

## Chapter One: Collecting, Curating and Exhibition Making

Tony Bennett's seminal book, *The Birth of the Museum*<sup>1</sup> begins with Foucault's proposition that museums are heterotopias of indefinitely accumulating time...worlds within worlds that represent all time, all epochs, all form and all taste. But Foucault does not confine himself to one definition of the heterotopic space, he also refers to fairgrounds and festivals where time is fleeting and transitory. A juxtaposition of the all-encompassing, eternal and everlasting with the fleeting, contingent and transitory reminds me of Baudelaire's definition of modernity, "the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent, one half of art, the other being the eternal and the immutable"<sup>2</sup>. In this chapter, I want to examine opposing concepts of time within the art museum and how they influence different forms of collecting and display: the permanent collection fulfilling Foucault's notion of all time, all epochs, all form and forever, while the temporary exhibition is closer in character to the fairground or festival in its fleeting, transitory and contingent nature. In addition, particularly over the last twenty years, a third strand of museum curating has emerged and this I am calling individual or social curating. I want to suggest that this new form of selection and display is encouraging a new response, different level of participation and a heightened expectation of the museum.

Cabinets of curiosity or Wunderkammer have often been described as the forerunner to the modern museum. Highly fashionable in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth century and popular with wealthy merchants, nobility, naturalists, princes, and academics, they were extraordinarily beautiful, carefully manufactured cabinets, sometimes even whole rooms, designed to show off eclectic objects in the hope that they would provoke wonder and amazement<sup>3</sup>. They also acted as shop fronts or calling cards for other wealthy individuals and became signifiers of knowledge, connoisseurship, and taste. On a simple level, collections were a very personal, idiosyncratic amassing of chosen items<sup>4</sup>, predominantly for the collector's pleasure with value taking a secondary role<sup>5</sup> but there were undoubtedly more serious motivations like increasing personal status or to borrow from Bourdieu's terminology, gaining additional cultural capital.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, displaying objects in beautifully crafted cabinets with the intention of provoking amazement and wonder became unfashionable<sup>6</sup> and enlightenment values like order and reason took precedence<sup>7</sup>. The public museum was founded on these ideals and random groups of objects were replaced with clearly assigned, carefully structured displays that encouraged visitors to engage with new ideas and new narratives. In their early formation, museums developed these ideas visually; formal education and learning came later. In fact, eighteenth and early nineteenth century institutions paid little attention to instruction, "museums were just collections of curiosities ...with little guidance for the inexpert"<sup>8</sup>. As museums grew in stature, greater emphasis was placed on learning, education and improving the mind. Grouped with libraries, public lecture halls and art galleries, they were expected to be, "instruments capable of improving man's inner life"<sup>9</sup>. Being inclusive, accessible, and restorative<sup>10</sup>, was highly prized, both then and now and current DCMS policy stresses the crucial contribution that museums make "to the regeneration, health and wellbeing of our regions, cities, towns and villages"<sup>11</sup>.

The transition of privately owned, randomly displayed collections, into the more orderly categorisation of work in public museums was largely due to an increase of displayable objects but there was also a radical change of attitude regarding assessment, worth and value. Institutional, rather than individual judgment became the accepted measure of worth. If a work was acquired by a museum, it was, de facto, valuable. This increased the status and prestige of curators and directors who became powerful, influential taste makers. Jean-Christophe Ammann, whose curatorial journey started at the Kunsthalle under Szeemann, was asked at a Tate conference about the importance of the directors' role. He replied that you should be able to 'smell' him/her as you enter a museum. Chris Dercon, compared his tenure as director of Tate Modern to 'taking the helm of a particularly difficult to steer ocean liner'<sup>12</sup>, and current director, Maria Balshaw has expressed her intention to make Tate, "the most artistically adventurous and culturally inclusive gallery in the world"<sup>13</sup>. MoMA's first director, Alfred Barr went even further and created an epistemology to shape the way generations of artists, art historians and art lovers studied modern European and American art. Many museum directors have become high-profile, high-status influencers, visionaries and inspirational leaders. They are dedicated to the promotion, development, and status of their institutions. You might say that they are the composers and conductors of a symphony and their curatorial team, principal members of the orchestra.

People are fascinated with the job of the curator even though they often have no idea what it entails. It is a specialist role involving detailed research into the provenance of individual works, in depth knowledge of an artist or group of artists and a period of art history or art theory. Curators must also show that they are experienced in the display, management and maintenance of the collection. This is a rather conventional description of the curatorial role. Modern definitions might be different, "the contemporary art curator is no longer an expert on a

particular period, instead the curator is an anthropologist, a reporter, a sociologist, an epistemologist, an author, an NGO representative or an observer of the internet"<sup>14</sup>. To this long list of curatorial attributes, former Tate director, Nicholas Serota adds, "the curator can no longer be seen solely as the dispassionate judge of quality...the curator is a collaborator, often engaging with the artist to accomplish the work"<sup>15</sup>.

Museums with permanent collections are custodians of work that is, by definition, permanently in the collection and must, therefore, be available, either on view or in store, in perpetuity. This is increasingly problematic for directors, academics and curators who question the sustainability of keeping work in perpetuity. Rosalind Krauss refers to Thomas Krens, Director of the Guggenheim, "what was revealed to him was not only the tininess and inadequacy of most museums, but that the encyclopaedic nature of the museum was "over"<sup>16</sup> and Krens himself said, "the notion of the encyclopaedia only makes sense in a world that is not mobile"<sup>17</sup>.

The decision to acquire work is based on many factors but the trajectory of art history, as it has been, or how it might develop together with the current shape and future form of the collection, will always be a factor. Museums are keen to be open and transparent about their acquisition policy, but the language they use, shows how difficult this can be. MoMA claims to have "a unique point of view that is carefully shaped by its curators, who are always mindful of historical precedents as they look ahead to future developments"<sup>18</sup> and Tate speaks of, "trying to ...form a collection which is both fine in quality and shows the richness and variety of modern art, with representations of all the major movements and with the greatest artists each represented by several works, or groups of works"<sup>19</sup>. Tate's acquisition policy also refers to, "significant developments in art in all areas covered by the remit...of outstanding quality, and distinctive in aesthetic character or importance"<sup>20</sup>. The phrase, significant developments in art and aesthetic character exposes the rather indeterminate nature of an acquisition policy.

The word aesthetic is defined as the philosophical study of beauty and taste and used by Kant to expound his theory that aesthetic judgements are inevitably subjective and impossible to support by any interpersonal means, both concepts that are problematic for museum curators. There are theorists who believe that aesthetic encounters with artworks are immediate, non-inferential and sensory while others argue that aesthetic judgements are shaped by art history. Prioritizing art history over aesthetics or vice versa is the main topic of a group of conversations organised by James Elkins<sup>21</sup>. In the introduction to the series Robert Gero asserts, "the aesthetic is a contested space – a multiply defended zone of discourses occupied by theorists working within the disciplines of art history and philosophy"<sup>22</sup>. Referring to aesthetics in relation to a museum's collecting policy, presupposes that aesthetics and art history are junctures on the same path, or at the very least deeply connected, "art history without aesthetics is inconceivable ... because art history is first of all constituted by the evidential record of previous aesthetic"<sup>23</sup>. It is Thierry de Duve's belief that art history and aesthetics are inextricably linked, Elkins, on the other hand, believes that they are totally disconnected, that aesthetics is a means to a nonaesthetic understanding of art history. If the aesthetic is ever a factor for curators when they make acquisitions, it is rarely mentioned, whereas more practical considerations, like the condition of the work, cost, economics, politics, style, and fashion<sup>24</sup> are always factors. Timing is also critical, if a work suddenly becomes available in auction or donated as part of a bequest. Gifts are regularly offered and just as often rejected, which is understandable, given that new acquisitions require documentation, cataloguing, and looking after, in perpetuity. Even after a work has entered the collection, it will not automatically, or in some cases, *ever* be displayed. Like many other major art institutions, Tate has a huge body of work in store<sup>25</sup> and the decision to display a work will be influenced by popularity, status, relevance and space (even weight can be a factor)<sup>26</sup>.

Documentation relating to the foundation of the museum makes clear that museums "hold work in trust for the nation and the public, not a super serving elite"<sup>27</sup> but as Tate Modern director Frances Morris observes, many collections started out as, "a reflection of the taste, deficiencies, and particular 'hobby horse' passions of directors and curators"<sup>28</sup>. Among the small group of collectors who were responsible for the establishment of early UK public art collections, were Sir Henry Tate who donated his collection to the nation, John Julius Angerstein whose 38 paintings of Italian, Dutch, Flemish and English origin formed the origins of the National Gallery and Sir Hans Sloane, doctor and collector, whose enormous collection became the foundation of the British Museum. Regrettably, all three of these major collectors had links to the slave trade, Angerstein for example, owned a third share in slave estates in Grenada and used profits from the slave trade to build his art collection. In a move towards transparency, some museums are now openly discussing these matters. In a special section of its website called, Tate Galleries and Slavery, Tate includes the following statement, "there can be no doubt that British culture was shaped by the institution of slavery in many, fundamental ways...we believe the firms founded by the two men which later combined as Tate & Lyle, do connect to slavery"<sup>29</sup>.

In the eighteenth century, museums had no written acquisition policy and there were no rules or guidelines to impact on decisions made to buy specific works. In 1855, Sir Charles Eastlake travelled through Europe on a vast

shopping spree and bought Italian paintings he thought would be worthwhile additions to the National Gallery. These works were predominantly what he liked and what interested him. In other words, it reflected his own taste and that of his Trustees<sup>30</sup>. In many ways this very personal selection process, resembles that of early private collectors. Then and now, personal taste has always played an important role in the shaping and development of national collections, and it would be naïve to believe that this no longer happens.

The move away from private to public collections signalled a shift of emphasis from the purely enjoyable to the socially serious. Cabinets of curiosity functioned in a playful way, the “poetics and politics of the cabinet of curiosities offer[ed] a form of resistance to the totalising ambitions of reason, a place where the human mind [was able] to play instead of working”<sup>31</sup>. In contrast, public museums had more serious ambitions, they were dedicated to inclusiveness, instruction, appreciation, research, and scholarship. They were also spaces where changes in art history and attitudes to art practice were played out.

Modernism and modernist values from the late nineteenth to the mid twentieth century were rooted in logic, originality, tradition, liberty of expression and a belief in an abstract truth of life. Post-modernist thinking, from the middle to latter part of the twentieth century was more concerned with the irrational and illogical and favoured a fragmented, eclectic and critical view of previous theoretical positions. How we come to view the present is still being decided. The twenty first century might be characterized as a digital age, an age of knowledge consumerism or an individualized society, a product of liquid modernity<sup>32</sup>, digital modernity or identity modernity. Whichever definition we choose, there are indications that we have entered a “new period of transition and epistemological uncertainty”<sup>33</sup>.

Marion Endt uses the phrase, *transition and epistemological uncertainty* in support of her proposition that “concepts of curiosity and the marvellous resurface at different moments in cultural history”<sup>34</sup>. This fits perfectly with the historical period with which this book is concerned, the latter half of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty first century, a moment in museum history that I would suggest, is exactly that... a moment of transition and epistemological uncertainty, when institutional frameworks of knowledge and meaning are being scrutinized and traditional values and institutional identity, regularly challenged. A moment, too, of doubt in the sustainability and continual expansion of the permanent collection and unease regarding the desirability (or possibility) of material objects becoming permanent signifiers of the passing of time.

There are signs of a split of ideological methodology as curators shape new visual identities that both challenge and/or replace outmoded legacies and directors, architects and designers re-imagine the museum space in the hope that this will re-configure its mission and purpose. It may not be surprising that this period of indeterminacy has embraced a new identity and enthusiastically appropriated the fashionable trope that is ‘the turn’. The curatorial turn, the deconstructive turn, the ethical turn, post-colonial turn, educational, social, postmodern and epistemological turn<sup>35</sup>, are all turns that are being used as a discursive frame for the re-shaping, re-evaluating and re-centring of collections as well as a repositioning of theory, structure and the management of museums and revision of theoretical ideas. Museums have been forced to embrace opposing ideologies, showing their allegiance to the maintenance of permanent collections that signify status and nationhood, traditional values, and longevity, while at the same time, welcoming a new form of exhibition making that encourages dissent, discourse and dialogue. Some might see this as an impossible conflict of objectives, but there are many directors who identify real advantages in the symbiotic nature of different ideologies and methodologies.

In an interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist, and in answer to the question, are you against the idea of separating collections from exhibitions, Pontus Hultén replied, “Yes, otherwise the institution has no real foundation...I think the encounter between the collection and the temporary exhibition is an enriching experience.... a collection isn’t a shelter into which to retreat, it’s a source of energy for the curator as much as the visitor”<sup>36</sup>. Hultén is expressing his appreciation of the energy and dynamism of the permanent collection as the backbone of an institution<sup>(37)</sup>. Frances Morris is also a strong believer in the intellectually nourishing role of the permanent collection. In her keynote speech at MCA in Melbourne in 2016<sup>38</sup>, she referred to the display of different groups of work from different time periods as *a dynamic interplay of concepts and ideas* and described the permanent collection as “interlocuter in dialogue with the contemporary collection. Both Hultén and Morris are keen to draw attention to the substantial advantages of museums that house both contemporary and historic collections and even though Morris believes that a museum’s permanent collection will always show signs of “inherent contradictions, utopias, dystopias, blind alleys and occasional misguided decision making”, she is confident that it will also be “a symbolic and real example of cultural, economic, intellectual and social capital and without it, the museum might become an exhibition space that holds no history and leaves no legacy”<sup>39</sup>.

## Exhibitions.

The first part of this chapter has looked at the way in which attitudes towards collecting for a permanent collection have been focused on notions of longevity and posterity. I will now examine temporary exhibition making and suggest that this form of display is closer in character to the cabinet of curiosity with the curator, taking the role of individual collector.

If Marjatta Hölz is right in her observation that Institutions are “increasingly focus[ing] their activity on temporary monographic or thematic exhibitions and events”<sup>40</sup> why might this be so? One hypothesis might be that the less permanent nature of a temporary display is an attractive proposition for curators who want to bypass expectations of longevity and timelessness and explore concepts that are more contingent and topical. Shorter, temporary exhibitions act as visual interrogations or conversations that are challenging and disruptive, they “collect – without suffering the consequences of the obstacles that isolate or disperse works – works of art that when gathered together, acquire a normative value or a programme of reproduction. By mobilizing material and intellectual means, without measures common to permanent exhibitions, they can concretely produce, within a relatively short timeframe, what has been elaborated for countless years in museums and in books on the history and theory of art”<sup>41</sup>. As well as their interventionist nature as an exclamation mark in the museum narrative, exhibitions are a source of significant income, particularly important for London museums where entrance to the permanent collection is generally free. Taking maximum advantage of this revenue source, museums have begun to expand their annual exhibition programme with smaller in-focus and artist displays. This new direction has radically changed the working pattern and character of the institution as well as significantly increasing the workload of art handlers who are required to negotiate charts of enormous complexity and work with military style precision on timetables that accommodate frequent changes in both exhibitions and permanent collection displays.

In Judith Masai’s essay in *Museums After Modernism*<sup>42</sup>, she states that “there is no such thing as a visitor” with an emphasis on the indefinite article. In other words, it is a mistake to speak of a single visitor or sole visitor type. Similarly, it is impossible to speak about exhibitions in a generic fashion. They are part of the history of an institution, and as such they will reflect, or challenge, its mission, structure, display and acquisition strategy. An exhibition acts as an intervention, an interrogation and/or a deconstruction of museum philosophy, in some cases, it may even challenge the “allegiance and affinity to the very tradition they seek to displace”<sup>43</sup>

Exhibitions may be arranged according to medium, (paintings, sculpture, photography, installation) or time frame, (decade or century), gender, (feminism, masculinity, bi or trans gender), philosophy, (phenomenology, existentialism, psychoanalysis) or an artists’ life. The display might take as its central theme, historical change like a world war or economic disruption, an artistic group with similar objectives, like naïve, outsider or folk art, an artist’s life or a friendship like Picasso and Matisse, Gauguin and Van Gogh, or an ‘ism’ like modernism, post modernism, surrealism, minimalism, or pop art. They may also take the form of a grand survey show, an annual competition like the Turner Prize or be cyclical, biennial or triennial in nature.

In contrast to the criteria used for the selection and display of the permanent collection, planning a temporary exhibition is conceptually and organizationally different. These smaller, shorter displays have a different starting point, different time frame and different pace. They may also speak with more than one voice, which may at times, confuse the visitor. Located within the museum and therefore identified with that institution, they may challenge the dominant ideology and present an alternative story or line of enquiry. In this way, they can be part of, but also apart from the museum’s past and present history, they can look forward while they also glance back, be part nostalgic, part futuristic.

Exhibitions start with an idea that is culturally, socially and artistically conceived, a blank canvas that the curator will use to explore an idea, concept or theory using “isolated points – stations or landmarks”<sup>44</sup>. To gain approval from the exhibition committee, the initial proposal must be supported by a solid rationale and a detailed list of desired works with additional information about the condition of individual pieces and required conservation, transportation to and from the exhibition venue and information about how the work will be installed. Each one of these considerations will have financial implications, and this will be reflected in the final selection. Work that is already in the permanent collection might need to be re-visioned, recontextualised and re-adapted to suit alternative narratives and create new context.

Curating is always a collaborative affair involving in-house colleagues or curators from other museums who are familiar with the subject area, experts on a specific artist, group of artists, genre or theme covered by the

exhibition. Collaborating with a guest curator will often add another dimension to the overall vision. There are numerous examples of this type of dynamic pairing including the *Intelligence* exhibition at Tate Britain in 2001, co-curated by Ginny Button from Tate and Charles Esche from the Van Abbemuseum and *Century City* an exploration of nine cities curated by nine different curators.

Planning an exhibition will begin years in advance with forecasts about likely visitor numbers and which slot in the year would best suits its revenue potential. Traditionally, autumn is the most desirable time and most likely to bring the greatest income, whereas the summer show will allow the institution an opportunity to experiment with artists and themes that might be less popular and more challenging. The pandemic and subsequent downturn in the economic situation may have impact on this type of annual programming and there are already signs that museums may have had to reduce their large-scale exhibitions and focus on shows of shorter duration.

If we borrow from Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital and specifically his proposition that objectified and institutional forms of cultural capital are only available to individuals with required levels of reading competency, parallels might be drawn with the development, consumption and understanding of images, sometimes called image literacy. Exhibitions have become "*the primary site of exchange in the political economy of art, where signification is constructed and maintained and occasionally deconstructed*"<sup>45</sup>. Any statement that refers to the construction and deconstruction of signification is important. Signification is relative, it has no permanence or eternal 'truth', "as long as we can identify something through signification, we have caught the thing in its essence. For Derrida, signification is an endless chain. Just when we think that we have pinned down the thing in question, we realise that what we have caught is simply another signifier"<sup>46</sup>. Understanding, appreciating or interrogating works of art will never be exclusively about its style, subject matter or content, it will always be affected by its mode of acquisition, method of exhibition and display, and the accompanying institutional interpretation.

The curator is the beating heart of the museum, orchestrating a vision and making possible the intellectual development of an idea as well as ensuring 'an afterlife' for the artist, "after the death of an artist their work continues to evolve...not literally in his work but in our perception of the work"<sup>47</sup>. They are archaeologist, ringmaster and choreographer, juxtaposing the familiar with the unfamiliar, exploring different methodologies, challenging emerging theories or sometimes, acting as the mouthpiece and spokesperson for the museum, in which case they, 'speak of, and for, the object that he/she has produced'<sup>48</sup>. This might suggest that the subject of curating is not "a subject of the master, but neither is it a subject of the university, it is, like the artist himself, or like the analyst, the subject of a praxis"<sup>49</sup>. Ensslin's refusal to accept that the subject of curating is either the subject of the master or the subject of the university or cultural institution is particularly important for the cultural period that this book covers.

If curators are the "institutionalised recognised experts of the artworld establishment"<sup>50</sup>, then Hans Ulrich Obrist, who regularly tops the list of the worlds' most powerful artworld experts, is surely its star. There are many critics who view the kind of iconic status achieved by star curators as worrying. They believe that they have become too influential, too powerful, sometimes even in competition with the artist. Curators defend their position and explain that they are exercising "procedures of artistic self-organisation and becoming collaborators in an area in which attributions are uncertain, and therefore also more flexible and negotiable"<sup>51</sup>. Affording star-like status to curators is not a new phenomenon. Harald Szeemann achieved his notoriety in 1969 in Kunsthalle Bern when he staged his exhibition *Live in Your Head; When Attitudes Become Form*. This exhibition was startlingly innovative: it interrogated the most radical artistic movements of the 1960, Minimalism, Body Art, Land Art, Earth Works, Arte-Povera, Fluxus and other conceptual art movements. Even more radically, it chose to emphasise a shift of artistic focus from space as location, to space inside your head. The show achieved iconic status, influenced many young curators and left a remarkable legacy as well as transforming the actual making of an exhibition into an artform, *in its own right*. It treated the museum space as a laboratory rather than a collective memorial<sup>52</sup> and took an experimental as well as an experiential attitude towards exhibition making. Szeemann rejected the traditional aestheticized showcase previously favoured by curators and created in its place, a form of "spatial choreography"<sup>53</sup>, a stage upon which he would choreograph intricate pieces of movement. The exhibition space became an environment where artists could meet, interact and engage in dialogue and Szeemann was the facilitator and enabler, "setting the stage for the curatorial assumption of the artist's creative mantle"<sup>54</sup>.

Szeemann devoted as much attention to the empty spaces surrounding and in between each artwork, as the work itself. He wanted to give art, a "special aura, a beathing space that it would never have again"<sup>55</sup>, and create an atmosphere that was expansive, spiritual and utopian. He was also keen to display relevant supporting material like plans, lists of works, correspondence, evidence of his thinking process and references to the relationships he had formed with artists and curators. Making transparent the thinking behind an exhibition has become a popular trope with modern curators. Hans Ulrich Obrist for example often includes archive material,

interviews and memories. There is also renewed interest in the status of the temporary exhibition and a marked increase in university and art school degrees that offer “a foundational narrative of curatorial and exhibition studies”<sup>56</sup> and a proliferation of books, articles and exhibition related literature.

Exhibitions have their say and pave the way for other curators, sometimes quite literally. In 2013, Jens Hoffman staged a come-back version of the Szeemann show called, *When Attitudes become Form become Attitudes*. This tribute show, showcasing the work of younger artists born after 1970 took place in 2013, in San Francisco, Detroit and the Venetian Palazzo of the Prado foundation<sup>57</sup> and included a large-scale model of the original exhibition. I like to think of Hoffman acting like a stalker, a fan or gang member in this obsessive act, (interestingly Szeemann said, only tribes survive<sup>58</sup>), an impressionable teenager cramming his bedroom with posters and memorabilia of a favourite film or pop star. Hoffman’s exhibition opened with an archive room, representing “the sequel to an episode that tells you what went before”<sup>59</sup>. Including archival information of the original exhibition. When asked in a video interview<sup>60</sup> why he thought the original exhibition had become so iconic, Hoffmann replied that this was the first time that Europe had been exposed to conceptual art from the United States. This was true, but in my opinion, of even greater significance was Szeemann’s decision to cast the curator as a free spirit, an inspired partner of the artist. This was an idea that really captured the imagination of the art world.

It is not uncommon for curators to pay tribute to extraordinary exhibitions but not always in such an overt manner. Reesa Greenberg has written extensively about remembering exhibitions, describing them as *replica, riff and reprise*<sup>61</sup>. The act of remembering is an important concept for any temporary exhibition, as it is in the process of remembering, that the temporary becomes permanent. Hoffmann’s acts of resurrection became both a personal homage to Szeemann and a visual legacy of the vast potential an exhibition can have as well as its ability to influence institutional attitudes and form.

The museum has never been a neutral space, although at times, it might try to present itself as such, “from the inside the museum effaces itself to become an invisible frame for the art or artifacts, it appears merely to house, conserve and exhibit”<sup>62</sup>. It has always had a story to tell, ideas to communicate and a reputation to uphold, all attitudes that have influenced its function, policy and identity. Just as the new art history in the latter part of the twentieth century, changed from a context-specific, socio-historical discipline to a revision of the hierarchy of art historical values, exhibitions have developed from “merely a staging of the aesthetic projects of their participants”<sup>63</sup> to a “radical redistribution of what seemed solidly preordained moving from transparency to opacity, from the erasure of aesthetic projects to their over-determination”<sup>64</sup>.

The museum exhibition has become the art institutions’ modern cabinet of curiosity with the curator, its privileged, powerful, sometimes wayward but always protected, collector. And not just collector, the curator is implicated in the “democratization of the circumscribed professional relations between artists and those who seek to professionally represent it”<sup>65</sup>. In Obrist’s words, exhibition making has become, “the medium through which most art becomes known”<sup>66</sup>.

### Curating as a Social act

The roots of the verb to curate come from the Latin *curare*, to take care of, so for example, the curate of a church is expected to look after, nurture and care for the congregation. The focus of this book is curating in the art museum, a job that uses different methodologies to manage different parts of the collection: if a work has already been acquired or is about to enter the permanent collection, the curator will check its provenance, history, arrange conservation, write the catalogue entry, award an accession number and make plans either for its display or removal to store. If the curator is devising and managing a temporary display, which is less concerned with longevity, it will be the central idea, narrative or philosophical proposition that shapes its development and artworks will be selected to visually explore the broad parameters of that question. Exhibitions may be used as a provocation, a challenge or a critique of assumptions and values held by the institution and attitudes to artistic production.

As official mediator of the institution, the curator is possibly “the most emblematic worker of the cognitive age”<sup>67</sup>. They are responsible for communicating the story that the museum wishes to tell and as sanctioned intermediaries, they fulfil the objectives of a range of institutional and professional networks as well as “the interests of larger and more powerful groups and constituencies”<sup>68</sup>. The type of recognised groups and constituencies to which Greenberg et al refer includes directors, trustees, academics, sponsors, donors and government officials, all powerful well-established influencers. But also, more recently, a new group of influencers has emerged, individuals who view the museum as their space. The museum visitor may once have been a

passive receiver of information, but this has changed. They are now actively encouraged to take control of their experience, become contributors not just consumers, producers not simply audience members, participants with real rather than symbolic involvement. Above all, they are encouraged to think and act like curators<sup>69</sup>. These changes did not come out of the blue. Throughout history, the public museum has promoted itself as inclusive and accessible but more recently, it has also become an interactive laboratory and working studio rather than a temple of excellence, a space in which curators and visitors engage in collaborative thinking and shared creating process.

It is this move towards co-curating and co-producing that is central to the proposition I am making. I want to draw attention to the rather ambiguous relationship that exists between curating as a profession characterized by power, authority and authorship, an activity undertaken by museum curators who care for, manage, interpret, and display what, in their view, best represents the story they wish to tell, and the daily acts of selection and display in which individuals engage, to construct their own personal identity. This ambiguity might be described as, “the culture of lifestyle over culture of connoisseurship”<sup>70</sup>.

In some parts of the world with high levels of consumption and production (in 2005 the wealthiest 20% of the world accounted for 76.6% of total private consumption), these personal acts of selection have become habitual. People choose the style of dress that appeals to them, their hairstyle, make-up, how they decorate their homes, their lifestyle, leisure activities and political affiliations. We are told that this form of individual curating is freely available, but as Zygmunt Bauman comments, “freedom has a price. No unchallengeable authority exists....to reassure that identity is a ‘good’ one”<sup>71</sup>. Essentially, even if our identity choices are free, they may not always be good.

Lifestyle, knowledge production, politics and culture are all paraded in front of our curatorial eye, and we piece together a personal identity that matches the vision we have chosen for ourselves. This image may, if we so wish, be communicated to others in the form of a personal narrative, a visual display that makes new links and new connections. Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat, TikTok and Tumblr are all networks built on content curation. They encourage us to create, share and publish the most up-to-date version of our everyday selves. An important feature of these acts of individual image making, or what I am calling personal curating, is that they can be regularly changed, edited, adapted, or simply abandoned when new styles emerge, or we become tired of what we perceive to be an old-fashioned or outmoded image. We have become comfortable with the act of constructing and reconstructing ourselves in this way and readily buy into the idea of identity consumerism.

As this book is concerned with attitude that becomes form in the museum, I want to question whether the liberty we have, to select, deselect and reselect our own self-image has given rise to similar expectations of our museums, leading us to believe that we have a heightened level of agency and power to influence and change the way we choose, shape, and consume the art that we are told is *ours* and the legacy that we have inherited.

You will see the immediate conflict of interest.

Individual curating welcomes change, revision and renewal and will happily reject or disrupt what went before. Museum curating operates within strict guidelines, actively resisting any attempt to ‘have a good clear out’. In UK museums, de-accession is still rare. Even the word *museum* implies permanence, ICOM defines it as a permanent institution that exhibits “tangible and intangible heritage of humanity”<sup>72</sup>. But this description is problematic. A collection that represents the visual heritage of what was once considered historically and culturally relevant may now seem like an uncomfortable reminder of a time when class, race, gender, colonial attitudes, and political awareness were very different.

As the permanent home of works of art, many of which have, over time, become part of the furniture, our museums find themselves in a difficult position. They are unable to upgrade or re-fashion work that was acquired long ago, they can only move it around or in some cases, store it in the loft (for loft, read museum store). Although moving work around may change the background narrative and encourage new thinking<sup>73</sup>, it is impossible to re-paint visual references or change visual narrative. The only option for museums is to reposition and recontextualize, make new connections, create new links and hope that these acts and the addition of interpretative text will somehow change the context of what was being communicated *then* to what is acceptable *now*.

There are also problems with our passion for encyclopedic collections based on notions of universality. James Rondeau, Director of the Art Museum of Chicago says, “I don’t actually embrace the word “encyclopedic” when it comes to our museum. I feel that the term isn’t scrutinized enough. We’re not actually encyclopedic in our collections. We’re broad in general, and deep and

varied. ...but I worry about the transparency and the honesty around [the word]. Clearly, it suggests a kind of universality that we as museums don't actually deliver"<sup>74</sup>.

So, how to square the circle where individual curating is ubiquitous, an act that begins with a vision of ourselves, an opportunity, "to take identities off the shelf, to deliberately pick and choose those elements we like and want"<sup>75</sup> and museum curating, a uniquely specialist profession, steeped in historical, traditional values and privileges, and for now at least, solidly opposed to the idea of deaccession.

Museums work hard to be accessible, inclusive, and welcoming to all. They reject what they describe as the clean slate or empty receptacle model and encourage visitors to bring their own experience, engage, participate, and become active interpreters and co-producers<sup>76</sup>. But this invitation triggers other expectations. In their newly emancipated status, visitors expect a level of empowerment, in which, "physical or symbolic acts of interaction allow them to determine their own social and political reality"<sup>77</sup> and as active producers, they imagine that they have agency to influence the content, shape and future of the museum. But museums are fiercely protective of their brand, their authorship, their authority and scholarship and although there may be opportunities for visitors to participate, interact, even sometimes to become co-artist or performer, it is unlikely that the visitor will influence acquisition policy or change the rules of de-accession, they cannot write museum captions or interpretative panels (there have been occasions where visitors are invited to contribute their own interpretation, but only in the form of a temporary intervention on informal platforms) and they cannot decide how, or if, work will be displayed. The conflict of people versus institutional power is constantly being tested not just in museums but also in the realm of public art and statuary.

The case of the Edward Colston statue is an example of how dangerous it is to assume and/or expect consensus regarding the preservation of tangible and intangible heritage. The vast majority of UK statutory was erected between the 1890's and mid twentieth century, decades that were largely responsible for "the entrenchment of whiteness and the creation of favourable conditions for the memorialisation of slave-holders and colonialists"<sup>78</sup>. The question of what is to be done with statues like these is not easy to resolve. The UK government has introduced laws that block their removal and they now demand a policy of 'retain and explain' (so interpretation becomes the dominant method of 'seeing' cultural artifacts). But many people feel uncomfortable with this. They are uneasy about displaying, either on our streets or in our museums, tangible examples of heritage that do not reflect enlightened views regarding colonialism, even if it is explained.

So, it falls upon curators to find ways of re-positioning and re-valuing history and heritage in a climate of changing attitude and values. In *Liquid Modernity*<sup>79</sup>, Zygmunt Bauman refers to a relentless recycle of directionless self-modernisation. If museums, as sites of modernity, have become ideological sites where acts of modernisation are performed for their own sake, then curation might simply respond to itself and become its own autonomous mode of practice. There is some evidence that this has already happened and modern exhibitions "mark the transformation of the curator from behind-the-scenes aesthetic arbiter to central player"<sup>80</sup>.

Inherent within the operational model of the 17<sup>th</sup> century cabinet of curiosity was a clear understanding of the source of power. Objects were the property of the collector, symbolic of his (usually male) wealth and status and clear of their intention to impress the visitor/viewer. Any relationship between the two interested partners was well understood. Following this, in the nineteenth century, museums became recognized publicly owned depositories housing encyclopaedic collections of objects of "perpetual, and indefinite accumulation of time in an immobile place"<sup>81</sup>. In these public spaces, visitors were invited to see outstanding works of art, collected *on their behalf*, exhibited and displayed with the purpose of promoting education and enlightenment thinking. In the twenty first century, museums have a divided mission, they remain dedicated to their role as the preserver of legacy and history while they also provoke and challenge past attitudes to heritage and cultural worth.

Museums have always been sites of inclusivity and accessibility and the message they now communicate is that anyone can be an artist, that creativity is for all<sup>82</sup>. Visitors are happy to accept this role and to adopt what Zygmunt Bauman calls a postmodern habitat, "governed by consumer desires and choices". They want to upgrade their position from, 'back street driver, criticising the route taken and move forward into the driving seat'<sup>83</sup>. But transforming the visitor into driver, (curator, creator, artist, and performer) brings problems of its own. If we are all artists, then what exactly is the art museum for? Is this "space of performativity and performance" changing visitors into, "participants in a cultural activity that is both a creation of involvement and the manufacture of the necessary distance of critical reflection and self-consciousness?"<sup>84</sup>. The modern museum may have become ideologically more socio/political and more conceptually framed. It has certainly become a space for interactivity and participation although there are differences of opinion regarding the impetus for this change. Claire Bishop suggests that visitors think of engagement as emancipation "from a state of alienation induced by the dominant ideological order – be this consumer capitalism, totalitarian socialism or military dictatorship?"<sup>85</sup>.

Bishop's belief that visitors engage in participatory activities in order to *escape from alienation or isolation* is different to the more popular interpretation, that visitors use engagement and interaction to fulfil a deep need for playful interaction. Either, or both, of these interpretations may be applicable but what is undeniable is the dramatic change of attitude in the way in which people are using the museum space. They no longer wish to worship at the high altar of culture, they want to challenge the "settled, and uncontroversial position"<sup>86</sup>, that culture has, for centuries, held dear. They have different ideas and expectations. They want to broaden their experience by re-imagining the museum as an expanded and re-visioned field of sociocultural experimentation, a space for debate and discussion, talks, lectures, conferences, and events, a space that is physically, socially, intellectually, and culturally accessible<sup>87</sup>, a haven for "convivial community"<sup>88</sup>. The modern museum visitor wants to engage in real collaborative creativity and achieve, "a more positive and non-hierarchical social model"<sup>89</sup>.

Although this non-hierarchical social model may not always be evident in the structure, governance, ethnicity and gender of museum personnel, it certainly is, in the newly designed physical spaces that offer an environment that is inclusive, accessible and participative as opposed to what has historically been an elitist, didactic environment. The museum has become an alternative space, a place for interaction and immersive activity, a physical embodiment of Foucault's heterotopia.

And as well as the provision of new spaces, museums have extended opening hours, introduced inclusive and accessible programming and devised a range of interactive activities to suit the changing demands and lifestyle of its visitors. All great news...but not without substantial financial challenges. Museums must achieve (and then sustain) a level of income that facilitates the upkeep of their buildings, ongoing conservation, ambitious exhibition programming and excellent standards of display. It only takes one unexpected event like the recent pandemic or fears of an economic recession to disrupt their smooth running. During the pandemic, museums were forced to close their doors for months, radically depleting their financial reserves and changing (maybe forever)<sup>90</sup> the behaviour of visitors who, unable to visit in person, turned (yet another 'turn') to virtual platforms and online resources<sup>91</sup>.

Time, events, politics, the environment, people and ideas are central to the formation of history and what we choose as representative of our cultural heritage is exactly that...our choice. Nineteenth century museums were preoccupied with themes of ever accumulating time and the expansion of encyclopaedic collections, twentieth century museums placed more emphasis on discussion, debate, and critical discourse, and we can only imagine what central theme will dominate the museum in the twenty first century.

Our attitudes toward legacy, heritage and modernism are out of sync. Our public spaces are concrete reminders of the way in which heroes of the past have become antagonists of the present, impossible to depose, so solidly are they rooted in our historical memory. Our permanent collections are struggling to reflect new attitudes regarding authorship, ownership, and value and exhibitions, as sites of activism, where tradition is scrutinized, and values reassessed, present an alternative ideology. If individual curating is influenced by and reflected in, the major philosophical concerns of the twenty first century, and identity, change and renewal are the current central themes, the question we must ask is how and if, we will be able to inject ideas of identity, change and renewal into our permanent collections and whether these new ideas will find refuge in a new separate space, a new heterotopia, a new world within a world.

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<sup>1</sup> Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London: Routledge, 1995), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. trans. Jonathan Mayne (London: Phaidon, 1995).

<sup>3</sup> "Stephen Greenblatt suggests that museums encourage two kinds of response: resonance and wonder. 'By wonder,' he writes, 'I mean the power of the displayed object to stop the viewer in his or her tracks, to convey an arresting sense of uniqueness, to evoke an exalted attention.'" Steven Lubar, "Cabinets of Curiosity", *Medium.com*, 1 October 2018 <https://lubar.medium.com/cabinets-of-curiosity-a134f65c115a>

<sup>4</sup> Alma S. Wittlin, *The Museum: Its History and Its Tasks in Education* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1949) 20

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid. Wittlin comments that "the actual material value of collections is likely to be inferior to the impression of wealth they evoke", 23.

<sup>6</sup> Although words like these are still used by artists of all disciplines. Hans Ulrich Obrist recalls that Diaghilev and Cocteau tried to explain what they did with the words 'Etonnez moi!' Interviewing Hans Ulrich Obrist by Tino Monetti (unpublished) <https://medium.com/@tinomonetti/interviewing-hans-ulrich-obrist-eng-482b5886abe8>

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- <sup>7</sup> Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, 2. Quotes Greenwood (1888) who asserts that “order and system is coming out of chaos”.
- <sup>8</sup> Alma S Wittlin, *Museums: in search of a usable future* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1970), 132.
- <sup>9</sup> Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, 18.
- <sup>10</sup> It should be noted that using The British Museum as an example, ‘accessible’ in the early years of the public museum, is not how we might understand the term. In those early years, those who wished to visit were required to give their credentials in person at an office and then wait about fourteen days until they were allowed entry.
- <sup>11</sup> United Kingdom, Department for Culture, Media and Sport, *The Culture White Paper*, Cm 9218 (London: HMSO, 2016) accessed 5 November 2022, [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/510798/DCMS\\_The\\_Culture\\_White\\_Paper\\_\\_3\\_.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/510798/DCMS_The_Culture_White_Paper__3_.pdf), 9.
- <sup>12</sup> Elizabeth Fullerton “Tate Director Chris Dercon: “Everything can be changed” **ARTnews February 2013**
- <sup>13</sup> Tate, “Maria Balshaw appointed new director of Tate”, press release, 17 January 2017, <https://www.tate.org.uk/press/press-releases/maria-balshaw-appointed-new-director-tate>.
- <sup>14</sup> Heinz Bude, “The curator as meta-artist: the case of HUO”, *Texte zur Kunst* 86 (2012): 114.
- <sup>15</sup> Nicholas Serota, *Experience or Interpretation: The Dilemma of Museums of Modern Art* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2000), 36.
- <sup>16</sup> Tom Krens cited in Rosalind Krauss, “The Cultural Logic of the Late Capitalist Museum”, *October* 54 (1990), 7.
- <sup>17</sup> Serota, *Experience or Interpretation*, 36.
- <sup>18</sup> Inside/Out @ in Context: Criteria for an Acquisition [https://www.moma.org/explore/inside\\_out/tag/acquisition/](https://www.moma.org/explore/inside_out/tag/acquisition/)
- <sup>19</sup> Nicholas Serota, *Experience or Interpretation*, 11.
- <sup>20</sup> Tate, *Tate acquisition and disposal policy. Approved by the board of trustees on 18 November 2020* (2020) [https://www.tate.org.uk/documents/1685/acquisition\\_and\\_disposal\\_policy\\_2020.pdf](https://www.tate.org.uk/documents/1685/acquisition_and_disposal_policy_2020.pdf)
- <sup>21</sup> James Elkins, ed., *Art History versus Aesthetics* (New York: Routledge, 2006).
- <sup>22</sup> Robert Gero, “The Border of the Aesthetic” in *Art History versus Aesthetics*, ed. James Elkins (New York: Routledge, 2006), 3.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid; Thierry de Duve in *Art History versus Aesthetics*, ed. James Elkins (New York: Routledge, 2006), 60.
- <sup>24</sup> “All decisions regarding acquisitions will take into account the needs of the Collection; the condition of the work and the costs of conserving and storing the work; the potential for display at relevant Tate site(s); and that any purchase has been negotiated to represent the best possible price to Tate.” Tate, *Tate acquisition and disposal policy*, 2020, [https://www.tate.org.uk/documents/1685/acquisition\\_and\\_disposal\\_policy\\_2020.pdf](https://www.tate.org.uk/documents/1685/acquisition_and_disposal_policy_2020.pdf)
- <sup>25</sup> Marjatte Hölz observes that ‘much of museums’ collections are kept in store without ever being shown for various reasons. (qualitative, conservational, financial, spatial, etc.). Marjatte Hölz, “Fresh breeze in the depots — curatorial concepts for reinterpreting collections”, *OnCurating* 12 (2011): 2.
- <sup>26</sup> The original American architect of Tate Britain’s Duveen gallery designed the space so that statues arranged in two rows either side of the centre would stand on reinforced parts of the floor.
- <sup>27</sup> Frances Morris, “Expanding horizons: rethinking the past through the lens of the present” (Keynote speech at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Melbourne, Australia, 2016), <https://youtu.be/UrCyyt5z1Ow>. In her speech Morris quotes from Boris Groys who described the traditional museum as a place of things and the contemporary museum as a space of events.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>29</sup> “The Tate Galleries and Slavery”, Tate, accessed 4 November 2022, <https://www.tate.org.uk/about-us/history-tate/tate-galleries-and-slavery>.
- <sup>30</sup> Art for the Nation: Sir Charles Eastlake at the National Gallery, [nationalgallery.org.uk/about-us/history/directors-sir-charles-lock-eastlake](http://nationalgallery.org.uk/about-us/history/directors-sir-charles-lock-eastlake)
- <sup>31</sup> Peter Mason, “The Song of the Sloth” in *Re-verberations, Tactics of Resistance, Forms of Agency in Trans/cultural Practices*, ed. Jean Fisher (Maastricht: Jan van Eyck, 2000), 28. ¶
- <sup>32</sup> Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity, 2000).
- <sup>33</sup> Marion Endt, *Reopening the Cabinet of Curiosities: Nature and the Marvellous in Surrealism and Contemporary Art* (PhD diss., University of Manchester, 2008), 3.
- <sup>34</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>35</sup> Rachel Esner and Fieke Konijn, “Curating the Collection: Editorial”, *Stedelijk Studies* 5 (2017), <https://stedelijkstudies.com/journal/curating-the-collection/>
- <sup>36</sup> Hans Ulrich Obrist, *A Brief History of Curating* (Zürich: JRP Ringier, 2011), 47.
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>38</sup> Morris, *Expanding Horizons: rethinking the past through the lens of the present*”. In this speech, Morris outlined her vision for redefining the museum for the 21st century.

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Hölz, "Fresh breeze in the depots", 2.

<sup>41</sup> Jean-Marc Poinot, "Large exhibitions: a sketch of a typology" in *Thinking about Exhibitions*, eds. Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, and Sandy Nairne (London: Routledge, 1996), 40.

<sup>42</sup> Judith Mastai, "There Is No Such Thing As A Visitor" in *Museums after Modernism: Strategies of Engagement, New Interventions in Art History*, eds. Griselda Pollock and Joyce Zemans (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 173–78.

<sup>43</sup> Okwui Enwezor, "The postcolonial constellation: contemporary art in a state of permanent transition" in *Antinomies of art and culture: modernity, postmodernity, contemporaneity*, eds. Terry Smith, Okwui Enwezor and Nancy Condee (Durham, Duke University Press, 2008), 211

<sup>44</sup> Reesa Greenberg, "'Remembering Exhibitions': From Point to Line to Web" *Tate Papers* 12 (2009), <https://www.tate.org.uk/research/tate-papers/12/remembering-exhibitions-from-point-to-line-to-web>.

<sup>45</sup> Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, and Sandy Nairne, eds., *Thinking about Exhibitions* (London: Routledge, 1996), 1.

<sup>46</sup> Brian Grassom, "Measure and Excess" in *Analecta Husserliana: The Yearbook of Phenomenological Research* 97 ed. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (2007): 160

<sup>47</sup> Caroline Elbaor, "Rem Koolhaas Moonlights as Co-Curator of Milan Exhibition Highlighting Sol LeWitt's Links to Architecture", *Artnet News*, 15 November 2017, <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/sol-lewitt-rem-koolhaas-curator-1148495>

<sup>48</sup> Felix Vogel, "Notes on exhibition history in curatorial discourse", *OnCurating* 21 (2013): 48.

<sup>49</sup> Felix Ensslin, "The Subject of Curating – Notes on the Path towards a Cultural Clinic of the Present", *OnCurating* 26 (2015): 28.

<sup>50</sup> Mari Carmen Ramirez, "Brokering Identities: Art curators and the politics of cultural representation" in *Thinking about Exhibitions* eds. Reesa Greenberg, Bruce Ferguson, Sandy Nairne (London: Routledge, 1996), 22.

<sup>51</sup> Dorothee Richter, "Artists and Curators as Authors – Competitors, Collaborators, or Team-workers?" *OnCurating* 19 (2013): 43.

<sup>52</sup> Obrist, *A Brief History of Curating*, 83.

<sup>53</sup> Teresa Gleadowe, "Introduction" in *Exhibiting the New Art: 'Op Losse Schroeven' and 'When Attitudes Become Form' 1969* (London: Afterall, 2010), mentions Christian Rattemeyer's deep interest in spatial choreography, 11

<sup>54</sup> *ibid*

<sup>55</sup> Melanie Tran, "Harald Szeeman's 'Project Files'", *Getty Research Institute: Outside the Box* (blog), 31 May 2013, <https://blogs.getty.edu/iris/treasures-from-the-vault-harald-szeemanns-project-files/>.

<sup>56</sup> Nanne Burmann and Dorothee Richter, "Editorial: documenta: Curating the History of the Present" *OnCurating* 33 (2017): 2

<sup>57</sup> Jens Hoffmann, *Show Time: The Most Influential Exhibitions of Contemporary Art* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2017): 186.

<sup>58</sup> Quote from Una Szeemann in A Closer Look: Being Harald Szeemann – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vu6zn-V11vI>

Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, "Jens Hoffman Interview: 'When Attitudes Became Form Become Attitudes'", 12 February 2013, video, 3:33, <https://youtu.be/3JwXvOrxK5o>

<sup>60</sup> In conversation with artist Carey Young at a Tate event, Jens Hoffman discussed 'a canon of curating'. This was a critical discussion that considered questions around the role of a curator, the major changes that have influenced curating and its relationship to art, artists and the wider world. "Show Time: Curating contemporary art", Tate, accessed 4 November 2022, <https://www.tate.org.uk/audio/show-time-curating-contemporary-art>.

<sup>61</sup> Greenberg, "Remembering Exhibitions"

<sup>62</sup> Suzanne Oberhardt quoted in Griselda Pollock, "Un-Framing the Modern: Critical Space/Public Possibility" in *Museums after Modernism: Strategies of Engagement, New Interventions in Art History*, Griselda Pollock and Joyce Zemans eds. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 2.

<sup>63</sup> Jean-Marc Poinot, "Large exhibitions", 39.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*, 40.

<sup>65</sup> John Roberts quoted in Michael Birchall, "Editorial" *OnCurating* 19 (2013): 4.

<sup>66</sup> Obrist, *A Brief History of Curating* 7.

<sup>67</sup> Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev quoted in David Balzer, *Curationism: how curating took over the art world and everything else* (London: Pluto Press, 2015), 3.

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<sup>68</sup> Ramirez, "Brokering Identities", 22.

<sup>69</sup> See Graham Black on this topic, "Meeting the audience challenge in the 'Age of Participation'", *Museum Management and Curatorship* 33, no. 4 (2018): 302-319, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09647775.2018.469097>

<sup>70</sup> In *The global art world: audiences, markets, and museums*, eds. Hans Belting and Andrea Buddensieg (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2009), 38-70

<sup>71</sup> Dennis Smith, *Zygmunt Bauman: Prophet of Postmodernity* (Cambridge: Polity, 1999), 107.

<sup>72</sup> "A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment." International Council of Museums, *Museum Definition*, August 24, 2022, <https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/museum-definition/>, accessed November 4, 2022.

<sup>73</sup> Frances Morris talks of the future of the museum in relation to audience participation as an open experiment.

<sup>74</sup> See James Rondeau quoted in Andrew Goldstein, "Museums are Contested Sites. The Art Institute of Chicago's James Rondeau on Why he Finds the Current Moment so Electrifying," *Artnet News*, 23 July 2019, <https://news.artnet.com/the-big-interview/james-rondeau-art-institute-of-chicago-interview-part-1-1607410>

<sup>75</sup> Michael Bhaskar, *Curation: The Power of Selection in a World of Excess* (London: Piatkus, 2016), 285.

<sup>76</sup> Tony Butler director of Derby museums has invited young people to act as co-curators and develop a programme of interpretation around Joseph Wright of Derby's life, his family and wellbeing.

<sup>77</sup> Sue Bell Yank, "The Role of Social Art According to Bishop and Mouffe", 20 November 2009, <https://suebellyank.com/2009/09/the-role-of-social-art-according-to-bishop-and-mouffe/>

<sup>78</sup> Peter Hill, "When the Statues Went Up", *History Workshop*, 12 June 2020, <https://www.historyworkshop.org.uk/when-the-statues-went-up/>

<sup>79</sup> Bauman, *Liquid Modernity*

<sup>80</sup> Ramirez, "Brokering Identities", 21.

<sup>81</sup> These ideas are expressed in Foucault and Miskowicz "Of Other Spaces"

<sup>82</sup> Adam Reed Rozan, Director of Audience Engagement, Worcester Art Museum states that museum projects 'need to be as much about the audience as they do the objects.' "Audience Engagement: How Museums Learned to Love their Visitors", *Museum-iD*, July 2016, <https://museum-id.com/audience-engagement-how-museums-learned-to-love-their-visitors-by-adam-rozan/>.

<sup>83</sup> Smith, *Zygmunt Bauman: Prophet of Postmodernity*, 107.

<sup>84</sup> Pollock, "Un-framing the Modern", 30

<sup>85</sup> Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London: Verso, 2012), 275.

<sup>86</sup> Orian Brook, Dave O'Brien and Mark Taylor, *Culture Is Bad for You: Inequality in the Cultural and Creative Industries* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), 31.

<sup>87</sup> The Nina Simon Ted Talk, 'The Art of Relevance' offers an excellent discussion on the relevance of art and culture. Nina Simon, "The Art of Relevance" (recorded at TedX Palo Alto, 2 April 2018), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NTih-l739w4>

<sup>88</sup> Gillian Rose in Katie Schick, "Social Utopianism – Architectural Illusion", in *The Broken Middle* in Gillian Rose: A Good Enough Justice, (Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 36-54, [www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctt3fgtr2.6](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctt3fgtr2.6),<sup>?</sup>

<sup>89</sup> Bell Yank, "The Role of Social Art According to Bishop and Mouffe"

<sup>90</sup> Research by The Art Fund reports that 85% of museum directors have expressed concern about the ability to attract visitors back.

<sup>91</sup> The DCMS published a policy document in 2019 that referred to "the Digital Culture Project and the #CultureisDigital. This was an exploration of how culture and technology can work together to drive audience engagement, boost the capability of cultural organisations and unleash the creative potential of technology". Unied Kingdom, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, *Policy Paper: Culture is Digital*, updated September 18, 2019, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/culture-is-digital/culture-is-digital>.