

CURATORS' NETWORK

Let us be known; let us be seen, and let us shine

Activities of Curators' Network at Matadero Madrid

June 27 to July 14, 2013

01. About Curators' Network

Curators' Network is an **international initiative of five European cultural institutions**. It was founded in 2010 by the Spanish association *hablarenarte*: with the **aim to promote intercultural dialogue through interconnecting European art scenes**.

The transfer of cultural knowledge, often branded as “intercultural dialogue” has become a tremendously important tool to encourage the creation of a political and social cohesion and collaboration. To promote this intercultural dialogue, it is necessary to **encourage art professionals to get in touch with cultural players of other national art scenes** and expand their network of contacts.

Curators' Network offered the invited curators and artists during the first phase of its activities (2010-2013) an **extensive knowledge on the leading cultural players of the European cultural scene**. It has initiated the development of lasting international networks. It was the **starting point of direct collaborations between cultural agents from several European countries**. It has **boosted the visibility of the participating artists** through its much-visited database.

In short, during its three years of existence Curators' Network has proved to be an **effective tool for networking and promotion of the young and contemporary arts** and is currently becoming an important european initiative to internationally promote emergent and mid-career artists and cultural agents.

Between 2010 and 2013, and through meetings, portfolio reviews, conferences and research residencies Curators' Network has brought together around **70 international curators with more than hundred artists from five European countries**: Austria, Spain, Hungary, Poland and Romania. These activities have contributed to a growing popularity and international consideration of the participating artists and curators.

Curators' Network will celebrate a **three-week long event at Matadero Madrid between June 27 and July 14, 2013**. The aim of this event is to **build a bridge between the past and future activities** of the network through a **series of high-profile exhibitions and conferences**.

02. Activities at Intermediae Madrid: June 27 to July 14, 2013

Theme and general concept

Between June 27 and July 14 2013 Curators' Network organizes a showcase of the outcomes of its recent activities at Intermediae, at the Center for Contemporary Creation Matadero Madrid. Curators' Network seeks to give this event an eminently international focus, inviting both curators and artists who have participated in the various meetings of Curators' Network, as well as cultural agents who are interested in collaborating with the network.

Curators' Network will present itself during those three weeks of exhibitions, talks and discussions as a generator of new content and activities, a resource for intellectual discourse, attractive to members of the network, art professionals and general public.

"Let us be known; let us be seen, and let us shine", takes its name from a press release for an exhibition of Fine Art Students of the University of Massachusett, in 2009, titled "Shameless self-promotion". Based on this title we seek to reflect with this event on the experience generated during the first three years of the network.

The activities that Curators' Network proposes during the summer days in Madrid will put into practice our understanding of the role of the curator as an intermediary and facilitator whose prior task is to direct and guide collective creative processes.

The members of Austria, Hungary, Poland and Romania will issue three curated programs present alternative exhibition formats featuring artists, that have been participating at the activities of Curators' Network since 2011. On the other hand, **hablarenarte**: as the host and Spanish organizer will lead three seminars that trigger panel talks, round tables and open discussions around issues that we have been repeatedly confronted with during our collaboration within the network.

The activities of Curators' Network at Intermediae have been partially supported by:

Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) of the European Commission.

Centro de Creación Contemporánea, Matadero Madrid



Education and Culture DG

Culture Programme



03. Curated Activities

June 27 to July 14: Impossibility vs. Self-Censorship (27/06/2013 - 14/07/2013)

What makes an artwork, a project or an exhibition impossible? What drives an artist to censor his/her own artwork and to hold back an idea without any pressure from the outside? What are the justifications and risks behind?

In the mid of the 20th century, Mies van der Rohe came with his Babylonian idea of creating the universal space that would generate infinite possibilities within the finitude of its vertical elements and the accessibility of light – a space of contrast and paradox motivated by the complexity of imagination. The exhibition-project demonstrates how different examples for events and interventions beyond possibility, examples of artistic self-censorship, as well as some not realized or materialized artworks can be expanded beyond the constraints of the “absolute art space” with the use of imagination. These do not only outline a picture of the borders of the current art-system, but also locate the different types of inner or outer, personal or general, practical or theoretical, real or imagined obstacles surrounding the artistic practice.

With: Ana de Almeida (PT), Maria Anwander (AT); Apparatus 22 (RO), Irina Botea (RO), Pedro Luis Cembranos (ES), Simion Cernica (RO), Roland Farkas (HU), Cristina Garrido (ES), Agnieszka Grodzieska (PL), Núria Güell (ES), Lukasz Jastrubczak (PL), Tamás Kaszás (HU), Ádám Kokesch (HU), Ewa Kubiak (PL), Fermín Jiménez Landa (ES), Luiza Margan (HR), Miklós Mécs (HU); Sebastian Moldovan (RO), Daniela Palimariu (RO); Péter Szabó (HU), Kornél Szilágyi (HU), Stefania Strouza (GR), Jakub Woynarowski (PL)
Curated by Anca Mihulet (RO) and Borbála Szalai (HU). Visual concept by invited artist Radu Cioca (RO)

This project has been partially supported by the Romanian Cultural Institute Madrid.



03. Curated Activities

Zine Spaces (29/06/2013 - 14/09/2013)

Zine Spaces consists of three *artzines*, an artist-led workshop and the discursive evening event *Table in the Space*. The essential idea for the *artzine* project parallels the *Impossibility vs. Self-Censorship* exhibition: The *artzines* offer a space for visualizing ideas and concepts; they resemble small exhibitions and condensed archives of thinking and reflection. At the same time they provide a medium for communicating artistic ideas that are not dependent on the white cube gallery space.

In the context of the *Table in the Space* event – an exhibition format designed as a space for dialogue and a dinner table landscape – the newly produced *artzines* will be presented for the first time, with the artists Karolina Bregula and Marlene Hausegger speaking about their work.

With: Karolina Bregula, Igor and Ivan Buharov, Cristina Garrido, Marlene Hausegger
Table in the Space by Kunsthalle Exnergasse, with Karolina Bregula and Marlene Hausegger
Curators: Andrea Löbel and Jürgen Tabor

This project has been partially supported by Das Land Steiermark, Austria; Kunsthalle Exnergasse, Vienna; Foro Cultural de Austria, Madrid



KUNSTHALLE EXNERGASSE | WUK



03. Curated Activities

The Whisperers (04/07/2013 - 14/07/2013)

Presentation of a research project on social archeology, documenting the activities of an international revolutionary organization called “The Whisperers”, which apparently for a long time had been interfering in the order of our society. The exhibition shows artifacts related to the organization, as well as texts and audio-visual materials from different parts of Europe, that are related to the activity of the group. Among others we will present the recently discovered peculiar typewriter featuring a „whisper punctuation mark” that was used by the organization.

Curator: Gawel Gownacki (F.A.I.T)

This project has been partially supported by the Polish Cultural Institute, Madrid.



Monocanal: Session of Video Art (02/07/2013 - 05/07/2013)

Many of the artists who presented their work during the meetings that Curators' Network held during the past years are somehow related to the video format. Some of the artists perceive their videoworks as a part of an installation, some rather use it as a means of documentation, others perceive the film in itself as the final formalization of their work. However, it is becoming obvious that the video format, independently of its artistic purpose, is becoming more and more one of the favourite means for an effective distribution and promotion of artistic work. We want to echo this tendency by the creation of several video capsules. During four nights, the invited curators will present and comment during aprox. one hours a selection of single-channel video art of their regions. These capsules will be projected in the courtyard of the Cantina bar, located within Matadero.

04. Seminars

Within the framework of the aforementioned activities, Curators' Network seeks to create a space for reflection and debate in order to tackle the themes on stake also from a theoretical and discursive perspective. We unite cultural players and thinkers from the Spanish cultural scene with the international agents and propose public presentations, interdisciplinary workshops and round table talks. Artists, curators, cultural managers and thinkers are invited to share their ideas and experiences about how we should act towards the opportunities and challenges that we are facing when working in the realm of contemporary arts.

On education: "I don't think art can be taught. I really don't." (John Baldessari)

Economist Richard Florida argues in his book "The Rise of the Creative Class" that the high concentration of "bohemians" in a city or region is directly related to a higher level of economic development of that environment. Florida's theory has great detractors and defenders. But the truth is that especially in the more prosperous regions of Europe centers for artistic and cultural education are increasingly subject to the influence of the art market and the so-called "cultural industries". Other less buoyant regions instead experience a certain lack of interest of the art market and the cultural industries in their Fine Art Universities - either because those lack reforms in their educational models or because of undue political influence. Each of the two are longing for what the other has in excess: in the prosperous regions it is watched with critical eyes how the market influences in the realm of education and initiatives try to protect students from excessive pressure. In the other regions people criticize the lack of reforms and flexibility that is needed for adequately educating artists and cultural professionals and seek bringing universities closer to the art market and society. Both models however agree that we are currently witnessing an agglomeration of the present elites in very few centers for artistic and cultural education while the others are relegated to the second row, to the periphery. Prestigious and expensive institutions as deAppel (Amsterdam), Goldsmith (London) or Staedelschule (Frankfurt) have actually created a market and a kind of "brand", for their graduates.

This trend brings up some fundamental questions: What is the purpose of educating artists? How should we teach art? Can art actually be taught and excellence be indulged? We want to discuss these and related questions about art education, providing a reflection on the understanding of the role of the art-education in a time where education and knowledge has gained a monetary value.

With: Maurice Carlin, co-director of the Islington Mill in Manchester, UK and head of its education program. Sam Thorne, co-editor of the Frieze Magazine (London, UK) and co-funder of the new Art School East, that will start its activities in September 2013.

Szablocs Kisspal, artist and University teacher (Intermedia, Transpraxis International Center for Art and Theory (Budapest, HU)

The travel and stay of Maurice Carlin and Sam Thorne has been partially supported by the British Council.



04. Seminars

On promotion: “ Let us be known; let us be seen, and let us shine”

Curators' Network is one of the many projects that seek to promote artists and international cultural initiatives, but is one of the few that foremost seeks uniting peripheries. The problems however, that Curators' Network is facing, are the same as all promotional initiatives are experiencing: What is the purpose and which are the strategies of communicating arts and artists in a more-than-ever-fragmented media and art market? After three years of international promotional activities, it is time to review the past and to think how we should orientate the network in the future. We would like to initiate this debate in an open format and together with initiatives that pursue similar approaches.

With: Anca Mihulet, freelance curator (RO), Andrea Löbel, Kunsthalle Exnergasse (AT), Borbála Szalai, Trafo Gallery (HU), Gawel Kownacki; F.A.I.T (PL), Jürgen Tabor, Galerie im Taxispalais (AT), Nini Palavandishvili, GeoAIR (GEO), Zorana Dakovic, Culture Center of Belgrade (SRB), Marko Stamenkovich, freelance curator (SRB), Maurice Carlin, Islington Mill (UK)

On society: “Has the autonomy of art as formulated by modernity, perhaps had its day? (Pascal Gielen)

Political philosophers such as Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt have formulated in the last years a critical theory that brands the actual economic system as “post-fordist”: they sustain that capitalism has overcome at large the production mode of the XX Century, named after the inventor of the assembly line, Henry Ford. Post-fordism, they sustain, is based on the creative, flexible and communicative, autonomous and creative worker and embraces the cultural industries as one of its leading models for economic growth.

The crucial question lies in whether the arts and the cultural community have to face the fact that the ideal of the intellectual and economical independency of an artist has come to an end. Is the artist to be seen as an intrinsic part of the so called “creative industries” and therefore a cultural entrepreneur or does this conversion mean the eradication of the essence of the artist itself? In short: has the autonomy of art as formulated by modernity, asks the Dutch sociologist Pascal Gielen, perhaps had its day?

The Dutch philosopher Joost de Bloois says yes: “after having fulfilled the creative industries, art is now in process of dissolving into the creative industries (...) The precarious working conditions of the art world, and the precarious status of the artist have been appropriated by the new spirit of capitalism, and is now, in a sense, being turned against art: art can no longer claim its exceptional status.” And he concludes: “If art wants to survive, other than as fuel for the international art market, other than as investment object for the super rich, it has to take into account its own dissolution into the new models of economy”.

With: Joost de Bloois, University of Amsterdam (NL) Gilad Reich and Yael Messer, High&Low Bureau (Israel)

04. Participants

Founding members of the network:

Andrea Löbel is the director of Kunsthalle Exnergasse, Vienna, Austria. Besides running an intensive exhibition program with external curators as well as an international residency program, Andrea is curating the recurring exhibition/performance series *Tisch im Raum*, a laboratory, a space for dialogue and a dinner table landscape.

Jürgen Tabor is deputy director and curator of the Galerie im Taxispalais in Innsbruck, Austria. In his work, he often focuses on psychoanalytical and social aspects of art and culture, on the history and nature of images and the question of how globalization affects the people.

Andrea Löbel and Jürgen Tabor will be in charge of the *Zine Spaces* project.

Borbála Szalai is a curator and co-director of Trafo Gallery Space in Budapest, Hungary. In her curatorial work, Borbála focuses especially on the Central European region. Her exhibition-series *Flashbulb Memory* presented an aspect of historical memory, showcasing the troubled relationship of young artists from Central Europe with their own historical past.

Anca Mihulet is a free-lance curator from Romania. She was recently designated as curator of the Romanian Pavonó for the 2013 Venice Biennial. Lately, Anca works together with a stable group artists to research topics such as the implications of knowledge, history, margins and landscape, as well as to produce new works of art which talk about these issues.

Borbála Szalai and Anca Mihulet will be in charge of *Impossibility vs. Self-Censorship*

Gawel Kownacki lives in Krakow, Poland, and works mainly through his platform F.A.I.T., an association that seeks to encourage new approaches to the visual arts. Gawel is mainly interested in correlations between visual arts and film and is currently working on a series of documentary movies presenting the icons of contemporary art in Poland in order to discover new and future strategies for the arts.

Gawel Kownacki will be in charge of the *Los susurradores* project.

hablarenarte: is an association of four that works in a wide range of fields related with contemporary art. Their main concern is the promotion of contemporary culture among a wider public and the interconnection of national and international art professionals. In order to fulfill those aims, they organize an innovative cultural education program for families and children in collaboration with museums and art galleries in Madrid and curatorial and promotional activities such as *Jugada a 3 Bandas*, the series of performative events “*Palabras Habladas*” and “*A Ciegas*”, or the exhibition project “*Biblioteca Intervenida*”.

hablarenarte: will be in charge of the overall project and will organize the seminars

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