NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE INSTITUTION
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*Martin Fritz*
This teaching material is based on playful research on the relevance of artistic practices concerned with institutional critique, both of today and in the future. When looking at different artworks that pose relevant questions, for instance those of Andrea Fraser and Hans Haacke, we have discussed the underlying structures of the art world and its institutions. Over the last thirty years such works have become part of the canon and been put into boxes in museums all over the world—both materially and discursively—and so the idea behind this teaching material is to revisit and revive these late-twentieth-century analytical and conceptual artistic approaches by seriously considering the critical stances they offer.

What consequences and strategies for institutions could emerge if we were to listen to the questions institutional critique poses? What can we learn from artistic investigations into the power relations, underlying assumptions, mechanisms and functions of institutions? For us curators of today, such criticism opens up a lot of questions. For instance, is there perhaps a way to do things differently? How can we conceive of organizing the task of curating differently? What would a more democratic, open and transparent, equal and collaborative, or unstructured and fluctuating approach look like?

Because there has, for a long time, rarely been any mention of or reflection on such questions, the question that arises for us is why do current critical curating strategies (mostly) fail to emerge as convincing institutional practices. These concerns have motivated us (since 2012) to develop a curriculum on Critical Management in Curating that utilizes the tools of institutional critique to address the gap between theory and practice in curating, contemporary art and critical management studies.

Critical management in curating also entails taking a closer look at the notion of work in general in contemporary neoliberal society and the changes it has brought about in the cultural sector, and asking how the subjectivization of the worker and knowledge-intensive labour have altered the ways in which knowledge is produced,
and how the division of labour and working conditions have taken shape within artistic practices. Because critical management studies are generally focused on organizational culture, we seek to link this with institutional critique and thereby to open up new possibilities and to create new angles for approaching the individual and the institutional in the arts.

The students of today are the arts professionals of tomorrow. They are the ones who will be building and changing the field for years to come. Our motivation for forging a link between critical management and curating within the CuMMA curriculum is founded on what we see as the need to understand, take under scrutiny, and develop a language for addressing the working and structural conditions of the field.

We want to thank Helena Björk, Laura Kokkonen and all the CuMMA students for earnestly engaging with these questions. For us, their viewpoints and work have been an invitation to engage with the ongoing debate on possible institutional alternatives.
The American artist John Baldessari (b. 1931) has said that the most important goal of art education is to demystify artists. “It is important for art students to learn that art is made by human beings, just like them,” he said.

We believe the same is true of art institutions. They too are created by human beings and can therefore be criticized, rethought and imagined differently. Too often, however, everyday practices and power relations prevent us from seeing the possibilities.

With this material we intend to stir up established notions by revisiting some key artistic practices that take on institutional structures in one way or another. The artists and artist groups selected here represent strategies that are closely associated with institutional critique. Numerous others have worked with and around similar themes, but we have chosen to concentrate on those who have dedicated themselves to questioning institutions. By presenting examples from recent history, we want to urge reflection on how the institutions have actually changed during the last decades and on what they might look like in the future.

Institutional critique has been art historically institutionalized as a genre of artistic practices. Its development can be associated with post-structuralist and critical theory and with their impact on visual practices. Subsequently, it was also linked to social developments, especially the civil rights and feminist movements early on, and postcolonial and queer politics later, as well as theoretical critiques of the opposing of high and low culture, or modernist and mass art. The institutional frameworks related to practices of displaying art have been called into question since Marcel Duchamp’s ready-mades in the 1910s, when the entire institutional context in which the work of art occurs came into focus. The 1960s marked an important period in conceptual art, and movements such as Fluxus and the Situationists also contributed to the questioning of the institutional framework of art.

Many artists later identified as occupying the genre of “institutional critique”, such as Hans Haacke, Daniel Buren, Michael Asher and Marcel Broodthaers started off in the late 1960s, followed by a “second wave” of artists such as...

The purpose of this material is to re-actualize core themes of institutional critique. The artists presented here provide a framework to relate to in curatorial or artistic education.
Andrea Fraser and Fred Wilson in the 1980s. In this material we introduce the reader to the practices of these central figures and others, in order to provide a background to what might be actualized by people working with art and its institutions today.

Over the decades, institutional critique has come to be used as a label for specific artistic practices, and seems in 2014 to belong in the past. Today, the term is indeed seldom used, although many of its central themes are still very much present. The purpose of this material is therefore to re-actualize core themes of institutional critique. The artists presented here provide a solid framework to relate to in curatorial or artistic education.

This material has been collected by curating students for curating students. We have born in mind what would have been useful for us at the beginning of our studies: getting acquainted with the topic of institutional critique, and relating that to our existing critical approach to habitual practices.

The content is arranged according to five themes: Institution, Space, Museology, Discrimination, and Collectivity. By way of these themes, we aim to bring issues in the artistic practices of institutional critique into focus to help in imagining alternative ways of acting within and around institutions.

Alongside these themes, we propose assignments for both class and individual explorations of the subject. These assignments, often involving questions, can be used for group work and as a basis for discussing how to think about institutions differently. They range from deconstructing a museum’s mission statement to critical budgeting. Some of these assignments were created for this material, while others originate in publications by the Guerrilla Girls or in projects by the Berlin-based collective Wir Spielen. We hope these assignments will create further connections, and inspire critical thinking and creative approaches to current institutional practices.

An interview with the curator, consultant and writer Martin Fritz concludes the publication, and suggests further directions for actualizing institutional critique today.

Simon Sheikh has suggested that institutional critique should be seen as an analytical tool, a method of spatial and political criticism and articulation that can be applied not only to the art world, but also to disciplinary spaces and institutions in general. Similarly, we hope to inspire discussion with a wide perspective and to revitalize questions that have lost none of their relevance.
Can the institution be critical? Why / Why not?
INSTRUCTIONS FOR A MUSEUM

Find the mission statement of a museum. Create instructions for the museum by cutting words or phrases from the mission statement and gluing them onto paper. (Wir Spielen*)

What are the underlying basic assumptions of the text? The starting point for this exercise is the vocabulary of the museum. Can you subvert, alienate or highlight meanings in it by simply rearranging words?

Optional exercise: Send the final result to the museum director.

* The workgroup WIR SPIELEN (WE PLAY) is a critical/analytical reading and action group with a focus on contemporary strategies of sharing and the cultural production of art and action. http://wirspielen.net
“I became politicized, like a lot of people. As I had been dealing with what I considered, at the time, to be physical and biological ‘systems’ it appeared to be only logical, from the point of view of general system theory, and particularly in view of what was happening in the social arena, also to address social issues. That seemed to require a shift in medium ... That led me to the incorporation of words. Our social relations are structured and largely intelligible through verbal constructs. This development in my work coincided with the influx of words into the art scene of the period.”
Hans Haacke’s art has been the hub of institutional critique discourses. At the beginning of his artistic career, Haacke was a minimalist interested in natural systems, but later got into political topics. For Haacke, institutional critique was an attempt to recontextualize the sphere of the aesthetic, with its socioeconomic and ideological foundation.

Philosophically, the legacy of the Frankfurt School and Jürgen Habermas are in the background to Haacke’s works. Sociological mapping was an important method for him. In his works from the late 1960s on, he aimed to make the underlying power structures of art institutions open and transparent. He moved from profile polls of gallery and museum visitors and archival exposes of real-estate moguls in New York (1969–1973) to detailed reports on successive owners of particular paintings by Manet and Seurat (1974–75), and to continued investigations of the financial and ideological arrangements made by museums, corporations and governments.

At the turn of the 1970s, Haacke began a series dealing with ‘social systems’, called either Polls or Visitor’s Profiles, in which exhibition visitors became active participants. In his MOMA-Poll (1970) Haacke posed the question: “Would the fact that Governor Rockefeller has not denounced President Nixon’s Indochina Policy be a reason for you not to vote for him in November?”

Haacke’s work makes visible the economic, ideological, and political interests behind the supposedly neutral space of an art museum. (Foster et al. 2004, 29) In Gallery-Goers’ Birthplace and Residence Profile (1969–70) Haacke inverted the mores of exhibutive logic and made the visitors to his shows the subject of his work, by quizzing them about aspects of their personal lives and then displaying the results.

Shapolsky et al. Manhattan Real Estate Holdings, a Real-Time Social System, as of May 1, 1971 (1971) took Haacke’s sociological approach further, and presented the findings of his research into the underhand business dealings of a New York real-estate company with strong ties to several art institutions. Famously, Haacke’s refusal to withdraw that and another piece (Sol Goldman and Alex DiLorenzo Manhattan Real Estate Holdings, 1971) from his solo show at the Guggenheim Museum in 1971 led to the exhibition being cancelled.

The works were simple, matter-of-fact trackings of tenement holdings, without any accusation or polemical tone. He was juxtaposing two socio-political models of the urban condition: the slum housing of New York’s massive underclass and the luxurious “neutrality” of the uptown, exclusionary, high-art institutions with their total obliviousness to the situation of the large majority of the people who share the same urban space.
Andrea Fraser (b. 1965) is a performance artist and a central figure within institutional critique. In one of her best-known performances, *Museum Highlights*, Fraser creates a guided tour of the most important works on display. She mimics the language used by art institutions to create a parody in order to expose power relations and how they are manifested in everyday activities. Similarly, she has given a speech at an event staged by a private collector, with words and phrases sampled from press releases that praise the art.

In a controversial 2003 piece, Fraser slept with an anonymous collector. He had paid $20,000 to participate in the piece, which took place in a hotel room, and remains unidentified. Fraser sought to address the relationship between artist and collector, comparing it to prostitution.

Fraser’s writings, including manuscripts for performances have been published in *Museum Highlights: The Writings of Andrea Fraser*. The volume includes critical texts on her performance and a foreword by Pierre Bourdieu, by whose reflexive sociology Fraser’s work is largely informed.
WHAT MAKES AN INSTITUTION?

WHOSE INSTITUTION IS IT?

DO STRUCTURES MATTER?
& CAN ARTWORKS OPERATE WITHIN THEM?

HOW HAVE INSTITUTIONS DONE IT DIFFERENTLY?

* Take a look at some ideas about how institutions have worked with critical practices:

MACBA
http://www.republicart.net/disc/institution/ribalta01_en.htm
Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova
http://www.mg-lj.si/node/803
SAVVY Contemporary Berlin
http://savvy-contemporary.com/index.php/concept/
TENSTA Konsthall
http://www.tenstakonsthall.se
The Van Abbemuseum
http://vanabbemuseum.nl/en/
W139
www.w139.nl
What are the values that dominate the exhibition space?
How about public space?
Get a copy of the floor plan of a museum that you are visiting. Map your own way through the exhibition and mark any pauses. Also write down any thoughts, wishes and dreams.

Research into museum architecture by watching visitors can reveal many things. Are visitors free to move as they want, or disciplined into a predetermined choreography?

Take a look at the project “Powered A-Hole Spanish Donkey Sport Dick Drink Donkey Dong Dongs Sunscreen Model” by Paul McCarthy & Mike Bouchet http://portikus.de/1464.html?&L=1#c3601
Michael Asher is regarded as one of the canonical artists of institutional critique. His artistic practice was often about altering existing environments rather than creating new objects. Asher’s works were subtle interventions made by adding, removing or changing the gallery space—they could be a slab of air that the visitor encountered or a manipulation of sound, cancelling out all sound waves in a room, to create a dead zone in the middle of a museum.

Asher also worked with walls, dividing up a gallery space with partition walls or removing a wall between a gallery space and an office space to display work behind the scenes. In *Installation* (1970) at Pomona College he started working with opening hours, keeping the gallery open for 24 hours a day, introducing noise and light from the street into the installation.

In 1979, Asher started repositioning objects in museum collections. He also worked with lists, such as an inventory of all the artworks ever deaccessioned by the Museum of Modern Art. His most important artistic goal, in his own words, has always been “to animate debate”.

Asher was also very influential as a teacher. Many successful artists have mentioned him as an important figure for their development. British journalist Sarah Thornton has described Asher’s teaching practice as his most important work. In a chapter of her book *Seven Days in the Art World* she has been given permission to audit Asher’s MFA Post-Studio Crit Class at CalArts. Thornton concludes: “Whether it’s deemed art or not the Post-Studio crit is Asher’s greatest and most influential work. It’s a thirty-year institutional critique that reveals the limits of the rest of the curriculum. It’s also a sound piece where Asher has been at the quiet eye of a multivocal storm. It’s a minimalist performance where the artist has sat, listened with care, and occasionally cleared his throat.”
Daniel Buren (b. 1938) is a French conceptual artist, sometimes characterized as an abstract minimalist. His work is site-specific—very often created on historical, landmark architecture—and characterised by the use of 8.7 cm wide stripes. These always alternate between white and a single colour.

Challenging traditional ideas about art has formed the core of Buren’s practice, which also involves writing. He started off pasting striped posters on the walls around Paris and, later, on more than a hundred metro stations. He performed these unsolicited acts, connected to ideas of space and presentation arising through deconstructionist philosophies, in public space, and went on to create his first New York show to take place both inside and outside the gallery. “When Attitudes Become Form” marks an important point in Buren’s career. The artist wanted to take part in the show curated by Harald Szeemann in Bern 1969 without being invited. He was offered space by two of the contributing artists, but instead set about covering billboards in the city with his stripes. As a consequence, he was arrested and had to leave Switzerland.

Today Buren’s stripes have become his trademark. While objecting to traditional ways of showing art, he has been shown more than ten times at the Venice Biennale, and has work in some major museum collections, including the MoMA and Tate Modern.
CLAIM THE BATHROOM AS EXHIBITION SPACE

Put up posters and statements on the doors and in the toilet stalls. We’ve stickered bathrooms all over the world! Don’t forget the men’s room!

(The Guerrilla Girls’ Art Museum Activity Book)

P.S. Independently from one another, Paul McCarthy and Mike Bouchet have both made a work that transformed the Guggenheim New York into a toilet.
Who decides what is valuable for collecting? Does it matter how the objects are organized?
MONUMENT

Commission a monument for someone or something you want to commemorate.

Who and what are usually given monuments? Start by brainstorming about existing monuments to map societal values. Then move on to imagining new ones and discussing their meaning.

CONCEPTS TO GOOGLE FOR*

new institutionalism + contemporary art

critical museology

critical pedagogy

* or start here
Radical Education Workbook
http://radicaleducationforum.tumblr.com/post/34563386245/published-radical-education-workbook

or here
www.frieze.com/issue/article/bureaux_de_change
How to Fake a Museum

MARCEL BROODTHAERS
1924–1976

Marcel Broodthaers was a Belgian poet, film-maker and artist. He started off as a poet and had some contact with the Belgian Surrealists in his teenage years. The work of René Magritte, especially his paintings with words involving a contradiction between the word and the image, came to have an important influence on him. Broodthaers made his first art objects in 1963, after working for 20 years as a poet, struggling economically. He came to work with found objects and whatever raw material was at hand, often combining images with written text.

In 1968, Broothaers created his most well-known work, Musée d’Art Moderne, Département des Aigles, in his home in Brussels. The fictional museum had a collection consisting of postcards of famous artworks and transportation crates for artworks. This first installation was followed by eleven other versions of the ‘museum’. In one of them, the Financial Section from 1970, he attempted to sell the museum due to bankruptcy, in an ad in the Art Cologne fair catalogue. Broodthaers also made an unlimited edition of gold ingots with the museum’s emblem, an eagle—a common symbol associated with power and victory—stamped on them. In order to raise money for the museum, the ingots were sold at a price that was calculated by doubling the market value of gold.

In many ways Marcel Broodthaers remained a poet throughout his brief career as an artist, using objects and words to play with perceptions of the world. By exploring the art world and its institutions, Broodthaers also shed light on issues concerning the production and consumption of art, thereby becoming an important figure for institutional critique.
“I, too, wondered whether I could not sell something and succeed in life. For some time I had been no good at anything. I am forty years old... Finally the idea of inventing something insincere finally crossed my mind and I set to work straightaway. At the end of three months I showed what I had produced to Philippe Edouard Toussaint, the owner of the Galerie St Laurent. ‘But it is art’ he said ‘and I will willingly exhibit all of it.’ ‘Agreed’ I replied. If I sell something, he takes 30%. It seems these are the usual conditions, some galleries take 75%. What is it? In fact it is objects.”
Fred Wilson (b. 1954) is an installation artist whose work centres around museology as its medium. Working as a freelance museum educator in several museums during the 1970s, he observed the conventions of displaying historical artefacts and artworks. He later used this inside knowledge in a series of mock museums that he created. Wilson is interested in questioning representations of race. By subverting the usual forms of display and juxtaposing objects in unexpected ways, he exposes recurring racist ideas that consciously or unwittingly guide the work in institutions. By means of new wall labels, sound, light and above all, combinations of objects, he exposes the prejudice and limitations of institutions and the power they have in creating value.

For the Venice Biennale in 2003, Wilson employed a tourist to play the role of an African street vendor. The fake designer bags the man sold were in fact Wilson’s own designs. He also placed so-called blackamoors in the show at the US pavilion. These are sculptures of black servants, often used as stands for lights. The work was inspired by Wilson’s observation that these statues were very common in Venice, in places such as hotel lobbies, but often went unnoticed. By his subtle act in the context of the art biennial, he made them visible.

“I get everything that satisfies my soul from bringing together objects that are in the world, manipulating them, working with spatial arrangements, and having things presented in the way I want to see them.”
Engage in an educational situation (in a school, a university or elsewhere). Have the students spend an entire lesson doodling in their schoolbooks. Organise an exhibition of the results.

Cleanliness and order are desired from students of all ages. This project proposal instead constitutes a protest by assigning the value of art to doodles created in schoolbooks. By working with the same pages in, for example, a history book, diverse interpretations will emerge, exposing a whole range of individual positions that interact with the knowledge at hand.
The School
Revisited

MIKE KELLEY
1954–2012

“Since I am an artist, it seemed natural to look to my own aesthetic training as the root of my secret indoctrination in perversity and possibly as the site of my own abuse. My education must have been a form of mental abuse, of brainwashing.”

Mike Kelley (1954–2012) is known for his rich use of found materials from thrift stores: toys, craft objects and textiles. He explored visual culture in a variety of ways, attempting to expose what we usually do not see. As a counter-reaction to minimalism, Kelley’s artistic practice had a lot in common with American feminist artists.

In Educational Complex Kelley used architecture to work on the notion of repressed memories. The piece combines the floor plans of all the schools he ever attended, recreated from memory. The spaces left blank are, according to Kelley, sites of abuse that he has repressed.

Mike Kelley directed much of his critique at art education, but also examined general education. In Day is Done he examined how high schools produce and reproduce social class in the form of extracurricular activities, such as dress-up days, or so-called Slave Days. Using yearbook photographs as a starting point, Kelley called the work a kind of anthropological investigation into American folk culture. He was interested in how high school students in this way create a representation of the world.
CURRICULUM

Propose an alternative curriculum for a school subject of your choice.

Why is Physical Education arranged in separate groups for boys and girls in Finland? Could Geography become more critical and be taught imaginatively? Is the Music curriculum multicultural enough? Can history education be made less nationally focussed?
Mark Dion examines history, knowledge, and the natural world, and the ways in which dominant ideologies and public institutions shape our understanding of them. Dion questions objective “rational” knowledge and researches scientific methods in archaeology, biology, biochemistry, museology, ethnography, museology, and ornithology, and the classification systems of collecting, ordering, and exhibiting objects in his installations that are often assembled like curiosity cabinets.

Dion has been strongly influenced by environmental issues, and he also deals with public policies in the construction of knowledge about nature, and questions the authoritative role of the scientific voice in contemporary society.

Dion’s work has been located as a part of a contemporary, “expanded” institutional critique, a practice that extends the reflexivity of classical museum-focused institutional critique to explore a broader spectrum of sites, such as the natural history museum, the zoo, public parks and facilities, as well as the art museum.

Dion usually works with living things or their remnants. His approach to science and dominant culture remains sceptical, playful and anti-authorial, introducing methods from other fields to embrace the interrelatedness of various cultural, political and natural ecologies.

Dion’s Tate Thames Dig was executed in three phases: an archaeological dig, the cleaning and classifying of objects, and the display, which consisted of “Cabinets of Curiosities” filled with items such as plastic toys, oyster shells, and clay pipes, challenging institutional and museological discourses. Tate Thames Dig re-enacts the processes of scientific research, and questions the premises upon which these activities are based.

Dion often collaborates with other artists, scientists, community groups, and both art and non-art institutions. His work is influenced by evolutionary theorist Stephen Jay Gould, who has pointed out that taxonomic systems do not provide objective criteria, but are contingent upon our value systems, and thus rooted within our social structures.
Who is the institution for?
Who does it present, and how?
Who is neglected?
Not enough work by women artists or people of colour in your favourite museum? Let the director* know how you feel. Send a letter, a postcard or an email. Or better yet, send a greeting card. Museums pride themselves on their “outreach to the public”. Let’s reach out to them and change their discriminating ways.

(The Guerrilla Girls’ Art Museum Activity Book)
Widening the Perspective

MARTHA ROSLER
1943–

Martha Rosler is a video, photography, text, installation, and performance artist, and an active writer. Since the early 1970s, Rosler has been concerned about class structures and democracy, the role of the media and analysing quotidian, domestic, and urban life from a feminist viewpoint, often with humour. She was part of the generation of artists who started off with conceptualism, but highlighted subjectivity and psychoanalysis, and the formation of identity through social structures.

In her work from 1989 If You Lived Here… Rosler related to the then highly unequal context of New York City. There were 70,000–80,000 homeless in New York, and 250,000 at risk of losing their homes, but these people were off the radar of most citizens. This situation in the urban space was a starting point for Rosler’s extensive participatory artwork. The project comprised three exhibitions on housing, homelessness, and architectural planning, with work by artists, film-makers, homeless people, squatters, poets, writers, community groups, schoolchildren, and others. Artists, activists, advocates, elected representatives, academics, and community members also took part in the project.

Rosler brought the social conditions in and under which art has been produced into focus. She was also involved in a critique of documentary modes of representation. In If You Lived Here… Rosler questioned the field and methods of artistic and institutional practices, developing the ways in which the audience is usually confronted. In her works Rosler has also reflected on her own sociological authority and her own voice of truth.
Durham is an American-born sculptor, performance artist, writer and political activist, who has been based for long periods in Europe. He has been exhibiting since the late 1960s, commenting on Native American culture and on how it has usually been represented in institutional settings. In the 1970s, Durham was a full-time organizer in the American Indian Movement, later giving up the position. He has refused to be labelled as a Native American artist with predetermined attributes.

Durham’s art can usually be characterized as ethical irony, in contrast to cynicism. In his 1985 installation, On Loan from a Museum of the American Indian, Durham collected fabricated and found objects, presented as “sociofacts” and “science-facts”, parodying conventional museum displays and the image of the Noble Savage. The installation was a reaction to the National Museum of the American Indian in New York City, especially its title claiming that there was one American Indian. From these premises Durham created a vitrine of his own relatives representing the relatives of the American Indians. The Indian’s Parents, The Indian’s Sister, etc., parodistically meaning all the American Indians.

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"I am really very confused about it [the relationship between art and political activism]. There is a cultural construct for art works that is the power apparatus, the apparatus that performs culturally. It doesn’t perform by decrees. We are all oppressed and repressed by cultural means primarily. So it seems a reasonable way to attack the machine. But I don’t do art so that I can screw the system. I do it because I do art! Because somewhere in your life usually when you are a little kid, you become an artist without knowing what that means. Then you have to figure out how to do it responsively."
Merging Life and Art

MIERLE LADERMAN UKELES
1939–

Ukeles was one of the first artists to connect institutional critique with feminism. In 1969, she wrote a Manifesto for Maintenance Art that questioned binary systems of opposition that articulate differences between art/life, nature/culture, and public/private. The manifesto followed her personal experiences of being excluded from the cultural sphere after having a child.

Instead of deciding to be the artist or the mother, Ukeles developed the concept of maintenance art. The manifesto and her subsequent ‘maintenance artworks’ aimed to create an awareness of the low cultural status of maintenance work in the art field and in the capitalist system in general.

In her works Ukeles showed that the museum space is not only a physical space, but also a cultural framework. In 1973, she carried out four performances in the woman artists’ exhibition curated by Lucy Lippard. In the performance Transfer: The Maintenance of the Art Object she cleaned the glass case of an Egyptian mummy that was usually cleaned by a janitor. In The Keeping of the Keys: Maintenance as Security Ukeles locked and unlocked each gallery room at designated times, with keys given to her by the security guards. In Hartford Wash: Washing Tracks, Maintenance Outside and Hartford Wash: Washing Tracks, Maintenance Inside she cleaned the museum entrance and floors for several hours while the museum was open.

The cleaners, janitors and security staff have a lot of power in maintaining the museum’s status. In her performances Ukeles showed the important role of maintenance work in the institutional definition of art. Her works and the manifesto also deal with the boundaries that separate the maintenance of everyday life from the role of an artist in society.

I am an artist. I am a woman. I am a wife. I am a mother. (Random order) I do a hell of a lot of washing, cleaning, cooking, renewing, supporting, preserving, etc. Also, (up to now separately) I ‘do’ Art. Now I will simply do these everyday things, and flush them up to consciousness, exhibit them, as Art.
The Guerrilla Girls are a group of feminist artists and activists. More than 55 women have been members of the group over the years for varying periods of time. The Guerrilla Girls were founded by seven women in New York City in 1985 in response to the Museum of Modern Art’s exhibition *An International Survey of Recent Painting and Sculpture*, opened in 1984. The show, claiming to be a survey of the most important contemporary artists, contained works by a total of 169 artists, out of which 13 were women.

The Guerrilla Girls are known for wearing gorilla masks to remain anonymous. Their goal is to shed light on gender and racial inequality within the fine arts. Stickers, billboards, posters, street projects and books are among the strategies employed by the group. With the help of facts, humour and characteristic graphic design, the Guerrilla Girls address corruption and discrimination in politics, art, film and culture. Their

The Guerrilla Girls also use parody as a means of revealing dominant narratives. The Guerrilla Girls’ Art Museum Activity Book mimics the publications that museums create to teach children to appreciate art, but instead encourages readers to take a critical look at museums. The tasks include “How to write a feminist wall label” and “Claim the bathroom as exhibition space”. For museum store items they suggest, for example, a hat with the text “Diversity in American Museums: 50 Years Behind Baseball”.

The work of the Guerrilla Girls is passed around globally by their supporters. They also travel extensively to encourage others to invent their own kinds of activism. Besides their own art projects that often involve research, the Guerrilla Girls have worked on with commissions for different art institutions, and with Amnesty International.

P.S. What is the difference between reproductive and productive work? Are genders equally represented in the institution? Are they equally in charge?
Is art about valuable objects created by the individual artist? Is art for everyone, or for the privileged?
COLLECTIVES

Form different new collectives and name them according to their goals.

A name can be everything from a power statement to a parody. Try the style of established institutions for a small, informal collective and vice versa.

Optional exercise: Use image-editing software and existing photographs to create a mock institution.

ART WORKERS UNITED WILL NEVER BE DIVIDED!
WHERE IT ALL STARTED:

ART WORKERS’ COALITION
Lucy Lippard: Art Workers’ Coalition – Not a History

AWC letter to MoMA
Together: Resistance

GROUP MATERIAL
1979–1996

“\textit{It is impossible to create a radical and innovative art if this work is anchored in one special gallery location. Art can have the most political content and right-on form, but the stuff just hangs there silent unless its means of distribution make political sense as well.}”

Group Material (1979–1996) was a New York-based artist collective, founded by artists concerned with social issues and the politics of representation. They produced more than forty exhibitions and public projects together, combining factual information, mass media, and artefacts from popular culture with recognized art. The contemporary mainstream art world was commercial and conservative, and Group Material acted as a counterpoint: they worked collectively against individual career-oriented art practices, and tried to reconnect art’s production and reception.

The group mainly worked curatorially, resigning from the role of the artist as a producer of sellable objects. Their aim was to ‘demonstrate how art is dependent on a social context for its meaning’. In their own gallery on the Lower East Side, Group Material realised exhibition projects that were both political and aesthetically innovative.

In \textit{The People’s Choice} (1981) Group Material invited their mostly Latino neighbours to lend objects from their own homes: class photographs and collectibles, a mural by local kids, posters, folk art, kitsch and religious icons. The objects were installed in the gallery space from floor to ceiling. The project was conceived in opposition to the gentrification of outlying neighbourhoods. Soon the group started using other channels such as public advertisements, and gave up gallery space as their main medium.
Disguise artistic work as carpentry or plumbing—and pay accordingly. Create a shared directory of alternative labels for artistic work. The collective exchange of knowledge is the key here.

The budget is the most common excuse for conceptually poor solutions, exploitative arrangements or unfair compromises. Switch the hotel accommodation of museum staff on their travels to couch surfing, and all of a sudden artists’ fees can be paid!

http://artsandlabor.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/AndreaFraser_1percent.pdf
Critical Art Ensemble explores the intersections between art, critical theory, technology and political activism. This collective of five media artists skilled in performance, book arts, graphic design, computer art, film/video, photography and critical writing, has recently focused on biotechnology.

At dOCUMENTA(13) Critical Art Ensemble realised a project on global economic inequality. The group offered VIP tickets to the exhibition that could be bought for 300 euros or, for the 99%, won with a scratch card. The ticket included a helicopter ride over the exhibition venue, Karlsaue park.

In a setting like Documenta, the project brings institutional critique to mind. Besides highlighting global inequality, it also reminds us about the privileged position of most exhibition visitors by creating a fake exclusion within the exhibition.


The Divorce Rate is Low

MARTIN FRITZ

who taught the workshop “Institutional Critique and Institutional Practice” at Aalto University looks back on his exhibition “Beziehungsarbeit Kunst und Institution”*

In English, another suggestion would be even richer in associations—Relationship Building includes building and architecture; and it also refers to relational aesthetics, which classical institutional critique sees as an “enemy” to be targeted. For the exhibition, it made sense that all of these aspects were included, as it combined what seem to be very disparate elements and also addressed various “camps”. Working with relationships ranges from serious conflict to a constructive and mutual desire for improvement. In her text for the catalogue, Astrid Wege wrote very aptly: “If we initially put the classification and evaluation of those moments of ‘critique’ to one side—without necessarily abandoning the meaning and function of critique per se—then our view of the differing forms of reference to institutional structures within which art is produced, exhibited, and evaluated opens up commensurately.”

But the relationship is only rarely broken off. Ultimately artists also feel responsible for institutions. To stay within the metaphor of the title: the divorce rate is low. It is the case, however, that separations often go unnoticed. If someone bids farewell to the art field, then you will only rarely find their work in historical research. The exhibition included copies of work files by Christopher D’Arcangelo, who committed suicide in New York at the age of twenty-four. He chained himself to museum doors and took pictures down from the walls in the Louvre. His oeuvre is small but unique, and yet it appears as no more than a footnote in texts. The second example for a kind of farewell is the mini-retrospective of Wochenklausur. This artists’ group walked away from the narrowly defined art business, taking institutional critique as their way out, and only few people outside the specialized field know that they are still active today.

* Based on an interview for the exhibition catalogue. The original interview was conducted by the art historian and journalist Nina Schedlmayr. The exhibition “Beziehungsarbeit Kunst und Institution” took place at Künstlerhaus Vienna in 2011. The catalogue was published by Schlebrügge.Editor www.schlebruegge.com
Positions which were uncompromisingly hostile to the institution are not shown in the exhibition, such as works by Alexander Brener and Barbara Schurz?

Brener and Schurz became violent toward acquaintances of mine, and I did not wish to legitimize this kind of behavior by showing them in an exhibition. But this aggressive behavior is less frequent than one might expect. The majority of artistic works that take a serious and long-term view of the subject is more constructive—the crude gesture of trashing hotel rooms is very rare. I think that today it is more fruitful to consider the history of reception and impact. This makes it possible to observe how Marcel Broodthaers's Musée d’Art Moderne is reactivated by Mario Garcia Torres. There are many other references back like this, such as Mierle Laderman Ukeles’s actions with keys, and Marlene Haring’s critique of gender relations in exhibitions by means of altering entrance policies at the Berlin Biennale in 2010. Thomas Schütte’s Model for a Museum, which represents a crematorium of images, is reminiscent of Robert Smithson, who spoke of museums as “graveyards above ground.”

But why are all those included whose institutionally critical position is very well known anyway?

I considered that to be essential, because I am interested in how institutions change. If you think about the question of relations between artists and the institution today, then these canonized positions automatically come to mind—Marcel Broodthaers and Andrea Fraser, but also Rirkrit Tiravanija, who sees the institution as a social space, Wochenklausur, and of course also the attacks of political activism.

The classical positions are seen as the starting point for processes of transformation in institutions?

The idea that it was possible to take a critical look at the apparatus also came just as much from curators who were inspired by intensive exchange on these questions with artists. In the case of Hans Haacke, for example, I am not only interested in the withdrawal of his invitation by the Guggenheim Museum, but also in the invitation. At the time Haacke was only thirty-five, and the Guggenheim was interested in him. I don’t mean to revise the critical impetus of his work by this, but to ask questions concerning collaboration. You don’t have to relativize the canon, but you can extend it.

I get the impression that many artists are interested in preserving the institutions. Especially public museums are endangered today. But they should be not only an exhibition space for artists, but also a partner in production, a store for knowledge, an archive. In the long term their openness is useful for society.
Are the institutions really so endangered? New museums are opening all the time.

But the reality today is that there are only few art spaces that take on social roles like producing knowledge. Representative functions are much less threatened. The assumption that artists want to improve the institutions can be observed in this context too—and now that they are under pressure politically and economically this is manifested in a different way.

What exactly is improving in the institutions?

It is true that not all the museums have changed, but you can definitely see that curating and exhibiting have changed. For us tables with books, series of lectures, and self-reflection have become matter of fact, unlike in a generally much more elitist bourgeois art system that was analyzed by people like Hans Haacke, Andrea Fraser, and Christian Philipp Müller. Today it is this generation of curators that supported these positions early on that is taking over the responsibility in many larger museums.

While some analyze the institutions and their work, others just establish their own spaces. Why?

People have recognized that in a certain phase of their lives self-organization better serves their needs than the apparatus of the museums and existing institutions. Certain mechanisms of exclusion are still intact, and what can all of those do who are not called up by the Museum of Modern Art?
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