

**THE END OF THE CURATOR:
ON CURATORIAL ACTS AS COLLECTIVE PRODUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE**

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ABSTRACT

The End of The Curator: On Curatorial Acts as Collective Production of Knowledge explores the convoluted liaison between knowledge production, collectivity and curating, through practices that have been neglected by mainstream curatorial platforms and art history. Bearing in mind the extensive usage of the notion 'knowledge production', my practice-based research is guided by the question *what forms of collective knowledge can curatorial practice produce?*

This PhD submission comprises practical and theoretical parts, as follows:

1. An investigative part, that contextualizes and problematizes theoretical notions in relation to curatorial practice, as well as formulating statements for the practices and potentials of curatorial acts.
2. Practice-based curatorial research, in the form of four projects realized in the course of this research, which are used as test sites for the ideas examined in the analytical part.

Introducing the inquiry in a wider historical, social and political context, the first chapter of the dissertation traces the background of curatorial history and the social and political context of the past decade in relation to collective acts in the form of exhibitions and pedagogical platforms. The main case studies are the practices of Martha Rosler, Marion von Osten and Kuratorisk Aktion.

The second chapter focuses on the epistemology of the concepts of knowledge, collectivity, participation and dissensus through theoretical references.

Assuming the character of practice-based research, the third chapter of the thesis reflects on interrogations associated with participatory research within the curatorial projects.

The appendices include the edited art book *Temporary Status* (2012), the newspaper *REDAKZIA* (2013), video and sound research material for *Institute for Collective Studies* (2013) and *I am Curious-Brown* (2015-2016) and two published articles: *The school as "microtopia": Do we produce politics? Or do we give up* (Skogen annual book, 2012) and *33 Unanswered Questions* (Frakzia, 2015).

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0.1 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Curatorial practice dominates the contemporary field of artistic production, through its forms of representation and communication. Since the 1960s when the role of curator became more and more prominent and influential as an authorial position, curating went through a diversification of positions, working with institutional formats such as biennials, or introducing ‘discursivity’¹ within the art field through education platforms.

This thesis aims to look at the tendency of curating towards collective and political practices. In doing so, the first objective of this research is to place the field of curating within a context of collective knowledge production which is increasingly based on curatorial methods such as investigation and research.

Providing a review of literature and related articles and publications on curatorial practice in the past decade, the second objective is to challenge the overriding idea of the dominant curator-author position. First of all, it is necessary to highlight a range of historical curatorial practices – those operating on the borders of exhibition-making – as these have been less analysed and discussed within the literature on curation. This study, therefore, particularly focuses on curators who have utilised ‘research’ processes and those concerned with political subjectivity and collective approaches towards knowledge and its representation. The overview of my practice pertaining to this research is an attempt to comprehend the curatorial methods that confront the production of the exhibition as the production of ‘truth’.

Furthermore, the current existing studies on curatorial practices relate to exhibition-making as the main format including its education-based extensions – such as temporary art schools. The recent development of the curatorial role engaging with

¹ I use the term ‘discourse’ as organized individual contributions in the form of a group of statements (Foucault, 2003:90). See Jürgen Habermas: ‘Discourses take place in particular social contexts and are subject to the limitations of time and space. (...) participants in a discourse are real human beings driven by other motives in addition to the one permitted motive of the search for truth. Topics and contributions have to be organised.’ (Habermas, 1990:92)

other practices and working on a collaborative basis reflects developments in other media, such as performance art, publications and film.

As this research has been practice-led, the thesis follows the direction taken by my own curatorial projects, from an exhibition and book project where the notion of collectivity and subjectivity were addressed through the content, towards two acts addressing the notion of collective knowledge through the format proposed. The final curatorial act produced in relation to this research is a film, generating new evidence in support of my investigation and taking the main attention from the format produced by curatorial practice (mainly exhibition) towards the method and process developed, defining curating as the progression from research to communication of ideas in the public sphere, positioning art in relation to political subjects. As such, the third objective of this study is to argue for a practice of curating expanding far beyond an act of visual representation – representations of art, objects, facts and ideas – and becoming a territory of congruency and/or conflict, where meaning is produced and debated. The politics of the field shifts from a focus on the format – be it exhibition or a discursive modality – to a medium that articulates methods – of research, production and communication.

My overriding concern is what constitutes a curatorial practice beyond its format of representation. My focus is on methods of work, trying to understand how they constitute a specific field through various modalities, and, moreover, how they articulate the production of collective knowledge, putting together an ensemble of positions. The notion of the ‘collective’ is intentionally used as an adjective, rather than a noun. This is to make a difference from working collectively, or in collaboration - forming a collective- which has been addressed previously by writings on art history and curatorial practice². This study refers to knowledge that is produced in process and

² Here I refer to writings on collective curating or collaborations between artists and curators, aka a group of people (artists, curators) developing concepts, works and exhibitions together. See Christian Karavagna (1988) *Working on the Community Models of Participatory Practice*, in Republicart.net. Republicart. 1988. Web. 2013. Febr 2.

http://republicart.net/disc/aap/kravagna01_en.htm; see also for a historical overview of collaborative practices and collective authorship Maria Lind (2007) *The Collaborative Turn*.

allowing multiple perspectives and subjectivities – produced in common through a method of correlation.

0.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In: Johanna Billing, Lars Nilsson (2007:15-31), Taking the Matter into Common Hands: On Contemporary Art and Collaborative Practices, Black Dog Publishing, London;
on shared authorial position between artist and curator – Park, Gill (2008) *A Space to Talk: Curator, Artist, Collaborateur*. Axisweb.org Axis Web. 25 March 2013.
<http://www.axisweb.org/dlFull.aspx?ESSAYID=122>; see alternative terms such as *dialogical art, conversational art, new genre public art, educational turn* in Paul O'Neill (2010) *Beyond Group Practice. Manifesta Journal – Collective Curating* 8/2010:37-45; for a critique of participatory projects see Claire Bishop (2006) *The Social Turn: Collaboration and its Discontents*, in *Artforum* February, 2006:178-183

This thesis sets out with an overall understanding of the curatorial as a contextual practice that at this particular stage allows itself to be influenced by other fields, in particular politics and the philosophy of ideas. Such an understanding sustains the extent of the practice's span and simultaneously permits for the originality of its manifestation. This thesis enquires into the way that the role of the curator is undergoing transformation in reaction to the shifts in contemporary art following the emphasis on its mechanisms of knowledge production.

To investigate curatorial practice in terms of its organization is to move away from a method centred on dualistic factors, such as the connection between form and content, between works and space or between topics and displays. Instead we must examine the associations and disagreements that the practices of the curatorial provoke and comprise, as these are of main concern if we are to consider how knowledge is produced and transferred.

In order to initiate an investigation of curatorial practice we must question all phases of the process, including visible elements - such as the artworks, the location, and the configurations of display - but also studying the contextual, process-based and durational aspects. When we talk of examining the process we need to examine the connections that were established during the project, such as the relations between curators, artists, institutions, funders, publics and other stakeholders.

In the study proposed here, the production of knowledge through a collective input within the curatorial is problematized and relativized. Discerning tactics, conventionally assumed as the area of the curator, are evaluated through empirical, informative and performative elements. The practice of participation that is leading to the notion of collective knowledge is observed through the performative characteristics of curatorial practice - the negotiation and exchange of knowledge is crucial to the investigation from the forthcoming chapters.

In particular, the study pursues the following research questions:

What forms of collective knowledge can curatorial practice produce?

How does the role of the curator change when working collaboratively?

As such, these questions are not rhetorical, but are immersed in practice. My response to these questions lies in how one defines the political role of the curatorial, and, consequently, not only in an examination of the politics of aesthetics, but also in an enquiry into the politics of organization in relation to the curatorial.

Firstly, the questions demand a historical and conceptual elaboration of knowledge production in the arts. This entails a crossover narrative between curatorial practices, critical thinking, political context and educational policies. Secondly, they solicit studies of those particular curatorial practices which, historically and more recently, have been informed and formulate their work through focusing on knowledge production.

Through this dual undertaking of the presentation of a theoretical account and analysis of specific curatorial practices, this study does not aim to deliver a theoretical nor an art historical account, but a methodical elaboration of the notion of curatorial practice as the collective production of knowledge through its applied representation in the context of contemporary art. The focal emphasis is on practices that problematize the collective mechanisms of knowledge production. Such a study draws on art history, political theory and philosophy, and is thus a thesis that is broadly positioned within artistic research and its approach to contemporary social theory.

0.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The central theory around which I have framed my curatorial approach is based on the political theorist Chantal Mouffe³'s interest in the importance of developing strategies for challenging and disrupting these flows of determination, through the creation of spaces in which alternatives can be imagined. In the context of curatorial practice, this process can be seen as a means of producing subjectivity and developing strategies that are resistant to the totalising effect of this subsumption. Mouffe's theories on hegemony⁴ will be applied to my four curatorial projects which are presented in Chapter Three as a means of analysing the power relations that influence and determine curatorial practice, and how these might inform new strategies for contesting the hegemony of curatorial practice. More specifically, the concepts of 'antagonism' and 'agonistic space' (2010:34) are used to analyse forms of contestation between curatorial authorial positions and non-institutional platforms that may have the potential to offer a relative alternative to them and through curatorial practice itself.

The key writings that this study is influenced by in terms of thematic emphasis, theorisation and structure, despite the fact that they do not treat curatorial practice as such, are Jean-Luc Nancy's *The Inoperative Community* (2006) and Foucault's *Power/Knowledge* (1976). Alongside Mouffe, Nancy provides an account of collective political acts and attitudes, with an eye on methodological developments. Foucault provides an in-depth reading of the concept of knowledge in relation to power apparatuses. What I am drawn to in these three works is the crossover between knowledge, collectivity and political action.

³ Chantal Mouffe is most well known for her writings on the radicalisation of western democracy through what she calls 'agnostic pluralism', and has recently developed writings on the radical potential of artistic practices. Mouffe argues that an agnostic conception can help artistic practice in the hegemonic struggle for public space (Mouffe 2013).

⁴ By counter-hegemonies Mouffe means practices that position themselves in critical opposition to the neoliberal hegemony. She coins the term 'artist', meaning a hybrid between artistic practice and activism that represents important dimensions of radical politics (Ibid, p. 99).

In particular, this thesis engages with the principle logic of the relationship between the concepts of the politics and the curatorial, specifically regarding Mouffe, Nancy and Foucault's works. I argue that the curatorial, as an act of collective action, is characterized by its correlation with the notion of politics. The essence of the collective act of producing knowledge (as a way of describing curatorial practice) is functioning primarily as the negative of the hierarchical structure of the curator versus the artist. Politics and the curatorial are involved in a never-ending relation of differentiation and play, which is at the heart of the concept of collective knowledge production.

As the thesis progresses, I draw on a number of references from sociology, political and art theory as these have allowed me to establish a vocabulary for connecting the practice of curating to the concept of collective knowledge. For example, I make use of a classical management definition of knowledge from Davenport and Prusak⁵. Sociologists such as Barbara Bolt, Barrett. E., Alvesson and Skoldberg⁶ have been useful in guiding my methodology of work through their writings on pedagogy and artistic research, as well as defining the 'artistic field', taken from the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu's writings⁷, which have a broader sociological application than the study of art, allows me to conceptualize curatorial practice and the curatorial role defined as 'agent', composed of a multiplicity of fields such as politics, culture, science and art.

The key theoretical influences for defining collective knowledge in this thesis are Foucault's idea of *power* (which is not restraining but rather productive, revealing through the production of knowledge and subjectivity — see Foucault,1980, 1995, etc.)

⁵ See Chapter 2.1

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ The French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu approaches power within the context of a comprehensive 'theory of society'. Bourdieu sees power as culturally and symbolically created, and constantly re-legitimised through an interplay of agency and structure. The main way this happens is through what he calls 'habitus' or socialised norms or tendencies that guide behaviour and thinking (Bourdieu 1984: 170). Bourdieu's dismantling of the concept of taste reveals the real function of 'innate' artistic sensibility to be that of maintaining the power and privilege of the few.

and Ranciere's notion of an *emancipated spectator* (Ranciere, 2009), closely related to his concept of *the politics of aesthetics* (Ranciere, 2013) and his notion of alternative production of knowledge (particularly its emancipatory potential) as presented in *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (Ranciere, 1991). Furthermore, when going through similar concepts used within artistic and curatorial theory, I exemplify a non-hierarchical and distributed notion of the *subject-knowledge-power*, out of which Bishop derives the idea of an artwork in flux or that is '[...] open-ended, interactive and resistant to closure, often appearing to be 'work-in-progress' rather than a completed object' (Bishop, 2004:52), as well as the critique of participation by Markus Miessen in *The Nightmare of Participation* from 2010. In addition, I refer to the art historian Grant Kester's term 'dialogical art' in his key text *Conversation pieces, Community and Communication in Modern Art* (2005) and Nicholas Bourriaud's 'relational aesthetics' in *Relational Art* (1998). These terminologies coming from sociology, political and art theory refer to the idea of allowing conversation with source communities to influence the process and outcome of curatorial acts. In this case, I argue that by exploring methods of combined research as well as collaboration—it is possible to imagine a curatorial practice that is not a methodology, but a discourse that contributes to the processes of producing collective knowledge. I also visualize an alternative production of knowledge that would in the essential Foucauldian logic relate to a microutopistic production of subjectivity (thus generating a form of resistance ingrained to the productive mechanisms of power which is ever more embodied in the discourse on curating and production of contemporary art.

0.4 GLOSSARY OF KEY CONCEPTS

The thesis introduces the term of ‘collective knowledge’ to capture the collective aspect of curatorial practice, which include a) collective authorship in processes of distributed creativity and b) transcultural phenomena in shared or even collective creative/artistic practices, while at the same time framing these points as particularly prominent aspects of contemporary history. The term is applied to three case study curatorial projects in the period 2012-2015: Temporary Status which included an exhibition and a book project produced and shown together at Röda Sten in Gothenburg; Redakzia, a collaboration with artist Maria Draghici on the theme of alternative education; and *I am curious:Brown* (working title), for which I have worked together with artists Saskia Holmkvist and Ellen Nyman. Chapter 2 also situates my practice-based-research in a broader archipelago of exhibitions and debates within the field of the history of curating.

As an example, the focus on the process of producing the film project *I am curious:Brown* (working title) functions as a case study to analyze processes of transformation in collaborative artistic practices that raise questions which go beyond the notion of (single) authorship. Chapter 3.4 relates to forms of shared knowledge production shaped by the co-producers themselves. Another example is that since the formation of the group REDAKZIA at the beginning of 2012, we have experimented extensively with collective research practices, e.g. collective writing, and the reading of exhibitions. We have also held two workshops in the context of Skogen and Gothenburg International Film Festival.

A comparative reading of Chapter 1 and 2 attempts to make clear that the specific power relations within each of the socio-political and historical settings is a key factor in explaining how forms of collaboration evolve, change, and might continue to (in-) form distributed creativity. Taken together, the chapters also provide partial but complementary answers to some of the thesis’s research questions, while highlighting the need to address those questions that only appear as an afterthought of the analysis of the practice: Are there new ways of collectively producing and sharing artistic knowledge in the broadest sense, which would transcend earlier practices by which artist groups and networked amateurs alike, as well as artistic or simply creative media, were able to overcome the (modernist) ideals of single authorship?

The research's concerns circulate around the critical and experimental investigation of collaborative methodologies and their utilisation in artistic, curatorial and writing practices. I am asking what the significance of collective knowledge production as a concept and practice in contemporary art might be today, how it is articulated curatorially and artistically, and how it works in practice.

Curating supposes a relation between at least two perspectives, which is already quite a crowd, the multiplicity of an affirmative practice that brings sociality in the field of art. If, as this thesis contends, curatorial practice can be seen as fundamentally collective, then the space of the exhibition becomes a place for articulating a curatorial argument about the methods used for producing knowledge.

With a focus on collective knowledge, this study refers to certain practices within artistic, curating and pedagogical research, in order to understand their mechanisms. As I will indicate in the following chapters, a historical and theoretical framework is necessary in order to position the concept and its practices. The study does not function with a hypothesis that can be evidently demonstrated or rejected: instead, it moves forward by way of exploring the assembly of collective knowledge, as visible in curatorial practice, rather than tracing knowledge as a fixed and singular object in art. The question of how curatorial practice can produce collective knowledge today, centred on the understanding of the concepts historically, maintains this focus. In sum, the project addresses the way in which curatorial practice contests and shifts norms within the apparatus of knowledge production, and within the social and geopolitical concerns of contemporary society. Four key concepts that the thesis engages with extensively are outlined below.

KNOWLEDGE

Davenport and Prusak define knowledge as, 'a fluid mix of framed experience, contextual information, values and expert insight that provides a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information' (Davenport and Prusak, 1998:5). This definition includes two aspects: the content (information, motivation, experiences, beliefs and values) and the purpose of knowledge, which is a framework enabling us to evaluate new experiences.

According to Foucault, art is a different form of knowledge, which allows us to signify what is not narrated within a historic structure of knowledge. Art can reveal the obscure, the excluded and what cannot be articulated within a specific field, not by 'showing the invisible, but rather showing the extent to which the invisibility of the visible is invisible.' (Foucault, 1972:219). If knowledge is expected in scientific terms to be objective and absolute, artistic practice contributes with the singular and ambivalent position, which can destabilise a power position.

SUBJECTIVITY/AGENCY

An important shift for our understanding of subjectivity and this is the move indicated in Foucault's work (Foucault, 1990) on the subjects produced in power/knowledge and subjectivity, which is the experience of being subjected. Subjectivity becomes, as such, a multiple experience of existences. This understanding of subjectivity brings us further to the issue of agency. For Foucault the relation between power and knowledge constructs the individual and power produces modes of resistance. (Foucault, 1990:95).

PARTICIPATORY

Transposing these concepts to contemporary art, there is a variety of terminology used to define practices that take into account the agency of the spectator, such as relational, dialogical, participative, collective and interactive. Kester situates these socially oriented practices as context-led as opposed to content-led and practices, which are focussed on processes and relationships instead of art objects or material outcome (Kester, 2004:1). Bourriaud's *Relational Aesthetics* theorises moments of sociability in art practice and art objects that produce sociability (Bourriaud, 2002). Claire Bishop applies Rancière's idea of the 'distribution of the sensible (Rancière, 2004) to participatory practices, intending to distinguish the aesthetics of socially engaged art between art and life (Bishop, 2012:26-40 & 241-274).

These theories reflect on the social value of art, focusing on accessibility and spectatorship. In my research, I intend to investigate the particular agency of the

public, which transforms the spectator into a co-producer of knowledge both within and through the mechanism of an exhibition. Indeed, this shift of mindset to one in which the audience becomes the key focus in the making and reception of the work (Kester 2004:91) is a significant starting point for my reasoning.

COLLECTIVE

By bringing in the concept of multiplicity and collectivity, one challenges the notion of the individual as an 'active and productive force', as political theorist, Paolo Virno, suggests (Virno, 2010). As he develops in *A Grammar of the Multitude* (Virno, 2004), the relations between the individual and the collective must be recalibrated. Introducing collective thought and action does not imply dissolution of the individual, but rather a refinement of our singularity (Virno, 2010 referring to Gilbert Simondon). In this search for the collective, others thinkers such as Nancy enlarged the discussion to questioning the notion of community, or rather the nostalgia for an original community (Nancy, 1991). A community can't be defined as such; it implies a process of getting there. Therefore, one could discuss the collective work as one of the methods required for this process.

In the creative sector, there has been a rise in the number of micro-collectives, working groups and research teams. Virno positions these structures not only in a resistant space against the production curve, but also in a political sphere, by subverting the rules of wage labor and forming a 'political community oriented towards the general intellect'. (Virno, 2010:81)

0.5 METHODOLOGY: CURATION AS REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

This section defines my own practice of managing a curatorial-practice based doctoral project, and the methodological structure I developed to assemble this process. The primary challenge I encountered was the issue of how to incorporate the curatorial– practical work that would produce the material focus for my research. The inquiry addressed how curatorial practice itself might generate new knowledge that could be verbalised within the framework of formal academic research. To tackle this issue I turned to Donald Schön's *The Reflective Practitioner* (Schön, 1983) to comprehend how professional practitioners produce knowledge through action. The outcome was the development of a reflective curatorial practice. Reflective practice permitted me to incorporate findings and consequences of these methodological trials into a series of grounded reflection, analysis and applied practice. In my research, this iterative, recurring progression was established in the association between my curatorial work on four case studies and the research questions. My reflection-in-action was grounded in constant evaluations of how my four curatorial endeavours were enhancing the particular purposes of the overall research.

In his book *The Reflective Practitioner* (1983) Schön argues that the practitioner produces new knowledge as a result of engaging with real situations, rather than creating situations in order to produce new knowledge. Contrasting investigational research, the creative practitioner does not have to continue trying to invalidate premises. Rather, through experimentation, a practitioner's engagements disclose new facets of the situation, previously unidentified. The situation then replies to the actions of the practitioner, thus permitting additional understanding grounded on new revelations. Both the practitioner and the situation are playing active parts. Such a dynamic varies considerably from the more conventional investigational process of what Schön labels as 'technical rationality' – an unbiased model of research which values the 'generalisable' over the specific (Schön, 1983).

In all projects it can be challenging to move from the theoretical phase, where there are several potential proposals for a work, to concrete realization, where ideas are gradually narrowed down through a sequence of selections and priorities. Habitually there is no precise policy for formulating some of these problematic verdicts, and

this can be exceptionally challenging if there are several persons involved as in collaborative or shared practices. An emphasis on the collective knowledge produced through a shared involvement supports the shift of a work from theoretical development to production in three ways:

- by offering a common perspective for artist and curator;
- by exposing the potentials as well as the confines of the foreseen outcomes;
- by specifying a constant reference indication during the defiances and disturbances of the production process

My method of reflection-in-action during the case studies (my curatorial practice projects outlined in Chapter 3) was centred on creating the best possible context for the group during the production and presentation/display of works. At moments during this process, and particularly at the end of each case study, I took a step back from the situation and led a process of 'reflection-on-action'. At these points I observed what happened during the case studies and inquired what were the effects for my forthcoming practice and for the research questions which I have established. Interruptions in the stream of action often stimulated contemplation. In these instances the practitioner 'reflects on the understandings which have been implicit in his action, understandings which he surfaces, criticises, restructures, and embodies in further action' (Schön 1983:50). Reflective practice makes an asset of effort, and permits even failures to contribute to an inclusive course of development and learning.

Curatorial practice implies an interweaving of indicators of self onto the curatorial subject as somebody submersed in discursive constructions and narrations. On the other hand, the moving back and forth over one's practice and that which informs it – theories and possibilities – are exactly what can sum up an account of the self (understood as the practice) and of what can constitute the foundation for reflexivity and analysis. The projects as outlined in Chapter Three - *Temporary Status, Institute for Collective Studies* and *I am Curious -Brown* - are thus connected not only in a chronology, but also they iterate a journey. The question of group formation in the exhibition-making process between curator and artists leads me to the attempts of recalling a collaborative attitude in the second project, just as the intention of a political heading

for the former pushed towards a more forceful one in the latter. In all three cases, there is a tension between the thematic and the undertaking, between the individual articulation, the collective formation and the materialization. The case studies offer rich potential for research, as they involve a crossover between content and format, providing a testground for the production of collective knowledge.

As practice-led research, thinking, imagining, writing and acting are the main instruments at work. In the first year of research I tested two exercises of methods of producing collective knowledge followed by a slow process of developing the concept of a curatorial project, which would reflect and act upon the philosophical threads around the problematics of collective knowledge production, informed by the theories and practices articulated in the first two chapters.

In order to have a perspective over previous curatorial projects which related to knowledge production and collective work I have looked in particular at the 'project exhibition' of the mid-1980s - as it was coined by Marion von Osten⁸ - as an inspiring artistic practice, connecting to political and theoretical struggles of the time, in relation to feminist and gender concerns and demanding the establishment of non-dichotomously based subject positions.

Furthermore, I have focused on three curatorial practices, which have used research inside the format of the exhibition, as a temporary agency for contesting prevailing social structures. Here I examine the work of Martha Rosler, Marion von Osten and Kuratorisk Aktion. Their curatorial methods have forced a polemical position towards mainstream representational or hegemonic exhibition-making and curatorial practice, and have experimented with platforms that stimulate collective formation of knowledge and mobilize a public potential.

The intention with this review of practices at the end of the second chapter is to identify the artistic or curatorial methodologies that reveal the collective work in a dialogical space. The curatorial becomes, through the public space of the exhibition, a part of complex social and intellectual interactions and settings.

⁸ See the analysis of Marion von Osten's concept of 'project exhibition' in subchapter 1.4

What connects these examples by Rosler, von Osten and Kuratorisk Aktion is the intention of putting knowledge at the core of their curatorial practice, achieved through collective practices. As such, they understand knowledge as Davenport and Prusak define it as ‘a fluid mix of framed experience, contextual information, values and expert insight that provides a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information’ (Davenport and Prusak, 1998:5).

Curatorial projects developed by Marion von Osten and Kuratorisk Aktion brought forward subjects of colonialism intertwining artistic production with methods of making present the subjects at stake, questioning situations, exclusions, limitations and definitions inside the exhibition space, making itinerant events, durational and context-related exhibitions.

There were methodological changes over the progression of the study, mainly at the beginning. My original goal when I started the research was to outline and designate the responsibility and occupation of the curator working within a collective and politically aware context. There appeared to be a number of approaches available to me: for instance, it was significant to relate my considerations to practices of other curators, and to chart similar relevant contexts – pedagogy and politics – understanding the curatorial position as a crossing between the two. I started by reasoning that there was a practice of ‘curator-researcher’⁹, and that while this was a hybrid function, it located its rationality in the distinct characteristics of curator- researcher who went some way to assimilate the two. I had foreseen that though different, these subjectivities would assign a mutual base, and that by classifying these common considerations. I would be capable of generating a complex description that revealed the density and opacity of the practice but, at the same time, might be accessible.

A different research methodology was necessary that would house this move in emphasis inspired by ‘the educational turn’ in curatorial practices (O’Neill and Wilson, 2010) and assessments of the statements of artists working collaboratively to ‘repair the social bond’ (Bishop, 2012:11). My analysis of the literature adjoining the practice of the curator-researcher, reinforced by my curatorial projects, confirmed my belief that the

⁹ See also *Curating research*. Author: Paul O’Neill & Mick Wilson (eds.). London : Open Editions ; Amsterdam, Netherlands : de Appel Arts Centre, 2015.

curator-researcher's viewpoint was essentially lacking. The venture progressed from an examination of others' considerations of the curatorial position towards an aspiration to look more thoroughly at my own. This led to an inwardly focused perspective and a challenge to involve myself with the notion of self-reflection as practice. The method of reflection has taken as its inspiration Foucault's final interviews and writings, where self-crafting is a pursuit that defies the machineries of both knowledge and power (Foucault, 1984).

Chapter Three focuses on the practice element of the research and my attempt through this study to identify appropriate methods of analysis of one's own practice as a research act. Several research methodologies served as guidance for the study. One of them is *Reflexive Methodology. New Vistas for Qualitative Research* by sociologists Mats Alvesson and Kaj Sköldbberg (2000), a 'quadri-hermeneutics' method, mainly used in social science and business settings. In the preface to *Reflexive Methodology. New Vistas for Qualitative Research*, Mats Alvesson and Kaj Sköldbberg propose 'an awareness among researchers of a broad range of insights: into interpretive acts, into the political, ideological and ethical issues of the social sciences, and into their own construction of the 'data' or empirical material about which they have something to say' (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2000:vii). They continue to describe their endeavour as 'an intellectualization of qualitative method or a pragmatization of the philosophy of science' (ibid).

This intersection of one method with another could be a valuable approach when analysing hybrid artistic and curatorial practices, located between several disciplines and which take place in settings other than the traditional ones, such as galleries or museums.

In Alvesson and Sjöldbberg's writings in *Reflexive Methodology. New Vistas for Qualitative Research*, there are four evaluative stages: interaction with the observed material (data-oriented methods which tackle how 'data' is formed and positioned); analysis (representation of several components within hermeneutics to uncover fundamental connotations); critical interpretation (based on critical theory and its investigation of ideology, power and social replica); thinking on writing and dialectal usage (based on post-structuralist concepts to question one's own writing and to evaluate the research itself) (Alvesson and Sjöldbberg, 2000:106). This multi-method tactic acknowledges the

researcher to counterweigh one approach against another, assessing each. Using this methodology for my ongoing practice, the goal was that the analysis would be more layered and would include paradoxical sections. The method of assessment was to develop a constant procedure of research.

Through Alvesson and Sköldbberg's method, the reading of data travels from one level to another, finishing with an investigation of the position of the researcher itself. Following that model, the writing of the thesis involves the construction of research subjectivity. At the start of the research, I considered a method of gathering and decoding interviews from other curators and, thus, generated an area of common values between curators working with research and politics. Throughout the progression of the research, the attention altered towards the understanding of my own practice.

Two further methodological strands have served as guidance for my study: 'action research'¹⁰ and 'critical reflection'¹¹. These strands intersect throughout the experiments and the discourse development. The critical reflection thread outlines the course taken by the research, analysing decisions regarding approach and context.

In the study *Practice as Research*, Barrett and Bolt refer to Bourdieu's notion of intuitive knowledge as 'the logic of practice' (Barrett, 2007:2). In this case, strategies operate based on not pre-determined requests of action, which emerge in time. They argue that the acquisition of knowledge may be understood as what they define as a 'sense activity', involving relations between individual subjectivities and objective phenomena - including knowledge and ideas. (Barrett, 2007:61)

¹⁰ Action research was introduced in the 1940s by the psychologist Kurt Lewin as a reflection of his work with group dynamic processes. In the late 1960s this methodology was employed by Norwegian sociologists Vilhelm Aubert and Yngvar Løchen and has primarily been used in research on the development of communities and institutions and unfolding social experiments (Axelsen and Findset 1973).

¹¹ Critical reflection is a form of reflection which shows awareness that actions and events may be 'located within and explicable by multiple perspectives, but are located in and influenced by multiple and socio-political contexts' (Bloom, 1964)

The situated knowledge of the practitioner produces reflexivity through the written account of the research process. The articulation of the argumentative discourse is constructed through reflecting on the actions performed and developing a practice of critical thought through the writing process.

The 'action research' strand defines the participative approach to this research and describes its structure and its activities. I have reviewed a number of participatory and action-based methods, processes and practices, which helped me establish a structure of parameters for my action research. To start with, I have looked into the research and ideas argued by Michel De Certeau in *The Practices of Everyday Life* (1984) on the cultural logic and poetics within daily-lived experience. De Certeau tries to express our intrinsic abilities of invention and resistance by developing theories, hypothesis and language. De Certeau's 'practical science of singularity' has three priorities: orality (speaking practices), ordinary (making with), and operativity (creating a sense of self – the self-reflection). These ideas strengthen the position of a situated knowledge, which evolved through the experience. The grounded theory outlined more recently by Colin Robson, derives from data and it is analysed through the research process. Robson emphasises the value of 'grounded theory' studies for qualitative research and argues that it is 'particularly useful in applied areas of research, and novel ones, where the theoretical approach to be selected is not clear or is non-existent' (Robson, 2002:192).

In order to relate to the research question referring to the role of the curator in collaborative practices, I have paid particular attention to the working process and the structure of each collaboration. My curatorial role is integral to the art production in all four case studies; together with the artists I have conceived the initial concept collaboratively and been part of the production process. In the case of *Temporary Status* (2012) the exhibition was used as a medium to challenge, alter and re-model. What I do in my curatorial practice produces an archival method that allows simultaneous displays of fictitious, subjective positions, including art production, and documentation or public artefacts from institutional archive structures, constructing

what Akram Zaatari¹² calls 'archaeology of the present'. Curatorial practice intervenes, thus, in dominant narratives and histories, turning the exhibition space into a site for counter-information.

The merging of roles between the artist and the curator is inherently linked to similarities in the production of art and labour practices, which they adopt. As noted by Buden, today's art curator is no longer an expert on a particular period, instead the curator is an anthropologist, a reporter, a sociologist, an epistemologist, an NGO representative or an observer of the Internet (Buden, 2012). In this re-functioned area of the artist-curator, what the artist does and what the curator provides has become gradually blurred.

At a technical level what the curator does and what the artist does are not dissimilar: they both arrange materials or rearrange materials into new forms and totalities of meaning that are reliant on the labour and intellectual, archival and symbolic skills of others (John Roberts, *The Curator as Producer*, *Manifesta Journal* #10 2009/2010).

The curator as researcher demonstrates an interest in inquiry-based practice and investigates more ways to contribute to social and political debates beyond image-representation. Antonio Gramsci calls 'organic intellectuals' all people who take local knowledge from life experiences and use that knowledge to address changes and problems in society (Gramsci, 1971:258). The 'participatory action' researchers are co-learners and researches in relation with the people they meet (publics) in the research process. The co-operative exhibition acts as a cross field, an intersection of different subjectivities.

In an attempt to create a viable alternative to scientific methods inscribed in the notion of research, Andrei Siclodi puts forward another notion – the one of 'private investigations'. Siclodi describes in his book *Private investigations-Paths of Critical*

¹² Akram Zaatari is a filmmaker, photographer, archival artist and curator. In 1997, he co-founded the Arab Image Foundation. His work is largely based on collecting, studying and archiving the photographic history of the Arab World in a post-war Lebanon.

Knowledge Production in Contemporary Art (2011) a work starting from a very personal interest in a given situation but through research-based approach and an investigation, transcends the personal.

The socio-spatial dimension of display and production within the curatorial practice and the exhibition-making should constitute an essential interest. Inscribing the continuous production of knowledge in a physical space and the temporal dimension creates a room for what is normally absent in traditional research. It re-contextualizes the research, opens up the process and gives space to interventions in real-time.

0.6 OUTLINE OF THE THESIS STRUCTURE

This dissertation is divided into five parts - the present introduction, three chapters and a conclusion - which trace the progress of a curatorial discourse and practice from a dominant authorial position to a collective method approach which has begun to be defined in the last decade. Following existent studies on curatorial history which focus mainly on exhibition-making as the core product of exhibition practice from the 1960s, this research examines how curating expands into other fields and formats. Examining the changes that influential globalization and postcolonial theories made on contemporary art from a social and political perspective, an attempt is made in this thesis to demonstrate that concepts such as working collectively, mediating political ideas, working across fields, addressing the economy of production, do intersect and have influenced the act of curating during the 21st century especially in the 2000s.

Chapter One traces the main trends to have emerged within curatorial discourse since the 1960s, mapping an understanding of curating first as a form of exhibition-making, gaining domination within the arts, identifying discourses on expanding the format towards educational models, collective practices and political agency. The first chapter also presents three case studies on curatorial projects, which have been selected based on the criteria that they have resisted normative ways of producing knowledge and have a research aspect to their endeavour.

Chapter Two outlines the conceptual framework that has inspired the direction of my practice in the pursuit of collective knowledge. To direct the inquiry, each subchapter focuses on specific notions in relation to the common topic of collective knowledge: these topics are knowledge collectivity, pedagogical associations and the paradigm of participation.

Chapter Three engages with the practice element of the thesis – the curatorial projects that respond to the notion of collective knowledge production. First, it presents the

exhibition and book project – *Temporary Status* (2012), which included commissioned works, which are traditionally connected to the idea of collaborative curating.

The second and third projects are the platforms *Redakzia* (2012-2013) and *Institute for Collective Studies* (2013-2014), which problematize the individualistic approach of both the educational and artistic institution for its viewpoints on education. Finally, the film project *I am curious: Brown* (2015-2016) explores a collective proposal engaging with documentary and research film practice.

The Conclusion returns to the research questions set out at the start of the thesis. It proceeds to collect the several threads disclosed throughout the study by methods of the historical and theoretical contextualization, followed by a discussion of how practices work upon the apparatus of knowledge production and artistic research. It finally leads into an attempted definition of collective knowledge in relation to the position of the curator, contributing to an expanded notion of curatorial practice and its political potentiality.

The curatorial projects are fully documented in the appendices. A curatorial statement for *Temporary Status* can be found in the appendices as well as in the edited volume *Temporary Status – a project book on political imagination*. The appendices include a retrospective account of the projects outcomes for the two research platforms *Redakzia* and *Institute for Collective Research* and research material from the filmic proposal *I am curious: Brown*.

07. CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

Exhibitions have increasingly become the subject of historical inquiry, as part of a gradual assembling of a history of exhibitions and of the work of curatorial practitioners. Yet, in this historical re-examination, the collective and collaborative dimension of the curatorial practice as a whole is rarely foregrounded. Furthermore, there is a gap in historicizing female curatorial practice. The focus of this thesis is, therefore, the curated exhibition as a collective construct, influenced by feminist and post-colonial theories. *The End of the Curator: on Curatorial Practice as Acts of Collective Knowledge* asserts the fundamentally collective nature of the object of research – curatorial practice – and the thesis seeks to make a contribution to Curatorial Studies, which is an emerging discipline, productively situated at the intersection of the three other disciplines: Art History, Exhibition and Museum Studies. The hypothesis of this research project is reflected in its title, which posits that the practice of curating is fundamentally collective, made manifest through the production of knowledge through a collective process, and not as ‘a’ singular authorial concept.

It is hoped that the thesis presents a framework through which to read and learn from these curatorial instances of care, signalling one potential way to break the cycle of repression and marginalisation.

This project, therefore, is an attempt to re-dress and re-orientate curatorial practice, creating interventions in order to critically model an alternative approach to curatorial practice. This project calls empirical representations of reality as exclusive representations of truth into question. This is achieved by creating an experience that connects the reader to collective thinking and to the variety of formats of curatorial practice.

The claims I make to original contributions to knowledge can be divided into two interrelated areas: my methodology, and the outcomes of the strategies I have

explored through curatorial practice. I claim that my approach to the field of curatorial practice has been unique in two specific ways:

- Firstly, as existing discourse primarily focuses upon the authorial power shift brought about by the activities of independent and institutional 'übercurators' on international platforms, the way in which I have placed a focus upon three female curators (one of the examples being a curatorial duo) offers a different lens through which to view the history of curatorial practice.

- Secondly, I have studied the field of curatorial research through a unique combination of empirical research upon selected case studies, and self-driven collaborative practice-based curatorial projects, in parallel with a theoretical process of reading and exploring concepts such as 'collectivity', 'knowledge', 'participation'. This methodology resulted in a contextualization and cross-influence of the practical and theoretical parts of this research.

The outcomes of the practice-based curatorial projects explored during my research resulted in five interrelated contributions to knowledge within the field:

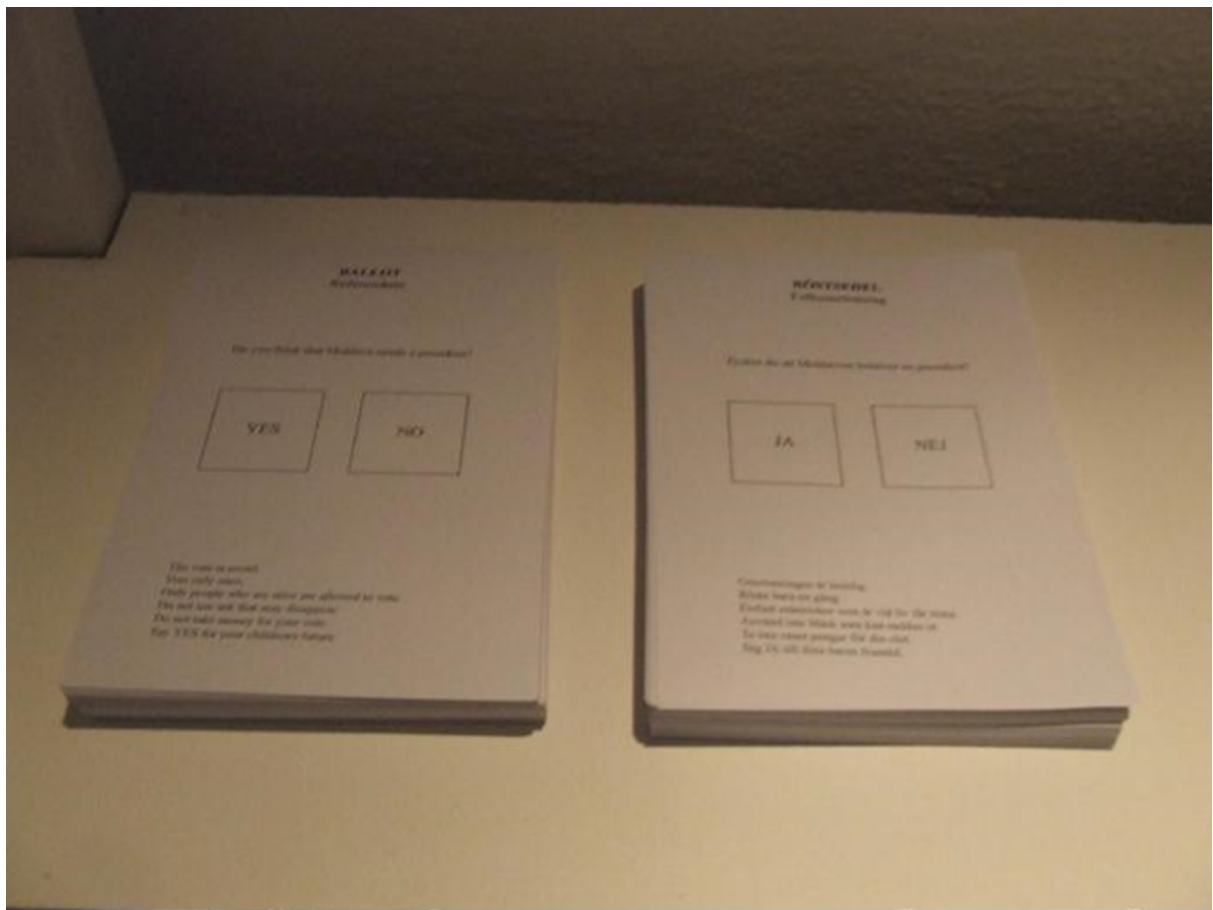
- Firstly, I claim that *I am curious: Brown*, which is the first example of a film project to be framed as a practice-based curatorial PhD research project, is itself a contribution to knowledge in the field, which is best understood as an ongoing response to a line of inquiry rather than a fixed finalized outcome.

- The two curatorial projects *Temporary Status* and *REDAKZIA* offered a new lens through which to view the concept of curatorial practice as the emergence of production, distribution, and consumption of work within contemporary practice.

Within this context, I have developed a new model of curatorial practice, which I have referred to as collective knowledge. A direct outcome of this strategy, this model of curatorship is reflective of the expanded curatorial role involved in collaborative and collective work.

- Drawing from the precursors identified in Chapter 2.2, the inscribing of women's curatorial practices contributes to history of curating at large.

- Finally, *Institute for Collective Studies* explored a collaborative strategy for developing a new speculative artist-run institution through forms of instituent practice and processes of instituting. This strategy, which aimed to move beyond the binary between the artist-run and the institutional, could be further developed by other practitioners aiming to explore forms of critical curatorial practice through the reflection on institutional structures.





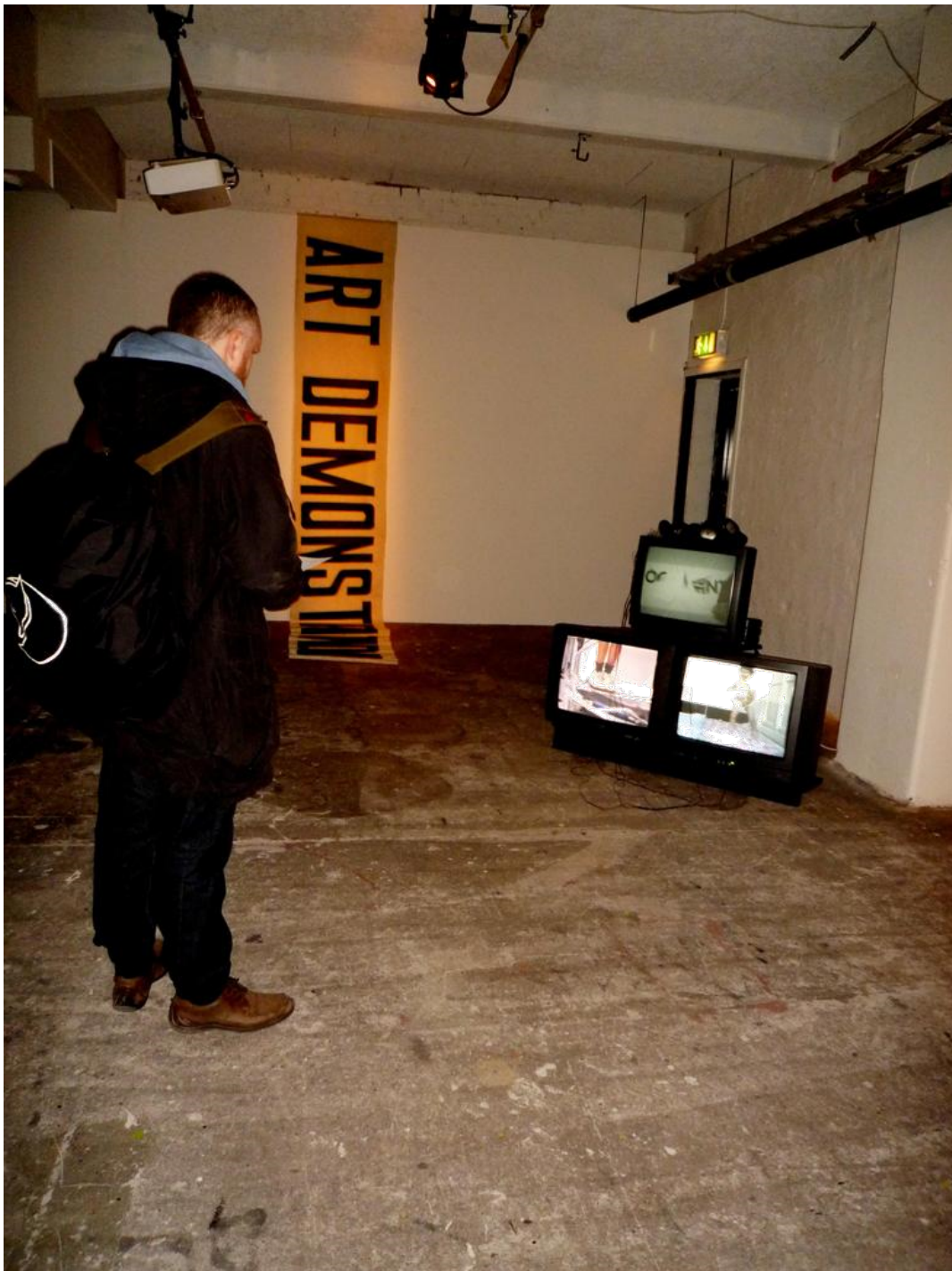


Figure 2: Installation views from *Temporary Status*, at Röda Sten, in Gothenburg, 2012.

From top to bottom: Nicoleta Esinencu's installation *365 days without a president*, Johan Tiren and Christian Hillesø's installation *What is your view?*, Pavel Braila's 3 channel video installation *Chisinau -a city difficult to pronounce*, banner *Art Demonstration* and video installation by Diana Hakobyan.

PART 1: CURATORIAL HISTORIES AND THEORIES

CHAPTER 1.

A HISTORICAL OUTLINE OF CURATORIAL PRACTICE AND THE MOVE TOWARDS COLLABORATIVE PRACTICES IN EUROPE IN THE PAST DECADE

This chapter maps the practice of curating as it changes historically and structurally since the 1960s when the role of the curator became part of contemporary art discourse, with a focus on the last decade including an attempt to draw a connection to the social political events that have put a mark on the direction taken by curating towards a collective approach. This demands a rationalization of several intertwined stages of transformation in the role and understanding of curatorial practice, and the relation between art and knowledge; and it requires also an outline of key social and political events that have been particularly influential in the last decade. I have chosen to include in the historical overview examples coming from artists, such as Lucy Lippard, Martha Rosler and Marion von Osten, whose projects have a great influence on how we think of curating in terms of location, display, development of a concept through production of new works and cross---disciplinary collaborations. The historical overview of curating points also to the shifts towards globalization of curatorial practice and its link to capital's subsumption of the art market and then later neo - liberalism, as well as its counter - part of institutional critique. This chapter also examines the responsibilities for curators and institutions to present work that includes invisible memories of marginalized groups from the southern hemisphere, the Global South, influenced by globalization and postcolonial theories¹³.

¹³ With the Global South, I mean not limited to its geographic location but including the diaspora and displaced communities living in Europe, as well as the communities mentioned as 'other' in the Western ideology.

Presenting such an outline attempts to generate a narrative on which to build the concept of collective knowledge production through curating. This chapter is divided into five sections, which link and interweave the distinctive historical aspects leading to collective knowledge production in art. The five parts deal respectively with: the curator as author, the social and political context in the last decade, pedagogical formats that expand the format of the exhibition, collective attempts within curating in the last decade in two main geographies and the US and Europe and a short conclusion making the link between the content of the chapter and the concept of collective knowledge.

In this chapter I am using the political thought of theorist Chantal Mouffe (2005) and her conceptual distinction between politics and the political as a way for me to structure the directions of several models of traditional definitions of the role of the curator and the alternative turns since year 2000 when curatorial theory has become more prominent. Mouffe's work is located at the core of 'the political' as a space of power, conflict and agonism constitutive of human societies. Following Mouffe, in my overview of curatorial practices of the past 15 years I have looked for signs of understanding of the political and leads to various ideas of politics placed at the core of curatorial practice.

1.1 BRIEF HISTORY OF THE EMERGENCE OF CURATORIAL DISCOURSE FROM THE CURATOR AS AUTHOR OF EXHIBITIONS IN 1960S-1980S TO COLLABORATIVE PRACTICES IN THE 1990S

From the beginning of the 20th century, artists and designers started to question the format of the exhibition, as part of a larger institutional critique movement. In *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, Peter Bürger (1984) argues for a subversive attitude of exhibition design as a critique over the passivity of art and exhibition space. Bürger exemplifies his theory with examples like Marcel Duchamp's *Mile of String*¹⁴, underlining the fact that artists take work on the reception of their works and the format of the exhibition.

Installation art from the 1950-1960s such as Yves Klein's *Le Vide* (1958) or Allan Kaprow's *Happenings and Environments* (1959-1960) transformed the exhibition space into a site where art production is taking place. Artists thus experimented with taking the control over the reception of their own work, including the location in their work and started to work in context specific ways¹⁵.

At the same time (1950-1960s) new museums emerged, such as Moderna Museet in Stockholm or Van Abbe Museum in Eindhoven, promoting the figure of the 'exhibition organizer' as opposed to the former 'museum employee'. This new position of producer of contemporary art exhibitions, together with innovative exhibition design and the presence of artists and architects as producers, transformed the museum from a storehouse into a site for contemporary art. In this context, the figure of the curator starts to rise, parallel to the format of the international exhibition and a new discourse on contemporary art¹⁶. The figure of the exhibition maker operates now independently from a museum fixed position, but with time might intersect with the creation of new institutions for contemporary art. An example here

¹⁴ Included as part of *First papers of Surrealism* at Whitelaw Reid Mansion, New York in 1942.

¹⁵ See Calderoni, Irene. *Creating Shows: Some Notes on Exhibition Aesthetics at the End of the Sixties*, in *Curating Subjects*, Ed. Paul O'Neill (2007:66)

¹⁶ See Bryan-Wilson, Julia, *A Curriculum for Institutional Critique, or the Professionalization of Conceptual Art*, in *New Institutionalism*, Verksted no.1, Ed. Jonas Ekeberg (2003:102-3)

would be Pontus Hulten who started curating exhibitions at a small gallery in Stockholm, called *The Collector*, during the 1950s and became director of Moderna Museet in 1958. The contemporary curator starts to position herself as a separate from previous museum positions, such as that of the art historian or keeper of the collection¹⁷.

The late 1960s brings forward also the influential figure of the individual curator with shows curated by, for example, Harald Szeemann (*When Attitudes become Form: Works, Concepts, Processes, Situations, Information*)¹⁸ Seth Siegelaub (January 5-31, 1969)¹⁹ and Lucy Lippard (*557,087*)²⁰ among others. These exhibitions intersected the curatorial framework with artistic intentions in experimenting with the exhibition space, including also new artistic productions created especially for these exhibitions. In this way, artists and curators were collaborating in the making and organizing of the exhibition, its process and its display, as opposed to providing existing, autonomous works²¹. Szeemann's exhibition from 1969 is considered the first major survey of conceptual art in Europe²². It gathered North American and European artists, who worked in process-oriented ways with installations and happenings. 'The artists took over the institution', as Szeemann stated, turning the site into a space of ongoing production (Szeemann, 1996:74-79). Lucy Lippard, on the other hand, describes the artistic strategies that questioned, reversed, stretched or excluded existent social, political and conceptual boundaries of art, its production and display (Lippard, 1973).

Szeemann established the idea of the autonomous curator-creator-mediator.

¹⁷ See Basualdo, Carlos (2006) *The Unstable Institution*, in *What Makes a Great Art Exhibition?* Ed. Paula Marincola, Philadelphia, Philadelphia Exhibitions Initiative, p.59

¹⁸ At Kunsthalle Bern, 22 March-23 April 1969

¹⁹ At Seth Siegelaub Gallery, New York, 1969

²⁰ At Art Museum, Seattle, 1969

²¹ See also Calderoni, Irene, op.cit.

²² The exhibition was revisited in *1965-1972 when attitudes became form*, 1984 at Kettle's Yard, Cambridge, UK and then recently in 2013 at Fondazione Prada, curated by Germano Celant in dialogue with Thomas Demand and Rem Koolhaas.

According to Bruce Altshuler, 'the new work was meant to disrupt the basic structure of the art World - the triad of studio, gallery and museum' (Altshuler, 1994:245).

In 1972, Szeemann, notable today as the first independent curator after his resignation from Bern Kunsthalle in 1969, directed Documenta 5, where he led a team of curators in producing the unconventional exhibition *Questions of Reality: The Image -World Today*. Alongside works of art, the exhibition showcased science fiction images, political propaganda, work by the mentally-ill, military insignia, Swiss bank notes and other kitsch objects. The works of 70 contemporary artists working with performance, installation and process art were gathered within a section entitled *Individual Mythologies*. This challenging structure and the introduction of artefacts other than art, interfered with the idea of high art showed at Documenta and established Szeemann and the curator as the main authorial figure of the exhibition²³. Regarding the authoritarian figure by Szeemann, Daniel Buren accused him of exhibiting the exhibition as work of art²⁴, a debate, which continues until today. The critique brought mainly by artists²⁵ against the power

²³ See Gabriele Mackert, *At Home in Contradictions: Harald Szeemann's Documenta, in Archive in Motion: 50 Years Documenta 1955 – 2005*, Kassel, Kunsthalle Fridericianum (2005:253-261).

²⁴ See Daniel Buren, *Exposition d'une exposition*, in Documenta 5, 1972, section 17, p 29, English translation taken from the web project *The Next Documenta Should be Curated by an Artist* (www.e-flux.com/projects/next_doc/index.html). In 2002, Daniel Buren declares 'This does not mean that exhibition do not require an organizer- they clearly do- the difference is between an organizer-interpreter and an organizer-author. With the latter, what gets exhibited is the curator rather than the works of art'.

²⁵ Artists Carl Andre, Hans Haacke, Donald Judd, Barry La Va, Sol LeWitt, Robert Morris, Dorothea Rockburne, Fred Sandback, Richard Serra, and Robert Smithson published a petition simultaneously in *Artforum* and *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, opposing the display of selected artworks under an overarching "theme concept" and alongside non-art materials. Five of the artists even withdrew from the exhibition.

relations within the arts outlined a discussion around the work of an exhibition, as an extension from the work of art. The exhibition and the curatorial position centralized the attention, giving visibility to the role of the curator as author.

In the 1970s, artists continued to practice and theorize an institutional critique directed from the outside (sometimes literally: artists closed galleries, wrapped them and covered paper over their facades)²⁶. The discourse and critique over the institutional was very much directed towards the building as a symbol of the structure. The modernist 'white cube' was critiqued as a highly ideological space, as articulated by artist and critic Brian O'Doherty in the book *Inside the White Cube*, a collection of essays first published in *Artforum* in 1976²⁷. Hans Haacke was one of the artists who has taken the museum as subject, and his radical interventions have not been always welcomed, culminating with two of his projects being censored, one at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (1971) and the other at Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Cologne (1974)²⁸. Following these two incidents, Haacke mostly exhibited his projects concerned with museums and their processes in private galleries for the next two decades.

In the late 1960s and 1970s feminist art movements started to discuss the issue of exclusion from art institutions and started to experiment with establishing new publics

²⁶ See 'The Gallery as a Gesture', in Brian O'Doherty, (1999) *Inside the White Cube*, University of California Press, Berkeley.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ The Director of Guggenheim asked Haacke to remove two pieces dealing with New York real estate corruption and one visitors' poll, which included questions relating to visitors' political opinions. In 1974, his proposed project *Manet-PROJEKT '74* for the 150th anniversary of the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, was excluded from the exhibition because of the politically biographical details linking the current chairman of the museum's friends' committee to Nazi economic policy. The piece was instead shown at a private gallery, inside a work by fellow artist Daniel Buren.

and developing new forms of collaboration and cooperation. Parallel to the reason of being excluded as female artists from the official spaces of art, there was also the critique over male-controlled and Eurocentric conditions of production and representation. Spaces outside of the art system were used for performances, installations and lectures. The performances by Valie Export and Adrian Piper took the action into urban space, exposing art to new publics. Feminist art movements introduced also macro-political discourses and identity issues relating to gender, ethnicity and class through methods involving informal networks, new publics and group formation²⁹.

The 1980s introduced the a-historical, grand thematic exhibition as a new institutional practice, such as, for example, *Magiciens de la Terre* (1989) and *L'époque, la mode, la morale, la passion* (1987) at Centre Pompidou in Paris. These exhibitions introduced a structure of art history into themes and concepts, rather than in a chronological history. Deborah J. Meijers has categorized these types of exhibitions as 'ahistorical' (Meijers, 1996:7-20). The museum was thus used as a venue for contemporary art, as a site for the production of art, commissioning works and bringing even more visibility to the curator as author, the latter now rewriting art history, thematizing the present, managing the research and the display of the exhibition. The creative authorship of the curator goes further into constructing 'new truths' presented as universals, as Meijers argues (1996:18). The institutionalized form of the thematic exhibition established the credentials of a curatorial discourse.

The shift from institutional curator to independent artist preoccupied with the format of the exhibition becomes visible in the US, where feminist movements continued to fight against the patriarchal art system and its institutional forms. In 1989 Martha Rosler

²⁹ For useful surveys on feminist art movements see *Art and Feminism* (Reckitt and Phelan, 2012), *Feminism-Art-Theory: An Anthology 1968-2014* (Robinson, 2015), *The Pink Glass Swan: Selected Essays on Feminist Art* (Lippard, 1995), *Framing Feminism: Art and the Women's Movement 1970-1985* (Parker and Pollock, 1987), *Power of Feminist Art: The American Movement of the 1970's History and Impact* (Broude and Garrard, 1996), *Women, Art, And Power And Other Essays* (Nochlin, 1989).

initiated the artist-led curatorial project *If You lived here...* at Dia Art Foundation in New York which continued until 1991. The project addressed the living situation, urban planning and utopian visions mostly in connection to the local context of New York. It involved various perspectives from architects, planners, homeless people, squatters, activist groups, film producers and schoolchildren. The artworks were displayed alongside other artefacts, opening up the discourse towards individuals and communities who might have been excluded in the past. The physical space of the exhibition became the arena for debate, the discussion which used to be marginalized was not happening elsewhere and there was no division between the artefacts and the debate itself. The working process involved diverse groups of people: artists, activist groups, homeless people, architects, urban planners and journalists, many of them interested in the questions raised by the project. The exhibition programme went beyond the usual pattern of an art gallery. *If You Lived Here...* transformed the gallery into a territory sustaining participation and intervention. There was a combination of various media on display: photographs, videos, newspapers, posters, manifestos, prints, pictures on canvas and architectural models, including temporary offices and library space (Rosler, 1993).

Opposing the authoritarian figure of the curator established by Szeemann, artist collectives such as Group Material practiced a collaborative exhibition-making process and addressed often marginalized socio-political topics. Similar to the approach taken by Martha Rosler, Group Material addressed the exhibition as a political event and they worked with methods intersecting art with information and cultural objects. With reference to feminist writer bell hooks, Group Material implemented a policy of inclusion in order not to reproduce oppressive structures. Their exhibitions were conceived as forums, shifting the attention from object to subject (Milevska, 2006).

The 1990s established the institutionalization of curating with the appearance of curatorial study programmes, the recognition of the über-curators working internationally, the rise in the number of biennials and the development of curatorial discourses, histories and models within academia and publishing industry. The publication *Thinking about exhibitions* argues that 'exhibitions are primary sites of

exchange in the political economy of art, where signification is constructed, maintained and occasionally deconstructed' (Greenberg et al, 1996:2-4) raising the issues of curating, exhibition sites, forms of installation and audience and how they are shaping the production and reception of art.

In Europe, the fall of the Berlin Wall (1989) and former communist regimes in the East brought an interest in artists coming from this region, especially expressions that dealt with social and political issues, activism, and analysis of history, deconstruction of ideologies.

The new economic and political situation resulted in a rise of self-organised groups and an increase in collaborative practices. Temporary platforms and initiatives of

self-institutionalization made up for the lack of a functioning art system, as Branislav Dimitrijević argues: 'The group of artists, theorists and curators who organized these 'schools', 'institutes', 'workshops' and 'movements' or have gathered around emerging art magazines, belonged to the no-institutional or anti-institutional opposition yet they themselves acted very seriously to provide structural organization' (Dimitrijević, 2004:105). The power tensions between East and West brought concerns about 'self-colonization' alongside with the dilemma of representing 'the other' with stereotypical narratives (Kiossev, 1999:114).

Since the 1990s, 'institutional critique' has started to look at the collusion with social, economic and political structures within the arts. As Hito Steyerl sees it, it is 'a new social movement within the art field' (Steyerl, 2006). The new approaches use critique as an instrument of analysis and even an instituting practice that aims at social change. In 1996 curator Ute Meta Bauer collaborated with artist Fared Armaly for the exhibition *Now Here* at the Louisiana Museum in Denmark. They moved the collection of the museum into storage - in this way creating room for contemporary art. Armaly and Bauer were thus addressing the issue of the museum as a site for cultural production.

Since then, curatorial practice has received much attention through studies and publications, creating its own discourse and theoretical field. Curating has also been analysed in relation to a new institutionalism, raising issues based on unconventional

and formal systems (Möntmann), community centres and educational platforms (Esche), the curator as author and its prevalence over the artist's role (O'Neill) and discursive practices of curating (Rogoff)³⁰.

³⁰ See Nina Möntmann, (2007) *The Rise and Fall of New Institutionalism: Perspectives on a Possible Future*, *Transversal* (August 2007), available as eipcp.net/transversal/0407/moentmann/en.; Gerd Elise Morland and Heidi Bale Amundsen, *The Politics of the Small Act: Interview with Paul O'Neill*, *On Curating* (2009); Irit Rogoff, *From Criticism to Critique to Criticality*, *Transveral* (January 2003), available at eipcp.net/transversal/0806/rogoff/en.

1.2 HOW GLOBALIZATION AND POSTCOLONIAL THEORIES HAVE SHAPED CURATORIAL PRACTICES

‘Art in an age of globalism’ is an expression frequently used for the understanding of art after 2000. Critic and art theoretician Miško Šuvaković defines this concept as art that is produced inside a ‘planetary’ process of networking on a social, political, economic, cultural and artistic level (Šuvaković, 2011).

In a talk in Athens in 1996 Pierre Bourdieu criticized the discourse of ‘globalisation’ as ‘a myth in the strongest sense of the word’, as a ‘power discourse, an idea power’ (Bourdieu 1998:34). Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt (2000:XI) described a different, autonomous global power, ‘Empire’, emphasizing it as an ‘inexorable and irreversible globalisation of economic and cultural exchange processes’. Hardt and Negri argued that this formula of power cannot be recognized as a territorially defined midpoint; it somewhat indicates a dispersed and deterritorialized machine of control: ‘In contrast to imperialism, Empire establishes no territorial centre of power and does not rely on fixed boundaries or barriers’ (2000:XII). Apart from their consideration of power, Negri’s and Hardt’s thesis of deterritorialisation meets the postulations of the conventional globalization model.

In this context, the journal *Artforum* published in 2003 a discussion³¹ which categorized *documenta 11*, the *Venice Biennale* and a number of so-called ‘peripheral biennales’ of the last decades (like the Biennales and Triennales of Sao Paulo, Brisbane, Dakar, Havana, Tirana, Vilnius, Johannesburg, Istanbul, Cairo and Guangzhou) as cases of a newly evolving category of ‘global exhibitions’; not only because of the very choice of the main curator and the inclusion of non-Western artists, but also for the motive that they took place in places all over the world (like

³¹ Among the artists and curators named as participants in the discussion were: Martha Rosler, Yinka Shonibare, Okwui Enwezor, Hans Ulrich Obrist, Catherine David and Francesco Bonami.

documenta 11 with its 'platforms' in Europe, Africa, Asia, and in the Caribbean region) and that they dealt with subjects related with the globalization discourse:

'This type of exhibition, endowed with a transnational circuitry, assumed the unique position of both reflecting globalism – since these shows happen in locations throughout the world, however remote – and taking up globalism itself as an idea' (Griffin, 2003:153).

Certain sociological writing on the question furthermore reinforces the hypothesis of a globalizing art field. Concentrating on the dynamics of the art market, the sociologist Raymonde Moulin identifies the expansion of the last three decades as a tendency regarding a rising network of worldwide interdependencies, nurturing the movement of individuals and artifacts outside national confines. She writes:

'The specificity of the last three decades lies in the fact that the art market regarding extremely expensive works as well as contemporary works, does not function anymore as coexistence of national markets, which communicate with each other more or less quite well, but like a global market. Each national artistic space is embedded in a worldwide system of cultural and economic exchange processes. The circulation of people, works and information, favors the networking of the market' (Moulin 2003:81).

Saskia Sassen (2004) argues that the explosion of art biennales produced an 'intensified transnational engagement of artists, curators, museums and cities' also highlighting the rise of 'a transnational class of curators'.

The appearance of postcolonial studies with the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism* (Said, 1977) and their impact on curatorial practices is rather complex since it is a non-linear process and its roots go back to anti-colonial thought (Bouwhis, 2012). The long and complex history of resistance and emancipation of the

oppressed peoples continues in other forms in the arts³². The 1980s in Britain, particularly through the development of the 'black' arts movement³³ gives us the key to understanding how a postcolonial reflection is needed for critical artistic and curatorial practices. Centuries of imperialism left behind paradoxes, which gave rise to acts of resistance, instilled by the movement of 'black' arts, driven by the emergence of black consciousness and relating to questions of identity and culture, central to theories of 'race' and nation.

The thought of Frantz Fanon, reintroduced in 1983 by an article by Homi K. Bhabha, *The Other Question: Stereotype and the Colonial Discourse* (Bhabha, 1983), published in the journal *Screen* (devoted to cinema and widely read by the artistic community) and in 1986 in the English reprint of *Black Skin, White Masks*, becomes an essential theoretical support for artists. With the publication of *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* in 1987, Paul Gilroy provided, also at that time, a sharp tool for art professionals who wanted to establish a link between race, class and nation, and especially to highlight the importance of the African diaspora culture via the construction of a history, and of aesthetics and policies that offered 'alternatives to hegemonic accounts' (Gilroy, 1991). Some exhibitions, such as *Mirage: Enigmas of Race, Difference & Desire*, from 1995 at Iniva in London, were informed by this theoretical context that allowed them to adopt positions of radical

³² The battles of colonized peoples begin in 1791 in Haiti with the anti-slavery struggle and independence conducted in particular by Toussaint Louverture. After the Secession war (1861-1865), the abolition of slavery (1804-1899), anti-colonialism, the decolonization movements and accession independence (since 1804), and the fight for Civil Rights (1954-1968). For a problematization of colonial history in the twentieth century see *The Souls of Black Folk* (W.E.B. Du Bois, 1903).

³³ The quotation marks for 'Black' refers to a common situation for people who are victims of migrant xenophobia. An anthology published in 2005 emphasizes the multiplicity that black would constitute, 'the' black implying a 'story of a black art scene in Britain that cannot be monochromatic; black is not black, but all the nuances of black'. See David A. Bailey, Ian Baucom, Sonia Boyce, *Shades of Black: Assembling the 1980s*, in David A. Bailey, Ian Baucom, Sonia Boyce (ed.), *Shades of Black: Assembling Black Arts in 1980s Britain*, Durham (NC), Duke University Press, London, Iniva, 2005.

theory vis-à-vis the mainstream and the society in the UK in order to ‘investigate the unconscious dimensions of colonial heritage, understand racism as a meeting dialectic in which both the victim and the oppressor internalize aspects of the other, both at the individual level and the social’(Fusco, 1988:11).

In 1978, motivated by the finding of the invisibility of ‘non-white’ artists in the mainstream, and a racialized pattern to the stereotype, the artist and critic Rasheed Araeen founded the journal *Black Phoenix*. This included readings by Araeen of anti-colonial writings such as those of Frantz Fanon, Amílcar Cabral, Ho Chi Minh or Paulo Freire and his involvement with the movement of black workers (*Black Workers Movement*), arising directly from that of the *Black Panthers* in its British version. Later, in 1987, he followed this up by setting up the journal *Third Text*, subtitled *Third World Perspectives on Contemporary Art & Culture*, as a place of articulation between discourses on art and postcolonial theories.

The same shift is observed in the curatorial proposals of Araeen. Held at the Hayward Gallery in London in 1989, at the same time as *Magicians de la Terre* and the third edition of the *Biennial of Havana*, *The Other Story: Afro-Asian Artists in Post-War Britain* was the first exhibition to include immigrant artists in the history of dominant art in the ‘story’ of modern art. Notably, Araeen abandoned Fanon in the exhibition catalogue *The Essential Black Art* (1988) and shifted his focus exclusively to the figure of Edward Said in the introduction. This Rather than the anti-coloniality of Araeen’s previous curatorial projects, this ideological shift marks *The Other Story* out as a post-colonial and antiracist exhibition.

The use of Fanon by artists is notable over a decade after the publication of *The Other Question ...*, in 1995 in London³⁴. If in the 1980s and early 1990s theories served local postcolonial discourse and claims of minorities in political contexts of cultural

³⁴ In 1995, the Institute of International Visual Arts (Iniva), newly created in the emergence of a new internationalism, and the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) co-organized *Mirage: Enigmas of Race, Difference and Desire*-a series of events including an exhibition, a film program and performances and a symposium-which explored the legacy Fanon. See

differences, as is the case in Great Britain but also in North America, from the second half of the 1990s postcolonial theories refer also to global migration-related groups and / or diasporas.

Although theories feed mostly curatorial practices whose subject is culturally specific, their use then shifts, considering 'above all a matter of relationship and context, rather than scale or space' (Appadurai, 2001:247), towards a globality. We begin to see them appear in projects driven by problematics accentuated by the phenomenon of globalization such as transnational migration, the constitution of diasporas, the experience of exile or cultural practices challenged by these upheavals. *Inklusion: Exklusion. Kunst im Zeitalter Postkolonialismus Globaler von und Migration* (1996) was one of the first exhibitions in Europe to address jointly the issue of post-colonialism and migration in a global perspective, while the second Biennial of Johannesburg, *Trade Routes: History and Geography*, curated by Okwui Enwezor in 1997, is considered to be the 'first comprehensive exhibition to transform the promise of postcolonial theory into tangible reality, thus exorcising almost completely the ghost of *Magicians de la Terre* from the curatorial lexicon' (Cameron, 1997). *The Trade Routes'* challenge is to go 'beyond the limits of the gallery space 'and reinvent' the practice of exposure in a more appropriate way to the conditions in South Africa' (Kellner, 2000). This second edition of the Johannesburg Biennial appears not only at the beginning of *Documenta11* but also a line of shows like *The Short Century* (2001), *Authentic / Ex-centric* (2001) or *Fault Lines* (2003) participating in the emancipation and the recognition of an African and diasporic identity, offering a reality of contemporary art in terms of postcolonial studies and / or, broadly, cultural studies. The role in *Documenta11* of the integration of postcolonial

http://www.iniva.org/exhibitions_projects/1995/mirage_enigmas_of_race_difference_and_desire.

theories in the lexicon of curatorial mainstream since the early 2000s is significant in proposing a new appropriation of the 'Other'.

The exhibitions that use postcolonial theories renew theoretical approaches by transforming theory into a resource, a support for generating different speeches, criticisms, and aesthetics.

Okwui Enwezor in the *The Postcolonial Constellation*, recapitulated the correlation between curatorial practice and post colonialist discourses³⁵. In Enwezor's opinion, the present artistic and curatorial context is 'constellated around the norms of the postcolonial, those based on discontinuous, aleatory forms, on creolization, hybridization, and so forth', it is one that arises as 'an outcome of the upheaval that has resulted from deep political and cultural restructuring since World War II, manifest in the liberation, civil rights, feminist, gay/lesbian, and antiracist movements' (Enwezor, 2003:209, 232). As a result, claims Enwezor, cultural representation and politics are currently evidently interconnected:

'Representation becomes not merely the name for a manner of practice, but, quite literally, the name for a political awareness of identity within the field of representation. In the context of decolonized representation, innovation is as much about the coming to being of new relations to cultures and histories, to rationalization and transformation, to transculturation and assimilation, and new practices and processes, new kinds of exchange and moments of multiple dwelling as it is about the ways artists are seen to be bound to their national and cultural traditions. Here, political community and cultural community become essentially coterminous.' (Enwezor, 2003:225).

³⁵ For other references regarding postcolonial theory and curatorial practice see Greenberg et al. (1996), Filipovic and Vanderlinden (2005).

Furthermore, reasons Enwezor, it is vital to acknowledge the particular, spatially and temporally situated type of cultural discourses:

‘Curatorial and exhibition systems are confronted with the fact that all discourses are located, that is, they are formed and begin somewhere, they have a temporal and spatial basis, and they operate synchronically and diachronically. The located nature of cultural discourses, along with their history of discontinuities and transitions, confronts curatorial practices with the fragility of universalized conceptions of history, culture and artistic procedures.’ (Enwezor, 2003:224)

One of the significant concretizations of this emergent critique is the Third Guangzhou Triennial - titled *Farewell to Post-Colonialism*, in 2008. As its heading implies, *Farewell to Post-Colonialism* was envisioned to make use of the international survey exhibition as a public platform for postcolonialist criticism. According to the statements of the transnational curatorial team (Sarat Maharaj, Chang Tsong-Zung and Gao Shiming³⁶), postcolonialism can, like the politics of identity in general, be assumed to have destabilized the radicality of its own critical standing by accompanying the formation of an ‘institutionalised pluralistic landscape’ correlated with the appearance of political correctness³⁷. In Maharaj, Chang and Gao’s view, the creation of this kind of context has steered a rather powerful normative-managerialist mode of thinking on subjects of diversity and multiculturalism that have obstructed artistic vision and has caused a simplistic dialectical understanding of East-West/North-South relations of power, or, as they call it, a ‘tyranny of the Other’

³⁰ (Johnson) Chang Tsong-Zung is the Hong Kong-based Director of the Hanart TZ Gallery and curator of the influential 1993 exhibition *China’s New Art Post-1989*. Gao Shiming is Associate Professor of Art History and Head of the centre for Visual Cultural Research at the China Academy of Fine Arts in Hangzhou. Sarat Maharaj is the London-based academic and curator best known for his scholarly writings on Marcel Duchamp, Richard Hamilton and James Joyce as well as his role as a co-curator of *Documenta 11* in 2003.

³¹ For the curatorial statement of the Guangzhou Triennial --- titled *Farewell to Post - Colonialism*, see <http://www.gdmoa.org/zhanlan/threeyear/4/24/13/12629.jsp>

(Maharaj³⁸, 2009).

³⁸ Ibid

1.3 PEDAGOGICAL FORMATS THAT EXPAND THE FORMAT OF THE EXHIBITION

How do pedagogical curatorial platforms produce knowledge? This section looks at the direction taken by curatorial practice towards educational formats – defined also as the ‘educational turn’³⁹. It aims to identify their methods of reacting to the socio-political context presented in the previous subchapter and how they investigate the formation of the collective subject and subject-formation through knowledge production.

With their emphasis on pedagogy and social changes in education ‘the educational turn’ defines the rising interest, beginning in the 1990s, in arts potential to contest and restructure prevailing educational configurations through an engagement with knowledge, education and the structures and methods through which they are enacted. The four examples presented here share key features, all developing from reactions against the impact of social and political events and ideas on art production, and all seeking, through the development of original pedagogical practices for instituting knowledge, to generate potential spaces, relations, institutions and subjectivities.

Since the second half of the 1990s various approaches utilizing educational methods and configurations and alternative pedagogical systems and platforms, have emerged in or as curatorial and artistic practices. Initiatives associated with the educational turn revolve around the notion of education, knowledge production, and artistic and curatorial research. These projects focus more on the process, rather than on the object-based artwork or on the event. They also extensively use discursive and pedagogical methods and try to place the artistic activity in and outside of the exhibition, extending the territory of art, forming informal networks and reclaiming an alternative institutional structure.

³⁹ O’Neil and Wilson (eds.) (2010), *Curating and the Educational Turn*, London and Amsterdam: Open Editions and De Appel Arts Centre.

Mick Wilson and Paul O'Neill (2010) identified the educational turn in art as a particular interest in contemporary art in education, acknowledged as a multitude of projects, exhibitions and additional activities that take on paradigms found in pedagogy to elaborate a cultural practice. As formal art education in Europe undergoes a fundamental organizational transformation, contemporary art spaces outside of the academy become a potential to alternative notions of the pedagogical. Examples emanated in the form of large-scale projects, such as *Manifesta 6*⁴⁰, which initiated a temporary art school in Cyprus and was subsequently closed by the city of Nicosia, and *Documenta 12*⁴¹, which quoted education as one of the exhibition's three themes.

In addition, there was an increase of small-scale actions based on pedagogical formats beyond the structure of an exhibition. It is important to make a distinction between projects where education is a theme in an exhibition and appears on display and those where the pedagogical mechanisms are prominent. For example, although the curators of *Documenta 12* identified education as an issue, it stayed, for the most part, a thematic within the formalised structures of the exhibition.

The projects understood as taking part of the educational turn attempt to develop new methods of democratizing the access to knowledge, as well as new forms of sharing or

⁴⁰ Manifesta is a pan-European platform for contemporary visual arts. Manifesta is held in a different location every two years, and the concept of an itinerant event first took shape in Rotterdam in 1996. Manifesta 6 (2006) was to be held in Nicosia, Cyprus. The curatorial team of Mai Abu ElDahab, Anton Vidokle and Florian Waldvogel intended to start an experimental art school using the capital, network and infrastructure of Manifesta along with the local resources. The proposal was strongly opposed by the Cypriot artistic community and the exhibition was cancelled three months before the opening and relocated to Berlin, under the name of *unitednationsplaza*.

⁴¹ *documenta* is an exhibition of modern and contemporary art founded in 1955 by artist and curator Arnold Bode. The exhibition takes place every five years in Kassel, Germany. The curators of Documenta 12 (2007), Roger Buergel and Ruth Noack, proposed as one of the questions for the publication *The Magazines Project*- the question - 'What is to be done?', which established a discursive field on education. *The Magazines Project* invited over 90 different journals from several continents to think collectively about the topic, including *Zehar*, *Third Text*, *Grey Room*, and *Radical Philosophy*. The educational project operated as an online archival platform inviting international audiences to participate in the consideration of the question of education.

distribution. These projects try also to shift the traditional hierarchical positioning of the artist, curator, artwork and viewer, challenging the inclusion of the participant/audience/viewer in the process of making. The educational turn involves also, a reconsideration of art institutions and the possibility of their transformation into platforms for education. In many cases the educational turn takes the format of self- organization and constitutes a parallel system to public education.

There is an important history of radical pedagogic theories to acknowledge as crucial to these considerations, ranging from critical pedagogies (Rancière, 1981) to the development of anti-hegemonic schooling methods (Freire, 1970). Instead of propagating the same old hegemonic value system, generally, critical pedagogy aims to develop a more adaptable and non-rigid practice, and establish ways of sharing knowledge on a horizontal and democratic basis, including issues that are current and with respect towards the needs of the participants as producers of knowledge. Contemporary pedagogical initiatives often refer to previous artistic practices, including those seen as using experimental educational methods in the 1960 and 1970s, such as the action teaching of Bazok Brock⁴², or the performative lecture and the *Free International University of Joseph Beuys*⁴³.

⁴² Bazok Brock (b.1936) is a German art theorist and critic, multi-media generalist and artist. He is considered a member of Fluxus. In 1968, Brock installed a *Besucherschule* (visitors' school) at *documenta 4*, introducing exhibition visitors to contemporary art in several hours of 'action teaching'. The device was repeated several times until 1992.

⁴³ *Free International University for Creativity and Interdisciplinary Research* was founded in 1972 by Joseph Beuys, as part of his enlarged conception of artistic action. A manifesto drawn up by Beuys with German poet Heinrich Böll outlines the principles of this new educational paradigm. In this document, the primary goal of the FIU was described as 'the encouragement, discovery, and furtherance of democratic potential, and the expression of this'. (<https://sites.google.com/site/socialsculptureusa/freeinternationaluniversitymanifesto>)

Projects like *16 Beaver*⁴⁴ and *Sarai*⁴⁵, and by artist Annette Krauss⁴⁶ extend the non-academic paradigm and question how we mediate education and how we negotiate spaces for thought and reflection. In these particular projects, education is regarded as a *transformative practice*, shifting it away from institutionalized notions of pedagogy and towards something more convivial and extensive. Ivan Illich described the term 'conviviality as 'a range of autonomous and creative exchanges among people' (Illich, 1973). For Illich conviviality is the opposite of manipulation, which he saw as the prevailing form of institutional handling. For him, conviviality is modest and unprompted, interpersonal and enabling, common, shared and symbiotic and by that we can identify the fruitful potential of an educational turn in contemporary art.

With regard to the formal aspect, many of these contemporary 'pedagogical' projects leave the gallery space or the exhibition display and construct art practices informed by theories and practices related to 'institutional critique'. By going out of the gallery, they inhabit new sites, such as private apartments, schools or the street, the site-specific aspect influencing the concept and the format. Furthermore, temporary and experimental schools are included in the framework of biennials, as well as gallery spaces, many of which have started to host alternative, public institutions, libraries,

⁴⁴ *16 Beaver* group is an artist community that functions as a social and collaborative space on 16 Beaver street in downtown Manhattan, where the group hosts panel discussions, film series, artist talks, radio recordings, reading groups and more.

⁴⁵ The Sarai Programme at Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) was initiated in 2000 by a group consisting of the Ravi S. Vasudevan and Ravi Sundaram (both fellows at CSDS) and the members of the Raqs Media Collective, a Delhi based group of media practitioners, documentaries, artists and writers.

Sarai's mission is to act as a platform for discursive and creative collaboration between theorists, researchers, practitioners and artists actively engaged in reflecting on contemporary urban spaces and cultures in South Asia.

⁴⁶ Using performance and film as tools, Utrecht based artist Annette Krauss explores the transformative potential of (un)learning. Krauss's projects such as *Read-In* (2010-present), *The Site for Unlearning* (Tbilisi Triennial 2012), *In Search of the Missing Lessons* (2013) explore approaches to art making as forms of research and pedagogy. Her ongoing project, *The Hidden Curriculum* produced with support from Casco (Utrecht 2007), *Walden #3* (Munich 2010), *Kunsthau* (Dresden 2010), *The Showroom* (London 2012), and *Whitechapel Gallery* (London 2012–2013) refers to the expectations, values, and behaviours that are learned in educational contexts, without being necessarily recognized, intended or desired.

schools, and laboratories (Beech, 2010). Thus, the curatorial becomes an 'expanded educational praxis' (O'Neill, Wilson, 2010:12-13), a form which is parasitic on other kinds of art institutions as expanded educational initiatives. Publicly funded institutions and the internationally oriented biennial circuit in particular provides willing host sites for such educational endeavors, their ambitions chiming well with their aim (usually set by the public-corporate body funding these large-scale organizations) to provide a public good through 'creative' activity, or the affirmation of creativity as public good.

Simultaneously, art institutions in Europe started to be interested in self- organization methods, promoting critical thinking addressed to the format of the institution, including art academies (Madoff, 2009). Furthermore, a number of exhibitions on the subject of education were opened⁴⁷. This turn towards education meant a changed perspective on curatorial practice as a platform for dialogue between audience, artists and the public sphere.

The challenge comes, though, when employing formats such that of the school or the classroom, as this may create a distance from the audience that is more accustomed with just the position of the viewer. In this way, these projects might exclude rather than include different opinions and voices.

In some cases, projects turned their criticism towards the education system, the privatization, commercialization and commodification of knowledge and the market economy within education and at large⁴⁸. Knowledge has always been closely related to conventions of supremacy, institutions, pedagogics, ethics and politics.

⁴⁷ A.C.A.D.E.M.Y. (2005-2006), Siemens Art Program, MuHKA, Van Abbemuseum -an exhibition, discussion, and workshop series, which looked at the academy -as a general term for educational institutions -and its role and possibilities in society. The project also examined the role of the museum as a site for education.

⁴⁸ See for instance, the 2011 exhibition *Possible Damage* at INIVA, London was on the student protest of 2010-2011 in London.
http://www.iniva.org/exhibitions_projects/2011/possible_damage/possible_damage

To paraphrase Suhail Malik, there is a difference between two pedagogical directions, the one of schooling and the one of education:

‘Schooling is the repetition of a fixed body of knowledge, selected, assessed, passed, or rejected by given authorities according to whatever more or less fixed criteria they hold, and subjected to the power and control mechanisms of established institutions and their bureaucracies. It is a practice of instrumentalism and discipline. (...) Education, on the other hand, is a learning process that never ends, fostering growth and development of individual and collective agency that instils greater understanding of experience and the world. Education is transformative and induces change, keeping boundaries open and amenable to growth.’
(Malik, 2011).

The latter ambitions are, of course, those of today’s capitalist liberal democracies in sustaining wealth generation through creativity. But, in different form (though in troubling proximity), they are also values and practices sought and affirmed in cultural milieus antagonistic to capitalized systems of production. In this alternative advocacy of education, individual or collective self-determination—autonomy—is the counter-principle to the systems of control by prevalent state-capital power. The list of complaints about the unhappy realities of art education today can be understood as motivated by two distinct interests that overlap in the case of art schools. First, if contemporary or critical art is said to be the challenging of conventions and conformities, then such art takes place as a kind of education. Contemporary art is the opposite of schooling, and, at its most provocative, even seeks to eradicate schooling. Significantly, the undoing of schooling for the sake of education in more general terms, but nonetheless vectored through contemporary art, was the theme of the *Deschooling Society* conference organized by London’s Serpentine Gallery in April 2010⁴⁹.

⁴⁹ See <http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/nd/hayward-gallery-and-visual-arts/visual-arts-talks-and-events/tickets/deschooling-society-52395>

This turn towards education has had an impact on several contemporary art tendencies. Firstly, it connects to institutional critique and new institutionalism, emphasizing through exhibitions, research projects, workshops, seminars and free universities, the need for a pedagogical vision. Secondly, it reflects on the original meaning of the academy, its public significance and how it relates to venue, structure, practice and its role within art and curatorial projects. Finally, it has proliferated discursivity and performativity in art. As Irit Rogoff writes in the article *Turning* from 2008, it remains to be questioned whether education is read through the filter of the format of the exhibition or as an interpretative model (Rogoff, 2008).

To account for the increase of projects and exhibitions that create a platform for a multifaceted relationship between art and education, several initiatives in the last decade have sought to appropriate pedagogy as a curatorial or artistic strategy. *Manifesta 6*, due to be held in Nicosia, failed to materialise the proposed curatorial programme for an 'Exhibition as School' (Vidokle, 2002:1). However, it established a terrain of discussion around education across the global biennial market.

Manifesta 6 aimed at taking a step further than the already existing programmes angled towards discursivity and learning within the museum. Involving theorists, artists, curators and critics, the goal was to identify ways in which the pedagogical can be restructured, contextualized and translated into an aesthetic experience.

Despite its cancellation, *Manifesta 6* produced a critical argument for 'going back to school', through a collection of texts that both developed a discourse of confrontation and a new manifesto for an art school (Vidokle, 2002:1). Co-curator and artist Anton Vidokle established in these texts a timeline of experimental art schools, from institutions such as the *Ecole nationale superieure des beaux-arts* (Paris, 1671) to the *Mountain School of Art* (Los Angeles, 2005) (Vidokle, 2002:6). This incomplete chronology disclosed a substantial appearance of self-organized academies emerging after the turn of the twenty-first century.

What is common to the art system and education system, is a simultaneous threat coming from the politics of privatization and instrumentalization of knowledge. These circumstances contribute to a climate of resistance within both fields. One such example is *A.C.A.D.E.M.Y.*, a project mutually started by the Siemens Arts Program,

Kunstverein in Hamburg, the Visual Cultures Department at Goldsmiths College in London, Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst in Antwerp and the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven. Opposition to the Bologna Declaration, which imposed European Universities to deliver ‘internationally comparable’ education by 2010 (De Baere, 2006:7), originally motivated the project *A.C.A.D.E.M.Y.* . The intention was to extend towards a complex commitment with the process of learning that, while still politicised, using existent frictions in the education system as a setting for creating new work and for imagining education as a site of ‘potentiality’.

As an event, *A.C.A.D.E.M.Y.* emerged as three exhibitions, each involving a distinctive curated sequence of installations, workshops, research-based interventions, lectures, video works, interviews, symposia, round-tables and talks within their particular situations of Hamburg, Antwerp and Eindhoven. It is important to note that the museum was not used as a platform for representation; it was integrated into the problematic area.

The museum and academy were allied under the ‘context of an economic hegemony that controls much of the space where art has to reside’ and in this context must reconsider those ‘value systems’ inbuilt in the functions of art institutions which share a heritage of favouring ‘not only learning but speculation for its own sake’ (De Baere, 2006: 7). The *A.C.A.D.E.M.Y.* project was imagined out of a wish to approach wish to approach the museum as a ‘space for unexpected learning’ (Rogoff, 2006: 179), thus advocating for the complex knowledge exchanges that function in such space.

Copenhagen Free University is a significant example when it comes to the concept of a self-initiated institution established in the co-organisers’ apartment that, while now separated, nevertheless exists in the web space and in the University’s publications that continue to be disseminated. Articulated as a rejection of the increasing state control over cultural production and the rising prominence of the ‘new knowledge economy’, *Copenhagen Free University* pursued a working process based on knowledge practices ‘that are fleeting, fluid, schizophrenic, uncompromising, subjective, uneconomic, acapitalist, produced in the kitchen, produced when asleep or arisen on a social

excursion-collectively'⁵⁰. Although these types of knowledge are not produced through a 'superstructure' but rather appear occasionally through 'mumbles' and processes of 'drifting through various social relations', the organizers argue that the University should be seen as an institution, though self-organized⁵¹. *Copenhagen Free University* is an endeavour to embody new organisms of 'vaporization of knowledge in society'⁵² and to generate new communities both locally and through virtual online discourse. 'Mass Intellectuality' is the phrase used by *Copenhagen Free University* to define knowledge as a continuous semantic of the social, and the foundation for the idea that 'all forms of human activity carry a level of knowledge'⁵³. *CFU* proposes selfinstitutionalisation as a way to address the institution as an elastic organism of power to be controlled equally by the individual and by the collective.

Manoeuvring the spatial divisions, organizational configurations, methods of valuation and power relations that make up the structure of the 'school', this curatorial movement moves towards a notion of 'schooling' as a site of contestation. It relates to how Michel Foucault positions 'schooling' as one of the central subjects of his analysis of societal control and 'the school' as an exemplary model of the 'disciplinary institution' (Foucault, 1975:173). Projects like *Manifesta 6, Academy, Copenhagen Free 48 University and School of the Missing Studies*⁵⁴ intend to shift the instrumentalization in formal education and in art institutions. Considering some of the most acknowledged contemporary initiatives, one notices the following features: arguing for 'free' access, the lack of a fixed location, a focus on discursivity, the production of a manifesto, the

⁵⁰For an archive of previous project, see <http://www.copenhagenfreeuniversity.dk/infouk.html>, 4/02/14

⁵¹ Committee of 15th July 2001/Henriette Heise & Jakob Jakobsen, *Copenhagen Free University #1, All Power to the Copenhagen Free University*, 2001:14,19

⁵² *Copenhagen Free University #4, The ABZ of the Copenhagen Free University*, p.17

⁵³ *The Copenhagen Free University, The ABZ of the Copenhagen Free University*, p.4

⁵⁴ *School of Missing Studies* (SMS) is a network for experimental study of cities marked by or currently undergoing abrupt transition. Founding members of SMS are: Liesbeth Bik, Katherine Carl, Ana Dzokic, Ivan Kucina, Marc Neelen, Milica Topalovic, Jos Van Der Pol, Sabine von Fischer, Stevan Vukovic and Srdjan Jovanovic Weiss.

deterritorialization of disciplines and specializations and a demand to work within an economy of means. The thought-provoking feature that connects these initiatives is not the fluctuating levels of opposition towards the formal institution, but rather that they would even embrace a pedagogic structure as an instrument for a collective practice. More than aiming at remodelling the art school or to resist institutional structure, they assemble around a complex aspiration to question what is to know, to interrogate how knowledge is produced and disseminated, to make evident the communities and dialogues invested in these exchanges and to shift the established structures of power.

1.4 CASE STUDIES OF ARTISTIC AND CURATORIAL PRACTICES THAT CHALLENGE THE AUTHORIAL POSITION OF EXHIBITION-MAKER AND POLITICAL SUBJECTIVITY WITHIN CURATORIAL PRACTICE

Following the ‘pedagogical turn’, curatorial practice developed an interest in discursivity and articulation. This interest came from an identified need to place the artistic endeavour, its narrative and reflection in and outside of the ‘art universe’. The exhibition or the para-curatorial project then becomes about giving an account not only in respect of art’s history but also to and of society, engaging with and formulating subjective positions on politics and aesthetics. The format of the exhibition becomes pluralized; it looks to create antagonisms and articulates a position of the public, history and locality at the centre of its concept. Parameters to take into consideration: how the viewer is placed, the circulation and movement through the exhibition/space, the visible and hidden narratives which turn the spectator from passive to active subject at stake. The organization also plays a significant role varying from self-organized groups to small alternative spaces, public institutions and large-scale government-funded projects and biennials.

In the previous subchapters I have looked at several formats of curatorial practice, which have shaped an understanding of visual and discursive representation through exhibition-making. The 1980s introduced the thematic exhibition as an institution in itself, with examples such as *Magiciens de la Terre* at Centre Pompidou in Paris. Similar exhibitions by curators Harald Szeeman (*A-Historische Klanken*, Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam, 1988) and Rudi Fuchs (*documenta 7*, 1982; van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 1983) as well as a guest-curated show (also at the Museum Boymans-van Beuningen) by the filmmaker Peter Greenaway (*The Physical Self*, 1991/92), which addressed a new reading and writing of art history and theory. All these curatorial projects centred on a conceptualization theme rather than a chronological order. It is notable that these exhibitions have been named ‘ahistorical exhibitions’, as Deborah J. Meijers wrote in an article from 1996 (Meijers, 1996:7-20).

The rise of the ahistorical exhibition lead to some aspects: a new museum practice, the museum functioning like an art centre, as a prime site for contemporary art, not just historical collections, as a location for art production, regularly commissioning works. It has led to retrospective exhibitions of mid-career artists, as an addition to previous historical showcases of passed away artists and art movements.

Consequently, the thematic exhibition becomes established, the present is scrutinised and the focus moves towards the 'new', in discovering and formulating 'new' discourses, medias, subjects, thematics, geographies and artists. Significantly, exhibitions presenting emerging artists from recent discovered geographies have dominated the 1990's, exoticizing social and political contexts and localities⁵⁵.

⁵⁵ Exhibitions on Central Europe or *Mittleeuropa* in particular abound in the 1990s and reach their peak at the turn of the millennium, often mixed with the Europeanization hype. The Balkans appeared as the specific focus of three internationally renowned curatorial projects—*Blood and Honey: Future's in the Balkans* by Harold Szeemann, *In the Gorges of the Balkans: A Report* by Rene Block, and *In Search of Balkania* by Peter Weibel. Indisputably, the largest curatorial project of historicizing East European art is the *East Art Map: A (Re)Construction of the History of Contemporary Art in Eastern Europe*, initiated by the Slovenian artists' group Irwin in the late 1990s. Among the most remarkable exhibitions of the art of Central Europe are: *Sensitivities—Contemporary Art from Central Europe* (1998), *Aspects / Positions—50 Years of Art in Central Europe, 1949–1999* (1999), *KunstRaumMittleuropa: 12 Positions on Contemporary Art* (2000), *Central: New Art from New Europe* (2001). The list of exhibitions on the so-called "New Europe" throughout the first half of the 2000s is rather extensive: © *Europe Exists*, Thessaloniki, Greece (2003); *Breakthrough: Perspectives on Art from the Ten New Member States*, Hague, The Netherlands (2004); *Instant Europe – Photography and Video from the New Europe*, Passariano – Codroipo (Udine), Italy (2004); *New Video, New Europe: A Survey of Eastern European Video*, Chicago, United States (2004); *Passage Europe: Realities, references*, St. Etienne, France (2004); *The Image of Europe*, Brussels, Belgium (2004); *The New Ten: Contemporary Art from the 10 New Member Nations of the EU*, Duisburg, Vienna, Mannheim, Oostende (2004); *Who if Not We Should at Least Try to Imagine the Future of All This? 7 Episodes on Ex(Changing) Europe*, Budapest, Amsterdam, Utrecht, Rotterdam, Ljubljana, Vilnius, Warsaw (2004); *Positioning—In the New Reality of Europe: Art from Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary*, Osaka, Japan (2005); *The New Europe. Culture of Mixing and Politics of Representation*, Vienna, Austria (2005); *Central: New Art from New Europe*, Vienna (2005), Sofia (2006); *Check-In Europe: Reflecting Identities in Contemporary Art*, Munich, Germany (2006).

Curatorial practice starts to think and act from a place of politics of the aesthetic. If we take the categorization of Jacques Rancière in enlisting politics in art in terms of exposition rather than intent, we can say that in the case of exhibition-making, politics has to do not only with the choice of the artists and their exposed positions but also the overall perspective of the world and its potential verbalization. In his book *Disagreement – Politics and Philosophy*, Rancière differentiates politics from the concept of policing, insinuating all institutions and orders generally termed as politics, such as regulations, assemblies and even the notion of democracy (Rancière, 1999). This is what he calls a ‘police order’, and the political arises when this order is interrupted, in drastic disruptions with the prevailing order, when those who have no part claim their part. In the case of exhibition-making and curatorial practice, this would entail a political practice within the curatorial by producing exhibitions showcasing new subjects and subjectivities, which were previously omitted. In this category one can name the previously discussed exhibitions such as Martha Rosler’s *If You Lived Here*, that factually let the homeless of New York speak within a cultural institution, the Dia Art Foundation; *Magiciens de la Terre* and the many exhibitions of Eastern European art in Western Europe after 1989, such as *After the Wall*. However, displaying ‘the new’ merely in terms of subjects would be a limited reading of Rancière’s notion of politics. Addressing the political in curatorial practice needs to be stretched from subjectivities as individuals to exhibiting the fractions and gaps that constitute a political subjectivity, determining similar halts and splits in the way in which they are revealed, exemplified and debated.

Rewriting the normative and excluding art history by including ‘new’ subjects doesn’t automatically create any rift -on the contrary it justifies and underlines such an order by extending and reiterating it instead of bypassing or eradicating it. Actually, this is the purpose of the presence of young artists from Eastern Europe as that has been a major dynamic of the art world, its exhibitions and institutions since the 1990s. The issue at stake to be experimented with from 2000s onwards was how to work with exhibition platforms and politics. The shift has been from political exhibitions where the politics was within the theme to practicing politics through the curatorial, as an act

of caring as well as punishing what is governing, succeeding the work of Michel Foucault on the subject.

But there are also counter-moves to such thematic exhibitions. If such exhibitions thematize, recount and structure the artworks, they also order the work, and, eventually, direct the interpretation in an influential manner. One of the main alternate tactics to the thematic exhibition is what Marion von Osten has named 'the project exhibition' as opposite to the thematic exhibition (von Osten, 2007:230-43). The project exhibition is not established, though, in direct contrast to the thematic group show, but analogous to it as an artistic and political tactic: the exhibition as vehicle for voicing and examining a discourse. In the place of working with selecting and displaying works by singular artists, clustered to fit a chosen topic, the project exhibition creates the complete exhibition as an artistic work involving a group of artists, theorists, activists, producers etc. getting together to establish an exhibition tackling a particular subject or problematic. The project exhibition is consequently an enunciation in practice, not a curatorial selection or collection of individual works of art by individual artists exemplifying a theme, a story or an artistic medium. The project exhibition somewhat shifted the debates on how viewers become a community. Community is here constructed between the practitioners as well as being something fundamental to the exhibition.

Subsequently, I will focus on two examples of curatorial practice, and their association with the several approaches I have outlined, as well as their correlation to, and maybe fluctuation between, politics and the policing of aesthetics. I will look at the examples of Marion von Osten and Curatorial Action/Kuratorisk Aktion, from the 1990s to the 2000s and sharing not only an involvement in post---institution practice but also feminist political and philosophical standpoints.

First Marion von Osten, who, in common with Martha Rosler's approach, blurs the boundary between artist and curator's practice. Marion von Osten became director of Shedhalle Zurich in the mid 1990s where she exercised her practices of opposition to

classical curatorial and institutional approaches. Initially addressing the question of how to use the exhibition space to create a new discourse, she went on to claim her approach, engaged in social transformation. She also used a methodology of work that was a critique of the division of labour in the arts, sharing the space of Shedhalle as a collective space and supporting micro-political interventions in the field of art itself (von Osten, 2006).

After experiencing Germany pre and post-1989, the idea of the archive was very important and this is reflected throughout her practice and methods of investigation. Von Osten treats the archive as a symbol for democracy, by asking the question: Who has access to the archive? For her, archival practice foregrounds knowledge that is hidden and contributes to the mapping of new histories.

Von Osten also proposes the notion of the 'project exhibition' which includes people from diverse fields of knowledge to develop the concept or the realization of the exhibition. The intention is to be able to change subject positions in this temporary context. It builds on the feminist and gender oriented theories and discourses, empowering other subject positions than those already established. This exhibition format can establish new modes of production inviting other addressees (von Osten, 2003).

The most radical stand of the 'project exhibition' is that of countering the illustration mode and moving towards the formulation of the curator's own themes and methods, establishing a new discourse. It becomes a radical practice that questions the logic of the space of art and its regime of representation.

The *Projekt Migration* exhibition was one result of an extensive inter-disciplinary research process that took place between 2002 and 2006. The exhibition opened on 30 September 2005 and took place in three central locations in Cologne. The project

considered the impact of migration on German politics, economics, culture, society and art in the period from 1955 to 2005 and was co-curated together with Kathrin Rhomberg.

The exhibition employed different materials, photography, documents, experimental films and artistic works provoking a dialogue of contents. The method was referring to the use of locations as well, which were designed according to the topics, suggesting thus a continuing analysis of the subject rather than a historical perspective (von Osten, 2002-2006).

As such, the exhibition also did not consist of a collection of compiled artworks, but was, actually a work in itself. Von Osten has categorized this as a project exhibition, involving diverse material and exemplars, as well as interactive graphic displays, which pose particular questions about the various histories and standpoints on immigration in Germany at the time. The exhibition resisted supplying a new production of imageries and focused on inquiring into the politics of the image by advancing a fundamental research and critique.

Turning to the other example, Kuratorisk Aktion/Curatorial Action⁵⁶, the group counters both the authority of institutions and hegemonic discursive construction within art and national politics. For the curators of Kuratorisk Aktion, curatorial practice is an instrument and a model for action that can interfere in diverse areas and societal interactions.

⁵⁶ Kuratorisk Aktion [Curatorial Action] is an all-female independent curatorial collective committed to curating radical critique and critical action. The collective was formed in 2005 by Danish independent curators Frederikke Hansen and Tone Olaf Nielsen with an aim to take curatorial action against the injustices and inequalities produced and sustained by global capitalism. (www.kuratorisk-aktion.org) KA's recent projects include: *Rethinking Nordic Colonialism: A Postcolonial Exhibition Project in Five Acts* (2006), *The Road to Mental Decolonization* (2008), *TUPILAKOSAURUS: Pia Arke's Issue with Art, Ethnicity, and Colonialism, 1981-2006* (2010), and *Troubling Ireland* (2011-12).

This has resulted in an ongoing curatorial investigation into the complex relations between historical colonialism, capitalist globalization, and neo-colonial forms of exploitation on the one hand and postcolonial forms of conviviality on the other. In a broad body of projects, ranging from cross-disciplinary exhibitions to film programs, publications and public discussions, Kuratorisk Aktion strives to examine how colonialism's catastrophic race-and gender-thinking continues to structure the nationalized, racialized, classed, gendered, and sexed divides of globalized corporate capitalism.

It is the chronological dematerialization of art, and the recent artistic interests in other arenas, that, in juxtaposition, has generated a new area of meaning for art, as well as a new aesthetic space of 'politics.' In the case of Kuratorisk Aktion's project *Rethinking Nordic Colonialism: A Postcolonial Exhibition Project in Five Acts* from 2006 the whole framework was an environment of alteration, i.e. the possibly transformative influences of art. Similarly with *Tranzit Migration* of von Osten, although absolutely claiming it renders a politics of art, the project attempted to work from a place where curating is a knowledgeable tool to enquire, research and articulate discourses on Nordic colonialism. It is the display of knowledge, straightforwardly associated with not only artistic work as such, but with contextual power as articulatory statements and the institution of discourse and art behind it, which in turn confers power onto the artists and their works in the form of presence, story-telling, rewriting history and going against the norm.

The second example from Kuratorisk Aktion, is a venue and institution started in 2009, *Trampoolin Hus*, aimed at offering community services to refugees and asylum seekers in Copenhagen. In February 2015, a dedicated exhibition space was opened under the name of CAMP (Center for Art on Migration Politics)⁵⁷.

This space/institution both concretely and metaphorically, produces new subjects and methods of interrelating with art, often with a humble dialectic. Consequently, the

⁵⁷ <http://campcph.org/>

institution is part community centre, part laboratory and part academy, with less prerequisite for it to adopt a conventional showroom purpose. The community centre, the laboratory and the academy – are being used as prototypes, but critically, the institution has an alternative approach of instituting its community as constituency rather than spectators. Usually, the community centre, the laboratory and the academy have no public; the community centre is, generally, self-organized, the laboratory has very inflexible administrative procedures, and the academy has a notion of knowledge being handed or shared between distinctive agents. *Trampoolin Hus* was therefore imagined as a crossbreed that would generate new social relations. The institution is a committed statement for a distinctive social model that would not only be part of a so-called democracy, but also harvest another, more in-depth and fundamental democratic process of subjectivization in contrast with the scholastic fabrication of national citizens and create social antagonisms. The potential for experimenting with modes of display and dematerialized art objects, concentrates on social as much aesthetic relations, and produces a different communicatory model than that of the artist and the institution transmitting knowledge to a more or less anonymous public with regards to political claims and intentions for inclusiveness.

1.5 A CONCEPT IN PRACTICE: COLLECTIVE KNOWLEDGE

The opening inquiry of this study, *What forms of collective knowledge can curatorial practice produce?* requires the consideration of several theories and practices on the notions of knowledge, collective and the curatorial. The 'collective' implies the processes of coming and acting together but this is a complex notion. Positioning the two notions of 'collective' and 'knowledge' side-by-side suggests a performative practice of philosophy. The narrative that has been unfolded in this chapter has drawn the historical, social and political background of a curatorial practice performing acts of collective knowledge through the examples outlined.

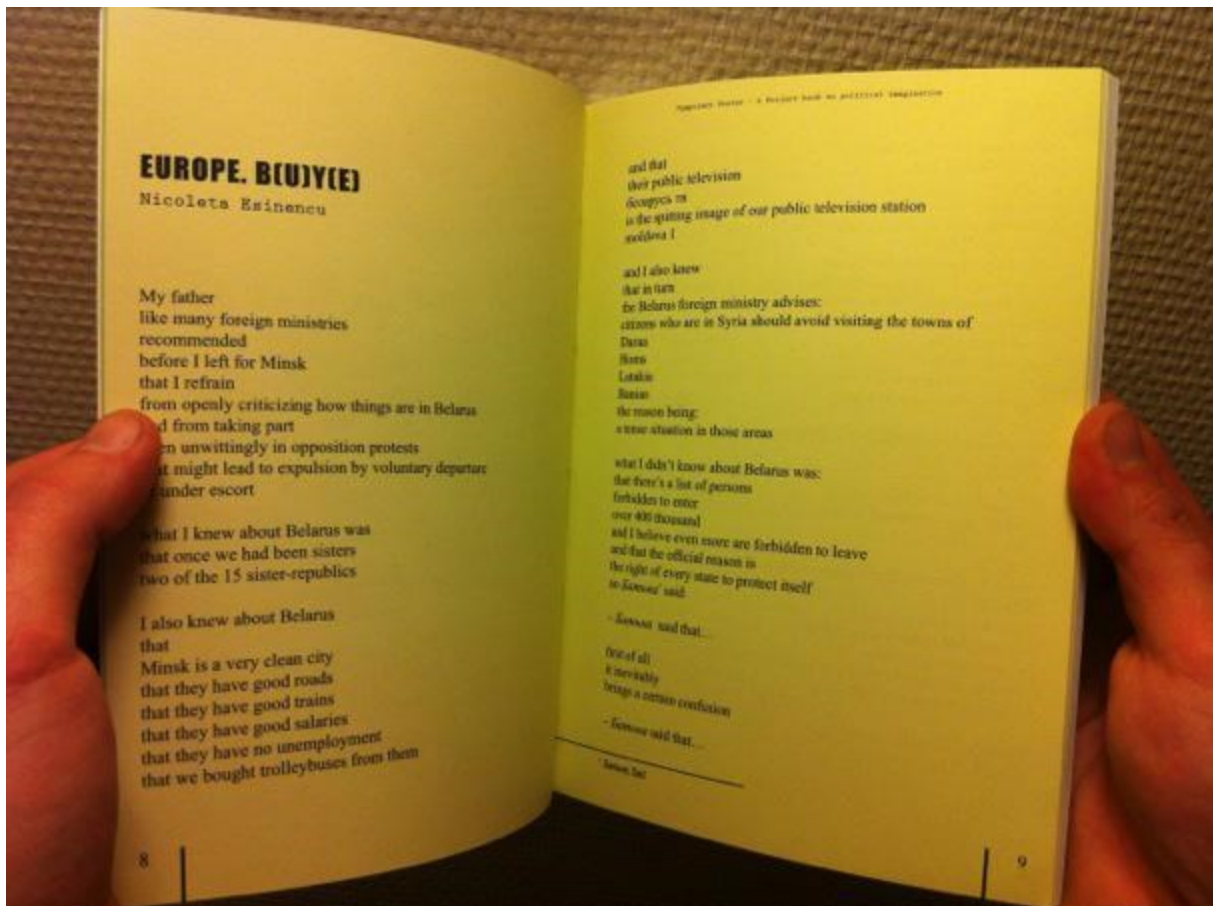
Throughout this chapter I have focused on the politically-aware curator, challenging the position of the authoritarian curator. In its place, this chapter writes a parallel narrative that highlights an image of the curator(s) as a collaborator, functioning interdisciplinary and responsive of their practice as taking part of a communal and societal realm.

After going through the history of curating and the implications of globalization and post-colonial theories, we can determine that curatorial practice is increasingly becoming a collective attempt, acting across the predetermined positions (curators, artists, theorists, activists) and sites (exhibitions, independent research projects and art works) and that collective knowledge derive from pedagogical methods. The examples that have been discussed give evidence that there is a continuous negotiation with the political and an aspiration to explore alternative methods of knowledge distribution and to address matters associated with political urgencies.

Over the course of the chapter we have seen how the curatorial role is continuously shifting (as in the case studies), in parallel with the concept of curatorial knowledge

developing from being a fixed unit to something that is more defined through relations, methods, situations and practices that entail conceptual thinking.

In order to sustain the curatorial counter narrative of collective knowledge production, the next chapter will further investigate the theoretical underpinnings of some of the key concepts in the research questions, as these have served as support for the curatorial practice, which follows.



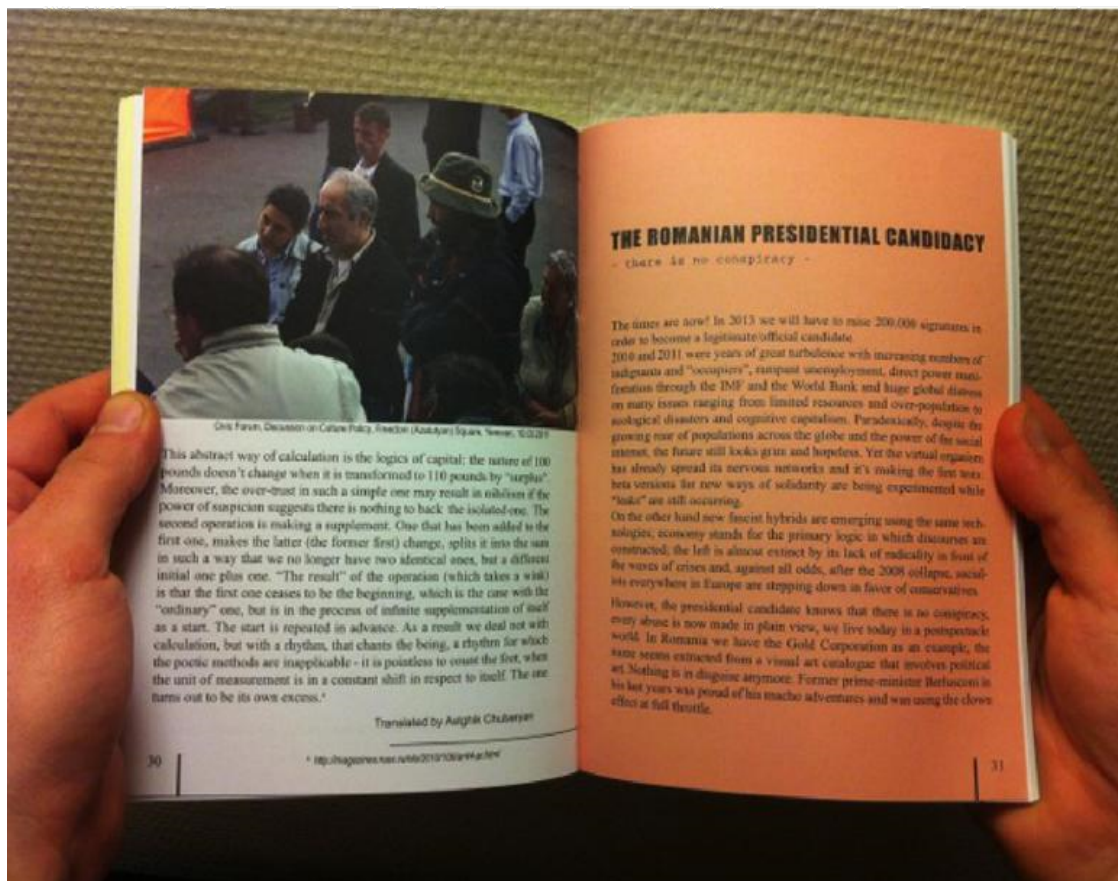
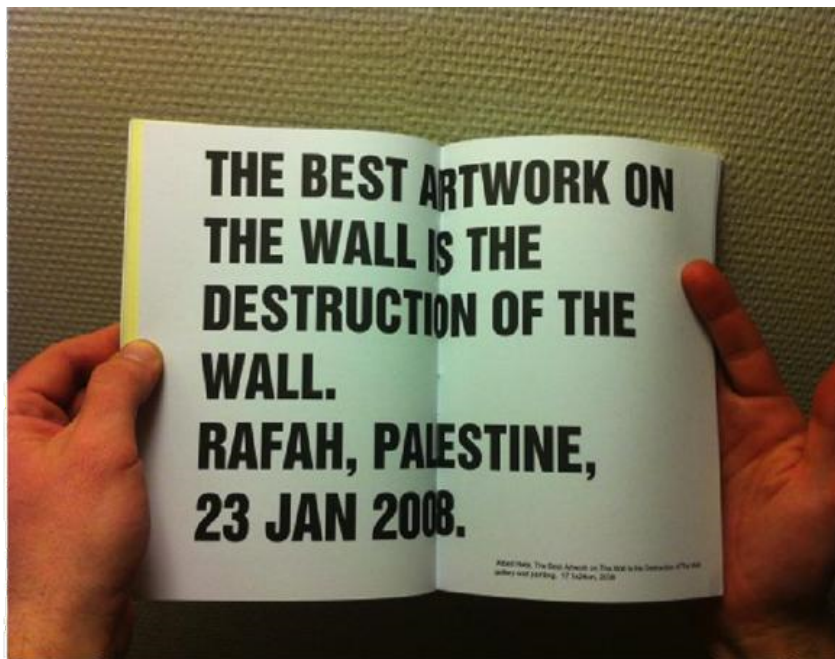


Figure 3: Images from the book *Temporary Status*, self-published, 2012
 Top to bottom: *Europe. B(U)Y(E)* by Nicoleta Esinencu, *No news from Belarus*, fax paper (2010) by Aleksander Komarov, *The Best Artwork on The Wall is the Destruction of The Wall*, gallery wall painting (2008) by Albert Heta, *1,1,1,1* by Karen Andreassian, *Political Essay* by The Romanian Presidential Candidacy. (A copy of the book in the Appendix 2)

CHAPTER 2.

THE PARADIGM OF PARTICIPATION AND COLLECTIVE KNOWLEDGE

The concept of ‘collective knowledge’ is addressed in some depth in this chapter. Relating the curatorial case studies and the political and social background exposed in the previous chapter to the concepts of knowledge and collectivity, it compounds the conventional definition of curatorial practice, generally assumed to as ‘exhibition-making’: selecting, assembling, organizing, displaying, showing and communicating by making associations between artworks taken out of their original situations (von Bismarck, 2011:19). The logic of collective knowledge within the curatorial is informed by what Irit Rogoff describes as ‘the various principles that might not be associated with displaying works of art; principles of the production of knowledge, of activism, of cultural circulations and translations that begin to shape and determine other forms by which arts can engage’ (Rogoff, 2006:132-136)⁵⁸.

Centred on the definitions of ‘knowledge’ and ‘collective’, as well as an overview of two other concepts that have influenced a politically-aware practice of curating – participation and pedagogy – collective knowledge is argued to be a process of knowledge produced within a forum implicating socio-political discourses and questions, subjects and imaginaries.

The chapter is divided into five sections. The first provides a contextual terminology and it looks at epistemological definitions of knowledge exposing how knowledge comes about through dialogue. The second section addresses definitions of the concept of the ‘collective’. The third and the fourth parts situate the research within the critical viewpoints on the notions of participation and pedagogy and contextualise

⁵⁸ See also the various perspectives on the curatorial in Jean Paul Martinon, ed. (2013), *The Curatorial: A Philosophy of Curating*, London.

them within the wider arena of artistic assemblies that have both a social and an artistic agenda. Finally, the fifth part discusses the issue of ‘consensus’ and ‘dissensus’ within the curatorial as a way of leading the reader into the third and final chapter, which presents, reviews and evaluates the curatorial practice produced for the doctoral project.

Foucault has influenced the theoretical framework of this chapter both as an inspiration and as a point of critical departure, specifically on the point of ‘knowledge is power’. Foucault's thinking about power and, specifically, his methodological critique of the ‘system of Law-and-Sovereign’⁵⁹ and his critique of the state's ‘political reason’ are of the most interest because it is there that we can trace a tendency similar to the conceptualization of knowledge. Since power operates through discourse -- the field of operation of a multiplicity of statements in a regular manner -- its institutional crystallization, its regularity, has to be discursive as well, resulting in the production of knowledge as a discursive ‘totality’.

The political question of the collective is informed by the theories of Jean-Luc Nancy (1997), embracing the very specificity of the political process of producing knowledge as a form of community building.

⁵⁹ See Foucault, M. (2002) *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. Trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith. London and New York: Routledge.

2.1 THE NOTION OF KNOWLEDGE IN RELATION TO POWER AND POLEMICS

Knowledge is, in the words of Michel Foucault ‘that of which one can speak in a discursive practice’, and ‘also the space in which the subject may take up a position and speak of the objects with which he deals in his discourse’, as well ‘the field of coordination and subordination of statements in which concepts appear, and are defined, applied and transformed’ and finally ‘knowledge is defined by the possibilities of use and appropriation offered by discourse’ (Foucault, 1989:182-3). In this situation, the narrator becomes a performer, being confident in a language that gives validity to its discourse, as well as speaking in a way and about matters that can be recognized through this language, and thus ensuring this language its authority. So, when speaking about knowledge production within art, we cannot isolate it from how it is produced, what it eliminates and disavows and how it is formed by discourse. As Foucault writes in *The Archeology of Knowledge*,

‘There are bodies of knowledge that are independent of the sciences (which are neither their historical prototypes, nor the practical by-products), but there is no knowledge without a particular discursive practice; and any discursive practice may be defined by the knowledge that it forms.’ (Foucault, 1989:183)

Moreover, there is the relation between *the will to knowledge* and *the will to truth*, as Foucault situates it, since the production of truth always entails an amendment of knowledge and its institutions (Foucault, 2000:152). Knowledge is therefore not truth, but a device of discourse, and as such subordinate, servile and dependent. Here, Foucault mentions the Nietzschean concept of knowledge, not as a natural predisposition, but as a creation. In order to account for transformations in the

discursive constructions, such as in the case of exhibitions and other curatorial practices, we can refer to Foucault when he writes:

‘The transformation of a discursive practice is tied to a whole, often quite complex set of modifications which may occur either outside of it (in the forms of production, in the social relations, in the political institutions), or within it (the techniques for determining objects, in the refinement and adjustment of concepts, the accumulation of data), or alongside it (in other discursive practices)’ (Foucault, 1997:12).

Foucault wrote significantly about historical reconfigurations. During the 1970s, though, he claimed (especially in *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault, 1975) and the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* (Foucault, 1976)) that these reorganizations of knowledge were also linked with new systems of power and dominance.

Foucault argued for a vibrant notion of knowledge when he differs the creation of a discursive field of knowledge (*savoir*) from the particular assertions seized accurate at certain topics within that field (*connaissances*). Knowledge (*savoir*) in this logic is scattered throughout the whole field, rather than situated in certain statements or groups of statements. Foucault spoke in this way to designate that the ‘seriousness’, sagacity, and probable fact of some specific *connaissances* was resolute by their place in a broader field. What was omitted from this previous idea, though, was a logic of the heterogeneity of epistemic fields, and of their sequential factor formed by ongoing epistemic divergence (Foucault, 1975).

When related to the art arena, we can see the variations happening outside in the political and administrative circumstances stated in the first chapter, or general fluctuations in production in terms of dematerialized and expanded art practices, and

in the number of extensive changes from the transformations in other academic disciplines to the revolutions in political economy. Certainly, we have seen in Chapter One a number of changes in contemporary art practices: to a certain extent with regards to its objects of knowledge; if not discursive constructions then there is plenty of evidence of practices with an interdisciplinary attitude, work being produced within an expanded praxis, interfering with numerous arenas other than the traditional art domain, touching upon such areas as architecture and design, but also philosophy, sociology, politics, biology, science and so on. The field of art has converted into a field of potentialities, of interchange and comparative analysis. It has become a field for alternatives, propositions and prototypes, and can, significantly, act as a cross field, an intermediary between diverse subjects, approaches, insight and rationalities, as well as between very diverse situations and subjectivities. Art therefore has an advantaged, perhaps ephemeral, but critical location and potential in contemporary culture. It is not a matter of the politicization of art, but rather of the culturalization of politics.

What was named the 'event' in philosophy could include the new performative discipline of knowledge production, which takes an amorphous shape and arises in non-anticipated frameworks. In *The University Without Condition*, Jacques Derrida was critical towards this positioning of academic research. In that text, he accentuated the performative form of the production of knowledge, which he argued surpasses the traditional representation mode and converts into actual production. Disregarding the moment of spontaneity, it becomes incarcerated within the institutionalized 'order of the masterable possible' (Derrida, 2002:202-237).

Within academia, 'knowledge' is somehow described as all valuable ideas, information, and data in whatever form in which it is articulated or attained. The emphasis is maybe on 'useful knowledge', whether original, scientific, academic, or non-academic. It comprises artistic works and respects the polemical nature of knowledge with its double purpose as a commodity and as a constitutive force of society. Knowledge is problematized regarding its public good characteristic, by being cumulative, as it spurs

new thoughts and new commodities. However, the public characteristic is not complete, as the access to and the use of knowledge is limited. Furthermore, the scientific model of knowledge implies a singular authorial position that controls the production and reception process, protecting the impartial aspect of the work⁶⁰.

In the case of contemporary art, the process of knowledge production is in a perpetual movement fluctuating between the author(s) and the viewer(s). The experience of the work becomes thus a subjective position through the eyes of the viewer; therefore the production of meaning as knowledge is shared with the receiver.

Knowledge is founded not only in connection to a ground of assertions but also of entities, apparatuses, practices, studies, abilities, social networks, and organizations. As Foucault suggests, taken separately, an assertion, a practice or ability, or an apparatus cannot reckon as knowledge. Solely through its usage, and thus gradually associated with other features over time, it turns into (and persists in being) epistemologically meaningful. However these practices and configurations confront obstacles and produce clashes with other evolving epistemological practices. These clashes, however, offshoots added examinations, articulations, and methodological alterations. Clash therefore turns out to be the territory for the on-going elaboration and restructuring of knowledge.

To relate the Foucauldian definition of knowledge to its production within art and research, I am using an exposé by art critic and curator Simon Sheikh⁶¹, which focuses on a division between knowledge and thinking. According to Sheikh, knowledge is

⁶⁰ In order to understand how scientific knowledge is constructed see *Epistemology for the masses: The origins of the 'scientific method'* (Rudolph, 2005:341-347).

⁶¹ Curator Simon Sheikh closely examines in his curatorial projects and writings the expanded notion of the curatorial as a way of presenting ideas, research results, and project outcomes that contribute to a general culture of knowledge production and research.

controlled by normative practices and regulations, while the notion of thinking indicates the non-disciplinary, and promises for divergent normativity, which definitely entails distinct places:

‘We have to move beyond knowledge production into what we can term *spaces for thinking*. [...] Thinking is here meant to imply networks of indiscipline, lines of flight and utopian questionings’. (Sheikh, 2009:6)

A noteworthy aspect of Sheikh’s analysis of knowledge is that he does not only attack its product position, but also its ‘disciplinedness’ and the related restraints and confines. He also mentions the emancipatory perspective, which is typically connected with the notion of knowledge, but problematizes this by underlining its boundaries. As he notes, knowledge is ‘something that holds you back, that inscribes you within tradition, within certain parameters of the possible’ (Sheikh, 2006). In this way, it also creates a series of dismissals concerning opportunities of thinking and imagining – artistically, politically, sexually and socially.

Furthermore, writers such as Gayatri Spivak and Edward Said addressed the issue of *epistemic violence* (Spivak, 1988:280), which builds knowledge as a tool of power together with the support and legitimization of dominance, and this turned knowledge into a result of European imperialism.

With reference to today’s Western knowledge production, Encarnación Gutiérrez-Rodríguez appraises the ‘postcolonial rhetoric’ that defines current university processes, in which *Postcolonial Studies* has itself become an item of university marketing, and which repetitively creates segregations. Since knowledge production is so linked to social circumstances, but moreover to the political battles, from which knowledge arises, it cannot be detached from its ontological element. The ‘materiality of knowledge’ communicates through concrete practices and bodies, which goes

against the theories supporting the notion of contemporary immaterial labour based on the knowledge economy (Gutiérrez Rodríguez, 2010:57).

Furthermore, the task of defining the notion of collective knowledge will be to define its objects, which define the very meaning of collective knowledge. Its objects could be social framework, methods of production and organizational structures. The relation of knowledge to power continues to be questioned in regards to its problematic support of a configuration of the world that excludes unconventional potentials of organization. By proposing an epistemological connection between knowledge production and the collective aspect I am enquiring into the possibility of configuring a form of knowledge with multiple authors, beyond an absolute authority, which evaluate its truth.

2.2 COLLECTIVITY AS AN ACT IN PROCESS

Social movement researchers like Diana Kendall, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe looking to rationalize how social movements generate and maintain commitment and unity between actors over time have used the notion of collective identity extensively. Despite its broad function, collective identity is a particularly abstract concept. The notion of collective identity is not exclusive to social movement studies⁶². The concept is furthermore used in readings on autonomy, religion, economy, political culture and psychology. Within sociology, prior key readings comprised of the writings of Marx and Durkheim (see Hunt and Benford 2004), and Georg Simmel (1955) who investigated the dynamics of group construction and emphasized features such as the prerequisite to recognize that group unity grows in tension with struggle in particular historic contexts.

While Polletta and Jasper localize collective identity within the individual, defining it as: ‘an individual’s cognitive, moral and emotional connection with a broader community, category, practice, or institution’ (Polletta and Jasper, 2001:285), it is more often assumed as somewhat produced and shaped between individuals, as in Snow’s classification (2001), which places collective identity in a communal space and unequivocally associates it with collective agency:

‘... discussions of the concept invariably suggest that its essence resides in a shared sense of ‘oneness’ or ‘we-ness’ anchored in real or imagined shared attributes and experiences among those who comprise the collectivity and in relation or contrast to one more actual or imagined sets of others. Embedded within the shared sense of we is a corresponding sense of collective agency...Thus, it can be argued that collective identity is constituted by a shared and interactive sense of ‘we-ness’ and collective

⁶² The studies of social movement theory and organizational theory are embedded in the understanding, the roots and effects of collective action. Social movement research (see Buechler 1995, Habermas 1981, Offe 1985) is concerned with cultural reproduction, collective identity and group solidarity.

agency' (Snow, 2001:2).

In a work that considers collective identity significantly, *Feminist Generations*, Whittier (1995) states 'I conceptualize...collective identity as located in action and interaction-observable phenomena-rather than in individual self-conceptions, attitudes, or beliefs' (Whittier, 1995:16).

Though collective identities can be assumed as (possibly) embracing shared interests, ideologies, subcultures, objectives, practices, ideals, worldview, commitment, solidarity, strategies, methods, definitions of the 'nemesis' or the resistance towards certain matters, it is not equal with and cannot be reduced to solely one of these things.

There is a conventional concept of collectivity that is becoming gradually irrelevant and therefore it needs to be questioned and substituted by more appropriate examples. The notion of collectivity unwraps a series of topics including concepts such as unity, solidarity, and belonging. Examples and notions for these social constructions - community and collective -are located in numerous art projects, in curatorial approaches where collaboration is a constitutive movement, in political activism and other social projects⁶³. Examples of this refusal are found in Jean-Luc Nancy's 'inoperative community' (Nancy, 1991) or Maurice Blanchot's unavowable community' (Blanchot, 1988), which have qualities in common with Georges Bataille's 'negative community' (Blanchot, 1983), the community of those without community.

The writers cited, while divergent in several aspects, all contest communal identities that exclude individualities and claim for anti-essentialist communities of singularities whose only prerequisite is being in the world. Nancy, for example, addresses community as a interpersonal social body instituted, not by the fact of belonging, but by the cohabitation of individuality and mutual involvement. He understands

⁶³ See Tania Bruguera's projects *Cátedra Arte de Conducta* (Behavior Art Department, 2002-2009) and *Immigrant Movement International* (2010-2015); Ahmet Ögut's *Silent University* (2012-ongoing).

community as a political venture and identifies its perpetual battle against inherent authority.

This type of rationale of collectivity and community as the assembly and grouping of singularities can anticipate a 'potential politics' as a positioned 'common' that produces singular beings and the relations between them. The 'being such' amplifies the latent field of action and mobilizes the subject without being forcefully included into the 'pluralist' homogeneousness.

Nancy unlocks the argument on community by indicating that it is somewhat distinctive from the type of individuality as envisioned by the previous systems of hyper-subjective communitarianism. He also argues that it cannot ever be attained and can only occur in an inoperative and inactive state, since it continuously progresses through the other and for the other, in the other's 'in common' and the other's shared being. Blanchot takes these thoughts further and radicalises the perpetually incomplete character of Nancy's notion of community by suggesting that any category of community is, by nature, unavowable (Blanchot, 1988).

The concept of the community has erupted in contemporary philosophy, politics, sociology and other disciplines. Moreover, in the past twenty years, we have seen an increased interest in artistic projects that work at the edge between art and community based practice. Many of these practices are temporary and difficult to identify or to map. Even more so it is rather difficult to assert or evaluate their impact or significance at the communitarian level.

However, in its significance and discourse, collective or community practices are seen as a desirable quality, as something to strive for and this has also become a key criteria in supporting and evaluating the impact of artistic projects overall. The diverse nature of knowledge that communitarian initiatives produce and disseminate, multiplies the 'collective' element of subjects. Furthermore, the projects that relate to *The Unavowable*

Community (Blanchot, 1988) question the notion of a definite, or even identifiable, form of authorship. They reprocess pre-existing sites and actions, are parasitic upon established structures and generate new vocabularies. They position themselves at the core of the 'general intellect' from Marx, the 'social brain' that is both a prolific power and the source of society formation.

Artists and curators (such as Marion von Osten, Martha Rosler and Kuratorisk Aktion discussed in Chapter One) are investigating the different concepts of social constructions and their political and historical circumstances, be it across collaborations in collective and participatory projects or by introducing a certain communal concern and inquiring a social or political structure. Consequently artists are not only delivering a visual portrayal of the problem, they are also partaking in new methods of collectivity and are producing a transient prototypical setting of a temporary community.

Contemporary examples for art that merge social relations as a component of the work itself need to be studied within a wider historical context, which involves the failure of state---organized social structures or supporting structures. The emphasis of community-based art on specific ostracized groups, who are stimulated to act and communicate through a collective process, with the goal to endow the socially underprivileged, arose in the early 1990s mainly in the US. Different methods and terminologies have been used such as 'new genre public art' (Suzanne Lacy)⁶⁴ or 'connective aesthetics' (Suzi Gablik)⁶⁵. These projects aimed at having a political impact and being public by their very nature, beyond their location, but through the core action taken.

⁶⁴ The term 'new genre public art' indicates public art, often with an activist character and produced independent from institutional structures in order to engage directly with an audience. The American artist, writer and educator Suzanne Lacy coined it in 1991. See also Lacy's book *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*(1995).

⁶⁵ In the article *Connective Aesthetics: Art after Individualism*, critic Suzi Gablik claimed for a new kind of artist who recognizes that 'the boundary between self and Other is fluid rather than fixed: the Other is included within the boundary of selfhood' (Gablik, 1995).

The 'being-in-common' (Nancy, 1991) of a collectivity is antagonistic to the point that it produces itself through actions or the creative process (it cannot be produced) without building a communal being or a fundamental ground for being-together. Its togetherness is a surplus, a derivative of its antagonism.

In *The Inoperative Community* Nancy starts the argument on community by indicating that it is somewhat distinctive from an intensified type of individualism as regarded by the previous practices of hyper-subjective communitarism. He also writes that it cannot be attained and can simply occur in an inoperative and inactive state, since it always progresses in the other's 'in common' and the other's communal existence. In *The Unavowable Community*, Blanchot advances these concepts and radicalises the perpetually incomplete character of Nancy's notion of community by suggesting that any sort of community is, by nature, unavowable.

The most motivating and fundamental thoughts on communal dynamics nowadays cannot be advanced without accepting the social territory to be a disintegrated space. This can be seen in: the considerations of Paolo Virno on the multitude as an economic and political practice where the most intense hazards of human kind are exposed to the notion of the end of metaphysics proposed by Giorgio Agamben in *The Coming Community* (1993); the post-humanist philosophy of Peter Sloterdijk and the inherent community described by Deleuze and Guattari in *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1972); Roberto Exposito's thoughts on community versus immunity and *La Théorie du Bloom* (2000-2004) (Bloom's Theory) by the Tiquun collective ⁶⁶, where amorphous life translates into defiance against the tactics of the biopower.

Grant Kester's analysis also emphasizes socially-engaging practices in art. He studies what he refers to as 'representational politics of community arts' and the connexion

⁶⁶ Tiquun is a French collective of authors and activists formed in 1999. The group published two journal volumes in 1999 and 2001 (in which the collective author *The Invisible Committee*

between the artist and the community (Kester, 1995). Among some of the critical concerns regarding community art struggles that he examines are potential manipulation of marginalized communities by the artists and subsidising parties and the risks of a authoritarian attitude when trying to 'empower' communities. In his book *Conversation Pieces; Community and Communication in Modern Art* he reviews community development efforts through art. Kester further encourages for the understanding of art as a 'process of communicative exchange rather than a physical object' (Kester, 2004:90).

It appears that the issue of the implication of community and its apparatuses has erupted the confines of contemporary anthropology, sociology and political philosophy and occupied other disciplines. With the arrival of community, a distinctive space for practice, and also a special audience has been revealed for art. To investigate this ground of collective act it is essential to locate new practices of mediation and to build special practices of representation.

2.3 PARTICIPATION AND ITS CRITICISM

Addressing the question of collective acts as a production of curatorial practice entails looking at participatory processes and the arts. Since earlier avant-gardes, and particularly since the 1960s, participation has been a key development and this has paralleled critiques of hierarchical aspects of cultural production. Participation involves an activation of the viewer, sometimes driven to the point of involving the viewer in the production process, as a co-author, a collaborator. The concept of participatory art practices is also based on an increase in social relations at the core of the artistic process.

In the 1990s, participation became an appealing notion for curators and art practitioners, alongside durational practices and collective approaches. Artists' motivations for pursuing a participatory practice are frequently inclined to address isolation, oppression, often locating the project within a marginalized community with the scope of empowering the subjects. The approach towards the viewer or the audience is against contemplation, and more towards an active engagement which is collective, co-authorial and socially involved. The artistic gesture consists in the creative interaction with the community. Through collaborative efforts, artists, curators, researchers and community members actively outline a project to contribute to the reconfiguration of a special social issue. Hereby, the artist or curator functions as a mediator between culture and a broader political and social agenda⁶⁷. For details of the discussion, see the examples given in first chapter.

In parallel with the increase of participatory projects, a critique of the translation of the concept in art practice has emerged. Claire Bishop, in an attempt to contextualize participatory art, has outlined the three main foundations of participation: the emancipation of the subject to convey towards a social and political setting and ultimately to influence it; to inquire authority and single authorship in order to

⁶⁷ See Chapter One for examples of participative practices. See also *The Art of Participation. 1950 to Now* (Frieling, 2008) and *Participation* (ed. Bishop, 2006)

introduce a democratic model through collaboration; and to rebuild communities through increased social and civic responsibility (Bishop, 2006). On the other hand, Markus Miessen, argues for a conflictual understanding of participation, inspired by the writings of Chantal Mouffe on antagonism⁶⁸. He suggests a post-consensual alternative that rejects a constant positioning and compromises and permits a method of participation ‘from outside existing networks and clearly defined milieus’, thus allowing the ‘disinterested outsider’ to enter the field of dissent (Miessen, 2007).

The main criticism Bishop posits the development of participation as an instrument of political legitimization, forcing a democratic model of so-called inclusion, where the participants are instructed to act as active citizens, under a hierarchical structure. Furthermore, participation has become a common keyword, transforming it into a formal requirement for all artistic or curatorial events (Bishop, 2004:51-79). Thus, it loses meaning; it remains simply a token to be instrumentalized by culture producers.

There is a notion that engagement cannot happen without the artist or curator inquiring into the position of the public or audience as a politicized entity. Jacques Rancière’s theory of the spectator can be reconsidered here, through his theory of the ‘paradox of the spectator’ and ‘paradox of the actor’ – an analysis of theatrical relations where theatre depends on spectators, despite the understanding that ‘spectatorship is a bad thing’ (Rancière, 2001:1). According to Rancière, ‘Being a spectator means looking at a spectacle. And looking is a bad thing, for two reasons. First, looking is deemed the opposite of knowing. Second, looking is deemed the opposite of acting’ (Rancière, 2001:1). Hence, Rancière is arguing for the abolition of passive spectatorship.

Furthermore, ‘participation’ has been used as a method to tackle social issues in contemporary art. Participation has been associated, for example, with an attitude about

⁶⁸ As discussed earlier in the Introduction, see Chantal Mouffe’s *On the Political* (2005), *Democratic Paradox* (2000), the *Return of the Political* (1993), *Agonistics* (2013)

communities and a kind of humanism aimed at decreasing power, which meets the human ideal of common sustenance for humanity, a collective drive of humanity. In a series of related projects and practices in recent years, participatory methodologies have been applied to implicate more or diverse publics in artistic practices.

Suzanne Lacy's project *Between the Door and the Street* (2013) invited women and men of all ages from the neighbourhood of Prospect Heights in Brooklyn to engage in discussions about social-justice, changing gender roles, labour, poverty, migration and feminism. In that project, there were 400 women and men finally selected to represent different ages, backgrounds and perspectives, placed in different groups, among which were wandering thousands of members of the public⁶⁹. Certainly, participation may itself be perceived as the goal of contemporary artistic processes. Concern, nevertheless, frequently arises concerning potential complications of involving 'others' in practices of art and research.

According to Markus Miessen, in practices concerning 'micro-political participation in the production of space' (Miessen, 2010:20), the curatorial is structuring and staging the (re)production of social as well as spatial relationships. Here, 'the political' indicates the question of who is acknowledged and embodied as a subject in artistic and curatorial practices. Concerned with the social access to decision making in the polis, the art's role is constantly occupied with the conflict of power relationships and authority by the articulation of new vocabularies and topics for contestation and new routes to act.

In terms of participation, since the 1990s participatory art actions, such as the examples I will be discussing shortly, were concerned with the politics and principles of democracy. Several projects took place in vulnerable locations in the setting of struggles for an improved and more equal situation, in which participation was regularly conveyed as mutual decision-making in the elaboration of social art practices.

⁶⁹ Further information on the project can be found on Creative Time website, the producer of the work. <http://creativetime.org/projects/between-the-door-and-the-street/>

Methodologies of participation repeatedly established two significant interests – first, approaches for the direct commitment of those who should benefit from a participative construction process of infrastructure, for example *Project Row Houses*⁷⁰.

Secondly, instruments and procedures to encourage co-development of the communities through simulations, archetypes, situations and games in order to institute a more democratic system among different partakers – for example *Oda Projesi* in Istanbul⁷¹. Social art practices could be assumed to comprise the framing and staging of relations between different participants, comprising of those with initial ideas distinct from those of artists or curators and with diverse abilities and interests.

The projects cited in this section usually involve direct participation and social cooperation. The crossing with other disciplines confronts art's autonomy as a discourse, with the aim of tackling political concerns and consolidating communities. The critique provided by Bishop addresses the impact of artworks that do not antagonize, supporting on the other hand the pedagogic methodology and the idea of collaboration. The critique of Bishop and Miessen helps to differentiate projects that have socially valuable effects, cooperative artist practices and relational symbolic practices.

⁷⁰ *Project Row Houses* is an initiative which opened in 1994 within a set of eight renovated shotgun houses dedicated to artists' projects in Houston, USA, founded by Rick Lowe.

⁷¹ *Oda Projesi* is an artist collaborative based in Istanbul, Turkey, and initiated by three women artists: Özge Acıkkol, Günes Savas and Secil Yersel. The group turned their collaboration into an art project in 2000 after a three years period of renting an apartment as a studio in the neighbourhood of Galata, a historical urban district in Istanbul with considerable mixture of social classes and an ongoing process of gentrification. *Oda Projesi* means 'Room Project' and employs thinking of the different usages of the 'room' in order to find new ways to combine the daily life and art practices with the purpose of bridging relations between artists, non- artists, artist-run-groups, institutions and the communities in the local neighborhood.

2.4 PEDAGOGICAL PERSPECTIVES OVER THE PROCESS OF KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION IN COMMON

Following the cross referencing between curatorial practice and pedagogical theories outlined in Chapter One, it is now important to consider the questions and problematics which have influenced recent curatorial practices, including two of my own projects presented in Chapter Three (*Redakzia* and *Institute for Collective Studies*).

The pedagogical aesthetic has nurtured a discussion on the rise of a set of relations that revolve around the concept of knowledge transmission. These relationships involve that of the Master and Student, Performer and Spectator, Artist and Participant. One might also question in this context, the agency of the apprentice and the moral position of the teacher within the 'schooling relations'. Rancière's influential text *The Emancipated Spectator* (2007) provides a contemporary connection to a number of other significant texts (from Paulo Freire to Michel Foucault⁷²) that question the mediated circumstances by which we exchange and acquire knowledge in relation to distributions of power. The hybridization of these positions through artistic or curatorial practice has created a space for decomposing and recreating the process of 'schooling' but has also concurrently complicated the role of the participant or audience member of the art 'event'.

The Master-Student relationship is a paradigm indissolubly related to a complete system of objectives that focus on the educational programme of the subject. According to Foucault, the production or exchange of knowledge is reliant on the practice of power

⁷² I refer here to Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, London: Continuum, 1970 and Michel Foucault's *Knowledge/Power*, Harvester Press, London, 1981. Both texts were discussed in earlier sections as well as further in this section.

relations to the degree that the process of teaching protects an intrinsic apparatus of 'supervision' and 'surveillance' (Foucault, 1975:175). This profoundly hierarchised relationship regards knowledge exchange as being particularly unidirectional however also denotes that to educate is to compel the production of knowledge on or about the overseen student-subject.

Since Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, published in 1970, theory has tried to locate ways to overcome this dogmatic configuration and convey potential alternatives to the conventional pedagogical model. Freire's influential text launched the circumstances under which pedagogy can be used potentially both as a method of domination and of emancipation. This work facilitates further the understanding of the classifications of the student and teacher – their assumed interdependence and dissension. Freire advocates a 'humanizing pedagogy', or 'liberation education' grounded on a relationship of 'dialogue' and on the reconciliation of the 'teacher-student contradiction', 'so that both are simultaneously teachers and students' (Freire, 1970:50,51,53). Freire denounces the 'depositing' or 'banking' concept of education as an inhibitory device, based on the opinion that 'knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing' (Freire, 1970:53,58).

There are clear correspondences with Freire's theory in Jacques Rancière's publication *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation* (1991:1). Rancière's text evokes the story of exiled professor Joseph Jacotot whose effort in 1818 to teach French to Flemish students, faced by the difficulty that he himself could not speak Flemish and his students could not speak French, permitted him to change his understanding of the Master-student relationship (Rancière, 1991:1). Rancière accounts for Jacotot's initial supposition that, based on the intellectual difference between the Master and the Student, the process of teaching should be characterised by the communication of knowledge from the expert to the ignorant, 'according to an ordered progression' and with the ambition of lifting the student to the Master's 'own level of expertise' (Rancière, 1991:1). The students' capacity to learn French through a book,

without the aids of explanation, spelling or 'conjugations' from Jacotot, is said to have made the Professor consider the obsolescence of the Master figure and led him to classify his prior method of teaching as belonging to a 'principle of *enforced stultification*' (Rancière, 1991:3,7). Like Freire, at the centre of Rancière's inquiry is the project of emancipation through the pedagogical process- disclosing Jacotot's concept of 'mutual teaching' whereby 'each ignorant person could become, for another ignorant person, the master who would reveal to him his intellectual power' (Rancière, 1991:17). Throughout his writing Rancière exposes a non-hierarchical structure of learning that collapses the separation between the Master and Student and that permits for the mobilization of an 'intellectual adventure' (Rancière, 1991:1).

By engaging with pedagogy, contemporary art and curatorial practice allows for the potential of aesthetics and education to collide politically, based on the discourses around social engagement and participation. Features of Rancière's theory occur as fundamental in many participatory projects. It is important in these cases to inquire to what degree the position of authority could be transferred to the artist or curator and to question the structures of power relations situated in the visible, addressing the power relations between the ones that hold and communicate knowledge and the ones that receive it. The disruptive element resides within the semi-collaborative exercise with the artist and curator and involves members of the public from specific demographics and it engages similar activities to those allocated as informal learning practices for group schooling, involving definite circumstances of viewership or interactivity. Rancière uses performance – or the relation between the performer and viewer - as processes of expanding upon the 'pedagogical scheme' – a structure that comprises the closing-down and contradictory opening up of the gaps between master and student, between knowledge and ignorance (Rancière, 2004). Rancière's theory does not encourage the re-positioning of power from the Master to the Student, and the reverse of expertise and ignorance, rather Rancière proposes that pedagogy must adapt to the idea that 'there is no gap between two forms of intelligence', affirming that 'emancipation is the process of verification of the equality of intelligence' (Rancière, 2008:4,5).

Pedagogy and notions of communal models from the field of pedagogy are appropriate to any debate on the curator- as- educationalist. In critical pedagogy, the major writing (beside other works by Henry Giroux and Ivan Illich) is Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968). Freire suggests that all education is political since it always deals with social relationships. Operating from a subjective practice of teaching adult literacy, he suggests an idea of education, which discards the 'banking' model where tutors convey knowledge to the pupil. Freire grasps that this approach and practices 'mirror oppressive society as a whole' (Freire, 1970:73) Freire encourages a constant interchange of functions between teacher and student and the degree of student participation is in 'receiving, filing, and storing the deposits' (Freire, 1970:72). As such, critical pedagogy obliges teachers to reflect on essential questions of power and their relationship to greater communal forces that influence didactic situations. Therefore critical pedagogy is an attitude to education, which pursues to emphasize and criticize domineering configurations and performances in society, not only through the content communicated, but also in the way in which knowledge is theorized and obtained.

'Critical pedagogy asks how and why knowledge gets constructed the way it does, and how and why some constructions of reality are legitimated and celebrated by the dominant culture while others clearly are not'
(McLaren, 2002:69).

The required consequence of education is action and this is attained through the course of 'conscientization' where, through dialectics, and in communion with other students, the individual becomes conscious of the social and political paradoxes in his or her condition within society. This notion of education as an analytical, progressive instrument is thought provoking when we reflect on methods of curatorial practice oriented towards processes of social interaction and their consequences.

Another main idea is the postmodern understanding that reality and knowledge are not immovable and complete, but rather reliant on one's practice, methods of reading those

occurrences, and based on how those analyses convert the actions. Kincheloe clarifies that 'Knowledge is not complete in and of itself. It is produced in a larger process and can never be understood outside of its historical development and its relationship to other information' (Kincheloe, 2004:17). Educators (or community developers, mediators or cultural producers) should recognize their place of power, and abandon the place of 'truth providers' for that of 'facilitators of student inquiry

and problem posing' (Kincheloe, 2004:17). Giroux highlights that a mentor must be introspective about his or her affiliation to convoluted power systems and how that affects how we relate with scholars or community participants, as well as what we teach. Effectively any area can be pedagogical, and all schooling is political. As such, he writes that artists and other cultural workers should perceive their labour as political and pedagogical:

‘..critical pedagogy as a theory and practice does not legitimate a romanticized notion of the cultural worker as one who can only function on the margins of society, nor does it refer to a notion of teaching/performance/cultural production in which formalism or the fetish of, method erases the historical, semiotic, and social dimensions of pedagogy as the active construction of responsible and risk-taking citizens’ (Giroux, 1994:9).

Pedagogues and pedagogical areas are not external or resistant to the complicated network within which individuality, community, and power are produced and theorized. As such, pedagogy (or artistic or curatorial practice with an interest in pedagogy) should relentlessly and analytically assess and renegotiate how to work for a collective and participatory change.

2.5 FRAMING AND STAGING DISSENSUS IN THE CURATORIAL

Consensus can be assumed as a prevalent direction within cultures considered democratic, in which, as Rancière formulates, '[consensus] desires to have well-identifiable groups with specific interests, aspirations, values, and 'culture' (Rancière, 2000:125). Rancière and other contemporary political philosophers do not disregard nor refuse the circumstance of participation, but question how methods of participation establish the selves and subjectivities of participants. Consensus, for instance, can be understood simply as a transitory outcome of a temporary order, maintenance of power, which unavoidably involves certain practices of marginalization (Mouffe, 2000). Although 'agonistic pluralism' and 'dissensus' advance the training of democracy in dissimilar modes, together they are oriented towards potential methods of politics that create democracy as a significant and constant battle rather than as a set purpose.

Participation does involve struggles amongst those categorized by disparities in representation and power and disagreement is crucial and beneficial, as opposed to a dominant philosophy fetishizing the agreement. This is especially important with regard to contemporary art that takes place in the public realm, which is formed by the broadest variety of individuals and crowds that may or may not be pre-constituted in relation to specific subjects. So as to approach art in ways that do not simply confirm the existing structure of society, along with segregations and gaps, alternatives to notions such as consensus are to be pursued.

In political philosophy, connotations and practices of participation are recurrently confronted. According to theorists such as Chantal Mouffe and Rancière, participatory politics, as performed currently, is grounded on a consensus or understanding amongst representatives of actors or actors themselves. This prevailing procedure of politics generates a condition nurtured in a lack of 'political frontier' – which equivalences a broader 'crisis of political identity' inside persons or social groups in Western cultures. As Mouffe claims, an absence of political battles enables ethnic, nationalist, religious,

or antidemocratic identities in establishing and instituting themselves (Mouffe, 1993). Likewise reasoning that xenophobia in consensus-oriented democracies is not an exemption but is prevalent to such political structures, Rancière disputes in contradiction of the reason presumed within the prevailing political concept of consensus:

‘Consensus does not mean simply the erasure of conflicts for the benefit of common interests. Consensus means erasing the contestatory, conflictual nature of the very givens of common life. It reduces political difference to police-like homogeneity.

Consensus knows only: real parts of the community, problems around the redistribution of powers and wealth among these parts, expert calculations over the possible forms of such redistribution, and negotiations between the representatives of these various parts’ (Rancière, 2004:7).

Consensus overpowers the contestatory nature of common life and diminishes political subjectivization among segments of a community. This disallows different political formulas and identities from taking form, impulses that may then be shifted into more severe or violent practices⁷³. Consensus-oriented democracies have also clashes and disputes, but these are categorized as risks rather than assumed as the critical condition of democracy itself. In this way, consensual procedures of political participation can be claimed to be unable of attaining more egalitarianism and emancipation.

Those critiquing such consensual politics additionally recommend complementary

⁷³ Rancière says: ‘From here it is possible to understand how consensus is able to engender new forms of identitarian passion. The core of consensus lies in suppressing supernumerary political subjects, the people surplus to the breaking down of the population into parts, the subjectivations of class conflict superimposed onto conflicts of interest between parts of the population. At the core of consensus is the dream of an administration of affairs in which all forms of symbolising the common, and thus all conflicts over that symbolisation, have been liquidated as ideological spectres’ (Rancière, 2004:7-8). He even argues that consensus endangers the very possibility of democracy itself.

tactics. Mouffe proposes the notion of ‘agonistic pluralism’⁷⁴. She theorizes antagonism as the fundamental state of human cohabitation, suggesting a practice of politics that would convert ‘antagonism’ amid latent adversaries to ‘agonism’ or ‘conflictual consensus’. Although consensus-oriented politics is concerned with controlling law and order among antagonistic bodies, Mouffe positions ‘the prime task of democratic politics as to not eliminate passions from the sphere of the public, in order to render a rational consensus possible, but to mobilize those passions towards democratic designs’ (Mouffe, 2003).

The notion of conflictual consensus might still be assumed as a result of consensus, though, as a production of clashes between curiosity, ideas and beliefs. Rancière offers a more fundamental theory of ‘dissensus’. For him, dissensus is articulated in relation to an aesthetical regime, a ‘sensible order’ that classifies and outlines who is authorized to voice and about what, who is heard and in what way. It concerns a disruption in the sensible order, or a ‘gap in the sensible’ (Rancière, 2004), in which the recognized structure of insight, thought and act is opposed with the ‘inadmissible’, ie. a political subject, or political forms and identities. As a process, rather than a success, dissensus is always on-going, struggling with the politics of law and order by inquiring into the principles of a specific condition. In this sense, dissensus is not the opposite of consensus, but, rather, a process concerned with the prospective rise of new political establishments.

Although using distinctive tactics, both ‘agonistic pluralism’ and ‘dissensus’ present the case that egalitarianism in consensus-oriented politics can only ever be amongst a well-identified group of people. Additionally, consensus is generally premised on an archetype of ‘communicative action’⁷⁵. Thus, partakers in an outgoing conversation are

⁷⁴ For example Chantal Mouffe, *The Return of the Political* (1993) and *The Democratic Paradox* (2000)

⁷⁵ Jürgen Habermas’ *The Theory of Communicative Action* (Boston: Beacon. 1981) criticizes the consequences of modernism, which brought about representative democracy in our societies. He argues that democratic public life cannot develop where citizens do not discuss matters of public.

pre-constituted within a space-time that is whichever common or that can be recognized by those sharing. There is also the matter of how new practices of the political could interfere with such pre-established structures of consensus within identified groups. Also at stake is how subjects and identities that are not produced or identified can be part of or disrupt an order or system.

The framing of a curatorial project is usually premised on the description of a problematic by the curator(s) sometimes together with the artists. Although some of the concerns of the curator might intersect with those of the prospective participants, nevertheless the foundation and outlining of the problematic assumes but is not prepared by 'the others'. As Dave Beech formulates, 'participation always involves a specific invitation and a specific formation of the participant's subjectivity' (Beech, 2010:27). It is the project's authors that usually decide the methodology, approaches, extent and means. Participants are usually involved and sometimes invited later. Project initiators define and pre-establish those who may participate, even in occasions in which participation may be far-reaching and open-ended. Therefore, to some extent, dissensus is avoided in advance, as assumptions about subjectivity manage the selection, positions and ways of commitment for participation.

The enactment of a curatorial process encompasses not only the framing of the problematic and the collective structure for tackling it, but a territory of materiality and responsiveness within the curatorial process that may also sustain long after. Rancière considers the 'distribution of the sensible' (Rancière, 2004), in which the obvious and the unseen, the perceptible and imperceptible, the articulated and unpronounceable are revealed in the dissemination of time, space and experience. It is across perceivable processes, for instance, that collective or communal circumstances in space/time take place. In everyday life, this realm of sensibility is demarcated and pre-recognized, in which particular physical opportunities can be apparent and others cannot. Sensible orders replicate and apply separations within society – who is eligible to perceive, attend or debate, and who is not. For Rancière, this is not a problem of capacity, but about the

sensible, through which some parts of society meet while others are discounted or disregarded. This means that there is a recognized 'community of sense', however others are not accepted or regarded, causing the inconspicuousness of these others. Discounted from the predominant sensible order, the others have no shared space/time to practice other options for the dissemination of the sensible – to perceive what is assumed to persist to be hidden for them, to attend what is believed to be imperceptible to them, to argue what is not alleged to be considered by them.

Applied by establishments, sensible orders are founded and protected via numerous exercises, comprising curatorial practice. Curators participate in developing a system of appreciation, concrete reading or a sensible order, which happen in space/time. Although there are many potential methods in which curators might advance the sensible order, most of the curatorial projects contribute to the re-production of already existing establishments, which circulate space/time, thus asserting the power and the politics of undercurrent institutes. Other attitudes, such as those concerned with dissensus, might interfere within a prevailing or recognized sensible order. In this, the affinity and subjectivity of participants cannot be assumed nor, actually, the method of unrestrained acts. Individualities and their issues may convert into acknowledged circumstances within curatorial practices that are framed and staged in other modes. By reallocating the sensible order, those contributing to 'dissensus positioned curating' might so interfere in the political order. An intrusion, disruption or halt in the territory of materiality and sensibility can therefore introduce a new aesthetical rule and other practices of politics to arise. A disruption in systems of sense also creates the prospective for discerning and proceeding through new methods – it is a proposal as opposed to re-production.

A series of questions emerge if we reflect on curatorial practice in terms of dissensus. How, for example, might the 'political frontier' between unequal people/groups be analysed? In what ways may they be considered or established as contributors to a research process? In what ways might different partakers intrude into a particular order and redistribute the sensible? How might such forms of participation expose an investigative territory that does not simply incorporate those excluded in an already established order but, rather, institute a disruption? How might interruptions in the established order of values, significance and terrains, the order of sensible, take form? How may 'framing' and 'staging' in curating and research be centred on dissensus, in which the problematics of participation may be questioned and options scrutinised? Such inquiries are to be investigated in the following chapter which unfolds the practice component of this research, in which investigational undertakings in distinctive sceneries ground reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. By investigational undertakings, I suggest activities concerning methods of interaction that both explore into circumstances 'in the field' as well as into research questions and methods.

CONCLUSION: FIRST PART

Artistic and curatorial practice is currently going through a phase of interest towards knowledge production, collectivity, pedagogy and participation. The topic of knowledge generates an alteration of the term focusing on the object of the inquiry, which is the apparatus of thought. This presents knowledge at the level of dialogical epistemology rather than as some ontological fundamentalist classification. Thus the dialogic develops into a circumstance of producing not a distinct author but is the process by which a collective institutes itself.

Pursuing a political articulation related to the vocabularies of pedagogy and collectivity and concerned with the detachment among the operating artist and the inactive witness that establishes a domineering inequity, the artist calls for the spectator to participate in the act. This partnership is favoured as it evades the estrangement between maker and spectator subsequent to the facilitation of spectacle, art object or service. This is the idealism of collectivity. As we move through the critique of participatory projects, we discover that there is something in the juxtaposition of collectivity and knowledge that can help us navigate the changes being made in curatorial practice when it comes to creating a space for dissensus.

Taking into consideration the analysis of the previous chapters of this study up to this point, we can now turn to a consideration of the implications for our understanding of contemporary curatorial practice.

In the final chapter, the inquiries raised in the study so far will be applied to my own practice reviewed through four curatorial projects. First, concerning the influence of social and political events examined in Chapter Two and the acknowledgment that these have driven an inclination towards collective models of practice, it was necessary to reflect on how relations are defined in these practices and particularly to inquire what position curators have within such models.

Secondly, with regard to Chapter Three, a device was needed with which we can approach the articulation of curatorial projects - a series of key questions and terminologies which can lead the research and here I refer to the key concepts analysed in Chapter Two: knowledge, participation, collective, pedagogy and dissensus in curatorial practice.

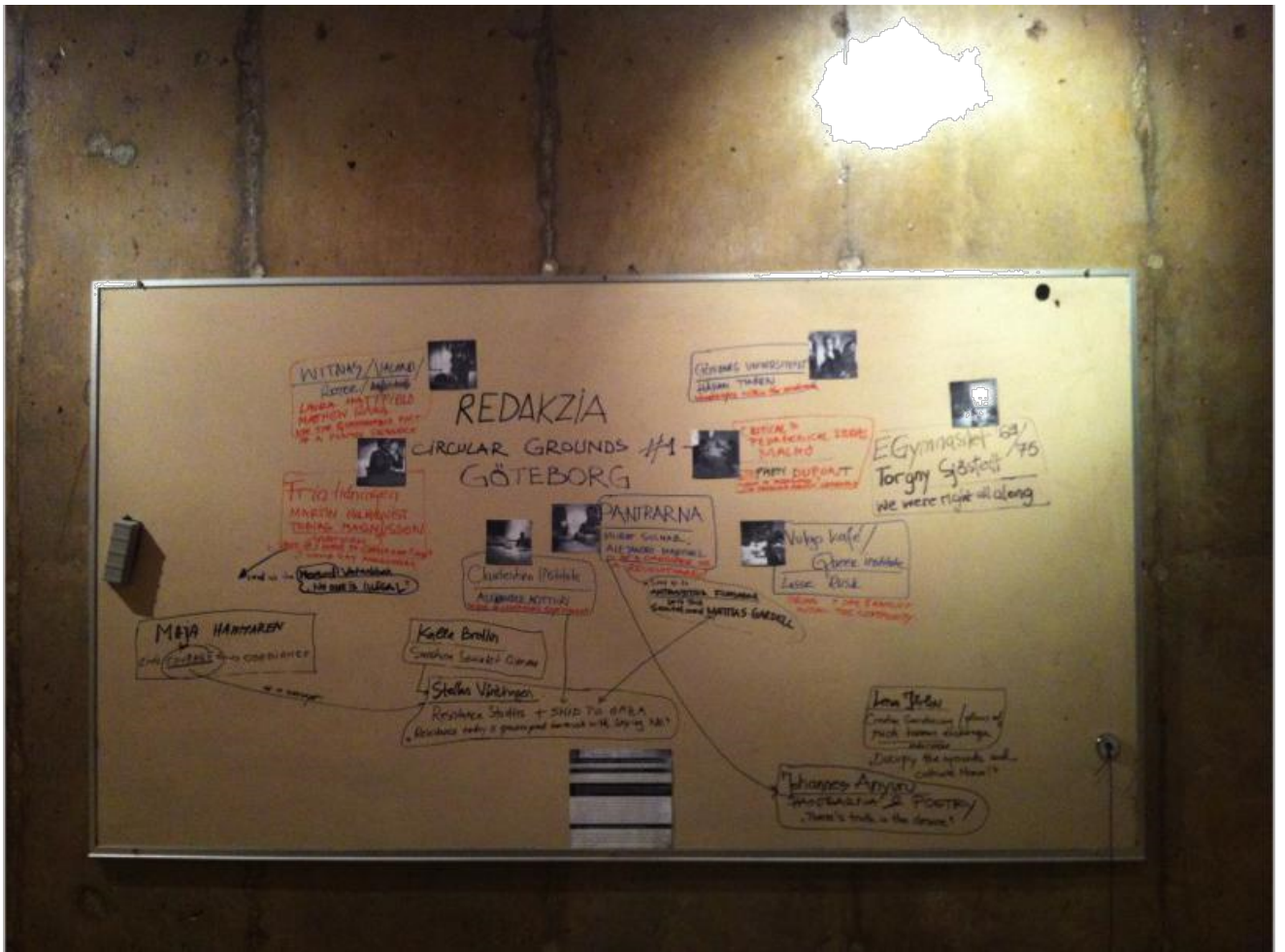


Figure 4: View of the research working process- the mapping for Redakzia, at Skogen, in Gothenburg, 2013.

PART 2: CURATORIAL PRACTICES

CHAPTER 3

CURATING AS RESEARCH PRACTICE - WORKING COLLECTIVELY

In this Chapter I will cite examples and make a case for the notion of collective knowledge as a product of curatorial practice and will include a discussion on the practices I selected to work with for this research.

This chapter is an attempt at compiling a subjective account of the processes and decision-making involved in developing a curatorial practice. The intention behind this chapter has been to present a commentary more akin to journal entries than an objective analysis, on the basis that it felt important to describe and reflect upon outcomes of the strategy in a similar way to how those same outcomes were themselves developed. This chapter does not present a comprehensive account of these processes, but a method for bringing together discursive information pertaining to significant moments in the development of the curatorial practice. It has also been an attempt at capturing the responsive thoughts and incidentals that may otherwise pass through the net of the PhD framework.

What unites all four curatorial projects is a suggested expansion of the category of curatorial practice to include three specific lines of enquiry: the concept of the artistcurator, critical curatorial practice informed by feminist and postcolonial methods, and a critique towards the power relations that shape traditional curatorial structures. Analysis of these projects, and indeed the practice-based curatorial strategies explored within the projects, place particular focus upon three interconnected subjects: practice, power, and critique.

Throughout the four projects realized in the course of my research I have attempted to find alternative curatorial formats distinct from the ones based on a normative production dramaturgy: theme, selection and installation as the main strategies. The

problematic which remained was how to maintain consistency, how to tackle concerns, how to communicate through a curatorial medium, whether an exhibition, a book, a discursive format and so on, beyond the normative group exhibitions. From one point of view, I attempted to foster ideas in collaboration, but in the case of the exhibition *Temporary Status*, ultimately it involved works by individual artists. Whilst this is not exceptional, it did confirm a dominant paradox concerning the notion of collective knowledge: with artworks that have not been collectively produced, a traditional division of labour in accomplishing the exhibition persisted⁷⁶, such as curator, artist, producer, technician; there were still various separate roles though each one of us could shift roles or take multiple tasks within same project. That is to say that there was no collective 'we' created inside the exhibition. I have tackled this problematic of the 'we' through the second project exposed – *The Institute for Collective Studies*. I will discuss it further in this chapter as an example of the struggle to objectify and produce a 'we' for solely artistic endeavours in lack of social or political identity. The projects build on each other and they address different aspects of the research questions, as it emerges from each description and analysis.

Curatorial methods and processes are the scope of this chapter in relation to particular questions of curatorial practice as research: How can curatorial practice be considered research? Can the curatorial object (exhibition, book, seminar, commissioned artwork, collaborative project) contribute to a theoretical concept such as collective knowledge?

The study of the following projects leads to a discussion of curatorial research at the end of the chapter, which proposes that artistic research is to be located both in artistic practice and in the approach of the curators towards formats and challenging prevailing norms of representation.

In this section of the study, the following four curatorial projects are described and analysed:

⁷⁶ A similar experience I had in a previous project from 2010 – *Washed Out*- co-curated with four other colleagues (Isabel Löfgren, Valerio delBaglivo, Milena Piacentile, Judith Souriau)

TEMPORARY STATUS

11 February – 18 March 2012

Röda Sten, Gothenburg, Sweden

A book and exhibition project curated by Corina Oprea.

Contributors: ACT Collective, Pavel Braila, Nicoleta Esinencu, Diana Hakobyan, Goran Hassanpour and Johan Tirén/Christian Hillesø

REDAKZIA

Circular Grounds #1 5-18 November 2012

@GIFF 24 January – 3 February 2014

Skogen & Gothenburg Film Festival, Gothenburg,

Sweden Co-initiated by Maria Draghici and Corina Oprea

INSTITUTE FOR COLLECTIVE STUDIES

How Theory Becomes Concrete- 13-17 May

2013 WELD, Stockholm, Sweden

The working group:

Johanna Gustafsson – artist, Radical Pedagogy

Cecilia Germain - artist

Anders Paulin -theatre director

Corina Oprea – curator and PhD Researcher in Arts at University of Loughborough, UK.

Rasmus Nielsen – artist, co-founder of Danish group Superflex, professor – Umeå Art Academy

+

Benjamin Noys – critical thinker and researcher, University of Chichester, UK

Co-initiated by Corina Oprea and Anders Paulin

JAG ÄR NYFIKEN – BRUN / I AM CURIOUS – BROWN

2015 –2016

Co-initiated by Saskia Holmkvist and Corina Oprea, in collaboration with Ellen Nyman

3.1 TEMPORARY STATUS – A CURATED BOOK THAT EXTENDS THE TEMPORALITY OF AN EXHIBITION

DESCRIPTION

Temporary Status was an exhibition and book project begun in 2011 through a series of research travels to Moldova, Armenia and Georgia and materialized as an exhibition at Röda Sten, in Gothenburg, in February 2012. The exhibition was simultaneously launched with an art book, which extended the exhibition's content and format. The intention of the exhibition and the book was an exercise in imagining alternative discourses on polis/social formations and a re-formulation of politics, other than the present construction of the political apparatus.

The project invited artists, curators and writers to formulate their positions, reflections and alternatives in the space of an exhibition and/or a book. The contributions were discursive or visual and related to the format of the exhibition and the book as a space of public manifestation of individual statements, which thus form a social community.

The installation room at Röda Sten, in Gothenburg questioned the format of the space for manifestation. What is the public space for opinion today and where does the temporary format of an exhibition space come to? Is the 'public' square⁷⁷ the solitary space for conversion of politics? Is making politics an exercise that happens in relation to revolutions or elections or does it have more to do with the continuous activity of awareness of the social construction and its elapses? And from here comes the often-posed question of the impossibility of the artistic act into the realm of politics, a question valid only at the point where politics is solely understood as the realm of state and city regulations. The artists invited dealt in their current artistic practice with less regulated and strict conditions. For them, politics is entangled with their practice naturally, due to the undefined official status at state, organizational and infrastructural level.

⁷⁷ squares are historically tied to political and social discourses that seek to determine the best ways of achieving 'common good', reaching nearly the level of symbol for political protest. (for example *The Tiananmen Square* protests of 1989 or *Occupy movement* in 2011 in Times Square). See also Oliver Ressler's video installation *Take The Squar* (2012).

The exhibition took place in two distinctive exhibition rooms, with a 'white cube' on the first floor, and the second floor housing one of the new commissions, a film, which required a singular space for visual and sound quality. The first floor contained six works in a composition of the exposed space, which had a feeling of unfinished architecture, with raw walls. The six works composed nearly a parallel route intertwining through political history of the past 25 years. On the end wall, instantly noticeable when entering the space, was positioned a big banner from 1991 with the text 'Art Demonstration' by the Armenian group Art Collective. The banner was positioned vertically, falling on the floor and thus obscuring the entire text, as a forgotten archived historical material. This vertically placed banner acted as an historical bridge over time, with a text statement articulating the positions of artists versus politics within Eastern Europe.

This reinforces the claim that art has the ability to imagine the political, and/or any absence of reaction. *Art Demonstration* was contextualized by the other works, as well as by the exhibition title.

Beside it, was Diana Hakobyan's installation, one of the members of the Art Collective, foretelling its imminent fragmentation. In addition, was Nicoleta Esinencu's installation documenting and creating a voting situation for Moldova's president after more than a year of a country without a leader; and a sculpture installation by Goran Hassanpour of a symbolic silencer of protest in contemporary urban situations. These works referred precisely to the work of empty political discourse, confusion and rootless articulation, which continued upstairs with the newly commissioned work of Pavel Braila.

One of the characteristics of the practices of the artists in the region was the interest in re-tracing history and re-collecting memory, building up informal archives, making documents and artefact based on collective memory. This acute need for the construction of a history, questioning national identity, a temporary status or lack of political symbols, found more relevant representation within the project book.

The project book crosses borders between the visual expression and the written word, theory and performativity through language. During my first research trip to Moldova

(including the unrecognised territory of Transnistria), a strong impression was the discourse around space, either regarding a lack of working space, or the strong need for the public space as a place for reflection, manifestation and debate. The rules around the activities allowed in the public space (indoor or outdoor) in the region are very limited. *Temporary Status* also investigated an alternative language using visual and written strategies as a response to current political formulations, provoking a sense the artistic field which expands beyond, the gallery entering the political sphere, through discursive, performative and visual modes. The book contains theoretical essays, poems, discursive, visual works and interviews with nine contemporary artists and scholars.

The exhibition and book project were composed of several overlapping layers: the distinct artistic projects, the whole installation, and the installations by the individual artists, the writings and the word-based components and eventual character of works used by the artists⁷⁸. Furthermore, there is the relation between the concept of political imagination to be effected in the space of an exhibition, and then the idea of resistance that happens in actual public spaces, in real circumstances. The question remained: could exhibition-making act as a prototype of resistance, an instrument for production in terms of theory, articulation and practice? Why is the thematic exhibition insufficient to act discursively, socially and politically? The exhibition is perceived as too depictive, and in its place further approaches of expanding the content are used to generate collective knowledge.

ANALYSIS

Already in the structure of exhibition-making, one works with a flexible exhibition form, which permits artworks to appear also singularly through the commissioning, the production and the mounting of the exhibition, and the exhibition is also mixed when it comes to forms and styles, so as to not classify one category of art above the other.

However, concerning the issue of contemporary curating and the political imaginary, culture concerning the issue of contemporary curating and the political imaginary, culture producers are aiming to generate different idioms and to create new narratives,

⁷⁸ See especially the works by Nicoleta Esinencu and Goran Hassanpour.

which can be transformative, rather than to confirm existing histories. Simultaneously, the artworks aim to not fall into the trap of being descriptive or even celebratory, towards the immaterial capital. An artistic act, similar to a political one, entails the re-making or the re-enactment of a collective apparent truth. Therefore the political character does not exist in the singularity of the artworks. The political belongs to the potential imaginary that is generated, or what Jacques Rancière has termed the politics of aesthetics (Rancière, 2006) -how they share the division and dissemination of the sensible, what can be perceived and recognized, what can be understood and assumed; additionally, what can be imagined, and what cannot be imagined (see Castoriadis⁷⁹).

The political character of artworks is generally measured by either their capacity to communicate political information or their symbolic character of who and how they embody political subjects. In the case of *Temporary Status* with the subtitle *Politics of Imagination*, my intention was to include works which are political based on their capacity to suggest new imaginaries, new narratives, creating and foretelling further realms and the prospect of self alteration of the world, shaped through subjectivity rather than merely representing subjectivity.

When it comes to the notion of the exhibition as a discursive practice for potential new, situated articulations, the curatorial instruments are: the title, the curatorial statement, the spatial display, position and engagement of the viewer, and the narrative built through the language used in each of the artworks. In the case of *Temporary Status*, intentionally, a further layer has been added, through the publication of a book as a method to expand the format of the exhibition. Even so, it is on location that the articulation is shaped, through the actual placement of the works in a space, in relation to each other, the topic and the viewer. Furthermore the context plays a significant role: the institution, the location, the city, the neighbourhood.

⁷⁹ For Castoriadis the theory of imaginary institutionalization is the foundation for a concept of democracy, since democratic policy is grounded on an constant quest for autonomy and critical questioning of existing social institutions (Cornelius Castoriadis, *The imaginary institution of society*, 1975). See also the discussion at length on Castoriadis's theory of the institution in section 3.3 of this thesis.

Throughout the articulation of the exhibition a collective body, possibly a collective subject is constructed, emerging in discourse or in antagonism to it.

As a discourse, the curatorial practice through its acts (exhibitions, publications and seminars) does formulate opinions and connotations, and not the forgoing curatorial statement, nor the press release or catalogue essay. These types of writings are endeavours to direct the understanding and reception of the event, but can also be attempts to generate outlooks, circumstances, problematics, and additional assumption.

Therefore the accompanying publication of *Temporary Status* was explicitly an organic extension of the exhibition based on the research, which showed artistic practices in discursive formats. These practices seemed to be better represented in a publication than in an exhibition, hence the choice of publishing the book, not having the function of a catalogue, but of an exhibition in book format.

In the context of the group exhibition such as *Temporary Status*, which aims at constructing a 'we', formed by the artists, the curator, the public and so on, the question is if this 'we' can be the speaking subject? How can we define the curatorial role? Is the curator the one giving an account of him or herself, similar to the researcher's role? Is the curator an analyst?

The art museums, with their nationalist pasts, continuously attempted to postulate truth through symbolization and history telling, and in ways that were controlled and systematic, self-directed and heteronomous, but that certainly did not expose this construction method, as this would have compromised the actual truth that was produced. This has to do with the instituting of society, and why Castoriadis defines it as imaginary⁸⁰; that that its establishing values and history entail preservation through faith, through praxis. Art and exhibitions are already endowed with distinctive political

⁸⁰ See the discussion at length on Castoriadis's theory of institutions as imaginary in section 3.3.

ideas. They represent therefore significant locations of power suited for contestation and dissensus.

An exhibition such as *Temporary Status*, can be articulated precisely as an endeavour to appeal to the imaginary mode of constructing societies, as indicated by Castoriadis, and alter the method of employing art in relation to the contemporary world system. I would say it is this case for the majority of the works present in the exhibition, such as *What is your view*⁸¹ -a series of artistic tactics that has and might be sustained outside of the framework of this specific display. It is exactly this act of exploiting the artist as a model confirming the concepts from the curatorial statement that is one of the analyses that can be addressed when it comes to thematic exhibitions.

Another problematic is the method of inscribing the works into the exhibition's thematic in the form of inventory. In the case of curated exhibitions, the communication of the thematic is based on how the works showed exemplify the concept, regardless of whether the thematic is conceptual or art historical. The analysis of the works, and their significance, is done with regards to the theme in which they are clustered, and not the technique of aesthetics and politics they might engage, and irrespective of the project, or even oeuvre, of the specific artist. The exhibition is analysed based on how the works address the subject. In order to avoid the domination of the topic as a conceptual scheme to produce an exhibition, there are alternative options to disengage with the norm of selecting existing works as in an inventory or catalogue, which also increases the significance of the subject. One of the opportunities is the commissioning of new works explicitly created for the exhibition, not necessarily site-specific, but in relation to the elaboration of the concept of the exhibition. This entails that the artists are asked, in the context of current practice, about their overall approach and curiosity, to develop a work through constant negotiation surrounding

⁸¹ In 2000, artists Johan Tirén and Christian Hillesø sent letters to the CEOs of the top 100 Fortune Global 500 companies asking for their views on power, economy, and democracy. In 2008, they repeated these inquiries, sending identical letters to the CEOs of the top 100 companies of that year. Most of the corporate leaders they addressed didn't reply, while a few sent 'non-answers', typically via their public relations officers, indicating their unavailability or unwillingness to respond. For more information:- <http://whatisyourview.net>

the topic. As a working relationship between artist and curator or institution, this is a frequently fostered model by both artists and curators.

However, at the level of the structure, this is a situation of a fabricated 'we', since the invited artists had not established themselves as a crowd, nor selected the thematic offered: myself, as the curator, holding the full responsibility of it. The conclusion was that a curatorial action as such cannot create partaking per se, cannot generate a collective without the separation from the institutionalised curatorial power.

As an alleged research exhibition, *Temporary Status*, did not embody this concept in formal expressions, such as displaying itself in the workroom, archive or library, nor showing source materials, works in progress, drafts etcetera, but in terms of its articulation of the subject, in the modes the works were showing artistic research into the conception and locating a political imaginary.

3.2 REDAKZIA – A COLLABORATIVE PLATFORM EVOLVING FROM AN INVESTIGATION ON SYSTEMIC AND ANTISYSTEMIC EDUCATION

DESCRIPTION

*Redakzia*⁸² (initiated by artist Maria Draghici and myself) created for two weeks in November 2012 a temporary structure at Skogen, where we invited individuals and initiatives from both systemic and anti-systemic education⁸³ to question the role and premises of education today, focused on the academia, in humanistic and looking at so called alternative formats (e.g. Free universities or temporary academies). The format of an editorial board included the idea of a collective editorial process, where the research material, the writing and the editing is, on-going, extended with all the encounters we make, receiving impulses, looking for references, transforming us into interpreters. At the same time, all contribute and shape *Redakzia* itself as a platform for knowledge circulation, and thus they become part of its collective. In Gothenburg we worked through several channels: informal meetings, video interviews, a workshop on shaping temporary social structures, a symposium on modes of resistance in education and a collective editing of the final map-zine *Circular Grounds #1*.

The scope was to question the transformation of academia into a factory of marketoriented skills in opposition to knowledge, which is produced through debate and not through learning, through questioning and not through acceptance of the general norm.

⁸² The title *Redakzia* is playing with the words 'redactia'(Romanian), 'redaksia' (Albanian), 'redakzia' (Russian and other slavic languages) and 'redaction' (English) which means both 'editorial board' and the process of editing text for publication.

⁸³ Systemic and anti-systemic educational platforms here refers to the so-called traditional or structured pedagogical system and other independent alternative systems of education.

The relation between power and knowledge, in the Foucault-ian understanding, is a question of hegemony, which nowadays translates into the capitalization and institutionalization of knowledge. What *Redakzia* was interested in was breaking this hegemony and acknowledging other platforms of education and knowledge production, which may take the form of a university or a grass-root movement with a pedagogical consciousness.

In Gothenburg we looked at different alternative educational initiatives, which happened in the present or in the past. We wanted to start with Gothenburg and the Swedish context, where the debate on education is an important issue, as it is currently at risk of loosing its free status. In order to achieve a historical perspective, we went back to *Experiment gymnasiet*: an experiment in the late 1960's/early 1970's - a highschool run by students and professors equally (Heyman, 2009). The school was open till 22hrs, the students could draw on the ceiling, they could smoke in the classroom, took an equal part in the decisions-making alongside employed professors- although there were no actual professors, but 'guides'. The curriculum was based on research and not on learning physics, mathematics and so on. Instead, if for example pupils were interested in poverty in Africa, they would learn about its economy, social studies, geography, history through interdisciplinary approaches and perspectives. It was interesting to discover that Gothenburg has a heritage of working with the format of the school as a social space, as a debate, as a discussion and not a place where you learn a skill for a certain number of years.

The process of looking for collective editorial material started from several individuals or initiatives, which we already knew and wanted to interview. We asked them to act as our local guides and to put us in contact with other initiatives from Gothenburg that they were considering important for our process, such as individuals who are working either directly with education, activists, entities and movements who have a pedagogical vision incorporated in their actions. In this way we managed to put together a map of Gothenburg, which linked the Valand Art Academy to a nomadic

music group, the free autonomous newspaper to *Ship to Gaza*⁸⁴, the research group *Resistance studies* to a group of guerilla gardeners and the underground university and to *Pantrarna*⁸⁵, a youth movement initiated in the periphery and the *Queer Institute*.

These connections, which often remain on the margins of the academy due to strict disciplinary interests, became the collective aspect of the process. The time in Gothenburg (two weeks) became a pretext – the event - created for the analysis of both differences and commonalities of these experiences.

In 2014, during the Gothenburg International Film Festival, *Redakzia* continued to work with the city through the production of a zine developed through an open mobile editorial board, conceived as a hybrid of an open editorial and film production conducted publicly in the festival environment. The naivité and investigative character of the tone of the publication continues in *I am Curious - Brown*, a film in process, presented in section 3.4.

ANALYSIS

One of the questions we raised was the condition for politics of destabilization as a form of resistance, meaning finding those gaps in the system where you can intervene, shake and challenge a fixed structure, a rigid concept. Education has become a production machine of knowledge based on the requirement to respond to the market and its economic rules, like an industry for specialized skills. Knowledge, on the other hand, is part of a social project, which is produced through circulation of information, reflection, feed-backing culture, and critical thought. Knowledge is a collective product, formed by the specificities of different angles and modes of address: radical, academic, in deep analysis and fieldwork. This is why it is essential to create such temporary labs in which each consciousness /knowledge matters and interacts with the others. The way we worked was through deconstructing the writing and the editing

⁸⁴ *Ship to Gaza* is a Swedish organization that aims to break the blockade of the Gaza Strip by delivering humanitarian aid from Scandinavia to Gaza.

⁸⁵ *Pantrarna* is a political youth movement born in Gothenburg suburb Biskopsgården, inspired of the *Black Panther* movement.

process, thinking of the publication as a social platform, enabling encounters and discussions along the way.

Several initiatives fighting for the rights of specific communities such as *Pantrarna* (The Panthers) – the group for the restoration of the suburbs and *Queer Institute-Gothenburg* shared similar preoccupations of the possibilities of self-organization. They were eager to start platforms for knowledge production and distribution which are self-determined, flexible and cheap or free to attend, what Gregory Sholette calls ‘mockstitutions’ and ‘phantom establishments’ (Sholette, 2010).

With *Redakzia* my curatorial role developed beyond the selection and placement of artefacts in a space to become equally about collaboration. The changing curatorial role also embraced its civic role in the community. By collaborating and connecting with other organizations and community leaders, *Redakzia* generated a negotiation and nourished new mind-sets. As the content initiator, I mediated with these freestanding clusters in an equal share with my fellow artist. Through conversations, we exposed what issues were significant in the community and addressed and sustained those ideas through the publications, which received the endorsement of the institutions supporting *Redakzia*. The curatorial role is merging with the one of a sociologist and anthropologist, identifying a need in the community, looking for an unusual setting for the work, building partnerships with a wide range of disparate stakeholders and, in some cases, conceding the artistic control in order to benefit from a bigger impact.

The theories on collectivity and participation developed in the sections 2.2 and 2.3 of this thesis, have been articulated in *Redakzia* through the way in which the content of the videazine, map and newspaper (see Appendices 3 and 6 and Figure 4) is brought about. These objects generate questions at the same time as they enact a response in the visual choices made (the choosing of articles, contributions, the editing of the footage in relation to a specific political issue). The curator is active in this form of artistic research as acts of research leading to artistic objects. This understanding of

the curator playing an active role in a process of theoretical and practical oscillation around a topic responds to the research question of how the role of the curator changes when working collectively. This process and dialogue led to three objects (the videozine, the newspaper and the map), which again circulates, prompting theoretical reflection and affective responses.

The dialogues and conversations within the working group of *Redakzia* stayed on for over two years (2012-2014), so that the intimacy developed over time, on different levels. This example of sharing research and developing thoughts within and outside programmed events suggest that *Redakzia* succeeds in working around the politics of affective intimacy. Being a forum, it created an environment in which people took part in social and intellectual activities before, during and after timetabled events. This is a line of argument that shows that curatorial research events set in the public sphere benefit from taking an open approach, i.e. not aiming for a result or application of the research. There is the knowledge intrinsic to each person joining, each part of the program and research, and each local discourse – dealing, for example, with education, memory, postcolonialism, racism, different political issues – all of which go beyond the level of curatorial research. *Redakzia* became an axis around which larger discourses folded into these three objects (map, videozine and newspaper), and that process in return allowed for these discourses to be re-examined and eventually these were further developed at different levels from the micro to the macro in the theoretical writing of the thesis.

3.3 INSTITUTE FOR COLLECTIVE STUDIES - HOW THEORY BECOMES CONCRETE AND ON THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE

DESCRIPTION

Starting with the concept of artistic knowledge production, five artists and researchers gathered during one week to discuss the notion of 'negativity' in relation to potential collective methods and initiatives as a form of resistance against the institutionalization of research.

The week at Weld⁸⁶ was a precarious attempt to form the *Institute for Collective Studies*,

an initiative aiming to generate various modes of knowledge production which question artistic research in a public context. The aim was to set up a forum for collective knowledge, where participants from different fields met and defined pedagogical structures and strategies for an emancipated, collective educational platform and in which the notions of participant versus moderator were to be understood as flexible and ambulant positions. The objective of the project was to develop methods where theoretical studies could be applied in a collective practice through continuous laboratory-based events. This third project attempted to get to grips with the research question, which asks how forms of collective knowledge can be produced through curatorial practice.

A central objective of the *Institute for Collective Studies* was to develop a trans-organizational platform connecting academies, art institutions and professionals, allowing questions and activities in a collective context, which, due to different structural concerns would not be possible within an institutional framework.

⁸⁶ Weld is an independent platform for experimental processes and knowledge production, based in Stockholm. www.weld.se

Through these conjunctions, various projects, programs and interventions would test a possible framework for theoretical reflection, artistic activity and research in the quest for methods of collective knowledge production. We understand artistic knowledge not as analysis and interpretation, but as something produced through practice, but also believe in the necessity of using theory as a tool to define objectives for practical research that respond to a contemporary context.

In the context of an accelerated institutionalization and commodification of knowledge⁸⁷ and artistic research, the *Institute for Collective Studies* intended to reclaim a portion of research practice within the artistic field, which does not have to compel entirely to the institutional framework, but can function as a parallel platform.

The Institute for Collective Studies referred to a series of initiatives such as the *Institute für Raumexperimente* by Olafur Eliasson and projects by Marion von Osten (see a description of Marion von Osten's previous projects in section 1.4 of this thesis). Writings on collaboration and collectivity in education and artistic research by Bojana Kunst, Florian Schneider and Bojana Cveijc as well as the critical perspective brought by Dieter Lesage and Tom Holert were inspirational to the project.

The working group consisted of:

Johanna Gustafsson – artist, Radical Pedagogy

Cecilia Germain - artist

Anders Paulin – theatre director

Corina Oprea – curator and PhD Researcher in Arts at University of Loughborough, UK.

Rasmus Nielsen – artist, co-founder of Danish group Superflex, professor – Umeå Art Academy

+

Benjamin Noys – critical thinker and researcher, University of Chichester, UK

ANALYSIS

⁸⁷ The notion of knowledge and how it is understood in the present study was discussed at length in Chapter Two, section 2.1.

The actual name of the initiative *Institute for Collective Studies* brings together two notions – ‘institute’ and ‘collective’- that act as motivating concepts, but they could also appear paradoxical: an institute is generally a hierarchical structure⁸⁸, whereas a ‘collective’ is usually a shared horizontal assembly. Actually, the name and subject did derive from a flexible view on research and education as a maker of the communal, and partly from a concern regarding certain contemporary artistic practices dealing with the formation of temporary collectives of thought in terms of political critique and alternative forms of being. It also developed from a concern and conversation about the relations between structural education and research based artistic practice.

Based on these features we attempted to produce a consistency of the components, both those of discourse and study, together with those of working collectively, as well as the particular public event. We were trying to form a setting or inclusive construction of the event that would accept that the temporary collective formed will act as a so-called model of an ‘institute of research’, extended into the practice of a public setting.

The notion of institution raised by the theorist Cornelius Castoriadis served as inspiration: the concept of society as an imaginary institution, with real instituted social imaginaries and relations: ‘It is the instituting social imaginary that creates institution in general (the institution as form) as well as the particular institutions of each specific society, and the radical imagination of the singular human being’ (Castoriadis, 2007:71).

For Castoriadis, society is an imaginary assembly of institutions, practices, principles and truths, that we altogether contribute to and therefore repetitively (re)produce⁸⁹.

⁸⁰ See for example the definition by Huntington in which institutions are defined as ‘stable, valued, recurring patterns of behavior’. (Huntington 1965:394). In Giorgio Agamben’s *What is an Apparatus?* ‘institutions aim to manage, govern, control, and orient – in a way that purports to be useful – behaviours, gestures, and thoughts of human beings.’ (Agamben, 2009:12).

⁸⁹ See also the reference to Castoriadis in section 3.1 of this study.

Society and its institutions are imaginary as well as operative. Institutions are part of symbolic systems, and as such they are not permanent or secure, but persistently enunciated through projection and practice. As a result, it is about producing a different discourse to support the new imaginary. In Castoriadis' political philosophy, the struggle for autonomy plays a significant role. He describes how whereas all societies create their own imaginaries – institutions, rules, customs, principles, the members of autonomous societies are conscious of this situation and self-institute.

In the case of the *Institute for Collective Studies*, the concept of self-institutionalization plays a critical role, as an association of collective knowledge, and in the method of debating a political discourse in relation to autonomy in art and research. One should rearticulate the imagined subjects, as addressees, publics, communities and antagonists; in order to transform the way subjectivity and imagination are constructed. This can be done by altering the existing formats and narratives, as in the queering of space and the (re)writing of histories – that is, through deconstructive as well as reconstructive projects, and by constructing new formats, by rethinking the structures and implementations of the exhibition altogether – even to the extent of abandoning it for events and formats of 'non-exhibition', and disappearance as dissipation and participation. Secondly, any institution and its ways of institution, such as exhibition-making, should not be understood as unitary, but as dispersed – its modes of address need not be uniform, but different in scale, grammar and reach.

Thirdly, the institution and the exhibition, and their respective ways of instituting, may not always play themselves out in unison, but sometimes as discordant, dissonant or even atonal. Rather than seeing this as a problem, it can also be viewed as a potential, as a space of resonance – between curator, artist and institution, naturally, but also between producer and audience, art and society at large – and as a space of conflict – major as minor – as a space for possibility. In other words, institution- and exhibiting-making should be described in terms of its position, its scope, its view on and of the world, its perspective. Since the intention with *Institute for Collective Studies* was to counter-discuss the problematics related to the institutionalization of artistic

knowledge and searching for a way of destabilizing or proposing a parallel platform, we confronted the texts of Benjamin Noys on *The Aesthetics of Communization* (see Appendix 5). Noys has looked into questions of communization, which relates to the *Institute for Collective Studies*'s intention of focusing on collectivity rather than an individual approach towards knowledge. Focusing on the process of collective work is a form of negation against the cult for results and the usual focus on commodified outcomes. Rather than depending on the result's success, the *Institute for Collective Studies* tried to focus on the act and process of 'making'.

The structure of the week based itself on a few precarious acts such as: a 'digital-free Tuesday', a one-day collective reading of one text, cooking meals and a sleep-over.

During the week three main questions arose:

Who is the 'we'?

What is the 'event'?

How do we define 'production' in a non-result oriented format?

Having the notion of collectivity at the core of the process, the 'we' question comes naturally, from the intention of identification with a particular community in which the members are to become co-existing parts of this certain 'we'. In other working contexts, the 'we' can be formed temporarily for specific collaborative events. However, the question of the formation of the 'we' is vital in relation to structural principles, which pertain to the responsibility of roles and a dramaturgy of the process. Here I would like to go back to J-L. Nancy (referred to previously in section 2.2 of this thesis), who claims that we have forgotten the importance of 'being together', 'being – in – common' and 'belonging' (Nancy, 1983). In order to re-appropriate this knowledge, Nancy suggests that it is important to understand that 'we' is not a subject of self-identification and that one should concentrate on the praxis of 'we' in the making, of an intersubjectivity. In order for a process-based project, which involves a certain community, to start functioning, the 'we' needs to be created. This imaginary 'we'

exists, as most of the times, only for the duration of a particular event. In the case of the *Institute for Collective Studies*, the intention was a long-lasting self-sustainable project with the week at Weld being an attempt to test a certain format and structure. Again, being inspired by Nancy and his fear of communitarian work and the relation to totalitarianism, I would suggest that ‘inoperative communities’ that refuse predictable decisions for participation or clear identification with the other members based on social or political commonalities, might be a way to re-think the question of community. Nancy writes that community cannot arise from the domain of work, but through the withdrawal from work, from ‘unworking’ (‘desoeuvrement’) – a term from Blanchot. Interruption, fragmentation, suspension: this is where community happens for Nancy⁹⁰. Therefore, can a suspended given time and space allow a formation of the ‘we’ in the absence of result-oriented ‘work’?

What is the ‘event’?

In order to refer to two previous theoreticians who wrote about the notion of the ‘event’, Badiou’s fundamental theory of the ‘event’ is completely contrasting to Deleuze’s: the event is not assumed as intrinsic to ‘becoming’ (the philosophical expression for the rising and developing of all that subsists), but as that which navigates, intersects across the given recurrences and crops new prospects, new varieties. In this sense, the ‘event’ is profoundly distinctive from ‘becoming’. Badiou’s major illustration throughout his work is the political revolution: it comes unexpectedly, and can’t be justified solely as being the result of its circumstances⁹¹.

For Badiou, it’s almost an arithmetical work to deduct random circumstances from the

⁹⁰ See Jean-Luc Nancy. *The Inoperative Community*, ed. Peter Connor, Minnesota University Press, 1991 in which Nancy writes even about the inscription of ‘infinite resistance’. Also, see earlier chapter in this thesis discussing Nancy.

⁹¹ The Event is Badiou’s best-known concept and denotes, in principle, his idea of transformation and social revolution, whether in politics or other areas. In *Logic of Worlds: Being and Event II* (2009) Events are essentially breaches through the governing order. An Event states that another world is thinkable. An Event involves both the demolition of the current order and the meaning of a new order.

drive towards truth, towards planning the ground for events to occur (Badiou, 2006).

The precarity of the format proposed concentrated on the act of reading a 4000 word text – *The Aesthetics of Communization* by Benjamin Noys (see Appendix 5), deconstructing a theory on paper, reading through, attempting to decipher words, notions, intentions. It was a process of translation, reflection and making connections to practices of our own or others. In the current post-spectacle context, even processual works become commodities, presented as spectacle, the ‘event’ as the presence becomes important. One could say that the event which the *Institute for Collective Studies* created was the public lecture of Benjamin Noys. I would argue, though, that the event was the act of reading and the transformation of a theory into a concrete act. The question of valorization is rather important. For what are we working? What do we consider to have been an outcome? In times when we tend to consume critique and theory, allowing that suspended space of digesting a text becomes the ‘event’.

How can we define production in a non - result oriented format?

Recently in the artistic field key words such as ‘knowledge production’ have become frequently used in describing discursive and process-based practices. This term confronts us with the mere frame of opposing a commodified neo-liberal logic. Late capitalism positions knowledge as the main resource for surplus-value gain. And has the capacity of absorbing and appropriating any form of creative, critical, alternative, new form of knowledge. The risk of being complicit and the impossibility of a pure form of resistance towards the commodification of knowledge are present. So, what do we actually produce? Here, I would like to suggest that what temporary formations can test is a transversal perspective over the structure of producing knowledge, which tends to institutionalize or legitimize a certain form of knowledge, with a set of values and criteria. Artistic research should remain articulated within the sphere of social movement and exercise the capacity of cutting through boundaries between academia and the non-disciplined actions outside.

My part in the *Institute for Collective Studies* following the path of *Redakzia* was to conceive the initial concept in collaboration with my colleague Anders Paulin and this was part of the production process. We have adopted the curatorial model of a performative academy as a medium to subvert, adapt and re-model in order to advance an additional theoretical position. This theoretical position inherent to the critique of institutionalized artistic research was taken from the critical writings of Benjamin Noys, and then modified into a tangible framework.

One of the essential aspects of the *Institute for Collective Studies* was the freed structure of the week, free from the pressure of producing anything other than a conflict of ideas. The criticism of the free labour in knowledge production formats was addressed by paid labour in this case for all the participants, engaged in a situation of production of intellectual precarious work. However, the format falls into that of precarious labour within a post-Fordist context, since it embodied the familiar traits associated with immaterial labour: poorly paid, temporary employment, as well as the accumulation of symbolic capital towards another entity (even if here we are speaking of a non-institutional one - *The Institute for Collective Studies*). The era of post-Fordism is reproduced in the labour of cultural workers and the advanced capital is producing new situations, where cultural workers are involved in precarious labour, often unpaid labour – ‘immaterial labour began to constitute this hegemony for all forms of production’ (Boltanski, Chiapello, 2007). Those who view it as a ‘powerhouse of value’ often exploit creativity; as Marx said, ‘knowledge has become a productive force’ (Marx, 1974). Thus, curators and artists are part of the neoliberal market economy, they are at the disposal of this system and it tolerates their labour to be perverted.

Subsequently, the *Institute for Collective Studies* became a passive structure as it had several attempts to reunite which due to various organisational challenges, including lack of funding and availability of its members, all failed⁹². However, the work done

⁹² All the projects presented in this thesis have been produced independently from any institutional structure. I have fundraised for each project from national and regional funding and I have received in support in kind from the partner institutions (such as the use of space and technical equipment).

during the week at Weld also resulted in an article published in the magazine *Frakzia*, which gathered unanswered questions on the institutionalization and commodification of knowledge (see Appendix 4).

3.4 I AM CURIOUS: BROWN: A FILMIC PROPOSAL WHICH ENGAGES WITH THE DOCUMENTARY FILM FORMAT

DESCRIPTION

I am Curious: Brown is a filmic proposal which engages with documentary and performative practice, initiated by artist Saskia Holmkvist and myself as curator with a developing input by performance artist Ellen Nyman⁹³.

During the research and production process, we (Holmkvist, Nyman and myself) have used different methods to open up new verbal experiences to get to a deeper understanding of how political understanding of 'the other' can be made through experimenting with the documentary film format. One point of departure sits at the point of interaction with political identity and activism, mirroring some of the techniques the film *I am Curious Yellow* by Vilgot Sjöman⁹⁴ was testing in 1967, but making the transition to the year of 2015, where today we see characters being fully trained in constructing political discourses and opinions in front of the camera.

This curatorial process is rhizomatic⁹⁵, spontaneous, and non-linear; the authorship is distorted, and the proficiency of creating is greatly and deliberately complex.

The research and development phase started in April 2015 and the post-production

⁹³ *I am Curious: Brown* is a project still in the course of its post-production work. The finalized version of the film is estimated to be premiered in September 2016. For this reason this section presents an in-depth analysis and focuses on the process of making the film.

⁹⁴ *I am Curious Yellow* (1969) (Director Vilgot Sjöman) is one of the most significant films of the 1960s. In particular, the film became controversial due to the scenes of sexuality but its actual value consists in its being one of the first movies, at least in Sweden, which tried to dissect the social and political realities of the time, through mixing documentary, staged scenes, improvisation and activist intentions.

⁹⁵ Here referring to Deleuze and Guattari's use of the terms 'rhizome' and 'rhizomatic' to describe theory and research that allows for multiple, non-hierarchical entry and exit points in data representation and interpretation. In *A Thousand Plateaus* (Deleuze, Guattari, 1980), they oppose it to a hierarchic conception of knowledge, which works with dualist categories and binary choices.

phase of the final film is planned for June-July 2016 with a first viewing in September 2016. During the research, we interviewed over fifty persons, both in official settings (in their offices, booked meetings and prepared dialogues) as well as spontaneous interviews in public squares. The interviews have followed two threads - on the topic of racism and on the question of Sweden's weapon export. We asked them the following main questions: What is a racist society? Is Sweden a racist society? Which groups are most vulnerable today? How we can export weapons to dictatorships and non-democratic regimes? How do diplomatic relations work with military equipment? And why should Sweden export arms and war materials at all? What, and to whom?

Inevitably, we came to the interviews with a set of concerns about social typecasts, assumptions, interests and inquiries. However, through the interview process, we moved away from the safety and conclusion of pre-set questions to an open-ended dialogical battle to comprehend the conversations. The entire construction of an interchange could dissipate if we had been too busy with getting a 'correct' reply. When the interviewees began to develop their ideas, it produced an unpredictable outcome to our subsequent questions and the development of the project.

We intentionally left the definition of these questions open, and for a reason; we saw them as forceful and variable, they generated their significance in the conversation, by the individuals in their discussion and by their remarks. Furthermore we filmed visual material in significant areas of production and export for Sweden weapons industry. The visual presented the calm horizontal Swedish landscape as opposed to information and testimonials provided through the narrative. The questions asked in the interviews then guided us in the process of editing and assembling the visual material.

The possibility of establishing a link between our discussions on racism and the problematics of weapons export did not occur to us before the one week residency at Skogen in October 2015 where we wrote down a parallel historical timeline for Sweden's post-colonial history related to the weapons industry and export and relation to war. Instinctively we assumed that the *artistic* answer was to put the two issues side by side and let the relation between them stay unstipulated. As we observed the material more carefully, we saw little modification in the wish of our interviewees for self-definition and their efforts to institute it in practice. Our working hypothesis was that centring on the interrogation of self-definition would permit us to generate a connection between

the two topics. We then started to ask the same questions to the interviewees, playing down the etymological variances in our material.

From this point on, we were convinced that the link between racism and Sweden's relation to war was to be found in the mutual influences that our interviewees would make between each other. This changed the project significantly. At this point we also found that we needed to recognize our own position of undertaking artistic research and our participation in the problematics, and also make this part of the project.

Therefore we filmed a scene with us producing a replica of an AT4⁹⁶ and performing holding the gun to embody the sales speech of ergonomics and design communicated by the original producer of the gun as well as producing a reference to Chekhov's well-known saying that 'if a gun sits on the wall at the beginning of the play, it will be used at the end of it'⁹⁷.

⁹⁶ The AT4 is an 84-mm unguided, portable, single-shot weapon built in Sweden by Saab Bofors Dynamics.

⁹⁷ 'If in the first act you have hung a pistol on the wall, then in the following one it should be fired. Otherwise don't put it there'. From Gurlyand's *Reminiscences of A. P. Chekhov*, in *Teatr i iskusstvo* 1904, No. 28, 11 July, p. 521.

ANALYSIS

Passing from *Temporary Status, Institute for Collective Studies* to *Redakzia* and *I am curious: Brown*, the question arises: *can the exhibition be the site for research, and can one, then, also think of it as a specific model: the 'research exhibition'?* The notion here of the research exhibition refers to a curatorial practice which goes beyond the exhibition production as a medium for the exposition of research outcomes and becomes also a site for the ongoing research, both with the format and thematic being behind the conceptualization of the curatorial. Staging apparently clashing modules such as aesthetic experience and political activism; co-producer Holmkvist and myself tried, possibly provocatively, to advance the idea of the speaking subject or author, questioning its symbols of power and figures of discourse, as well as its framings of the real in terms of editorial methods and camera angles. How does this character appear through discourse, and what are its functions? What can be said and not said in order for a speaking subject to emerge as genuine and as authentic? What is implied in certain discourses and subject positions, particularly, for example, in relation to the figure of 'the curator' and 'the artist, as well as the 'witness' and the 'source'? The production process behind the film studied how images are ideologically constructed, through the framings and positionings of the subjects, but it also addresses the kinds of counter-images that can be generated. Here, the actual makings and politics of image production from the original film from 1967 was echoed, debated and analysed, proposing an aesthetics of fiction and documentary as that which can get to the performativity of the ideology of mass-media images, in resistance to their claimed neutrality and rationality. Finally, the film project resumes the aspect of counter-images and counter-information, but, in this case, through the artistic employment of editorial attributes such as *exposé* and research.

Specific concerns of 'staging' took the form of carrying research content with their specific circumstances in terms of space/time and subjectivities, to a performative and filmic situation, which was preconditioned by the terms of a film project, the constraints of material and other resources. Here I saw my position, as a curator, to take, and translate resources from the investigations into other material forms in a new setting. In other words, those specific 'communities of sense', would be staged within

another sensory world of a film for viewers that are established and acknowledged in cultural, social and political terms. I reflected how to transpose the sensibilities and materialities of one field into another, which also involves the translation from a world of experiences and communities that tend to be obscure or ostracized, into a world of actual audiences.

The confrontation, or frontier, between these two worlds can also be assumed in the terms of 'dissensus', implied not as a battle between 'enemy and friend' (Rancière, 2011) but 'a total break with the existing state of affairs in order to create something absolutely new' (Mouffe, 2007:5). The prospective could be for the curatorial part to offer an intermission, a disruption within one world, grasped and apprehended as 'factual present' in which another that might be imperceptible, omitted or not present, could be embodied. Divergence need not take the form of disagreement between ideas and attitudes but a disruption in the way we observe and practice the world in which we are currently situated and its taken-for-granted sensible and social orders.

In curatorial terms, assuming the gathered resources from the first three projects, I amended and developed a conceptual methodology centred on Walter Benjamin's debate of the mission of the 'translator'⁹⁸, a methodology of developing the translation beyond the translation of imageries and writings. In between these two spheres, a translator does not reject the inconsistencies and disparities between the two, but exploits them in order to 'intensify' a dissensual condition which might expose a space for political subjectivization.

More specifically, I reflected on the role of the curator as translator within a practice advanced by the interviewees and followed by the fictionalization of the research material.

⁹⁸ The task of the translator consists in finding that intended effect [intention] upon the language into which he is translating which produces in it the echo of the original', *The Task of The Translator: An Introduction to the Translation of Baudelaire's Tableaux Parisiens*, in Walter Benjamin and Hannah Arendt (eds.) *Illuminations: Reflections and Essay*. London: Pimlico, 1999.

3.5 REFLECTIONS ON CURATORIAL PRACTICE AS RESEARCH

Evaluating the curatorial projects presented in this chapter in relation to the contemporary writings on artistic research is useful in understanding curatorial practices as research within artistic knowledge production. Within the rational on artistic research, I will position them between two aspects: one that centres on the methodology and theoretical understanding and the other one that emphasises the actual representation/event/object as producing knowledge, or as a contribution to a theoretical concept through the content developed.

What is significant to the theoretically responsive curator is to be alert to the site of knowledge and its local manifestation, meaning an emphasis on where the research takes place and what it achieves⁹⁹. An additional focus is the emphasis on developing methods, while, at the same time, developing research in a way that does not submit to academic standards of research (Feyerabend and Hannula, 2009-20).

Artistic research with both a focus on theory and methodology thus advances the practice at the core and it is through researching one's own practice that methodology emerges¹⁰⁰. The method of defining artistic research as a combination of theory, research and practice does give a direction to the curator to be responsive to the social context, to initiate projects that critically scrutinize societal concerns, to challenge the

⁹⁹ For other positions related to the theoretically aware artist in relation to knowledge production within debates about artistic research, see Angelika Nollert et al., eds., *A.C.A.D.E.M.Y.* (Frankfurt am Main, 2006); Maria Hlavajova, *On Knowledge Production: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art* (Utrecht, 2008); Lina Dokuzovic et al., *Intersections: At the Crossroads of the Production of Knowledge, Precarity, Subjugation and the Reconstruction of History, Display and De-Linking* (Wien, 2009); Paul O'Neill and Mick Wilson, *Curating and the Educational Turn* (London, 2010); Andrei Siclodi, ed., *Private Investigations: Paths of Critical Knowledge Production in Contemporary Art* (Innsbrück, 2011); Philips, *Why Practice-based PhDs are Political*, 68–79; Carola Dertnig et al., eds., *Troubling Research: Performing Knowledge in the Arts* (Berlin, 2014).

¹⁰⁰ For other positions related to artistic research defined as researching artistic practice, see Hazel Smith and Roger T. Dean, eds., *Practice-Led Research, Research-Led Practice in the Creative Arts* (Edinburgh, 2009); van Ruiten and Wilson, *SHARE Handbook for Artistic Research Education*.

prevailing knowledge systems, to develop research methodologies particular to the matter in question and to research the curatorial practice itself.

Temporary Status, Redakzia, Institute for Collective Studies and *I am Curious: Brown* indicate a potential for curatorial practice as critical knowledge production by experimenting with a collaborative format. This process entails a theoretical approach. Thus, curatorial research suggests a process of pluralisation of knowledge as non-universalist, localised and embodied. As art historian Caroline A. Jones states, the art object becomes a node in 'the on going activity of knowledge production' in a wider context, while also engaging observers in the production of subjectivities as 'subject-making machines' (Jones, 2007:318). The curator emerges in a process of theoretical and practical fluctuation in continuous negotiation with models, formats and matters. This process and interchange lead to a theoretical object, which again travels, stimulating theoretical reflection within academia and affective reactions for the viewers, perhaps altering what is perceivable and what can occur¹⁰¹.

¹⁰¹ See my discussion of Butler's idea in the introduction to Chapter Three in this thesis.

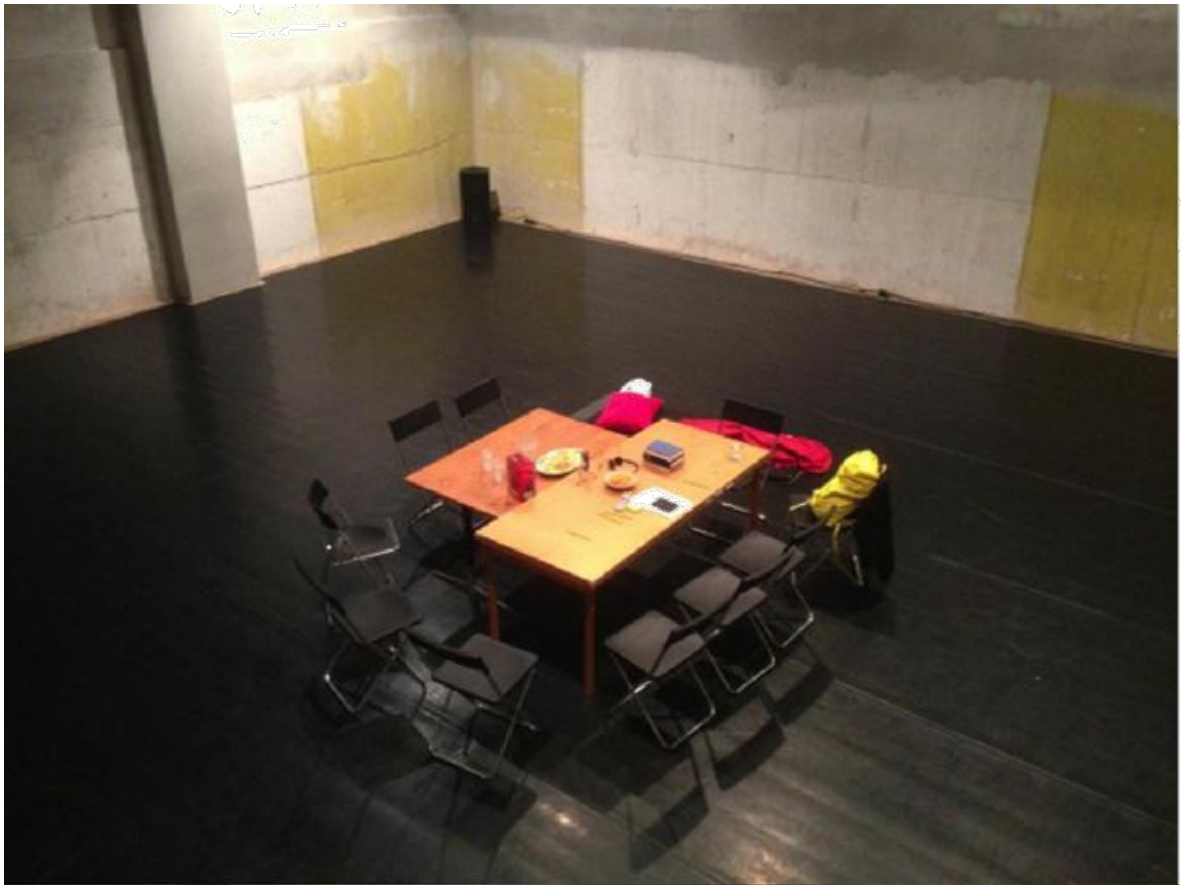




Figure 5: Images from the lecture on negativity by Benjamin Noys, at Weld, in Stockholm, 2014

CONCLUSION

A series of research questions were outlined at the outset of this thesis with the aim of addressing some particular issues related to curatorial practice, such as the forms of collective knowledge that curatorial practice can produce and the shifting role of the curator when working collaboratively. In order to echo both the research questions and the aims of this study mentioned in the Introduction, I claim that my approach to the field of curatorial practice has been unique in two specific ways: firstly, as existing discourse primarily focuses upon the authorial power shift brought about by the activities of independent and institutional 'übercurators' on international platforms, the way in which I have placed a focus upon three female curators (one of the examples being a curatorial duo) offers a different lens through which to view the history of curatorial practice. Secondly, I have studied the field of curatorial research through a unique combination of empirical research upon selected case studies, and self-driven collaborative practice-based curatorial projects, in parallel with a theoretical process of reading and exploring concepts such as 'collectivity', 'knowledge', 'participation'.

The outcomes of the practice-based curatorial projects explored during my research can be resumed in *I am curious: Brown*, which is the first example of a film project to be framed as a practice-based curatorial PhD research project, is itself a contribution to knowledge in the field, which is best understood as an ongoing response to a line of inquiry rather than a fixed finalized outcome. This strategy, which aimed to move beyond the binary between the artist-run and the institutional, could be further developed by other practitioners aiming to explore forms of critical curatorial practice through the reflection on institutional structures.

While the traditional understanding of curatorial practice is related to a sovereign, a well-defined authority that owns the means of coercion, Foucauldian understandings of knowledge related to power have allowed me to define collective knowledge as the subject and aim of the curatorial acts overviewed as case studies in Chapter One and the curatorial projects practiced and outlined in Chapter Three. This represents an element

that cannot be possessed, conquered or held, but rather exercised. It is not a property or product of the dominant curatorial position but the overall effect of this strategic collaborative work; it is a network of relations that merges public and private. Foucault's thinking around power is what makes such a statement possible.

In connection with the desire to have emancipatory effects, the ideas of Mouffe and Nancy have guided this doctoral project. These effects can be created through radical curatorial decisions, and through curatorial collaboration with subversive artistic practices. So if we view curatorial acts as a collective apparatus making it possible to convey certain meanings and new perspectives into the public sphere, then what is important is how knowledge circulates, and which curatorial contexts can be created.

The argument that has unfolded throughout this study is that collective knowledge can potentially exist as a concept within curatorial practice, based on recent political influences, theoretical writings and practices.

The term 'end' adopted in the title of this research project is to be understood as an allegory, in the sense of confines or limits. So the End of the Curator is not to be confused with the 'end of curating', because the allegory is not implying the demise of curating. Rather, it indicates the edges of the curatorial field as one focuses on individual figures. In Chapter Two, it was claimed that the term curator can no longer be grasped as identifiable with a distinctive individual figure – instead, curating should be understood as a critical space crossed by various nomadic elements.

This study has suggested a different method for writing a narrative of curatorial practice history, one in which the emphasis is shifted from the terms of the curator as authoritarian figure to the contexts produced. The main vocabularies in this study have focused around 'collectivity' (Rogoff, 2002) and 'knowledge' in relation to a primarily chronological and performative understanding of how curatorial projects develop and are practised.

However, the issue remains as to how knowledge is created in such collective constellations, and what methods of collectivity essentially appear as an outcome of participation. The argument here is that by reviewing the idea of how curatorial practice produces meaning, we can recognize the significance of the curatorial as a site of critical knowledge production rather than it being one which leads to the reproduction of normative values. Having in mind the written study and the case studies by the other artists and curators, this research asserts that curatorial projects are sites of communal knowledge, and as such, sites where interaction is repeatedly happening and values are being conveyed.

In Chapter Two of this study, a speculative attempt was made to discuss the paradigm of participation and consider alternatives. In Lave and Wenger's study of what they call 'communities of practice', the argument is that people can rightfully be committed to these, while staying peripheral and that even genuine marginal participation signifies an objective to ascertain by taking part (Lave and Wenger, 1991). This is a key point in relation to how curatorial projects are established where a logic of collectivity, within a conventional logic, might seem non-existent but where even the most marginal of participant/practitioners acquire intentionality.

The practice projects described and analysed in Chapter Three are key to this study because they expose, in different ways, the complexity and unpredictability of the collaborative and collective activities that make up curatorial practice. In retrospect, these projects share two similarities and those are the emphasis on freelance practice and their unequivocal socio-political aims. Examples of this kind are useful in reflecting on the method in which the engagement of the different contributors is framed, negotiated and finally instituted.

Apparently insignificant, subjective reflections concerning the processes by which the projects are organized often provide us with understandings that unravel the grand

narratives of the completed outcome, which we find prevailing in press releases, informational writings and curatorial manifestos.

This study has sought to relativize the importance of curating within our understanding of how exhibitions are constituted or practiced and of the processes of learning that such practice leads to. This assessment of the 'ends of curating' is undertaken neither to support an idea of the importance of the artist, over and above the curator, nor to champion the public, over and above the art. The picture of the field that emerges is one of shifting hierarchies, co-participation, multiplicity and exchange, symptomized by the itinerancy of individuals within a field of identifications that were once definitive. With this in mind, the process of relativizing the importance of curating can be seen, perhaps conversely, as strengthening the field of exhibition practice.

To go back to the inquiry of curatorial practice as a site of collective knowledge, the curators' role here is described by their commitment to the community of practice that a project produces. In the case studies of Martha Rosler, Marion von Osten and Kuratorisk Aktion, these are transitory platforms, of which the artists, curators, their colleagues, visitors, institutional staff and anyone else who encounters the project are all an integral part. It is their shared undertakings that define how a project is established. To relativize curatorial practice in the way proposed here, is neither to suggest it has a facilitator function nor a pedagogical one, both of which would imply that the curator is, in some way outside the community of practice. On the contrary, the curator is assumed here as included within the community and affiliated with its objective of generating knowledge together.

Regarding the review of the position of the curatorial researcher in relation to on-going socio-political practices, the researcher's gender, culture and class were put at stake, along with the knowledge and authority usually assumed and applied by the established practices of curating and research, over those who may have very distinctive terminologies for recognising, relating and cooperating with others. The subjects and their political subjectivities came into focus as the main and decisive matter in the

situation, essentially reconfiguring the original research plan and its pre-constitution of how things might progress and what could be produced. The politics of communicative actions were reconceived in terms of how they were embodied (by the researcher and participants with diverse cultural identities, forms of knowledge and political subjectivities) and mediated (as access, opportunity and influence). Indisciplinarity conceptualizes a reflexive approach towards the proportions of authority personified in researcher-participant interactions and endorsed in communicative activities.

The position of the curator and researcher cannot be pre-constituted, nor its terms of participation. Curating must be questioned at the 'political frontier', in which other situated forms of knowledge are embodied in social-oriented practices. Notions such as the 'collective' exposes a series of under-explored questions and methods that may be cross-examined within and through art research.

Nevertheless, the method here advances added concerns about the politics of curatorial research. Practice-based research methodologies foster theory in the context of curatorial practice, through effective de/construction of theoretical notions conveyed into practice. The argument is that the challenge is not only to comprehend and include critical-political theories from without, but also to construct an intellectual foundation for curatorial practice on the base of its own methods of operation. That said, this study highlights the difficult and perhaps ambiguous issue of consolidating the theoretical and conceptual foundation of curatorial practice, by ways in which it is discerned and outlined as a discipline, in the same time as opposing notions of exclusion, authority and power.

My argument is that a critical role of the curator researcher should be to enhance his or her understanding of the contingencies and confines in context, in relation to further practices of knowledge. This is as Ross Birrell has said, a more political, or disruptive and even destructive, form of indisciplinarity (Birrell and Rancière, 2008:4). Or, as Kathrin Busch formulates, it is a question of how art may function to interrupt both its

own and other recognized knowledge structures, to reveal innate power structures through forms of knowledge and practice that are ambivalent, incommensurable, and singular (Busch, 2007:41).

Regarding the economy of curatorial practice, the contemporary art curator is no longer a specialist on a specific era; instead the curator is an anthropologist, a journalist, a sociologist, an epistemologist, an NGO representative or an observer of the Internet (Buden, 2012:114). This post-fordist cultural worker has become skilful at balancing sporadic creative work with supplementary routine jobs in the creative and service industries. Gregory Sholette writes that

‘artists who are engaged in this existence build up complex networks made up of other semi-employed artists as well as family members. These networks circulate material support, as well as a great deal of intangible, informational assistance in the form of opportunities for auctions, residencies, exhibitions, publications and technical solutions.’ (Sholette, 2011:27-48).

Conclusively, what this thesis - and the associated curatorial works -has revealed is that curatorial practice has metamorphosed into additional artistic modes affiliated to creative practices of the common, allowing both artists and curators alike to produce what I call ‘collective knowledge’. Through the method of investigating, developing concepts, coordinating, configuring and producing the work side-by-side with the artists, as a curator, I start to position my own practice while considering the practice of other curators. As this research is practice-based, my curatorial and research process go hand-in-hand with constructing, in parallel, opinions about curating and the manifestations of it. My curatorial practice and the organization of each of the projects contribute to a better understanding of the notion of a collective knowledge produced in collaboration with my fellow colleagues, while actively producing it.

By developing this doctoral research and thesis, as a method of producing an original contribution in reaction to evident breaches in curatorial knowledge, I suggest that it has produced additional groundwork for its historical discourse as well as contemporary practice. Inquiring into what way knowledge is being constructed from inside the curatorial arena, has provided the foundation of a process of exposing how the practice of curating develops in relation to social, philosophical and artistic trajectories.

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