (1968), a dance performance by Merce Cunningham. The artwork was planned to be Warhol's retirement from painting, as the artist desired to concentrate on filmmaking. In this way, he created floating paintings that, together with the presence of the audience, resulted in an interactive installation that challenged the idea that art cannot be touched or experienced. Warhol, an artist famous for thinking ahead of his time, was interested in new media and in technological progress; which are, as a matter of fact, the main connections between the two representations of the cloud:

"In their interrelated effects, and the economic, cognitive, affective and social world they engendered, the two clouds of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have a direct historical connection. The emergence of the information and communication networks that the digital 'cloud' condenses have their source in the technologies of the earlier sublime cloud of post-war nuclear weapons." (Ribas, 2015: 11)

The emergence of the new sublime was influenced by a "hyper-circulation of images, credit, and data of digital capital." (Ribas, 2015: 9) The significant amount and speed of algorithms reshaped landscapes, regulating online systems as well as economic and financial fields. These events resulted in the invisible danger of radiation and radioactive destruction, as it was implied in the work of the artists Silvestre Pestana (Portugal, 1949), *Radiologias* (1972), and Ângelo de Sousa (Porugal, 1938-2011), *Pequenas Esculturas (Orelhas)* (1975). However, "the information floating in the cloud – where data is now increasingly stored and controlled – replaces this invisible threat of

⁴⁹ Wilard Maas recorded Andy Warhol's *Silver Clouds* (1966) at the Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, in 1966. It resulted in the film *Andy Warhol's Silver Flotations*, which is available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=65obeVlgD9E>. Accessed September 5, 2017.

radiation. Despite the immaterial metaphor, the shadow of the cloud presses itself onto our bodies and the world around us." (Ribas, 2015: 19) The work of the artist Pedro Henriques (Portugal, 1985) can visually relate to this representation of the invisibility of such abstract and yet limitless form of digital cloud. The images are, in a way, a black and white harmonious representation of an explosion of data. The cloud is exposed in its dual form, as wrecked information and as mysterious shadows in the sky. Abstract moments flow in an organised chaos and are materialised into the *Sidewinder* compositions, taking the form of exhibition, publication or group of images. The artist exhibited his work regularly since 2008 and published two books called *Sidewinder* (2013 and 2015). In the exhibition *Under the Clouds: From Paranoia to the Digital Sublime*, Pedro Henriques displayed two works from the last edition of *Sidewinder*. The overproduction of images coincided with the notion of network, which can connect them all: "As a metaphor for digitalization and contemporary hypomnemata – the externalization of memory and knowledge – the cloud is our way of dealing with the vastness of it all." (Ribas, 2015: 17) *Movie Mural*⁵⁰ (1968) by Stan VanDerBeek (USA, 1927-1984) was a multimedia installation that consisted of assembled films, slides and the artist's stop-motion animations made from collages of magazine photographs and illustrations. VanDerBeek was an American experimental filmmaker, pioneer in media art, as he explored new technological mediums in his work. The artist was interested in the way that images from movies, advertising and newspapers could influence our daily lives and even develop a new universal visual language; and, in this sense, he coined the term "expanded cinema": "This vision concerns the immediate use of motion pictures... or expanded cinema, as a tool for world communication" (VanDerBeek, 1966: 73). VanDerBeek constructed the *Movie-Drome* (1963-65), a theatre and audio-visual laboratory in Stony Point, New York, conceived to explore, research and display experimental projections or "image-events". From these experimentations, it resulted in presentations such as "Movie-Murals", "Ethos-Cinema", "Newsreel of Dreams", "Feedback" and "Image Libraries" (VanDerBeek, 1966: 74):

"My concern is for a way for the over-developing technology of part of the world to help the underdeveloped emotional-sociology of *all* of the world to catch up to the 20th century... to counter-balance technique and logic – and to do it now, quickly..."

⁵⁰ *Movie Mural* (1965-68) by Stan VanDerBeek was displayed in Art Basel 2017, which provided a video available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5YdnjEWTmT4>. Accessed September 4, 2017.

(...) An international picture-language is a tool to build that future." (VanDerBeek, 1966: 76)



Figure 11 *Movie Mural* (1968) by Stan VanDerBeek at Serralves Museum, Porto, 2015. Installation view. Photo: Patrícia Assis.

Apart from the exponential growth of information, the technological development brought a sense of paranoia, which is suggested in the work of Horst Ademeit (Germany, 1937-2010). The exhibition *Under the Clouds: From Paranoia to the Digital Sublime* displayed seven of the over six thousand inscribed polaroids from the artist: *Untitled 21.01.1993* (1993), *Untitled 15.10.1993* (1993), *4535, 15.08.2001* (2001), *4540, 20.08.2001* (2001), *4545, 20.08.2001* (2001), *5948, 14.02.2004* (2004) and *5949, 15.02.2004* (2004). The artist, trained as textile designer, attended Joseph Beuys' classes in the late 1960s; however, his work was rejected because it was considered too academic and conservative. As a result, Ademeit not only quit the art classes but the artistic practice at large. The artist did not produce the group of polaroids as an artistic project: it was an obsessive documentation of particular moments and places experienced by the artist. Ademeit believed to be a victim of the effects resultant from what he called "cold rays" and radiations coming from electrical sockets in his apartment. The artist photographed the

electrical equipment and added detailed information about them (measures and physical descriptions) as well as personal notes about the sounds, smells and atmosphere that, to some extent, described his emotional reality. Every photograph was documented and dated on the white frames of the polaroids, through his almost illegible handwriting. This compulsory routine resulted in an extensive archive of Horst Ademeit's everyday life and nervous/paranoid condition, affected by the technological equipment existent around him. The paranoia, in the context of the mushroom cloud, was associated with the potential massive destruction of nuclear technologies:

"The paranoia condensed in the image of the mushroom cloud stems from the phantasmatic event haunting the subsequent period after World War II: nuclear holocaust. The stockpile of post-war nuclear weapons could assure the death of every person on earth, multiple times." (Ribas, 2015: 12)

The devastating power of postwar technology was materialised in the Jean Tinguely's (Switzerland, 1925-1991) self-destructing sculptural pieces. In March 1962, the artist was invited by NBC to create an artwork in Las Vegas and the result was the *Study for an End of the World, no. 2 (Étude pour une fin du monde No. 2)*⁵¹. The artist gathered junk pieces found and collected from the landfill and merged them into sculptures that were displayed outside the Flamingo Hotel, where he was staying. Later on March 21, Tinguely assembled an audience of journalists to witness and document the explosion of seven of his sculptures in the Jean Dry Lake, 55 miles south of Las Vegas. For this purpose, the artist used dynamite and firecrackers. Jean Tinguely was, somehow, always interested in the mechanical potential of sculptures by creating motors that enabled them to move; and in 1954, Pontus Hultén developed the term "méta-mécaniques" to describe these new forms of sculptures. Tinguely's most influential work, *Homage to New York* (1960), also consisted of a self-destructing sculpture displayed at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. The destruction of the machine was interrupted by the fire department, and it was performed in front of an audience, who could keep and take home the remains of the artwork. Both works reflected a critique of the consumerist culture that stimulated so many materialistic excesses.

⁵¹ *Study for an End of the World, no. 2* (1962) by Jean Tinguely has partial video available on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FxbC7kYJ__c. Accessed September 4, 2017.

Cleaning the Drapes is a work from the series of photomontages *House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home* (1967-72) by Martha Rosler (USA, 1943). The curator explained, "In the post-war era, the female body was appropriated as a commodity through which to sell other commodities, linking sex and the bomb through the dialectical development of a booming post-war economy" (Ribas, 2015: 16). Rosler's work was known exactly for its political and social critique: videos, photographs, installations, collages and performances about war, feminism and social struggles. The artist created *House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home* during the occupation of Vietnam by the United States and the resultant collages were a combination of images of war scenarios published in *Life* magazine and pictures of modernist American houses from a magazine named *House Beautiful*. The photomontages aimed that its viewers would reconsider the comfortable and distant realities of "here" and "there", in a critique of the war that was peacefully lived through the screens of American television.

"*Cleaning the Drapes* shows a smiling woman vacuuming curtains while she casually pulls them aside to reveal a black-a-white scene of two American soldiers in a bunker. The window becomes a screen where the woman presents the image as if it were a showroom full of commercial goods." (Voorchies, 2017: 143)

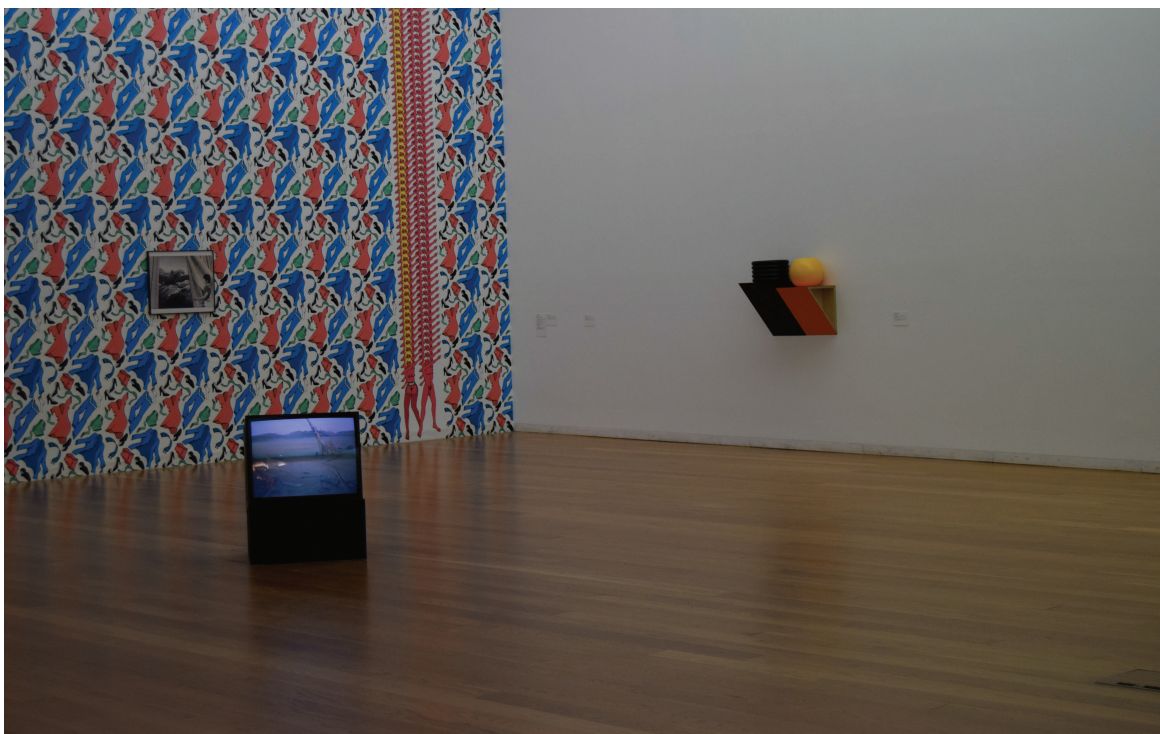


Figure 12 *Cleaning the Drapes* (1967-72) by Martha Rosler at Serralves Museum, Porto, 2015. Installation view. Photo: Patrícia Assis.

The juxtaposition of such contrasting images intended to "bring the war home", to the domestic environment of safety. The artist did not want to create abstract perspectives or utopian scenarios: the familiar atmosphere was meant to place the viewers in spaces that they could identify with. The artist delivered the images as flyers to the anti-war communities during the 1960s and the pictures were criticised for being propaganda anti-war and not art (although the artist did not write any slogan in her works). Her visual message, more than anti-war, aimed to provoke discomfort in the viewers and critically confront the way war was handled in American society: "Terror is a familiar enough, nearly pathological, contemporary emotion – it is the normalized state of alert of the contemporary political subject." (Ribas, 2015: 22)

Considering the passive attitude of dealing with war images, Ribas argues, "Mediated violence is enacted not just on subjects, but upon images themselves, through contemporary forms of iconoclasm and iconophilia. There is no better evidence of the value of images today than the violence inflicted on them, the hatred and violence they instil." (Ribas, 2015: 23) *Touching Reality* (2012) by Thomas Hirshhorn (Switzerland, 1957) was part of the exhibition. The artist studied at Schule für Gestaltung, Zurich from 1978 to 1983 and moved to Paris in 1983, where he has been living and working ever since. In the essay "Why Is It Important – Today – To Show and Look at Images of Destroyed Human Bodies?" (2012), the artist explains, in eight topics, the use of such violent images in his work, namely *Superficial Engagement* (2006), *Concretion* (2006), *The Incommensurable Banner* (2008), *Ur-Collage* (2008), *Crystal of Resistance* (2011), *Touching Reality* (2012), and *Collage-Truth* (2012). The eight topics are described as follows:

1. *Origin*: the images' provenance is most of the times anonymous. The uncertain source of the images usually belongs to non-photographers witnesses, but Hirshhorn argues "Often the provenance is not guaranteed— but what, in our world today can claim a guarantee and how can 'under guarantee' still make sense?" (Hirschhorn, 2012: 226)
2. *Redundancy*: not in the sense of repetitive images because they are not the same pictures nor the same bodies, but redundancy in the sense of a repetitive destruction of human beings: "We do not want to accept the redundancy of such images because we don't want to accept the redundancy of cruelty toward the human being." (Hirschhorn, 2012: 226)
3. *Invisibility*: the images of destroyed human bodies are not often shown in media in order

not to hurt anyone sensibilities. However, this invisibility is not innocent as it makes the war acceptable or, at least, less harmful or destructive. 4. *Tendency to Iconism*, which is the act of select the most important (iconic) image, demonstrating the basis of hierarchies and manipulation by not showing the non-iconic or the different. 5. *Reduction to facts* is the common practice of reducing things to facts to avoid the truth. 6. *Victim Syndrome*, as the necessity of classifying the destroyed human bodies in pictures as victims or non-victims as a way of dealing with the fact of these dead bodies being incommensurable. 7. *Irrelevance of quality*: due to the non-professional authorship of these pictures, the images have no quality, and it does not matter. What is relevant is the presence of witnesses in that moment and place. 8. *Detachment through 'Hyper-Sensitivity'* criticises viewers that, when confronted with pictures of destroyed bodies, react with the expression "I can't look at this, I must not see this, I'm too sensitive.' This is a way of keeping a comfortable, narcissistic, and exclusive distance from today's reality, from the world." (Hirschhorn, 2012: 229)

The essay integrates the exhibition's publication, along with the work *Touching Reality* (2012), which was displayed in the exhibition *Under the Clouds: From Paranoia to the Digital Sublime*. It consisted of a silent video in which a series of still images of destroyed and disfigured human bodies, victims of war and violent conflicts, were projected. The images were being dragged and zoomed in by a female hand operating a touchscreen of what could be a smartphone or a tablet computer. Although these images are accessible on the Internet, they are barely shown on the media (television or newspapers). Before this technological revolution, the power of images was used to generate social awareness and consciousness; while currently, the increasing number of images with which everyone is confronted every day diminished their potential impact. In this video, Thomas Hirschhorn challenged the act of seeing and of touching, considering that to show images is not enough anymore.

The arguments that structured the research project and exhibition curated by João Ribas were consistently constructed through the display of artworks that represented different styles, historical periods and mediums. The remarkable relationships established between the artworks and the research questions highlighted the artistic production: on the one hand, as a consequence of the paranoia and the sublime caused by the two clouds and, on the other hand, as mediative elements that helped the understanding of Ribas' theory. In

Under the Clouds: From Paranoia to the Digital Sublime, not only the curator worked as the mediator, but also each artwork, within their specificities performed as axis of mediation that introduced the visitor to this research field.

3.3.3. The curator as a mediator for contemporary subjects

The curatorial work is no longer an individual position of choosing and displaying different artworks to create innovative connections between them (O'Neill, 2009) In the interview "The Politics of the Small Act", Paul O'Neill described the curatorial activity as "collaborative processual structures" (O'Neill, 2009: 6). There is a demystification of the autonomous role of the curator as a single author: exhibitions have become open-ended processes and results that require collaborative work between curators, artists, writers and the (most of the times, invisible) participation of the audience. The collaborative turn of curating established it as a network that, according to Bruno Latour, is "a string of actions where each participant is treated as a full-blown mediator." (Latour, 2005: 68) The curator as a mediator creates encounters and exchange of ideas, potentiating knowledge production (O'Neill and Wilson, 2010). The curatorial collective *What, How & for Whom* argued:

"We recognize exhibitions as specific sites where art is critically presented and where knowledge is produced. We believe that the exhibition has the capacity to reframe the times and spaces of the social world. The exhibition is a creative redefinition that opens up a different perception of the political environment, which in turn might offer a different view of social reality." (WHW, 2010 Conversation X-TRA)

Curating is not only about the production and display of art anymore; it is working towards the mediation between contemporary social subject matters and the educative role of exhibitions as spaces of experiences, dialogue and new critical perspectives (O'Neill, 2009). The "critical potentiality of the group exhibition form as a productive space for creating new forms of knowledge" (O'Neill, 2009: 6) is possible through the circulation of different ideas within a "complex durational process of engagement" (O'Neill, 2009: 8). Curating, that has become more than exhibition making, established as a tool for expression and reflection about the world (Teixeira, 2017). This critical thinking and flow of ideas may not be only about art, as it can involve other subject matters. João Ribas, for

instance, has been working notably in the relations between arts, science and technology. He argued that:

"Something about the role of artistic and aesthetic in negotiating social questions in relation to technology that seems to always have a great effect historically. I've come to understand more about our contemporary condition through the art that is being made now than, I would say, through any other means. (...) It is historically been proven that the lateral thinking of artistic practice can be hugely productive in dealing with these questions, particularly if they are in the realm of visibility."⁵²

The curator mediates the access and acknowledgement of new ideas in the art and cultural production, making them available to the public through not only exhibitions but also lectures, publications, projects and platforms (O'Brian, 2005). Through the mediation of artistic and other unexpected but important issues, the curatorial work has grown into an interdisciplinary space for reflection, in which social justice, war, racism, feminism, technology, science, terrorism, politics or economics are discussed through art.

"What interests me in those types of spaces is the potential for contemporary artistic production to be treated as a field in which knowledge is produced, and for engaging models of how that knowledge might be constituted. How can contemporary art be engaged as a field of inquiry, and how does it relate to other disciplines and forms?" (Ribas, 2010)

The possibility of focusing on one particular subject and of displaying it to an audience in one specific moment is already, in a way, curating as mediation and education (George, 2015). At least, it arouses the curiosity of visitors about that particular subject, engaging them in a posterior and more profound research about it – "and by that causing something to happen which could not have happened otherwise." (O'Neill, 2009: 8) This mediation requires the stimulation of dialogues between the artworks, the institutions and the audience, and these relationships are the valid arguments of the curatorial decisions. The educational responsibility of the curator is visible in the display of new trends of visual art and its contextualisation in art history (George, 2015). The curator mediates the circulation of contemporary social subjects and of artistic objects and projects; and it culminates in the emergence of new topics, opinions and ideas. This places the curator in

⁵² João Ribas's "The Future was a Cloud" lecture at Global Art Forum 10: "The Future Was", Madinat Jumeirah Conference & Events Centre, Dubai, March 16-18 2016: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WGvDIN7rdFM>. Accessed September 1, 2017.

an in-between, in which he/she lives and works, as a central figure of mediation in the discussion of all these subjects: "Its slight shift away from an author-centred cultural hierarchy towards a post-productive discourse, in which the function of curating has become another recognized part of the expanded field of art production." (O'Neill, 2007: 21)

The exhibition *Under the Clouds: From Paranoia to the Digital Sublime* evidenced how the artistic production is not only a reflection but also a result of the social, historical and cultural reality. The curator emerged as the key figure of mediation, which selects the appropriate artwork to describe the society in order to connect the dots that link theory and practice. João Ribas contextualised the artworks in the framework of the two clouds, that float between the sublime and the paranoia. The knowledge produced in the exhibition *Under the Clouds: From Paranoia to the Digital Sublime*, through the relationships between science, technology and art, brought new and relevant subjects into the sphere of contemporary art.

4. Conclusion: the curatorial as knowledge production

The development of this dissertation contemplated the continuous transformation process that the exhibition concept is experiencing at every moment, since it relies on the vast sphere of contemporary art, a permeable field opened to infinite possibilities. The curatorial acknowledges new contributions constantly through publications, articles, lectures, and the artistic production displayed in the exhibitions that, globally, open every day. The curatorial history is being narrated while it is happening, and certainly more advances were accomplished along the elaboration of the present study. The aim of the dissertation was to be a contribution to these fields of study, being aware that it did not conclude the on-going investigation about the role of exhibitions in society.

The knowledge production connects the museum and the university, and this relationship was strengthened by the artists' transition to the university, which transformed the academic research tools in artistic practice and vice-versa. The institutions and the exhibitions became spaces of intellectual production, introducing the idea of the laboratory. Bearing in mind that the arguments introduced along the dissertation may not apply to every situation, it is possible to conclude that the exhibition became a space of mediation, a series of processes in which knowledge is produced. Firstly, the recognition of curatorial movements such as the New Institutionalism and the Educational Turn as fundamental for the dilution of boundaries and openness of museums were determinant elements for the construction of a new curatorial conception. The open-ended projects, produced by these movements, promoted participation, dialogue and aimed a closer engagement with the audience. Through the stimulation of critical thinking and the formulation of new questions, the curatorial projects intended to encourage the reflection not only about the subjects displayed but also about the social, cultural and economic circumstances that surround us. Secondly, the collaborative attitude manifested in the new curatorial structures through relationships and networks, placed the role of the curator as a mediator between professionals, institutions, audience and artists. Thirdly, the transgression of boundaries and the collective work of mediation expanded the exhibition into the curatorial dimension, in an expanded field, which crossed disciplinary domains and provided the tools for knowledge production.

The curatorial, apart from belonging to a field that is constantly evolving, is itself the stage of multiple interactions between actors in continuous construction: visitors, artworks, institutions, professionals. The exhibition actively contributes for this interdisciplinary construction: and it is in this sense of self-reflection that the dissertation intended to demonstrate the potential of the exhibition as knowledge production.

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