

The Role of the Curator

A critique of the art system today.¹

*"There is a saying, that says that a plan
is a list of things that will not work"²*

I would like to begin by making an introductory remark – In this essay I will be looking at and discussing the constantly changing role of the curator in the arts as an example. Curators are known to be required for the purpose of mediating artists and conceptualising and designing exhibition space. By looking at the way in which arts is mediated, presented und curated we gain insight into the current state of the artistic system.

At the moment there are two different forms of presentation within the art world: Periodically repeating and one-off exhibitions; art exhibitions without a thematic subject, and those with one. A Biennale is a format that can be used to present an overview of contemporary art. It can however also be used to present a thematic subject or an essay. As such two tendencies of contemporary exhibition practice are characterised; the Biennale as means for presenting local or national art and the so-called 'exhibition-essay' which tackles and presents a thematic subject.

Regular Art Exhibitions at a Fixed Location

A Biennale is an exhibition format. Through its biennial repetition, a temporal continuum is established.³ Biennales take place at various locations across the globe.

Every Biennale attempts to find its own profile. They have to be constantly renewed⁴. As a result Biennales have a contemporary exhibition format. The profile of an exhibition defines its concept. Simultaneously the concepts of the exhibition determine the profile of each individual Biennale. The format of a Biennale is fundamentally independent of its content⁵. The profile is also very much connected to the physical location of the Biennale. The profile of a Biennale draws attention to the physical location of the exhibition. This is an important consideration, not only to the initiators of the Biennale but also to its sponsors and investors. Therein lies a permanent problem with every Biennale and every art exhibition. It is not possible to predict whether or not the artistic concept will be effective, whether the exhibition will be a success or a failure. If an exhibition is a flop, this redounds upon the city or location in which the exhibition took place.

Large urban exhibitions such as the Berlin Biennale (which has been going since 1998) are in most cases safeguarded by financial and administrative means. Such Biennales are subsequently autonomous. They can pursue their own information politics. The visitor is a political calculation within this. Seen metaphorically, this so-called 'flood' of data and information is no bad thing. Every participant of the art system is 'swimming' in a so-called 'sea of information'. Biennales are like information tsunamis. They flood chosen subsections of the public and overwhelm their target audience⁶. This flow of data drowns out everyday media. Allow me to illustrate an example within everyday media: A weekend edition of a national newspaper - who really has the time to work through the entirety of one of these? One would need three weeks to get through the weekend edition of the New York Times. When it comes to the implementation of a large-scale event like a Biennale, the organisers use both old and new media. One part of this is a mass of published material implemented in a variety of ways. At the very peak of all of this content there is usually a mammoth catalogue. Organising and processing all of this content would be too challenging for a casual visitor to the exhibition. Who really has the time and energy to set up their own archive? As a result, the

interested visitors have no other possibility than to blindly trust the information they are presented. This means that the exhibition guests - or generally speaking, the *users* - lose their independence and autonomy in the consumption and processing of the exhibition's information and content.

The planning and implementation of exhibitions is a core part of art mediation. Exhibitions address the challenges of the art system. They adapt to them. In this system the curator takes on the directorial task of implementing and mediating the art content: this makes the curator vital within the art system. The curator is currently needed within this system. It is a system that is in continuous flux, as such it remains continually open for new exhibitions. The whole process, from the initial planning to the final follow-up is repeated from one exhibition to the next.

Biennales seek to create a discourse on current and relevant topics. They generally illustrate these subject matters through the means of artistic projects. A transparent, art-historical form of presentation is generally not desired or asked for. Therefore the cooperation with the curator, who stands as the mediator, is necessary. The success of new art is only limitedly calculable and predictable. Contemporary art collectors adjust their buying strategies according to current tendencies, but it is only in hindsight that one can actually recognise what was to push through and gain recognition and what not.

The Prototype of all Biennales

The Biennale in Venice is the mother of all Biennales. Over the years it has slowly grown to become one of the most important international art exhibitions in the world.



First Biennale in Venice, central Exhibition Building and Exhibition Room, **1896**

The Biennale in Venice began in 1896 and was then followed by the Biennale in São Paulo in 1951.⁷



First Biennale in São Paulo, temporary Construction by Luiz Saia and Eduardo Kneese de Mello, 1951

As a contrast we can also consider the example of the *documenta* in Kassel, an exhibition of contemporary art that takes place once every five years.

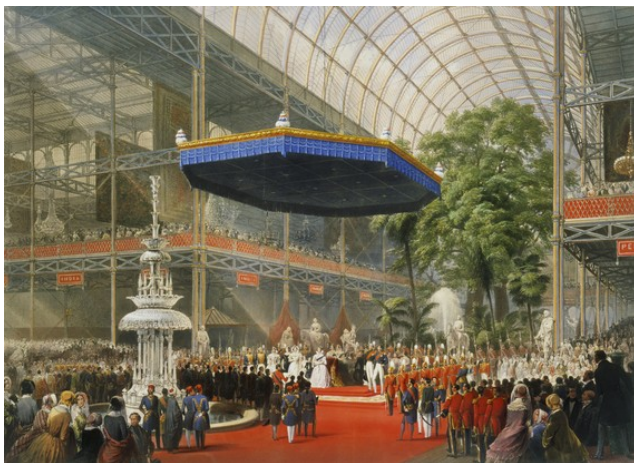


The Biennale in Paulo in 1951 (temporary construction)



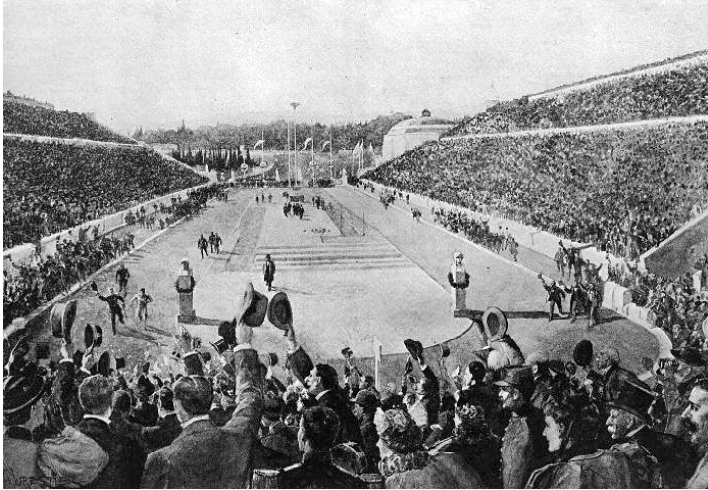
The documenta in Kassel, 1955 (main building, Fridecianum)

More or less all international exhibition formats are modelled on that of the Venice Biennale and the unique exhibition for contemporary art in Kassel, the *documenta*. Today one can count approximately 150 international projects that have been created, inspired by the Venice Biennale. The setup of the Venice Biennale was in turn inspired by two other large events. One of which was *the Great Exhibition* in London in 1851, the first of the *World Exhibitions*.



First World's Exhibition in London, 1851

The other was the reintroduction of the *Olympic Games* in Athens in 1896.⁸



Olympic Games in Athens, 1895

In the beginning the Biennale was a sales exhibition. Over the following two decades, that is to say, up until the First World War, it motivated seven countries to build their own national pavilions in Venice. The venue for the Biennale is the Giardini in Castello, located next to the Arsenals that sit at the end of a long riverside promenade (Riva degli schiavoni) that begins at Markus Square. The two world wars forced two longer breaks between Biennales, as such last year marked the 57th Venice Biennale.

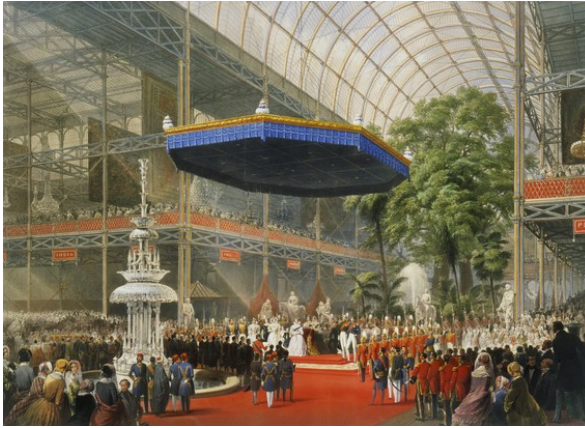


57th Venice Biennale, 1895, Foto F. Engelbert

Today there are pavilions from about 29 different countries in the Giardini, the Biennale's original location, as well as representation from approximately 60 further countries spread across this part of the city.⁹ As such the Venice Biennale is both a national as well as an international art exhibition. It has made the world map of art much more diverse and rich.

The Biennale in Venice comprises two different types of exhibition format that coexist side by side. On the one hand there are the curators of the country pavilions – they have a more nationally-oriented task. On the other hand there are the appointed curators that arrange an international art show in the Main building of the Giardini and the Arsenals. National curators are responsible for the representation of their country. Over the years additional huge exhibition spaces have been added to the setup.

World's Exhibitions provide us an outlook on the interrelation between goods (products) and artworks.



First World's Exhibition in London, 1951



Expo in Milan, Italian Pavilion, 2015, Foto F. Engelbert

Production, the influence of consumer products and the influence of art have all grown. They define our daily life. It has gotten to the stage where the enormous quantity of goods and artwork overwhelm both buyers and exhibition visitors. Every individual piece contributes to the overall aesthetic homogenisation of the whole. Shoppers and exhibition visitors; shopping malls and exhibitions have a lot in common. Art fairs and art exhibitions mutually define each other. Traditionally there used to be a distinct difference - the art exhibit in a museum followed a different strategy to the sales stands at art fairs. This division seems to be disintegrating, when one sets aside the fact that the first Biennale in Venice was actually a sales exhibition. On the other hand there has so far always been an unwritten rule of division of power between artists, curators, critics and visitors. One has to separate oneself from this idealistic imagined notion of an aesthetic kingdom with its own set of laws. Purposeful and purposeless aesthetic objects have become indistinguishable. Aesthetic worth becomes monetary worth. It is like the stock market announcing the worth of its companies.

But let us get back to the history of art exhibitions. After 1989 the global political climate changed dramatically. I'm talking here about globalisation and digitalisation. These had consequences for the Venice Biennale. The separation between East and West broke down and with it the ideological gap between Eastern and Western Art. Nowadays we have the same prerequisites for, and expectations from art across the whole globe. There is no longer any delay in international art, be it in Shanghai or in Berlin, everywhere is connected instantaneously and constantly.

Within the context of globalisation and as a result of international economical tendencies and national political tendencies the art system has changed. On the one hand international finance capitals and international conglomerates share and divide up the global space in competition with one another. On the other hand different states and nations are distancing themselves from one another and trying to assert themselves individually in the face of the global power of financial markets. Nationally identifiable artworks appear within an international framework. The politics of how they are presented determines how they are perceived. The identification of a piece is something else entirely than finding its allocation within the international art scene.

Harald Szeemann as a Model for Art Curation.

Harald Szeemann was the director of the Biennale in Venice for the two consecutive Biennales in 1999 and 2001. He led the symbolic transition of global art into the new millennium. In reality, he did so much more than this. Szeemann executed a change of systems from international to global art. From a Western art

scene a global art system was born. An indicator for this is the worldwide boom of Biennales and art fairs.

Ever since then the strength of the curator's ability to integrate is measured against that of Harald Szeemann. His legacy is revealing in many ways. In the 20th century, over the course of decades Szeemann conceptualised and implemented important and trendsetting art exhibitions. A part of this is that he understood the transition that Marcel Duchamp made as an artist, exhibition organiser, theorist and critic and used this in the orchestration of his exhibitions.¹⁰

"Tableau of humankind" is what Szeemann called his global art show in Venice in 1999.



Ron Mueck, untitelt (Boy), Arsenale, 490 x 490 x 250 cm, 48. Biennale in Venice 1999, Fotos von A. Engelbert

With this he drew attention to the new international art scene of global art. Venice isn't only the most well-known and oldest Biennale. It isn't only the biggest and certainly most important art exhibition currently in existence. Much more than this, Venice decides to what extent different cultures that produce nationally rated art will come together. The global art scene differentiates itself locally through different cultures. In this dramatic exchange between culture and art, the Venice Biennale plays a crucial role. It is a global art exhibition that exists under the conditions of several different cultures. Biennales are special products of the art system. The curator serves as the surface for their artistic profile, as the universal means for conveying their concept, and as the pretext for the format of the exhibition. Nowadays he is simply an effect of the art system. Biennale's are places where international art accumulates and collects¹¹.

Since Szeemann's huge show at the latest, further differentiations have become apparent. Art differs in the rules that get applied to it. Through this the universal understanding of art gets divided up into a spectrum of parts. The monotheistic legacy of Western art collapses into a polyvalent spectrum of global art. The scale of values for global art is as follows: Information value, market value, cultural value, relevance, artistic value and exhibition value.

The curator functions - seen in a positive light - as the link between two worlds. Negatively seen, he's spreading himself thin trying to fulfil a double role. The curator serves the strategies of the art system alone¹². He is simply a brand that is supposed to guide a product (e.g a Biennale) to success. But in this regard I am hopeful: all parties involved within the global art system are connected to one another. The insular position of the artist belongs to the past. Even the visitor to the exhibit is no longer the dictator of the scene. On the contrary, the visitor, due to the sheer quantity of content, has been pushed into the defensive. Traditional artwork presented a clear challenge that already demanded everything of the viewer, in contrast to this he has now become a slave to the vast displays of artwork. Seen from a modern perspective - we could say he is 'shopping aesthetics'. Provocation, shock and the progression into new

aesthetic territory have long been aspects of an art exhibition. They are now a fixed element of what the audience has come to expect.

Essay-based Exhibitions - Thematic Exhibitions.

Since the beginning of exhibition practice, aside from individual and group exhibitions, thematic exhibitions have also been commonplace. In the case of a topic-oriented exhibition, the form of delivery is adapted to the type of exhibition. It depends on whether the exhibition comprises a display of works or a historical overview. Research and creative implementation are complimented by presentations. Thematic exhibitions in particular are usually combined with a conceptualised mediation and curation. The question now, is how the design and production of an art exhibition can be further developed to enhance and better mediate its concepts.

The design and staging of a space has become important not only within the exhibition context, but also within stage design. If the format of an exhibition is considered to be space-related, the format of the theatrical stage can be considered to be time-related. One could compare the space-design aspect of exhibitions to the introduction of illustration within printed media. On the one hand it provided a visual enrichment for the reader but on the other hand it resulted in a reduction in its intellectual demand.

Aside from the way in which the exhibition or theatre space is designed and orchestrated, there are other characterising factors: Namely success and reputation. The economical value of art is disproportionately greater than that of theatre. Whilst theatre seems to be more independent of the economic world, the exhibition space is more economically dependent on and open to the outside world. Within theatre the focus is on the combination of media. Within the exhibition world it is on the reflection on media. Whereas the political discourse of the stage appears to be less burdened by economical interests, the exhibition space is more adept at demonstrating the other medial forms of conveying information and ideas. We are experiencing a crossover between theatregoers and exhibition visitors.¹³

In Berlin's art world, new territory was covered with the 2005 exhibition "Zur Vorstellung des Terrors. Die RAF". The purpose of this exhibition was to present a historical subject in an exhibition context.¹⁴

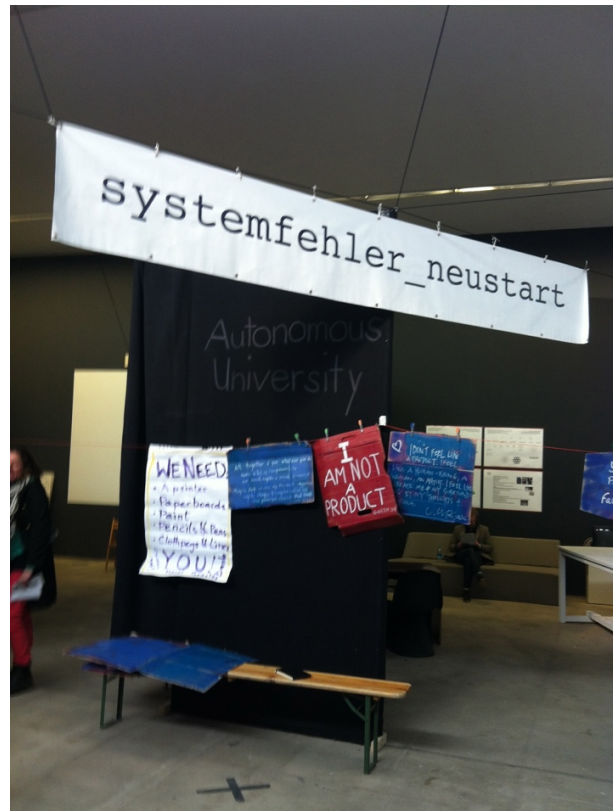
This exhibition was centred around a specific European rebellion that took place before 1989, explained simply; the RAF (Red Army Fraction) challenged the central state authorities in Germany. The state reacted to this. This escalated to violence on both sides and climaxed with a firm and radical intervention on the part of the German state. These events shook German society but remain unprocessed until today. Only in the field of art has there been an attempt to create some sort of reconciliation between law and rebellion. The highlight of the essay-exhibition in Berlin was that this text-based content was combined with a visual delivery within an exhibition context. The curator drew upon well-known forms of information mediation within mass media. The principle of re-appropriating historical material as has previously been done in re-enactment exhibitions was combined with the possibilities contained within the artistic practice. Through this the essay format was brought into the realm of art and its themes could be made illustratively experienceable.¹⁵ This raises the question of the possibility of using the exhibition framework and context to combine the development of democracy, media reporting and the idea of political resistance.

Politics as a Subject: The Seventh Berlin Biennale in 2012 and the documenta 14 in Kassel in 2017

Since 1998 the Berlin Biennale has had an independent profile. It distinguishes itself as a fixed location within the art world. This is reflected in its chosen artistic concepts, the casting of the jury¹⁶ and the choice of curators¹⁷. Every Berlin Biennale receives 2.5 Million Euros of funding¹⁸. Continuous organisation and management guarantee continuity. Everything is in order. In 2012 Artur Zmijewski was appointed as curator with his subject "Forget Fear".¹⁹



7. Berlin Biennale, Kunstwerke, 2012, Foto von A. Engelbert



Installationsfotos, Kunstwerke, 2012, Foto von A. Engelbert

The focus of the 7th Berlin Biennale (2012) was the inclusion of the occupy movement. The occupy movement (2011) dealt with the global financial situation. It was a movement that took its - physically visible - position opposing large banks such as Goldman Sachs on Wallstreet. Representatives of this movement from New York, Amsterdam and Frankfurt received a permanent site in the central exhibition space at the Berlin Biennale. The risk that the curator took in combining different movements blew over as early as the exhibition's spectacular opening day: activists were simply perceived as art objects by the visitors to the exhibition, and the visitors were perceived as escapist of reality.

There was no exchange and no distance. The curator confronted the public with the occupy movement. But the artistic space stayed peculiarly empty. The exhibition trapped reality in a cage. It is however important to take cultural differences into consideration. One must not forget that visitors from Egypt, Iran or China might have different standards for reality than Europeans and would subsequently have perceived the activists differently.



Documenta 14, Kassel 2017, Tempel vor dem Fridericianum, Fotos von A. Engelbert



Detail, Säule mit Büchern

Although the attempt to tackle the subject of contemporary political movements failed spectacularly in this case it was decided, five years after the exhibition in Berlin to make another attempt at tackling this subject, this time at the 14th *documenta* in Kassel. This edition of the *documenta* took place from the 8th of April to the 17th September in both Kassel and Athens.²⁰ Except in this case the expectation was that nothing could or would go wrong. The subject at hand was Europe, the relationship between indebted Greece and the rest of Europe. But at the exhibition there was no vision for a future Europe, or a “Global Village” anywhere to be seen. Aside from this there was also no perceptible criticism of Europe’s current politics, the European crisis, so to speak. The 14th *documenta* in Kassel was the most successful to date in terms of the number of visitors.²¹ However it was unanimously torn apart by international critics.²² Nevertheless one can see a greater meaning to the 14th *documenta* in Kassel: downfall or self-renewal. Is contemporary art disintegrating of its own accord? Or are the artists managing to breathe new life into art? Since 1955 this is what the *documenta* has really been about.²³

This is something that in my opinion needs to be taken into consideration when reflecting on the *documenta*. There are two reasons for the failure in Kassel. The first of these is the concept and curators, the second is the fact that the art system is currently in the midst of a crisis. The globally networked art industry drew a boundary between art and reality. There exists a distinct separation between the art world and the real world. This is a division that can no longer be lifted. Even if all of the highly-ranked members of the art industry wanted it and were to express that the art world needed a new vision. The ability to react to and suggest changes has been lost and forgotten. The global art industry is revolving around itself, it lacks the strength, independent of the system, to renew itself.

Tendencies of the discussed Exhibition Industry.

There are two perspectives that I will now critically illuminate.

Firstly, global commercial competition has consequences for the global exhibition industry. The exhibition industry is positioned within immediate proximity to the tendencies of the international financial market. It is however even less controllable, and significantly more lacking in rules than the former. This has however

not yet led to a crash of the art market. The international exhibition industry is like a wild-west relic of uncontrolled and unconstrained capitalism. This is why the mafia-esque structures are even more brutal within the art industry. Biennales and well known museums have long since been getting placed within international rankings. This ranking is decided by the following factors: the media effect on reality, how far-reaching their effect on the public is, and their power within the aesthetic discourse, that is to say, their art politics. There is no real difference when one compares art to profit-oriented business or banks. In the end, the professional side of international Biennales is nothing more than a fight for cultural-political sponsors, patrons and supporters or lenders. That is to say; it is uncivilised. The exhibition industry is quite apparently even more corrupt than all of the other participants of the capitalist market. On the other hand there is a difference. So far there has been a critical distance between purpose-oriented corporations and art-oriented practice. This critical distance profits from the purpose-free logic of museum-based entities. As though the insufficiency or rather, discomfort, with society could be demonstrated through this critical distance. In their current condition, Biennales are like aesthetic predators. They are constantly in search of controversial, problematic, current and high-risk subject matters. In this process the curator is like a predator, held and lead at the neck by the Biennale and the leading museums. Previously it was the museum directors that snarled and bared their teeth. They fought for their interests. Now a cooperative ensemble has emerged, the globally knowledgeable, well-networked and moderate, aesthetically-driven businessman.

Secondly, 'information media' is another of the requirements that hasn't passed the exhibition business by without leaving a mark. A core aspect of the essay-exhibition format is the way in which information is mediated within the media. An essay-exhibition could easily find its place within a Biennale. Essay-exhibitions force the viewer to confront themselves with their knowledge base by using the exhibition context to create a distance to the information being mediated. As a result the visitor can reflect on the ways in which information can be mediated. The essay-exhibition expands upon the possibilities for artistic expression by playing with the form of presentation and as such analysing information politics within the media. In contrast to the format seen at Biennales, the essay-exhibition format is about the politics of the delivery of information. It stands apart from commercial tendencies, centring instead around the presentation of interest-based content. The format of a Biennale is open for other exhibition formats. It could therefore also make use of the concept of an essay-exhibition.

Art exhibitions, and Biennales in particular drive the modern discourse on art. Biennales promote this discourse by taking on interesting projects. It can however not be denied that the role of the local and national public remains minimal. The visitor to the exhibition is left to their own devices. He consumes the offerings of the exhibition passively. He is confronted with the opinions of critics and the self-representation of the artists. Based on this, he is supposed to form his own opinion. Only a very small group of mobile visitors, artists, collectors, gallery owners and curators are truly able to take part in the international and trans-cultural artistic discourse.

The notion of "Art for all" that emerged last century, as well as Josef Beuys idea that "Everyone is an Artist" nowadays seem like foreign and strange concepts.

We also have to say goodbye forever to old and new expressions like "The Beauty" or "Smart Things" ("Good Usage"). We are connected to different universes now. Actually we have to replace the concept "Our Life on Earth" and learn through the visions (Gestaltung) of virtual spaces.

What is this discourse really about? Is it about the forms of mediation, exhibition formats, thematic subject matters or individual artworks? My theory is that there exists only an imaginary discourse, bound to nothing fixed: The successful invention of the European exhibition space needs to be critically scrutinised and questioned. The separation of the art world and reality has isolated the art world from reality. As a result the art world is in crisis.

Despite all of the critique and scepticism I remain hopeful, although at this point I am only able to make the first tentative suggestions as to why: Artworks refer to something general that exists beyond themselves. They require a commonality for all involved. This common ground is social and revolutionary in a novel way. It necessitates a new form of aesthetic experience. Let us name this new, as yet non-existent structure "Arts and Meditation". In my opinion, the validity of art is in desperate need of a new moral strength and the liberation that comes from a social push. The hermetic border between art and reality must be lifted. That

would be something novel. The social aspect of the internal and external experience of art would have to be reinvented. That means a global change of arts and their curating is necessary. I would like to be a part of this future mission. To say in an older expression: The relationship between Arts and Reality must be redefined.

Further Comments

* In following writing of nouns don't provide the exclusion from different meanings.

The background is a correct understanding: So is in German the use of the article related to man, woman or child. I will avoid that the belief there is only one grammatical understanding intended.

¹ This text has a long history; originally developed orally in collaboration with the Kunstwerke in Berlin [Renate Wagner], it was able to make known in different places, to different audiences. The lecture takes up a number of questions that were first discussed in seminars and tested in lectures since in 2013 and have been continuously expanded:

__Lecture: Die Kunst des Möglichen (The Art of the Possible), 7th Annual meeting of the Association for Culture Management 17th - 19th January, 2013, Potsdam")

__On 03.03.2018, the lecture "The role of the curator. A Critique of the Art System Today" was held. The lecture was financed by the Goethe-Institute/ Max Mueller Bhavan and the IIT/IDC Bombay and took place at the occasion of the exhibition "Nature Embedded. A Design Technology Experience" - curated by Dr. Ajanta Sen.

__In October 1919 the text form of this lecture was written.

² Katalog Berlin: Forget Fear, 7th Berlin Biennale for contemporary Art, KW Institute for Contemporary Arts, curated by Artur Zmijewski and Joanna Warsza, Cologne: Walther König Publishers.

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⁴ Block, René: *We hop on, we hop off*, a.a.O., S.104. see also:

The Catalog "Das Lied von der Erde" ("The Song from the Earth") Documents the exhibition, however not the criteria for curation
Katalog Kassel: Das Lied von der Erde, ed. by René Block, Fridericianum Kassel 2000.
 Congress of Biennials, Fridericianum Kassel, 2000.

⁵ We limit our discussion here to Biennale exhibitions of visual art. As soon as the content is changed, the criteria also change

⁶ Here an example from the 7th Berlin Biennale:

"Unlike any previous edition, the 7th Berlin Biennale received substantial media interest even long before its opening. With over 1,000 articles in the daily press as well as art publications the coverage was more comprehensive than ever before. In accordance with the curators demands, the content was no longer just discussed within the art world - the 7th Berlin Biennale's extreme resonance reached beyond the traditional art publications into both the national and international press as well as news outlets such as Al-Jazeera, CNN and the Tagesschau."

See the report „Die 7. Berlin Biennale rief so viel Diskussionen hervor wie nie“ (*"The 7th Berlin Biennale caused more discussion than ever before"*) in <http://www.berlinbiennale.de/blog/1-6-biennale/7-berlin-biennale>, last accessed 06.02.2016.

⁷ The first Venice Biennale took place in 1895. The Biennale in São Paulo began in 1951.

⁸ In 1894 Pierre de Coubertin suggested the introduction of the modern Olympic games. The Olympics have taken place every four years since 1896. The Winter and Summer Olympics take place biennially in other parts of the world
 See also: https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olympische_Spiele; last accessed: 22.01.2018.

⁹ Fleck, Robert: *Die Biennale von Venedig. Eine Geschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, 2. korrigierte Aufl., Hamburg: Philo Fine Arts Publishing 2012.

¹⁰ See two images by Marcel Duchamp: a) *Surrealist Exhibition*, New York, 1942 and Marcel Duchamp; b) *Shop Window*, New York, 1960.

¹¹ One thing that cannot be disregarded: On the one side there is the independent Biennale format, on the other side there is the sales-dependent format of an art fair. The Venice Biennale and Art Basel are however increasingly mixing their profiles. Their opening dates are always close together.

¹² Heidenreich, Stefan: Schafft die Kuratoren ab! Ob Documenta oder Biennale, überall herrschen Ausstellungsmacher und schaden der Kunst und den Künstlern, in: <http://www.zeit.de/2017/26/ausstellungen-kuratoren-kuenstler-macht>; last accessed 24.01.2018.

¹³ See the photos in the catalogue "Zur Vorstellung des Terrors: Die RAF-Ausstellung, Kunstwerke Berlin 2005", especially the images of Josef Beuys' action "Dürer, ich fuhr führen persönlich Baader + Meinhof durch die Dokumenta V".

¹⁴ See here the exhibition archive of Kunst-Werke Berlin:
http://www.kwberlin.de/de/exhibitions/regarding_terror_the_raf_exhibition_113, last accessed 06.02.2016.

¹⁵ The exhibition's curator outlined the content in just a few sentences "The exhibition and the catalogue for the "zur Vorstellung des Terrors: Die RAF" exhibition comprise pieces from around 40 different artists that have all tackled the subject of the RAF and produced pictures on the topic. Some of these pictures are completely their own, others partially derived from media images, posters, or literature from the time. We only displayed and exhibited content that was already public, that is to say, had already been published." First it is necessary to differentiate between aspiration and reality. There are various entities that want to draw attention to, or try to change this. If one follows this thought further, complex relationships emerge. As such one can ask, beyond this initial differentiation: Is there a relationship between political entities (that regulate interests), revolts (that push for change) and the media (which reflects and comments on these) that can be made visible through the means of artistic reflection and the mediation thereof in the exhibition context?

Katalog Berlin: Zur Vorstellung des Terrors. Die RAF-Ausstellung, Bd. 2, ed. by Klaus Biesenbach, KW Institute for Contemporary Art, 2 Bde., Göttingen, Berlin: Steidl Verlag 2005, S.11.

¹⁶ The selection committee for the position of curator for the 8th Berlin Biennale comprised of Sergio Edelsztein (Director and Editor-in-Chief at the Centre for Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv); Can Fei (Artist, Beijing), Susanne Gaensheimer (Director, MMK Museum for Modern Art, Frankfurt a. M.); Koyo Kouoh (Founding Director and Art Director, Raw Material Company - Centre for Art Knowledge and Society, Dakar); Matthias Mühling (Head of Collections and Curator, Städtische Galerie in Lenbachhaus, Munich); Bisi Silva (Director and Founder, Centre for Contemporary Art, Lagos) and Patricia Sloane (Associate Curator, MUAC Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo and Advisor to the Head of Department of Visual Arts, UN-AM Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico City)

¹⁷ All of the Berlin Biennales to date:

1. Berlin Biennale (1998): Klaus Biesenbach with Nancy Spector and Hans Ulrich Obrist
2. Berlin Biennale (2001): Saskia Bos
3. Berlin Biennale (2004): Ute Meta Bauer
4. Berlin Biennale (2006): Maurizio Cattelan, Massimiliano Gioni and Ali Subotnick
5. Berlin Biennale (2008): Adam Szymczyk and Elena Filipovic
6. Berlin Biennale (2010): Kathrin Rhomberg
7. Berlin Biennale (2012): Artur Zmijewski together with the associated curators Voina und Joanna Warsza
8. Berlin Biennale (2012): Juan A. Gaitán (Kanada/ Kolumbien)

¹⁸ "Since its fourth edition, the Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art has been funded by the Cultural Foundation of the German Federal Government for artistic excellence. The 2.5 Million Euro funding received for each Biennale guarantees security in the planning side of the exhibition, allowing the organisers of the Berlin Biennale to concentrate instead on its content."

¹⁹ As a result of his political intentions, the curator of the 7th Berlin Biennale connected the art world to reality. He chose to take up the topic of the international financial crisis, as exemplified by the occupy movement, and put this into the museum context in the form of an art exhibition. This connected two networks; the activists and the Biennale decision-makers. Within this the curator is a calculated medium and embodies a socially relevant tendency.

²⁰ The Art Director is called: Adam Szymczyk. For the team behind the Documenta 14 see: <http://www.documenta14.de/de/team>; Last Accessed: 22.01.2018

²¹ More than one million visitors saw the exhibition in both cities during its 163-day running time. This makes the Documenta 14 the most visited exhibition of contemporary art in history. During the 100 days of the Documenta 14 in Kassel, 891,500 visitors came for the events or to see the public works. 65% of the visitors came from Germany and the remaining 35% came from 76 countries worldwide.
In: <http://www.documenta14.de/de/news/25596/closing>; Last accessed: 30.12.2017.

²² As an example of the critics of the Documenta 14: Bazon Brock, a regular attendee and affiliate of the Documenta in Kassel was a key representative for the critical response to Documenta 14. Here he gives fundamental clues as to the system of art and artists.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5F94LtuZsVA>; Last Accessed: 22.01.2018

²³ The Documenta was founded by Arnold Bode in Kassel, not far from the border to the DDR. It was supposed to represent a new beginning for the arts after the Second World War and be a signal of the free art of West Germany in contrast to the East.