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CATÓLICA
PORTUGUESA

THE ROLE OF ART CURATORS IN CONTEMPORARY ART
AND PHOTOGRAPHY

Dissertação apresentada à Universidade Católica Portuguesa para
obtenção do grau de mestre em Culture Studies

Por

Loan Lamoureux

Human Sciences

10 de Novembro de 2017



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Sob orientação de Luisa Leal de Faria

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Acknowledgments

The production of this report was made possible thanks to the help of several people to whom I would like to express my gratitude.

First of all, I would like to thank the supervisor of the following dissertation, Madam Luisa Homem Leal de Faria, Professor at Universidade Católica Portuguesa. She guided me and helped me to structure my work and its development. Her availability and involvement helped me to find solutions and move forward. I also thank the faculty members Isabel Gil, Daniela Agostinho, and Ana Margardia Abrantes. I would also like to thank the art curator and university teacher Luisa Santos for the interview she had agreed to give me and her help throughout my work.

I would also like to thank David Moreillon and Charly Forin, the production managers and cofounders of Cinq Etoiles production along with their whole team to make me discover the field of production in photography. I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to Fany Dupechez and Pascal Michaut, two talented curators and the cofounders of the *Vichy Portrait(s)* festival that I assisted on great exhibitions during my six months' internship as an art curator and production assistant. In addition to her good pieces of advice and insights on the work of art curator, I would like to thank Fany Dupechez for her interview.

Lastly, I would like to express my gratitude to all the people who have followed the progress of this work.

Abstract

The following dissertation will focus on the social role of art curators within our society along with the evolution of the concept of “Museum” since the beginning of the 20th century. This research paper is based on my experience as an art curator and production assistant for the company Cinq Etoiles Production on exhibitions such as Pernod Ricard’s art campaign *MINDSET*, Médecins du Monde’s *Mise Au Poing* exhibition or *Vichy Portrait(s)*. This internship gave me insights into the organization of a cultural and artistic show, its mission and the skills and the resources required to conduct it successfully.

Indeed, evolving in the field of exhibitions’ organization and especially photography made me reflect upon the way people “use” museums and exhibitions and to what extent Art is essential for society. More than presenting the work of artists for their aesthetical values, an exhibition can raise awareness about issues, open debates on different subjects and enables us to project ourselves forwards. Besides, museums serve as vectors of knowledge about our history, or culture and other values and identities. Therefore, I began to realize that the most important changes in society were due to artists and intellectuals who promoted open-mindedness, multiculturalism, and alternative thinking. I wanted to understand how museums that were long reserved for a small fraction of our society became able to address larger audience and educate the public opinion. We will see during this research that just like any significant evolution of society, the democratization of art and culture under all its forms had to overcome many obstacles over the decades. We will also reflect upon the concept of “Museums” as art laboratory and places of social interactions, why it should be politically-engaged and how to involve the community in the process to achieve change within our society.

Keywords: Art, Culture, Curating, Exhibition, Museum, Curator, Ethical, Politics, Society, Modern Art, Video, Photography, Light, Scenography, Innovative, Management.

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Introduction¹

«When you see something special, something inspired, you realize the debt we owe great curators and their unforgettable shows - literally unforgettable because you remember every picture, every wall and every juxtaposition.»² Once said Charles Saatchi, the co-founder of the Saatchi & Saatchi gallery in London. Indeed, who are those men and women working behind the scenes of memorable art shows and exhibitions? From the small exhibitions of neighbourhood galleries to the giant installations of the Guggenheim or the MoMA, art curators work to sublimate the work of artists and enhance the experience of the visitors. Straddling between artistic visions and managerial imperatives, curators are the mediators in the exhibition process. From the display of the work in line with the artist's vision, the management of the different stakeholders and the administrative issues surrounding the event, the curator is nowadays a multi-layered manager in addition to an art specialist. Indeed, a curator will need a range of specific skills such as polyphonic communication or peripheral vision, to manage the organization of an exhibition effectively. On the subject of art curating and its history, the literature is relatively sparse, but nevertheless, the discipline along with the very concept of museums have drastically evolved during the last century thanks to avant-garde curators who understood the need for society to bridge the gap between Art and Life. How has this change happened in the cultural sector? What have been the drivers of this evolution? How can an exhibition change someone's perspective? How to make Art meaningful for everybody? How to work in line with artists to enhance the experience of a show? The following dissertation hopes to answer these questions. All around the world, the last decades witnessed the rise of innovative curatorial practices, from the first shows of Amerindian arts in New York in 1941 to the disruptive performances of the *Documental V* in Kassel, Germany in the 1970's. Indeed, thanks to the work of visionary curators and with lots of risk-taking and controversies, social

¹ Throughout the following pages, all references will be presented in footnotes. Indeed, the majority of sources are internet sources and footnotes will provide clear and precise additional information to the reader without interfering with the reading of the dissertation.

² Saatchi, Charles (2009), "30 things about art and life, as explained by Charles Saatchi". *Theguardian.com*. Available at : <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2009/aug/30/charles-saatchi-best-of-british>. Last viewed on: 02/10/17.

thematic, conceptual art, multiculturalism and educational departments established themselves in museums. Besides, not only the substance but also the form of exhibition evolved remarkably. New ways to organize spaces of exhibition made their appearance, breaking with the old-fashion definition of “museums” and its dark rooms. Such would be the case of the white cube for traditional visual arts or the black box to display audio-visual installations. The last century also saw the rise of photography as an integral part of our life and a powerful tool of communication for companies and organizations all around the globe. Indeed, multinational groups such as Pernod Ricard or famous NGOs like Médecins du Monde use portrait photography as an essential part of their campaigns to highlight specific matters or raise awareness about others. As portraits have always been associated with pride and identity, at the centre of the main societal debates we will discuss their use in communication and their social implications. Furthermore, just as light is essential in art, we could not address the topic of curating and exhibitions without discussing the importance of light and lighting design in artworks display. With the advance of technology and lighting techniques, curators became able to adapt the light of a space according to the nature of the artwork offering new opportunities in terms of curatorial practices. We will also be looking at the organization of a photography festival and particularly *Vichy Portrait(s)*, the first photography festival dedicated to portrait photography. The festival taking place annually in the city of Vichy is an excellent example of an encounter between Art and everyday life.

To carry out this study, we will analyse the work of art specialists, curators, historians and museum directors who marked the history of curating. To understand the cultural renewal that occurred in museums during the second part of the 20th century, we will need to understand Alexander Dorner’s thinking and philosophy about the evolution of art through his work *The Way Beyond Art*. In the same vein, we will study the work and careers of innovative curators such as Willem Sandberg or Pontus Hülten through various publications such as the interviews conducted by Hans Ulrich Obrist in his book *A Brief History of Curating*. Besides, as the following argumentation will focus mainly on photography, we will study various studies on the relationship between photography, perception and cognitive functions such as the work of the neurophysiologist Vittorio Gallese and his extensive research on mirror neurons or the work of the professor of Cognitive Science Fritz Breithaupt on cognition and empathy. Besides, we

will study the work of Susan Sontag to better grasp the “power” of photography and how we react emotionally to pictures. To illustrate the argumentation, we will also provide interviews with professional curators from France and Portugal. These interviews conducted during the last few months will give us insights into the challenges and issues related to the profession and its actuality.

What is the social role of art curators in society? The following reasoning will attempt to answer this question.

I. The evolution of curating and the social role of curators

1. The work of curating

1.1. What is a curator?

*“Curating does not create art but the experience of art”*³, once said Hopkins. According to its Latin origin, “curare” means “to take care” and the art curator is taking care of an exhibition’s organization that he “curates”. Traditionally, the art curator or the “keeper” of a cultural institution such as a gallery or a museum is an art specialist in charge of a collection and its display within the space of exhibition. However, the role and missions of art curators have considerably evolved since the last century, and the curator is nowadays also in charge of providing meanings and creating experiences to the public through the work of the artist. Just as the institution of “Museum” always had an educational purpose, the curator has also an educational role regarding the audience. Before being strictly reserved to arts as we know it today, the term of Museum used to be associated with knowledge and studies. The word “Museum” comes from the Latin word “musea” or “museums” in plural. It originated from the ancient Greek “Mouseion” (Μουσείον), a temple dedicated to the Muses, the divinities of the arts in the Greek mythology. The “Musaeum” for example, the institution hosting the Library

³ B. Hopkins, Justin (2012), “Abstract and Brief Chronicles: Creative and Critical Curation of Performance”, *Liminalities: Journal of Performance Studies*, 8(1), pp. 22. Available at: <http://liminalities.net/8-1/curation.pdf>. Last viewed on: 03/11/17.

of Alexandria was a place of research and philosophy until its destruction in 216 AC. We will discuss, later on, the changes that the idea of the “museum” underwent throughout the 20th century.

Besides, the art curator is responsible for the vision of the exhibition by creating meanings for the public while being in adequacy with the artist’s vision and his creative approach and involvement. Besides the selection of artist(s), works of art and the design of an exhibition’s scenography, the curator has to deal with a broad range of imperatives with the different stakeholders of a show; artists, gallery owners, audience, publishers and many more. In fact, from a managerial perspective, the work of art curator has changed a lot in recent years, along with the art itself and today’s curators need to a broad range of skills to succeed in the field.

1.2. A multi-faceted manager

During the 20th century, the art scene witnessed the emergence of several art movements such as expressionism, surrealism or postmodernism characterized by unrelated patterns and a provocative, intense and moving approach to art. In fact, to understand how the role of curating is changing along with new art movements, we should understand clearly what are those movements and their conditions.

Alberto Martinelli in his work *Global modernization: rethinking the project of modernity* remarks:

The postmodern condition expands the range of possible choices; experiments with a plurality of eclectic lifestyles, languages and modalities of social interaction; offers the greatest opportunities for generational, ethnic and gender groups to develop alternative subcultures that establish their specific public identities.⁴

Indeed, Martinelli observed that with postmodernism “*everything is possible*” and it can be applied to any form of modern art. Modern art is linked with globalization and plurality of arts

⁴ Martinelli, Aberto (2005), *Global modernization: rethinking the project of modernity*, London: Sage Publications, pp. 85.

and cultures and is also connected to technology, science and social fields. Consequently, the actual art scene can generate any art and attract many different kinds of publics requiring the art curator to have a polyphonic communication and peripheral vision. Another important aspect of the modern art scene is that it includes its community as a subject, it creates a link between art and its public. The changes in expectations, interpretations and people's preferences regarding art create new devices of understanding and give a new approach to the work of the curator. In what follows we will discuss the curator's role from a managerial point of view. First of all, Curating is a reconstructed practice. Far from the heritage of art curating in sacred temples with straight borders called museums, Art is now taking place in popular events such as biennales, art centers, art fairs and many other venues creating opportunities for curators, gallery owners, artists and critics to exchange ideas and reflect upon the place of art in society. Along with the change in where it should take place, art is also evolving in its relation and interaction between curators, artists and audience. As an example, *The Beta-space* is an experimental public room of audio-visual art where the audience interacts live with the space and its technological devices that translate the movements of the public in animated content. Developed by the University of Technology of Sydney, the Powerhouse Museum and Creativity and Cognition Studios, *Beta-space* is one example among dozens of a new approach to art that changes the audience's role from viewers to doers⁵. An other example could be Ana Hamilton's participative performance *the event of the thread*. Hamilton's piece of work, exhibited at the Park Avenue Armory, New York in December 2012 featured 42 swings suspended from the ceiling around a giant white sheet. In this particular case, the audience is essential to the work as the people swinging on their swings create regulated movements in the room, and those patterns accompany the movement of the white sheet on the space. Interaction is then the main feature of the exhibition that could not exist without it. Art curating evolves and it is by inviting artists willing to promote art as a vector of culture and social interactions that the curator can make a difference in term of curatorial practices. In O'Neil's words "*Curating is about opening up relationships between things, people and ideas. It is a multi-layered interface of ideologies,*

⁵ Website of the Beta-Space.

Available at: <http://research.it.uts.edu.au/creative/betaspace/moreInfo.html>. Last viewed on: 06/09/17.

statements, different positions that may agree, contest, or antagonize each other"⁶. The curator is no longer only performing administrative activities within galleries or museums, and he is nowadays deeply engaged in the production process. Because of his role of educator creating links between artists and audiences, the curator takes on the function of manager-innovator and must then "*plan, organize, co-ordinate and control*"⁷ noted the Turkish academician Gonca Aslan. A curator must be able to surround himself with the best resources and delegate effectively within the different stakeholders of a show; artists, galleries owners, light designers or stage directors, and must be able to synthesize the ideas of all. Finally, the curator must be aware of trends in art from local to global scale and must have a long term vision for his exhibitions along with having improvisational skills, a polyphonic communication and a peripheral vision.

1.3. Peripheral vision, polyphonic communication, and improvisational skills

The Curator must have a peripheral vision. He needs to understand his environment, the audience's tastes and expectations, the art trends and how to seize opportunities. The art curator is the mediator of the project, and by having a peripheral vision, he will be able to understand the process of an exhibition in its entirety and answer to the different stakeholders' needs. It is also essential for the art curator to adopt a polyphonic communication and to adapt his discourse to the ones involved in the exhibition process. As described later in the dissertation in the part about corporate curating illustrated by the Pernod Ricard *MINDSET* case, a curator will have to deal with administrative issues, budgets, deadlines and must be able to "*convert the language of art into the language of corporation*"⁸ as Chris Bangle maintains in an article for the *Harvard*

⁶ O'Neil, Paul (2009), *On curating*, 6, pp. 7.

Available at: <http://www.on-curating.org/index.php/issue-6.html#.U8QzAyyKDmI>. Last viewed: 06/09/17.

⁷ Gonca, Aslan and Bulut, Cagri (2014), "The Role of Curator in Postmodern Epoch: A Manager, A Leader, An Innovator or All?" *International Journal of Cultural and Creative Industries*.

Available at: <http://www.ijcci.net/index.php?option=module&lang=en&task=pageinfo&id=121&index=3>. Last viewed on: 23/06/2017.

⁸ Bangle, Chris (2001), "The ultimate creative machine: How BMW turns art into profit", *Harvard Business Review*, pp. 47.

Available at: <http://hbswk.hbs.edu/archive/2256.html>. Last viewed on: 28/06/17.

Business Review. Polyphonic communication will also be essential to translate the discourses, feelings and needs of the different stakeholders, to create a structured mosaic made of all ideas and to determine the right path to follow. Also, the curator needs improvisational skills. Improvisation in the case of an art curator is his capacity to deviate from the routine. The curator needs to find different solutions to a certain issue, and he needs to have flexibility and know-how to respond to problems and adapt his/her activities to postmodern contexts. Indeed, while curating an exhibition within commercial and humanitarian purposes as we will see later in this dissertation, having these different skills will be essential to coordinate the various parties involved in the exhibition process. Take for example the organization of Médecins du Monde's exhibition *MISE AU POING* about precariousness in France. A peripheral vision was required to link the needs of the NGO and the work of photographers on the field. Which photographer could carry out a series of pictures on this thematic within a period? Which printer will we work with to produce this certain type of images? Which framer to frame the pictures? Which gallery or exhibition space could better receive the show according to the formats and medias displayed? Will it suit Médecin du Monde's budget and the number of people expected to attend the inauguration of the event? We'll we need additional staff for the catering? How to organize the transport and accommodations of the photographers and models that will attend the opening? These are some of the many questions that a global vision of the project requires to answer. Besides, a polyphonic communication will allow the curator to communicate effectively to the different parties of the show. As in any modern business, proficiency in several languages and intercultural skills are required. Indeed, in both shows described bellow, Médecin du Monde's *MISE AU POING* and Pernod Ricard's *MINDSET*, the photographers, models and commissioning organizations had different origins. Besides, the art curator will need to adapt his/her discourse not only to the geographical origin of his interlocutor but also according to his profession. The discourse will not be the same with a big company executive as with a photographer on the field, and this must be taken into consideration. Finally, the manager of a cultural event will need improvisational skills to cope with unforeseen events. A photographer might be late with his work or get ill, the expenses might exceed the approved project budget, or the space of exhibition might not be available anymore. In this case, a curator could not go further in the process without a backup plan. A crucial skill of the work of curator is to know

which exhibition space will fit best your artworks, and what are the special features of these spaces.

2. Gallery and exhibition spaces

2.1. The White Cube

What is the “White Cube”? As well as being famous galleries in London and Hong Kong owned by the English art dealer’s Joy Joplin, the concept of White Cube is a western minimalist and modernist environment to display pieces of art. It provides supposedly the perfect environment to present artworks: hidden sources of artificial light, a homogeneous floor and white walls. It is a bright and thoughtful environment made to decontextualize the conventional environment of museums and galleries. Indeed, once released from all environmental disruptions, one can appreciate the true “essence of art”, its timelessness and almost sacred nature. In the White Cube, the art is isolated from the real world and its social, economical and historical context. Besides, more than a physical entity, the white cube is an ideological and historical creation that is not separable from the art piece(s) displayed. It highlights the quality of the work but at the same time can appear more prominent than the artwork by trying to withdraw itself. One of the first experimentation of the White Cube was at the Museum of Modern Art of New York under the direction of Alfred Barr. Following the development of Abstract Art, the museum that was founded in 1929 democratized the White Cube display as the main form of the 20th-century gallery and museum space. The ideology behind the white cube is intimately connected to modernism but also to the evolution of the art market. In his work *Inside the White Cube*, the Irish artist, critic and activist Brian O’Doherty provides a rich and challenging analysis of the functioning and history of the White Cube. In his research, he analyses from several perspectives the concept, history and implications of this form of display across time along with its relation to modernism.

The history of modernism is intimately framed by that space; or rather the history of modern art can be correlated

with changes in that space and in the way we see it. We have now reached a point where we see not the art but the space first.⁹

remarks Doherty. Through all forms of visual arts; painting, filmmaking, sculpture, design, photography, installation and many others, the history of scenography, and the importance of the wall itself, Brian Doherty breaks up the legend surrounding the White Cube and its neutrality. In the third part of his research, *Context as Content*¹⁰, the author also provides interesting thoughts about the use of the space during the 1960's and 1970's when context became content itself. Indeed, the White Cube represents the social context and political radicalism of the 1960's and 1970's in Western Europe and the US.

It represents a rejection of traditional institutions such as museums and repositions the art itself at the centre of the exhibition rather than its public or its context. The white of the White Cube represents the non-intervention of the art curator, the respect of the art in its purest form. However, many critiques point out the withdrawal and passivity of the public regarding this kind of display. In *Inside the White Cube*, Doherty wrote on the experience of the white cube visitor and *the Presence before a work of Art*. According to him, the visitor is made of the "Eye" and the "Spectator", the Eye would be the disembodied faculty that relates exclusively to formal visual means while the Spectator "*is the attenuated and bleached-out life of the self from which the Eye goes forth and which, in the meantime, does nothing else. The Eye and the Spectator are all that is left of someone who has "died"*".¹¹ Indeed, the White Cube doesn't involve the audience in an educative approach, and the author suggests the perspective of a more active and self-reflective role of the participant. Besides, this is also why since the 1960's, a lot has been done in terms of curating and education to collaborate with the audience, involve the public and enhance their experience of the show.

With the emergence of new media, a new architectural art space appeared, the "Black Box" or "Black Cube". By the 1960's, with the increase of photography and film screening, a dark

⁹ O'Doherty, Brian (1976), *Inside the White Cube. The Ideology of the Gallery Space*. Expanded edition. University of California Press (1999), Ltd. London, England. Pp. 14.

¹⁰ Ibid, pp. 65.

¹¹ Ibid, pp. 9.

isolated environment was needed in gallery spaces to feature screening sessions for the visitors. Architectural innovations in art galleries and museum spaces have always followed the evolution of art itself. Indeed, just as the white cube adopted the zeitgeist of perception and abstract artworks, the black cube followed the rise of films and installations. The black box recalls a movie theatre and just as the White Cube presents pieces of art isolated from the outside reality. From the 1970's and 1980's onwards, the black cube became widely used for interactive installations and digital art under the impetus of the London Video Arts (LVA). In fact, video art gained great recognition after the influential *Video Show* at the Serpentine Gallery. It was the first “*festival of independent video with performances, artists' videos, video graphics, community video, closed-circuit installations, a tape library, a giant TV screen and live participatory events*”¹² featuring artists from 13 countries and several artworks requiring audience interaction. After that, curators and museums directors understood that the walls of the “white cube” or “classical” museums to display 3D sculpture and 2D artworks would not suit modern digital arts. Indeed, installation and video artworks such as the ones of David Hall require dark rooms for a better immersion and interaction with the audience.



Image 1: Hall, David (1974), *Progressive Recession* installed in 'The Video Show', Serpentine Gallery, 1975¹³

¹² Serpentine Gallery archive (1975), *The Video Show*.

Available at: <http://www.serpentinegalleries.org/exhibitions-events/video-show>. Last viewed on: 13/09/17

¹³ Hall, David (1974), *Progressive Recession* installed in 'The Video Show', Serpentine Gallery, 1975.

Available at: <http://3.bp.blogspot.com/>-



Image 2: Hall, David (2012) *End Piece...1001 TV Sets*, Ambika P3 Galleries, 2012¹⁴

Museums started equipping their facilities with movable rooms and adjustable lighting systems and temperature to make the rooms malleable to the specificities of any artwork. *Take your time* by Danish artist Olafur Eliasson exhibited at the MoMA in 2008 is a great example of the immersive atmosphere within a dark cube. Eliasson's work, made of projections, recreated the lights and sensorial environments of his native Scandinavia in a room full of geometric constructions, multi-coloured lights and elements such as stone or water projected on the walls and mirrors. This sensorial scenography was made possible by the typical space of the black box that transformed the environment into a hybrid space of culture and nature. Besides, the name itself of the exhibition *Take your time* is an invitation to immerse oneself in the artwork's atmosphere.

[ajMwpZKaLws/VEJ5BM4PI3I/AAAAAAAAABCA/whUWstoSlcM/s1600/Prog%2BRecess2.jpg](http://www.urban75.org/blog/images/david-hall-end-piece-ambika-p3-10.jpg). Last viewed on: 13/09/17.

¹⁴ Hall, David (2012), *End Piece...1001 TV Sets*, Ambika P3 Galleries, 2012.

Available at: <http://www.urban75.org/blog/images/david-hall-end-piece-ambika-p3-10.jpg>. Last viewed on: 13/09/17.



Image 3: Olafur Eliasson (2008). *Take your time*: Olafur Eliasson, MoMA Archives, New York¹⁵

However, just as the White Cube, the Black box may face several threats in the future. In addition to the internet, that makes available great amounts of photography and videos that can be then projected on a wall, the black box could be partially replaced by virtual reality devices that create a sense of immersion such as VR glasses that people can use from home.

The White Cube has lost its exclusivity to display contemporary arts. Art fairs, festivals, galleries, public spaces, industrial buildings reconverted in exhibition spaces, opened artist studios to the public or even internet websites or social medias to some extent are now common spaces of exhibitions. Not to mention illegal street artists that transform any wall, vehicle or property in a space of exhibition. Besides, while for many years, colours were totally banned from museums and galleries and only black and white prevailed, today's curators and art directors are more inclined to colours. Indeed, colours can create an atmosphere and a peculiar scenography. Colours can tell a story and convey emotions for the audience. Besides, as mentioned before, because of its nature, the White Cube is not always the most intimate type of space to display art. Nevertheless, the White Cube remains the privileged form of contemporary

¹⁵ Olafur, Eliasson (2008), *Take your time*: Olafur Eliasson, MoMA Archives, New York. Available at: <https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/31?locale=fr#installation-images>. Last viewed on: 13/09/17.

and modern art museums that might fail to involve the public in the artistic process but ensure the ideal environment for the display of artworks. White Cube or Black box, everything is a question of light and lighting design.

2.2. Light in Art and exhibitions

Why is light so important? Light is life. It surrounds us, it is everything we see and we respond to it emotionally. Since the dawn of time and throughout the world, light has always been associated with culture, religion, knowledge and spirituality and occupies today an important place in art and exhibitions. Way before Descartes and the start of modern physical optics (the behaviour and properties of light), light and its interpretations have always played a major role in religions and cultures from the Egyptian mythology to the monotheist religions or ancient Greece. Besides, light has always been associated with progress and enlightenment in opposition to darkness, chaos, and uncertainty. The cultural heritage of its meaning is even perceived in everyday language and has a great influence on arts. Light has been an essential instrument for many artists throughout time and is nowadays essential to display a piece of art, at the centre of the work of lighting design.

2.2.1. Light in arts, from the painting masters to cinema and photography

It would be inconceivable to address the topic of light in modern art, cinema and photography without highlighting the influence of the great painters who used light as an essential tool in their art. “*Darkness is the first degree of shadow and light is the last*”¹⁶ once remarked Da Vinci who applied this principle in his painting technique, making very subtle transitions from light to shadow and vice-versa. In line with Italian masters, Caravaggio is somehow one of the first lighting designers that influenced the greatest names of photography and cinema. Caravaggio used light as one of his main instruments and as a visual translation of the world. He understood

¹⁶ DaVinci, Leonardo (2002), *Leonardo on Art and the Artist*, United-States:Dover Publications, pp. 93.

the importance to define exactly what lighting scenario was required in each painting and used light and Chiaroscuro to frame the scene he was painting. Later on, the Cinematographer Vittorio Storaro, director of photography on cinema master-pieces like *Apocalypse Now* or *The Last Emperor* will even define the remarkable Caravaggio as “*il cineaste in assoluto*”¹⁷, the epitome of a movie director. In fact, light is essential in cinema; key lights will give contextual meaning to a scene and are the most powerful tool for a director. The Dutch painter Johannes Vermeer, to whom we owe the *Girl with a Pearl Earring* was also a great source of inspiration for painters, filmmakers and photographers, and is considered as “The master of Dutch light”. Vermeer excelled in the technique of light points which aim was to focus the viewer’s attention on specific positions and details. The artist was seeking to represent objects as seen by the viewer and his painting light techniques gave dimensions and depth to his work. The heirs of these lighting techniques are modern portraitists such as Bill Gekas, Nicolas Moulard or Pierre Gonnord who use what they call a “*light from the north*” with reference to the Dutch school and its master Johannes Vermeer.



Image 4 (left): Caravaggio, Michelangelo (1607). *David with the Head of Goliath*¹⁸
 Image 5 (middle). Vermeer, Johannes (1665). *Girl with a Pearl Earring*¹⁹
 Image 6 (right). Gonnord, Pierre (2014). *Anibal 1*²⁰

¹⁷ Youtube Video, Vittorio Storaro discusses the influence of Caravaggio on the cinematography of *Il Conformista*.

Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3RoN1y0VDA4>. Last viewed on: 30/10/17.

¹⁸ Caravaggio, Michelangelo (1607), *David with the Head of Goliath*, Museum of Art History in Vienna.

Available at:

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/9/9a/Michelangelo_Caravaggio_071.jpg/1200px-Michelangelo_Caravaggio_071.jpg. Last viewed on: 03/09/17.

¹⁹ Vermeer, Johannes (1665), *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, oil painting, Mauritshuis museum in The Hague.

Available at: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/d7/Meisje_met_de_parel.jpg. Last viewed on: 03/09/17.

²⁰ Gonnord, Pierre (2014), *Anibal 1. Series Madrid*.

Available at: http://odlp.staging1.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/2015/02/pg_anibal_14_lr0.jpg. Last viewed on: 03/09/17.

Light allows an artist to convey emotions and meaning according to his use of it. The Colombian photographer Fernell Franco lived in Cali and his pictures often play on the contrasts between his subjects and their drop-shadow created by the the blinding sun of Colombia. Indeed, there is something almost mystical in many of his black and white images. His works seems to depict a parallel world to the human one, a world made of light and shadow.



Image 7: Fernell, Franco (1970), *Series Retratos de ciudad*²¹

During the 1960's, Fernell documented the decadence of the city of Cali, its westernization and the slow death of its true spirit with the disappearing of local cultural places such as salsa dancing clubs or billiard halls. He used greatly the chiaroscuro to create contrasts between life and death to portray the city and its changes; its abandoned businesses, its buildings in ruins and the remembrance of pre-70's Cali in series such as *Retratos de Ciudad* or *Pacifico*. In addition to his use of light in photography, Fernell used to let the pictures react to the passing of time without using chemical fixing agents. This experimental process resulted in random

²¹ Fernell, Franco (1970), *Series Retratos de ciudad*.

Available at:

https://1.bp.blogspot.com/_XQLqt9YsVrU/R_0jMMcWc3I/AAAAAAAAAkY/oEzfUZGvMaM/s400/fernel001.jpg. Last viewed on: 03/09/17.

modifications such as discoloration and spots on the photography determined by both light and time. It is interesting to see that light performs a dual role in the work of Franco Ferrnelli, like if the cliché was living two lives dictated by light, a first one while being taken and an other one once developed. The artist also experimented the technique of solarisation (exposure of the negative during the development causing the inversion of shadow and light) in his series *Prostitutas* to accentuate the contrasts and the condition of confinement and disappearance of the city's prostitutes.

The Japanese photographer Daido Moriyama was also fascinated by light (daylight, neons, artificial lights and natural lights). In his different series in black and white such as *Memories of a Dog*, the artist mixes saturated light and darkness to depict the city in its raw form. In his work, Moriyama emphasises on what we don't see or don't want to see such as little details acquiring their full significance under the lens of the photographer. Widely known for his use of light and contrasts, the artist presents the city stripped naked without any pretence. "*Black and white, by their monotony, unconsciously symbolize the alternatives of hope and despair which our species is subject to eternity*"²² once wrote Art historian Elie Faure and it illustrates perfectly the work of Daido Moriyama.

²² "*Le noir et le blanc, par leur monotonie même, symbolisent inconsciemment les alternatives de désespoir et d'espérance auxquelles notre espèce est soumise pour l'éternité*", Elie Faure, quoted in: Alekan, Henri (1984), *Des lumières et des Ombres*, Paris: Edition Le Sycomore, pp. 16.



Image 8: Moriyama, Daido (1971), *Stray Dog, Misawa, Series Memory of a dog*²³

“It is much more than waves of electromagnetic energy. It carries with it a lot of emotional energy since light is an essential component in both psychological and physiological equilibriums”²⁴. Different cultures have different preferences regarding light and it will have an impact on urban landscapes. Western cultures demonstrate a preference for diffused light while oriental cultures such as the Japanese one would rather prefer a softer transition in lighting contrasts, like the one filtered by traditional paper-walls. From the beginning, light has created civilizations and cultures. According to Japanese light designer Akari-Lisa Ishii, “light should be taken from the standpoint of culture”²⁵.

2.2.2. lighting design and artworks display

Light has been a medium for communicating ideas and emotions since the beginnings of mankind and plays an essential role in artworks display within galleries and museums. Indeed,

²³ Moriyama, Daido (1971), *Stray Dog, Misawa, Series Memory of a dog*.

Available at: http://www.americansuburbx.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/R0021HK0497_797FV_V2-Custom.jpg. Last viewed on: 03/09/17.

²⁴ Safial, Aqbar, Zakaria (2003), “The Language of Light in Culture: Between Spirituality and Practicality” *Faculty of Architecture*, RWTH Aachen, Germany, pp. 39. Original Quotation from: Nonie Niesewand (1989), *Encyclopaedia of Interior Design and Decorating*, Book sales incorporated.

Available at: <http://journal.utem.edu.my/index.php/jhcd/article/view/2299/1389>. Last viewed on: 02/11/17.

²⁵ Ishii, Akira-Lisa (2001), “Light and Shrines”, *Professional Lightening Design*, 22, Germany, pp. 42-45.

from the natural light of the hall of mirrors at the *Palace of Versailles* in France to the artificial light of the MoMA White Cube in New York, light is the most important factor of art display. “*I want to see objects, there is nothing else I can rely on,*”²⁶ remarked renowned interior design and architect Carlo Scarpa in his work *Light for art and culture*. Indeed, without light there is no space and even the most memorable artwork can be deprived of its aura by a wrong light. Besides, as light always played an essential role in cultures and religions, light is also a modulating, accentuating and experimental factor in art. Different lighting solutions will have different impacts on the artwork. Is the artwork a light sensitive graphic piece without much contrasts? Or is it a huge format and strong colours Pop artwork requiring a large bright room such as a White Cube? Some light designers will rather use daylight, while other will use high light levels and coloured walls to increase the effect of an artwork. Besides, the definition of light is technical but also conceptual to showcase a piece of work. Light might be used to create a certain atmosphere for the paintings or to illuminate them in their purest nature. The correct angle of illumination plays also an important role in regards to colours, forms and types of objects involved. Indeed, regarding a sensitive object, the illumination should be correspondingly subtle and if the artwork needs to be protected, special lighting technologies such as glass-fibre or LED illumination should be used to protect it from heat and harmful UV radiations. Lighting design has different purposes regarding the artworks displayed in the show.

²⁶ Scarpa, Carlo (2001), “Light for art and culture”, *Zumtobel GmbH*, Austria, pp. 7.



Image 9 (left): Palace of Versailles and natural light²⁷
Image 10 (right) : White Cube and artificial light²⁸

Light guided the master painters in their search for perfection, and just as light has been associated with life in every culture and religion throughout history, the plays of light in painting give soul and depth to the artwork. In photography, the process remains similar. A photograph is information about past light that we can perceive in present time and just as any “memory” it conveys emotions and meanings thanks to light exposition, obscurity and contrasts. The permanent duality between life and dead, good and bad, enlightenment and darkness is made possible by the use of light in photography and cinema, and if light brightened cultures, religions and arts, it is quite naturally that lighting design illuminates the cultures, wisdom and arts of our modern world. Just as gallery and museum spaces have evolved from the classical display of Le Louvre to minimalist displays such as the White Cube, the museums’ collections and the content of exhibitions also evolved thanks to the innovative practices of avant-garde museums directors and art curators.

²⁷ Koons, Jeff (2008), *Jeff Koons Versailles Exhibition*.

Available at: <https://oeuvrescandale.files.wordpress.com/2016/02/koons-c3a0-versailles.jpg>. Last viewed on: 03/09/17.

²⁸White Cube and artificial light.

Available at: <https://mostlyfilm.files.wordpress.com/2012/03/south-galleries-structure-and-absence.jpg>. Last viewed on: 03/09/17.

3. The evolution of the work of the curator and the concept of “museum” since the 1950’s

3.1. The influence of Alexander Dorner

While reading interviews of progressive curators, the name of Alexander Dorner kept coming up all the time. Indeed, Dorner and his book *The way beyond “art”* (1958) appears to be one of the most influential books of the 1950s concerning the evolution of art and exhibitions and the baseline of the work of many curators. Born in 1893, Alexander Dorner was a German museum director and art historian. He joined the Landesmuseum in Hannover in 1923 as a curator and became the director in 1925 at the age of 32, one of the youngest in Germany. After the rise of the Third Reich and its censorship on the Museum modern art collection, Dorner left Germany for the United States where he became director of the Art Museum at the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD). He was naturalized American citizen in 1943. At the end of the WWII, Dorner’s anti-fascist actions were ignored and he had to resign from his position at the RISD. He became then university professor until his death in Naples in 1957.

As we know it, the evolution of curating and the concept of “museum” are linked to the evolution of artistic thoughts and practices in the 20th century. In fact, right after the chaos of WWII, Europe went through a period of free creativity with abstract expressionism and artists such as de Kooning, Pollock or Rothko. Abstract expressionism emerged as an expression of pure freedom characterized by the absence of norms and homogeneity. To some extent, any standardized style by its very sameness was considered as a negation of individualism. By breaking free from its codes and constraints, Art was going to be more and more accessible, and the importance of education to educate the audience and bridge de gap between Art and Life began to take root in the mind of art specialists and museum curators. While talking about the cultural and artistic development of the 1950’s, Dorner comments in the preface of *The way beyond “art”*(1958) “How could art collections improve the lives of the individual students and of adults coming from different profession and strata of society?”²⁹. During the 20th century, the

²⁹ Dorner, Alexander (1947), *The way beyond “art”*, New York: Wittenborn, (revised edition, 1958), pp.16.

concept of art and visual art was changing and Alexander Dorner, in charge of the Hannover museum collection separated the museum exhibition in two rooms: one was arranged in collaboration with the Russian Constructivist artist El Lissitzky while the other was about new visions in Art and their effects upon technical production. Dorner noted that “*Both rooms were intended to involve the visitor both physically and spiritually in the growing process of modern reality.*”³⁰ Alexander Dorner was one of the first museum curator willing to make the visitors participate actively in the exhibition. Furthermore, Dorner wrote widely on the duality between *Being* and *Becoming*. According to him, Art was for long considered as a “Being” that reached excellence with the work of great masters such as Raphael and his masterpiece *School of Athens* (1509) or DaVinci and his *Joconde* (between 1503 and 1519). However, the emergence of new iconographies such as expressionism or surrealism suggested that art is rather a *Becoming* or an “art without epoch”. Within its new form;

*Lines and colours emancipate themselves and by so doing corrode the old scaffolding. They no longer signify a generally accepted truth but the experience of a metamorphosed truth. The work of art turns into a kind of hybrid: it is still a symbol of ultimate Being and thus of static form but at the same time it seeks to express unformed, creative urges. It purports to embody both Being and Becoming.*³¹

Any artist was then able to represent his subjective and metaphorical reality, in opposition to a fixed one. With modern art, the artist depicts his own concept of reality, and the viewer is free to interpret it the way he wants. Dorner understood very early that these new art forms were not just reflecting the changes within our society but were actually the main vectors for change along with science and technology. As art and society were changing, Dorner understood that the relation between both would also evolve and this is why the concept of museum needed to be rethought to involve the public with the exhibitions to communicate and educate through art. By the early 1960s, the writings and curatorial practices of Alexander Dorner impacted on many avant-garde curators such as Willem Sandberg, Pontus Hultén or Johannes Cladders who worked to widen access to Art and culture and transform the concept of “museum”.

³⁰ Ibid, pp.18.

³¹ Ibid, pp.28.



Image 11 (Left): de Kooning, Willem (1955), *Interchange*³²
Image 12 (Right): Pollock Jackson (1952), *Convergences*³³

3.2. Avant-garde practices in curating by innovative curators during the 20th century

By the second half of the 20th century and under the influence of avant-garde curators such as Alexander Dornier, the way art and museum were perceived by curators evolved at various levels. The post-war period witnessed the rise of educational departments in many museums to educate the public and enrich the exhibition experience. Museums were evolving in social gathering places to exchange ideas and meet people, and the exhibitions became more and more open to conceptual arts and social thematic. While some curators innovated by promoting conceptual art or dealing with social and political issues, some others such as René d'Harnoncourt worked to promote the world's rich diversity of art and culture. D'Harnoncourt was the director of the Museum of Modern Art of New York from 1949 to 1968 and began his career in Mexico organizing the production and distribution of handicrafts made by local artisans. Very influenced by Alexander Dornier, he was opposed to the mentality in art presenting the western forms of art as the richest and more advanced. At the MoMA, d'Harnoncourt

³² de Kooning, Willem (1955), *Interchange*. ArtMarketMonitor website.

Available at: <http://www.artmarketmonitor.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/de-Kooning-Interchange.jpg>. Last viewed on: 28/09/17.

³³Pollock, Jackson (1952), *Convergences*, Wikiart website.

Available at: <https://www.wikiart.org/en/jackson-pollock/convergence-1952>. Last viewed on: 28/09/17.

worked first for Alfred Barr, the first director of the museum and one of the first curators to showcase art in a form of display that later became known as the White Cube. D’Harnoncourt wanted to show the diversity and “globality” of Art to break with the typical mindsets of the early 20th century and organized in 1941 an exhibition called *Indian Art of the United States* where he invited Amerindian painters to perform their art. The exhibition also hosted giant Indian totem poles including a thirty-foot pole carved from a red cedar log in the image of a raven, a killer-whale, a devil-fish, a sea lion and a shark. Indeed, it was one of the first shows in the United-States to recognize the skills and knowledge of indigenous Indian populations. The press release of January 22 of 1941 regarding the exhibition stated:

Wallace, whose Indian name is unpronounceable and unspellable, was born in the eighteen-sixties. He is the son of one the greatest totem pole carvers of the Northwest and worked as his father’s assistant on many of the most important poles now standing in Alaska.³⁴

What is striking with this quote from the press release is that while highlighting quite awkwardly the name of the artist, the journalist also acknowledges his know-how. Besides, in this same press release, we can read “*Contrary to popular belief, totem poles have no connection with Indian religion. Their significance is more nearly related to the European coat of arms*”³⁵ . Not only the show was recognizing the know-how of the artist, but it was also educating the audience about the Indian culture without denigrating it.



*Image 13: Navajo Indians sand painting, March 26, 1941, at the exhibition Indian Art of the United States.*³⁶

³⁴ The Museum of Modern Art (1941), “Indian Totem Pole Arrives at Museum of Modern Art”, *Press Release*, pp.1.

³⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 1.

³⁶ Navajo Indians sand painting (1941), exhibition *Indian Art of the United States*. Photographic Archive. The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York. Photo: Eliot Elisofon.

Available at: <https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/2998> Last viewed on: 07/09/17.

In 1948, he curated the exhibition *Timeless Aspects of Modern Art*, the first of the museum's 20th-anniversary exhibitions gathering arts from every epoch and culture including prehistoric sculptures, works of Picasso and paintings from the Sung Dynasty. The dark rooms of the exhibition covered the last 75,000 years, and each piece was enlightened to highlight its individuality. "*Modern Art is not an isolated phenomenon in history, but is, like the art of any period, an integral part of the art of all ages, as well as an expression of its own epoch,*"³⁷ remarked d'Harnoncourt in the press release of the exhibition. Indeed, modern artists in Europe or the United-States are closely related to artists from other epochs because what used to be called "modern" in the 1940s such as abstraction or distortion in art have been experienced in other cultures and art practices over the centuries. René d'Harnoncourt will remain an important figure in the history of art curating for his humanist approach and his will to promote art under all its forms and origins.

Over the same period, many curators began to criticize the art veneration in museums, stating that art should be experienced rather than admired. These include the Dutch curator and typographer Willem Sandberg who directed the Stedelijk Museum from 1945 to 1963. Sandberg was a graphic designer and he personally designed the graphic materials of the museum exhibitions. Ahead of his time, his colourful minimalist graphic designs and photomontages were influenced by the Bauhaus style and its philosophy of "*form over function*". His designs were often deprived of capital letters in a simple, smart and minimalist style recalling the work of the famous typographer Max Bill.

In fact, the idea of developing a new font style was very typical of the Bauhaus' philosophy. Herbert Bayer, in charge of the printing department at the Bauhaus school, created a "universal" typeface of rounded letters with not capital letters or accent marks. Rounded letters, were based on the same circle and the idea was to democratize an easy-to-read typeface accessible to all. The master of typography Bayer created another unfinished version in capital letters of its "Universal typeface" in 1925, completed in 1969 and entitled "Bauhaus". "*It's lack of serifs, so*

³⁷ The Museum of Modern Art (1948), "Timeless Aspects of Modern Art", *Press Release*, pp. 2. Available at: <https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/2845>. Last viewed on: 08/09/17.

different from the common German Fraktur typeface, was perfectly in line with ‘form over function.’”³⁸ Sandberg’s style was also influenced by constructivism and the work of artists such as El Lissitzky.



*Image 14 (left): Lissitzky, El (1923). Catalogue Cover³⁹
 Image 15 (middle). Bill, Max (1947). Poster for an Art exhibition in Zurich⁴⁰
 Image 16 (right). Sandberg, Willem (1949). Henry Moore exhibition poster, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.⁴¹*

In addition to being a talented creative typographer with more than an estimated 320 catalogues and 150 posters, Sandburg was also a ground-breaking curator. He came up with the concept of “Anti-museum”, a place of social interactions and modernity that should be accessible to everyone in opposition to the old-fashion definition of classical museums. The Stedelijk museum had a library, a café and a restaurant which was uncommon for the middle of the century. Sandburg also introduced an education program in the perspective of involving the public in the exhibition process. Besides, in 1938 the entire interior of the building was painted in white in line with the White Cube philosophy and later on the huge wooden doors of the entrance were replaced by transparent glass doors. The whole museum was also painted in white giving it more visibility within the city. Along with reinventing the museum’s identity, Sandberg

³⁸ Lekach, Maya (2015), “Know Your Design History: The Bauhaus Movement”, *99designs*. Available at: <https://en.99designs.pt/blog/creative-inspiration/know-your-design-history-the-bauhaus-movement/>. Last viewed on: 07/09/17.

³⁹ Lissitzky, El (1923), Catalogue Cover. Available at: [http://fr.wahooart.com/Art.nsf/O/8XXULR/\\$File/El-Lissitzky-Catalog-cover.JPG](http://fr.wahooart.com/Art.nsf/O/8XXULR/$File/El-Lissitzky-Catalog-cover.JPG) Last viewed on : 03/09/17.

⁴⁰ Bill, Max (1947), Poster for an Art exhibition in Zurich. Available at: <http://indexgrafik.fr/max-bill/>. Last viewed on: 03/09/17.

⁴¹ Sandberg, Willem (1949), *Henry Moore exhibition poster*, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. Available at: <http://www.stedelijk.nl/en/artwork/35314-henry-moore>. Last viewed on: 03/09/17.

was one of the first to showcase artists that soon became some of the most influential artists of the century such as Picasso or Pollock. Besides, under his directorship, the museum began to collect pieces of art from the most prestigious artists of the early and mid-twentieth such as Moor, Mondrian, Malevich, Van Gogh or Léger but also diversified its collection by including other forms of art such as design and photography. Willem Sandberg was a visionary art specialist able to guess if artists had strong features and if they would mark their generation. Those tremendous changes of the museum were possible because of the liberal postwar atmosphere of the 1950's and 1960's but also because the Stedelejisk was a public institution, less conservative than other major museums like the MoMA financed by private investors that would not have allowed this risk-taking.

Along with the evolution of their structures, museums became places committed to freedom of speech and creativity featuring all kinds of arts and opinions. In line with the zeitgeist, the Moderna Musset in Stockholm directed by Pontus Hultén hosted the exhibition *Poetry must be made by all! Transform the world* in 1969, about revolutionary parties and avant-garde artistic practices. During an interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist, Hultén told him about the exhibition:

Vietnam dodgers and soldiers who had gone AWOL (Absent Without Official Leave), as well as the Black Panthers, come to test how open we really were. There was a support committee for the Panther that held meeting in a room set aside for public use. For those activities, we were accused by parliament of using public money to form a revolution⁴²

Eight years later, Hultén, who was the artistic director of the Centre Georges Pompidou curated an exhibition on *On Kawara's* conceptual art about his perception of space-time that was not covered by the press because of its unique and innovative nature. From his conceptual art exhibitions to his subversive and political ones, Hultén participated actively in the development of the new art scene.

During this period of innovation, The German curator Johannes Cladder, director of the Städtisches Museum Abteiberg in Mönchengladbach also came up with various avant-garde ideas to modernize his museum. Cladder was interested in promoting young artists and he considered the museum “*as a mediating institution – in the process that transforms a work into*

⁴² *This anecdote is very representative of the political climate of the 1960's.*

Obrist, Hans Ulrich (2010), *A Brief History of Curating*, Zurich: JRP|Ringier & Les Presses Du Réel, pp. 45.

*a work of art*⁴³ meaning that one of the roles of a “Museum” is to democratize the work of new artists for it to be declared art by common consent. Very inspired by Willem Sandburg, Cladders also wanted to turn the definition of a museum upside down. Indeed, he considered that a museum should be a place of experimentation and social encounter, a place of Art and Life. Without completely abandoning the term of museum, he reinvented the Mönchengladbach Museum as an Art Laboratory. In the vein of Sandburg’s ideas, Cladder understood anti-art as “*something that invites the permanent renewal of art*”⁴⁴ in a process of constant creation. Cladder made the city of Mönchengladbach famous partly thanks to its museum and its innovations. For example, he curated Joseph Beuys retrospectives and wanted the traditional catalogue of the exhibition to be something with volume, an entire art object enabling visitors to bring home a part of the exhibition. He decided with Beuys to propose boxes containing different objects representative of the artist’s style.

In this perspective of reinventing the concept of “Museum” and its experience, former Architect Jean Leering who directed the Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven from 1964 to 1973 innovated in curating participatory exhibitions about the place of human beings within the city and its interactions with it. Leering curating’s approach focused on the public instead of the artists. He worked closely with avant-garde architects and visual artists such as Constant Nieuwenhuys, the inventor of the utopic anti-capitalist city *New Babylon*. In 1969, Leering curated *City Plan* with architects Van den Broek and Bakema, which was an exhibition about a new plan for the city of Eindhoven engaging the public to reflect on the city. Even if the plan has never been realized on a 1:1 scale, the exhibitions presented parts of the plan on a scale 1:20 through which the public could walk. Very connected to the idea of the city, *City Plan* led three years later to a bigger exhibition called *The Street, Ways of Living Together* about the life in community within the city. Indeed, who makes the streets? This is, of course the urban planners and architects, but this is mostly the ones using this street every day, the citizens. Within the idea of involving the public, the exhibition focused on what people experienced in their daily

⁴³ Ibid, pp. 57.

⁴⁴ Ibid, pp. 54.

life. As Leering remarks “*If you want the museum public to be interested in art, you should not only bring in art, but you should ask what people are interested in*”⁴⁵.

It would not be possible to discuss the history of modern curating and the ones who shaped it without mentioning Walter Hopps, the curator and director of the Ferus Gallery, Los Angeles who became then the director of the Washington Gallery of Modern Art and of the Corcoran Gallery of Art. Along with Ed Kienhov, Walter Hopps founded the Ferus Gallery in 1957, an institution famous for its forward-thinking exhibitions. One of his most famous shows was *Objects on the New Landscape Demanding of the Eye* from March to April 1957, a collective show with artists such as Craig Kauffman, Richard Dienbenkorn or Fred Lobdell hosting conceptual art installations, which was very uncommon back in the 1950’s. The show was so unusual that the gallery drew the attention of the authorities, and later on that year, the gallery was closed for obscenity by the LAPD Vice division. Indeed, the Beat-generation artist Wallace Berman was arrested and charged with obscenity for his erotic, almost pornographic collage including a drawing by Cameron depicting a coitus. Famous for its subversive work, the “father” of collages and assemblages, Wallace Berman, was an important figure of the post war Californian art scene. After the scandal, Berman left Los Angeles that he called “*the city of degenerate angels*” and did not come back until the early 1960s. This trial is very representative of the censorship imposed by the United States government back in the 1950s. It is also one of the first scandals around modern art of this time and the forerunner of new practices in art and exhibitions. Walter Hopps also organized the first exhibition of Andy Warhol’s *Soup Cans*. During the show, 5 canvases were sold for \$100. 48 years later, in 2010, one of these *Campbell’s Soup Can* estimated between USD 6,000,000 and USD 8,000,000 was sold USD 9,042,500 at a Christies’ auction.⁴⁶ Hopps was clearly ahead of his time and was able to identify the next artistic trends and the artists who will influence future generations.

⁴⁵ Ibid, pp. 72.

⁴⁶ Christies website. Warhol, Andy (1962), *Handy Campbell’s Soup Can (Tomato)*. Available at: <http://www.christies.com/lotfinder/Lot/andy-warhol-1928-1987-campbells-soup-can-5371697-details.aspx>. Last viewed on: 22/09/17.



Image 17 (Left): Cameron, *Untitled (Peyote Vision)*⁴⁷

Image 18 (Right): Wallace Berman and the LAPD vice squad at Ferus Gallery, 1957⁴⁸

One of the most disruptive and innovative curators might be the director of the Kunsthalle Bern from 1961 to 1969, the revolutionary Harald Szeeman: the “Ausstellungsmacher” or “maker of exhibition”, as Szeeman used to define himself. He was very attached to the idea of the museum as an “Art Laboratory”, and his approach of curating has often been defined as a “structured chaos”. Indeed, just as Johannes Cladder, Szeeman was seeing Art as a way of challenging the concept of property and possession and this is why the Kunsthalle had no permanent collection. The Kunsthalle exhibited and welcomed all kind of artists; from fashion designers to dancers, filmmakers, or musicians such as the band *Free Jazz from Detroit*. Thanks to its multidisciplinary aspects, conceptual art exhibitions and happenings⁴⁹, The Kunsthalle Bern became quickly one of the most controversial European museums. In 1969, commissioned by the American Group Phillip Morris, Harold curated a show criticized as “*destructive to human*

⁴⁷Cameron, *Untitled (Peyote Vision)*.

Available at: http://blogs.getty.edu/pacificstandardtime/files/2011/07/gri_2864_801_326100ds_d.jpg. Last viewed on: 22/09/17.

⁴⁸ Wallace Berman and the LAPD vice squad at Ferus Gallery, 1957. The Getty Research Institute, Charles Brittin papers, 2005.M.11.8. © J. Paul Getty Trust. Photo by Charles Brittin.

Available at: <http://blogs.getty.edu/pacificstandardtime/explore-the-era/archives/i23/>. Last viewed on: 22/09/17.

⁴⁹ “A happening is a performance, event, or situation meant to be considered art, usually as performance art.” Definition of « Happening » on Wikipedia.com.

Available at: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Happening>. Last viewed on: 03/08/17.

kind”⁵⁰ by the government, the infamous *When Attitudes Become Forms* that featured the work of 69 post minimalist American and European artists. Harald Szeeman wrote about the show:

*Robert Barry irradiated the roof; Richard Long did a walk in the mountains; Mario Merz made one of his first igloos; Michel Heizer opened the sidewalk; Walter de Maria produced his telephone piece; Richard Serra showed lead sculptures, the belt piece, and a splash piece; Weiner took a meter out of the wall, Beuys made a grease sculpture. The Kunsthalle became a real laboratory and a new exhibition style was born - one of structured chaos.*⁵¹



Image 19: Kunsthalle Bern (1969), *When Attitudes Become Form*.⁵²

Because of its progressive exhibitions, such as *Attitudes* or the following one *Friends and their Friends* Szeeman was accused of “alienating traditional audiences”⁵³ by the city authorities and the parliament as he was presenting new forms of art with social implications. With Szeeman’s work, we see the emergence of a new form of artistic sensibility, where ideas and information count more than the experience of an object, a less materialist and more spiritual approach to Art such as Willem Sandberg. Shortly after the scandal and under pressure from the government, Szeeman left the Bern Kunsthalle to create his own agency, the *Agentur für Geistige Gastarbeit* (agency for spiritual guest work) whose slogan was “Replace property with Free Activity”, to work as an independent curator. The name of the agency itself was a provocation against the Swiss political system. Indeed, during this period marked by hostility regarding foreigners, Spanish, Italian or Turkish workers were often called “guest workers” just as Szeeman whose

⁵⁰ Obrist, Hans Ulrich (2010), *A Brief History of Curating*, Zurich: JRP|Ringier & Les Presses Du Réel, pp. 88.

⁵¹ Ibid, pp. 88.

⁵² Kunsthalle Bern (1969), *When attitudes Become Form*. Available at: <http://www.contemporaryartdaily.com/2013/09/when-attitudes-become-form-at-kunsthalle-bern-1969/>. Last viewed on: 07/09/17.

⁵³ Ibid, pp. 88.

name was Hungarian and not Swiss. From 1969, Szeeman continued to produce innovative projects with contemporaneous artists from all around the world including a film project; *Height x Length x Width* with Burkhart, Bernhard Lunginbühl and Markus Raetz. Following the creation of the *Agentur für Geistige Gastarbeit*, Szeeman curated various exhibitions related to new forms of expressions and social issues. Among *The Thing as Object* (1970), *I want to Leave a Nice Well-Done Child Here* (1971) and the famous *Documenta V* (1972), Szeeman organized the *Happening & Fluxus* exhibition in Cologne, an exhibition that launched many controversies. The exhibition was made of different styles of work, including a large number of Performances and Installations.

*All kinds of gestures were possible: Claes Oldenburg put up posters and publications, Ben Vautier did a performance piece in which he provoked the audience, Tetsumi Kudo imprisoned himself in a cage, and so on. A third part consisted of environments by Wolf Vostell, Robert Watts, Dick Higgins, as well as Allan Kaprow's tire piece (...) as well as happenings inside and outside the museum with Vostell, Higgins, Kaprow, Vautier, and of course Otto Mühl and Hermann Nitsch.*⁵⁴

The exhibition was very progressive featuring all kind of artists such as the Viennese art activists Nitsch, Mühl and Brus whose piece was a space full of flyers, newspapers and documents about the *Art and Revolution* event that took place at the University of Vienna and was followed by a trial. *Happening & Fluxus* was really upsetting for the authorities and created massive citizens' protests within the city of Cologne. However, it showed that art was and remains a vector for social change and a way to challenge established principles. In 1972, Szeeman was the art director of *Documenta V* in Kassel, Germany, the fifth edition of the quinquennial 100 days' contemporary art exhibition *Documenta* first launched in 1955 to exhibit the work known as "degenerate art" during the Third Reich such as Expressionism, Futurism, Cubism or Fauvism. For the first time in 17 years, the *Documenta* was not directed by the German curator Arnold Bold and was oriented towards conceptual art and happening. The fifth edition of the "museum of 100 days", focused on *Questioning Reality – Pictorial Worlds Today*. *Documenta V* was made of different iconographic universes, and through the juxtaposition of 'High' and 'Low', the viewer could decide for himself what was art and what was not. In opposition to the previous editions more focused on the "abstract", the *Documenta*

⁵⁴ Obrist, Hans Ulrich (2010), *A Brief History of Curating*, JRP|Ringier & Les Presses Du Réel, Zurich, pp. 89.

V innovated by presenting biased realities through various art forms including performances and installations. Among many artworks, James Lee Byars performed its *Calling German names* performance, calling German names on a pink outfit from the roof of the museum. *Arden Anderson and Mora Murphy* from John de Andrea consisted in a man and woman laying on the floor of the museum and cuddling. Joseph Beuys presented his work *Boxkampf für direkte Demokratie (the organisation for direct democracy and the referendum)*, a performance of two men boxing on a ring and Edward Kienholz presented his work installation *Five Car Stud* depicting the reality of racism in United-States. However, even if ground-breaking and important for the conception of exhibitions, the *Documenta V* and its art director were also strongly criticized. Indeed, Szeeman whose last exhibitions were polemical and anti-conformist was accused of not being radical enough by the left-wing parties and of being too sociological and messy by the right-wing ones. Besides, Szeeman and his “*art pour l’art*” was also accused of creating a work of art made out of all the exhibited ones, an “*exhibition of an exhibition*”⁵⁵. Indeed, I will agree that a curator is supposed to follow the art and the artists by promoting their visions and not the contrary. In a letter, the American artist Robert Morris prohibits the featuring of his work at the exhibition considering that he was not consulted and that his work would be presented for the purpose of “*illustrating misguided sociological principles and categories of art history.*”⁵⁶

Finally, it is also because of these controversies that these exhibitions and the role of their art director were so important for the history of curating, because they were innovative, disruptive and have paved the way for further innovations and the evolution of the curatorial field.

⁵⁵ Description of the *Documenta V*, on the Documenta website.

Available at: https://www.documenta.de/en/retrospective/documenta_5. Last viewed on: 03/08/17.

⁵⁶ Ibid.





*Image 20: Byars, James Lee Byars (1972), Calling German Names. Photo: Krings.
Image 21: Beuys, Joseph (1972), Boxkampf für direkte Demokratie. ©Joseph Beuys/VG Bild-Kunst
Image 22: John de Andrea (1972). Arden Anderson and Nora Murphy Photo: Paolo Mussat Sartor.⁵⁷*

3.3. The work of Hans Ulrich Obrist

Alexander Dorner, Willem Sandberg, Pontus Hultén, Harald Szeeman, Walter Hopps or Johannes Cladders influenced a new generation of curators and art directors such as the Swiss art curator and historian Hans Ulrich Obrist. In charge of international projects at the Serpentine Gallery in London, Ulrich Obrist conducted hundreds of interviews with artists, curators and art specialists to trace the history of an activity poorly documented, the one of art curator. Through his lectures and books such as the compilation of interviews conducted over 20 years, *A Brief History of Curating* or his autobiographic essay *The Ways of Curating* about his approach of curating and its influences we discover the vision of the author. He is working to bring together art and life through different universes along with meeting and exchanging ideas. While

⁵⁷ Ibid.

studying in Switzerland, Obrist decided to organize an exhibition in his kitchen in Saint-Gall. As he was not using his kitchen and was too young to find a proper space to organize an exhibition, he decided to give an artistic purpose to his kitchen and curated an exhibition later called the *World Soup*. Along with his friends, he displayed works of art and objects in the cabinets, shelters and around the table bringing together Art and everyday life in this tiny kitchen. In the big cabinet above the sink, conceptual artists Peter Fischli and David Weiss exhibited giant packages of food bought at restaurant wholesalers to create immensity and give a sense of wonder to the viewer, just as in the movie *Alice in Wonderland*. Another of his friends Hans-Peter Feldmann created a mini-exhibition inside Obrist's fridge made of food and beverage cans. The idea was to preserve the primary function of a kitchen with an artistic touch.



Image 23: Hans Ulrich Obrist (1991). *World Soup*.⁵⁸

While conducting interviews, Obrist Always asked what was the person's most incomplete projects, his wildest dream regarding curating. Indeed, of the curator's role is to make possible

⁵⁸ Obrist, Hans Ulrich (1991), *World Soup*.

Available at: <https://i.pinimg.com/736x/da/9e/a5/da9ea51805772bf434103bdc0eaab9a--the-kitchen-show-peter-fischli.jpg>. Last viewed on: 15/09/17.

the “impossible”. In this way, he could imagine new “ways” of curating and sometimes even join the artist in creating his dream exhibition. Hans Ulrich Obrist’s methodology is a direct result of his exchanges with some of the most influential artists, curators and art historians of the XXth century. In his early 20s, Obrist met Alighiero Boetti in Roma, an Italian artist member of the Art Movement Arte Povera with whom he discussed the idea of an exhibition in movement, an idea that comes back very often in Obrist’s interviews but also in his approach to treating art. Indeed, many curators seem to want to dematerialize art and exhibitions to make them flexible, mobile and accessible to anyone. While talking with Boetti, the Italian painter told him that one of his dreams was to organize an exhibition in all the planes of an airline company for a year so the exhibition could travel all around the world and be visited by a large number of people from different cultures. The idea took roots in Obrist’s mind, and a few years later, he presented it to the Museum in Progress event of Vienna and took contact with *Austrian Airlines* to make it a reality. After having reconsidered the project a thousand times with Boetti and negotiated with the airline company they decided to distribute a puzzle in every plane for a year. Unfortunately, the puzzle was too difficult to complete for most of the passengers and the company feared that people could associate it with the fear of flying. Nevertheless, it remains a really interesting experience and shows that in term of curatorial practices, the sky is the limit. However, one of the things that impressed me the most in his career is the *DO IT* project for its participatory aspect. *DO IT* allowed visitors to actively participate in a work of art based on their own interpretations. Indeed, Obrist and some of his colleagues such as Bertrand Lavier or Christian Boltanski were very influenced by the idea of letting the public be actors rather than observers. Back in 1919, Marcel Duchamp started to create this kind of participatory work of art with his *Ready-made malheureux*. Duchamp sent to his sisters in Paris a book of geometry from Argentina along with instructions about how to tear up, wrinkle and display the manual. Later on, many artists came out with similar works of art such as *Music of Changes* from John Cage that was made of tracks that could be interpreted in different ways or Yoko Ono’s *Grapefruits* in 1960 that was a book of instructions for life and art. The *DO IT* exhibition began in 1993, the idea was to conceive an exhibition taking place in different countries with given instructions to create an exhibition that curators could not totally control. The first exhibition took place in 1994 at the Ritter Kunsthalle of Klagenfurt in Austria and the instructions were

given by the artist Franz Erhard Walther. Later on, the exhibition went all over the world in Mexico, Paris, Ljubljana, Perth, Bogota, Helsinki, Bangkok, Nantes, Glasgow, Genève, Edmonton and many other cities. The concept of the exhibition was its constant evolution; *DO IT* became a socio-cultural experience taking different forms under the influence of the host country's culture. There were no original works of art just interpretations made by museum staffs and visitors based on the instructions. *DO IT* had a "DIY" (Do It Yourself) aspect that was breaking established norms regarding the work of curator and the display of artworks. At the end of every session, the exhibition was brought back to its initial form so it could be reinterpreted on the next day. In a sense, *DO IT* illustrated well the permanent renewal of art as seen by many artists. Pictures of each interpretation were taken, but there were no traces of previous interpretations so each show could be unique and the overall exhibition always in progress. The exhibition was performing a kind of storytelling of the hosted city because the interpretation of the public was strongly influenced by its local culture. By including the public in the production of works of art, *DO IT* was reinvented at every show according to local interpretations of the instructions and two same shows never occurred. Back in 1955, in his work *How To Do Thing With Words*, the Oxford philosopher J.L. Austin defined the notion of speaking as a "performative utterance". Austin explains that a particular language creates a new reality according to the context, the language and the cultural background of the one speaking. As it said, "to say something is to do something". Just as discourses, *DO IT* changed according to its geographical location and was very representative of what many contemporaneous curators are trying to achieve nowadays, dematerializing exhibitions and making them global.

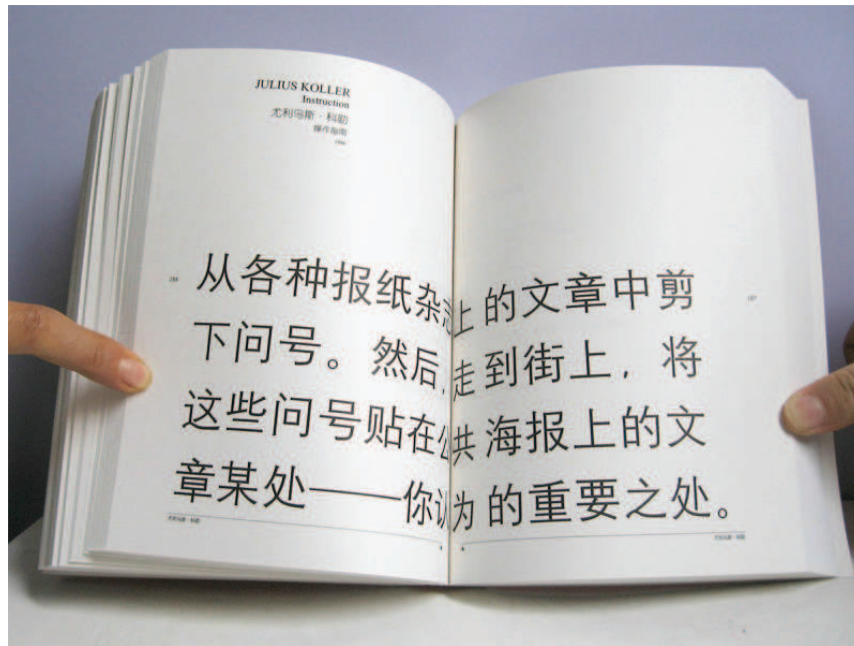


Image 24: DO IT Chinese instructions of Julius Koller's Artwork.⁵⁹



Image 25: DO IT practice, unknown location and format.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ DO IT Chinese instructions of Julius Koller's Artwork.

Available at: <http://www.vitamincreativespace.art/en/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/%E5%81%9A-6.jpg>. Last viewed on: 28/09/17.

⁶⁰ DO IT practice, unknown location and format.

Available at:

http://www.artspace.com/magazine/art_101/art_market/10_exhibitions_that_have_changed_the_course_of_contemporary_art-52142. Last viewed on: 28/09/17.

The organisation of participative and alternative exhibitions is becoming more and more common since the advent of Internet and social media but finds its roots in the 1960's and 1970's with curators such as Lucy Lippard. Indeed, in the 1960's, the historian and curator Lucy Lippard tried to show that visual art doesn't exist only in the form of objects such as paintings or sculptures but also exists in the cities and neighbourhoods' social structure. She began to organize what was called *number's shows*, which were exhibitions taking place in different cities whose name was the number of people living in the city. By doing so, Lippard wanted to democratize Art by transforming the artistic creation in something experienced daily by the public of the city. The exhibitions were getting out of the very codified and elitist system of museums to the streets and the countryside around a city. The first exhibition *557 087*, took place in Seattle and was made of dematerialized, conceptual and minimalist works of art from 60 artists. It included:

Grease marks five feet long on a floor, one for each letter of the name of the man who engineered the regrade of downtown Seattle (artist: Rafael Ferrer). Paintings of a local landscape, Lake Washington, by local artists (artist: Bruce McLean of Scotland). A provocation: the story of a group of art students led by their professor to chew up, spit out, and ferment a copy of Clement Greenberg's modernist bible, *Art and Culture*, borrowed from their school's library, leading to the firing of this artist/professor (John Latham). [...]Robert Morris's proposal was related to violence, Vietnam, and the way legends blow up. He ordered a shotgun blast at a gallery wall, using "heavy shot in the shells," then a photograph of the wound blown up to an 8-by-10-inch photograph. The exhibition's next venue would hang the photograph, shoot that, and make a larger blow-up, enlargements coming at every venue. ⁶¹

Most of the works were made by Lucy and her assistants based on instructions given by the artists such as instructions "*to remove a chunk of earth 15 feet deep and 100 feet in diameter, making a subtraction from the world rather than adding a new object because Art is only memory anyway*" (artist: Michael Heizer)."⁶² Back in 1969, the *Seattle Time* reviewer John Voorhes wrote that the exhibition was an "*artistic pollution, every bit as annoying and dangerous as that in the air*" as this new form of dematerialization of Art was revolutionary. "*All art originates in the human mind, in our reaction to the world rather than in the visible world of itself*" remarked Ernst Gombrich in accordance with Alexander Dörner's thoughts as

⁶¹ Jen, Graves (2013), "Dematerialized, A 1969 Exhibition on Index Cards", *theStranger.com*.

Available at: <http://www.thestranger.com/seattle/dematerialized/Content?oid=16701362>. Last viewed on: 06/09/17.

⁶² *ibid.*

seen previously. After Seattle, the exhibition went to Vancouver under the name *955 000* followed by *2 974 453* in Buenos Aires, *7 500* in Valencia, California before traveling around the United States and to London. In Obrist's vein, the art dealer and gallery owner Seth Siegelaub working closely with conceptual artists Robert Barry, Lawrence Weiner, Douglas Heuber and Joseph Kosuth noticed that infrastructures of galleries were not compatible with the nature of the work of many artists. In 1968, He launched the project *Xerox Book*, a collective exhibition in a book form where Siegelaub defines specific requirements for the 27 artists participating in the project. The instructions were to create a work of 25 pages that would be then photocopied and printed. The idea was to question the normalization of exhibitions to better demonstrate the differences between each work and their meanings. Besides, the project was also questioning the representation of art in books and its reproduction, as the original *Xerox Book* was already a reproduction, the fact that it was printed and distributed was not affecting its completeness as a piece of art. Its strength was that every reproduction was an original *Xerox Book*. Thanks to its medium, the public didn't have to go to the "sacred" institutions or arts that are museums or galleries to enjoy the artists' works, the exhibition was reproducible for all public all around the world. Siegelaub organized an other "printed" exhibition in 1971, for *Studio International*, however, this time he asked six art critics to select artists and thus "curate" a certain part of the exhibition. By doing so, Siegelaub withdrew from his role of curator to show that an exhibition doesn't exclusively rely on a structure and a curator but can take different approaches.

The last decades witnessed the emergence of new forms of curating. Curators such as Obrist developed new approaches to creating exhibitions repositioning the human, its culture, and its interaction with the Art at the forefront of the process. Besides, by organizing immaterial or movable exhibitions involving the audience in different cultural contexts, shows create unpredictable outputs resulting from multicultural collaborations. Art, Life, and Culture being intimately tied, the work of those curators aim to extend the walls of the museum to the entire world. Finally, these curators plainly understood the importance of Art in society, they are what the British artist John Latham would called "Incidental Persons" as their work go beyond the "art world" by being politically or socially involved in the community. Just as many artists,

activists or politicians such as Joseph Beuys, Christian Schlingensief, Tania Bruguera, John Latham, or Edi Rama.

3.4. Art in society and politics

“There can be no society without poetry.” Once stated the Mexican poet Octavio Paz, winner of the 1990 Nobel Prize in Literature who dedicated his life to fighting totalitarianism.

As seen previously, art is a vector of social change, and we need artists’ visions, creativity, and open-mindedness to pave the way for transformation within our society. “Everyone is an artist” said Joseph Beuys, one of the first artists standing up for the democratization of art. Indeed, according to Beuys, being an artist is about letting his imagination run free, projecting into the future and opening new debates to achieve changes in society. Beuys considered society as a “Gesamtkunstwerk” or “total work of art” made out of every art form shaped by society and politics. He considered society as a “sculptural structure” and that transformation in society is by definition a collective and creative action that requires free thought. In fact, rather than repeating the same schemas, society needs to think innovatively to envisage new possibilities. Beuys, who dedicated his life to discussing new ideas cofounded several organizations such as the Free International University for Creativity and Interdisciplinary Research in 1974 or the political German Green Party in 1980 as he knew that creative and innovative thinking regarding art, society, science or ecology could be translated into a political force. Indeed, Art is an integral element of community life, and it can influence the way we behave in the present, this is why everybody should be concerned with the changes in society and take part in debates to project into the future. The world is now globalized and multicultural, and it is by synergy and shared global knowledge that we will achieve change in society.

Very influenced by Beuys, the German filmmaker and theatre director Christian Schlingensief famous for his performances also addressed the issues of German society and its politic with powerful performances and provocations. During an interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist, Schlingensief explained how Beuys made him question how Art can influence the way we behave in the present to shape the future. Schlingensief was very subversive and politically engaged. He was arrested in 1997 for exhibiting a sign with the message “Kill Helmut Kohl” in

front of the *Documenta X* exhibition in Kassel and in 1998 he organized the Last Chance Party. With this initiative, Schlingensiefel invited the ordinary German citizens to nominate themselves for the parliamentary elections. One of the party's main event was the invitation to the entire unemployed population of Germany to come swim at once in the Austrian Lake Wolfgang where Helmut Kohl had a secondary residence. The idea was that the 6 million people entering the lake at the same time would increase the Lake's water level and flood the chancellor's home. Of course, only few hundred people participated in the event, that was more a symbolic gesture than anything else. The actual nature of this "Happening" was to assess the topic of an important issue and raise awareness about it in a creative way to invite reflection.

The actual prime minister of Albania and former painter, Edi Rama, ties in with the idea of "sculptural structure" developed by Joseph Beuys. In a process of "rethinking democracy", the artist and politician that was mayor of Tirana, the capital of Albania from 2000 to 2011 recreated social ties between the population, the environment and the authorities in a country marked by its tragic path by ordering the painting of hundreds of buildings in vivid colors across the city. The Edi Rama colors project aimed to transform the dialogue within the city by replacing the impacts of bullets on the walls by colorful patterns. « *I love the joy that color can give to our lives and to our communities. I try to bring something of the artist in me to my politics.* »⁶³ stated the politician during a lecture at TED Talk in Thessaloniki. Rama who considers his position as mayor of Tirana as art in a pure state succeeded in handing the city back to its people by recreating social ties through colors but also by his Clean and Green Project similar to the 7,000 Oak trees project of Joseph Beuys. Indeed, Edi Rama introduced 100,000 square meters of green area and ordered the planting of almost 1,800 trees within Tirana.

"When colors came out everywhere, a mood of change started transforming the spirit of the people. People started to drop less litter in the streets. They started to pay taxes. They started to feel something they'd forgotten ... Beauty was giving people a feeling of being protected. This was not a misplaced feeling, crime did fall,"⁶⁴

⁶³ Torgovnick May, Kate (2013), "Living blocks in central Tirana, photo by David Dufresne", *TEDBlog*. Available at: <http://blog.ted.com/9-views-of-tirana-albania-with-its-bright-multicolored-building/> Last viewed on: 27/09/17.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

remarked Rama at TEDxThessaloniki in 2013, showing how art contributed to the improvement of the quality of life in Tirana.



Image 26: Beuys, Joseph (1982), 7000 Oaks Tree, Documenta VII, Kassel, 1982⁶⁵



Image 27: Rama, Edi (2013), Living blocks in central Tirana, photo by David Dufresne⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Beuys, Joseph (1982), *7000 Oaks Tree*, Documenta VII, Kassel, 1982.

Available at: <http://globalmediacenter.ciee.org/art-in-germany/>. Last viewed on: 27/09/17.

⁶⁶ Torgovnick May, Kate (2013), "Living blocks in central Tirana, photo by David Dufresne", *TEDBlog*.

Available at: <http://blog.ted.com/9-views-of-tirana-albania-with-its-bright-multicolored-building/> Last viewed on: 27/09/17.

Another interesting example of an encounter between Art and Politics is the electoral campaign of the experimental American artist Bruce Conner for the election of San Francisco supervisor in 1967. Indeed, the artist believed that all voices and opinions should be heard even the ones of those who did not feel represented by the mainstream parties. Conner was a renowned actor of the 1960's alternative art scene and tried to give an alternative to those disappointed by the current system.

To understand the role of the Artist in society, the British artist John Latham developed the concept of the "Incidental Person" with the APG (Artist Placement Group), a group willing to increase the influence of Art within society that he cofounded in 1966 with artists such as David Hall or Jeffrey Shaw. The idea was to address the topic of artists going beyond the "art world" by being politically and socially involved in the community. Indeed, the "Incidental Person" sees no differences between the "art world" and the "real world" and intervenes in a certain context to propose new initiatives. The "Incidental Person" himself as a person or an artist is secondary, what matters is his input regarding an issue and the resulting consequences, the public involvement and the enthusiasm that goes with the development. The "Incidental Person" is the result of an everyday life philosophy of Art aware of the function of innovative thinking into society.

Just as Edi Rama, Bruce Conner, Christian Schlingensiefel or Joseph Beuys, the Cuban performance and installation artist Tania Bruguera is another great example of "Incidental Person". For years, Bruguera who had the opportunity to travel a lot as her father was working in the Fidel Castro government, addressed political and social issues in Cuba through happenings and performances. The artist practices what she calls "Arte Útil" or "useful art" in English, proposing new uses for art within society. In order to discuss and raise awareness about the role of Art in society and how it can be implemented in real situations, the artist organized the *Museum of Arte Útil* exhibition at the Van Abbe Museum in Eindhoven, Netherlands. The exhibition presented different case studies, analyses and debates about how we "use" museums and the role of artistic practices in Society. After the exhibition, *Arte Útil* became an international association that works to promote the implementation of "useful art". Also, the Cuban artist developed several projects such as a political party of immigrants, the MPP (*Migrant People Party*) founded in 2006. This political party that became the *Immigrant*

Movement International was based in New York and its aim was to discuss immigration reforms with different communities and the social service organizations. Besides, she created an institution raising awareness about Politics in Cuba and promoting changes in the Cuban society regarding art, freedom, and democracy. This organization involves “Cubanos de Pie” or Cubans of everyday life, from cleaning workers to intellectuals, from students to activists, to collectively reflect upon alternatives for the future of the Cuban society. Subversive and politically-engaged, Tania Bruguera has been at the center of several controversies for her performances. In 2009, during the 10th Havana Biennial, she invited people to say whatever they want for one minute at a performance called *Tatlin’s wisper #6, Havana Version*. Several intellectuals took part in the projects such as Yoani Sánchez, the awarded blogger who criticized censorship and asked for more “freedom” and “democracy.” Following the event, Bruguera was accused by the authorities of organizing “an anti-cultural event of shameful opportunism that offends Cuban artists and foreigners who came to offer their work and solidarity.”⁶⁷ Later on, in 2014, the artist was arrested for organizing the same public performance in La Havana. The street performance was part of a protest movement called *Yo también exijo* which demanded political changes after the restoration of diplomatic ties between Cuba and the United States. Tania Bruguera who is one of the most controversial Cuban artists announced at the 2016 Creative Time Summit that she will be a candidate in the Cuban presidential elections of 2018. The “artist” is willing to “change the culture of fear” as stated in a YouTube video announcing her candidacy. “Let’s use the 2018 elections to build a different Cuba, to build a Cuba where we are all in charge and not just the few,”⁶⁸ said Bruguera, who wants to give voice and leadership to the Cuban people that remains unheard.

Street-artists such as the American Frank Shepard Fairey alias Obey or the Portuguese Bordalo II can be considered as “Incidental Persons” as they address the topic of Art in Society. Obey who began doing art illegally on the streets of Rhode Island gained recognition in 2008 with his

⁶⁷ Unknown Reuters Journalist (2009), “Cuba accuses blogger of “provocation””, *Reuters.com*. Available at: <http://uk.reuters.com/article/oukin-uk-cuba-blogger/cuba-accuses-blogger-of-provocation-idUKTRE5306OQ20090401?sp=true>. Last viewed on: 27/09/17.

⁶⁸ Jones, Jonathan (2016), “Why we should back Tania Bruguera’s presidential bid for a free Cuba”, *Theguardian.com*. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/jonathanjonesblog/2016/oct/17/tania-bruguera-cuba-president>. Last viewed on: 27/09/17.

“Hope” poster for the presidential campaign of Barack Obama. Recapturing the visual codes of Constructivism, Obey began to cover the walls with posters of Barack Obama meeting street art with political commitment.

“I would like to thank you for using your talent in support of my campaign. The political messages involved in your work have encouraged Americans to believe they can change the status-quo. Your images have a profound effect on people, whether seen in a gallery or on a stop sign. I am privileged to be a part of your artwork and proud to have your support. I wish you continued success and creativity,”

stated the letter from the former American President Barack Obama to the Artist showing that art can contest the established order of things. Obey’s political activism is found displayed all across the world from portraits in the living memory of Nelson Mandela to the ones that fought peacefully during the Portuguese Revolution or Revolução dos Cravos in 1974. The Portuguese street artist Bordalo II also works to make Art useful for society. His giant installations can be found all over the city of Lisbon and are made from domestic and commercial waste. By creating social ties out of what has been thrown away, the artist addresses the topic of ecology and human consumption through his work. The artist engages the public to think of the disposal of our waste and to consider alternatives.



Image 28 (Left): Obey (2008), *Hope*⁶⁹

Image 29 (Right): Bordalo II (2016), artwork from the series *Trash Animal*⁷⁰

⁶⁹Obey (2008), *Hope*. Available at: <https://obeygiant.com/obama-hope/>. Last viewed on: 27/09/17.

⁷⁰Bordalo II (2016), artwork from the series *Trash Animal*. Available at: <http://www.bordaloii.com/#/big-trash-animals/>. Last viewed on: 27/09/17.

4. Interviews with professionals in the field

4.1. Interview with the French curator and art director Fany Dupechez

Fany Duepchez is a French “commissaire d’exposition” (art curator) specialized in the conception of photography exhibitions. She works with renowned photographers and photography institutions such as Cinq Etoiles Production, L’Agence Vu, Modds or Magnum. Among many other projects, she has been in charge of the Pernod Ricard’s Art Campaign at *Paris Photo*, Grand Palais every year since 2010 and she is also the Director of *Vichy Portrait(s)*, a festival of portrait photography that she created and co-curated with the art director Pascal Michaut. The festival is taking place every year since 2013 in the city of Vichy, France. Fany Dupechez, whom I assisted on various projects had the kindness to conduct this interview to give us insights into the work of art curator in photography.

Loan Lamoureux: Can you tell me about your professional background and how did you get to curating?

Fany Dupechez: Before curating I worked then years in the press and then at *Tendance Flou*, a photography agency in Paris. I have always been passionate about photography and working with so many talented artists made me want to cop with them and put their work in perspective. This is why in 2003, right after *Tendance Flou* I began to curate private cultural events.

LL: What are, for you, the most essential qualities for a curator?

FD: A curator has, of course, to master his topic and be well documented but he also has to go beyond the exhibition topic and raise issues concerning the work of an artist. The curator is a mediator, an intermediary between the artist, its vision and the public.

LL: Do you consider that the art curator has a social role? What would it be?

FD: Of course, the curator has a social role and also a strong responsibility regarding the public. When you first receive a proposal for an exhibition project, you have to think how to make the project relevant to the public, faithful to the artist’s work but also meaningful to the exhibition’s

topic. The curator's role is to question the public; what those pictures have to say? How do they reflect the artist's vision and how does the artist communicate through his work? The social role of the curator is also to put into perspective the work of different artists within the same exhibition. Through his scenography, the curator gives meaning to each piece of work as part of a bigger picture. The role of the curator is to depict a general issue or idea, made possible by the diversity of works.

LL: Which event or exhibition particularly marked you? Why?

FD: The 2017 edition of *Les Rencontres d'Arles* were truly great. Like every year the festival is very representative of what is contemporaneous photography, a discipline made out of different cultures, visions, techniques, and inspirations. Indeed, through lectures, gatherings, exhibitions and interactions with all kinds of professionals; photographers, publishers, teachers, curators and many others from everywhere, the festival presents an overall view of what is photography's richness and diversity.

LL: Reading about various curators such as Pontús Hultén or Johannes Cladders, I have often come across the notion of "co-creator". Do you consider the curator as a co-creator?

FD: I do not claim to be a co-creator but I do understand what you mean. The curator is a co-creator in the sense that he/she is creating alongside the artist(s) to create an exhibition but these are two very different things. I would rather that say my work involves exchanging visions and experiences with photographers to raise new issues.

LL: What is your part of decision regarding the scenography of an exhibition? With what kind of companies do you usually work to produce it?

FD: I am working closely with project manager Pascal Michaut with whom I discuss the hanging and scenography before running digital simulations to decide what would be the best way to organize the place and pieces of the exhibition. It is not only the display of artworks within the exhibition space but also the different sizes, frames, and support on which pieces will be displayed. Of course we also discuss it with the artist(s) and the gallery or museum manager, some will give you carte blanche to organize it while some others will have specific ideas and

opinions regarding the display and the organization, it depends on the institution. For the installation of layers, frames, additional walls, screens or audio-visual material it will also depend on the resources of the hosting institution. If additional materials are needed we often work with creative studios composed of art directors, engineers, architects and producers. For Médecins du Monde's exhibition *Mise au Poing* we worked with Parisian studio *Bonsoir Paris*, which provided us with materials such as blue layers and screens for us to achieve the vision we had for this exhibition about precariousness in France. Regarding the photo printing, we work with long-time partners such as *Central Dupon Images*.

LL: What do you like most about the work of curator?

FD: What I like about curating a show is putting together all the details to reconstitute the story. An exhibition makes artist's work tangible; it becomes then real in the mind of the viewer that is discovering it.

LL: What are the main differences between a "classical" exhibition and a "people-centered" one such as Mise au Poing for Médecins du Monde ?

FD: Well *Mise au Poing* was peculiar because of its topic and social implications but also because it was a photographic commission from Médecins du Monde and we had to cast several photographers from different countries to work on the same issue, the precariousness in France. For this Photograph order, along with co-curators Pascal Michaut and Alexandre Jalbert we selected 6 photographers and 1 filmmaker based on their previous works and approach to photography. We finally selected artists from France, Spain and the Netherlands. The second mission was to reach the artists and discuss the project with them. Of course, it has much to do with the personal network of one another. Once the pictures and videos were completed, we decided which photographs would be part of the exhibition and we designed the scenography with *Bonsoir Paris*.

LL: What are the difficulties most often faced when curating an exhibition?

FD: You can always face issues concerning the budget, many institutions have great ideas regarding the exhibition they want to host and its scenography but have limited budgets so we

have to adapt and find solutions to curate effectively for less. Finally, you can have problems dealing with artists. You have to put his work in perspective but he might not share your ideas regarding the scenography or the selected pieces. In this case, you need to be tactful and willing to make accommodations to go in the same direction, the job of curating is all about exchanges.

The answers provided by Fany Dupechez reflect the skills required to be a curator such as having multicultural and improvisational competencies. Besides, being a curator is not only presenting the work of an artist but to enhance it while raising issues only about the artwork but also on related topics. Throughout the interview, we understand that the work of art curator is based on exchanges of ideas and experiences with the artist. The curator must understand the work of an artist in its entirety and just as a puzzle, put all the pieces together for the audience to truly grasp the artist's vision. Fany also places particular emphasis on the educational aspect of the job and her role as a mediator between the artist and the public.

4.2. Interview of Portuguese curator, researcher and university professor Luisa Santos

Luisa Santos is a Contemporary Art Curator, Researcher and Gulbenkian Professor at the Universidade Católica Portuguesa in Lisbon. She was awarded her Ph.D. in Culture Studies at the Viadrina-Humboldt School of Governance in Berlin in 2015 with a FCT scholarship and her MA in Art Curating at the Royal College of Art, in London in 2008, with a Gulbenkian Scholarship. She is based in Lisbon and collaborates regularly with renowned local and international institutions. Past collaborations include institutions such as the CAM Gulbenkian or the Fundação EDP in Lisbon, the Tensta Konsthall in Sweden or the Frankfurter Kunstverein in Germany. Among others, she worked as an Executive Curator for the first edition of “Anozero: Coimbra Biennial of Contemporary Art” in 2015 and as a curator for the European Exhibition of the *CreArt Network* that travelled along Portugal, Lithuania and Norway in 2016. In May and June 2016, she was a jury member for the *Künstlerhaus Bethanien* artist-residency programme in Berlin and the first edition of *Art Jovem* at Carpe Diem & Pesquisa in Lisbon. Especially interested in translating her reflection, observations and critical thinking into

exhibitions and publications, Luisa's projects raise questions about the social role of art and culture in society.

She is a member of The British Art Network, Tate, the IKT (International Association of Curators of Contemporary Art), the AICA (Association Internationale des Critiques d'Art – International Association of Art Critics), APHA (Associação Portuguesa de Historiadores da Arte) and ICOM.

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Loan Lamoureux: *Can you tell me about your professional background and how did you get to curating?*

Luisa Santos: As far as I can remember, I have always wanted to work in Art. As a child, my mother thought I was going to be an artist or a writer. Every mother believes that everything their children do (such as writing or drawing) is brilliant, which, in my case was far from the truth. I not only lacked the skills, I also never wanted to be an artist. I have always wanted to be surrounded by art and artists that reflect the world in which we live. During the last year of my Communication Design degree at the FBAUL in 2003, I had two great teachers (Victor Almeida and António Nicolas) with an expanded notion of design. For my final project, along with 2 friends Mariana Pinto Coelho and Carlos Pontes we occupied the last floor of an old building of Vista Alegre in Lisbon. We didn't have any money but the building owner let us organize a 2 weeks' exhibition in exchange for showing the apartment to potential buyers. We divided the house into private and public spaces. In the "private" ones, were displayed the project of each artist and in the "public" one like the huge living room, were hosted the joint projects in mini-collective shows. What fascinated me most was to gather all those different pieces in the same space and see how every different idea was related to each other. I was not really interested in producing material objects. It was the year I read most about art, culture, and sociology. We were also encouraged by our aesthetic (Delfim Sardo) and anthropology (Fernandes Dias) teachers to attend as many lectures and conferences as possible, mostly outside of Lisbon. They wanted us to expand our vision of the world, that's what a good teacher does. I will always remember the afternoon I listened to Marc Augé presenting his work *Non-Lieux, introduction à une anthropologie de la surmodernité* (1992) at the FBAUP (Faculdade de Belas Artes da

Universidade do Porto). I also remember my first visit to the Tate Modern where I saw *24 Hour Psycho* (1993), from contemporaneous Scottish artist Douglas Gordon, a 24 hours' slow version of Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*. There I also saw the giant installation in the form of a gramophone *Marsyas* from Anish Kapoor, *Equivalent VIII* (1966) from Carl Andre, or *Still Water (The River Thames, for Example)* (1999) by Roni Horn. It was the first time I attended an exhibition thought as an orchestra made of historical and conceptual layers mixed with artistic practices. After I graduated, I worked in Design and Advertising for three years in Italy and Portugal before moving to London to pursue my MA in Curating Contemporary Art at the Royal College of Art. These two years were an incredible experience, at all levels. We were ten aspiring curators who had the opportunity to travel across the UK, Germany, Scotland, Ireland and India, which was truly enriching not only in terms of contemporary art but, mostly, in social, cultural and political terms.⁷¹

LL: What are, for you, the most essential qualities for a curator?

LS: Generosity – you need to be generous to give up on your ideas when needed, to be quiet in order to give voice to others and to understand the position of the others involved in whatever you want to communicate through your work because, in the end, it's not your work only, it's the work of many. Curiosity – every time you lose a bit of this quality, you die a little bit. Once you stop being in awe for the world that surrounds you, what is the point in translating it through exhibitions or other curatorial projects? Enthusiasm and ambition – always wanting to do more and better is essential to do anything properly.

LL: Do you consider that the art curator has a social role? What would it be?

LS: Of course! Joseph Beuys coined the idea of social sculpture in the 1970s – under this idea, every citizen holds the creative potential to change society. As a curator you are still a citizen and, on top of that, you get to work with creative minds that – at their best – give alternative

⁷¹ Answer originally written in Portuguese for an interview to the blog www.curadoresportugueses.wordpress.com by Barbara Sanchez Silva. translated by Loan Lamoureux.

perceptions of the world we all live in. It's a tremendous responsibility to mediate these perceptions and add our own.

LL: Which event or exhibition particularly marked you? Why?

LS: So many! Even some that I didn't attend personally, historical ones that I could only read about such as *The Model* at the Modern Musset in Stockholm (1968). I would love to have lived in the 1960s and 1970s to witness the influence of experimental exhibitions at the social level. In Portugal, when I was studying Communication Design at the FBAUL, the exhibition of João Onofre at the Museu Nacional do Chiado (MNAC) and the beautiful series from Helena Almeida at the Gulbenkian Museum made me realise that I could never keep on designing exhibition catalogues or make the graphics for exhibitions, I had to get involved in another way (back then I was studying communication design). When I went to London for the first time in 2002, I stayed 2 weeks and went to Tate Modern every day. It was absolutely fascinating, I got to see the Anish Kapoor's piece in the Turbine Hall, maybe was it the first time that I actually entered in an artwork. The way the collection was curated and the paths created by its themes and concepts were very innovative. I was used seeing exhibitions with a classical chronological path to follow and I was amazed by so many possibilities. In 2005, during a trip in New York, I saw an astonishing installation from Ilya and Emilia Kabakov at the MoMA that gave me the same sense of immersion that the one by Anish Kapoor at the Tate. The process of immersion - emersion through an artist's work is fascinating.

LL: What is the most memorable project you worked on?

LS: I have been very lucky to work with wonderful talented people since I graduated in curating contemporary art at the RCA. The first big exhibition that I curated in Lisbon was an interesting process. The project was accepted in 2009 but it only actually happened in 2014 at the Gulbenkian Foundation (and later at the Contemporary Art Museum in Roskilde, in Denmark) due to many different circumstances. It was an exhibition titled "*Daqui parece uma montanha*" and it included Portuguese, Danish and Austrian artists. I lived in these three countries and I was quite struck by the feeling that in these so different countries people seemed to always show

a sort of need to move away as if they would be better off in another reality and as if they would be too small if they stayed. This is quite present in Portuguese culture but I couldn't understand why this would be the case to the Danes and the Austrians and I started wondering if this had any translation in the visual arts. I realized that the 3 countries share some characteristics across history and geography – all were at war with their (big) neighbouring countries and all lost land to them; and all are rather small and, to some extent, peripheral. I also started making a lot of studio visits in the 3 countries and soon I realized that there are a lot of visual and formal connections. It was a great process to meet so many artists but also a lot of different people who were very generous in sharing experiences and ideas. And, of course, Isabel Carlos, who back in 2009 had just been appointed director of CAM-Gulbenkian and, despite my then 28 years old, accepted my proposal of project for the main exhibition space of Gulbenkian. I think it's not such a big thing in London, Stockholm or Linz, where I had worked before but it's certainly a very big thing in Lisbon to trust someone that young, that she had never met before.

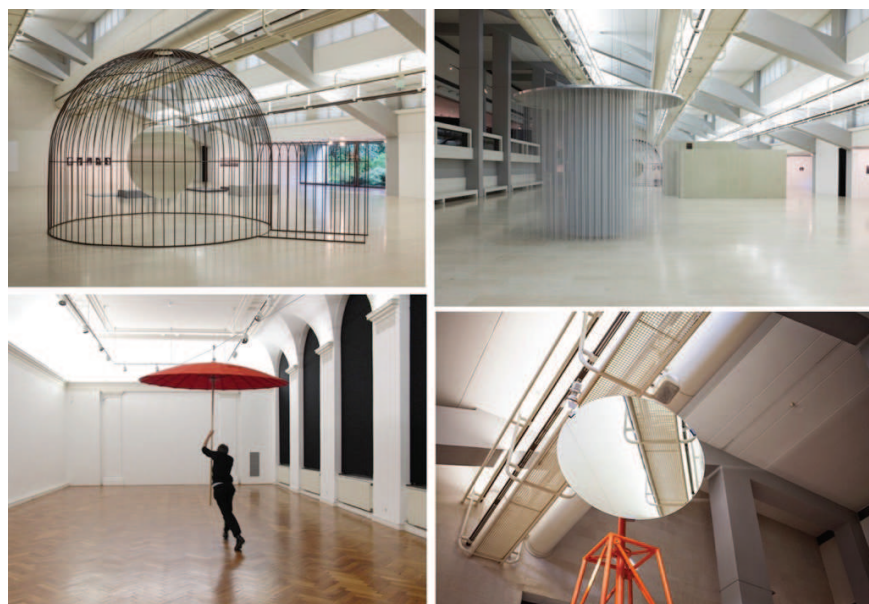


Image 30, 31, 32, 33 :*Daqui Parece Uma Montanha* exhibition (2014) CAM Lisboa Gulbenkian⁷²

⁷² *Daqui Parece Uma Montanha* exhibition (2014), CAM Lisboa Gulbenkian. Available at: <https://gulbenkian.pt/museu/past-exhibit/daqui-parece-uma-montanha-artistas-contemporaneos-austriacos-dinamarqueses-e-portugueses/>. Last viewed on: 28/09/17.

LL: Reading about various curators such as Pontús Hulten or Johannes Cladders, I have often come across the notion of "co-creator". Do you consider the curator as a co-creator?

LS: For sure! I don't think we can be creators in the contemporary world, only co-creators. And that's a wonderful thing.

LL: What is your part of decision regarding the layout of the exhibition?

LS: I see that as full responsibility of the curator and the artists, I wouldn't hire a designer to make the layout of an exhibition that I would organise.

LL: What do you like most about the work of curator?

LS: The thrill of being surprised by works of artists in so many different ways. And the best about working with such works and their creators is that I get to have access to knowledge that I wouldn't have otherwise.

LL: What are the difficulties most often faced while curating an exhibition?

LS: Budget and very often fundraising to make it happen. It always strikes me that so many people still think that artists and cultural producers don't need to be paid for their work. It is also quite difficult to work with institutions that dismiss their accountability towards the audience and society as a whole.

Luisa began her career of curator by organizing an exhibition on a flat to rent in exchange to showing the apartment to potential tenants, which reflects already the importance of personal network and compromises to be successful in curating. From the very start of the interview we noticed the importance of the social role of art and culture in society and the need for future curators to learn as much as possible to expand their vision of the world. Indeed, to curate a show is to promote alternative perceptions of the world and the world of the curator is to promote this vision to the public to change society. Luisa emphasis was on the multicultural aspect of

the job, drawing parallels and connections between different countries sharing similar geographical, historical and cultural characteristics. Just as Fany Dupechez, Luisa Santos works with international artists around the world and relies on a very humanist approach of the job by promoting knowledge and immersion within Art.

Museums, spaces of exhibitions, technologies, contents of exhibitions, art curating; every single aspect of the cultural field has drastically evolved since the last century. We witnessed the democratization of Art under all its forms along with the modernization of museums. Gradually, society understood the importance of Art as a vector of ideas, knowledge and fresh thinking and under the impetus of innovative artists and curators, museums adapted their exhibitions to catch up with new forms of arts and engage with the audience. Indeed, in addition to its aesthetical values, Art can address any issue of our society and invites us to reflect upon it. Therefore, the job of art curator evolved to adapt to all types of exhibitions in different cultural contexts along with the museums to host new forms of arts. This first chapter focused on the willingness of artists, curators and intellectuals to break free with the established order of things to create new experiences, educate about art and plan for the future. In the second chapter will look into the social and economic impact of curating in the field of Photography along with the ethical role of the art curator.

II. Curating in Photography and its social and economic impact

1. The curating of an exhibition related to human issues (with the practical example of Medecin du Monde's exhibition *MISE AU POING*, 2017)

Why do photographs strike us so much? Is it for purely artistic and aesthetic reasons or is it related to the human brain and its cognitive functions such as memory or empathy? To understand the social role of photography and how it can create empathy, raise awareness and influence the public of an exhibition, we must understand the relations between brain function, cognition and photography.

1.1. Photography, human brain and cognitive functions

*“The photographs are a means of making "real" (or "more real") matters that the privileged and the merely safe might prefer to ignore.”*⁷³. In modern society, incessant flows of images through TV, internet and cinema constitute our environment, *“but when it comes to remembering, the photograph has the deeper bite. Memory freeze-frames; its basic unit is the*

⁷³ Sontag, Susan (2003), *Regarding the Pain of Others*, Picador, Farrar, New York: Straus and Giroux, pp. 9.

single image,” remarks Susan Sontag.⁷⁴ Indeed, Photography represents a quick way to approach a topic and a compact form of memorization as photographs and human memories are very similar. The basis of human memory lies in the connection between all the memories of our experiences called autobiographical memories relying on a part of the brain called the hippocampus. This brain region is responsible for creating coherence and harmony between memories. Besides, a memory and a photography are very similar, “*a photo is information about past light that we can perceive in present time. Similarly, memories are the affects of our past experiences on our present self*,”⁷⁵ remarked Joshua Sarinaña (2013), neuroscience specialist, photographer and journalist of the online magazine *Petapixel*. From this observation, we can assume that pictures store memory and when we look at them, can activate memory reminiscence. Thus, our autobiographical memories work just as photographs and can stock data about *where*, *when* and *what*. Pictures are therefore comparable to our memories and life experience. Extended research also showed that people with hippocampus disability could recall experiences they would normally forget after a few days or hours thanks to photographs. In order to demonstrate it, Microsoft developed a wearable camera called *SenseCam* taking pictures automatically throughout 24 hours. When showing the pictures to the participants, the ones “*with a SenseCam had greater levels of recall compared to the ones with no SenseCam only having a written diary. What is interesting about the findings is that it suggests that visual memory of events is stored outside the hippocampus, but only after studying photographs*,” remarked Joshua. However, the question remains: do those photos become just events associated to a part of the brain other than the hippocampus, or do they also carry associated emotions felt during those events?

Everyone has a mental stock of images that can be instantly reminded and in that regard, it can be compared to a quote or a proverb. For instance, the most famous Spanish civil war’s picture, Capa’s photography “*Mort d’un soldat républicain*”, depicting a Republican militiaman receiving a bullet at the exact same moment the photograph was taken can be instantly visualized

⁷⁴ Ibid, pp. 20.

⁷⁵ Sarinaña, Joshua (2013), “Memories, Photographs, and the Human Brain”, *Petapixel.com*. Available at: <https://petapixel.com/2013/07/20/memories-photographs-and-the-human-brain/>. Last viewed on: 21/08/17.

by anyone who has heard about the war, it became a symbol if it. Likewise, the trend is today for shocking, striking pictures, “*beauty will be convulsive or will not be at all*” (La beauté sera convulsive ou ne sera pas) remarked André Breton⁷⁶ back in 1928. While writing this line, the aesthetic ideal was described as surrealistic by Breton but in our modern society where the exposure to images is constant, the impactful image seems essential to promote and communicate without going unnoticed. However, striking images, in that case, do not necessarily mean highly explicit, graphic and indecent images captured with extreme sharpness. A striking picture will more likely implicitly suggest, affect and appeal to our fundamental human and moral values. A situation one may identify himself easily. In the 1990’s, Italian neurophysiologists from the University of Parma discovered the chemical origin of empathy by studying monkey neurons. Indeed, empathy is a brain process caused by mirror neurons that create a reaction when doing an action but also when watching the same action performed by someone. Vittorio Gallese is one of the first neurophysiologists to study mirror neurons. He discovered that empathy is not about the introspection and reasoning on how you would have behaved in a similar situation but rather: “*the result of a direct experience of another person’s state (action, emotion, sensation), thanks to a mechanism of embodied simulation that produces within the observer a corporeal state that is—to some degree— shared with the person who expresses/experiences that state*”.⁷⁷ According to Gallese, empathy is a cognitive reaction. In line with Gallese’s work, Fritz Breithaupt, professor of Cognitive Science at Indiana University studied different forms of empathies. In his work *A three-person model of empathy*⁷⁸, Breithaupt distinguishes two forms of empathy, a “cold” one and a “hot” one. The first one is a distance-analytical form of empathy, the understanding of the other’s mind. While the “hot” one is a form of empathy that “*involves the simulation of the experience or emotion of the other within one’s neuronal network*”⁷⁹. It is described as giving emotional weight to the other’s suffering. This second form of empathy is more emotional than rational, it is putting yourself in the emotional

⁷⁶ Breton, André (1928), *Nadja*, Paris: Gallimard (1964), pp. 160.

⁷⁷ Chappelle Wojciehowski, Hannah (2010), “*The Mirror Neuron Mechanism and Literary Studies: An Interview with Vittorio Gallese*”, California Italian Studies, 2(1), 2010. pp. 5.
Available at : <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/56f8v9bv>. Last viewed on: 02/08/2017.

⁷⁸ Breithaupt, Fritz (2011), “A Three-Person Model of Empathy”, *Emotion Review*, copyright Emotion Review.
Available at: <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1754073911421375>. Last viewed on: 03/08/17.

⁷⁹ *ibid*, pp.17

shoes of others and this is what a curator should keep in mind while curating an exhibition related to social issues. By watching news, people acknowledge information without getting emotionally involved. They experience cold empathy and remain “distant” from it. According to an article based on researches published in the British newspaper “Times of London” and “Telegraph”, the human brain is exposed everyday to nearly 34 gigabytes of information everyday through radio, electronic mail, television, internet, books or smartphones⁸⁰. As remarked by the psychiatrist and ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) specialist Edward Hallowell,

never in human history, our brains had to work so much information as today. We have now a generation of people who spend many hours in front of a computer monitor or a cell phone and who are so busy in processing the information received from all directions, so they lose the ability to think and feel. Most of this information is superficial. People are sacrificing the depth and feeling and cut off from other people.⁸¹

Unlike a constant flow of information, an exhibition should empower the public by allowing visitors to imagine how it feels to experience another reality and giving them an emotional weight to carry.

1.2. Exhibitions related to social issues and how to empower the public through knowledge

While curating an exhibition related to human issues, one of the curator’s role is to raise awareness about this issue and by doing so to empower the public on the topic of focus. According to the Oxford dictionary, “*to empower is to Give (someone) the authority or power to do something*” or “*to make (someone) stronger and more confident, especially in controlling their life and claiming their rights*”⁸². Besides, in 1668, the English philosopher and former

⁸⁰Unknown (2006), *The human brain is loaded daily with 34 GB of information. Tech21century.com.* Available at : <https://www.tech21century.com/the-human-brain-is-loaded-daily-with-34-gb-of-information/>. Last viewed on: 29/08/17.

⁸¹ Garner, Janine (2017), “Connection = The Exchange of Humanity”, *Huffingtonpost.com.* Available at: https://www.huffingtonpost.com/janine-garner/connection-the-exchange-o_b_10135002.html. Last viewed on: 31/10/17.

⁸² Definition of “to empower”. *Oxford Online dictionary.* Available at : <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/empower> last viewed on: 23/08/17.

secretary of Sir Francis Bacon, Thomas Hobbes remarked “*scientia potentia est*”, meaning in Latin “*knowledge is power*”⁸³. Indeed, the more knowledge one has about a topic the more choices he will have to deal or understand it and therefore the more power he will have regarding this subject. Similarly, if knowledge is power and power is the capacity to achieve a goal, to empower the audience of an exhibition related to social issues is to give the power to make a difference regarding these issues. Power, in this case, will be the ability to spread awareness on the situation, to understand what is responsible for it and adapt their behaviour. A relevant example of empowering through art would be the show *Monsanto: A Photographic Investigation* that took place at the festival *Les rencontres d’Arles* in 2017. In his exhibition, the photographer and investigator Mathieu Asselin unveils the ravages of pesticides and chemicals in agriculture and the social and ecological impact of the Monsanto Corporation’s products and policy.

*“The American agrochemicals company has become notorious, primarily for its production of PCB’s, Agent Orange, herbicide Roundup, and genetically modified seeds. Over the year, Monsanto has been steadily incorporating other agribusinesses and filing patent violation claims to secure its monopoly on the food industry. In his book, Monsanto®: A photographic Investigation, Asselin coupled his own photographic documentation of the socio-economic impact of company practices with found archival footage. The book thus provides a visual inventory of major health and safety violations throughout the company’s history,”*⁸⁴

so writes the Journalist Hinde Haest in his article *Tomorrowland* about Asselin’s exhibition and upcoming book. Indeed, when visiting *the* exhibition, the public grows increasingly conscious of the firm’s impact on farmers. The show also points to the clever corporation’s communication and manipulation claiming that chemicals are an integral part of life and nature. For example, a 1997’s ad stated “*Life is chemical. And with chemicals, companies like Monsanto® are working to help improve the quality of life*” while another ad from 1980 mentioned “*Mother Nature is lucky her products don’t need labels*”. With this knowledge about the *Monsanto Corporation*,

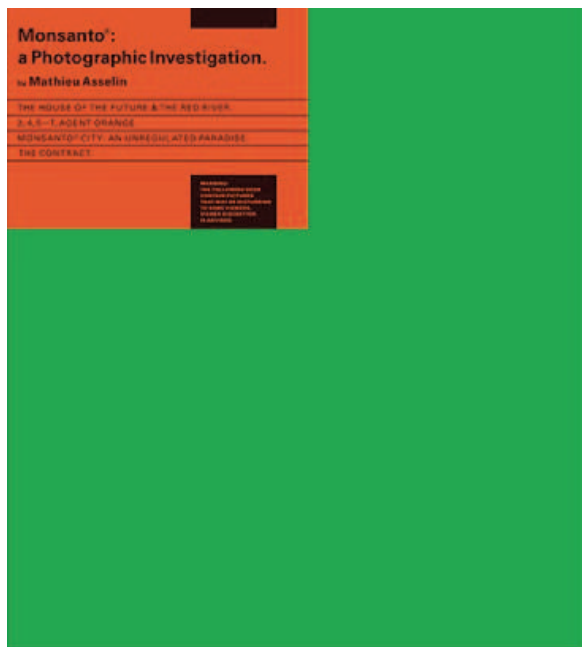
⁸³García, José María Rodríguez (2001), “Scientia Potestas Est – Knowledge is Power: Francis Bacon to Michel Foucault”, *SpringerLink*.

Originally from: Hobbes, Thomas (1668), *Opera philosophica, quae latine scripsit, omnia in unum corpus nunc primum collecta studio et labore Gulielmi Molesworth*.

Available at: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1023/A:1011901104984> Last viewed on: 31/10/17.

⁸⁴Haest, Hinde (2017), “Tomorrowland”, *FOAM international photography magazine #47, Propaganda, no power without image control*, Amsterdam: Foam Editions, pp. 112.

the consumer gains the power of opposing the firm and its policy. Through boycotts, position statements and changes in consumption patterns the public has the power to deal with the issue.



Images 34: Mathieu, Asselin (2017), *Monsanto: A Photographic Investigation* (book)⁸⁵

An exhibition related to social issues can raise awareness and create empathy about any kind of topic although the following practical example will deal with the ethical role of the curator in organizing an exhibition about precariousness.

1.3. The practical example of Médecins du Monde's exhibition *MISE AU POING*

I had the opportunity to assist art directors Fany Dupechez and Pascal Michaut in collaboration with the creative agency “BonsoirParis” for the curating of the exhibition “*MISE AU POING, 30 ans de combat contre l'exclusion*”⁸⁶ (“*MISE AU POING, 30 years of fight against*

⁸⁵ Photo from the website of Prix de la Photographie Paris. Available at: <https://px3.fr/>. Last viewed on: 29/08/17.

⁸⁶Website of Médecins du Monde. Available at: <http://www.medecinsdumonde.org/fr/actualites/evenements/10-02-2017/mise-au-poing>. Last viewed on: 29/08/17.

exclusion”). The exhibition was organized by Médecins du Monde (MdM), a French medical humanitarian organization that provides emergency and long-term medical care to the most vulnerable around the world. In 1986, Médecins du monde opened in Paris a health free centre for the ones who needed it the most. Today, through 67 different programs, the association keeps on supporting and treating women, men and children in precarious conditions. In this social context, *MISE AU POING*’s mission was to testify and break the silence surrounding the excluded ones of our society. Whether they are undocumented migrants, without rights or without money, their voices are unheard. The exhibition was the opportunity to shed light on people who suffer from social exclusion. Besides, its title, “MISE AU POING” is a play on words between the sentence “mise au point” in French meaning to “focus” on photography and the word “poing” meaning “fist” or “punch”. The idea was to express the vision of the exhibition, “hitting” exclusion through photography. According to Vittorio Gallese’s research on empathy the show created “hot” empathy by presenting a wide range of pieces from close-up portraits to situational photographs with a humanistic approach for visitors to understand the background situation of the ones depicted. Besides, thanks to different styles such as black and white or colours, analogue or digital, film or photography, close-ups or full-body portraits the viewer had different perspectives to grasp the subject. Just as the techniques “*filmmakers utilize when they employ sequences of shots from different perspectives and thereby guide viewers “through” different points-of-view*”⁸⁷ as remarked Breithaupt in his work *A Three-Person Model of Empathy*, the *MISE AU POING* exhibition depicted deprivation in France from different point of views to shift the public empathic attention from one issue to another. Depicting various situations is very important to show the plurality of conditions gathered under the same topic. Indeed, broadening the spectrum of distress by making it global could induce the feeling on the viewer that he should be more implicated. However, if the exhibition groups together under the same theme too many different issues it can influence the viewer’s empathy making it more hesitant by pulling the situation towards the abstract. In that case, the suffering depicted may appear too broad for the viewer who would feel helpless given the complexity of the issue. Therefore, the curator will then have to choose how to present or “frame” the subject.

⁸⁷ *ibid*, pp.6

MISE AU POING presented the work of five photographers and one video maker: Cédric Gerbehaye, Alberto Garcia-Alix, Henk Wildschut, Valérie Jouve, Denis Rouvre and Claudine Doury on the theme of precariousness in France. Through their work, the artists question the statement of “living together” in a society of true solidarity. The exhibition took place at the “*Topographie de l'Art*” Gallery, Paris in February 2017 with an ingenious scenography highlighting the unique identities of the ones depicted. Whether in the choice of pieces, the formats displayed and the general layout of the exhibition, the approach was intimate and human. For instance, the work of Denis Rouvre depicted different victims of precariousness, such as undocumented migrants, abused people, drug addicts and outsiders. His portraits, from Medium shots to Full close-ups were displayed with back-lit settings in a dark room supported by vocal testimonials of the subjects. Voices were coming out of speakers all around the room in a nonlinear order not to prioritize a history over another one, nor create a ranking of sufferings. Rouvre’s work and the setting of his pieces were very interesting as they were literally highlighting and giving voices to the ones invisible in the obscurity of indifference. Faithful to his style, the photographer’s portraits were taken with light panels and flash on black backgrounds to separate the subject from its socio-cultural and contextual history. Another interpretation of Rouvre’s pictures could be the obscurity of what the ones depicted have been through and how they rise from exclusion and misery through the photographer’s lens.



*Images 35, 36: Rouvre, Denis (2017), *Mise au Poing*⁸⁸*

Claudine Doury adopted another approach to the subject with situational portraits of peoples within their houses, focusing on living conditions of victims of poverty and deprivation such as

⁸⁸ Rouvre, Denis (2017), Series *Mise au Poing*. Available at: <http://www.medecinsdumonde.org/fr/actualites/evenements/10-02-2017/mise-au-poing>. Last viewed on: 02/08/17.

immigrants. Cedric Gerbehaye's pictures were situational, lifestyle and traditional portraits of African minors in the cities of Rouen and Reims. His series, in a black and white granular style, was echoing the gravity of the situation and depicted the difficulties encountered by those migrants deprived of their family, their home and their normal life. Indeed, because they just arrived in France, those youths live in hostels, move every day from social centres to administrative offices to learn French and regulate their situation and struggle to integrate schools and sport clubs. These kids are struggling at an age where they should be playing, learning and discovering life and Gerbehaye's work depicted perfectly this ambiguity. Indeed, unlike Denis Rouvre's work, his pictures were highly contextual. Some portraits featured the young migrants in the confusing concrete jungles of Rouen or Reims in low angle shots to make the architecture look bigger and depict the hostile aspect of their new environment. Some other portraits, show them in hostels or administrative structures dealing with their new life imperatives. Besides, as Albert Plécy observes, in photography "*The camera angle modifies the normal vision of things*"⁸⁹ and this is why the artist didn't use high-angle shot, not to make the subject look vulnerable but rather to inspire compassion instead of pity.

⁸⁹ English translation from the student of the original quote "*L'angle de prise de vue modifie la vision habituelle des choses*". Plécy, Albert (1975), *Grammaire élémentaire de l'image*, Paris: Édition Marabout, pp. 108.



Image 37: Gerbehaye, Cedric (2017), *Mise au Poing*⁹⁰

With another approach, Henk Wildschut who is an artist familiar with the situation of refugees for working with the inhabitants of “La Jungle de Calais” (Calais’ jungle) on a previous project⁹¹ presented a series of photographs of refugees trying to pass the border between France and Italy. The Dutch photographer depicted men and women in wide shots from a distance, walking on different paths and passing different geographic obstacles such as barriers, forests, and mountains to reach the French border.

⁹⁰ Gerbehaye, Cédric (2017), Series *Mise au Poing*.

Available at: http://img.lemde.fr/2017/02/14/0/0/5661/3774/1000/667/60/0/8e6ef16_31501-zilb72.cudph3q5mi.jpg. Last viewed on: 02/08/17.

⁹¹ Wildschut, Henk (2015), *From Jungle to City*.

Available at: <http://www.henkwildschut.com/work/calais-from-jungle-to-city-2/calais-from-jungle-to-city-photo/>. Last viewed on: 02/08/17.



Images 37: Wildschut, Henk (2017), *Mise au Poing*⁹²

Wildschut's series was very intimate as it put the viewer in the shoes of the migrants, his camera could be the eyes of another migrant following the one in the picture. In all those series, the names or at least precise information about the persons that appear in the pictures were mentioned on the cartels coming with the photograph. In a way, this process humanizes the picture and does not reduce the subject simply as a representative of his suffering, profession or ethnicity. In addition to his documentary work *Calais, from jungle to city* and his series for *MISE AU POING*, Wildschut worked on several social and ecological themes such as his brilliant eye-opener work *Food* about the large-scale food industry in the Netherlands.

1.4. The blue layers of the scenography

Regarding the scenography and the space organisation, the dialogue was driven by the numerous transparent blue layers hanging around the space and standing between the photographs and the public. Serving as supports for written contents or just displayed as obstacles, the translucent blue sheets questioned the distance between the audience and the situation depicted. Indeed,

⁹² Photo from the website *Photo.fr*.

Available at: <http://www.photo.fr/exposition/mise-au-poing-6-regards-sur-la-precarite-pour-medecins-du-monde>.
Last viewed on: 29/08/17.

human issues are perceived under different scopes through different media by the general opinion and in that sense, the scenography represented how people react to the suffering of others. Besides, the blue layers represented the screens of our iPads, smartphones, and computers through which we get daily informed and how those screens keep us at a safe distance from news that seem not to affect us anymore or that we would prefer to ignore. Also, the blue colour being the coldest of the three primary colours (red, blue, green), the layers could be interpreted as a symbol of the “cold” empathy described in Breithaupt’s work. People receive so many information every day but remain distant from it and these blue layers representing the screens of our routine are the reasons why. By bypassing them, the viewer will then be able to experience “hot” empathy regarding the other’s suffering. The scenography and general layout of the exhibition questions: Is the public looking away from the issue? Are they trying to inform themselves about it? Are they willing to make a change? Various matters that the exhibition display put in perspective along with structuring the space and the sense of circulation.



Images 39: The exhibition Mise au Poing at the Topography de l'Art, Paris, 2017⁹³

⁹³ Photo from the website *Topographiedelart*.

Available at: http://www.topographiedelart.fr/assets/components/phpthumbof/cache/mise_au_poing_-_medecins_du_monde-2.9f9a35013fd8ff7ecbb8a9da321b3ee1.jpg. Last viewed on: 29/08/17.

For several reasons previously described, organizing an exhibition related to social and human issues will never have the same impacts and implications as a purely aesthetic or artistic one. Regarding this kind of show, the curator will bear responsibilities toward the situation depicted and will have to empower the audience about it. Rather than inspire pity, the show should inspire compassion, empathy and should put the public in the shoes of the ones depicted. Indeed, in addition to presenting great works of art to the audience, a show with social implications must shed light on the issue, create knowledge and empower the public that will then know how to act accordingly. Photography is a great tool of communication to raise awareness, but photography is also a great tool for advertising and communication. The fashion and beauty industry use portraits and photography in their advertising campaigns while others such as *Pernod Ricard* would use portrait photography to enhance their collaborators.

2. The corporate curating (with the practical example of Pernod Ricard artistic campaign *MINDSET*, 2016)

From the expensive portrait paintings of royal families to the first portrait photographs commissioned for special occasions at the end of the 19th century and throughout the 20th century, portraits have long been reserved for the elite of our society. With the advent of photography and in particular, digital photography, portraits are no longer only confined to museums and high-level institution but can be found everywhere from the small screens of our smartphones to the giant billboard advertising lining the highways. Since the first light picture ever taken in 1839, the auto-portrait of Robert Cornelius, portraits have become tools of communication widely used by companies to give a human face to their organizations. Under this approach, the group of liqueurs and distilled beverages Pernod Ricard strives to honour its collaborators through series of portraits in the context of the group annual art campaign exhibited during *Paris Photo*, Grand Palais.

2.1. The annual art campaign of Pernod Ricard

During my 6-months internship as an art curator and production assistant within the production company Cinq Étoiles Production, I assisted Fany Dupechez and project manager Pascal Michaut in the organization of the annual Pernod Ricard's art campaign.

Pernod Ricard is a French company specialized in the manufacture and distribution of wines and liqueurs. It is the second largest group in its market. The group's name comes from the anise-flavoured distilled beverages Pernod Anise and Ricard Pastis. Founded in 1975, it owns 85 brands, employs 18,230 people in all 5 continents and its turnover reached €8,558 in 2014-2015. On the occasion of its annual art campaign, Pernod Ricard which tagline is "créateur de convivialité" (creator of conviviality) has been giving "carte blanche" to an artist for over 40 years to illustrate its annual report. Since 2010, the Group has made the choice to work with contemporary photographers.

After Marco Lopes, Eugenio Recuenco, Denis Rouvre, Olaf Breuning, Vee Speers and Li Wei, the group gave "carte blanche" to the Senegalese artist Omar Victor Diop represented by the *A-Gallery* in Paris. Africa being the "new frontier" for the group that opened 6 direct subsidiaries in the continent in the last 5 years, it is only natural that Pernod Ricard selected an African artist for its 2016 Art Campaign *MINDSET*. Diop shot the portrait of 17 collaborators of Pernod Ricard's African subsidiaries and chose to embody the bonds that link them to their colleagues from the rest of the world, whom they mostly never met. The selected collaborators were wearing creative outfits specially designed by Senegalese fashion designer Selly Raby Kane in the form of portraits in medallions that are often found in African celebrations. Pride of belonging, joy of being together, audacity to innovate, these are the words represented by *MINDSET*.

For Alexandre Ricard, Chairman, and CEO of Pernod Ricard:

It is the men and women of Pernod Ricard who make our Group unique. In addition to the support we can give to artists, this artistic carte blanche allows us to put employees at the centre of our communication while sublimating their identity. ⁹⁴

The series *MINDSET* was exhibited from the 10 to the 13 of November 2016 to 60,000 visitors at the *Grand Palais* for *Paris Photo*, the most prestigious international fair dedicated to photography.



Image 40,41,42: Omar Victor Diop (2016), Pernod Ricard *MINDSET*. © Pernod Ricard⁹⁵

⁹⁴ English translation by the student of the original French content on Pernod Ricard website.

“ *Ce sont les hommes et les femmes de Pernod Ricard qui font la singularité de notre Groupe. En plus du soutien que nous pouvons apporter aux artistes, cette carte blanche artistique nous permet de remettre les collaborateurs au cœur de notre démarche tout en sublimant leur identité*”.

Available at: <https://www.pernod-ricard.com/fr/medias/communiques-de-presse/ Pernod-Ricard-presente-sa-41eme-campagne-artistique-mindset-realisee/>. Last viewed on: 02/09/17.

⁹⁵ Omar Victor Diop (2016), *Séries MINDSET*. © Pernod Ricard.

Available at: <http://photographie.com/article/omar-victor-diop-deux-fois-dix-sept-portraits-de-la-galaxie-pernod-ricard>. Last viewed on: 03/09/17.

2.2. Omar Victor Diop, the African photographer mixing tradition and modernity

Omar Victor Diop is one of those African artists strongly influenced by the legacy of renowned African portrait photographers such as the Malian Malick Sidibé also called “l'œil de Bamako” (the eye of Bamako), Seydou Keïta or the Senegalese photography precursor Mama Casset. However, he is also strongly influenced by occidental fashion trends and takes up the daring challenge of bringing fashion codes to tradition in his series. Omar Victor Diop depicts the reality of the African continent, a continent in transition, diverse and full of creativity. In his series “*The Studio of Vanities, Staged Portraits of Africa's Contemporary Urban Scene*”⁹⁶, the artist presents the new faces of the continent urban culture. Black, Arab or white, Diop drew the portrait of a generation that works to make Africa a melting pot of contemporary creation, a place of exchange and cultural production between tradition and modernity. The approach of his series was collaborative, working closely with the models in the elaboration of the outfits, backgrounds and accessories to depict identities and social translations. The artists called its series “vanity”, to show that expressing an identity is already a way of being. Rather than “showing off”, vanity is used in a way to assess optimism, pride, and diversity. Africa is creative and this creativity comes from its diversity. Africa is made of hundreds of different influences. Africa has a creole soul. In another project, *Project Diaspora* the artist puts himself in the shoes of famous Africans out of Africa in History. In this series of auto-portraits that the artist did during a 4-months artist residency in Malaga (Spain), Omar questions de role of famous Africans, often former slaves in Europe from the 15th to the 19th century. Inspired by the baroque paintings of this period, he reinvents famous paintings portraits of these African men and women in a modern and fashionable style. Besides, by incorporating elements of football culture such as goalkeeper gloves or a golden cup, Diop establishes a parallel with the destiny of modern football players, who left their countries of origin to become celebrities in their hosting countries. Once again, he draws connections between his continent and the rest of the world depicting the influence of the western world on Africa but also the influence of his continent on the rest of the world.

⁹⁶Website of Omar Victor Diop.

Available at: <https://www.omarviktor.com/the-studio-of-vanities>. Last viewed on: 15/09/17.



Image 43 (left): Sidibé, Malick (1973), *Nana Touré*⁹⁷
Image 44 (right): Diop, Omar Victor (2016), *Le studio des vanités*, Khady Niang – Make-up Artist⁹⁸

Another powerful work of the artist with social and cultural implications is his series [*Re-Mixing Hollywood (Onomollywood)*] in collaboration with French photographer Antoine Tempé. In this series, the artists “remix” iconographic shots of Hollywood movies with major actors of the African culture scene. Just as everywhere else in the world, the American cinema culture has a strong influence on African pop culture. Diop and Tempé decided to pay tribute to the influence of these movies while putting the African pop culture to the front of the stage. In each one of Omar’s work, there is this willingness to enhance the African people and its tradition but also to connect it to the world creative trends. And this is why the Pernod Ricard campaign art director Fany Dupechez selected Omar Victor Diop to depicts the African collaborators of the group because no other artist can depict the freshness, dynamism, and creativity of Africa better than Diop.

⁹⁷ Sidibé, Malick (1973), *Nana Touré*.

Available at: <http://www.magnin-a.com/en/artistes/presentation/1029/malick-sidibe#nana-toure>. Last viewed on: 03/09/17.

⁹⁸ Diop, Omar Victor (2016), *Le studio des vanités*, Khady Niang – Make-up Artist.

Available at: <http://www.magnin-a.com/en/artistes/presentation/1199/omar-victor-diop#khady>. Last viewed on: 03/09/17.

2.3 The organization of a “corporate exhibition”

When organizing a “corporate exhibition”, different aspects must be taken into consideration as the artworks showcased will serve as a reflexion of the brand. The art campaign must meet the group’s identity and vision. Indeed, when presenting its artists’ selection to the client, the curator or art director must present renowned photographers whose work could embrace the group’s actuality and current communication.

In 2016, the emphasis was on the African continent, the new young pole of the Group. Spontaneously, Omar Victor Diop a 37 years old Senegalese photographer who explores the themes of identity and questions the place of Africans in the world history was the right choice to convey the group’s vision. Pernod Ricard has a strong brand identity; before being an international group made of 85 brands and 18,000 employees, Pernod, was a French brand of anise distilled beverages created in 1805 that significantly marked the French cultural landscape. Since always, the brand has been associated to the south of France, summer, freshness, holidays and conviviality. Besides, just as the American brand Coca-Cola has its corporate Red colour, a drink of the anise liqueur brands Pernod or Ricard is commonly denominated “un Jaune” (a Yellow) in France because of its colour. The over-60’s remember old Peugeot cars going through villages and city centres advertising the brand colours with pride. Nowadays, as an international group established all around the world, the group changed its brand identity but remains very strong and clever in communication. The group chose the blue colour according to the “personality” of the brand. Indeed, just as yellow would stand for optimism, clarity and warmth or red, excitement and youth, in marketing and brand management, blue is associated with sincerity and trust. Pernod Ricard that wants to be perceived as a convivial brand uses the colour blue to convey honesty, sincerity, realness, originality, and friendliness. Of course, colour is very dependent on personal experiences. According to the marketing strategist Gregory Ciotti, *“there are, however, broader messaging patterns to be found in color perceptions”* and *“90% of snap judgements made about products can be based on color alone, depending on the*

*product*⁹⁹. Besides, according to a survey from the same study, Blue is the favourite colour of both men (57%) and women (35%)¹⁰⁰. The study also shows that men are more likely to select dark shades of colours while women would prefer light shades of colours. Even if today men and women alcohol consumption is nearly the same, among the generations born in the first decades of the XXth century, men were twice as likely to consume alcohol, which could explain the important part of dark blue over light blue on the Pernod Ricard's logo. To some extent, the blue colours of the brand could symbolize the planet earth or "blue planet" as it is commonly called. The brand being implanted in every continent, its colour could represent the will for the group to create conviviality all around the world.



Image 45: Logo Pernod Ricard¹⁰¹

Ahead of the show, the company invited 17 collaborators of the group along with the artist, the art director Fany Dupechez and the producers of Cinq Étoiles Production to their studios in Johannesburg, South Africa to shoot the series *MINDSET*. The exhibition layout had to embrace the group identity and vision. All the portraits were printed in big-formats to highlight the importance of every collaborator. Colourful flowers were displayed all around the space to

⁹⁹Ciotti, Gregory (2016), "The Psychology of Color in Marketing and Branding", *Helpscout.com*. Available at: <https://www.helpscout.net/blog/psychology-of-color/>. Last viewed on: 02/11/17.

¹⁰⁰ Bot, Olivier (2016), "Consommation d'alcool: les femmes rejoignent les hommes". *Tribune de Genève*. Available at: <https://www.tdg.ch/monde/consommation-alcool-femmes-rejoignent-hommes/story/13891877>. Last viewed on: 03/08/17.

¹⁰¹ Logo Pernod Ricard.

Available at: <https://assets.pernod-ricard.com/logo-pernod-ricard.png>. Last viewed on: 03/09/17.

create an African or exotic atmosphere but also to match the kitsch colours of the portrait models' outfits. For the inauguration of *MINDSET*, the group also provided colourful appetizers with beverages from the group's brands. In a spirit of "conviviality", Pernod Ricard collaborators depicted in the pictures were here to attend the exhibition with the purpose of putting the employees of the African subsidiaries at the center of the project. The exhibition also benefited from screens displaying footages of exotic fauna and flora. Faithful to the typical display at Paris Photo, the portraits were hung on white neutral walls. The space of *Grand Palais* does not allow to take liberties with the scenography that was classic and minimalist. Unlike a regular exhibition, *MINDSET* emphasised its collaborators and the conviviality of spending time together, the portraits were displayed as a corporate framework, a background depicting the actuality of the group.

As seen previously, photography is a perfect tool to communicate and raise awareness. Indeed, it allows to personify something intangible such as an organization or a human issue. Moreover, the specific discipline of portrait photography brings a human dimension to the topic. Multinational companies such as Pernod Ricard will use portrait photography to depict their customers' satisfaction or their employee's well-being and fulfilment. On the other hand, NGOs such as Médecins du Monde will communicate more effectively about an issue with tangible graphic visuals.

However, portrait photography does not necessarily serve communication purposes. It is also a fully-fledged style of photography. For this reason, the next part will focus on Vichy Portrait(s), the first French festival entirely dedicated to portrait photography.

3. The organization of a photography festival (with the practical example of *Vichy Portrait(s)*, 2017)

3.1. An overview of the festival

3.1.1 The festival

Vichy Portrait(s), the only French festival centred around portrait photography, is taking place every year since 2013 in the spa town of Vichy, France. The festival features a rich diversity of visions and celebrates portraits in all its forms, from the most classical ones to the most innovative. The festival gathers every year a great plurality of artists, from documentary-makers, photo reporters and street-photographers to studio photographers and conceptual artists. From general public exhibitions to sophisticated shows, *Portrait(s)* includes every year about fifteen exhibitions with two outdoor displays, more than 10 artists in the cultural centres, an artist in residency, a book and about 300,000 annual visitors. The 5th edition of the festival took place from June to September 2017. *Portrait(s)* and its eclectic program promote to the city of Vichy and its region the history of portrait photography through the work of renowned masters and most recent artists. For the Fifth Edition, the festival published in association with *Filigranes Edition* a retrospective book about *Portrait(s)*, retracing 5 years of portrait photography within the city of Vichy. The book, produced in 1,000 copies is geared around the most impactful photographs of the festival along with a mini-book about the organization of the festival, its framework, and cultural background.

In 2013, the festival featured the work of Pascal Aimar, Liu Bolin, Jérôme Bonnet, Sylvie Meunier, Sarah Moon, Denis Rouvre, Dorothée Smith and Vanessa Winship. In 2014, Jeanloup Sieff, Jim Naughten, Bruce Gilden, Vee Speers, Martina Bacigalupo, Claudia Huidobro, Michael Wolf, Yusuf Sevinçli, Cédric Delsaux and Ludovic Combe. In 2015, Pascal Aimar, Liu Bolin Jérôme Bonnet, Sylvie Meunier, Sarah Moon, Denis Rouvre, Dorothée Smith, and Vanessa Winship and in 2016, Martin Schoeller, Bruce Wrighton, Richard Pak, Kourtney Roy, Mat Jacob, Alejandro Cartagena, Sarah Moon, José Chidlovsky, Irina Ionesco, Rachel Rom, Elliott Erwitt and Yusuf Sevinçli.

Vichy Portrait(s), received 600 persons at the opening between the different spaces of exhibition, 26,000 visitors in 2015 and 30,000 in 2016, 300 photographs exhibited, 13 international photographers, 12 expositions during 2 months and 3 weeks.

3.1.2. *The spaces of lectures and exhibition*

The festival benefits from different exhibition spaces and different ways to put the work of artists in perspectives. The main space of exhibition is the *Centre Culturel Valery Larbaud (CCVL)* with its two galleries and a total of 600m² where around 10 exhibitions of the festival are displayed. The total space is composed of black rooms with an elegant atmospheric lighting and thanks to its size, each collection can be presented independently. The *CCVL*, also hosts in an adjacent room, the work of the participants of *Flash Expo*, a photo competition organized every year within the festival. Besides, another series is displayed every year on the Allier Lac's esplanade. This outdoor space presents the work of a photographer through 60 large format photographs. For the 5th edition, it was the work of the activist, art performer and renowned photographer Liu Bolin that was showcased on the esplanade. The pictures are presented on big panels and elegant white cubes along the waterside promenade. Since 2014, eight similar cubes are displayed on the church Saint-Louis forecourt and present 30 large-scale photographs. This space of exhibition is reserved for the work of the artist in residence. This year it featured the series *Dérives des Baigneurs* from Sandra Rocha. Finally, the "Médiathèque Valery-Larbaud" features in its space of exhibition the work of the winners of the "Flash Expo" contest from the previous edition. The Médiathèque also hosts lectures from professional photographers and book signing sessions.

3.1.3. *The artist in residency*

Since 2014, *Portrait(s)* is giving carte blanche to a contemporary photographer to create a subjective portrait of the city of Vichy and its citizens throughout a one-month residency. The artist's work is then displayed around the city, outside the church, in front of the train station or on the esplanade above the lac. After Cédric Delsaux, Yusuf Sevinçli et Anton Renborg, it is the Portuguese photographer from Azores islands Sandra Rocha that had carte blanche for this 5th edition. Inspired by the legacy of the city and its thermal springs and in line with her artistic

approach, Sandra created a series of photos including portraits, architecture, landscapes and all sorts of details centred around the femininity, youth, nature and the purity of Vichy's waters. In her series *Dérives des baigneuses*, the Portuguese artist depicted with her unique sensibility the youth of Vichy.

In the vein of her previous work such as *Le Silence des Sirènes* or *Love Stream*, *Dérives des baigneuses* is strongly influenced by her own childhood in the Azores, those Portuguese green islands surrounded by water and raging waves in the middle of the Atlantic.



Image 46, 47: Rocha, Sandra (2017), *Séries Dérives des Baigneurs*, Artist in residence 2017, Filigranes Editions¹⁰²

¹⁰²Website of Filigranes Editions.

Available at: <http://www.filigranes.com/livre/derive-des-baigneuses/>. Last viewed on: 08/03/17.



Image 48, 49: Renborg, Anton (2015), *Séries Daysinvichy*. Artist in residence 2016, Filigranes Editions¹⁰³



Image 50, 51: Sevinçli, Yusuf (2015), *Séries Walking*. Artist in residence 2015, Filigranes Editions¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Website of Filigranes Editions.

Available at: <http://www.filigranes.com/livre/daysinvichy/> Last viewed on: 08/03/17.

¹⁰⁴ Website of Filigranes Editions.

Available at: <http://www.filigranes.com/livre/walking/> Last viewed on: 08/03/17.

What is interesting with the artist in residence's work is his/her perception of the city based on his cultural and artistic background. In 2015, The Turkish photographer Yusuf Sevinç depicted Vichy in a grainy black and white style very rich in contrasts. That darkness, which emanates from his work, could have found an echo in the political turmoil in Turkey. Indeed, 2015 marks the start of the third Kurdish-Turkish conflict in the country and in 2013 the country experienced riots during the Gezi Park protests. It is possible that the troubles in Turkey influenced the artist's vision of Vichy. With an entirely different style, the Swedish artist Anton Renborg adopted a minimalist approach to his work, very characteristic of the Scandinavian style. Renborg documented Vichy and its citizens without pretence and with a sometimes disarming honesty. The artist shoots the finesse and elegance of the old people he meets and describes his pictures as "slow". Indeed, day after day, the artist follows the rhythm of the quiet city. His work *Days in Vichy* release a sense of spaciousness and serenity, certainly inspired by the great Swedish outdoors. Every year, the work of the artist in residence is converted into a book published by Filigranes Editions with a unique artistic direction. 1000 books are issued and sold during the festival.

3.1.3. The photography contests

Since its 4th edition, *Portrait(s)* launched a photo contest "Flash Expo" in partnership with the photography platform *Wipplay* to give a better visibility to all kinds of photographers at national and international level. The second edition of the competition, sponsored by renowned photographers was initiated in February 2017. The participants must provide a coherent series of portraits along with their argumentation and thinking about their work. The Jury is composed of a large panel of photographers including the artist in residence, Sandra Rocha.

Following the competition, two prizes are awarded, one to the professional category and one to the amateur category. The public can vote during the whole festival. The competition allows the festival audience to get involved in *Portrait(s)* but also to discover emerging talents and promote their work. Indeed, *Portrait(s)* is not only restricted to the work of famous artists but aims to explore portrait photography in all its forms. Every year, around 200 portfolios are submitted to

the organization and 20 participations are submitted to the jury after pre-selection. Among the winners, we find talented photographers such as Ronan Guillou, Talos Buccalieti or Julia Gat. In addition to the photography contest “Flash Expo”, the festival launched the competition “Vichy & Moi” in 2016 in collaboration with the platform Wipplay. With “Vichy & Moi”, *Portrait(s)* involves the people of Vichy by asking them to send a picture of their daily life in Vichy. With a picture for each participant, the idea was to depict as many stories as possible. The selected photographs are then displayed for the period of the festival, allowing the people of Vichy to share their story.

3.1.4. The educative mission

Since the first edition of the festival in 2014, an educational booklet is published specially for the young public by the “*Centre Culturel Valéry Larbaud*”. Designed by Jérôme Schirtzinger and illustrated by photographs from the festival, the booklet is an introduction to photography for kids to understand the language of images and to arouse their sense of observation. The social role of the art director is to involve all kinds of audience in discovering photography. Indeed, most of the visitors are not art or photography specialists but rather locals from the city and tourists in the region. The curator must then find the means for everyone to understand the visions of the artists and experience their work.



Image 52: Schirtzinger, Jérôme Guide Jeune Public 2015 (Kid booklet)

3.1.5. The festival's media coverage

Portrait(s) benefits from a larger media coverage every year. In 2015, the Canadian Photographer Kourtney Roy whose work was exhibited in the festival was interviewed by the French Radio “France Inter” for the show “*Regardez voir*”. The work of residency artist Yusuf Sevincli benefited from an article in the New Yorker. The festival was also relayed by several national media such as *Grazia*, *La Croix*, *Le nouvel Obs*, *Madame Figaro*, *Elle*, *France 3 Auvergne* or *Causette*. In 2016, an article from the British newspaper *The Guardian* is dedicated to the work of Jean-Marie Perier and his exhibition at the festival. On television, TV5Monde ran a news story about Jean Depara and his work about Kinshasa exhibited in *Portrait(s)*. A “*Regardez voir*” is once again dedicated to an artist of the festival, Nicola Lo Calzo and his work on colonial heritage. For this 3rd edition, among various articles in *Libération*, *Le Magazine*, *Le Monde*, *Le Parisien*, *France.fr*, *Africaculture*, *Slates* or *Grazia* the festival benefited from a 3 pages’ article in *Marianne*. In Italy, the event was covered by the magazine *Internazionale*. In 2017, the festival was covered by French newspapers *Le Monde* and *Libération*.

In order to ensure media coverage on the Festival new edition, the event managers and the press secretary or “press-attaché” must go through different phases. The press secretary is responsible to assess the impact of the media and the media coverage by constituting a press kit compiling all the newspaper articles and audio-visual shows dedicated to the festival prioritizing renowned local and international media. In the cases of the 5th edition of Vichy Portrait(s), I was in charge of constituting the press release working in tight collaboration with the press-attaché to promote the festival to journalists. Along with the press-attaché, we watched carefully the written and multimedia press to find articles dealing with our upcoming festival but also to keep abreast of the latest photographic activities and events. Indeed, to know and analyse a sector of activity will help to assess the competition but also communicate effectively with relevant actors of the sector. It is recommended to target the right partner organisations according to the nature of the information to spread. Also, it is essential for the press secretary to constitute a strong personal network and to adapt his discourse regarding the media. To create strong relations and communicate effectively with the different media, the press-attaché doesn’t communicate exclusively through the press kit but also through press conferences or receptions.

When all the materials such as press kit model, posters or flyers are created and validated by the festival stakeholders the managers must validate the “press proof document”, *a term used in printing to officially approve the final printing contract to be performed by the printer*¹⁰⁵. The same expression is used to approve the final printing of the photographs that will be displayed during the show.

3.2. The Organization of Vichy Portrait(s)

The organization of a cultural public event such as *Vichy Portrait(s)* involves several stages that must be carefully thought out. Once the project has been clearly defined, the event manager will need to carry out a detailed study of the festival specific market. In the case of *Vichy Portrait(s)*,

¹⁰⁵ Translation of “BAT: Bon à tirer”, from the website *Journal du net*. Available at: <http://www.journaldunet.com/business/pratique/dictionnaire-du-marketing/communication/19203/bat-bon-a-tirer-definition-traduction-et-synonymes.html>. Last viewed on 31/08/17.

the project managers Fany Dupechez and Pascal Michaut studied carefully other photography events taking place at the same period such as *Les rencontres de la photographie d'Arles*¹⁰⁶. Then, the event manager will need to decide the date of the event. Besides, to identify the right time to set up the project will influence its progress and must be thought carefully. Indeed, the inauguration is very important for the media coverage and the visibility of the festival. It should not begin at the same time as another event of the same kind. Besides, the day and period of the year such as national holidays can also have a considerable influence on the number of visitors. An important part of the exhibition will be then to look for spaces to host the exhibitions. In visual arts such as Photography, the managers or art directors will have to keep in mind the layout of the exhibitions to find spaces that will match the exhibitions' scenography. The managers will also have to verify whether the necessary technical and safety requirements for the shows are fulfilled and make a final validation, subject to the prior agreement of the competent authorities of the city. In the case of *Vichy Portrait(s)*, a dossier was presented to the prefecture to create a long-time partnership with the city in several spaces of exhibition. The next step will be then to create the festival identity including its vision, its mission, the logo and the graphic chart. Regarding the graphic designers and printers, *Vichy Portrait(s)* producers Fany Dupechez and Pascal Michaut selected longstanding partners. For the exhibition annual catalogue and the books of the artists in residency, *Portrait(s)* collaborates with Filigranes Editions specialised in photography publishing since 27 years. The managers will then have to draw up a budget estimate and a programme for the installation of the festival. Control management is a vital part of the project organization, providing the managers with a global vision of the current financial situation of the project. In the case of *Vichy Portrait(s)*, keeping the financial accounts in order will also allow comparing expenses from one year to another and the evolution of the budget allocated to the installation and the progress of the festival. To attract the audience of such festival, the manager will have to host an eclectic range of artists from well known photographs to modern and contemporary artists. The festival does not target one certain type of audience and must be able to propose different styles and visions to attract artists, specialists, professionals of the field and a wider audience. For this 5th Edition, *Portrait(s)*

¹⁰⁶ a festival of contemporary photography taking place every year in Arles since 1970 in more than 40 different spaces of exhibition and visited by more than 100,000 visitors in 2016.

invited the famous portraitist Liu Bolin. Exhibited in New York, Stockholm, Milan, Paris, and Moscow, the photographer skilfully camouflaged in his own pictures presented his work on the open-sky esplanade of the Allier's lac. Bolin is known for his original work in which his painted body disappears in his photographs such as the Chinese flag, propaganda slogans or a supermarket. Subversive, Liu Bolin embodies along with Ma Yangling, Ai Weiwei, Liu Xiaodong, Zhang Binjian, Zhang-ke Jia and many others this new generation of Chinese artists, criticizing the Chinese government and its censorship. The programme also includes the work of photographers from the renowned Parisian photography agency Modds, specialized in celebrities' photographs for the press such as Patrick Swirc, Jérôme Bonnet and Denis Rouvre. The festival also hosted the very best of photography. Stephen Shames, the American photojournalist who covered the Black Panthers' era and worked mainly on social issues such as racism, precariousness, and poverty presented a series of pictures from his work *Power to the People: The World of the Black Panthers*. The festival also hosted the work of the Swedish photographers Christer Strömholm about the transsexual prostitutes of the Place Blanche and the Pigalle District of Paris in the 1960's. The French photographer Catherine Balet presented her series *Looking for the masters in Ricardo's Golden shoes*, a series of staged scenes recreating 120 famous pictures of masters such as Robert Cornelius' *Self-Portrait* (1839), *Le Baiser de l'Hôtel de Ville* (1950) or *Les pains de Picasso* (1952) from Robert Doisneau with the 74 years old male model Ricardo Martinez Paz. The festival also presented series of close-up portraits from Pierre Gonnord on black backgrounds in the style of XVIth century Flemish renaissance portrait paintings. Finally, were also displayed portraits of Claudia Imbert who spent time in residency in the remote village of Petite-Vallé, on the tip of Quebec's Gaspé Peninsula. With her background in movies, Claudia depicted the citizens of this village in 16:9 image ratio in staged portraits reflecting on the way we occupy spaces.



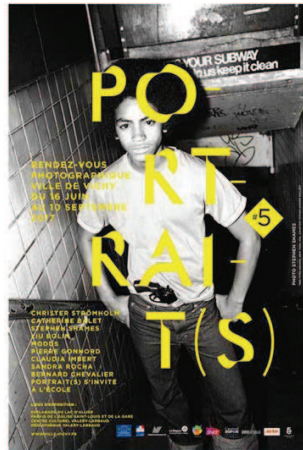


Image 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61: Vichy Portrait(s) posters from the 1st to the 5th Edition¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷Vichy Portrait(s) posters from the 1st to the 5th Edition. Archives from the Centre Culturel Valéry Larbaud.

The booking of photographs can be done in several ways and will depend on every artist. The artist can be reached and booked directly or through his agent. Besides, the booking of artists will rely mostly on the professional and personal network of the curator along with the visibility of the event in the photography festival landscape.

Finally, once the project, its program and the planning is defined, the event will require partnerships. *Vichy Portrait(s)* benefits from Vichy local and regional partnerships since the first edition. Indeed, the city of Vichy provides spaces of exhibition and communicates about *Portrait(s)* through billboards, its website, and social media. Besides, the festival represents a large influx of tourists for the city but also for its region, the Auvergne that will benefit from the festival. The French railway network company SNCF also supports the festival as most of the tourists in the region are commuting by train. As a major national public exhibition, the festival is financially supported by the Ministry of Culture and Communication. The French and German tv channel of public service ARTE (Association relative à la télévision européenne) also support and communicate about the festival through their branch *Arte Actions culturelles*. Also included is the photography website Wipplay monitoring the Festival photography competition “Flash Expo”. Finally, the festival benefits from the support of the festival long-term partners such as the printing and production companies Central Dupon Images, Cinq Etoiles Production and Processus.



Image 62: Vichy Portrait(s) Partnerships

Such a festival also requires sponsorships to support the event with financing or through products and services in addition to communicating about the event. There are different categories of sponsors such as the “title sponsor”. It will often be the company, organization or administration with the most important role in the organization of the event. In the case of *Vichy Portrait(s)*, the city of Vichy hosting the festival on its different cultural facilities and financing most of the installations and layouts of the exhibitions is the title sponsor of the event. However, for professional confidentiality reasons, it is difficult to distinguish from partners to sponsors and the financial participation of the different organizations in the exhibition.

Finally, every year, *Vichy Portrait(s)* highlights the work of a special guest. For its 4th edition the festival presented the work of renowned photographer Jean-Marie Périer who was there to talk about his work while in 2017 it is the Chinese photographer Liu Bolin that represented the festival for its 5th Edition. Receiving guests from around the world involves an important work of logistics and production. Indeed, one of the tasks of the production assistant will be to make travel arrangements, book the hotels, planes, and restaurants and pay the artists according to the clauses of the contract. This part of the production is essential and relies on the rigor and diligence of the control producers and production assistants. Finally, it shows once again that the work of curating is halfway between expertise in the arts and management.

If people don't go to museums, museums will come to them. That is what could be the philosophy behind the festival *Vichy Portrait(s)*. Every year, for a period of three months, the work of talented photographers is brought into the exhibition centres and open air spaces of the thermal city. The Festival represents what curators are trying to achieve all around the world, to educate about art, reach out as many people as possible and involve the public. Just as the spa waters of the city stimulate the body of its visitors since the 19th century, the festival nourishes the mind of the tourists and citizens of the region. In our present hyper-connected and individualist society, the festival is the occasion to renew contact within the city. Thanks to conferences, lectures and educational classes for the kids, the festival promotes social cohesion but also puts the city at the forefront of the event with a photo competition dedicated to the citizens of Vichy and the work of the residency artist about the city.

Conclusion

Today, more than ever, the debate on Art and society, must be taken beyond the institutions to its citizens. For decades now, professionals in the field of Art - artists, curators, academicians or museums directors - work to enhance the experience of exhibitions, to question the audience and open up debates about our society. The importance of arts and culture has been neglected and reserved for the elite for too long, and society needs to re-engage with it. Indeed, arts can only be understood within the context of the situations and events which brought them into being. Art reflects the present situation of our society, helps us understand the past and enables us to project ourselves forward.

Art is crucial to understand our history and the way the human thinking evolves. In fact, the evolution and synergy of cultures made us what we are today, and we need to reconnect ourselves with our essence by understanding what are the key factors in the evolution of our society. According to Alexander Dorner's thought, Art is one of the three vectors connected with the evolution of modern society along with Science and Technology. It is also connected with multiculturalism and taking interest in art is taking interest in others, and thus be aware of their own history. When d'Harnoncourt organized *Indian Art of the United States* at the MoMA in 1941, in addition to presenting the work of Indian artists, he also educated the audience about the indigenous culture. Indeed, art is a vector of knowledge that can make change mentalities and highlight topics seen as taboo such as sexuality, racial issues, social inequalities, war, and imperialism. Dorner explained that, at the beginning of the 20th century, Abstract Art had shown to the world different ways to perceive a certain reality based on cultural background. Moreover, it has shown that anyone is capable of sharing his version of what he considers as reality and that the reaction of the public will only depend on their subjective interpretations. Also, creativity speaks volumes on the special features of a person or a culture and remains a way of expressing often "untranslatable" concepts or feelings. The way a photographer takes pictures tells you a great deal about him just as a writer or a poet will be able to express feelings that he will not normally discuss during a regular conversation.

If Art can make us connect with our present, our history, other cultures and ourselves, then Art is crucial for society and promoting art is promoting human development. However, Art has been for long associated with few a classical forms reserved for the elite of our society while we understand know that the notion of “Art” is very subjective and that every production can therefore be considered as Art. Thus, art curators had to democratize art under all its forms. The curators' social role is to bridge the gap between art and society. Indeed, curators work as art mediators presenting and supporting the artists of tomorrow whatever the price is. Hence, the history of curating is full of scandals and controversies just like any process that challenges the established order of things. Walter Hopp saw his gallery temporally shut down for obscenity for presenting the work of the Wally Hendrick and Harald Szeeman was accused of alienating traditional audiences for hosting conceptual art and performances at the Kunsthalle Bern. Besides, as the curator has a social responsibility, he must be able to adapt his discourse to different languages, professional fields or socio-cultural backgrounds. This is why the work of art curator evolved with globalization and specialists in the field of Art are now multifaceted polyglot managers. Indeed, as developed during this research, being an art curator evolved way beyond being an art specialist and is now about connecting art to the world.

As it has drastically changed since the last 70 years, the work of curating along with the very concept of "museum" will evolve both in form and substance in the future. As we are now living in a hyper-connected technology-driven society, museums and exhibitions will certainly evolve with technology and offer completely new immersive experiences for visitors. Virtual reality devices and installations will most likely replace the Black Box, and applications such as research engines might become new ways to visit museum institutions. With the rise of algorithms based on our internet research and preferences, we can imagine that shows in the future will be tailor-made to our personal tastes. Indeed, just as people decide what they want to see on their Instagram or Facebook timeline, future generations might enjoy "imaginary museums" with 3-dimensional 360° shows based on their preferences integrating disruptive elements to question the viewer and enhance his experience. However, it is essential that exhibitions keep on raising issues and promoting reflexion as progress results in an output of thoughts, debates, exchanges, and open-mindedness. Museums will also keep on involving the audience in shows and educate about Art and Culture. *"The museum of the future must stand*

side by side with the library, and the laboratory" once stated a curator during a lecture at the Smithsonian Institute in 1889, and since then, museums never ceased to evolve in this vein. The cultural sector will also probably form closer ties with the commercial world. Soon, the entire cultural sector will depend on technocrats and shareholders, and it represents a threat for the quality of exhibitions and programs in museums. Indeed, privatizing cultural institutions is an incentive for taking fewer risks, being less human-centered and more money-oriented. As the museums will need to make more profits, atypical or innovative exhibitions likely to disturb and raise new issues will decrease as it could represent a threat to incomes. As seen previously, the modernization of the Stedelijk Museum in the 1960's by Willem Sandberg was made possible because it was a public institution. Privatization will also increase with the growth of single-owner collections that influence and distort the market. Indeed, it is nowadays private owners and renowned galleries that create trends on the art market by capitalizing on certain artists rather than others, and it will increase in the future. Besides, the rapid economic development of various regions will most likely affect the markets. From 1962 to 2010, the price of a piece of Andy Warhol's *World Soup* set has been multiplied by 90,000. How much it be in 2060? In addition to the demographic growth in regions such as China, standards of living are increasing, and lifestyles are changing. There are now 805,000 millionaires in China, and the country witnessed an increase of 31% in the number of millionaires since 2008 which gives an idea of how it will evolve in the future. Besides, China is building thousands of new museums, 451 new museums opened in 2014 and the total number of museums in China doubled since the year 2000, passing from 2000 to more than 4000 in 2014.¹⁰⁸ The dynamism of China and many other countries including Brasil or Russia gives a relatively clear forecast on how the art market and the cultural field could evolve in the next decades. The museum itself with its architecture is also becoming very important and might in the future define its identity more than the shows it hosts. Indeed, museums such as the Fondation Louis Vuitton in Paris designed by Jean Nouvel or the Guggenheim museum of Bilbao by Franck Gehry are architectural pieces of art from renowned artists which have nothing to envy to the ones displayed within these institutions.

¹⁰⁸ Unknown The Economist journalist (2014), "Mad about museums", *TheEconomist*. Available at: <https://www.economist.com/news/special-report/21591710-china-building-thousands-new-museums-how-will-it-fill-them-mad-about-museum>. Last viewed on: 03/11/17.

Besides, private corporations will keep on investing in art, as it is a long-term safe investment, and in opening art foundations to consolidate their image. The question is to know if those institutions will provide meaningful shows to the public or will only enhance the image of their brand. We will also witness the increase of multiculturalism in art and inter-cultural exchanges. The example of the Louvre Abu Dhabi is a testimony to that broad tendency. We will also witness the extension of the definition of art. What do we consider Art and who defines what is Art and what is not? Museums. As museums are evolving in Art laboratories, the notion of "Art" itself might become more and more blurry and the artworks exhibited will no longer be viewed as items divorced from the social context from which they rose since very often in Art, context and content go hand-in-hand. Finally, we can hope that if people keep engaging with cultural institutions, we will see the rise of museums as spaces of exchanges between artworks, ideas, and people looking toward the future.

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